

Adoption: The Long View Transcript

Season 4 Best Of

Season 4 Episode 10 | December 1, 2023

Lori Holden, Intro

This is Adoption: The Long View, a podcast brought to you by Adopting.com. I'm your host, Lori Holden, author of [The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption](#) and [Adoption Unfiltered](#). Join me as we take a closer look at what happens *after* you adopt your child and begin parenting them. Your adoption journey isn't over then -- it's just beginning.

In this podcast, you'll hear from a variety of thought-provoking and influential guests as we help you make the most of your adoption journey. Like any trip worth taking, there will be ups and downs and challenges. Here's what you're going to wish you'd known from the start. Ready? Let's go.

Lori Holden, Greeting

It's finally December of 2023, which means that my new book, [Adoption Unfiltered](#), written with the amazing Sara Easterly, an adoptee, and Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard, a birth parent, is finally available! The first part of this episode will be our traditional season closing digest of best advice from all Season 4 guests, and the last part will be a preview of Sara, Kelsey, and me narrating parts of *Adoption Unfiltered* in our own voices.

(We're pleased to report that the audio version will eventually be available in Sara's voice throughout.)

As 2023 comes to a close, so does the 4th season of Adoption: The Long View. This season we heard from 6 adoptees, 2 birth parents, 4 adoptive parents, and 5 professionals in the field, like attachment therapists, a social worker, a psychologist, and agency professionals. I'm so honored that each of these guests came to share their personal and expert experiences to help us all get a better understanding of adoption's long view.

As you may already know, the last episode of each season is a bite-sized recap from each guest of the Best Advice given this season. For Season 4, the question that ended each interview was this: *How can we best support adoptees in building healthy identities and connections right from the start – or at least from today?*

So now I offer you the brilliance of our Season 4 guests, distilled into this season's best advice. What you'll hear in the next half hour or so are brief clips from the end of each episode – guests giving you their very best advice for taking the long view of adoption. We have a transcript available so you can easily find any episode you'd like to refer back to and take a deeper dive into.

After that, stay tuned to listen to excerpts from the new groundbreaking book [Adoption Unfiltered](#), narrated by Sara, Kelsey, and me.

Episode 401 featured Rebecca Ricardo, who is a 3-in-1 adoption sage: adoptee, birth mom, and adoption social worker. Here she is in [ep 401](#) about the adoption constellation in one woman.

401: Rebecca Ricardo, Adoption Constellation in One Woman

Rebecca: Sure. Well, you know, our best support to adoptees is transparency, openness, providing access to information, allowing us to choose how to make use of that information and not having that dictated by other people.

Lori: When you say us, you mean adoptee; an adult adoptee?

Rebecca: Yes. We need to be the owners of our information and the decision makers on how to make use of that information. And so we still need to dismantle systemic issues that are keeping documents and information protected from us, of having all this gatekeeping around what we're allowed to know about us.

Lori: You're talking about original birth certificates and adoption records.

Rebecca: Original birth certificates and adoption records. I mean, I think that information is about us. Yes, it's about other people, but other people who already made a choice about what to do legally. I can get on a soapbox about original birth certificates and the issues that people keep raising about birth mother privacy. It's like but you're talking about privacy around someone who legally terminated their rights to this child. And yet you still want to imply that they have rights to privacy, but they knowingly, supposedly (and I know there are a lot of women who didn't quite knowingly make this choice) but on paper, the legality of making the choice to terminate your rights means you have terminated your rights. And yet we want to not only give them rights to privacy, but more rights than any other parent has over a document. No one else controls their child's birth certificate other than the adopted persons whose birth certificate we seemingly want to let other people control. Your kids turn adulthood, they can go get their birth certificate. Well, you're not your kids, but if you gave birth to kids, they would be able to access their birth certificate. They would never have to ask you a question about it, but not adoptees. So anyways, that and adoption records. I think we have the right to all of our information.

