

Summer Reading for the Adoptee: Two A+ Resources

It is often difficult to get adopted children to talk about adoption. Yet, most report thinking about it “all the time.” [Movies](#), websites—[Adoption Clubhouse](#), culture camps, books, support groups, etc., provide the inroad needed to help open the discussion. Children need to talk about their pre- and post-adoption experiences—on and off—over time in order to form strong attachments to their adoptive parents and siblings.

Two books are the focus of this post. Each makes a great contribution to this very issue of helping kids talk about adoption.

[*Help! I've Been Adopted by Brenda McCreight*](#)

This 83-page book is packed with answers to all the questions kids have before and after their adoption. It is a perfect companion for their journey!

McCreight covers,

- the expectations and feelings about moving to an adoptive home
- why kids get adopted
- what people will help them become a legal part of their new family
- how families decide to adopt
- what families have to do to adopt
- how adoptive parents and children are “matched”
- coming to terms with being adopted, forming an identity as a member of a adopted family—resolving the past—and attaching

In essence, she helps kids look at their thoughts and feelings through each step of the adoption process.

The book contains vignettes and an array of discussion questions. The questions are exactly what kids want to know, but are often afraid to ask! For example,

- Why does it matter if I attach or not?
- What do I have in common with my new parents?
- Adjusting—“I expected...”, “I didn’t expect...”, “The hardest thing to get used to in my new family was...”, “The biggest change after the adoption was....”
- Why did my parents pick me?
- What kind of things did my parents think about when they applied to adopt?
- Grief and Loss: “When I moved I had to leave some things behind. The things I miss most are...”, “When I miss someone from my past I...”, “I wish I could be with....”
- And many more...

Parents and professionals will want a copy for themselves, and one to pack along with the child’s belongings!

[*Pieces of Me: Who do I Want to Be? Edited by Robert Ballard*](#)

This book is very powerful! It is a collection of 107 stories, poems and art works. Most contributors are now adult adoptees. Yet, in this book, they look back on their adolescent

experience of being adopted. The “pieces” are what the adoptee needs to gather in order to become whole. Each “piece” of this book is unique. We often have preconceived beliefs about adoptees. Most typically we describe them as “angry.” *Pieces of Me* will dispel this type of stereotyping. It gives depth and breadth to our understanding of what adolescent adoptees actually feel and think. Readers learn that the journey is as unique as is each adopted person.

As a therapist for children with histories of trauma, I particularly like some of the candid “pieces” like *Why I Cut Myself* and *The Queen Redeemed*. This is the story of moving from being the “oral sex queen” to reclaiming self-worth. These are particularly poignant selections—essential for the troubled teen who can learn that he or she is not alone in thought, actions and feelings. Information relating to sexuality and sexual behavior are rare among adoption literature. It is great to see this type of content put forth!

There are also anecdotes about moving from the birth home; prejudice, discrimination and all out feeling hatred from others; search and reunion and the profound and bottomless pit of feelings for the loss of the birth family.

The pain and triumph of these young people will move you from tears of sadness to tears of joy! This book is absolutely a must read for all in adoption!