

Adoption: The Long View

Episode 7 Transcript | Clemencia Deleon | Nov 2020

Lori Holden, Greeting

To get ready for this episode -- which turned out to be on Emotional Intelligence in adoption relationships -- imagine that you are 18 years old and parenting a 4 month old boy, a path you don't feel prepared for at all. You have an older half-brother; he and his wife have been struggling to conceive. You end up placing your baby with them in what is agreed to be an open adoption.

But in practice, it's not open. Sure you have contact at family get-togethers. You get to see him. But years later, his parents have declined to tell him that he was adopted and that you are his birth mom. As he grows older, you are pressed to either stay complicit with this lie of omission, or spill the beans without their permission. Listen in to this story of a kinship adoption gone wrong, and lessons learned.

Lori Holden, Intro

Hello and welcome to this episode of Adoption: The Long View, a podcast brought to you by Adopting.com.

Whether you've been married or not, you probably have an opinion on this question: is a wedding the ending, the happily ever after ending? When I ask that in workshops I lead, people laugh and say No. Sure, they say, the wedding is the end of the journey to the altar, but it's just the beginning of the journey of the marriage

And that's the focus of this podcast. Once you fill the crib and are legally joined to your beloved child, your journey is not over. It's just beginning. We cover many of the things you need to know to navigate adoptive parenting over the long view. Starting with things you need to know *now*, perspectives you need to hear *now*.

I'm your host, Lori Holden, the author of the book *The Open Hearted Way to Open Adoption* and longtime blogger at LavenderLuz.com. More importantly, I'm a mom through domestic infant adoption to a daughter and a son, now in their late teens. Let me tell you, it's been a ride. Think of any road trip you've ever taken. There are ups and their downs and it's always an adventure. You're always glad for the trip and afterward, you might on occasion, thinking, *if only I knew then what I know now*. Regarding your adoptive parenting journey, we aim to help you know now.

Lori Holden 0:01

With me today is Clemencia Deleon, who became a birth mom more than a decade ago in a kinship adoption, she has quite the story to tell and continues to walk a road of healing. Clemencia is passionate about child and brain development, emotional intelligence and treatment of traumatic life experiences. Her experience as a birth mother involved in a kinship adoption has given her a beautiful perspective on the importance of self worth, and the value of

clarity in communication. She is dedicated to helping others know their value, and the importance of having a clear understanding of their emotions.

Welcome, Clemencia!

Clemencia 0:41

Yes, yes, it's good to talk with you this morning.

Lori Holden 0:45

Tell us briefly how you came to place your four month old son with a family member.

Clemencia 0:52

Well, there were a lot of things that led up to the decision. And obviously, I didn't place him out of the hospital. I attempted to raise him for four months. And in those four months, I realized that my emotional space and my mental space were not stable. I wasn't in a stable mindset, I wasn't in a stable emotional space to care for a child.

And that's eventually what led me to the decision to place. I knew that there were things that I was going through, there were situations that kept occurring that weren't safe, that weren't safe for me that weren't safe for him. And I knew that he had to be somewhere that was safe, that was consistent and safe. And that was something I could not provide for him at the time. I was 18. There were a lot of emotions that I was unaware of. I was sad, I was feeling shame and guilt. And all of those led to very self destructive behaviors. And I knew that if I continued down this path, I would drag him with me and he deserved better.

So my brother and my sister in law were in a position to, to take him in, I didn't want anybody else. Like, I knew I didn't want him going to a family outside of my family because I still wanted to be a part of his life, I still wanted to see him grow up, I still wanted to have contact with him. And I just kind of instinctively knew that it would be more difficult to have that contact with him if it was with a family outside of my own. And so I decided to place him with my brother and my sister in law.

And from there, you know, it was supposed to be an open adoption when we discussed it. And so that's how I came to the decision. I knew that I was not right, emotionally or mentally to care for him.

Lori Holden 3:21

And you have talked about traumatic life experiences and you were experiencing some of those during the pregnancy. Are you able to talk about that?

Clemencia 3:30

Yeah, for sure. Okay, so prior to high school, in my childhood, there was a lot of my mom, you know, she was going through her own stuff. As an infant -- I'm the youngest of five kids. All of my siblings are 12, 18, 20 years older than me. So when my mom got pregnant with me in her late 30s, she was done raising kids. She was done having kids and then she gets pregnant with

me while in a not so healthy relationship with my father. And so she's going through everything with my older brother, his trial, and then you know, here I come.

