

AAC Conference 101 handout

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A matter of perspective

We have all heard or read statements about adoption that trigger strong emotions or reactions in us. How do you feel when you hear each of these statements? Are there any other things you've heard about adoption that cause a strong reaction in you, whether it's positive or negative?

Examples of "polarized" statements:

Adoption is best for a baby born to a single mom.

Being adopted causes lifelong injury.

Adoption is a great way to build a family.

Raising an adopted child is no different than raising a child born to you.

Your birth mom gave you up for adoption because she loved you so much.

You are lucky to have been adopted into your family.

Adoption is a selfless thing to choose for your baby.

Adoption is complex.

Small group discussion

- 1) Which statement really bugs you, and why?
- 2) Now, how could that statement be true for someone else? Is there any possibility you can imagine that might make someone genuinely feel or believe that?
- 3) Which statement do you feel in your heart but are afraid to say out loud?
- 4) Which statement makes you feel at ease?
- 5) Can you imagine a scenario in which that statement might be difficult for someone else to hear?

Larger group discussion

- 1) What was this exercise like for you?
- 2) What did you notice happening for you as you were hearing these statements?
- 3) What do you do when you hear a perspective that's really different from your own? How do you cope with emotions (anger, sadness, frustration, etc.) when they arise?

Food for thought

"Compassionate action starts with seeing yourself when you start to make yourself right and when you start to make yourself wrong. At that point you could just contemplate the fact that there is a larger alternative to either of those, a more tender, shaky kind of place where you could live." Pema Chodron