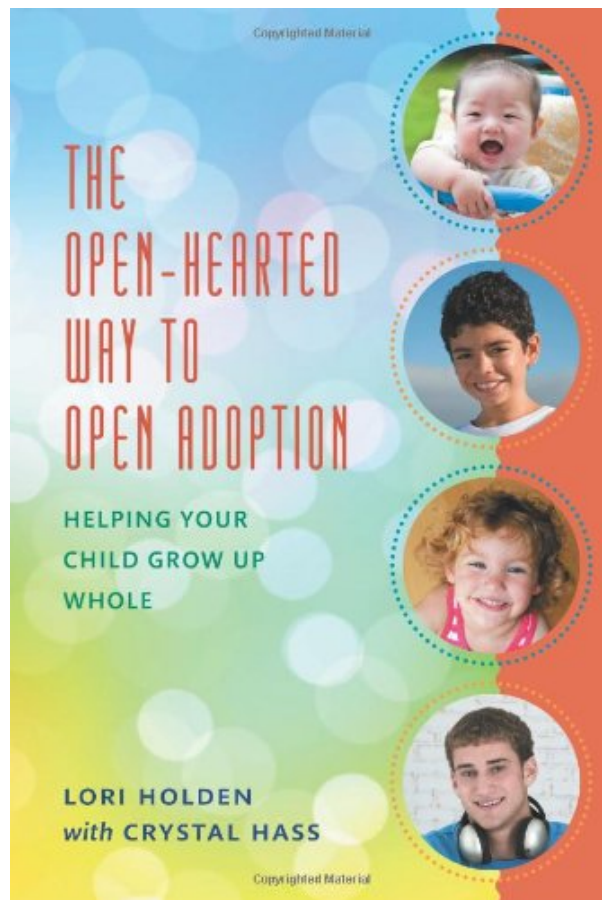
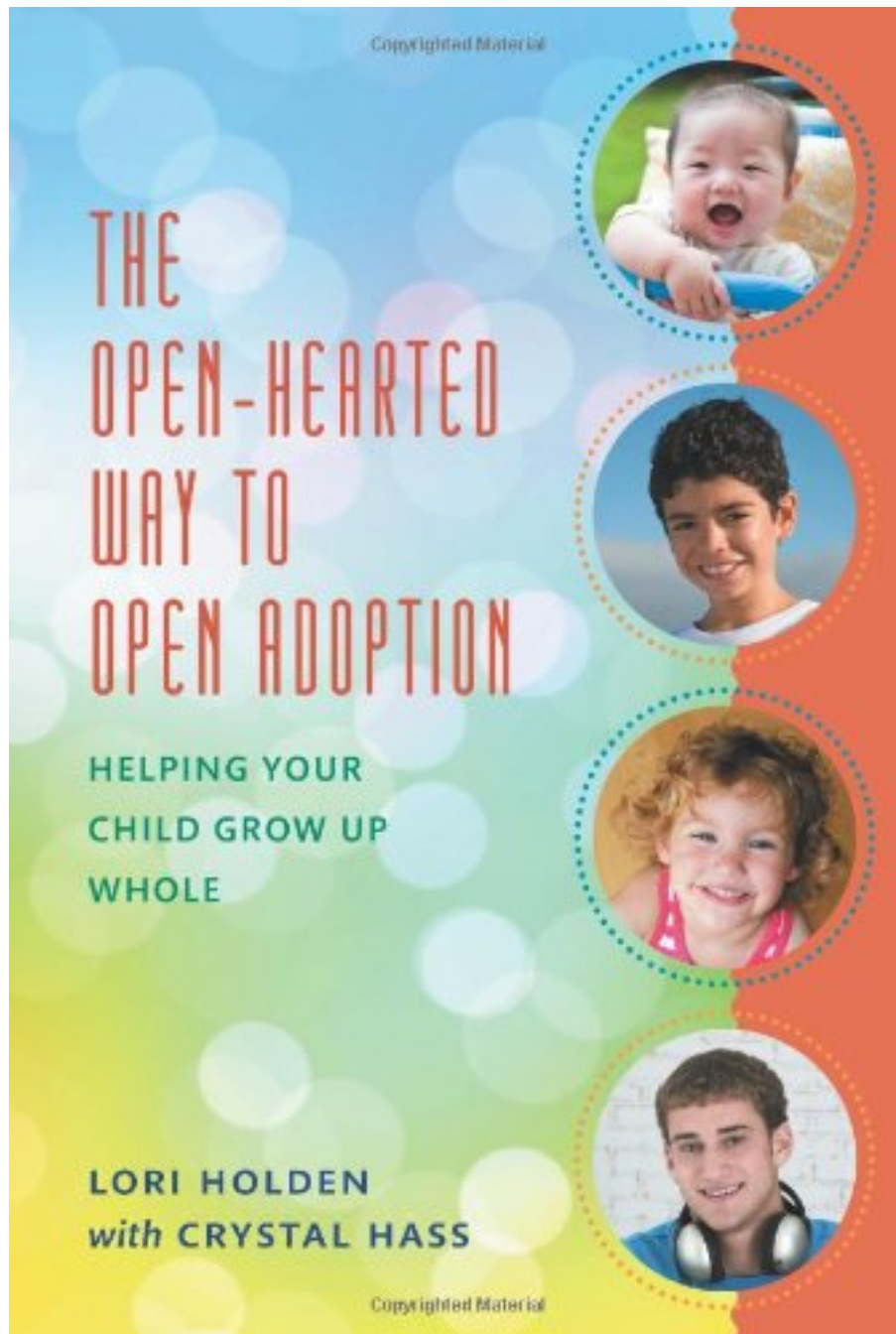