That is how we support adult adoptees. We support adult adoptees by also fixing some of the systemic issues inherent in adoption; the ethical problems, the transfer of money. We know so much more about the damaging impact of adoption and how we do it is part of the damaging impact. It's not necessarily the adoption itself; it's the process we put people through that does a lot of the damage. And we could fix that. We could do this differently. Those are all ways in which we could be supporting adoptees better, as well as just listening to their stories and not listening to them with a, "Yeah, but I know someone who doesn't feel like that." So it doesn't mean my experience isn't valid.

Listen to what I have to say. And then when you start to, I think you don't have to listen to very many of Damon Davis' "Who am I really?" podcasts to go, "Hey, there's some themes here, people." Like, we do all have radically different stories, but if you weren't picking up some themes, and his is a nice cross section because of how randomly people come across wanting to be on his podcast. so it's not like he's getting some super-secret subset of adoptees who are all in collusion to say, "Let's all tell our stories the same way."

And even the adoptees that I know everyone wants to say, "Yeah, but I know an adoptee who says... they aren't struggling with any of this, that they don't have any of these questions, that this isn't hard for them." You know, my response to that is, "Awesome for them. And they're not dead yet. so there's still time for this to get hard, for this to get confusing, for this to get difficult, and for them to have some epiphanies that they didn't have before because it all happens for all of us at different times."

I happened to get really into wanting to understand my adoption experience in my early twenties. Some people don't get into that until their sixties, seventies. They live their whole life with, I'm sure you've heard the term, fog, of just those blinders on of, "No, it was great. It was great. It was great. It's great." It's a

survival coping skill, right? For a long time, we need to believe it's all okay, because the other side of that is terrifying. so it's a survival mechanism.

The other thing I always say to people who want to tell me that is they might not want to tell you. You might think you're a safe person for them to tell that to, but I'm here to tell you, as an adopted person and as a birth mother, we pick and choose who we're going to be open with. And it is a lot for us to really lay ourselves open bare, with our emotions around this. And so we're not going to do that with just anyone.

And so for a lot of us, including me, even to this day, there are certain situations where people will say, "Oh, well, how was that for you?" And I'll be like, "It's fine," because I'm not going to get into it with you right now. so you walk away from that interaction saying, "Well, I know an adoptee who said it was fine." And maybe it was fine in that moment, but you're not going to hear my whole story.

Lori: So let me see if I can summarize a few things for people who are raising an adoptee to adulthood. Things we can do along the way is I hear you saying transparency; just tell the truth. Deliver the truth. I hear you saying validation. Validate the child by validating their birth parents and their birth family and their experiences. Give them the space to be sad. Give them the space to experience that grief and loss. Give them the space to be maybe even be angry, envious, whatever it is. so validation, transparency. You've mentioned before, honoring. You felt honored when your son's mom reached out to you. She honored you. so these are some ways to help with that integration.

We talk so much on this podcast about the BothAnd. And I originally started using it as both adoptive family and birth family. But I've come to see that also as the both end of these emotions. so this journey of the highs and the lows, the joy and the loss. And so becoming, as adoptive parents, expansive enough to be able to hold the BothAnd of those, so that whatever our child is feeling, we can hold it. And that's how we feel safe to them. That's our best shot at feeling safe. Of course, we can just do our own work and clear away our own stuff is what we can do to feel safe. Does that about wrap it up?

Rebecca: That's great. And I'm so glad you used the word, integration, because I think a lot of why I want people to be doing this throughout their child's childhood is so that we as adoptees do have that chance at integration. so it's not hitting us all in adulthood, which is a much harder time to go back and integrate. It's much easier to integrate hard stuff as a little at a time as we're growing, developmentally, within the safety of our family, when our family is supposed to feel safest to us, not when we've launched from our family and are now sort of out there on our own. And I think that's my generation of adoptees, that's what's been hardest for us, is we were doing most of this work as adults separated already from our adoptive family. so we were flailing around literally on our own, trying to integrate. And integrate, looking back on a childhood going, "What? Wait a minute, now my childhood doesn't make sense." so integration for sure.

