

Intergenerational Issues in Adoption

(Seven Core Issues of Adoption and Intergenerational Issues in Adoption developed by Sharon Kaplan Roszia and Deborah Silverstein.)

	ADOPTEE	ADOPTEE AS PARENT	BIRTH PARENTS	BIRTH PARENTS AS PARENTS
Loss	I lost both parents, extended family, cultural and genealogical heritage, sense of connectedness, sense of self, social status	I lost the ability to pass on history of extended family, cultural heritage, medical history, loss of extended biological relationships (cousins, aunt, uncles)	I lost of social status, loss of acceptance, loss of lifelong relationship with child, loss of relationship with child’s father/mother, loss of genealogical connectedness	I lost the raising biological children together, loss of trust from other birth children- “am I secure here?”
Rejection	I feel rejection by birth family, “like I was gotten rid of,” or “thrown-away,”	I feel vulnerability in marital relationship and with in-laws, I fear rejection by child so I become overprotective	I fear rejection peers and parents, rejection by the other birth parent after adoption plan, and I feel self-hatred (rejection of self)	I fear rejected by other child when learn of relinquishment,
Guilt and Shame	If I had been different, would they have kept me? <i>Guilt</i> What was so wrong about me as a person they dumped me? <i>Shame</i>	If something was wrong with me to be given away, will I feel the same about my child? Am I making the same mistakes my birth parents did?	No good person would place a child for adoption - <i>Guilt</i> I am truly a worthless person for doing this - <i>Shame</i>	Why couldn’t I have cared for this child - <i>Guilt</i> What good parent would allow for a family to be separated by adoption -- <i>Shame</i>
Grief	I may never know birth family roots or background, may never know bio siblings, may never feel truly connected	I will never have a genealogical connection to the past, or I will never look into the eyes of my birth parent or siblings	I will never know (in closed adoption) how child is doing, never see first day of school, first date, graduation, etc.	I will never be able to share the joys of raising children together
Identity	Who am I? Who do I look like? Who do I act like?	What identity do I pass on to my children? Who are they in light of my adoption?	I may never have another child and never have the identity of being a mother or father.	Can I truly feel good about my identity as a parent since I allowed for this adoption plan?
Intimacy	How close can I become? Will I be rejected in this relationship, too?	I fear intimate relationships - what will I pass on genetically to my offspring?	I fear intimacy because other close relationships have lead to significant losses.	Can I really be close to these children because of my past?
Control	I never had any say about being placed for adoption (especially issue for child adopted as older). No one ever asked me how I felt.	I have no control over my child knowing any genetic past or medical history or having a sense of connectedness.	My parents made this decision for me. I fear powerless, like a victim.	I cannot control how my other children will feel about the issue of adoption in this family.

	<i>ADOPTIVE PARENTS</i>	<i>ADOPTIVE PARENTS AS GRANDPARENTS</i>	<i>BIRTH GRANDPARENTS</i>	<i>SIBLINGS</i>
Loss	I suffer the loss of biological child, loss of genealogical connection to the future, loss of social status, loss of sharing a child together, loss of birthing experience, loss of time with child	I experience the loss of biological child, loss of genealogical connection to the future,	I experience the loss of relationship with grandchild, loss of information about child, loss of genealogical connection to the future,	We experience the loss of relationship to birth sibling, loss of trust in birth parent if disclosed later in life, and possible loss of security
Rejection	By each for infertility reasons, by society - what's wrong with you, by parents - Subconsciously - couldn't produce grandchild	Fears rejection by grandchildren if birth grandparents come into the picture	Might experience rejection by child (birth parent) because they didn't support them and enable them to keep child.	"If they got rid of one, if I do something wrong, will I be rejected."
Guilt and Shame	If I were a better person would I conceive? <i>Guilt</i> What is so bad about me that I cannot become a biological parent? <i>Shame</i>	I don't want my child to search in case I will be replaced and I feel badly about that - <i>Guilt</i> When they said they wanted to search, I was again reminded of my inadequacies as a person	Why couldn't I have cared for this child - <i>Guilt</i> What good grandparent would allow for a family to be separated by adoption -- <i>Shame</i>	I can't believe my mother would give a child away - <i>Guilt</i> ...If she is like that, may I am, too - <i>Shame</i>
Grief	I will never have a genealogical connection to the future, will never look into the eyes of a biological child	I will never have a genealogical connection to the future, I will never look into the eyes of a biological grandchild	I will never be able to share in the joys of grandparenting this child, or to share with friends about them	We will never share the same memories of growing up together, we may never meet
Identity	Am I truly entitled to the identity of being this child's parent - am I a "real" parent	Am I truly entitled to the identity of being this child's grandparent - am I a "real" grandparent	Can I even consider myself a grandparent to a child I do not know?	I grew up as an only child after my sibling's birth and relinquishment. Am I a "real" sister/brother? What is my identity in this regard?
Intimacy	I fear intimacy because it reminds me of the pain of infertility. I fear closeness with my children because of rejection by them.	I fear closeness with my grandchildren because of rejection by them, especially if the birth grandparents return.	Can I be close to other grandchildren if I allowed one to be placed for adoption?	I fear close relationships because my older sibling was placed for adoption and how close can I really get to my parent.
Control	I have had no control over my body or circumstances leading to adoption.	I have no control over my place in my grandchild's life if birth parents return.	I had no choice whether the adoption occurred or not. I would have raised the child.	I had no input on this adoption. I wasn't born yet, but I wish it hadn't happened.
MASTERY AND GROWTH COMES AS A RESULT OF WORKING THROUGH THESE ISSUES - RECOGNIZING A PERSON HAS A RIGHT TO BE HAPPY AND LOSSES CAN LEAD TO GROWTH AND DEPTH. (Sharon Kaplan Roszia)				