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Straight Talk and Real Answers to Legitimate Questions About Adoption...

It doesn't matter what you've been told or what you think you know. Adoption is an unselfish gift. It's a way to transform a very difficult and probably horrible circumstance into something wonderful. Adoption doesn't take away the pain of a complex emotional issue like an unplanned pregnancy or a pregnancy resulting from assault or incest. It does provide a positive way to bring resolution that will not bring deep wounding and regret for the rest of the life of a birth mom. Any decision made under these circumstances is guaranteed to be tough, and the truth is there are no quick fixes. NONE! Every choice comes with consequences; some less harmful than others.

As a general rule, most of us wouldn't talk about our pets (or baby seals) in the same disrespectful way we discuss what to do about a baby on the way that wasn't in the plan. Our society is guilty of using terms that make abortion sound acceptable and adoption sound unloving. In fact the opposite is true. Adoption is not "giving" a baby away. Adoption is not "throwing" a baby away. Adoption is a legal, humane, beautiful way to care for a child that's been conceived at an inconvenient time. It means a birth mom (and possibly dad) can place that baby in the arms of a loving family...with parents who are ready and prepared for the responsibility. Birth parents who place their child for adoption will never wonder what that child would have been had it lived. Bitter-sweet relief.

I was an unplanned child...a very unwelcome product from my married, but divorcing parents' last act of intimacy. There were three older children, and my birth mother had no job, no job skills and no education. She had no way of getting what she needed to provide for herself or her soon to be four children, and her ex-husband (My birth father) wouldn't help. In those days abortion wasn't legal except for "therapeutic" reasons. I don't think my mother was in a position to find a doctor that would agree. Then, as now it took money to secure abortion. Someone has to pay for it: A benevolent dad; a scared boyfriend; taxpayers. My mother had no money and (I'm thankful!) no one who suggested abortion and then stepped forward to pay.

With the divorce my family's life changed. My siblings were sent to live with relatives and my mother cleaned other peoples' houses for a living. Somewhere in the mix I was born. It's fairly easy to take an infant to work with you to private homes, but babies grow and begin to make noise and get into things. So, when I was 18 months old my mother made a hard decision. She knew soon she would need to find a friend or relative who would keep me too, but she desired a good permanent solution.

Things were done differently many years ago. She didn't go through an adoption facilitator, the state or an attorney. She put a notice that told of her situation and her goal to see me secure with a family in the personal section of the newspaper. Granted, this would not be acceptable in current times, but it was a way available to her to bring some relief to her and to provide for a child she hadn't really wanted, but for whom she desired a rich, full life.

The couple (My adoptive parents) who saw and responded to her notice had been married just a short time. My dad's (adoptive) family had not had a girl born in four generations. A boy for them would be a welcome and almost guaranteed addition to their family and in addition my mom (adoptive) had a son from a previous marriage. Mom and dad had already talked about adoption as a means to add a daughter to their family. They believed that notice in the newspaper was meant for them. They contacted my birth mom to find out more.

At 18 months old I was too young to remember anything about the process or what actually happened. I didn't grow up fearful of strangers or with "abandonment" issues because I began to live with the family that chose me. There has never been a time in my memory when I didn't know I was adopted. I grew up with loving parents who told me over and over again, "We chose you." They chose my middle name "Joy" as a reflection of how they felt about me. To be honest, I kind of "lorded" it over my siblings---a younger brother and a sister in addition to my older brother---who entered the family the conventional way: by birth. I did not grow up with a focus on why my birth mom made the choice to give me the gift of a stable family. I grew up being loved. I was confident I was loved by the parents who chose me and the birth mom who loved me enough to ensure I had a good life.

Having an adopted child also made it easier for my parents' families to adjust to my older brother from mom's previous marriage. We were all welcome and we all knew that. As a result of my adoption, several other relatives also chose adoption as a way to grow their families.

Was I loved? Yes! Was I welcome? Yes! Did I know both were true? Yes! Was I curious about my family of origin? You bet! I did want to know who I resembled and important things about the history of my birth family. When I met my birth mom, siblings, cousins and a grandmother when I was 27, I had nothing but gratitude for the hard choice a woman who was in a tough situation made out of her love and concern for me. It was a joy to meet her and have the opportunity to tell her she'd made the right choice for me.

I know many people who were adopted. Only those who found out about it later in life usually by mistake had negative feelings. In every case where there issues of which I am aware, adopted kids didn't think of themselves as having been "given away" by their birth mom, but were hurt by not being trusted with the truth regarding their conception and birth. They were robbed of the knowledge of knowing they were chosen as a result of a loving choice by their birth mom.

When I decided I was interested in seeing my birth mom a friend had to go to a lot of time and effort to find her with the information my parents had given me. Today, with open adoption that's not the case. In most instances, the birth mom picks the family she thinks will be the best for her child and she is usually the one to make a decision about her involvement in her baby's life from birth. I was happy with being adopted although I had no contact with my birth family until I was an adult. Many adopted children grow up today with their natural family involved to some extent. I know families like this and it's a beautiful thing to see them all caring for not just that child, but for all the kids involved.

The truth is adoption is a gift for everyone it impacts. The birth mom faced with a rough road ahead is able to relax and think about the future. An unplanned baby is not treated as an inconvenient problem to be thrown out, but someone special, sent by God to bless all the lives she touches. A couple who may be unable to conceive or who desires to grow their family through adoption is blessed. There are usually two parents in the home, and they have undergone significant studies to be approved for adoption. Their home is inspected, and they have to show through a rigorous process they would be good and loving parents. Generally, the whole extended family is ready and excited to be a part of the child's life.

The only time you won't hear the truth--- EVERYONE wins through adoption will be from people who make lots of money from the abortion industry or those who have no knowledge of adoption, but state their biased opinions as facts.

Pregnancy & Family Resource Center offers lots of factual information about adoption, and we can put a birth mom who exploring her options in touch with an adoption facilitator. She will answer questions and be supportive without pressure. There is real help and support for a mom who chooses to develop an adoption plan in the way of housing, living expenses, life coaching and spiritual direction. An unplanned pregnancy that results in adoption is often the opportunity to make positive forward-moving changes. Pregnancy & Family Resource Center does not benefit from an adoption or any other service we offer other than the blessing we receive though walking with a woman and possibly her family throughout the pregnancy and beyond.