

# OUR ADOPTION JOURNEY

BY ALYA SHERMAN



## "I'm Adopted"

This is Jacob's typical response when someone asks him why he doesn't look like me.

## "I'm his son."

This is Jacob's typical response when I say you're just like Daddy.

**A**s you can tell, adoption is not a taboo subject for us. We openly discuss our journey to adopt with Jacob and anyone who is interested in listening. I'm proud of how our little family came to be. I love sharing our experience with the goal of inspiring others to consider adoption when natural methods are no longer an option.

I say this not to imply that adoption is for everyone or a means to an end. Sometimes it's the first choice for couples looking to grow their family. However, most of the time, adoption is a choice for couples desperate to have a family and it has become their final attempt at one.

We were the latter.

### THE JOURNEY BEGINS

After months of being injected, probed, prodded, and monitored like a lab animal, my husband Phil suggested that we look into adoption. It seemed like such a foreign subject at the time. I was over feeling

sad and was open-minded primarily because I thought that it would take forever for anything to come of it. Like many of you reading this, I had heard too many horror stories of failed adoptions and broken dreams to believe that we would be the lucky ones. Plus, my doctor kept insisting that I was perfectly healthy and there was no reason to think otherwise. Yes, this is how they keep your hopes up and the infertility industry fertile...literally.



A bond like no other.

### TAKING STEPS

So, in typical Sherman fashion, we made a decision to learn more and dove right into researching adoption. It began with us attending open houses and meeting with adoption agencies and specialists to learn as much as we could about all the possibilities. Foreign, domestic, open, closed. There was so much to know and so many decisions to make. Since I was born in Kiev, Ukraine seemed like the natural place to adopt from. However, we quickly learned about the many downsides to adopting from there as well as other foreign countries. We finally decided on domestic adoption, selected an agency, created a killer portfolio, and crossed our fingers.

Not a week went by before I received THE phone call.

### THE FAST TRACK

I remember it like it was yesterday...just writing that sentence brings tears to my eyes. I was sitting in my office probably massaging my freshly insulted butt cheek when the voice on the other line asked if we were interested in adopting a boy. The birth mother was six months pregnant and had seen our profile and wanted to meet us.

*Are you kidding?*

*Was someone playing an evil joke?*

*Wasn't this supposed to take months, if not years?*

Three months later, I was holding the most perfect baby boy in my arms. The birth mother, her entire family, and probably most of her friends were watching us as we stared into his baby blue eyes.

I was scared she would do what a large number of new mothers do and change her mind, but she didn't. She had the support of her family, friends, and physician and the



In Daddy's shoes.

desire to give her child a life she knew he deserved but could not afford him.

**THE ROAD HOME**

As soon as Jacob was discharged, we grabbed him and took off, afraid that things could change in a moment's time. I think my exact words were, "Phil, drive to Mexico!" We didn't. We drove home, a mere 15 miles from where Jacob was born and settled into our new life as a family of three in Philadelphia.

We agreed to an open adoption. I will say that this is not for everyone, but we were willing to accept the terms that came with it. Since the day he was born, Jacob's birth mother has seen him a few times and requested updates periodically.

While ours may sound like an adoption fairy tale, there have been great highs and great lows.

The months leading up to Jacob's birth were scary, unpredictable, and dark. Every time we walked through the streets of Philadelphia, strollers and happy families



At our favorite family place, the beach.

holding hands unfolded in front of us like a sadistic film noir.

The past 12 years with Jacob have been nothing but a miracle sprinkled in with moments of expected but unpredictable adoption inquiries from, "Why didn't she want me?" to, most recently, "So, if there was a birth mother, there was a birth father." Let's just say that I let Phil handle that one.

I'm grateful every day for the opportunity to be Jacob's mama and, quite frankly, often forget that he was adopted. He, on the other hand, never forgets and is quick to volunteer, "I was adopted," almost as if he wears it as a badge of honor.



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