



# Dr. Culture's<sup>®</sup> "10-90" Guide

To

## American High Value Cultural Components

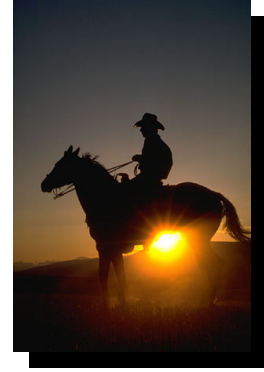
Note: The issues discussed here are done so in a very general sense and the information contained is to be used with our classroom discussions. Depending on where you go in the US, you will find variations on everything discussed here! However, by understanding these 10 High Value Cultural Components, you'll understand 90% of the Americans you meet!



### **I. Self Reliance/Individualism**

This has to be the cornerstone of American culture; standing on your own two feet, limited only by your own strength and discipline, providing for yourself and your family on your own; with no assistance from anyone – to do otherwise would force others to do for you what you should be doing for yourself. Result: loss of “face” (although most Americans don’t understand this concept they view this as horribly humiliating) and a public admission that you cannot “do” for yourself. This is especially humiliating within families—asking a family member for financial or other “help” or assistance is culturally inappropriate and only a final resort due to no other options. This is straight out of our historical background as Americans made their way across the North American continent. This one

of the many elements of the 1800s “cowboy” mentality and is still found in a large percentage of Americans today. The sincere belief is that you, *the individual*, control your own *independent* destiny. This is articulated in a book by an American of Indian background (Dinesh D’ Souza) entitled “What’s so Great About America.” In it he describes the control and accomplishment average people have over their lives referring to it as “writing your own book of your life.” This he writes is accomplished only *through your own individual discipline, hard work, and adaptation*.



The general view of many Americans is that to do otherwise means you are lazy and not willing to take responsibility for improving your life. You are *individually responsible* for your life. It is a logical extension then, for Americans to consider it perfectly normal that if it is important enough we will control everything in our power – and try to control other things that logically cannot be done such as the weather. Although great scientific accomplishments have been made regarding hurricane control, irrigation, transforming bad land into productive farmland, etc. Most Americans understand bad luck can enter anyone’s life but they also feel that if you look back from “the problem” often there is some very bad choice that was made and ultimately, it is that choice that has placed you into this bad position.

**Example:** although controversial, the issue of the homeless in American cities is a very emotional issue with only two sides to the discussion: Group 1 says these homeless people are people down on their luck, homeless because they can’t get jobs which pay enough to sustain themselves. Therefore, large organizations have been developed to feed, clothe, even house them and keep them off the street. Group 2 says the homeless issue is almost entirely self inflicted; they point to studies which show almost all homeless have huge problems of long term drug use – either hard drugs or alcohol—and/or they suffer from serious mental illness so significantly that they are totally out of touch with their surroundings and in earlier times would have been institutionalized.

Although sympathetic, most Americans feel the homeless problem is a result of poor *personal, individual* decisions and *not taking responsibility* to do whatever it takes to *individually improve your situation*.

Most Americans find it difficult to accept that there are some things that lie beyond the power of humans to achieve. Americans have literally gone to the moon because they refused to accept earthly limitations. It all seems to be a matter of control for most Americans. We feel if it is important enough, we can control, well, ...anything!

Americans seem to be challenged, even compelled, to do, by one means or another (and often at great cost) what seven-eighths of the world is certain cannot be done—and, they most often succeed. This has been an identifiable cultural trait for generations – from moving a river to Lindberg’s flight across the Atlantic to landing on the moon or carving faces on a mountain.



## 2. Competition and Change

### Competition:

Americans believe competition brings out the best in any individual, organization, etc. The feeling is that the challenges force each person to produce the very best that is possible. Non-US individuals are quick to see these examples; competition in the American classroom (individual reward for the best grade, etc.) from Kindergarten to PhDs! Young children are, for example, encouraged to answer questions for which their classmates who do not know the answers. Does this embarrass those who can’t provide the answer? Probably, but the feeling is that if they had prepared for the class (trained for the competition) they would have had the answer. Net conclusion: it’s their (*individual*) fault.

I call this the “*motivation through humiliation*” method of encouragement. Note that there is no effort to learn or teach “face-saving” as other cultures consider appropriate. As mentioned above, face-saving is a foreign concept to most Americans. We prefer the direct, informal approach that cuts (sometimes painfully!) to the heart of the situation as quickly as possible. Americans call it “Constructive Criticism” as we are expected to benefit from the criticism. In short, we are expected to change our behavior, etc., in order to avoid another Constructive Criticism discussion. You will find more information on this at the Informality and Direct Approach section.

