

Everyone is an ambassador for their native country

by Makito Yurita

Before studying in the United States, international students usually receive information about American characteristics and culture so that they will be better prepared for life in an American university. In addition, they attend special orientation programs that help them understand what is going on and how differently things work in America compared to their own countries. These orientation programs are designed to help international students become more familiar and comfortable with a new culture and way of life.

Unfortunately though, there are very few orientation programs that help American students understand, or become more familiar with, how to deal with incoming international students. This means that an American student may not be prepared to find unfamiliar accents and customs in his or her roommates or classmates. Though they are curious and interested in their international schoolmates, American students may often feel hesitant or unsure about how to communicate or befriend those from other countries.

Since coming to Penn State Harrisburg, I have heard many questions from American voices wondering how to approach or deal with international students, especially if it is the first time in their lives to meet "international bodies." Therefore, this is an opportune time to address some of those questions and curiosities to accelerate the cultural enrichment of Capital College.

Q: I want to ask my classmate about his home country, but I am worried that I'll ask questions he has probably heard many times before, or worse yet—something foolish. Do silly or redundantly asked questions bother international students?

A: No. Of course there are individual differences, but most international students are more than willing to share their viewpoints or cultural heritage with others. Remember that international students are little ambassadors of their countries. All international students want to learn from America, and share their country with America as well.

Q: I worry about talking with international students. What if I say or do something that

is inappropriate or offensive to them?

A: It is not necessary to worry so much about doing something wrong. Just use common sense and the Golden Rule: Do to others what you want done to you. Even if you mistakenly say or do something inappropriate, I believe international students will understand you are sorry, and will most likely even explain their different customs and culture. Learn from any misunderstandings caused by cultural differences. Mistakes are the greatest way for everyone to learn.

Q: Why are international students so quiet? Why don't they speak up?

A: I believe this does not apply to all international students. Yet, it is true that many international students tend to be quiet both in and outside of class. This reticence could be attributed to personality or cultural tendencies. However, their quietness is not always due to shyness or culture since many of them are very active and outgoing in their countries. Often they may just lack confidence in speaking, or are afraid that their English irritates native speakers.

All international students here have met the language requirements of Penn State. Thus, please communicate and encourage them to speak up. Once they do, they will gain confidence, and you may be surprised by all of the new ideas that come rushing out of their mouths.

I am sure these questions above are just a small portion of what curious American students wonder about international ones; there are dozens of unasked and unanswered questions out there. Remember that the only way to get a question answered is to ask one first. Also, keep in mind that not only are international students representatives of their homelands, but all American students are representatives of the U.S. as well.

As we are all ambassadors of our own countries, it is important to share and learn from one another. We should take advantage of this global atmosphere at Capital College to enrich our experiences and cultures. After all, the best orientation program to learn and understand people from other countries is firsthand experience.

Do or die: the seven habits of highly effective corpses

by Crispin Sartwell

For over three weeks, I've worked with all kinds of people: incredibly successful corporate executives, entrepreneurs, movie stars, sports heroes, politicians, even squirrels. What do all of these incredibly successful people have in common? Just two things: they are highly effective. And their lives are meaningless because they're going to end up dead. Using my studies of these future corpses, as well as my vast personal creativity and greed, I have been able to develop the following guide for post-life success.

(1) Be Proactive—Sure, you're a corpse. But that does not mean that you cannot control your environment. That is what

proactiveness is. Stop simply allowing things to happen and take charge! You know, our environment doesn't control us; we control our environment. Our basic nature is to act, not to be acted upon. Resolve today that you will not just lay there decomposing, but that you will take charge of your own decomposition. You are free to choose! You can create an effective presentation.

(2) Begin With the End in Mind—For a corpse, it's always already the end. Develop a personal mission statement. It should emerge from your paradigms, your maps, your vision, your values and stuff. Start with your general goals: perhaps you want to remain dead, for example, or perhaps you want

nothing at all. Whatever it is you want, you can't get it until you write it down. This may be hard for you since you're dead, but maybe someone could chisel it in stone for you.

