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Learning objectives

UNIT

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the East-West cultural differences in emotional well-being;
- explain why ancient Chinese philosophy is popular in Harvard;
- talk about the similarities and differences between Eastern and Western ways of thinking.

Everything you can imagine is real. — Pablo Picasso (1881–1973, painter)

Warm-up

 $(\mathbf{1})$

Step

(2)

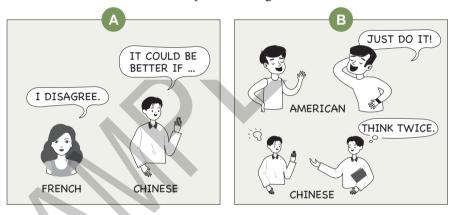
Step

(3)

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Step Talking about the pictures

Look at the following two pictures and try to talk about the differences between Chinese and Western ways of thinking.



Brainstorming

Besides what is shown in the above two pictures, can you think of any other differences between Chinese and Western ways of thinking? You may illustrate them from the following aspects.

Aspects	Chinese	Western
Ways of communication	Indirect	Direct
Attitudes toward risk and challenge		
Attitudes toward uncertainty		
Attitudes toward hierarchy		
Teamwork styles		

Sharing your ideas

How do you understand the saying "Ways of thinking define our ways of living."?

Culture reading

East-West cultural differences in depression

- Strategies for coping with negative moods

cope with 应付;对付 disorder /dɪs'ɔ:də/ n. 失调;疾病 prevalence /'prevələns/ n. 患病率;流行 likewise /'laıkwaız/ ad. 同样地;相似地

Reading

Anxiety and mood **disorders** are much less common in China than in the United States. In this country, the lifetime **prevalence** of anxiety disorders is nearly 30 percent but only five percent in China. **Likewise**, about 20 percent of Americans will experience a major depressive disorder at some time in their lives, but for their Chinese counterparts, it's only two percent.

Some researchers propose that cultural differences in emotional disorders are due to the way Easterners and Westerners think about and respond to emotions.

analytical /,ænə'lɪtɪkl/ a. 分析的;用分析方法的 holistic /həʊ'lɪstɪk/ a. 整体(论)的;全面的

incidence /'InsId(ə)ns/ n. 发生率 give rise to 引起 likelihood /'laıklihud/ n. 可能(性) setback /'set,bæk/ n. 挫折; 阻碍

mutually /'mju:t∫uəli/ ad. 相互地;彼此地 exclusive /ɪk'sklu:sɪv/ a. 排斥的; 排他的 Over the past several decades, cross-cultural psychologists have documented fundamental differences in the world view between Eastern and Western cultures. Westerners approach the world from an **analytical** perspective. In contrast, people in Eastern cultures tend to view the world in a **holistic** fashion.

If the incidence of emotional disorders is so much lower in Asia, De Vaus, an Australian psychologist, and her colleagues argue, we may be able to learn some effective coping strategies by studying how Asians deal with negative emotions. In their research, they found three ways of thinking about emotions that are different between Eastern and Western cultures. These ways of thinking then give rise to particular responses that reduce the likelihood that setbacks in life will lead to depression or anxiety.

• Emotions co-occur. Westerners tend to view happiness and sadness as opposites and therefore as **mutually exclusive**. In their pursuit of happiness, they avoid sad feelings at all costs, believing these will

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harm their well-being. Easterners, however, are open to experiencing **contradictory** emotions at the same time. There's always some sadness on any happy occasion, and some happiness can be found even in the darkest times. Thus, negative experiences are less threatening because they don't **preclude** happy feelings.