### Change:

In the American mind, change is seen as a natural result of hearty competition and change, which, we feel, is good. Change is strongly linked to development, improvement, progress, and growth.

Many older, more traditional cultures consider change as a disruptive, destructive force, to be avoided if at all possible. Instead of change, such societies value stability, continuity, tradition, and a rich and ancient heritage— which you will see is the virtual opposite of what most Americans value.

These first two values—the belief that we can do anything and the belief that any change is good—together with an American belief in the virtue of hard work (discussed later) and the belief that each individual has a responsibility to do the best he or she can do have helped Americans achieve some great accomplishments. So whether these beliefs are “true” is really irrelevant; *what is important is that Americans have considered them to be true and have acted as if they were, thus, in effect, causing them to happen.*

### 3. Time and Its Control

Time is, for the average American, of great importance. To the foreign visitor, Americans seem to be more concerned with getting things accomplished on time (according to a predetermined schedule) than they are with developing interpersonal relations. Schedules, for the American, are meant to be planned and followed in the smallest detail.



It may seem to you that most Americans are completely obsessed by time. Time management classes abound in the US. In fact, my first daily planner (a smile book for daily appointments, calendar, etc.) came with a 2-hour videotape instructional program! Time, to most Americans, is a commodity we never have enough of and is something to “kept, “filled, “saved” spent,” “wasted,” “lost,” “gained,” planned,” “given”, “made the most of”, even “killed!”

The international visitor soon learns that it is considered very rude to be late – even if by 10 minutes – for an appointment in the US. **NOTE:** *If it is absolutely impossible to be on time, you should phone ahead and tell the person you have been unavoidably detained and will be a half hour (for instance) late.*

By considering time to be important, one can clearly accomplish more than if one “wastes” time and does not keep busy. This philosophy has proven its worth for generations. It has enabled Americans to be extremely productive -- and productivity itself is highly valued in the US (more later). Many American proverbs and expressions stress the value in guarding our time, using it wisely, setting and working toward specific goals, and even expending our time and energy today so that the fruits of our labor may be enjoyed at a later time. When you hear the class, or meeting begins at 8 AM, you are expected to be there about 10 minutes early! In other words, if you arrive precisely at 8 AM – *you’re late!* To ease your adaptation to this, think of American appointment times as “airport time” – the time the airplane will actually leave the runway.

Many of my international friends refer to a very punctual outlook as living on “American Time.” Internationals I have worked with tell me they and their friends help each other by pushing each other to pay attention to time, meeting appointments, etc., and that this works well for them.

#### 4. Equality



Equality is, for most Americans, one of their most cherished values. This has been awarded religious stature within the US culture. Americans say all people are “created equal” and most Americans believe that God views all humans alike without regard to intelligence, economics, race, religion, etc. This is an area where Christianity and Islam share a common footing. For those who embrace Islam, at least once in their lives, if they can economically or physically deal with it, they will make the *Hajj*. Every lunar year or Islamic Calendar year, Muslims from around the globe descend on Mecca as they make their Hajj to Mecca. Everyone dresses in white robe-like clothes because God views all the same – with no regard for economic status, intelligence, and physical stature.

Regardless, this belief is translated into the assertion that all Americans have an equal opportunity to succeed in life. Asking ten Americans how to accomplish this will get you ten different plans but if you ask them if this is an important cultural component for them they will all agree that it is an important US value and goal. You will see this basic issue of “fairness” articulated across the US culture. A saying such as “What’s good for the goose is good for the gander” is typical of the historical importance Americans place on this. Not surprisingly, this issue of equality makes the American seem a bit “strange” to cultures who do not share this belief – eloquently written in our Declaration of Independence, that “*all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*”

It is odd to the American mind that this is a foreign concept in many areas of the world.

It is not unusual for highly placed non-US visitors in the US to be insulted by the way they are treated by lowly (or, at least, low class) service personnel such as clerks, waiters, taxi drivers, etc. Americans overwhelmingly, hold a mild suspicion of authority and generally a slight distaste for high position. Not surprisingly, the Americans harbor aversion to treating people of high position in a deferential manner because it, in their eyes, diminishes themselves. It amazes many high-position

international visitors that the Americans will appear to treat lower class people as if they were important while at the same time treating important people as low class! Foreign visitors to the US should understand that they, generally, will be treated “just like anyone else” while in the US.

