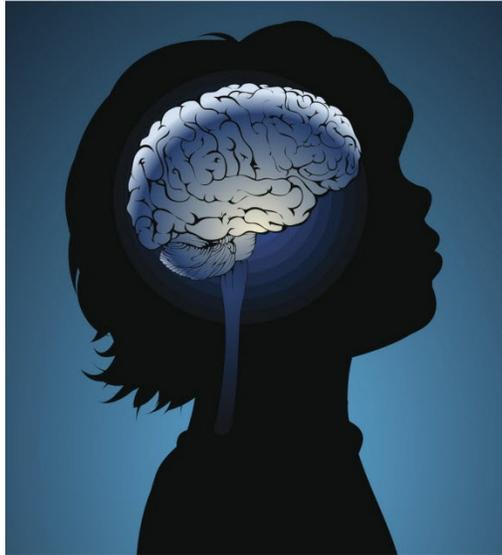


I'm adopted, but it's not what you think



Many families and individuals, that have gone or are going through the process of adoption, desire to live as if they could re-write the story. Probably some of us have felt that way at some point, wanting to erase something we did, said or was done to us.

We may want to start a new life as a family and put all the hurts and broken identity from the past in a box hidden in the closet to make space for new memories and experiences. But even more than we do, many of the children will want to do this. Some may even go as far as wanting to, consciously or not, forget their native language, forget memories and their past completely. Some of them invest so much energy suppressing memories daily but in spite all their efforts, they come to the surface whether through daily interactions, feelings, behaviors, even dreams and nightmares. Sometimes they may say "I don't want to think or talk about that", "if it's in the past, is gone".

For some parents it can also be difficult to hear and remember their child's story. Desiring to "erase" it as well. It may cause jealousy, anger or sadness because of the ones who abandoned or hurt their children, or maybe because they weren't able to be there and protect them; maybe they feel afraid to think about the possibility of their children preferring their previous family, or whatever other reason may be in their heart. All these feelings, are transmitted to our children directly or indirectly, through our actions, words and even gestures.

The reality is that we must provide an open and trusted environment where the children and/or teens are able to express their fears, difficulties, past and present hurts and worries. We must acknowledge that we cannot delete their past, and remember that everything they've lived is part of who they are today. But at the same time give them hope and courage that even though their past has an influence it does not have to determine their present and future.

Probably, in some cases, their abilities and capacities will be different to our expectations. It may also take them more time to reach some physical, emotional and cognitive developmental milestones. Maybe some of them will never get to be completely functional and healthy in their relationships or ability to be independent and successful. Remember that during those first years when they didn't receive the necessary stimulation and care, their ability to think, process and even communicate, was affected.

And that's why part of our role is to model the good and not give up when they fail or fall. And how can we do this?

When and as possible, get to know and accept their story. Remember where they came from and bring the right perspective of what they went through and where they are today. They might be much better today than what you could have imagined when they were little considering what they went through.

Give them an extra measure of grace and mercy.

Don't give up.

Ask our Creator to help us love, forgive, accept, give, and then keep giving.

What does the Word say?

...let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

Romans 12:2

Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.

Hebrews 9:14

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

Ephesians 1:5-8

While acknowledging His Son Jesus as Our Savior and Lord, we automatically become sons and daughters of God, because it pleased Him to make us part of His family. And when this happens, our story and past are not deleted, they are covered by the blood of Jesus like a holy blanket that cleanses and protects; provides forgiveness, restoration and strength to keep going in spite of the difficulties.

In this process of receiving a new identity as sons and daughters of God, those ideas and concepts we grew believing as "truth" about ourselves and the world around us, need to be exposed in order to be healed and transformed. We may all want that process to be quick and easy, but the reality is that it may take a lifetime to be renewed in our minds, and so it will for our adopted or fostered children.

And more than adopted or fostered by earthly parents, which is the cry of their hearts in the orphanages as they wait, our heart's cry is for them to know they are loved, accepted and adopted by a Perfect Father that will never abandon or hurt them. That no matter the choices their biological parents, the competent authorities or those around them make, they'll know God loves, heals and wants to be with them.

Many times they will even ask, "why if God loves, he allowed for all these to happen?" and we must know that we all have the freedom to choose which way to take, if we choose life or death. If we love or hate, if we give care or destroy, and that builds a destructive chain until, a new link is placed, one that produces good and lasting fruit.

Let us pray that God allows us to be that new and good thing in their lives, and may He be revealed in their lives. That no matter what happens tomorrow, that we may love them today with His love. That we may know the Author of our lives and be aligned with His purposes more each day. Let us pray for the mind and heart of our children every day.

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