And it's like, there's she disconnects. So the disconnection from my mom. My sister ends up raising me pretty much. Things happen between my father and I, which causes more harm.

And then, you know, so now I'm at the point of adolescence where I'm trying to identify who I am, I don't know who I am. I can't even -- I'm not aware of my emotions. I'm not aware of who I am. I don't know how to say, *I'm feeling angry*, or *I'm sad* or *I'm scared* or *I'm hurt*. And so it just stays inside.

And so come High School. It's typical. I had daddy issues. I was looking for love in all the wrong places and I had a boyfriend who had cancer and I end up sleeping with somebody else. And getting pregnant while he's essentially dying from cancer. And so all of the shame and guilt that comes with that.

I'm in high school, I'm in a small town, everybody knows what's going on, you know, and I'm like, embarrassed, I'm sad. You know, he dies. I'm six months pregnant when he dies. And because I don't communicate, because I don't tell anybody what I'm feeling, I take on like, *oh, he died of a broken heart*. Oh, *he died because I told him that this baby isn't his*. But no, he died from non Hodgkin's lymphoma. That's what took his life, not the fact that I was pregnant with somebody else's baby.

And I didn't know that I carried that for many years. And so I was, again, I was six months pregnant when this happened. So 3 months later, when I give birth, I'm still in like, *I don't feel like I deserve to be a mom*. I feel like I don't deserve to mother this child, because I'm such a horrible person for everything that I've done. It was like, really hard for me to admit that him and I had a connection -- that my son and I had a connection. And I denied it. And I was like, there's no connection. There's no connection. We're not connecting. We're not connecting.

But we were so connected.

And so yeah, it was really difficult to even comprehend the emotions that I was feeling. I was completely unaware of what I was feeling. I was so numb and disconnected. I've heard you talk about "don't split the baby," about how I'm just not splitting the baby. And I feel like I was a split baby. And I grew up with two beings. I showed the world one version of me. But really deep inside, there was another version of me and I couldn't, I couldn't fuse those two together, I didn't know how to fuse those two together. And that's how I lived my life hurt. I showed the world this version. But behind closed curtains, I was like, hurt and scared and didn't know how to express any of those things. So that little drama that led to that.

Lori Holden 7:33

There's so much that you as a 17 or 18 year old were dealing with. An absent father, it sounds like some issues there. And a mom who had kind of checked out because an older brother was

involved with the justice system and having a court trial. You're pregnant, your boyfriend is dying. You're pregnant with another man's baby. And I mean, that's a lot. Just so many emotions, I think it's probably a self protection mechanism to not feel them in full force when there's so much going on at once. And you're not fully supported by anyone.

Clemencia 8:12

Yeah, yeah,

Lori Holden 8:13

That makes sense. So that's the path to placing your four month old son. Let's put the time period. And this is about 12 years ago, right?

Clemencia 8:25

Correct. Yes.

Lori Holden 8:26

You intended for an open adoption. And I think it kind of is an assumption that we have that a kinship adoption is going to be open. How open are things now, 12 years later?

Clemencia 8:36

How open are things now? Um, things are not open at all. They are pretty much closed, I don't get to see him. I do not get to speak to him. I'm not invited to basketball games. I don't get to sit and have lunch with him at school. If there's a family dinner, and they're there, and I decide to go, then I get to see him. But other than that, there's no communication. There's no visitations.

Lori Holden 9:09

Wow. You mentioned that in a blog post (you wrote a couple of posts). For me that further explains the story. (We'll link to those in the show notes.)

By the way, you said that you come from a very tight knit family, but also one that wasn't really able to talk much about things, especially scary things like big emotions. What was it like growing up with that? And how did that continue to play out in what was supposed to be this open adoption? You had an agreement for an open adoption? So talk about the emotions and that kind of hardening against those emotions?

Clemencia 9:45

Yeah, I think it was normal for me growing up like, you know, like some kids their childhood like, they grow up and it's normal to just talk about their feelings. My childhood -- it was normal to not talk about my feelings. I didn't. It's not that I didn't know that. I couldn't. It's, you know, nobody was like, Oh, you can't feel that way. Don't ever feel that way. It was just not spoken, it was a learned behavior. nobody talked about their emotions.

