



THE ADOPTION CENTER OF THE MIDSOUTH

LED BY AGAPE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AND ITS COMMUNITY PARTNERS

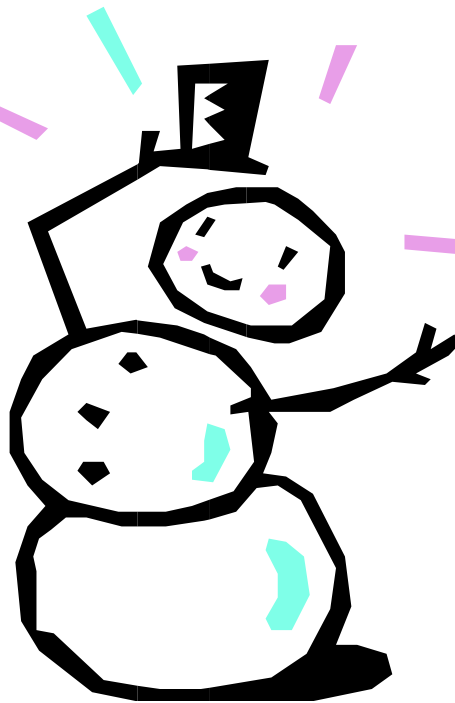
Be Aware of your Adopted Child's unspoken needs during family gatherings

—Sherrie Eldridge

Adopted people, no matter our age, have a tremendous need for a sense of connection. Connection with you, connection with our past, and connection with our extended family. Even though Christmas may be a happy time for you, remember that your adopted child might feel his “differentness” during family gatherings. Your child will likely not be able to put words to the feelings. Toddlers may act out or have tantrums, and teen and adult adoptees may choose to isolate themselves rather than spend

time with the rest of the family.

So, what can you do?
- Be sensitive to your



child's unspoken need for connection

- Be aware that he may be feeling “different” than other family members

- Plan activities that will keep your child, teen, or adult connected to you in a positive way (help plan a game, cook a recipe, or set the table).

- Remember that touch is a powerful way of connecting. A hand on the shoulder, a hug, or a high five.)

- If your child chooses isolation, ask him to share his thoughts with you. Use probing questions and affirm his emotions. See this article below

There is an ancient proverb that states, 'Look not where you fell, but where you slipped.' As a parent, look not at your child's behavior, but look at what triggering event caused the behavior.

Heather Forbes,
LCSW

“if my mind can conceive it and my heart can believe it Then I know I can achieve it “

Anonymous

Affirming the Emotional Reality of the Adopted Child or Adult

— Sherrie Eldridge

Not long ago, an anxious adoptive mother asked me about how to tell her child that he

was adopted.

“Do you think I should tell him that he has two moms?” she asked, half scared.

“The truth is that he

does have two moms—birth and adoptive,” I replied. “He spent the first nine months of life in intimate union with his birth mom, listening



Affirming the Emotional Reality of the Adopted Child or Adult

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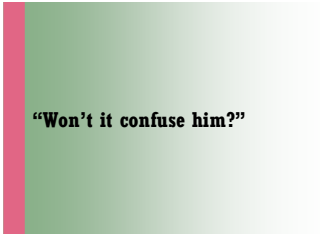
to her heartbeat, hearing the sound of her voice and receiving emotional signals. Losing her was traumatic and it happened before you ever held him in your arms.”
“I never thought about it that way,” she replied.
“That is his emotional reality whether you choose to acknowledge it or not,” I added.
“Well, won’t it hurt him to hear he has two moms? Won’t it confuse him?” she countered. “I don’t want to do anything that will hurt my

son.”
“Just the opposite will be true,” I assured her.
“Affirming his emotional reality will alleviate the craziness he often feels inside about his adoption and bring nurturing and comfort to his inner being.”
That conversation was a turning point for this



adoptive mom.
How different life could be for adopted children if their adoptive family affirmed their emotional reality from day one!
I know a middle-aged female adoptee that would agree. I met her at a conference a few years ago, and as we chatted, her horror story unfolded. “I’ve always had the feeling that something

wasn’t right inside,” she said.
“I’ve spent countless hours in counseling trying to identify the problem. I suffered in silence until attending the funeral of my father. It was then that I overheard someone talking about the fact that I had been adopted as an infant.



When I heard those words,” she said, “I could literally feel chains fall off inside me. The part of me that had been imprisoned since birth was finally set free. I knew it was the truth. MY truth. The missing piece required for my healing.”
This adoptee’s story is a great illustration of the

scripture verse which says, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8: 32 NIV)
Affirming an adoptee’s emotional reality is one of the greatest gifts anyone can give.

Sherrie Eldridge

Merry Christmas from the ACMS staff

