

“ When Adoptive Parents get a Bum Wrap ”

The comment: Adoptive parents sometimes face the unique challenge of assisting their children with their anger at their experience of relinquishment. In so doing adoptive parents are subject to the negative transferences that relinquishment may set in motion. These dynamics are especially evident in the task of managing a child’s protest against both relinquishment and adoption.

Relinquishment- the separation between a child and its first parents

Transference- expectations in the present that are set in motion by past experience.

The Protest- when relinquished children resist the care of adoptive parents because of difficulties managing/accepting the loss of first parents

The Catch-22 of Adoptive Development- the part of the adoptee heart most in need of understanding, comfort and nurture is less available to the adoptive parent because of the injury of relinquishment. Yet adequate parental care is the primary variable in helping the child grieve such an injury.

Adoptive parents DO get a “Bum Wrap” when...

- 1) their children express their primal anger at their relinquishment and their anger at their corresponding adoption ...precisely against them as parents. We usually hurt the people we are closest to as a method for requesting help and understanding. In their very frustration as parents they “live” the experience of their children.
- 2) there is insufficient pre-adoption education in the community about the struggles that relinquishment or the termination of rights may set in motion. These injuries usually result in some form of compromised attachment wherein the task of adoptive parenting becomes very complicated.

Managing the “Bum Wrap” dynamic

- 1) Education in the necessary grieving that *healthy* adoptees need assistance with
- 2) Careful understanding of how relinquishment and adoption are separate parallel processes in adoptive development
- 3) Learning to wear a “white coat” and not personalize the attack

“it is not so much that adopted children have problems, it is more that relinquished children have problems”

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