So therefore, I didn't even know what they were like, this, whatever I'm feeling inside is a thing called an emotion and I can express it. I felt it and I shut down, whatever it was I shut down. And

so as I grew, it was just, you know, an adolescent, I fought a lot, I was really aggressive. I was angry, and I had no idea why I was angry.

So I'm fighting people, in high school, you know, I'm still fighting people. And I'm angry with my mom, I don't want her to physically touch me like hugs, I don't want her affection. And you know, and as I grew older, relationships with other people -- friendships, were deteriorating, because I was so cold or hard, and I couldn't be vulnerable. I didn't even know what vulnerable was.

I didn't even know that I could be safe in my own person to even speak about, *I'm sad about this*, or *I'm feeling angry about this*. That was not any kind of language that I had ever even heard of.

And so as I grew, and the whole adoption took place, I knew that I wanted it to be an open adoption, what open looks like? I had no idea. I just knew that I wanted to be involved in his life. And so when those things didn't start when they weren't happening, I didn't know how to tell my brother and my sister in law. Hey, guys. He was supposed to know me as his birth as his biological mom. And we're not having these conversations.

I didn't know how to approach those. I didn't know, I was too scared, if I brought it up, but I hurt their feelings. Would they cut me out? Would they tell me it's none of my business? So a lot of fear went into it. And it just kind of started to pile and pile and get deeper and deeper. And to the point where it was just like, I was complying. You know, I just didn't say anything. I was happy to be in his life. He got older, I had my daughter. It was just kind of like, it wasn't an issue. I didn't think it was an issue anymore because I was a part of his life. And because we were hanging out and spending time with each other. So I was okay with seeing him and him not knowing who I was because I was a part of his life.

Until I wasn't anymore.

Lori Holden 12:52

Let's talk about that moment of truth. That time when you decided it was a very conscious decision, you're -- let me back up a little bit.

Your Instagram handle is EQClem. EQ as in IQ, but in emotional intelligence. Because I'm seeing this, this interface between your emotional, your ability to manage emotions and your ability to communicate with others and solve conflicts around emotions. And if you're missing either one of those, you're going to struggle with how to work out with the other person. In this case, your son's parents.

Somebody told me a long time ago -- and this has served me well -- that emotions are meant to be in motion. I'm kind of doing this waving motion, like a wave with my hand. If you can keep the emotion in motion, let them have their way for a little while, then that's a little bit more intelligent than shutting them down, which leads to brittleness, coming out sideways. And some of the

other things that you have mentioned that it's kind of what happens when they're done, those emotions aren't able to move.

Clemencia 14:14
Definitely.

Lori Holden 14:15
So let's talk about that moment of truth. You decided to not be quiet any longer about this complicity that you were taking part in and hiding the truth from your son. At this point, he doesn't know that you're his biological mom.

Clemencia 14:19
Correct.

Lori Holden 14:19
Doesn't know that he's biracial.

Clemencia 14:21
Correct.

Lori Holden 14:23
And not only is there hiding the truth from him, but you've got a daughter, a younger daughter, now who you're parenting, and you're having to hide that from *her* to keep the secret from *him*. So what is this moment of truth like?

Clemencia 14:38
Oh, man, this moment of truth. It's almost, you know, you hear people talk about an awakening, like a lightbulb moment that goes on in their life that changes the course of what they were currently going on. And this was a moment that I feel like had been building up and it was like a dam that released.

He had asked previously, before I even got to the point of wanting to tell him the truth,

Lori Holden 15:07
This is your son.

Clemencia 15:08
Yeah, this is my son, he had asked previously, if he was adopted -- twice in my presence. And both times he was met with avoidance, a joke, and then silence.

And it started to wake up something inside of me, that had been sleeping for a really long time, and I didn't know what it was. And then it just like, I had entered into a relationship, and it was bringing a lot of awareness that I'm a liar. I grew up with liars. And I learned to lie. And it was just something that happened. And you know, when you tell a lie, like a small lie, or you keep

the truth out of something, and you your intention is to go back and tell the truth, or to give the whole story, but time goes on. And then you forget, or you get comfortable in that missing truth part, that lie piece, and it just gets big and big and big and grows and grows. And that's kind of what happened.

I feel like what happened with this, their intentions were probably well, my brother and sister in law were well in wanting to, but out of their own fear and insecurities, it just kind of got out of hand. Like they didn't know how to enter into that conversation. And so it just kind of built and built and built until it couldn't hold anymore.

