

FROM CHECKLISTS TO REALITY

2011 Tapestry Adoption
& Foster Care Conference

Preparing for the challenging experience of adoption

Our Family



The Adoption Trap



I (or My spouse and I), armed with good intentions and the right techniques, will deliver our child to a place of healing beyond their current pain and struggles.

We can fix it.

What's Missing?



Perspective

Support

Patience



What we did to prepare

The items on our checklist that paid off

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

Perspective

- Why are we adopting? Or why did we adopt?
- What do we expect out of our children? Is it fair considering their past experiences?
- When we dream about the future, what does it look like? Is it a fair expectation for our kids? How will we react if it comes out differently?

EDUCATE YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS

- Books
 - ▣ *The Connected Child*
 - ▣ *The Boy Who Was Raised As A Dog*
 - ▣ Discipline Strategies
- Tapestry Conference
- Intentional Conversations
 - ▣ Explain your motivation & expectations
 - ▣ What are their expectations or concerns
 - ▣ How will your child's upbringing differ from your own?

Support
tools

BE CAUTIOUS WITH YOUR COMMITMENTS

- Work
- Church
- Family
- Other

Patience



What you can do to prepare

The items that didn't make it to our checklist

SHORTEN YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Perspective

- Never *lower* your expectations
- It's too discouraging to plan your child's future based on their current struggles
- Set expectations that are achievable for the near future
- Don't worry about the distant future

SEEK OUT SIMILAR FAMILIES & SUCCESSFUL FAMILIES

Support Groups

- Similar Families – families with kids in similar age groups, facing similar challenges - Empathy
- Successful Families – families with older kids that have made it through the challenges you face – Encouragement
- Join a support group
- Be pushy/ Invite yourself to dinner
- Connect before you need to connect

TRAIN FOR A MARATHON

- Sleep
- Diet
- Exercise
- Relaxation
- Adult Interaction
- Fun

Patience

What you can't prepare for

Throw away the checklists

YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM

Perspective

- Your attachment style
- Your parenting assumptions
- Your own insecurities/doubts
- Your communication with your spouse

DOING IT DAY IN & DAY OUT

- How do you cope with the following:
 - Exhaustion
 - Discouragement
 - Frustration
 - Stress
 - Judgment
 - Perceived Judgment

Support
troops

NOTHING IS CHANGING

- Be an investigator
- Is your strategy in alignment with your values?
- Is your approach in alignment with your strategy?
- Is your child open to your approach?
- Is your timetable open to your child?

Patience

The Adoption Hope



Our family, armed with as much support as we can get and despite all of the challenges before us, will not give up on this journey of healing.

We will stick together. No matter what.