

My Story: Open Adoption



The very first time I dialed the number for Open Adoption & Family Services, I was sitting on the steps outside the public library.

I was 18 years old, six months pregnant and beyond scared. I had kept my pregnancy a secret from my family up until this point and now I had less than three months to make the biggest decision of my life.

My first call with the agency is a little fuzzy in my mind. I had so much adrenaline, so many nerves that I don't really remember what I asked. I do remember a really kind voice on the other end of the phone telling me that no matter what I chose, there were people and resources to help me through it. They could help me find the right resources to parent on my own, or help me figure out what an open adoption would look like for me. While I never discussed abortion options with my adoption counselor because of how far along my pregnancy was, I know that they provide education and resources for that option as well. (All three options are valid, and there is absolutely no shame in considering each one.)

My family stood by me throughout my process, despite the chaos I had caused. The decision was mine to make, and I wanted to be informed.

Excerpt from the 2018 Issue of The Rational Enquirer.

No one at the agency ever tried to sway me one way or another. It was very clear that they were there to give me my options, not to tell me what my next move should be. In the end, I had to separate my needs from my child's needs. Which decisions were I making with fear? Which decisions were I making with love? There is no one that can decide that for you. After a few weeks of living in the decision process, I realized that my job as a mother was to give my son the absolute best childhood I could give him, and that meant moving forward with open adoption. My adoption counselor gave me a book of letters from potential families. I was to read through them and let her know if there was anyone I was potentially interested in.

I was incredibly lucky with my open adoption journey. When I found August's parents, I knew immediately that they were the ones. They walked into the room and I thought, "Oh, there you are. You are the ones that will love him as much as I do." It didn't make my choice any easier, but it made me certain that I was making the right one. We went through the last two or so months of my pregnancy together. I visited their home and saw the beautiful nursery my son would grow up in. They framed pictures of me and placed them around his crib so that he could see my face each day. Every moment I spent with them was a reminder of how magical and beautiful our son's childhood would be.

August is nearly 7 years old now and is, unquestionably, the most amazing person I've ever known. Matthew and Eric have raised him to be kind, curious, adventurous, hilarious, compassionate and just a little bit sassy (although that might be genetics). There hasn't been a moment in these past seven years that I haven't thought about him. It took the better part of that time for me to truly allow myself to be happy again. There is so much shame and secrecy around adoption in our culture. I didn't know that I was allowed to be happy or even proud of my choice, but what's not to be proud of? I gave my son the childhood he deserves, and I get to be there to watch him live it. He will always know how much I love him, and I will always be there to answer any questions he may have.

When I chose Matthew and Eric as August's parents, I knew that they would be the right fit for him. I never imagined they would also be such a perfect fit for me. In each of them I have gained a partner in crime, a confidant, a co-parent, a shoulder to cry on and a lifelong friend.

*When I found
August's parents,
I knew immediately
that they were
the ones*

We made the decision to become a family because it was the best thing for August, but in the end it turned out to be the best thing for all of us. There are some people that are meant to come into your life one way or another, and I wouldn't trade this experience or these people for anything in the world. They always find a way to make me a part of the little moments, no matter how far apart we are. Every year we grow closer as a family, and I am forever indebted to them for the constant love and support they have provided both my son and myself. If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't have it any other way.

All mothers have their own unique journey, and all people have the right to make the decision that is best for them. Organizations such as Open Adoption &

Family Services can help you understand your options. In the end, you have to put in real work to decide what's best for you. Do your research, talk to someone, be honest with yourself and be kind to yourself. This is not a road you are walking alone, and there is nothing shameful about this journey.

—Taylor Redwine
Young author

Taylor lives in Oregon, loves to read and is currently training for her third half marathon.

*I never
imagined they
would also be such
a perfect fit
for me*

Resources

Open Adoption & Family Services

For local all-options pregnancy counseling and open adoption services

www.openadopt.org

1-800-772-1115

Para Español 1-800-985-6763

All-Options (formally Backline)

Help line that provides unconditional and judgment-free support for people in all their decisions, feelings and experiences with pregnancy, parenting, adoption and abortion

www.all-options.org

1-888-493-0092

Monday–Friday, 10–1 a.m. EST;

Sunday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. EST

Oregon Department of Education

For information on teen parent programs

www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/Pages/teenparentprogram.aspx