- Emotions change. Westerners tend to think of emotions as arising from a stable self. If I think of myself as a happy person, then I need to discount any negative experiences as anomalies not really part of who I am. Likewise, those who suffer from depression often think that's the way they'll always feel. Easterners, in contrast, view emotions as well as the self as constantly changing. Thus, negative experiences are less threatening because they're only temporary.
- Emotions arise from context. Unlike Westerners, who view emotions as arising from within themselves, Easterners see emotions as emerging from the situation they're in. This means that moods can be changed by **altering** the context, in particular by **aligning** thoughts and behaviors with the expectations of their social groups. By distancing themselves from

well-being /,wel 'bi:m/ n. 舒适;健康;幸福 contradictory /,kontrə'dıkt(ə)ri/ a. 矛盾的;抵触的 preclude /prɪ'klu:d/ vt. 阻止;妨碍

alter /'ɔːltə/ v.改变;更改 align /ə'laɪn/ v.使一致

Unit 2 Thinking matters

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their emotions, Easterners are better at managing them. Thus, negative experiences are less threatening because there's something you can do about them.

rumination /,ru:mi'neifn/
n. 沉思5De Vaus and her colleagues then consider how these cultural differences
in ways of thinking about emotions impact two common behaviors that
people engage in when they're feeling sad — suppression and rumination.
Westerners often try to cope with negative moods by pushing them out of
mind. But suppressing bad feelings in this way usually backfires, increasing
the likelihood of sinking into depression.

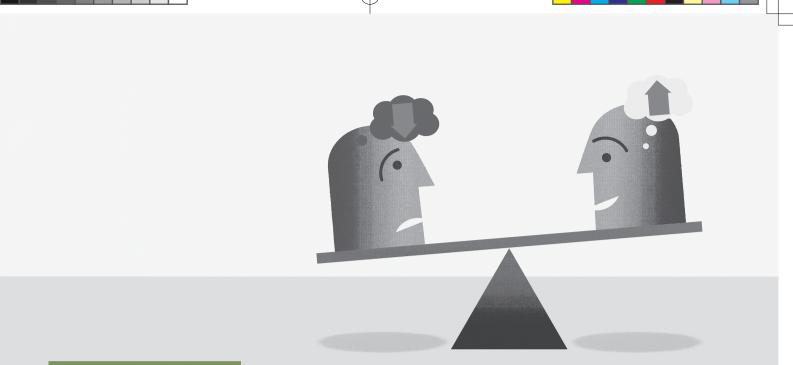
⁶ Easterners also suppress negative emotions, but in a different way. Although they feel bad, they try not to show it because they don't want to affect other people. The result of this is that when Asians feel sad they remain socially engaged, which generally boosts their mood.

tendency /'tendənsi/
n. 倾向7When we're sad, we also have a tendency to focus our thoughts on our
feelings. Westerners tend to ruminate about their negative emotions by
thinking: "What's wrong with me?" In contrast, Easterners are more likely
to think: "What's wrong with the situation?" Thus, while ruminating leadsvicious cycle 恶性循环Westerners into a vicious cycle of negative thoughts about themselves, the
same process leads Asians to seek solutions to their problems.

8 As we consider cross-cultural differences, it's important not to think of one world view as superior. On the one hand, the Western world view — analytical and independent — leads to high levels of subjective well-being for most people, but at the expense of greatly increased risk of anxiety and depression. On the other hand, the Eastern world view — holistic and interdependent — provides protection from emotional disorders, but it also reduces overall levels of happiness.

captive /ˈkæptɪv/
 9 You aren't a captive of your culture. By learning how others view the world, you can selectively adopt world views to your benefit. When you're feeling blue, try taking a holistic perspective. Remind yourself that bad times eventually give way to good times. And keep in mind that your moods are telling you something about your current situation. Start focusing on how to change the situation, and you're well on your way to feeling much better about yourself.

