

10 Things Every Birthmother Wants Adoptive Parents To Know

By Patricia Dischler

I often told my son's adoptive mother how much I loved her and was thankful she was a part of my life. But, like many things I've told her over the years, Kathy would already know. Back in 1985 I chose open adoption for my son. Being a birthmother has changed my life forever, and I know that becoming an adoptive parent changed Kathy's too. We've traveled the road of adoption together, with respect and honesty. We've shared our hopes, our fears and our dreams for the boy we both love.

However, often adoptive parents do not get the chance to build this type of relationship with their child's birthmother. While most domestic adoptions are open, most children adopted from other countries are not. This disconnect from a child's beginnings can make it difficult for adoptive parents to provide answers their child will need as they grow and explore the issue of being adopted.

While a birthmother's experience after placement may be different in open versus closed adoptions, the process leading to the choice of adoption is much more likely to follow the same thread - love. Regardless of our place on this planet, birthmothers share the journey of facing a decision in a pregnancy and letting our love for our child lead the way. The individual circumstances may be very different from culture to culture, but ultimately, we come to a place where we feel that what is best for our child is to have a life different than what we can provide and we choose adoption.

There are 10 things every birthmother thinks about, wishes for, and hopes for when placing their child for adoption. If you are in an open adoption, you may have heard some already, if not, they are important to know. They are:

- I did not place my child because she was "unwanted." I wanted her so much that I continued a pregnancy filled with unanswered questions.
- I chose adoption because I loved my child. This parental love allowed me to put his needs before my own when making my choice.
- This choice affected more than just me. She has a Grandmother, a Grandfather, and Aunts and Uncles who love her as well, and she will be missed.
- I wish for the day I can look into my child's eyes and tell him I love him one more time.
- I hope that you will teach my child about her beginnings - about where she was born and who I am.
- I hope you will teach respect to my child by showing respect for me in your discussions.
- I wish I could be there to answer my child's questions about adoption, but I trust you to answer them truthfully as best you can.
- I will never stop thinking about my child. She will always be a part of who I am.
- I would never try to disrupt my child's new family with you. I put too much emotion and suffering into making this choice to allow anything to disrupt it - including me.
- In my eyes, you will always be my child's Mom and Dad. And that thought brings me happiness.

My son's mother wrote to me in her first letter: "Children are never really ours; they are just entrusted to us for a time by God." As birthmothers, we take our short time with our child very seriously, and it affects us the rest of our lives. We place that final kiss on our baby's forehead and pass them forward to your waiting arms because we know you will be taking it very seriously too.

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