

Single Parent Adoption

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P U B L I C A T I O N



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The past few decades have brought a previously never seen and a remarkable increase in the number of families headed by single mothers. Yet, unlike the stereotypical images conjured up by the general population of an un-wed, poverty-stricken, uneducated, and abandoned young teen or woman facing parenthood alone and ostracized, an increasing number of successful, well-established, single well-educated professional women (and men) in their 30's and 40's and even 50's are arriving at motherhood by choice and through adoption.

Single Parent Adoption and International Adoption

Advocates note the number of both domestic and international adoptions by single parents have been steadily increasing over the last decade. However, compared to their married counterparts, citing the process of international adoption as less lengthy and the likelihood of adopting a younger child much greater, single women (and the occasional single male) are more likely to pursue international adoption over domestic adoption. With domestic adoption, birth mothers are

statistically more likely to select couples over singles for their babies and age is a greater consideration with most agencies.

Single Parent Adoption and the Need to Nurture

Not unlike their married counterparts who pursue adoption, single women often pursue motherhood citing the same need and desire to love and nurture a child of their own. However, unlike married couples, the single woman faces the arduous process and costs of adoption alone and with the reality she may end up raising her child alone without a father or partner. Many single mothers who adopt will openly share although they have chosen motherhood at this point in their lives they are not necessarily single by choice and hope to ultimately parent their child with a husband or partner. Others are comfortable with being single and choose to remain single throughout the adoption process and the raising of a child to adulthood. Faced with the reality of a ticking biological clock, numerous of them have unsuccessfully pursued intrauterine insemination with donor sperm &/or donor egg prior to pursuing adoption as the road to parenthood.

Single Parent Adoption and Society

Whereas friends, family, and society may embrace the married adoptive couple for rescuing or adopting a child and elevate them to the status of saints, single mothers are not always so readily lauded for their desire and plan to pursue motherhood through adoption. Detractors and critics will accuse the single mother of selfishness for not providing the adoptive child a father and an intact home. Considering the divorce rate in the US, this debate carries very little weight with single parents. Others will erroneously point to and cite statistics linking single motherhood to a variety of potential social ills for their child, yet again, these statistics tend to relate to low-income, under educated women or divorced mothers who were ill prepared to manage single motherhood without the resources most often available to single's who pursue adoption today. To pursue the consideration and possibility of adoption, a single woman may even have to develop newfound courage to conquer her own inner demons and alleviate her own previously held thoughts and beliefs about adoption.

Single Parent Adoption and Guilt

After investing so much financially and personally in fertility treatments or traveling around the world to finalize the legalities of adoption, both married and single adoptive parents may struggle with high expectations and transition to sharing their lives with a child. Single mothers can feel guilt and shame when they long for moments of solitude and the independence of their former single lives. Unlike married couples, where 'alone time' may not need to be scheduled or arranged well in advance, single mothers often need to make arrangements ahead of time and allocate limited financial resources to get their own "Mommy time".

Single Parent Adoption and Support Systems

Fortunately the Internet, television, and the media have raised awareness of the issues single women face in the adoption process as well as the challenges they may deal with after placement. Furthermore, the 24/7 nature of the Internet and the availability of tremendous amounts of information and resources on the web specific to single mothers have led to an increasingly savvy and well prepared prospective adoptive mother.

The successful single parent realizes it is not a sign of weakness or an indication of failure to reach out for assistance and support. Whether via a support group for adoptive families, her personal counselor or the cyber world, s/he and the newly adopted child are well served by reaching out and receiving help. As s/he makes the transition into the new role of parent, the guidance and information gathered from single parents who traveled the road ahead of them assists them in watching out for known potholes and barriers, a benefit for parent and child.

It is not reasonable to assume all married couples will stay married, nor should it be presumed all singles will forever remain single. Instead advocates for adoption by single women (and men) note an individual's character, strength and potential parenting capacity are better considered in providing a child with an adoptive home.

Martha Osborne is an adoption advocate, adoptive mom and adoptee. She is also the editor of the online adoption publication, RainbowKids.com, the leading online resource for international adoption and waiting children.