In the US, is usually doesn't matter who your Daddy is or who your Grandfather was....!

## 5. Individualism and Privacy



The individualism that was developed in the Western world since the Renaissance, beginning in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, has taken its most exaggerated form in the 20<sup>th</sup> century US. Here, each individual is seen as completely and marvelously unique; that is, totally different from all others and therefore, especially precious and wonderful.

Americans think they are more individualistic in their thoughts and actions than, in fact, they are. They resist being thought of as a representative of a homogenous group – whatever the group.

Privacy, the ultimate result of individualism is perhaps even more difficult for the non-US person to understand. The word “privacy” doesn't even exist in many languages. If it does, it many times will have a strong negative connotation, suggesting loneliness or isolation from the family, group, etc. In the US, privacy is not only seen as a very positive condition, but it is also viewed as a requirement which all humans would find equally necessary, desirable and satisfying. It is not uncommon for Americans to say – and believe – such statements as “If I don't have at least half an hour a day to myself, I will go crazy!”

Individualism, as it exists in the US, does mean that you will find a great variety of opinions (along with the absolute freedom to express them anywhere and anytime). Yet, in spite of this wide range of personal opinion, almost all Americans will ultimately vote for one of the two major political parties. That is what was meant by the statement made earlier that Americans take pride in crediting themselves with claiming more individualism than, in fact, they really have.

## 6. Self-Help Concept

In the United States, a person can take credit only for what he or she has accomplished by him or herself. Americans get (or give) little credit for having been born into a rich family. In fact this is most commonly referred to as “an accident of birth.” You will often hear Americans say something such as “they are no different than me—except the money” or “he puts his pants on one leg at a time – like me”, etc. Americans assign special pride and recognition and the culture supports bestowing of higher status on Americans who were born poor and, through their own sacrifice and hard work, climbed the difficult ladder of success to whatever level they have achieved – all by themselves. Their efforts and the combination of the American social system and the cultural reward of hard work have made it possible for Americans to move up the social/economic ladder.



The next time you're in a bookstore, look at all the books on “self” development – books designed to assist the reader in improving yourself. For instance, *Increase Your Self-Confidence*, *Exploring your Self-Conscious*, *Achieving The Self-Contented Self*, *Learning Self-Control*, *Overcoming Self-Defeating Habits*, *Dealing with Your Self-Denial*, *Keeping Self-Discipline*, *Increase Your Self-Esteem*, *Learn the Art of Self-Expression*, *You are Self-Important*, *Continuous Self-Improvement*, *Focusing on your own Self-Interest*, *Self-Reliance-- Getting There*, *Earning your own Self-Respect*, *Self-Restraint for Parents of Teenagers*, *Self-Sacrifice and Its Rewards...!*

The actual list is virtually endless and is a great indicator of how seriously Americans take doing things for one's self. Perhaps most importantly, the “self-made man or woman” earns tremendous respect within the US society. Americans love a winner and someone who, on their own, individually, through sacrifice and hard work, pulling themselves up “by the bootstraps” is seen as a competitor who has struggled against great odds and despite these great inhibitors, still succeeded in accomplishing or exceeding their goals. Examples are everywhere in the US; Collin Powell – born to Jamaican Immigrants of humble economic and social standing. Powell set his goals, worked and struggled against powerful handicaps and setbacks yet became Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff and later Secretary of State. President Bill



Clinton is another example of someone “coming from nowhere” and through determination, skill, and hard work rose from a fatherless family in a rural town environment to the highest office in the land, President of the United States.

Americans *love this* about ourselves. You’ll see it in our movies, TV programs, television commercials; the act of “rolling up your sleeves” and digging in to take on the task at hand. Successes from this spirit, found within the US society which fosters -- *encourages* -- this thinking and action is profoundly rewarding which, in a positive reinforcement manner, further encourages additional, more difficult, *individual* pursuits.

**Nobody is above hard or humble work:** It doesn’t matter what class you come from, what position you are in, what your family name is, etc. Across the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas it is not surprising the senators, state governors, Hollywood actors, even the President of the US and First Lady serving food at shelters, military bases, etc. We, as a culture, expect this of our famous ones, heroes, and leaders. **Connection to “normal folks”:** This is especially easy to see during election years as the presidential hopefuls are out at pancake breakfasts, milking cows on farms, kissing babies, riding motorcycles with others, fishing, chopping wood, etc., all in a effort to show that despite the wealth of the candidate they want to be seen (at least for the moment) as “one of the regular Americans.”