And so when he started to ask if he was adopted, it was like, I can't do this anymore. Somebody has to tell him the truth. He's at an age. He's, you know, 9, 10 years old, asking these questions. Clearly, he's biracial, he's half black and half Hispanic, he looks different. Both of his parents are Hispanic, I'm Hispanic. And my daughter is half black and half Hispanic. So they look a lot alike.

And so it was just kind of like this energy that was accumulating, and nobody was saying anything about until I was like, I can't do this anymore. I have to tell him. And I started asking, you know, I was getting counsel from close family members and people that I trusted, and everybody was like, *nope, don't do it. Don't tell him, you'll ruin his life. He's already happy, you'll just make it worse.*

And I was like, he's being lied to. I have to tell him. If I don't tell him, he'll find out from somebody else. And I even asked my brother and my sister in law, I sent them a message. Again, this is part of my lack of clear communication. Instead of going to them, sitting down and having a conversation -- *Hey, guys you know, he's been asking this, you know, can we sit down and talk to him? Or can you sit down and talk to him?* -- I didn't do that. I messaged them. And I was met with silence; nobody responded to my message.

So I took it upon myself. I made the choice in that moment that the next time he asks, in my presence, I was going to tell him the truth. And that's what happened.

Lori Holden 18:25

Wow. So let me just point out that what we tend to think of as an open adoption is that you have knowledge of and contact with both families. And so it's interesting for your situation, you had the *contact*, at this point in time, but not the *knowledge*. That's essentially like the other way around. So that's what makes your situation so unique. So can you tell us how it happened that day where he did ask in your presence and spoke your truth, the truth?

Clemencia 18:57

The truth. Yeah, it was. I explained it as an emotional explosion. We were at a dinner at my sister's house. Everybody was there. And my brother, his kids, my nephew, their kids. There were so many people in this house. And everybody in this house knew he was adopted. Everybody,

Lori Holden 19:23

-- except --

Clemencia 19:24

-- except him.

And so the kids were playing a game. We were sitting down in front of the TV in the living room, and the kids were sitting like, we were eating dinner and the kids were still playing a game. And it was like a house game. A mom and brother, mom and sister game. And somebody said something about being a mom and somebody was like, *well, I thought she was your mom*. And he was like what? And she was like *Yeah, I thought she was your mom* and the little girl points at me.

And I had like 0.5 seconds to respond. And my response was, I am your mom. You know, and he was just kind of like, but the whole time it was like slow motion. You know, like when you watch movies and time slows down and how everything slows down. That's what happened.

He looks at me and he's like, *what?* And I can see the confusion on his face, and he was, like, curious, almost like joy or like ah ha I knew it or something. It was just something in his face that wasn't sad or angry. It was like a confused, intrigued, like what?

And then my brother and my sister in law, they were listening in on the conversation. And it was just like, slow motion in that moment.

And then it came all crashing down. They were angry, they came and my brother was yelling at me. They were very hurt. They were very hurt about it. And my intention wasn't to cause harm. My intent wasn't to hurt anybody's feelings. It was like, one of those moments, I had no time and I had already made up my mind that I was going to tell him the truth. And it just kind of all came crashing down.

And that's when my brother was like, you know, I don't want you coming around. You're no longer welcome. You know, like, all these things. And they swept him away. And I haven't we haven't had a relationship since.

Lori Holden 21:26

How old was your son at that time? How many years ago was this?

Clemencia 21:30

This was going on three years? He was 10.

Lori Holden 21:32

He was 10. And he'll be 13 soon...

Clemencia 21:36

Next year, Yeah.

Lori Holden 21:38

So in the last almost three years, what has been the fallout? Just kind of you coexist as part of the same large family but not any close interactions with each other?

Clemencia 21:51

Yeah, experience? Yeah, it's caused a separation from not only my brother and my sister in law, but my sister, my niece, my nephew, my mom, the whole constellation, really.

Lori Holden 22:14

Do they feel like they have to take sides?

Clemencia 22:16

I don't know. There's zero communication. Like when I say we come from a family that don't speak? Nobody is talking to me. Like, I'm not talking to them, obviously. But they're not talking to me either. So I can't say what it is on their side. I just know what it is on my side.