And the other thing is, I want all parents to know this. Our job as parents is to raise our children to leave us and be out in the world successfully. Why wouldn't you want to teach how to manage hard stuff? There's nothing about the rest of their lives separated from us that's going to be easy. It wasn't for any of us. Why would we think it would be for our kids? They need the skills to manage the tough stuff. So why wouldn't we want? We shouldn't want adoption to just be rainbows and unicorns and all good all the time because when are we teaching about the hard stuff?

This is a great opportunity to make sure you're imbuing in your child what they need to just cope with the world, let alone cope with adoption. But the world has hard things and we need skills. We need skills on how to manage that. And our job as parents is to model it, to teach it, to recognize that our kid may need to use a different strategy than works for us. so we need to be open to teaching other strategies, "This doesn't work for me, but maybe it'll work for you." And giving you a chance to practice and figure out what does help them manage anger and sadness and loss and separation and frustration and confusion. And the list goes on and on. Right? That's our job as parents.

Lori: Even the emotions need to be integrated into a whole. Yeah.

Rebecca: I mean, we can't know what happy feels like if we don't know what sad feels like. And is always a more effective way to look at this than either/or, because it all is there and we want to experience it all. And in adoption, just if we accept it, it forces all of that to the surface. Because if you're really tending to the adoption issues well, you're grappling with all of this, a little at a time, over your child's childhood, and into adulthood. And the journey continues literally until you're dead.

Lori Holden, Host: Help adoptees integrate all their parts. Listen to them, validate their range of emotions, be trustworthy with them. That was Rebecca Ricardo from [Ep401](#), should you want to tune in for more wisdom from someone who has multiple perspectives on adoption.

Dawn Davenport, Executive Director of Creating A Family, talks about the importance of continuing education for adoptive parents in [Ep402](#).

[402: Dawn Davenport on Continuing Ed for Adoptive Parents](#)

Dawn: I think that as adoptive parents, we have to accept that our kids are not us and that their curiosity about, and connections with, their first family is not a threat to us. It's not all about us. And not feeling threatened allows us to open ourselves up to walk alongside them in this journey.

Lori: I love that. And I feel like maybe you've encapsulated the whole thing right there with, "It's not all about us." And it's normal, I think, when you come into it that it is all about you, when you're starting this journey of adopting; whatever method you use. But at some point, that has to fall away because you go from a "You" to an "Us" and you just have to make space for that other person to be themselves and have their own feelings and emotions about it.

Dawn: Exactly.

Lori Holden, Host: That was Dawn Davenport of Creating A Family on being willing to open ourselves up to our child's curiosity, and to connection with birth family in [Ep402](#).

In [Ep 403](#), we heard from two men who learned as adults that they had been adopted, one through a relative's "oops" moment and the other through random DNA testing. Brad Ewell and Fred Nicora tell us the impact of this late revelation along with their best advice for identity formation.

[403: The Truth, the Whole Truth, & Nothing But the Truth for Adoptees with Brad Ewell & Fred Nicora](#)

Brad: For me, and this really comes from listening to your podcast, it's that idea of openness. And not the idea that there has to be biological family contact, because sometimes I don't even think in my case that would have been a possibility. But the openness with (a) the story that, yes, you're adopted and here's, at that age appropriate time, why we chose to adopt. As an adoptive parent, you can find out the story about why they were relinquished for adoption. That's something that your child may want to know.

I think all of this comes down to not having secrets from your child, but at the same time, if they're not ready to know and they haven't asked, you don't necessarily have to dump that to them. But try to have all the information you can ready for them when they do start seeking.