THE OPEN-HEARTED WAY TO OPEN ADOPTION: HELPING YOUR CHILD GROW UP WHOLE BY LORI HOLDEN



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Review

Holden's debut is an insightful, heartfelt exploration of open adoption, an evolving arrangement that has been growing in popularity over the last 20 years. Her endorsement is personal; she has two children from open adoptions and maintains that openness helps heal adoption's split between a person's "biology" and "biography". She references open adoption as a "process" that encourages high-functioning relationships between birth parents, extended family members, and adopted parents. Open, honest, age-appropriate dialogue with adopted children about their biological background is stressed. Part one addresses basic information about open adoption, including common terminology, benefits as well as challenges, ethical concerns, choosing a professional to help navigate the process, dealing with the grief of infertility prior to adoption, and ingredients for a successful open adoption. Advice on how to incorporate, and set boundaries with, birth parents and extended birth families are included. Part two emphasizes the child (adoptee), and helps children respond to insensitive questions from others. Foster, international, and donor situations are also detailed. Anecdotes from birth parents, adoptive parents, and adult adopted children are included, establishing rapport between readers and real-life families. Holden skillfully covers many bases, including potential "bumps in the road," offering appendices and resources for further guidance. (Publishers Weekly)

Written with input from her daughter's birth mother Crystal Hass, *The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption: Helping Your Child Grow Up Whole* is both personal and dispassionate. A primer for open adoption, Holden's book is full of personal anecdotes from her own life as well as others living open adoption. Lori isn't an expert, a social worker, or a psychologist. She's a mom and super-connected blogger with two children on the brink of young adulthood, both of whom have sometimes on-again, off-again relationships with their birth parents. . . . The book offers practical tools to help adoptive parents make decisions about everything from embarking on an open adoption to opening a closed local or international adoption. She gives concrete how-to's on managing visits (use the in-law test), talking to the public about

your adoption (educate, use humor, ask a question or say it's private), handling difficult subjects and feelings with your kids (depersonalize the situation), and coaching your kids on how to handle comments from peers (choose whether to share, walk away, educate or say "it's private"). . . . The meat of the book is devoted to families living open adoption, which is where the book really shines. There are helpful sections for pre-adoptive parents wondering how to enter an open adoption, families in difficult or challenging situations with birth parents (common in foster care adoptions, closed adoptions that could be opened and international adoptions on the brink of openness. (Focus on Adoption)