And I know that I've been cut off from his cell phone, I've been cut off from lunch, you know school lunch visitations I've been told I'm not welcome. So I don't know what it is on their side. I just know that because nobody in my family communicates in a respectful or healthy manner. That talking to them is just not happening. And so, right now anyways, in this today, in this moment, it's just been a strained relationship. In my family, I don't feel respected. I think family dynamics plays a role in that because I'm the baby sister. And because I was so wild. And I don't want to say crazy, but I was very wild and emotional. And so I think that's still how they see me. And so yeah, there's just there's no communication, and it's just what it is right now.

Lori Holden 23:39

So how in the world have you found healing from this banishment from your son's life in the last three years? How, how have you done that?

Clemencia 23:49

Oh, it's education. Honestly. Being informed on trauma, my childhood trauma, being informed on mother-child connections, on attachment theories, on just basic adoption education, has helped me gain insight on why I feel how I feel and that I'm not alone in feeling like this. Because for the longest time, I didn't think I was allowed to feel any of these feelings. I didn't because it was my choice because I made the choice to relinquish rights. I felt like I didn't deserve to feel any kind of way. Oh, yeah.

Lori Holden 24:41

Just suck it up.

Clemencia 24:42

Yeah, that I should just suck it up. I made the choice. You know, my sister, the last time we spoke, she was like, *I didn't give up a son. I don't need adoption education. Why are you --?* And I'm like I needed adoption education because I felt like I wasn't healthy like in my headspace. There was a lot of turmoil and I needed answers.

And so I found a birth moms group here in Texas, here in Dallas, and I got into it. It was the first time since I relinquished rights that I had been in the same room with other women that have been through similar situations. And it was so healing in that moment to realize that I'm not alone in this world. In this feeling of guilt, and this feeling of love, and shame, and all of these feelings that go on with adoption, like not just in the birth mom section, but in the adoptive parents section. And then in the adoptee section, it was just like a lot of feelings that I felt very alone with.

And so getting into the group was the first start in healing. And after that, it was just like consuming adoption information, from all kinds of voices, and, and then becoming aware of my own self, healing my emotions and learning to listen to my body and listen to what I'm feeling. And then just digging deeper, putting in that work to dig deep, deep, deep and find out why am I feeling like this? Where is this coming from? And how can I better move forward in this emotion?

You said earlier, emotions are like, you know, they move, they flow. And I heard emotions are energy in motion, so, as long as they're moving, as long as that's what I had to take in, I had to take in information on how to better understand my emotions, because my emotions were handling me. I wasn't handling my emotions, they were handling me. And I didn't, I couldn't do it anymore. There was so much pain coming from my emotions handling me. I was like, I don't want the rest of my life to be like this. And so I had to stop and pause.

And I realized that I have a voice that I have that I have to cultivate and strengthen. You know that that Throat Chakra, that center in my heart and in my chest, that speaking is okay. Speaking is normal, that I'm allowed to talk and I'm allowed to express how I feel. And I can do it tactfully. I can do it mindfully. I don't have to be, you know, raw about it. But I can be mindful and I can say *hey, that really hurt my feelings* or *hey, I'm really angry about this*. And let it be. And so I had to take in a lot of adoption information, a lot of education and adoption and emotional awareness to help me to help me get up every day. To help me have hope.

Lori Holden 28:25

I'd like to point out that all the things you're talking about have such wide application beyond just adoption. In dealing with people and dealing with ourselves. I know that being mindful about my own emotions helps me -- when I can do it, well it helps me be a better mom to teenagers.

Clemencia 28:44

Oh my gosh, teenagers are whole different beings. I can't, I can't, my hat is off to you, Lori.

Lori Holden 28:51

Because there's so much, there's just emotions in the house. Yeah. During these years. So as your son is about to become a teenager, do you dare have any visioning or hopes for what may happen in the next 6 to 10 years between you and him?

Clemencia 29:12

I do I do. I do. I don't want to be away from my family. I don't want to not talk to my family. Everything happens for a reason. These last two years have been for me, for my healing, for me to come to a place where I can come to the table and have a coherent conversation. So I can come to the table in a rational mindset and have a conversation where I'm not taking things personally, where I'm not attacking anybody. And we can and I can be like, *hey, like this is what I want out of this or these were my intentions. Or this is what I thought things could be*, whatever the conversation comes up with.

So my hope in the next 6 to 10 years is that we can sit and we can have this conversation. Because he's my son and he is a priority for me, you know, like I want to be in his life. And I think that he wants to be a part of our life as well. I come from a very prideful family and our pride is a is a fall, is a downfall, you know, and I feel like once I am able to put my ego and my pride to the side and come humbly to the table with with love -- I've already I've given a lot -- but I still have more to give. And for him, I will give every every last drop that I can give to be able to have a healthy relationship with him, even if that means putting my ego and my pride to the side. And so in the next 6 to 10 years, I have hope I have lots of hope.