I think the biggest thing for identity forming is just holding that space. And I just reread my essay that I wrote for you and I can't remember if I put it in there or not now. But I use my cousin as a great example. She's an adoptive parent as well. And I went and stayed at her house for a couple of days when I was traveling through the city that she lives in. And she has, I believe, four adoptive kids, maybe five. I lost track. But regardless, when I was on the way there, she called me one day. She called me and said, "Hey, just wanted to give you a heads up before you get here. One of my kiddos just stopped me and ask, 'Hey, is Brad the one that's adopted? Is he the one that's coming?'" And she's like, "Yeah, yeah, that's the one that's coming." He goes, "Well, does he hate being adopted as much as I hate it?" And my first thought was, "Oh." I mean, my stomach turned because knowing the family that I was raised in and how those words would have been received, I couldn't imagine that went well. And she said, "I told him that he needed to ask you when you got here because I didn't know how you felt about it."

And I'm sure that somewhere there she was fazed by it. But at least when she was talking to me on the phone and as I've watched her around her kids, she holds space for those really just hard, not fun questions and conversations and just bad days. I mean, Fred's got biological kids. I have three biological kids. I think even with my own biological kids, there's days they'd probably prefer a different dad, but they got me. So just holding space for the hard conversations that you're going to have, regardless of whether they're your biological kids or adoptive kids.

Lori: That's a wonderful little vignette and kudos to her for not taking it personally, at least in the part that you saw of it. Because what I hear is that her son was then able to have that feeling, he can tell her that he's having that feeling and he's probably going to be able to tell her other things, too, without worrying about her reaction to it.

Brad: So that's exactly it. And I think it makes all the world of difference for the adopted kid, or really any kid, to be able to just talk through those feelings and realize that so many of the times, the things that are triggers for us, when people are saying to them they're not trying to trigger us. They're just having a feeling or an emotion.

Lori: And that speaks to the intimacy that, Fred, you were talking about and as close as we can be when we feel safe with each other and without secrets and triggers in between us.

Fred, what do you think people need to know; how to support adoptees in building healthy identities and connections right from the start?

Fred: One of the things that I think is awesome that you're doing, Lori, look at how you've approached adoption. By doing this show alone, by being an activist for adoption and for the adoptee, you are living a demonstration that shows you are open to it and that you're on their side. And I think the more that a parent can do to demonstrate that, not just make a simple comment; if you ever want to talk to me about it, just ask. That to me is kind of a wall.

On the other hand, if I see my mom, if I see my dad and they're actively doing things, if they're maybe involved in open records laws at the state level, and I'm aware of that, now all of a sudden, I know that they're in my corner. They're actually fighting for who I am as a person that has more to their story than just being your adopted child. And I'm not saying that's a small thing. I'm just saying that all of the kids that are adopted do come with a story that's a little bigger than that.

And as Brad said, holding space for that. That extra, is it an inch? Is it a foot? Is it a mile of space? That they do have something that's a little unique, different and recognizing that you're on their side for them,

exploring, understanding, embracing and growing into that, I think will go miles as they grow and get into middle and high school. I taught middle and high school for 20 years and those are challenging periods to begin with. And kids are grappling with Identity, trying to figure out who they are. Brad brought up that mirroring before. They're looking at everything around them. And for the adopted population, that's a lot more challenging. And especially if you get into something like interracial adoptions, that's very challenging.

And what are you doing on the front end that's demonstrating to them that you are not only fighting for their needs and fighting for who they are as an entire person, but helping them to engage in that, whether it's holding space for, if you know that they're of a different genetic heritage, maybe they're Scandinavian or maybe they're Nigerian or whatever they are, celebrating those holidays in your home as if they're part of your family because they are part of your family at this point. So think whatever you can do to include their total person in the entire scope of family will help them.

I know I mentioned to you a little earlier, for me a faith-based life. And I say that as a tool for coping and as a tool for processing can also help. So I think if you can allow kids to have some exposure to where they can explore with whatever their higher power, whatever their God is, whoever they recognize that to be. And maybe that ties into their own cultural history, maybe that's a place for that, too.

So I think the more you can do to show you embrace parts of them that aren't parts of you, I think that'll help firm up that relationship as they grow. And they'll see that you've acted according to what you're seeing.

