



A Private Adoption Story

Experiences in my life have led me to realize that I have the people-bug, a feeling similar in nature to how people feel about the travel-bug. You meet one great person and hear one great story and all of a sudden you feel compelled to discover more stories from more people. I am completely fascinated with people's stories, insight and their wisdom. I am so drawn to understanding and learning from people that I often gravitate to the non-fiction section of the bookstore before I even glance at the fiction side. I think this passion resonates from a deep seeded curiosity I have about my own family history and I have been lucky to learn of many stories about my heritage from my extended family.

I am married to an incredibly caring and inspirational lady and together we were blessed with the opportunity to become parents when we adopted a boy from birth. Our adoption is considered a private adoption or more specifically an open private adoption. I have come to learn that the openness part of our story is what gets most people excited (and not always in a good way).

Our journey to become parents is not unlike many other private adoptions and the process we underwent is certainly not unlike many other private adoptions. We educated ourselves about adoption by attending a weekend retreat (similar to P.R.I.D.E.) with other people that wanted to learn about adoption and we read many books. We went through many hours of (what it felt like at the time) intrusive discussions with our Adoption Practitioner where we revealed a lot of personal information. We were even fingered printed. As I look back, those experiences turned out to be essential in helping us to understand our motivation to adopt and to become parents. Our understanding about adoption continues to evolve and change. Many of our thoughts we held to be true have turned out to be myths and misunderstandings about adoption.

We were chosen (after several months; not years) by a birthmother to parent her child. Our son spent a short period of time in foster care before coming home with us. We celebrated the end of the 21-day revocation period. Several months after the revocation period and a few more visits from our Adoption Practitioner our adoption was finalized by the court. Some people may assume that our journey would end once everything was legally binding but we have come to learn that it is just another destination in our journey. By simple circumstance we seem to have been tossed (willingly) into the role as myth-buster because we often receive some very interesting and sometimes disturbing remarks when adoption is brought into a conversation; especially surrounding the idea of openness.

I really don't believe that people chose not to love and instead they chose not to parent. I believe this is very real for each type of adoption; however, in private adoption we have a unique opportunity because we can more easily form a relationship with our child's biological family. The definition I found in the dictionary describes the word "openness" as having the interior immediately accessible, as a box with the lid raised or a drawer that is pulled out. I think it refers to providing access. In our adoption story, openness simply means that we have a loving and nurturing relationship with the family where our son came from. We are not sharing our role as parents; parenting is solely our responsibility. It is our choice as parents to support an open adoption. We are not ashamed of where our son came from and we are proud to have our son's biological family as part of our extended family.





I admit, in the beginning, the thought of my child's birth family being part of my family's mix scared me tremendously. However, as I learned more about being an advocate for what is right for your child I have come to feel comforted in knowing that my son will know where he came from and he will know that he is our son because of a choice not to parent and not because he wasn't loved. As he grows from childhood to adulthood I am sure like many other children he will pick up a few of my traits, habits and even interests. If he catches the people-bug from me at least I know he will have the access and the ability to discover more about himself from his extended family. At the end of the day, my hope as a loving parent is to see him become a proud, emotionally strong and thoughtful adult.

Dedicated to the many people that lead people toward positive adoption awareness, my wife and to my newest people-destination; my son.

Written by: Denney Morrison, Parent

