

The Stereotyped American

Americans are:

- Optimistic
- Outgoing, friendly
- Informal
- Loud, rude, boastful, immature
- Naïve
- Hardworking
- Aggressive
- Judgmental, moralistic
- Superficial
- Extravagant, wasteful
- Confident they have all the answers
- Politically naïve and/or uninformed
- Disrespectful of authority
- Wealthy
- Materialistic
- Generous
- Impatient, always in a hurry

It is also widely believed that:

- All American women are promiscuous

How many of the listed items are positive and how many are negative? Go through and put a check beside the positive ones and circle the negative ones.

Sometimes what we think are positive values or admirable characteristics may not be considered so by others. Which brings us to a fundamental point: Throughout the world there are many different ways of doing things, most of which are intrinsically neither better nor worse than our own. They are simply different.

One thing is certain: At some point when you are abroad, you will encounter these stereotypes and there will be those who will hold you *personally* responsible for them. It's very likely you will be called upon to answer some very pointed questions based on them.

Guidelines for Addressing These Stereotypes

1. Resist becoming angry or defensive.
2. Avoid fitting negative stereotypes.
3. Persist in being yourself.