## 7. Future Orientation

This is one of the more distressing issues for many non-US visitors.

Generally, many Americans have little interest in history.

Hard to imagine? It’s true. In fact, even the concept of “old” is different here. For instance, I’m reminded of a story from a Dutch military pilot who, while visiting California, was invited by an American family for a Saturday “outing.” The Americans knew the Dutch pilot was interested in history so the Americans took him to an old gold mining camp – where the 1849 California Gold Rush started and changed the social landscape not only for California but also for much of the US geographical area west of the Mississippi. Historically,

this is an important site of early America. For those Americans who do have interest in history, this is a lovely place to visit and rich in early America history.



The American husband proudly strode up to a log cabin and pointed to it with great pride saying, “look at this (Hans). This was built in 1847! Wow, isn’t this incredible! Still standing after all these years.”

The pilot later told me he pretended, politely, to be impressed, etc., but told me with warm laughter that the house he was born in, the house he was raised in, the house *his parents still live in*, has been in the family since it was built in the mid-1700s.

I like this example as it shows how most Americans (1) have a different outlook on history or what is considered “old” (2) how little most Americans know about world history and (3) how little most Americans know of other cultures, countries or – as we refer to it, “the outside world.” As a result of our future orientation – (*we feel the future is where the opportunity is, the future is where the money is, the future is where I must go*) – *we place more value on the future than the past*. History cannot be changed and the future is yet to be written. The attitude here is that the future can be affected and molded to meet the future needs of the culture, world betterment, etc.

As you can imagine, this is especially problematic when the Americans travel outside the US. As a result of our near disregard for history we say things that make perfect sense to us but force our hosts to *recoil* in horror. Don’t be surprised to hear comments such as “The Past is the Past” or “Look to the Future.” Historically, this has been reinforced within the American culture from the earliest days. Every American has heard the advice, “Don’t Cry Over Spilled Milk.” Translation: *Forget about it*. Let’s move ahead. As a result, most Americans don’t have the mental tools to understand the powerful, multi-faceted, cultural, economic, religious, and historical dynamics involved in areas such as the Middle East, The Balkans, Sub Sahara Africa, Cambodia, and other areas. The Americans, however, are fast learners and will benefit from your discussions on these areas.

The American’s outlook is a perfectly understandable position when you look at it through the “eyes of an American.” Remember that Americans have been taught from birth that they, individually, are responsible for their situation. So if historical difficulties impede future development or a better life, then the Americans take steps to “change things for the better” ~ at least from their perspective. If you don’t like it, change it! What is the quickest, easiest way to remedy the situation? Don’t be surprised that an easy answer to the Arab-Israeli situation is to agree to disagree, look to the future, and change the cycle of violence by getting on with your individual lives, pursuit of happiness, education, jobs, etc. This flows nicely into our next value component: **Action!**

## 8. Action! WorkWorkWorkWorkWork!



It's not our fault. As a psychiatrist told me, "If it's not one thing, it's your mother." From birth, American children are enculturated, no, *indoctrinated*, with the attitude that action is preferable to inaction. Americans view inaction as "lazy." Americans certainly enjoy spending time with friends yet; this is usually planned ahead of time, and is considered a small part of one's life. The social side of the American's life must be planned. If you don't think so, try just "dropping in" in on your American friend. Actually, don't do this. Your reception will be much different (worse) than if you had called ahead to ask if you could come by for a visit. There will be more to come on this later.

The centuries old expression "Idle hands are the devils plaything" still haunts us. My mother's voice still rings in my ears, "*Don't sit around doing nothing. Go read a book!*" This was usually followed by my smart-mouth *comment de jour* which was then followed by a punishment such as raking leaves, picking weeds, writing my multiplication tables, cleaning the garage, basement, or, worse, my bedroom.

It's not surprising, then, that the American's outlook on life focuses on being productive; focuses on their job. Is the job more important than family? Occasionally, during my seminars, I will tell Americans that the job is more important – and many will disagree with me. I will ask them if they have children. If they do, I ask them if they've ever had to choose between taking care of their sick child or going to work (perhaps due to an important "I have to be there" meeting, etc.) Many will reply "Yes" and about half will reply they stayed home with their child. It is surprising to many from other cultures (and some Americans!) that many will also respond that they would leave their sick child with a neighbor or, as one woman told me, "I gave him his medicine and then left him (a 9 yr old boy) the phone number for my office and another number for my neighbor – then I told my boss I could only work until 1 PM that day. These Americans understand that their job rarely understands there are other priorities outside the job – which we both know is ridiculous but often workers are penalized for not having a "backup" plan to handle a sick child. One woman told me her boss was upset with her missing work due to a child's illness and that "a sick child isn't unexpected" and that she should have planned for it.