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Language focus

Complete the sentences with suitable words and phrases from the box. Change the form where necessary.

alt	er analytical	cope with	disorder	give rise to	
		-		0	
no	listic prevalence	suppress	tendency	well-being	
1.	thinkers have the	he ability to de	al with complicated is	ssues by evaluating	
	the information they've gathered and organized.				
2.	After two years of treatment, my friend Ann was able to control her emotional				
	··				
3.	thinking is the ability to see things as a whole and to understand the				
	relationships between many eleme	nts in a comple	x system.		
4.	Negative thinking patterns are a common concern. It's important to learn to				
	your thinking a	and think positi	vely.		
5.	There is a(n) th	hat Westerners	like to share their thou	ughts while	
	Easterners like to keep their though	hts to themselv	es.		
6.	Much research shows that the		of emotional problen	ns among young	
	children is increasing.		-		
7.	Studies have discovered that peopl	e with higher r	osvchological	are	
	more likely to live healthier and lo				
8.	Scientists find that when we try to	•	emotions it can	he dangerous to	
0.	our physical and mental health.			be daligerous to	
0		aanf	ist on other anoticnal	diff cultica you	
9.	If you have no ability to	conn	ict or other emotional	difficulties, you	
	may find it hard to get happiness.				
10.	Negative thinking	the feelings	s of hopelessness and	despair that are	
	typical of depression.				

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Global understanding

Read the passage and complete the research report with information from the passage.

	Research report
0	Research question: Why are anxiety and mood disorders 1) in China than in the United States?
0	Previous research: Some researchers suggest that cultural differences in emotional disorders are due to different ways of thinking about and responding to emotions.
0	Research purpose: To learn some effective strategies for dealing with 2) from Asians.
0	Research findings: • Three ways of thinking about emotions differ between Eastern and Western cultures: 3) ;; 4) ;; 5)
0	 Research conclusion: No world view is 8) than another. The Western world view leads to high levels of 9) but increases the risk of anxiety and depression. The Eastern world view provides protection from 10) while reducing overall levels of happiness.

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Detailed understanding

Read the passage again and match the information in the following three columns.

Westerners

- Easterners
- A. Push negative feelings out of mind.
- B. Remain socially engaged.
- C. Think: "What's wrong with the situation?"
- D. Think: "What's wrong with me?"
- a. They will get into a vicious cycle of negative thoughts about themselves.
- b. They begin to seek solutions to their problems.
- c. Their mood will be boosted.
- d. They are more likely to sink into depression.

Culture thinking

Work in groups and discuss the following questions.

- 1. In the passage, the author maintains that Westerners tend to approach the world from an analytical perspective, while Easterners in a holistic fashion. How do you usually deal with negative feelings, for instance, when you fail an important test? Judging from the way you deal with emotional problems, do you consider yourself an analytical thinker or a holistic thinker?
- 2. What do you think of the research findings in the passage? Choose one research finding and explain why you agree or disagree with it.
- 3. The author reminds the reader that "As we consider cross-cultural differences, it's important not to think of one world view as superior." What can Westerners and Easterners learn from each other about how to cope with negative emotions?





Why are hundreds of Harvard students studying ancient Chinese philosophy?

classical /'klæsıkl/ a. 经典的;古典的 ethical /'eθıkl/ a. 伦理的;道德的 narcissism /'nɑːsɪ,sız(ə)m/ n. 自恋;自我陶醉 harmoniously /hɑː'məʊnɪəsli/ ad. 友好和睦地;和谐地 rapt /ræpt/ a. 全神贯注的;专心致志的 semester /sə'mestə/ n. (尤指美国中学和大学的) —一学期

The professor who teaches *Classical* Chinese *Ethical* and Political Theory claims, "This course will change your life."

- Picture a world where human relationships are challenging, narcissism and self-centeredness are on the rise, and there is disagreement on the best way for people to live harmoniously together. The society that Michael Puett, a professor of Chinese history at Harvard University, is describing to more than 700 rapt students is China, 2,500 years ago.
- ² Why are so many students spending a **semester** trying to understand profound Chinese philosophy by scholars who lived thousands of years

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ago? For one thing, the class fulfills one of Harvard's more challenging core requirements, Ethical Reasoning. It's clear, though, that students are also attracted by Puett's promise: "This course will change your life."

