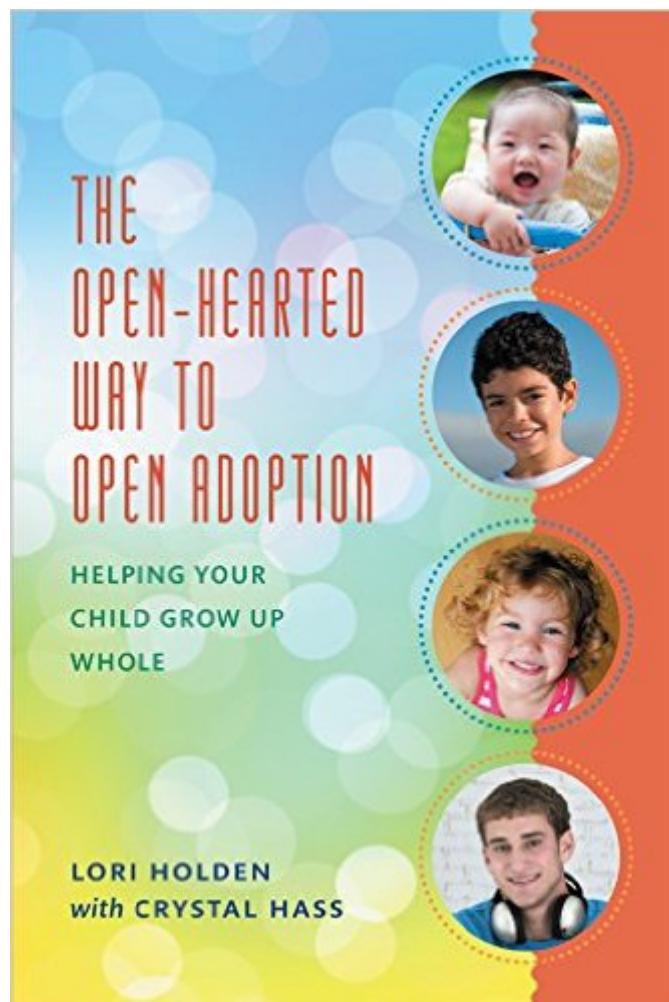


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# The Open-Hearted Way To Open Adoption: Helping Your Child Grow Up Whole



## Synopsis

Prior to 1990, fewer than five percent of domestic infant adoptions were open. In 2012, ninety percent or more of adoption agencies are recommending open adoption. Yet these agencies do not often or adequately prepare either adopting parents or birth parents for the road ahead of them! The adult parties in open adoptions are left floundering. There are many resources on why to do open adoption, but what about how? Open adoption isn't just something parents do when they exchange photos, send emails, share a visit. It's a lifestyle that may feel intrusive at times, be difficult or inconvenient at other times. Tensions can arise even in the best of circumstances. But knowing how to handle these situations and how to continue to make arrangements work for the child involved is paramount. This book offers readers the tools and the insight to do just that. It covers common open-adoption situations and how real families have navigated typical issues successfully. Like all useful parenting books, it provides parents with the tools to come to answers on their own, and answers questions that might not yet have come up. Through their own stories and those of other families of open adoption, Lori and Crystal review the secrets to success, the pitfalls and challenges, the joys and triumphs. By putting the adopted child at the center, families can come to enjoy the benefits of open adoption and mitigate the challenges that may arise. More than a how-to, this book shares a mindset, a heartset, that can be learned and internalized, so parents can choose to act out of love and honesty throughout their child's growing up years, helping that child to grow up whole.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My trouble with having star-studded so many previous Reviews is that when I REALLY want to give five stars to a work, there's no room for me to move up: no sixth star and no option to add exclamation points, unless it's to the Review title, which I did. I don't know how any author could offer more on this topic without reaching out too far and losing focus. There's something in Lori's book for every point of light in the open adoption constellation. A grandmother on the birthfamily side? She talks about your role. A resistant birthfather who comes around (or doesn't)? She swings the telescope your way. All possible contributions to the center of this universe -- the child -- are charted. Yet, she knows how dynamic all networks can be and she offers plenty of practical and even spiritual tips to make your own way. While Lori is super-positive and optimistic, she doesn't gloss over the bumpy currents all navigators of open adoption are bound to experience. Like all big families, interactions with all members are uneven across the lifespan; but clearly, Lori knows that. She even gives letter-writing ideas to open up an adoption that has been closed by either the birthfamily or the adoptive family. Having spoken in glowing terms about this book, please know I don't agree with everything Lori seems to embrace (to me, prospective adoptive parents do not belong in any room of the hospital). But I have the feeling I could have a cup of tea with Lori and she would hear my concerns with the same open mind she has greeted and discussed other conflicts of opinion in her book.

Open adoption has moved beyond the experimental stage and become the norm for most contemporary domestic adoptions. It has also created awareness that even with international adoptions, every effort should be made to gather as much birth family information, to preserve and respect these ties and to foster ongoing communication. We now recognize that connection to and respect for an adopted child's biological roots is integral to successfully unify their dual heritage. Still, the concept remains shrouded in apprehension, confusion and curiosity. How is it possible for a child to have two sets of parents involved in their lives? Questions abound in the minds of prospective adopters as well as expectant parents contemplating adoption for their unborn child. (Do we need a contract? Is it enforceable? Desirable? Isn't open adoption confusing for the child?) These and many more issues are addressed in *The Open-hearted Way to Open Adoption* by Lori Holden and Crystal Hass. They are the adoptive mother and birthmother who have an open adoption relationship. There are many reasons to recommend this excellent book. It overflows with practical suggestions for how to navigate the constantly changing seas that permeate open adoption. Not just for adoptive parents, it offers ideas for all members of the triad because the three

are inextricably connected. Each will be a permanent part of the child. Only the degree and level of involvement will vary. The influences of DNA are forever, just as the influence of the adoptive family's nurturing will permanently shape the child. (Lori refers to these factors as biology and biography.) Lori and Crystal Hass (the birthmother of one of Lori's children,) share strategies, ideas and personal anecdotes that are valuable, sensible and practical.

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