Lori Holden, Host: Cultivate openness, create space, deal with your own triggers, make the world better for adoptees by advocating for their interests, connect with a higher power, and embrace all parts. So said Brad Ewell and Fred Nicora in [Ep403](#)

In [Ep404](#), we heard from Dr Brad Reedy about three things parents need to have their antenna up about and be intentional with: guilt, shame, and boundaries.

[404: Dr Brad Reedy on Guilt, Shame, and Boundaries](#)

Dr. Brad: I know it's going to sound simple and perhaps a little repetitive but go to therapy; something therapeutic. If you can't afford therapy or you don't have the time, go to Codependents Anonymous or Adult Children of Alcoholics or Families Anonymous. Go for a therapeutic process where the task is not to be good or have all the answers, but to find out and be in touch with yourself. I was just talking to a very close friend this morning about a young person who just had a child. We were talking about therapy for a few minutes and I said, "Doing your own work is the best. Right now, It's fun because you have this beautiful little infant child and everything is wonderful and he's sleeping and eating well and safe, but it's going to get vastly more complicated." So, my answer is, do your own work, always. Do your own work.

Anne Lamott, the novelist, said, "The most profound thing that we can do for our children is to do our own work, to do our own healing." And that's my answer. And I'm standing with it.

Lori Holden, Host: That was [Ep404](#) with Dr Brad Reedy of Evoke Therapy Programs on boundaries, guilt, shame, and knowing ourselves, as a route to healing ourselves.

In [Ep405](#), Adi Tilford reveals the basics of becoming a Therapeutic Parent and cultivating your home as a therapeutic home. Doing so can facilitate authenticity, increase felt safety, and strengthen the connection between parent and child.

[405: Adi Tilford on Therapeutic Parenting](#)

Adi: Well, I feel like this has been something that I've had come up a lot lately. And I think it ties to your episode with the [two men who found out late in life that they were adopted](#). And I would just say that making sure children know as much as you know of their story at that developmentally appropriate age.

But I think [Heather Forbes](#), we learned it was, she says, by age 12. And as an educator and a person who loves child development, I would agree that as I watched the sixth graders at the middle school I work at start to really work through their identity and they really shift from adults and parent-people being the most important relationship in their perspective – to their peers, I feel like making sure that your children have a clear understanding of everything that you know and can offer to around this their story, whether that's from their adoption story or things that happened in your home when they were small so that they know like, *hey, I have had to work on some anger things. And when you were small, I yelled a lot and I didn't know how to do that.* And so I need you to know that sometimes if I am yelling, that might make you feel afraid because it has this old connotation. I've been working a lot on that.

And just making sure kids understand that even maybe I don't really yell now, but I did before. And so, helping them just make sense of why a teacher that yells might really be a big trigger for them and they'll make that sense of their own understanding.

But I guess just making sure children have as much of their story that you have to offer them. And I guess that makes a lot of sense to me that before they start entering and really working through identity development or their adolescent years, that they would have that. And that way they can allow all of those pieces of the puzzle to create the picture of who they are.

Lori: And the therapeutic parenting piece gives them the freedom to put those pieces together and be authentic. And with you standing by to help co-regulate them when they need things. So that's very helpful. I really appreciate your sharing your journey. I can tell, just in this conversation, you've made quite a journey for yourself for the sake of your daughters. And I want to clap for you and pat you on the back through the Zoom. So, we got to celebrate those things.

Lori Holden, Host: That was Adi Tilford on becoming a therapeutic parent and creating a therapeutic home in [Ep405](#).

[Ep406](#) is a conversation with adoptee, adoptive parent, and psychologist Dr Chaitra Wirta-Leiker about developing the courage and confidence to talk with adoptees about race.

406: Dr Chaitra Wirta-Leiker on How to Talk About Race with Adoptees

Dr. Chaitra: I think connecting with other adoptees and their families is one of the best things that you can do, because being an adoptee is a culture within itself, and being a transracial adoptee is a very specific culture. And even though every story is unique and every journey is in a different place, having people who share that lived experience is so important in being able to form your own identity and to feel like you have value. You know, it's hard to feel like you matter if you never see anyone around you who resembles you in some capacity. So, I think that's the most important thing they can do is connect with the adoption community, and especially adoptees who have been there and who know what it's like.