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- ³ His students tell me it is true: Puett uses Chinese philosophy as a way to give students **concrete**, **counterintuitive**, and even **revolutionary** ideas, which teach them how to live a better life. Puett requires his students to closely read original texts (in translation) such as *The Analects of Confucius*, *Mencius*, and *Tao Te Ching* and then actively put the teachings into practice in their daily lives. His lectures use Chinese thoughts in the context of contemporary American life to help 18- and 19-year-olds who are struggling to find their place in the world figure out how to be good human beings, how to create a good society, and how to have a flourishing life.
- Puett began offering his course to introduce his students not just to a completely different cultural world view but also to a different set of tools. A recent report shows a steep decline over the last decade in the number of Harvard students who are choosing to major in the humanities. Finance remains the most popular career for Harvard graduates. Puett sees students who orient all their courses and even their extracurricular activities toward practical, predetermined career goals and plans.
- ⁵ Puett tells his students that being **calculating** and **rationally** deciding on plans is precisely the wrong way to make any sort of important life decision. The Chinese philosophers they are reading would say that this strategy makes it harder to remain open to other possibilities that don't fit into that plan. He aims to open his students' eyes to a different way to approach everything from relationships to career decisions. He teaches them that:
- 6 The smallest actions have the most profound consequences. Confucius, Mencius, and other Chinese philosophers taught that the most mundane actions can have a **ripple effect**, and Puett urges his students to notice how even the most ordinary acts — smiling at the grocery clerk — change the course of the day by affecting how we feel.

concrete /'koŋkri:t/
a. 具体的
counterintuitive
/,kaont(ə)rın'tju:ıtıv/
a. 反直觉的
revolutionary
/,revə'lu:∫n(ə)ri/
a. 革命性的;突破性的;
创新的

extracurricular / ekstrəkə'rıkjulə/ a. 课外的

calculating /'kælkjʊ,leɪtɪŋ/ a. 精于算计的 **rationally** /'**r**æ∫n(ə)li/ ad. 理性地; 合理地

ripple effect 连锁反应

fraction /'fræk∫n/ n. 一点;少量 elicit /ɪ'lɪsɪt/ vt. 引起(某人的反应) 7

inextricably /,InIk'strIkəbli/ ad.紧密相连地; 密不可分地 spontaneous /spon'teIniəs/ a.自发的;自然而生的

> **radical** /'**rædıkl**/ a. 前卫的;激进的

yearning /'jɜːnɪŋ/ n. 渴望; 向往

pros and cons 利与弊

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sophomore /'sɒfə,mɔː/ *n*. (大学或高中的) 二年级学生 According to one psychology professor at Yale, if we see a happy face for just a **fraction** of a second, that's long enough to **elicit** a mini emotional high. In one study, viewers who were flashed a smile — even though it was shown too quickly for them to even realize they had seen it — perceived the things around them more positively.

⁸ Decisions are made from the heart. Americans tend to believe that humans are rational creatures who make decisions logically, using our brains. But in Chinese, the word for "mind" and "heart" are the same. Puett teaches that the heart and the mind are **inextricably** linked, and that one does not exist without the other. Whenever we make decisions, we will make better ones when we integrate heart and mind to blend our rational and emotional sides into one. Zhuangzi, a Taoist philosopher, taught that we should train ourselves to become "**spontaneous**" through daily living, rather than closing ourselves off through what we think of as rational decision-making.

To be interconnected, focus on mundane, everyday practices, and understand that great things begin with the very smallest of acts are **radical** ideas for young people living in a society that pressures them to think big and achieve individual excellence. This might be one reason why interest in Chinese philosophy is taking off around the nation — not just at Harvard. And it's a message that especially echoes those **yearnings** for an alternative to the fast track they have been on all their lives.

One of Puett's former students, Adam Mitchell, told me, "We're expected to think of our future in this rational way: to add up the **pros and cons** and then make a decision. That leads you down the road of 'Stick with what you're good at'" — a road with little risk but little reward. But after Puett's introduction to Chinese philosophy during his **sophomore** year, he realized this wasn't the only way to think about the future. Instead, he tried courses he was drawn to but wasn't naturally good at because he had learned how much value lies in working hard to become better at what you love. He became more aware of the way he was affected by those around him, and how they were affected by his own actions in turn. He told me, "I can happily say that Professor Puett has lived up to his promise, and that the course did in fact change my life."

