**Ethnocentrism**

People often make judgments about other cultures according to the customs and values of their own, a practice sociologist call ethnocentrism. For example, an American might treat an immigrant with hostility when their manners, eating habits, apparel, or religious beliefs differ considerably from those of their new neighbors. This can often lead to prejudice and discrimination.

Unfortunately, as an American, I’ve witnessed large amounts of ethnocentrism. Many people in this world often judge others because of their beliefs being different than ours. I admit that I am guilty of this as well. For example, my boyfriend has a friend named Luc who is from Guadeloupe. Luc came to Florida to further his education. My boyfriend met him at University of South Florida, and oddly enough, the two of them also lived in the same apartment complex. Luc could understand and speak English to the best of his ability; however, I had difficulty understanding him at first. My first impression of Luc was, “Man this guy is a mess!” He dressed like he lived in the islands, he talked funny, he smelled bad because he didn’t know to wear deodorant, and frankly because he was so different, I was surprised my boyfriend was such good friends with him.

As I got to know Luc better, I found that he is a really nice guy. Actually, Luc became one of my close friends who I’ve often invited into my home. My boyfriend decided to mention the word “deodorant” to him one day, and I was shocked. I could not believe he did that. My boyfriend assured me that he didn’t hurt Luc’s feelings. He said he was very polite about it, and Luc wasn’t offended. So that solved that problem!
Consequently, if my boyfriend hadn’t been friends with this guy, I would have let my judgmental behavior treat him with disrespect, and I would’ve missed out on a great friendship. Americans need to try harder to avoid ethnocentrism, and give people from different cultural backgrounds a fair chance. In my own experience, I discovered an extremely unique person. (346 words)