Lori: You and I are both involved with adoption camps. And I know adoption camps are not the be-all-end-all, especially for the child, but it does give them some time with that subculture. And what it does for us parents when we are at these camps is we're learning these things and we're getting to our edge and we're getting to that uncomfortable space in a safe space. And so there's value in camps for that as well.

Dr. Chaitra: Yeah, I think it's a great place to start building those relationships and communities that, like you're saying, it shouldn't just be one time a year, but when you're there, find those people, start connecting and build those relationships long term.

Lori Holden, Host: Recognize that being an interracial adoptee is a very specific culture in itself. Make sure to provide opportunities for your transracial adoptee to connect with others who have a similar background and experience. That was Dr Chaitra Wirta-Leiker in [Ep406](#).

In [Ep407](#), Greg Gentry, moderator of Fireside Adoptees, reveals 5 things his adoptive parents did well, and the 6 things...well, not so much.

407: Greg Gentry of Fireside Adoptees

Greg: I really think the transparency element is huge in this and the willingness to have done some inner work before adopting a child. And understanding the importance of keeping your child at the center. I kind of like the constellation idea much better than the triad, which kind of suggested three equal sides. And unfortunately, it's not. There really is a need to keep your child at the center. And I think that when you can do that and share transparently with them and enter into whatever questions they have and hear them, hear their words and value what they're saying and also value where they came from, I think you will have done the best you can. Again, there's no guarantee of a good experience. I don't even really like those ways of talking about, "Did you have a good adoption experience?" It sounds like a resort. How many stars would you give this? And it's not. It's a life that you live. So, it's really hard to break it down into those categories.

But I feel like that would be what I believe would be the best you can do as an adoptive parent to show that you're trying to center your child, not insisting that they have a certain reaction to it or feel a certain way in response. So, latitude for them to feel what they feel and transparency about everything you can share with them.

Lori Holden, Host: Commit to transparency, center your child, and give them latitude to feel their own feelings about adoption. That was [Ep407](#) with adoptee and adoption conversation facilitator Greg Gentry.

Joining us for [Ep408](#) was seasoned adoptive parent Maureen McCauley, sharing about the dance we adoptive parents do with the adoptees we parent. How do we know when to lead, and when to follow?

408: Maureen McCauley: The Dance of Adoptive Parenting

Maureen: And I think that's a really important point, actually, because where we are is where we can start. We cannot go backwards and we need to come to grips and to peace with that. I think that one way, as I look in retrospect and I've mentioned this, but we equipped our children well was raising them not in racial isolation, but in racial community. That they were surrounded by people who looked like them. I think we place a huge burden on transracially adopted children if they are raised in racial isolation. We as white people cannot really teach them about racism. And if they don't experience any until they are in college or beyond, that's a heck of a time to have to come to grips with some of that and to develop their own racial identity. So, I think that's one.

I think another way is to be open to hearing strange things occasionally from our children, things that you think, *What? Where did you possibly get that idea?* And it could have been from a friend, from a TV show, from social media, from something, and to take them seriously when they are asking these questions and to follow up.

Also, I think it helps to have, especially if you have more than one child, to have one-on-one conversations as often as possible with our children about some of these issues and be willing to ask somewhat leading questions so that we can get answers without appearing judgmental or that we have a particular answer that's the right answer in mind that we want them to provide. But again, having space and to be willing to listen and to not judge, but to accommodate and to, as long as everything is safe and everything is appropriate, to make progress from there.

I think having adoptee mentors, having adopted adults in their lives, being able as an adoptive parent to say, give them anecdotes of, "You know, I was talking to X person. Did you know she was adopted from Colombia and she made this kind of remark?" or "You know, sometimes I have a friend who was – she was adopted when she was a baby. But, you know, she's done –she's, of course, an adult now, but she still wonders what that was like, what her first few weeks of life were like before she went to live with her adoptive parents." And just kind of leaving it there. So, the child may respond, may not respond. And again, age appropriate. You have to be the best guide that you can be on something like that.

