

You ask You answer

This column is for readers who have questions but don't know who to ask for answers.

"You Ask—You Answer" is for non-cooking questions. When a reader sends in a question, it will be printed in the paper. Readers who know the answer are asked to respond by mailing the answer, which will then be printed in the paper.

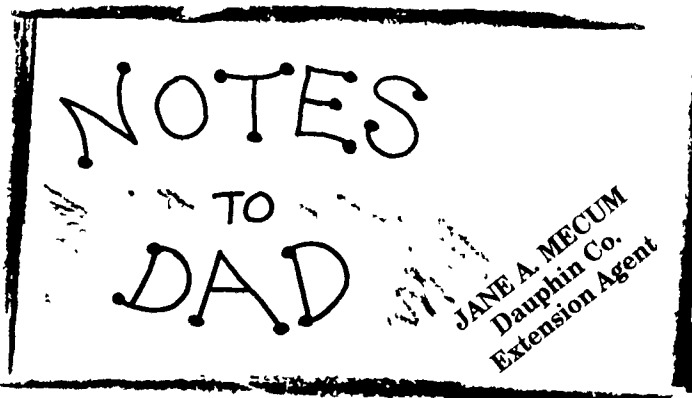
Questions and Answers to this column should be addressed to You Ask—You Answer, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522. Attention: Lou Ann Good.

Do not send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a reply. If we receive the answer, we will publish it as soon as possible. Please include your phone number because we sometimes need to contact the person to clarify details. We will not publish your phone number unless you request it.

QUESTION — Melvin Long, Whitehall, Md., wants a repair manual for a 12V battery charger.

QUESTION — E.M. Snyder, Red Lion, would like to know how to keep deer out of the truck patch.

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Blending Cultural: A Dad's Perspective on Bring Up a Daughter in America

Ask most fathers and you will find that raising a daughter is a different challenge than raising sons. But what is the impact when two different cultural marry and begin the challenge of raising children?

To answer that question, I asked a co-worker, David Tang to help me understand how culture plays a role in parenting.

David is from Thailand with Chinese ancestors. He arrived in America in 1987 at the age of 37 and is married to Elizabeth, an American citizen. David became a naturalized citizen in 1993

and works in Dauphin County as an urban youth agent. He and Elizabeth have two beautiful, talented daughters - Sara, age 11 and Anna, age 9

It is easy to assume that there are differences between the Chinese/Thai and American cultural. The real questions are what are the largest differences and similarities faced in parenting?

David explains that expectations can be quite different.

1 He was expected to marry a Chinese! This would bring honor and status to the family. As an American he doesn't plan to limit his girls in their choice of future partners. No arranged marriages either.

2 Education is highly honored, more for sons than daughters, and children are sent away to a boarding school often many miles away from the nucleus family. David has high hopes that his girls will attend an institution of higher learning, but neither Elizabeth nor David could imagine sending their young girls away to a distant school.

3. The labor laws are very lax in Thailand. David began working at the age of six selling pop-sicles. Working was an important value in his family. David still has the value of hard work, but his girls do not work outside the home; however they do have chores and are given small allowances to spend. He views this as teaching money management.

4. As a young boy it was an honor to do chores for no reward for their elders. In America, David observes that this prac-

tice isn't always the case. He finds that young people often expect a reward for helping others. He tries to instill the attitude that families help one another and friends without any expectations.

When asked what similarities he saw between the cultural, David had to give great thought to the question. He felt that both cultural expect that children will exceed their parents in work, education, and social status. Also, that children are encouraged to reach their potential. And finally, that values are passed on to their children. The emphasis on various values may differ, but the basic values of family, education, hard work and faith are the same.

When asked what difference involves discipline, David was quick to point out that corporal punishment was enforced when he was a young boy, but was done in the aspect of love and not anger. In his family today, David practices positive reinforcement rather than an harsh methods. Teaching respect is an important aspect in his discipline. If children respect themselves, they will respect others as well.

Most fathers have a long list of fears when it comes to raising daughters, but with a smile David quickly said none! His wife has more fears than he does. David's philosophy is that you cannot predict the future for your children. He believes that if you give them a firm foundation, children will be fine! That certainly must be an eastern point of view. Americans often have many more guilt feelings and worry over most every aspect of their children's lives.

In summary, I concluded that culture does not play a role in parenting when it comes to which values are shared, how discipline is administered, and certain parental expectations. However, basic fact remains, no matter what culture parents love, nurture, and protect their children with all the resource made available to them.

It is often easy to see differences between cultures, but with a little thought it is just as easy to see that parents of different cultures are more alike than different.

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