



Are you a hugger?

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

Have you ever had that awkward moment when you first see someone that you see often but maybe it has been a little while? Do you shake hands? Do you wave? Do you hug? Well, for me, it can be awkward because I am not a hugger. I am demonstrative with words; I am a writer. (Written is better and more eloquent. Plus, I remember everything I want to say) Now, don't get me wrong. I will give a hug when someone needs one or asks for one but it isn't my go-to greeting. I was this way before Covid and I haven't changed.

This isn't something I really ever thought about until just recently. A good friend of the family asked me, "Are you a hugger?" This person had just come to our home and my daughter hugged her as did my husband but I didn't. I told her I was happy to see her and engaged her in a lively conversation but didn't give her a hug. I felt bad that I didn't but once I hadn't it would have been weird to hug later on. So when she asked me later in the evening if I was a hugger, I answered no and apologized. She smiled and said, "Me neither." We laughed and decided that we would now know the other was good with no Huggie buggie.

What a relief! Of course I started to think about how I actually do share my thoughts and feelings of greetings with others. My thoughts about my impressions of them or how I share my praise. See while I am not a hugger, I am also not a talker. Not naturally anyway. This is a skill I have had to cultivate.



Now when it comes to children, I can talk and talk, no problem. But with adults, strangers and friends, I have had to learn. While sharing my praise of someone or my thoughts with them verbally doesn't come naturally, I can write and it is my preferred method of communication. That is where, in my opinion, I excel. When I write notes to others I can express exactly how I feel, my pride in their accomplishments, my amazement in their abilities, my happiness in their successes. I just am not as good at talking off the cuff.

Maybe on another occasion I will ponder whether these two shortcomings, the no Huggie thing and the less than natural speaking ability, are related somehow. For now, I am happy that I can recognize these two areas where I am less than. And maybe no one else has noticed. No one has mentioned any concerns that I don't hug as much and I don't give verbal praise quite as much. They could just be polite or kind by not pointing out the areas where I am lacking. Well, maybe the "less than" feeling is only in my head.

But, in case you **have** noticed, know that it has nothing to do with you. It is me. I am a writer not a talker. I am a person who shares affection with smiles and help and hospitality. Just not with hugs. My family knows this about me; knows that they can give me hugs anytime, I just won't necessarily generate them. But I will sit up with them at 2:00 in the morning, rubbing their back or listening to their concerns or deliver the sunscreen they forgot to bring on their staycation or drive to downtown Glendale to take pictures for the prom. I hope they, and you, can forgive the no Huggie buggies.

Shabbat Shalom.