I would highly recommend reading this book if you are waiting to adopt or if you are in an open adoption and looking for more guidance or information. Holden walks the reader through adoption – from the beginning stages, to the new relationship stage between the child, the birth parents, and the adoptive parents, to a relationship that will grow as time moves on. Holden and Hass share their views on what makes their adoption work and also share the views of others involved in their own open adoptions. The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption is a great book and should be used as a tool that can offer advice, anecdotes, and knowledge to anyone navigating their way through an open adoption relationship. (Our Story: A Blog About Open Adoption)

The personal stories are by far the most interesting part of the book. . . adoptive families will find a lot of helpful information here, including basics like questions to ask while exploring adoption agencies and tips for putting together a photo album (the book that a birth parent looks through to choose an adoptive family), and meatier stuff like the key ingredients to making an open adoption relationship work. ... Adoptive and birth families should prepare themselves for the rigors of relationship, and this book offers valuable tools for navigation. (New Rhythm Project)

I feel that this book would be an invaluable resource for either side interested in open adoption information. I especially liked the stories from Lori's and Crystal's personal experiences. I marvel at how they make their relationship work, both between themselves and with the daughter they share. (Generation Fabulous)

You know we love a good new adoption book, and "The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption: Helping Your Child Grow Up Whole," is at the top of our list. . . . Add it to your list! (Abby's One True Gift Adoptions)

A great read with real-life lessons from birth and adoptive parents, written by adoptive mom, Lori Holden and birth mother, Crystal Hass. (Adoptimist)

It's a fabulous read. I encourage everyone to buy it, and read it. (These Are The Days)

This is a useful, thought-provoking book that is written in the same humorous, friendly, approachable voice that you'll find on Lori's blog. I also appreciate the dual perspectives of both adoptive mother and birth mother on the same topics within the same context. Filled with personal stories and real-life examples, it's a book that current and prospective adoptive parents are sure to find very beneficial and challenging. It's also a rich source of conversational fuel that will spark some great discussions. (Christian Family Adoptions)

The Open-hearted Way to Open Adoption is a positive and inspiring book that will touch your heart as well as provide you with persuasive, practical and useful ideas. (GIFT Family Services)

Not only is Lori Holden an acknowledged thought leader in the area of open adoption, she is also truly beloved by the men and women who look to her for guidance, humor and balance when considering this route for themselves. Her book will be cherished by many and inspirational to all. (Corey Whelan, patient

advocate and author, The American Fertility Association)

Here, at last, is the book many adoptive parents have been clamoring for, as they grapple with the questions, "What is open adoption?" and "Will it work for everyone in our family constellation?" Using real-life examples and a gentle, intelligent approach, Lori Holden and Crystal Hass answer with a reassuring "yes." The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption helps readers understand that open adoption is a mindset, one that moves from thinking the adoptive/birth family relationship must be "either-or" to trusting that it can be "and." If I ever doubted the wisdom of open adoption, I finished the last page a believer. This book deserves a place on every adoption bookshelf. (Jessica O'Dwyer, author of *Mamalita: An Adoption Memoir*)

This is one wise book. Sure it's full of the practicalities of open adoption—the whys and, most useful, the hows, but it is the spirit of this book that truly shines. It is this spirit of openness—Lori calls it the heartset/mindset that ultimately needs to guide us as parents. I'd love for this to be read by every adoptive parents and expectant parent at the beginning of the adoption journey.

I especially liked the practicalities of how to mesh extended families in an open adoption, what to do when one child in the family has more contact with their birth parents than another child in the family, and the realities from the child's perspective of the push-pull of having another family "out there". But ultimately, I liked the focus on "adopting the heartset of openness" because it is what our kids need. "Adoption creates a split between a person's biology and his biography. Openness in adoption is an effective way to heal that split and help the child become whole." Amen! (Dawn Davenport, host of the top rated national radio show—*Creating a Family: Talk about Adoption and Infertility*, executive director of *Creating a Family*)

