

## Adoption: A personal narration

So you are thinking of having a baby!! Well, that is the assumption that I am making considering that you are reading this article. Allow me to share my wonderful experience about adopting a child with you. I hope it will encourage you to think about adoption too.

After ten years of married life my husband and I started talking about having a baby. For many couples this might be a long time to have waited but neither of us had been in any hurry. Active careers, some travelling and lots of hobbies gave us a fulfilling life and children had just not pictured in this. However, we realised that if we wanted to have a child or children, it would soon be too late both biologically as well as in terms of the energy one needs to have! I cannot really say why we decided that we would like to upturn our nice (sort of in control) life with the introduction of a new member to the family but we did decide to do just that.

The next decision was whether to have a child the more conventional way, i.e. by giving birth to one or to adopt one. We have many friends with adopted children and so for us it was natural to consider both ways right from the beginning.

Many people we know questioned this decision or made comments such as, “Isn’t it scary to adopt a child?” To my mind, it is plain and simple scary to think of having a child by any means! Think about it – from that point onwards there will be, in your life, a small totally dependent being who at the same time is an individual. In the beginning, their safety and well-being lie completely in your hands. That is scary irrespective of where that child came from. To our minds the one big difference between an adopted child and one that you have conceived is the fact that the moment you or your spouse is pregnant, the mother-to-be would take excellent care of herself in order to ensure that the child is born healthy. In the case of the child that is given up for adoption, it is possible that the mother does not have the means or the knowledge to look after herself and ensure this. Yes, that is very scary. On the other hand, there are many children born with some physical or mental problem and they were born to parents who took all the correct precautions and care. That brings me back to the statement, that having a child by any means is scary. There are no guarantees what kind of child you will adopt just as there are no guarantees as to what kind of child will be born to you. But it is such a wonderful adventure and learning experience and gives so much pleasure that people go on choosing to have children!

In India, there are many many unwanted children. In most states these children are girls and they are unwanted because they are girls. It breaks my heart every time, I go to an orphanage and see all the wonderful children there, abandoned because of their sex. The orphanage that we adopted our daughter from had 31 girls and 2 boys in it at the time we first visited it. The numbers keep changing but the ratio of boys to girls hardly ever varies.

Firstly it is horrific, that families would keep having girls and giving them away till they had a boy child. Secondly, we are already pushing our earths resources to the limit- what right did we have to bring more and more children into this world? One could always argue that it is not our fault if other people have lots of children and abandon them. It is

true that this is not our fault but though the responsibility may not be ours, it is also not that of the abandoned children. They deserve a full life with a loving family and the only way for them to get that is if they get adopted.

My husband and I debated all these things while we made our decision. Looking at all these issues, made us question whether we even had any more the right to give birth?! In the end, it was almost an easy decision. We were scared but we were scared of the responsibility that we were taking on and of the change to our life that was about to occur.

Two years later, I cannot tell you how happy I am because I do not find the words to describe it! Yes, our lives have changed completely and we are very often not in control of things but we are happy. And we are so much in love with our daughter. She is the most incredible child in the world! And it is not just us who says this but everyone who knows her! My husband and I have a saying, “ To know Sumi is to love Sumi!” I look at her and think – she is so beautiful and so smart and brings us so much joy and we didn’t pick her using any special scientific means. What I am trying to say is that every child given the right atmosphere would flower and grow in this way. How sad, that so many children do not get that opportunity! I look at my daughter and this thought comes to mind, “No matter what else I may do or have done in my life, no matter what I have achieved or will achieve, it is incredible to know that this is the best thing that I have ever done.” Am I gushing?! It is because the feeling of love is so strong – I love my daughter and she is just that- my daughter. She is not my adopted daughter any more but belongs to our family just like any child belongs to her or his family.

Many people are concerned about adoption because they are worried that their families will not accept the child. In our case, our parents were probably so happy that we decided to have a baby – the means were almost irrelevant! All Sumi’s grandparents adore her. I see my sisters much more often these days because they make it a point of meeting Sumi often! When your friends and family see you with your child, see how much she means to you, see her squeal in delight and chuckle in the way only babies can, see her cry when she is sad or hungry, it would have to be a most hard-hearted person who would not instinctively respond to that baby. Any reservations they may have had will vanish when she reaches out and tightly grabs their finger.

Let me end by saying: Don’t have doubts about adoption! Take all the precautions that you have to take (that is basic medical tests, etc) and then bring home that child and get ready to start on the most exciting and satisfying adventure of all!

Good luck!