(3) Put First Things First—Prioritize, prioritize, prioritize. Don't sweat the small stuff. Organize. Execute. Be executed. Buy a whole bunch of books that consist of nothing but brainless cliches and incomprehensible manglings of our beloved mother tongue. Start with my books. Now mutter these cliches and manglings to yourself at all times. There! Perhaps you are alive in the technical, medical sense. But in the deepest, most spiritual sense you're dead.

(4) Think Win/Win—When everyone

wins, everyone is happy. Don't be dependent, or independent, but interdependent. You're dead. Death is not a competition! We can all be dead together, and eventually we will be. Death is abundant; there's plenty of it for everyone.

(5) Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood—It's hard for a corpse to be understood. Sure, there are Ouija Boards and trance channelers, but that went out in the eighties. Today's highly successful corpse is receptive and perceptive and a good listener. I noticed that corpses who achieve excellence rarely interrupt. That's the essence of empathic telecommunications, and that's why everyone likes to talk to a corpse.

(6) Synergize—No corpse worth cremating fails to synergize. When things reach that critical mass, it's like a nuclear meltdown. And when there's a nuclear meltdown, there are many new corpses. See how everything builds on everything else? That's what I mean by synergy. Get rid of your dichotomous either/or mentality. This should be possible to execute because your mentality has been entirely extinguished, if not by death itself then by reading the stuff I write.

(7) Sharpen that Saw—You can be chopped up into little pieces and you will feel nothing! So donate your organs to medicine. With this habit, we can all proactively execute a win/win paradigm shift.

I leave you with this highly effective eulogy: Remember, the way you see a problem like death is the problem. Don't let a little thing like the fact that you are dead affect your production/production capability balance. Because when there is no production capability, there is no production. Voila! Balance. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said at the funeral of his best friend Henry David Thoreau: "There's nothing more irritating than a corpse without a paradigm."

We are all prisoners of freedom at PSH

by Dr. John Bruhn
For the CapTimes

The older I get the more confused I become about the paradox of living in a society that prides itself collectively in advocating so many individual freedoms, while simultaneously preventing individuals from being themselves. The more experience I have in universities and colleges, institutions whose ideals advocate tolerance, understanding and sensitivity, the more I become embarrassed by how inhumane citizens of higher education can be.

No one ever said everyone would live together in peace in a world of increasing diversity, but there is a general expectation that individuals can be themselves, at least in democratic societies. Diversity does not ask much — only that we recognize that we are all unique persons. We each have a right to live our lives in peace and to realize ourselves



and our potential, experiencing the opportunities and problems that accompany life. Diversity does not force anyone to be something or do something that they don't want to. It merely means that we each should treat others how we would like to be treated, and with the respect we deserve.

When an individual makes a move to overtly or covertly make someone else less human or less dignified than themselves, he or she has degraded his or her own self. When a person, by the dark of night, or during a private, secret moment, defaces a poster, writes inflammatory slogans in restrooms or halls or puts down another person because of who they are, they have put down themselves. While we may never know who such degenerates are, the fact remains that they must live with who they are. Yet, if we know anyone responsible for such deeds we are equally culpable when we remain silent.

I have repeatedly been an advocate for professionalism, diversity and civility during my three years at Penn State Harrisburg. As the

primary leader at Penn State Harrisburg I can only be a voice of reason and try to model what I preach. Not everyone listens, or cares. I feel enough people don't care, or by their silence convey their endorsement of the behavior of the very small minority.

I don't know why more people don't care. Even as a student of sociology, it escapes me. How do we create a healthy environment when so many remain silent. We become prisoners to the negative, destructive and uncaring few.

We have become prisoners of our own freedom at Penn State Harrisburg! It is time that each of us speaks up and helps to shape an environment that we can be proud of, that we can encourage others to join. Let's become socially responsible and accountable and no longer tolerate the prejudice and inhumanity of the few who make everyone look bad. Let's free ourselves from prison by our conviction and when we can, by our action. Only then can we practice the freedoms we talk about as being important in our society.