

# MY JOURNAL



*Digging deeper*



**Adoption Attuned families  
are  
happier, healthier families.**



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# Elements of Adoption Attunement<sup>®</sup>

- Operate with a child-centric focus.
- Recognize the Seven Core Issues in Adoption.
- Understand the Attachment process
- Use respectful adoption language.
- Talk about all aspects of adoption
- Acknowledge the grief and loss issues of all adoption constellation members.
- Parents address their own issues
- Respect birth parents and first families.
- Follow ethical practices.
- Recognize adoption is a family experience
- Honor a child's need to know and connect with their birth family.
- Integrate a child's birth heritage.
- Remember a child's story belongs to them.
- Model, teach, and hold healthy boundaries.
- Use Adoption Attuned discipline methods.
- Educate family, friends, teachers, and faith communities about adoption.
- Nurture and value a child's innate talents and encourage them to be themselves.
- Encourage playfulness and good humor as a family value.
- Adoptive parenting differs from bio parenting and includes unique responsibilities and challenges.



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# Operate with a Child-centric Focus

1) HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU HEARD THE AGENCY DIRECTOR ASSERTED THAT "ADOPTION IS NOT ABOUT FINDING CHILDREN FOR PARENTS"?

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2) HOW HAS THIS COURSE CHANGED YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTION?

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3) HOW WILL THIS SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE INFLUENCE YOUR PARENTING?

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4) HOW MIGHT IT SHAPE THE WAY YOU TALK ABOUT ADOPTION WITH OTHERS?

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SEVEN  
CORE ISSUES  
IN ADOPTION  
AND PERMANENCY

A Comprehensive Guide to Promoting  
Understanding and Healing in Adoption, Foster Care,  
Kinship Families and Third-Party Reproduction

Sharon Kaplan Reiss  
and Alison Herz Mason

- Loss
- Rejection
- Guilt and Shame
- Identity
- Intimacy
- Mastery/Self-control
- Grief

# Recognize the 7 Core Issues in Adoption

1) WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN YOU FIRST LEARNED ABOUT THESE CORE ISSUES?

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2) WHICH ISSUE FEELS THE EASIEST TO ACCEPT OR UNDERSTAND?

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3) WHICH ISSUE EVOKES YOUR STRONGEST CONCERN?

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4) HOW CAN UNDERSTANDING THESE ISSUES HELP YOU BE A BETTER PARENT?

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# Understand the Attachment Process

1) HOW DOES UNDERSTANDING THE ATTACHMENT PROCESS HELP YOU BE MORE INTENTIONAL IN BUILDING A CONNECTION WITH YOUR CHILD?

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2) HOW DOES UNDERSTANDING "SERVE AND RETURN" HELP IN IMPROVING YOUR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS?

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3) HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED "DECLARE AND REPAIR" FROM OTHERS AND HOW DID IT FEEL? HOW DID IT AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

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4) HOW DID YOUR OWN PARENTS HANDLE AND REPAIR BREAKS IN YOUR PARENT/RELATIONSHIP?

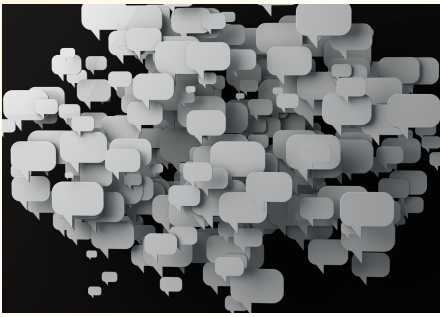
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# Use Respectful Adoption Language

1) THE PRESENTATION DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN POSITIVE ADOPTION LANGUAGE AND "UNSANITIZED LANGUAGE. HOW WILL YOU DECIDE WHICH TO USE?

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2) HOW CAN BEING INTENTIONAL ABOUT LANGUAGE BENEFIT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND IMPROVE COMMUNICATION?

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3) HOW WILL YOU TEACH PEOPLE APPROPRIATE WAYS TO TALK ABOUT ADOPTION, ADOPTIVE FAMILIES AND ADOPTION COMPLEXITY?

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4) HOW WILL YOU TALK ABOUT ADOPTION WITH YOUR CHILD?

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# Talk About All Aspects of Adoption

1) HOW MIGHT HELPING YOUR CHILD EXPLORE ALL OF HIS FEELINGS ABOUT BEING ADOPTED--THE HAPPY AND THE SAD--STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

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2) HOW MIGHT TALKING ABOUT HOW ADOPTION HELP YOUR CHILD?

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3) HOW ARE YOU PREPARING YOURSELF TO TALK ABOUT ADOPTION WITH YOUR CHILD?

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3) HOW ARE YOU PREPARING YOURSELF TO TALK ABOUT ADOPTION WITH YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND WITH OTHERS?

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# Acknowledge Grief and Loss of All Constellation Members



1) HOW MIGHT ACKNOWLEDGING THE GRIEF AND LOSSES OF ALL CONSTELLATION MEMBERS AFFECT THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT AND RELATE TO EACH OTHER?

