

[Home](#)
[Sections](#)
[About](#)
[Contact](#)

[RSS Feeds](#)
[Advertise](#)

Enter Search Keyword

Emotional differences

 By Dr. Douglas Berger, M.D., Ph D. | [ASK THE EXPERT](#)


Question

I come from a Latin family where being demonstrative is part of an expression of affections. Growing up, "Good morning", "Hello", and "Goodbye" were expressed with an embrace, kiss, or hug. My wife, being Japanese, had not been exposed to such an environment and therefore has indirectly influenced our kids, 6 and 8, who think showing affection by hugs and kisses is funny. I am extremely concerned that my children are slowly falling into this unhealthy pattern. How can I get my children to learn early that showing affection is a normal demonstration of parental love?

This is a common issue with Western-Japanese couples. First, you need to adjust your expectations with your wife and try to see the subtle expressions of love and care that the Japanese show to each other. Related to this, you need to come to some acceptance of your choices in relationships that don't fit completely with what you are familiar with.

That being said, you can show your kids the way you express affection and try to have them have as much experience with people in your culture, i.e. have them study abroad or spend summers with your family in your country of origin, etc.

It is clearly important to be magnanimous in cross-cultural relationships. Learning to speak Japanese may be one way to get into the mindset of the local people. Often, however, these issues result in power struggles between the spouses on how to raise the kids; the more stubborn each party is, the greater the risk of a fractured family. Reserve your battle-readiness for really important issues that revolve around serious life choices: Where to live, work, and large financial expenditures, etc.

If you feel that you just can't accept a compromise or if the situation irritates you too much, then you might want to enter into couples or individual psychotherapy where you can discuss your feelings and delve into your personality with a professional.

Doug Berger, M.D., Ph.D

The Meguro Counseling Center provides mental health care for individuals, couples, and families, in both English and Japanese.

www.megurocounseling.com

The discussions herein are meant as general information and advice only. Each person needs to make their own personal life decisions and to contact a mental health professional for consultation if deemed appropriate.

Become a Parent Coach Today!


 The Academy
for Coaching
Parents

Unique Japan

Discover a treasure trove of meaningful gifts crafted with pride in Japan.

Shop online: www.uniquejapan.com

Where modern life meets tradition. **UNIQUE JAPAN**