

EDDIE XU MY TURN

Father from China takes the best from 2 cultures



Happy Father's Day — a day to celebrate dads and all they do for their family. I grew up in China and joined Southwest Behavioral & Health Services

through a partnership it has with my alma mater, Sias University in China.

As you might imagine, the parenting style of Chinese parents has some differences from that of Americans. But like many dads, I think there are plenty of parenting techniques you both like and dislike from your own mom and dad. There are some I've chosen to mimic and others I've chosen to let go of and adapt a more American style of parenting.

Back in China, children are expected to obey orders without question from those who are older than them, whether it's their parents, their teachers or someone else. Here in the U.S., it's quite different.

It's not that children here are expected to constantly question authority, but it's not out of the ordinary for them to ask why they have to do something. I've adapted a more American parenting style to this kind of issue. I act as both a friend and a parent to my children, and I want to hear what they have to say.

They aren't expected to obey an order blindly, and I don't force them to do things they don't want to do.

On the other hand, beginning education, particularly mathematics, at a very young age is something very common in China that isn't as common in the U.S.

But starting their math education young is something I decided was important and is something we do at home. Education is something I find very important, and I think there is a real advantage to going to school with a base knowledge of some topics.

As a dad, I want to help guide my kids through life, to make sure they make the right decisions that will lead them to becoming good people and lead them to success. But at the same time, I don't want to totally control them.

I want them to have options and have to learn things and make some decisions on their own. I struggle with this balance but am learning every day how to help them grow into their own person both individually and with my help. Although it can be difficult to find the right way to talk to your kids, DrugFreeAZKids.org, a program of Southwest Behavioral & Health Services, has resources you can use on their website, such as taking advantage of the time spent driving in the car to ask and answer questions your child may have about important topics such as drugs and alcohol.

So happy Father's Day to all the dads out there. I feel very proud to be the father of two amazing children, and I hope each and every dad feels proud to have that title as well.

Eddie Xu is a network administrator from Mesa. He and his wife have been married for eight years and have two children.



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