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2) HOW HAS THIS PRINCIPLE SHAPED YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF ADOPTION?

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3) HOW DOES THIS PRINCIPLE HELP YOU FIND COMMON GROUND?

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4) HOW DOES THIS PRINCIPLE HELP YOU? HOW DOES IT CHALLENGE YOU?

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# Acknowledge Grief and Loss of All Birth Mothers

1) HOW HAS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF A BIRTH MOTHERS' GRIEF & LOSS CHANGED?

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2) HOW WILL YOUR ABILITY TO SEE HER PERSPECTIVE AFFECT THE WAY YOU THINK AND TALK ABOUT HER?

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3) HOW WILL THIS MORE NUANCED PICTURE SHAPE THE WAY YOU REGARD HER CONNECTION WITH YOUR CHILD?

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4) WHAT COMMONALITIES DO YOU SHARE WITH YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH MOTHER?

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# Parents Address and Process Their Own Grief

1) WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP YOU WILL TAKE TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS YOUR OWN ADOPTION-CONNECTED GRIEF AND LOSSES?

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2) HOW WILL YOU AND YOUR PARTNER SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER THROUGH THIS PROCESS?

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3) MAKE A LIST OF ANY ADOPTION-CONNECTED LOSSES YOU FEEL. MAKE NOTE OF EVENTS AND PLACES THAT MAY TRIGGER THEM.

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4) WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO BEGIN PROCESSING THEM?

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# Respect Birth Parents and First Families

1) HOW DOES BEING RESPECTFUL TOWARD YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH PARENTS AND FIRST FAMILY HELP YOUR CHILD?

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2) HOW DO YOU THINK THE WAYS YOU SHOW THIS RESPECT WILL EVOLVE OVER TIME?

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3) HOW WILL YOU BALANCE BEING RESPECTFUL WITH A COMMITMENT TO TRUTH-TELLING?

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4) HOW DOES THIS PRINCIPLE CHALLENGE YOU AND HOW WILL YOU WORK THROUGH IT?

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# Follow Ethical Practices

1) WRITE DOWN YOUR PERSONAL CODE OF ETHICS.

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2) LOOK FOR COMMONALITIES AND DISPARITIES WITH YOUR PARTNER.

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3) DISCUSS HOW THESE WILL GUIDE YOUR PARENTING DECISIONS.

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4) HOW WILL YOUR ETHICS SHAPE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH FAMILY?

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# Adoption Is a Family Experience

1) IN WHAT WAYS HAS ADOPTION CHANGED EACH MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY?

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2) HOW DO YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND SOCIETY SEE YOUR FAMILY AS DIFFERENT?

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3) ISSUES AND BIASES THAT SOCIETY HAS TOWARDS YOUR CHILD WILL TOUCH YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY. HOW WILL YOU HANDLE THIS?

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4) ADOPTION IS A FAMILY EXPERIENCE, NOT SOMETHING YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES ALONE. HOW WILL THAT INFLUENCE WHAT YOU THINK AND DO?

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# Honor a Child's Need to Know and Connect with Their Birth Family

1) HOW WILL YOU HANDLE YOUR CHILD'S NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AND CONNECT WITH HIS BIRTH FAMILY?

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2) HOW WILL YOU MANAGE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THIS?

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3) HOW DOES KNOWING ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF THE "GHOST KINGDOM" HELP YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR CHILD BETTER?

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4) WHO IS PRESENT IN YOUR OWN "GHOST KINGDOM?"

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Integrate a child's birth heritage

# Integrate a Child's Birth Heritage

1) WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE TRADITIONS, GENERATIONAL PATTERNS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH FAMILY?

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2) WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S CULTURAL TRADITIONS, HISTORY, LANGUAGE, FOOD ETC,? HOW WILL YOU INFUSE THEM INTO YOUR FAMILY LIFE?

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3) HOW ARE YOU BECOMING INFORMED ABOUT THE RACIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES YOUR CHILD MAY FACE?

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4) HOW WILL YOU HELP YOUR CHILD KNOW THAT YOU APPRECIATE THE DIFFERENCES HE BRINGS TO YOUR FAMILY JUST AS MUCH AS THE SIMILARITIES?

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# Remember a Child's Story Belongs to Them

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1) YOUR STORY BELONGS TO YOU. REMEMBER A TIME WHEN SOMEONE BETRAYED YOUR CONFIDENCE. HOW DID IT FEEL?

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2) WHAT IMPACT DID IT HAVE ON YOUR TRUST?

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3) HOW DID IT AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT PERSON?

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4) HOW DOES REMEMBERING THE IMPACT OF THAT EXPERIENCE STRENGTHEN YOUR COMMITMENT TO RESPECTING YOUR CHILD'S PRIVACY?

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# Model, Teach, & Hold Healthy Boundaries

1) HOW EFFECTIVE ARE YOUR OWN BOUNDARIES?

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2) HOW WELL DO YOU NOTICE AND RESPECT THE BOUNDARIES SET BY OTHERS?

