



# How Adoption Changed My Life

*By Sue N., an adoptive mother*

Where do I start? How do I tell a story so close to my heart? When I reflect on the last decade and all the changes that have occurred in our family it amazes me. I am overwhelmed with joy each time I sit back and watch my children together, caring for each other, looking out for one another.

My husband and I had been married four years when our first child arrived. We were so proud and filled with excitement, this baby boy was a part of each of us and was the beginning of our life as a family, as parents. We always thought there would be more children, after all isn't that the way it was supposed to happen. After several years of trying we decided maybe it was time to look at adding to our family in another way. As a child I had always thought about adoption and how wonderful it would be to adopt a child, to bring people who needed each other together. As we explored our options, we knew that this was not going to be something that happened overnight. We shared our desire to adopt with anyone that would listen. We were open with our hearts and minds, willing to put our toe in the proverbial pond and make a ripple that could carry for miles. Looking back, I think this is what ultimately worked for us.

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After a couple of years of waiting and praying, we finally would have hope. While taking my son to his regular Saturday morning sports event a family friend came up and very nonchalantly told me that she knew of a young woman looking for a family to adopt her baby. I remember the flushed feeling I had, my heart racing with excitement and my stomach churning with nerves. I remember my hands trembling when I went to write the young woman's phone number down. I could not wait to get home and talk to my husband, could this be the child we had been praying for, and what should I do next, it seemed like the five minute car ride home took hours. Everything within me wanted to run through the door and blurt out the information as fast as I could, but I knew that I needed to keep calm and not let our son know what was going on for fear he could be hurt if things did not work out. After a few minutes our son went off to play and I had a chance to tell my husband the news. He was filled with questions, and I could only answer a few, I had been so excited and nervous, I didn't think to even ask when the baby was due. We spent a day making phone calls to friends who could advise us on what to do next and what questions to ask the birth mother. As much as we thought we were prepared, we needed moral support and guidance, someone with an unbiased opinion. After gathering all the information, the next day we made the call, the one that changed our lives forever.

It was a Sunday night, we had just had family over for dinner and we shared the news with the adults, they were skeptical but supportive. We knew that this may not work out, and we were prepared. As our family entertained our son and the

other children in the next room, we stole away to the spare bedroom and made the call. I was shaking as I dialed the number, my husband stood by me, rubbing my back to soothe my nerves. The voice at the other end of the phone sent a wave all the way to my heart. My heart broke for this young woman she was so definite in her choice and so open and willing to meet with us. It was as if something much larger than any of us had brought us together, we both wanted the same thing. A couple of days later, we went to meet her, the car ride there was torture. Would she like us? Would this be the right fit? Will I remember everything I am supposed to ask? My husband held my hand the whole way, squeezing it gently as if to say, it will be okay. This quiet young woman met us at the door and was so warm and welcoming. We exchanged information, showed her pictures of our son and our home. We talked about life in general, asking even the hard questions. My husband was better at those than I was. I wanted to help her, to take care of her needs, not because I wanted to adopt her child, but because I was a mom, I had deep compassion for what she was going through. I wanted to help her even if she chose to keep this child. She was struggling and needed someone, we seemed to connect easily. After what seemed like hours we parted ways and agreed to call each other as soon as we knew what we wanted. We had barely arrived home when the phone rang, it was her, she wanted us to be her baby's family. Knowing her due date was close we quickly got to work, completing necessary paperwork and readying our home for this exciting new arrival. I specifically remember calling my in-laws who were away at the time. My mother-in-law answered and when we explained that we were adopting a baby she started to cry. We filled her in on all the pertinent information and she was overjoyed for us. About five minutes later she called back, she was so emotional at our initial call she could not remember anything we had told her. What an effect this baby had on our family and it was not even born yet.

The next few weeks were filled with paperwork, meeting with social workers, making plans. There were daily phone calls between the birthmother and I, sometimes several a day. We shared likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams. She told me that she wanted me to be there when the baby was to be born. I was overwhelmed with emotion when she told me this, she was sharing something so personal and intimate with me, what a strong and giving young woman. She made an adoption plan, decided how she wanted everything to take place, who would name the baby and who would be present. She was so willing to give us every opportunity to participate and wanted us to go through this process with her. The phone rang in the early hours of the morning and it was finally time for this baby to be born.

We hurried around and got on the road to the hospital. Little did I know what I would experience this cool spring day. I went in to meet her in the hospital room and was instantly drawn into the excitement and the process of childbirth. The nurses had a lot of questions, I stood by and observed, every now and then the birth mother would turn to me for answers but all I could say is that this has to be the way you want it to be, this is up to you. We shared many very intimate and beautiful moments, too personal to write about. These moments will be forever locked

within my heart, only to be opened by one person, my daughter. Before we knew it tears were flowing, our little baby girl was born, strong and beautiful just like her birth mother. The nurse whisked her away to be checked and I was told to follow. I remember them placing her in my arms and crying at the sight of this amazing child. My heart was filled with love, the same love I felt for my son, it did not matter that she did not grow inside of my body, she had grown in my heart and soul. My heart also felt sad, because out of this beautiful gift we had been given, another heart would ache for the loss this birthmother would feel, although by choice, this is never the less a loss.

We spent many hours together in the hospital sharing the joy of this beautiful baby girl. The next day it came time to part ways. There were many tears, both tears of joy and sorrow, we knew that we would be forever connected through this miracle she had created and shared with us. How can you thank someone for giving you the ultimate gift, the gift of a child. This beautiful little girl has changed our life so much. I can't imagine my life without her in it, she is so wonderful, loving, strong and dedicated to her family. When I look at her I sometimes see her birth mother and my heart longs to know that she is ok. My wish is that she knows what a wonderful and incredible thing she did for us, she made our family more complete, she will always have a very special place in my heart.

*“As an adoptive parent  
myself, adoption isn't just part of my professional  
career, it is my life.” - Colleen Zink*



**WELCH & ZINK**  
**COUNSELORS AT LAW**  
**19 East Market Street Suite 201**  
**Corning, New York 14830**  
**(607) 962-4671**  
**[zinkc@welchzink.com](mailto:zinkc@welchzink.com)**