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Language focus

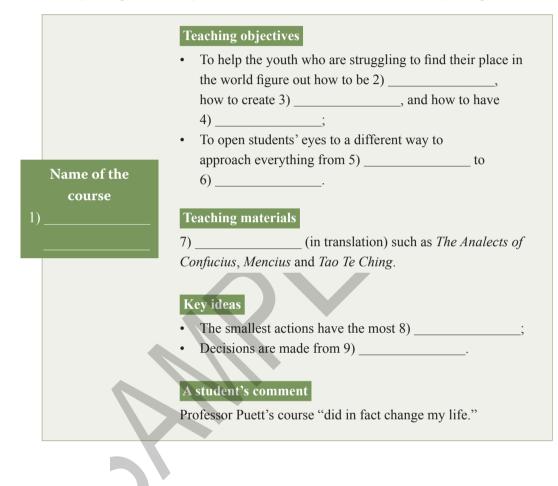
Complete the sentences with suitable words and phrases from the box. Change the form where necessary.

elicit	ethical	pros and cons	revolutionary
ripple effect	semester	spontaneous	yearning

- 1. The ______ to access the deep wisdom of the East brought many foreign students to Asia.
- 2. The ______ thoughts of Confucius on good behavior and moral characters have influenced generations of people.
- 3. Negative thinking not only ______ poor mental health, but can also lead to a cycle of negativity.
- 4. The new professor introduced _______ techniques in the teaching of critical thinking.
- 5. The book explains the ______ of creative thinking and its influence on our life and work.
- 6. Taoism holds that life is a series of natural and _____ changes and just let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.
- The mind is just like the pond. When you start thinking a certain way, a series of thoughts create a(n) ______.
- 8. In the next _____, our university is going to introduce several lectures that are related to ancient Chinese philosophy.

Global understanding

Read the passage and complete the chart with information from the passage.



Detailed understanding

Read the passage again and choose the best answer to the questions.

- 1. Why are so many Harvard students learning Chinese philosophy?
 - A. They want to improve their Chinese by taking the course.
 - B. Professor Puett is one of the most popular teachers in the university.
 - C. More and more Harvard students become interested in Chinese culture.
 - D. Professor Puett promises students that the course will change their lives.
- 2. Which of the following statements is TRUE according to a recent report about students' course and career preferences at Harvard?
 - A. More and more Harvard students are majoring in the humanities.
 - B. The most popular career for Harvard students is finance.

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- C. Professor Puett encourages students to rationally decide on their career goals.
- D. The number of Harvard students who orient all their courses toward practical career goals is in decline.
- 3. What did the study in Para. 7 try to prove?
 - A. Even a fleeting smile could elicit a mini emotional high in the viewers.
 - B. The viewers couldn't realize they had seen the smile if it was flashed to them quickly.
 - C. People would hold a more positive view toward the things around them if they smiled for a little time.
 - D. A smile for just a fraction of a second wouldn't have any influence on the feelings of the viewers.
- 4. According to Professor Puett, how should people use their heart and mind when they make decisions?
 - A. Decisions are the spontaneous overflow of emotions.
 - B. People should try to avoid emotional factors in decision-making.
 - C. People should use their heart to make logical and rational decisions.
 - D. People should combine heart and mind in decision-making.
- 5. What do you learn from what Adam Mitchell said?
 - A. People should always weigh the pros and cons before making a decision.
 - B. Sticking with what you are good at is less risky and more rewarding.
 - C. To become better at what you love through great efforts is a more valuable experience.
 - D. People should make career decisions according to what they are good at.

Culture thinking

1. In the passage, Professor Puett teaches his students that "The smallest actions have the most profound consequences." What other examples can you find from Chinese proverbs, idioms, classic works, etc. to support his point? The following is an example. Read the example and make a list of small things you will do daily to improve yourself.