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3) WITH WHOM DO YOU FIND IT CHALLENGING TO SET AND HOLD BOUNDARIES?

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4) HOW DO YOU RESPOND WHEN PEOPLE DO NOT RESPECT YOUR BOUNDARIES?

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# Use Adoption Attuned Discipline Methods

1) HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SEVEN CORE ISSUES OF ADOPTION INFLUENCE THE WAY YOU DISCIPLINE YOUR CHILD?

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2) WHAT WERE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS YOUR PARENTS DISCIPLINED YOU?

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3) REMEMBER A TIME WHEN YOU FELT OVER-PUNISHED, UNSEEN, AND/OR ALIENATED; WHAT DO YOU WISH YOUR PARENTS MIGHT HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

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4) THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE IS TO TEACH, NOT TO PUNISH, AND, TO NURTURE RESPECT NOT FEAR. WHY DOES THIS DISTINCTION MATTER?

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# Educate Family, Friends, Teachers, and Faith Communities

1) WHAT IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ADOPTION DO YOU WANT TO HELP THOSE IN YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE AND/OR UNLEARN?

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2) WHO IS THE MOST OPEN TO LEARNING ABOUT ADOPTION ATTUNEMENT?

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3) WHO IS THE MOST RESISTANT? HOW WILL YOU RESOLVE THAT?

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4) WHERE WILL YOU FIND ADOPTION ATTUNED RESOURCES?

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# Nurture & Value a Child's Innate Talents, Encourage Them to Be Themselves

1) HOW WILL YOU IDENTIFY YOUR CHILD'S NATURAL GIFTS?

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2) HOW WILL YOU STRETCH YOURSELF TO GROW AN INTEREST IN HIS PREFERRED ACTIVITIES IF THEY DON'T NATURALLY APPEAL TO YOU?

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3) YOUR CHILD MAY NEED TO SAMPLE A LOT OF ACTIVITIES TO FIND HIS "SWEET SPOT". HOW WILL YOU HELP HIM DEVELOP HIS SKILLS AND HIS ABILITY WORK THROUGH HARD THING AND HANDLE FRUSTRATIONS?

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4) IF YOUR CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT AND APTITUDES RUN COUNTER TO YOUR FAMILY'S TRADITIONS, HOW WILL YOU WORK THROUGH THAT?

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# Encourage Playfulness and Good Humor as a Family Value



1) RECALL FIVE CHERISHED MEMORIES FROM YOUR OWN CHILDHOOD. WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?

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2) HOW DID THESE FUN TIMES BOND YOU AS A FAMILY?

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3) HOW MIGHT YOUR CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT INFLUENCE THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES YOU TRY AS A FAMILY?

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4) PLEASANT WALKS DOWN MEMORYLANE CAN BE ENJOYABLE. HOW WILL YOU IDENTIFY WHICH MEMORIES TO RETELL AND WHICH ONES TO IGNORE?

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# Adoptive Parenting Differs from Bio Parenting & Includes Unique Responsibilities & Challenges

1) WHAT DID YOU THINK AND HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD THIS PRINCIPLE?

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2) WHAT DO YOU NOW SEE AS SOME KEY DIFFERENCES UNIQUE TO ADOPTIVE PARENTING?

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3) HOW DO THE PRINCIPLES OF ADOPTION ATTUNEMENT HELP YOU TO BE A MORE COMPETENT ADOPTIVE PARENT?

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4) HOW WILL KNOWING THE UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITIES AS WELL AS THE RIGHTS OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS GUIDE YOU?

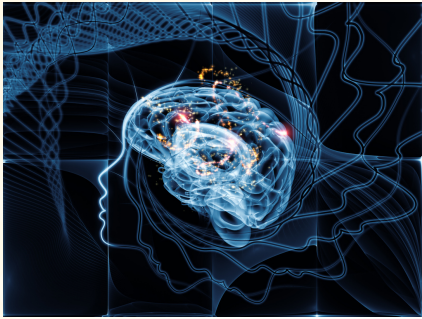
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# Everyone's Understanding of Adoption Evolves

1) LIST SOME OF THE WAYS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF ADOPTION HAS EVOLVED.

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2) WHAT SHIFTS IN UNDERSTANDING ABOUT ADOPTION HAVE YOU OBSERVED IN FAMILY AND FRIENDS?

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3) HOW HAS YOUR INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING MADE YOU A BETTER PARENT?

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4) HOW HAS YOUR INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING MADE YOU A BETTER ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD?

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## References and Resources



- [Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief by Pauline Boss PhD, Rosemary Benson, et al.](#)
- [Ethics in Adoption, NACAC \(North American Council on Adoptable Children\)](#)
- [Resolve, the National Infertility Association](#)
- [National Adoption Foundation](#)
- [An Interview with Interracial Adoptee Tony Hynes](#)
- [The Power of Showing Up](#)
- [Building an Enduring connection with Your child](#)
- [Why & How to Be a Therapeutic Adoptive Parent](#)



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