But I think offering questions, offering space, being uncomfortable, sometimes being able to say, "Yeah, that must just be really hard. I wasn't adopted, so I don't know. But that must be really hard to wonder why you were placed and somebody else wasn't, to not know at this point what your mother or your grandmother looks like. That must be really hard." To partner with them and just be in that kind of silence and to be in that challenging pain and sorrow with them. And not to languish there, of course, and to move on, but to be willing to be with them, even in their sadness as well as in their joy and in celebration of the family that we have now.

Lori Holden, Host: Find adult adoptee mentors. Be curious, give space, get comfortable being uncomfortable. Be willing to partner and co-create with your adoptee as they grow up. That was [Ep408](#) with seasoned parent Maureen McCauley on when adoptive parents should lead and when they should follow in the dance we do with our adoptee.

My co-authors Sara Easterly and Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard joined me for In [Ep 409](#) to talk about why and how we came together to write what we think will become a must-have in every adoption library, *Adoption Unfiltered: Revelations from Adoptees, Birth Parents, Adoptive Parents, and Allies*.

409: Sara Easterly & Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard: Unfiltering Adoption

Kelsey: I do think that it sometimes can be a little more complicated for each individual child, but at its core, approaching parenting with an open mind and approaching our child for who they are and meeting them where they are, if they haven't met our expectations. And maybe we should open our eyes a little bit more and see them for who they are and change our expectations, or just get rid of them.

So, I think that I'm in such an early part of my parenting journey with my own daughter. And also, I'm still in such a fresh perspective of being a birth mom only seven years. And so, I'm no expert on parenting, but I know that allowing our children to find out who they are and help and guiding them through that and approaching it with an open mind, I don't think is going to be a harmful way to be a parent. I think it could bring really good things.

Lori: That's beautiful. And I do think every human being wants to be seen for who they are. And so, adoption brings kind of an added layer to that. So, I love that advice. That's wonderful.

Sara, how about you? How can we best help our children build healthy connections and identities from this moment forward?

Sara: Well, I don't know how to answer that succinctly, Lori. I will say that chapter 21 of our book, I think, might be one of my two longest chapters. It's competing with one other, but I think it may be my longest chapter; I should do a word count. But that whole chapter is on supporting adoptee maturation and it's advice for parents. And so, I want to say read the chapter. I have six ways outlined how to meet adoptees' needs and support our maturation. And so, I think I really do believe those six ways are my answer. And I don't know how to distill that quickly. And I also kind of cheated because I have six ways. And then under each one I have sub points. So, I probably have more like 20 or 25 ways all in.

But I think, just on a high-level cliff notes, I'll start with just welcoming our full range of emotions and providing a space and opportunities to feel our sadness, as I touched on before, so that that kind of win-win story of adoption doesn't always make space for that. So, inviting sadness. And that doesn't mean pushing sadness into us, into our faces. But I get into that in the book of how to gently do that and gently help us find our way to our feelings. Because adaptation does require that we feel sadness and that when we encounter futility, we feel sadness, and we don't get stuck in a loop of frustration or a loop of attacking energy or denial; those kinds of things. We do actually need to feel the sadness to adapt and to grow. And that's for everybody, but then with any loss. But that's definitely important because adoption, as I said, has so much loss. So, I guess I would start there and then say, read chapter 21.

Lori: The frameworks that you bring with some visuals and everything in the book on the frustration traffic circle in particular, have been so helpful to me, not only for seeing my children, but seeing my own behavior patterns. So, I do highly suggest people read that. I believe that is that in chapter four.

Sara: Three, four, and five, I believe. Again, I just have to give so much appreciation to Dr. Gordon Neufeld for his work. And he was really fantastic about working with me on my chapters as well, and reading those through and giving me feedback and suggestions. So, I feel like that definitely strengthens

that whole message of our primary responses and the frustration traffic circle. And what happens. It may sound a little vague online, but you're right, there is a – we illustrate it in the book and try to explain it as much as we can.

