

## Cultures can clash in families

I remember growing up in the melting pot of Bridgeport, Conn. My parents had migrated into the country from Peru, and I was fortunate enough to be born in this great country of promise.

My parents are very grateful for the many opportunities and blessings this great country has given their children. However, I can remember the difficulties as my siblings and I became teenagers. We were torn between respecting my family's culture and traditions or fitting in with our friends and the culture in the country we were born in? As you can imagine, this made for interesting dinner conversations.

In many families with blended cultures there is an initial response for each parent and child to identify the negatives of the culture. Children may say that their parent's culture is too old-fashioned and ritualistic. They may be embarrassed of it, or just plain old disagree with it. The parents struggle with feelings of loss and betrayal. They wonder what they have done wrong,



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IN THE FAMILY

and if coming to this country was the right thing to do. This may lead them to feel blame or powerlessness.

To the children and to the parents I have this to say: Love each other, respect each other and seek understanding. No matter what culture you ascribe to, it does not change who you are to each other.

Interestingly enough, happy and successful families exist in all cultures. I challenge you to put down your defenses and learn of each other, your cultures and make a list of the positive aspects. We are given families to grow. Don't miss out!

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