Lori Holden 31:09

One of the common themes I'm finding in a lot of the people that I talk with on this podcast is the value of space, becoming spacious and expansive enough, being able to create enough space out of your heart or your being or your energy energetic space, to feel your own feelings, and to allow space for other people.

And even going into a birth mother support group, what you find there is that there's space for the emotions to unpack. And I feel like when you and your son are able to get back together, that you are doing the work on yourself, and you can provide him that space. So that even if he has some really tough emotions, if he's angry, if he's really ticked off, like super angry at various things, jealous of your daughter -- I mean, there's all sorts of things in adoption that he may be feeling. I feel that you'll be able to give him the space and the guidance to move those through. So I just think it's of such a value that you've committed to doing all of this work.

I want to know, what might you have done differently if you had a rewind button, assuming that you still placed him? What might you have done differently?

Clemencia 32:31

What might I have done differently? I would have gotten education. I heard you had Ashley Mitchell on here the other day, and she I remember listening to the podcast, and she was like, I was a grown woman and I did not know. And I remember thinking, I wasn't a grown woman, I was a child. I was 18. And I had no clue. I just knew the concept of adoption. And I knew the

concept of an open adoption. But other than that, I had no idea that there was education. I had no idea that there was information on emotions that could come up for me, them, or my son, so I would definitely, if I had a rewind button, immerse myself in adoption information.

Lori Holden 33:21

Is there something that's been of particular value? Like, where should people go to try to get this? Ashley Mitchell's Instagram page is an excellent source.

Clemencia 33:32

Yeah, she's an excellent source. There's so much out there. For me it was. It was the Brave Love website, I stumbled across that, that's how that's actually how I came across Ashley Mitchell's page is through the Brave Love website. It's a birth mom site. It was actually the first website that I came across that included birth moms. Everything else that I read was from an agency on an adoption website. And not all of it, none of it was bad information. It just, it wasn't full information. Like the full story. I felt like it was just bits and pieces of it, like a glimpse into possibilities. Um, and then I stumbled on the Brave Love website kind of just gave it to me kind of raw, like, here's birth mom stories and they had videos and you know, all kinds of stuff. And I was like, *Oh, wow*.

And then the Nancy Varrier book, the *Primal Wound*. That was a first for me. I told you I denied our connection. You know, my son and I's connection for so long. I think again, out of a protection thing, probably to protect him or to protect myself. But reading her book, it was like on a blog, top 10 adoption books to read or something, and I got it, and I read it and it forever was like, *okay, there was a connection. And these feelings are real*. And the things that in hindsight he was going through as a toddler made sense, and I was like, Okay, so that was, that was part of my healing journey as well was reading *The Primal Wound*, reading *The Girls Who Went Away*.

Those books kind of, again, just more education in the adoption space where it started. Adoption has a very dark background. I had no idea, I had no clue. And it just kind of opened it up. And then again, being in the birth moms group talking to finding a group in your area I would have, I definitely would have the education and support, those are two things that I would go back and, and do hardcore education and support.

Lori Holden 36:05

I've been taking some notes on what you're saying so I can include some of these resources in the show notes.

So we're getting close to time for wrapping up. So I would like to ask you this, what I asked all of our guests. Boil things down to your best piece of advice for adoptive parents, in the long view, the long view of adoptive parenting.

Clemencia 36:25

The long view of adopted parenting advice...my advice is to get comfortable being uncomfortable. There's going to be a lot of uncomfortable moments. And that's okay. Being uncomfortable is okay. A lot of a lot of growth comes out of uncomfortability. But my advice would just be to expect to be uncomfortable and to be prepared to put in the work for yourself. And then most importantly, for your child. Be uncomfortable. And then just be super mindful of your own emotions as the adoptive parent so that you can help your child in their emotional space because they're going to be there. We've got good emotions, tough emotions -- they're going to be there. And so my advice would be to be prepared to be uncomfortable and be mindful and aware of what you're feeling and why you're feeling and how you can get through those emotions in the best way possible.

Lori Holden 37:50

I think that's terrific advice. For all sorts of relationships. It's been such a pleasure talking with you Clemencia. Thank you for joining us today.

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