

Communication between cultures in the USA

C: Hi Maria! Welcome back! How are you today?

M: Hi Carla! I'm great. How are you doing?

C: Yeah. I'm good. I wondered if I could ask you about migration within the US. I have read that people in the US move quite frequently, much more than people in Europe.

M: Yeah, you know what. That's true! I moved from California to Colorado, to New York, back to Colorado, now I'm in Norway, I lived in Spain. That's really true.

C: Wow, you do move a lot.

M: Yeah, that's normal.

C: Cool! So, let's talk about migration within the US.

M: Ok.

C: Thank you.

C: So when you moved to Colorado, what was it like to move from, you know, sunny, warm, well, not so warm, you grew up in the mountains, California to Colorado? Was it kind of shock?

M: It was, more because of my background than anything else. So, in Colorado, they have a neutral accent, which is the accent I'm speaking now. California and Colorado is considered neutral. Brooklyn, where they talk like this, is not neutral. It's marked. And so, I came already with a neutral accent. But the way I speak, as fast as I speak, and as direct I am, that's different than Coloradans. So, I'll have people say to me, you're so direct. And to me, I'm like, what? I just told you your sweater is nicer. You know, I don't, I don't see it. So, there's a difference.

C: But that goes back to your Brooklyn background.

M: Yeah, definitely.

C: I understand.

M: And I'm lucky because I work in a place where there's a lot of people from New York and Boston, back east. So, they understand that. But then there's people who aren't who, I work with people who are native Coloradans. They don't understand that speech pattern. And the interrupting, you know, constantly.

C: I understand. So, I suppose Colorado people have a different way? What's common? What's their strategy in communication?

M: So again, this is hard to answer, right? Because Colorado has a lot of different cultures. And Colorado used to be Mexico. So, we have a lot of people from Mexican descent as well. So, it's hard to say. There's a lot of bilingual people and bicultural people. And so, I speak Spanish and English. So, in Colorado, I could spend my day speaking Spanish, if I wanted to. I can go places where everybody speaks Spanish. In the town where I live in Colorado, it's half Hispanic, half white, half English speaking. So, I could walk around speaking Spanish all day if I wanted to. And those are two different cultures. So, it just depends on who I'm talking to. So, you know, I work with people from all over the world. So, it depends. If they're native Coloradans, they're the ones that notice I communicate differently. But if I'm talking to someone from Colombia or Venezuela, they don't have a problem with it. So, it just depends.

C: It's fascinating, this, yeah, all these...

M: Multilingual.

C: Mixing cultures. It's actually quite fun. But I suppose also it's a really complex society with so many, like, variations and different opinions, different influences.

M: That's why it's hard, I know, speaking politics is very difficult because people are so different in what they believe. And, you know, with the election, some people wanted the new president and some people didn't. And it caused a lot of polarization.

C: I can imagine that.

M: Beliefs are just all over the place.

C: Well, thank you for talking to me about this. This is fascinating. And I'm sure we will talk about it again.

M: That would be super fun.