Lori Holden's book opens with a simple yet poignant snippet of conversation with her young daughter in the car. It's about her daughter's loving feelings toward her birth parents. Holden generously invites us into her mental tai chi process ("Don't take this personally...") leading to her wise responses. If this book were just a series of such glimpses it would be a treasure. But it's so much more: a tapestry of instructive real-life insights together with the latest research and philosophy, all aiming to "de-freakify" open adoption. The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption covers what this adoptee wishes my parents had known, and beyond. The definitive post-modern guide to enlightened adoption. (Marcy Axness, PhD, parent coach and author of *Parenting for Peace*)

Just as a panoramic photograph changes your understanding of a physical landscape, Lori Holden's panoramic book on open adoption will change the way you understand the family building landscape. By bringing in all voices in the adoption triad, Holden simultaneously holds everyone's hand and fills in the advice that has been sorely missing from the universe before this point: how to live well all the years that come after the adoption. Adoptive parents, birthparents, and children have all been asked to partake in a situation without a guidebook, and in doing so, stumble blindly sometimes through difficult conversations and emotional interactions. Holden's book smooths the road between all people in the triad, giving them a space to walk between one another in order to have easier interactions. (Melissa Ford, author of *Navigating the Land of If* and the infertility website, *Stirrup Queens*)

While many books focus on the mechanics of adoption, *The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption* stays focused on the well-being of all involved. While this should be mandatory reading for anyone who has ever uttered the words, 'just adopt,' all readers will come away as smarter, more understanding family members. (Pamela Mahoney Tsigdinos, author of *Silent Sorority*)

This fine book offers an honest look at the inner workings of open adoption with all its challenges and delights. Holden skillfully writes with the voice of experience, a voice seasoned with the gentleness of her

heart and honed by frank discussions with countless other participants who share her determination to do adoption in a manner that honors children. Those who long to see adoption done in a big-hearted way will be encouraged by her hospitable words. (James L. Gritter, MSW, author of *Hospitious Adoption*)

The adoption community needs more resources to offer to families – birth, first, adoptive – all the REAL families – that intersect and interact through open adoption. This book offers real, tangible, useful information that parents anywhere on the continuum of openness can make use of as they navigate through their adoption experience with their child. (Rebecca L. Ricardo, LCSW, executive director of coordinators2inc The Lifetime Adoption Resource)

About the Author

Lori Holden was named a Top 10 “Must-Read Mom” by Parenting magazine and was honored at the annual BlogHer Conference. Her articles have also appeared in Parenting magazine, Conceive magazines, and Adoptive Families magazine Her blog, LavenderLuz.com, has been listed by Adoptive Families Circle, Circle of Moms, and Grown in My Heart websites to be one of the top adoption blogs. She is a monthly contributor to MileHighMamas.com, a Denver Post site. In addition, Lori has written for The American Fertility Association, CreatingAFamily.org and Kaiser Permanente’s Partners in Health magazine. With Crystal, her daughter’s birth mom, she teaches classes on building a child-centered open adoption. Crystal Hass has taught about open adoption with Lori Holden at Colorado Free University and at adoption agencies.

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THE OPEN-HEARTED WAY TO OPEN ADOPTION: HELPING YOUR CHILD GROW UP WHOLE BY LORI HOLDEN PDF

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.

- Sales Rank: #1260036 in Books
- Published on: 2013-03-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.28" h x .88" w x 6.35" l, 1.05 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 228 pages

Review

Holden's debut is an insightful, heartfelt exploration of open adoption, an evolving arrangement that has been growing in popularity over the last 20 years. Her endorsement is personal; she has two children from open adoptions and maintains that openness helps heal adoption's split between a person's "biology" and "biography". She references open adoption as a "process" that encourages high-functioning relationships between birth parents, extended family members, and adopted parents. Open, honest, age-appropriate dialogue with adopted children about their biological background is stressed. Part one addresses basic information about open adoption, including common terminology, benefits as well as challenges, ethical concerns, choosing a professional to help navigate the process, dealing with the grief of infertility prior to adoption, and ingredients for a successful open adoption. Advice on how to incorporate, and set boundaries

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About the Author

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Comprehensive Yet Accessible!!!

By Lee

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.