I'm not saying it is right or wrong. It just is.

Often you will hear Americans refer to themselves as a “workaholic” – that is, an individual who is tightly focused their attention on work to the extent that nothing else matters. The American workaholic is an easily observable *Speciesamericanus*. Non-US visitors see them as “work junkies” sacrificing their lives, their family, all for the sake of their job demands.

**Dr. Culture Information Note:** A *junky* (*plural is junkies*) is slang for an intravenous drug (such as heroin) addict. Americans don’t “work in order to live” (although they’ll tell you that) but the truth is that most Americans indeed “live to work.” Don’t believe it? Ask your American friends if they’ve ever taken office paperwork with them on vacation. Don’t be surprised if they also take their laptop computers in order to retrieve their email messages, and continue to coordinate, handle and direct operations on the job while they’re relaxing “on vacation.”

And, speaking of vacations, American vacations are either (1) “go/do” ventures or (2) Einstein vacations.

(1) **GO/DO**-- **GO** to Disneyworld and **DO** as many amusement rides as possible in 4 days; **GO** to the Grand Canyon and **DO** the burro ride down to floor of canyon, **GO** to mountains and **DO** a whitewater rafting trip, etc.

(2) **EINSTEIN VACATIONS** – *Where everything is relatives.* This usually involves a lengthy car trip to a relative’s home where everyone sleeps on couches, floors, shares one bathroom, steps all over each other and is usually more stressful than anything found on the job. After completing an Einstein vacation it’s not surprising to hear Americans comment that they are delighted to be back at work where “they can relax.”



If I told another American that on my last vacation, I sat on the front porch, drank beer and threw the cans at passing semi trucks, they would be shocked – not that I was indulging in such bad behavior but that *for the entire vacation I did absolutely nothing!*

“You mean you did nothing? Really nothing? Zero?” would be their probable response.

Something else about our jobs: we use them to classify ourselves – although Americans will quickly tell you we live in a classless society. Overall most Americans truly believe this. However, the next time you’re socializing with a group of Americans, notice how many times you’re asked “What do you do?” or “Where do you work?” Observe what happens when Americans meet and greet each other for the first time. You’ll hear these same questions asked usually

within *the first 15-45 seconds!* This is how we classify each other; how we determine each other's probable economic position, determine status, etc.

### **Cultural Translation: What You Do is Who You Are.**

It's how we determine from which class the American comes.

We still have a bit more discussion on work: Americans are especially pleased to engage in physical labor. Don't be surprised to find your high-positioned American colleague, digging in the yard, planting flowers, working in the yard, washing his car, painting the house, etc. Could he afford to hire someone to do the work? Certainly, but we are compelled to attempt to "do it ourselves" and if, then, we cannot, we will grudgingly hire someone under the auspices of not having the time to do the work! This is especially true of the *Speciesamericanus-Male*. As discussed earlier, the higher up you are on the American societal scale, the more important it is to us to "be seen" doing volunteer work, helping at homeless kitchens, shelters, etc. I'm not questioned the sincerity to assist others. Americans are incredibly giving folks. But, during a recent seminar in the San Francisco area, I spoke with an upper-level manager who was a volunteer to help the homeless during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays in San Francisco. He was very excited about helping this season. This would be his first time working at the shelter. He had been on the volunteer waiting list and, he explained the waiting list to help at the "soup kitchen" on Thanksgiving or Christmas Day was over two years long! Oddly, for the remainder of the year there was no waiting list whatsoever!

It's not right or wrong. It just is....

## **9. Informality – The Direct Approach**

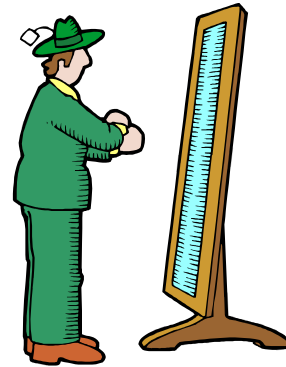
This is an area that provides great discomfort for many out-of-US visitors. Don't be surprised to hear Americans of power or position urge you to call them by their first names -- titles, positions, generally are discarded by those who own them. "Just call me Tom", "Just call me Bob" is not unusual. This is a difficult adjustment for those from cultures where formality, position, etc., is regularly acknowledged. As you know, even the language supports this with formal/informal verb usage. In today's US, there is simply no equivalent to this. Historically, "Thee" and "Thou" were used such as in "How for Art Thou?" Today, this has been replaced with Hey!, Yo!, Hi, Whatzup?, How are you?, as well as other versions between friends. **THIS IS IMPORTANT!** The position of the person you're speaking to is critical! You wouldn't normally go up to your "Big Boss" and say "Yo! Whatzup?" A more formal, "Good Morning", "Hello Mr. Jones", "Good Morning Ms Smith", "Hello Sir or Madam", etc., is proper.



