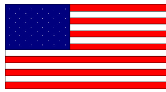


Who Is Responsible for Whom?

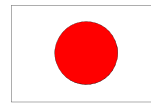
A Comparison Between Traditional American and Japanese Values



Values: In the U.S., the focus is on individual rights. The individual believes that he/she can do or be virtually anything desired, and that the group (community) must not object or get in the way.

Behaviors: The group is responsible for insuring that the individual is as happy as possible and encounters as few barriers as possible. If the individual is markedly different in traits or values, any complaints from group members might be labeled by the pejorative "discrimination." If problems get in the individual's way, he or she feels little personal responsibility and is quite capable of blaming and even suing a member of the group.

Result: Paradoxically, America's individualist culture promotes *denial* of responsibility by the individual. In short, *the group is responsible for the individual's fulfillment.*



Values: In Japan, the focus is on "collectivism" or "group rights." Harmony within the group is paramount, and the individual must not do or be anything that will disturb that harmony.

Behaviors: The individual is responsible for insuring that the group is functioning smoothly and encounters as few barriers as possible. If the individual is markedly different in traits or values, it is he or she who is violating group norms; complaints from group members are *not* labeled in any pejorative way. If problems get in the individual's way, it would not occur to him or her to blame or sue group members because the interests of the group prevail.

Result: Paradoxically, Japan's collectivist culture promotes *acceptance* of responsibility by the individual. In short, *the individual is responsible for the group's fulfillment.*