My advice for Lori's next edition of this book is to include more about the role birthmothers played in the history of open adoption, to mention the first and longest lasting support and advocacy organization for birthparents ([...]), and to offer an option for a reader to send certain chapters to people who need to consider what she has to say. Yes, I know a couple people I'd like to send a chapter to. And my bet is, so will you!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Heartfelt & Practical Resource for Parents Embarking on the Adventure of Open Adoption.

By gayle h. swift

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. They offer options not a specific blueprint for every adoptive family to follow. This makes sense since each adoption is unique. Their honesty and shared experience provide a window into living an open adoption journey. They reveal that open adoption is not without challenges and suggest "Talking about it and bringing your emotions up to a conscious level allows a healing release to occur ... and prevents misunderstandings from cropping up."

But the greatest value of *The Open-hearted Way to Open Adoption* is the philosophical assumption that underpins the book: open adoption is fundamentally an attitude that must infuse the relationship and all of the parenting decisions. The child's best interest is the foundational premise. This may sound like an obvious fact, but all too often—especially in the past—adoption considers the comfort level, fears and of the adults over the needs of the child. Yes, each of these is an important factor, but the foremost criteria must to be child-focused. Many fear that children will be confused or distressed by having an ongoing relationship with a birth parent/s. Lori responds, "Openness is not the cause of any eruptions but instead can actually be part of the solution to them. If you've established an open relationship with your child, he is more likely to allow

you into his innermost thoughts and fears. He then doesn't have to face them without you. But if you are closed, he is more alone." [emphasis added]

The Open-hearted Way to Open Adoption is a positive and inspiring book that will touch your heart as well as provide you with persuasive, practical and useful ideas. I am an adoption coach and a mom of now-adult children who came to us in the 1980s through closed adoptions. My children have reconnected with their birth mothers and I have seen first-hand the beneficial impact this reunion has brought all of us but most especially my children and their birth mothers. Lori points out that she takes her children to various professional who can provide services that she cannot: physician, dentist, therapist, etc. She writes, "I can't fill a certain emotional need that Tessa has, but I can take her to the well." (Tessa's birth mother, Crystal) That is love and that is parenting with a child's best interest at heart. I would assert that no adoptive parent want to leave their children unsupported as they process difficult parts of the adoption experience.

Open adoption is not easy nor is it perfect, but it is far better than the old secrecy-based closed adoptions. The greatest ingredient to success is a heart-connected attitude. This book offers a welcome, worthwhile resource for parents who are embarking on the adventure of open adoption parenting. As Lori writes, "Open adoption is a journey rather than a destination." --Gayle H. Swift, "ABC, Adoption & Me: A Multicultural Picture Book"

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A must for any adoptive parent

By Karen T.

There are so few books on open adoption. Most domestic adoptions have an open component now. It is critical for prospective parents to read this and really think through the issues. I had a wonderful agency that provided seminars but this is even better in some ways. I wish I had read it sooner but it's very helpful now as my two year old is ready to be told more and learn more. This helps provide guidance for having healthy open relationships. An easy read and good mix of info and case stories.

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THE OPEN-HEARTED WAY TO OPEN ADOPTION: HELPING YOUR CHILD GROW UP WHOLE BY LORI HOLDEN PDF

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Review

Holden's debut is an insightful, heartfelt exploration of open adoption, an evolving arrangement that has been growing in popularity over the last 20 years. Her endorsement is personal; she has two children from open adoptions and maintains that openness helps heal adoption's split between a person's "biology" and "biography". She references open adoption as a "process" that encourages high-functioning relationships between birth parents, extended family members, and adopted parents. Open, honest, age-appropriate dialogue with adopted children about their biological background is stressed. Part one addresses basic information about open adoption, including common terminology, benefits as well as challenges, ethical concerns, choosing a professional to help navigate the process, dealing with the grief of infertility prior to adoption, and ingredients for a successful open adoption. Advice on how to incorporate, and set boundaries with, birth parents and extended birth families are included. Part two emphasizes the child (adoptee), and helps children respond to insensitive questions from others. Foster, international, and donor situations are also detailed. Anecdotes from birth parents, adoptive parents, and adult adopted children are included, establishing rapport between readers and real-life families. Holden skillfully covers many bases, including potential "bumps in the road," offering appendices and resources for further guidance. (Publishers Weekly)

