

VALUES IN AMERICAN CULTURE

1. PERSONAL CONTROL OVER THE ENVIRONMENT

People can/should control nature, their own environment and destiny. The future is not left to fate.

Result: An energetic, goal-oriented society.

2. CHANGE / MOBILITY

Change is seen as positive and good. This means progress, improvement and growth.

Result: An established transient society geographically, economically and socially.

3. TIME AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Time is valuable - achievement of goals depends on the productive use of time.

Result: An efficient and progressive society often at the expense of interpersonal relationships.

4. EQUALITY / EGALITARIANISM

People have equal opportunities; people are important as individuals, for who they are, not from which family they come.

Result: A society where little deference is shown or status is acknowledged.

5. INDIVIDUALISM, INDEPENDENCE AND PRIVACY

People are seen as separate individuals (not group members) with individual needs. People need time to be alone and to be themselves.

Result: Americans may be seen as self-centered and sometimes isolated and lonely.

6. SELF-HELP

Americans take pride in their own accomplishments.

Result: Americans give respect for self achievements not achievements based on rights of birth.

7. COMPETITION AND FREE ENTERPRISE

Americans believe competition brings out the best in people and free enterprise leads to progress and produces success

Result: Competition is emphasized over cooperation.

8. FUTURE ORIENTATION / OPTIMISM

Americans believe that, regardless of past or present, the future will be better and happier.

Result: Americans place less value on past events and constantly look ahead to tomorrow.

9. ACTION AND WORK ORIENTATION

Americans believe that work is morally right; that it is immoral to waste time.

Result: There is more emphasis on "doing" rather than "being". This is a no-nonsense attitude toward life.

10. INFORMALITY

Americans believe that formality is "un-American" and a show of arrogance and superiority.

Result: A casual, egalitarian attitude between people is more accepted.

11. DIRECTNESS / OPENNESS / HONESTY

One can only trust people who "look you in the eye" and "tell it like it is". Truth is a function of reality not of circumstance.

Result: People tend to tell the "truth" and not worry about saving the other person's "face" or "honor".

12. PRACTICALITY / EFFICIENCY

Practicality is usually the most important consideration when decisions are to be made.

Result: Americans place less emphasis on the subjective, aesthetic, emotional or consensual decisions.

13. MATERIALISM / ACQUISITIVENESS

Material goods are seen as the just rewards of hard-work, the evidence of "God's favor."

Result: Americans are seen as caring more for things than people or relationships.