A final comment on this issue of informal treatment of you: for those coming from cultures where rigid social formality is the norm, facing such informality in the US can be challenging. However, just the opposite is true from the American's eyes. Being of a high position but being treated informally, "just like family," is a great compliment. A bit of flexibility here will go a long way.

## **No Shirt, No Problem**

While in the US, you'll notice another area of great informality: the "American Dress Code." Overall, you'll be surprised to see how informal the Americans dress. Blue jeans and T-shirts seem to be the American uniform. And, many Americans will "dress down" because, they say, "it's comfortable." You will see all manners of dress (and undress) that will surely conflict with what your home culture feels is appropriate out-in-public attire. I remember a recent visit to a video store in Pensacola, Florida,



where the guy in front of me was dressed in short, *short* cut-off jeans, no shoes, no shirt, with a machete hanging from his belt. He had an armload of videos (I thought probably Rambo, Dirty Harry, Full Metal Jacket, etc.) and, well, who would criticize a guy like this? The clerk handled him courteously, complete with "have a nice day." When he turned around I saw the movies: Heidi, Pinocchio, Fantasia and a few other children's titles. He said to me, "Gotta do yardwork today while the kids watch TV."

OK...

My recommendation: dress conservatively/nicely and you'll be fine and probably better attired than most of your American colleagues.

Here is another area of great discomfort for most out-of-US visitors: Whereas many other cultures have a very sophisticated, indirect way of delivering criticism, bad news, etc., the Americans pride themselves in "telling it like it is" direct, and, as we say, "straight from the hip." There is no attempt at facesaving, no attempt to soften the impact of the news. This can be extremely difficult for many. There, however, are a few exceptions to this. Most Americans are very uncomfortable criticizing someone's clothing, hair, breath or body odor and will (they feel) suffer rather than say something. With these exceptions, generally, Americans will view an indirect approach as "beating around the bush" (a derogatory slang reference to someone's inability to get to the point). If it continues, you will be viewed (regardless of fairness) as bordering on dishonesty. Regrettably, this detracts from any trust or confidence on the part of the American. And, within your home culture, if an intermediary would

normally be used, the problem becomes worse in that you're viewed as someone who is afraid to "tell it like it is" face to face. The American view is: "Why bring someone else into this?"

## 10. Body Odor



If ever there was a "hot button" in the American culture it is this. Although you will certainly encounter Americans with unpleasant body odor, the vast majorities of Americans -- especially American women -- are very sensitive to this. You can best judge what tremendous emphasis the American culture places on cleanliness ("Cleanliness is next to Godliness") by visiting a large grocery or department store. Go to the Deodorant aisle and look at the number of underarm deodorants available! Don't bother counting because I already have. *We have over 80 different deodorant products – for the underarms alone!* By the time you add in mouthwash, perfumes, cologne for men, etc., the number of "smell good" products are well into the hundreds!

Americans usually shower minimum of once a day and if there is any physical activity (working out at the gym, etc.) then another shower is required. It's not unusual for most Americans to shower in the morning before they leave for work or class then shower following their noon workout and then if they are going out that evening, they'll shower once again. Why? Because they don't want to give offense. They must smell clean – at all times.

Not suprisingly, when this American comes in contact with someone who has powerful body odor -- offensive from the American perspective -- the American will avoid that person. There are two reasons for this: (1) They can't breathe -- the smell is so bad they must get away or (2) by standing next to this person, *other Americans might think that they have the body odor!*

My recommendation for dealing with the "Great American Nose" is to shower in the morning use a strong deodorant (I personally prefer Mitchum Deodorant) but keep your arms raised after application until it dries. If not, you'll spend the rest of the day with your armpits "cemented" to your body. And, gentlemen, use men's cologne every day – but not too

much. By doing these simple things (along with washing clothes regularly, etc.) you'll have no problem with this!