Written with input from her daughter's birth mother Crystal Hass, *The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption: Helping Your Child Grow Up Whole* is both personal and dispassionate. A primer for open adoption, Holden's book is full of personal anecdotes from her own life as well as others living open adoption. Lori isn't an expert, a social worker, or a psychologist. She's a mom and super-connected blogger with two children on the brink of young adulthood, both of whom have sometimes on-again, off-again relationships with their birth parents. . . . The book offers practical tools to help adoptive parents make decisions about everything from embarking on an open adoption to opening a closed local or international adoption. She gives concrete how-to's on managing visits (use the in-law test), talking to the public about your adoption (educate, use humor, ask a question or say it's private), handling difficult subjects and feelings with your kids (depersonalize the situation), and coaching your kids on how to handle comments from peers (choose whether to share, walk away, educate or say "it's private"). . . . The meat of the book is devoted to families living open adoption, which is where the book really shines. There are helpful sections for pre-adoptive parents wondering how to enter an open adoption, families in difficult or challenging situations with birth parents (common in foster care adoptions, closed adoptions that could be opened and international adoptions on the brink of openness. (Focus on Adoption)

I would highly recommend reading this book if you are waiting to adopt or if you are in an open adoption and looking for more guidance or information. Holden walks the reader through adoption – from the

beginning stages, to the new relationship stage between the child, the birth parents, and the adoptive parents, to a relationship that will grow as time moves on. Holden and Hass share their views on what makes their adoption work and also share the views of others involved in their own open adoptions. *The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption* is a great book and should be used as a tool that can offer advice, anecdotes, and knowledge to anyone navigating their way through an open adoption relationship. (Our Story: A Blog About Open Adoption)

The personal stories are by far the most interesting part of the book. . . adoptive families will find a lot of helpful information here, including basics like questions to ask while exploring adoption agencies and tips for putting together a photo album (the book that a birth parent looks through to choose an adoptive family), and meatier stuff like the key ingredients to making an open adoption relationship work. ... Adoptive and birth families should prepare themselves for the rigors of relationship, and this book offers valuable tools for navigation. (New Rhythm Project)

I feel that this book would be an invaluable resource for either side interested in open adoption information. I especially liked the stories from Lori's and Crystal's personal experiences. I marvel at how they make their relationship work, both between themselves and with the daughter they share. (Generation Fabulous)

You know we love a good new adoption book, and "The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption: Helping Your Child Grow Up Whole," is at the top of our list. . . . Add it to your list! (Abby's One True Gift Adoptions)

A great read with real-life lessons from birth and adoptive parents, written by adoptive mom, Lori Holden and birth mother, Crystal Hass. (Adoptimist)

It's a fabulous read. I encourage everyone to buy it, and read it. (These Are The Days)

This is a useful, thought-provoking book that is written in the same humorous, friendly, approachable voice that you'll find on Lori's blog. I also appreciate the dual perspectives of both adoptive mother and birth mother on the same topics within the same context. Filled with personal stories and real-life examples, it's a book that current and prospective adoptive parents are sure to find very beneficial and challenging. It's also a rich source of conversational fuel that will spark some great discussions. (Christian Family Adoptions)

The Open-hearted Way to Open Adoption is a positive and inspiring book that will touch your heart as well as provide you with persuasive, practical and useful ideas. (GIFT Family Services)

Not only is Lori Holden an acknowledged thought leader in the area of open adoption, she is also truly beloved by the men and women who look to her for guidance, humor and balance when considering this route for themselves. Her book will be cherished by many and inspirational to all. (Corey Whelan, patient advocate and author, The American Fertility Association)

Here, at last, is the book many adoptive parents have been clamoring for, as they grapple with the questions, "What is open adoption?" and "Will it work for everyone in our family constellation?" Using real-life examples and a gentle, intelligent approach, Lori Holden and Crystal Hass answer with a reassuring "yes." *The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption* helps readers understand that open adoption is a mindset, one that moves from thinking the adoptive/birth family relationship must be "either-or" to trusting that it can be "and." If I ever doubted the wisdom of open adoption, I finished the last page a believer. This book deserves a place on every adoption bookshelf. (Jessica O'Dwyer, author of *Mamalita: An Adoption Memoir*)

This is one wise book. Sure it's full of the practicalities of open adoption—the whys and, most useful, the hows, but it is the spirit of this book that truly shines. It is this spirit of openness—Lori calls it the heartset/mindset that ultimately needs to guide us as parents. I'd love for this to be read by every adoptive parent and expectant parent at the beginning of the adoption journey.

