

arrative

Animals and humans can be set apart by one major characteristic: the ability to communicate exact feelings. To our knowledge, animals can only communicate through growls, roars, or purrs, and have no known language. Humans, on the other hand, try to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions through words. Nevertheless, words can never seem to be found to show intense emotions, and other times, the exact word simply can not be found. In such times, these emotions must be expressed in other ways

My youngest brother, Asher, left his homeland of Hong Kong to live with us at about one and a half years old. After waiting for what seemed like hours at the airport, Asher, asleep, and an exhausted looking care worker came out of the exit. I had the first glimpse of the pair and pointed excitedly, saying “Look! There they are!” We picked up the dazed little boy and his luggage and went back home. It was at this time that words failed our family. Saying “Don’t worry, it’s going to be all right” could not help Asher, who would only hear a foreign language underneath his sobs. The only expressions to communicate our love and caring for him was holding him, patting his back and saying “shhhhh.”

The next few days were very difficult. Though Asher adjusted quickly, he had an entirely new environment. From his point of view, everything that he had ever known had collapsed, and there was no way to tell us of his needs. The words that he knew for hunger, nap, or sad held no value. The only thing was to smile or frown, cry or laugh. These expressions became more effective than saying “I am sad,” or “I am happy,”



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For that time, our family comforted Asher
and we succeeded greatly. It was very strange

trying to show our love for a little boy that I have just met. However, comforting him
and cuddling with him seemed to strengthen our bond more than words could.

Now, it is hard to find the words to explain adoption to Asher. We can say that
Asher was not born into our family, but we chose him out of the orphanage to be part of
our family. But, these simple words can not express how much we loved and cared for
him before and after he came to America. There simply is no way to put into words that
he is as much a part of our family, despite his different background and ethnicity.

Though Asher does know of his adoption, I do not think that he fully understands what
that word really means beyond words. It can not become meaningful until his
understanding can not be put into words.

Words are essential to human survival. Emotions and needs must be expressed in
order to coexist. But words fail us when communicating across languages. However,
hugs, smiles, and frowns are another universal tool for expression and is usually very
useful. Even when language is similar, words sometimes can to communicate the
personal meaning of a word. A lack of words can show understanding, and a difference
in language is easily bridged.