勿以恶小而为之,勿以善小而不为。	
——《三国志》	
Do not do evil things though they may be insignificant; do not give up	
good things though they may be minor matters.	
— Records of the Three Kingdoms	

2. In the passage, Professor Puett suggests that "Decisions are made from the heart." Do you agree with him? Should we listen to our heart or our mind when we make decisions?



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Culture mosaic



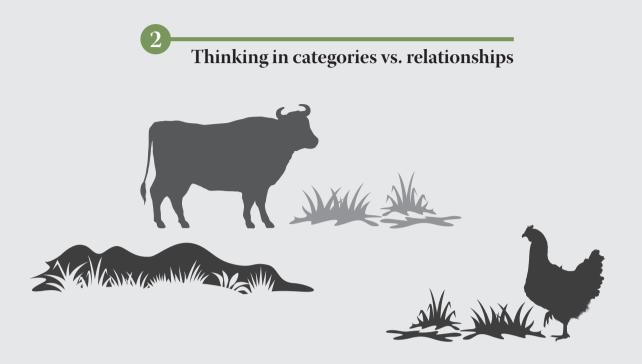


The Eastern dialectical way of thinking reflects the deep influence of ancient Chinese philosophy — Tao. Yin (the female principle, which is inactive, dark and negative) alternates with yang (the male principle, which is active, light and positive). Indeed, yin and yang coexist harmoniously, perfectly representing Eastern "paradoxical thinking" — everything is partly composed of its opposite. The founder of Taoism, Laozi, once said: "When the people of the Earth all know beauty as beauty, there arises the recognition of ugliness; when they know the good as good, there arises the recognition of evil. Therefore, being and non-being produce each other."

The yin and yang theory expresses the relationship that exists between opposing but interconnected forces that may complete each other, make each other understandable, or create the conditions for one to change into the other.

Task

What can be explained by yin and yang? Please give some examples. You may find examples from the phenomena in your daily life: happiness and misfortune, success and failure, etc.



Which choice best matches with the "bull" in the above picture, the "chicken" or "grass"?

Most Americans chose "chicken" as the best match for the "bull," since both were seen as part of the same category — "animals." However, most Asians chose "grass" as the best match for the "bull," because they were looking at it in terms of the relationship — "The bull eats grass."

This again illustrates how Westerners focus more on objects, properties, and categories, while Easterners focus more on relationships, context, and environment. According to Richard E. Nisbett, a professor of psychology, Westerners are more likely to mentally group things together in terms of "categories" while Easterners are more likely to mentally group things together in terms of "relationships."

Neither perspective is right or wrong, because each gives us a different lens to look at the world and interpret it. One perspective is more analytical, while the other is more holistic. Each can lead us down a different path of thinking about the world.

Task

Which will you choose to match with the "bull," "grass" or the "chicken"? What do you think of the research finding mentioned above? Is it overgeneralized? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the two thinking patterns: thinking in categories and thinking in relationships?

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Similarities between Eastern and Western ways of thinking

The British poet Joseph Rudyard Kipling said in his poem: "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet ..." Eastern and Western ways of thinking, however, present similar issues when it comes to the idea of the state of being a human being. Both philosophies have the goal of finding out the meaning and purpose in life.

One illustration is the focus on Confucius and Aristotle who discuss same basic concepts. Both philosophers state that the highest goal human beings can strive to achieve is virtue. They further discuss that lasting rewards come to one who considers virtue before the possessions of the world.

Another is innate morality. Two philosophers Plato and Wang Yangming discuss this fundamental topic. They argue that there exists innate knowledge for all human beings. The philosophers state that all human beings are born with the ability to tell apart right from wrong and good from bad. Therefore, people should only be encouraged to follow goodness so that they can live a better and fulfilling life.

Task Besides the examples used in the above passage, brainstorm more examples to illustrate the similarities between Eastern and Western ways of thinking. The following sentences and phrases are given for your reference.

Eastern ・ 三个具皮匠,顶个诸葛 ・ 居安思危

Western

Two heads are better than one. <u>The sword of Damo</u>cles



Unit 2 Thinking matters

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