I especially liked the practicalities of how to mesh extended families in an open adoption, what to do when one child in the family has more contact with their birth parents than another child in the family, and the realities from the child's perspective of the push-pull of having another family “out there”. But ultimately, I liked the focus on “adopting the heartset of openness” because it is what our kids need. “Adoption creates a split between a person's biology and his biography. Openness in adoption is an effective way to heal that split and help the child become whole.” Amen! (Dawn Davenport, host of the top rated national radio show—Creating a Family: Talk about Adoption and Infertility, executive director of Creating a Family)

Lori Holden's book opens with a simple yet poignant snippet of conversation with her young daughter in the car. It's about her daughter's loving feelings toward her birth parents. Holden generously invites us into her mental tai chi process (“Don't take this personally...”) leading to her wise responses. If this book were just a series of such glimpses it would be a treasure. But it's so much more: a tapestry of instructive real-life insights together with the latest research and philosophy, all aiming to “de-freakify” open adoption. The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption covers what this adoptee wishes my parents had known, and beyond. The definitive post-modern guide to enlightened adoption. (Marcy Axness, PhD, parent coach and author of Parenting for Peace)

Just as a panoramic photograph changes your understanding of a physical landscape, Lori Holden's panoramic book on open adoption will change the way you understand the family building landscape. By bringing in all voices in the adoption triad, Holden simultaneously holds everyone's hand and fills in the advice that has been sorely missing from the universe before this point: how to live well all the years that come after the adoption. Adoptive parents, birthparents, and children have all been asked to partake in a situation without a guidebook, and in doing so, stumble blindly sometimes through difficult conversations and emotional interactions. Holden's book smooths the road between all people in the triad, giving them a space to walk between one another in order to have easier interactions. (Melissa Ford, author of Navigating the Land of If and the infertility website, Stirrup Queens)

While many books focus on the mechanics of adoption, The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption stays focused on the well-being of all involved. While this should be mandatory reading for anyone who has ever uttered the words, 'just adopt,' all readers will come away as smarter, more understanding family members. (Pamela Mahoney Tsigdinos, author of Silent Sorority)

This fine book offers an honest look at the inner workings of open adoption with all its challenges and delights. Holden skillfully writes with the voice of experience, a voice seasoned with the gentleness of her heart and honed by frank discussions with countless other participants who share her determination to do adoption in a manner that honors children. Those who long to see adoption done in a big-hearted way will be encouraged by her hospitable words. (James L. Gritter, MSW, author of Hospitious Adoption)

The adoption community needs more resources to offer to families – birth, first, adoptive – all the REAL families – that intersect and interact through open adoption. This book offers real, tangible, useful information that parents anywhere on the continuum of openness can make use of as they navigate through their adoption experience with their child. (Rebecca L. Ricardo, LCSW, executive director of coordinators2inc The Lifetime Adoption Resource)

About the Author

Lori Holden was named a Top 10 “Must-Read Mom” by Parenting magazine and was honored at the annual BlogHer Conference. Her articles have also appeared in Parenting magazine, Conceive magazines, and Adoptive Families magazine Her blog, LavenderLuz.com, has been listed by Adoptive Families Circle, Circle of Moms, and Grown in My Heart websites to be one of the top adoption blogs. She is a monthly contributor to MileHighMamas.com, a Denver Post site. In addition, Lori has written for The American Fertility Association, CreatingAFamily.org and Kaiser Permanente’s Partners in Health magazine. With Crystal, her daughter’s birth mom, she teaches classes on building a child-centered open adoption.

Crystal Hass has taught about open adoption with Lori Holden at Colorado Free University and at adoption agencies.

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