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**Sent:** Friday, July 19, 2013 8:37 AM  
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# A Family for Every Child

Ten things every adoptive parent should know, from an adoptee's perspective.

One thing that I am very grateful for when it came to my adoption was my parent's honesty. For as long as I can remember, my parents were very open about my sister's and my adoption. We had books on being an adopted child, they answered our questions, and told us that when we were ready we could get in touch with our birth parents and they would be supportive of that. I didn't realize how important that was until the day I received some information about my birth family that made me very upset. The information was casually dropped into a conversation, and was something that should have been told to me long before. It made me think about how my parents could be so open about everything related to my adoption but still keep some things from me. I can tell you right now that honesty and openness are the best policy. Keep it age appropriate, but don't hide things from your adopted child. The more open you are, the more comfortable your child will be in asking you questions, and the easier it will be for him/her to process their life's events.

The following is a list from a blog post about ten things adoptees want their adoptive parents to know. It's not on the list, but I can tell you as an adoptee that I want my parents to know that being open and honest was the best.



## Ten Things Adoptive Parents Should Know

- 1. Adoption is not possible without loss.** Losing one's birth parents is the most traumatic form of loss a child can experience. That loss will always be a part of me. It will shape who I am and will have an effect on my relationships-especially my relationship with you.
- 2. Love isn't enough in adoption, but it certainly makes a difference.** Tell me every day that I am loved-especially on the days when I am not particularly lovable.
- 3. Show me-through your words and your actions-that you are willing to weather any storm with me.** I have a difficult time trusting people, due to the losses I have experienced in my life. Show me that I can trust you. Keep your word. I need to know that you are a safe person in my life, and that you will be there when I need you and when I don't need you.
- 4. I will always worry that you will abandon me,** no matter how often you tell me or show me otherwise. The mindset that "people who love me will leave me" has been instilled in me and will forever be a part of me. I may push you away to protect myself from the pain of loss. No matter what I say or do to push you away, I need you to fight like crazy to show me that you aren't going anywhere and will never give up on me.
- 5. Even though society says it is PC to be color-blind, I need you to know that race matters.** My race will always be a part of me, and society will always see me by the color of my skin (no matter how hard they try to convince me otherwise). I need you to help me learn about my race and culture of origin, because it's important to me. Members of my race and culture of origin may reject me because I'm not "black enough" or "Asian enough", but if you help arm me with pride in who I am and the tools to cope, it will be okay. I don't look like you, but you are my parent and I need you to tell me-through your words and your actions-that it's okay to be different. I have experienced many losses in my life. Please don't allow the losses of my race and culture of origin to be among them.
- 6. I need you to be my advocate.** There will be people in our family, our school, our church, our community, our medical clinic, etc. who don't understand adoption and my special needs. I need you to help educate them about adoption and special needs, and I need to know that you have my back. Ask me questions in front of them to show them that my voice matters.
- 7. At some point during our adoption journey, I may ask about or want to search for my birth family.** You may tell me that being blood related doesn't matter, but not having that

kind of connection to someone has left a void in my life. You will always be my family and you will always be my parent. If I ask about or search for my birth family, it doesn't mean I love you any less. I need you to know that living my life without knowledge of my birth family has been like working on a puzzle with missing pieces. Knowing about my birth family may help me feel more complete.

8. **Please don't expect me to be grateful for having been adopted.** I endured a tremendous loss before becoming a part of your family. I don't want to live with the message that "you saved me and I should be grateful" hanging over my head. Adoption is about forming forever families-it shouldn't be about "saving" children.

9. **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** I may need help in coping with the losses I have experienced and other issues related to adoption. It's okay and completely normal. If the adoption journey becomes overwhelming for you, it's important for you to seek help, as well. Join support groups and meet other families who have adopted. This may require you to go out of your comfort zone, but it will be worth it. Make the time and effort to search for and be in the company of parents and children/youth who understand adoption and understand the issues. These opportunities will help normalize and validate what we are going through.

10. **Adoption is different for everyone.** Please don't compare me to other adoptees. Rather, listen to their experiences and develop ways in which you can better support me and my needs. Please respect me as an individual and honor my adoption journey as my own. I need you to always keep an open mind and an open heart with regard to adoption. Our adoption journey will never end, and no matter how bumpy the road may be and regardless of where it may lead, the fact that we traveled this road together, will make all the difference.

Source: [Diary of a Not-So-Angry Asian Adoptee](#)

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