

After the long trip, they arrived at their apartment in Tokyo; they were tired but excited, but did not anticipate that the apartment would be so tiny, given the very high rent that the company was paying for it. Kelly realized at once that they had included way too much in their move of personal belongings to be able to fit into this apartment. Undaunted, they planned to spend the weekend sightseeing and looked forward to some travel. Japan was beautiful in the spring and they were anxious to see the area.

On Monday, Kelly took a cab to the office. She had emailed requesting a staff meeting at 9 a.m. She knew that her immediate staff would include seven Japanese, two Americans, and two Germans—all men. Her assistant, Peter, to whom she had not yet spoken, was an American who had also just arrived, coming from an assignment in London. He greeted her at the elevator, looking surprised, and they proceeded to the conference room, where everyone was awaiting “the new boss.” Kelly exchanged the usual handshake greetings with the Westerners, and then bowed to the Japanese; an awkward silence and exchange took place, with the Japanese looking embarrassed. While she attempted a greeting in her limited Japanese that she had studied on the plane, she was relieved to find that the Japanese spoke English, but they seemed very quiet and hesitant. Peter then told her that they all thought that “Kelly” was a man, and they all attempted a laugh.

After that, Kelly decided that she would just meet with Peter, and postpone the general meeting until the next day. She asked them to each prepare a short presentation for her on their ideas for the new account. While the Americans and Germans said they would have it ready, the Japanese seemed reluctant to commit themselves.

Meanwhile, at home Joe was looking into the schools for the children and also trying to make some contacts to look for a job. Travelling, getting information, and shopping for groceries proved bewildering, but they decided that they would soon get acquainted with local customs.

At the office the next day, Kelly received a short presentation from the Westerners on the staff, but when it came to the Japanese they indicated that they had not yet had a chance to meet with their groups and other contacts in order to come to their decisions. Kelly asked them why they had not told her the day before that they needed more time, and when could they be ready. They seemed unwilling to give a direct answer and kept their eyes lowered. In an attempt to lighten the atmosphere and get to know her staff, Kelly then began chatting casually and asked several of them about their families. The Americans chatted on about their children's achievements, the Germans talked about their family positions, and the Japanese went silent, seemingly very confused and offended.

Still attempting to get everyone's ideas for an initial proposal to the potential new client, Kelly later asked one of the Americans who had been there for some time what he thought was the problem and delay in getting presentations from the Japanese. He told her that they did not like to do individual presentations, but rather wanted to gain consensus among themselves and their contacts and present a group presentation. Having learned her lesson, but feeling irritated, she asked him to intervene and have the presentations ready for the next week. When that time came, the rest of the presentations were made by the Japanese, but, oddly, they seemed to be addressed primarily to Peter. Later, Kelly decided to finalize her own presentation to put forth a proposal for the client, which she set up for the following week.

At home, Joe said that he had not heard anything from his company in Boston and asked Kelly to again contact her company to request some networking in Tokyo that might lead to job opportunities for him. Kelly said she would do that, but that there didn't seem to be any one person “back home” who was keeping up with her situation or giving any support about that or about her job.

The children, meanwhile, complained that, although their schools were meant to be bilingual English-Japanese, a majority of the children were Japanese and did not speak English; Lisa and Sam felt confused and left out. They were disoriented by the different customs, classes, and foods for lunch. At home they complained that there was no back yard to go out to play, and that they could not get their programs on the television, or understand the Japanese programs.

Back at the office, Kelly worked with her staff to finalize the proposal, but noticed a strained atmosphere. Peter told her that some of them would drop by a local bar for a drink after work, which helped the whole group to relax together. However, she felt that she could not do that, nor that she would be accepted as a female.

The next week, as arranged, Kelly and Peter went to the offices of the client; she knew that a lot was riding on getting this big new contract. She had asked Peter to let them know ahead of

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