Lori Holden, Host

That was [Ep409](#) with my co-authors of the brand new *Adoption Unfiltered*. Kelsey advises us to parent with an open mind and meet your child where they are – really see them. Sara's advice is to support adoptee maturation by welcoming an adoptee's full range of emotions (plus 5 more important approaches outlined in Ch 21 of *Adoption Unfiltered*.)

Extra: *Adoption Unfiltered* excerpts

Now, drumroll please...it's time to preview three excerpts for *Adoption Unfiltered*., one each read by Sara, Kelsey, and by me. We have spent the last 3 years collaborating on a book that aims to bring clarity about our position in the adoption constellation to ourselves and to the others we are in orbit with. With a cast of 50 interviewees (some of them you listeners), our book is in 4 parts. Part 1 is called **Adoptees Unfiltered**. Part 2 is called **Birth Parents Unfiltered**, Part 3 is called **Adoptive Parents Unfiltered**. Part 4, not excerpted here, is called **Healing and Hope**. Enjoy this set of previews!

PART I: ADOPTEES UNFILTERED

Sara Easterly, author: Welcome to the first section of *ADOPTION UNFILTERED*, written by me, Sara Easterly, an adoptee.

Right off, I'll share that it's been daunting to write this adoptee-focused section of the book—not from lack of words—but because it is so important to me to properly honor the contributors who helped inform this project as well as support you, the reader—whether you are also an adoptee, or whether you've come to this book because you care about an adoptee. What's more, as I've been writing about some of adoptees' common struggles of adoption, I've had to wrestle with my own residue of separation trauma..

=== untranscribed portion ===

PART II: BIRTH PARENTS UNFILTERED

Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard, author: Welcome to the second section of *ADOPTION UNFILTERED*, written by me, Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard.

Our society loves to hear two stories about birth parents: first, the story of our “selfless” choice and second, the reunion story that occurs around twenty- five years later. No one seems to believe that the time in between matters, but they are wrong.

=== untranscribed portion ===

PART III: ADOPTIVE PARENTS UNFILTERED

Lori Holden, author: We have first heard from adoptees and birth parents—the lesser-heard voices of adoption. Now it's time to hear from adoptive parents. This section is written by adoptive parent Lori Holden. The adoptive parent perspective is better known and less mysterious, yet there are aspects of the adoptive parent experience that parents may try very hard to keep hidden, often from:

=== untranscribed portion ===

Wrap up

Lori Holden, Host: That was Sara, Kelsey, and me reading from our respective parts of our new book. I'm so excited for *Adoption Unfiltered* to be hitting the nightstands and book clubs of you and others, for the book's mission is in line with that of *Adoption: The Long View*: to help us better show up for the adoptees we love over the long arc of parenting. We have a really fun book club discussion guide available to those of you reading in community. Just visit AdoptionUnfiltered.com to download for free.

So it's a wrap for Season 4 of [Adoption: the Long View](#)! We will take a short break and see you soon for more captivating guests in Season 5. To support our efforts in bringing you high-quality guests and episodes, it really helps us out when you share this episode with others, and when you give it a heart or a rating on your podcast platform – thanks to those of you who already have, and thanks to those of you who are about to. Make sure to subscribe wherever you listen so you know when new monthly episodes are available.

Adoption agencies, THANK YOU for sharing with your clients. Adoption support groups, THANK YOU for discussing these topics together. Adopting.com, THANK YOU for meeting people early in their adoptive parenting journey and helping them begin to see the long view right at the starting gate.

So long, Season 4. I can't wait to gather again for Season 5. With each episode of *Adoption The Long View*, we bring you guests who expand your wisdom of adoptive parenting. Thanks to each of you listeners for tuning in and investing in your adoption's Long View. May you meet everything on your road ahead with confidence, curiosity, and compassion.