

KIDSAKE NEWSLETTER  
September 2010

*A Newsletter For Birthmothers, Adoptive Parent, Adoptees  
& Adoption Professionals*

Brought to you by:  
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*I just got the invitation in the mail to my son's wedding. I still remember vividly going to the mailbox each spring to look for the letter from his parents, I never dreamed then that I'd be going to the mailbox to look for his wedding invitation! Very surreal. I am treasuring every single moment of this event. I understand what a gift it is to be a part of this experience in his life. I know it's tough to consider giving up these moments when you are pregnant and considering adoption, that's why the decision has to be based on what is best for the child. A mother is willing to give up a lot personally, if it means their child will have a wonderful life. But also, we've come so far with open adoption that the probability that a birthmother will get to experience these important milestones in their child's life are dramatically increased. This month's article helps counselors, and parents of birthmother's (or potential birthmothers) to offer the type of support they really need.*

*Be there for someone this month,  
Patricia*

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To Push or Not to Push?  
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One of the most difficult balancing acts of the counseling profession is knowing just how far to push a client. Whether it be to push them towards a decision, an action, a realization, an acceptance. When a goal is ahead that you are hoping to help them reach how do you know how far to push and how far to let them travel

on their own? When counseling women, and young girls, regarding their choice in an unplanned pregnancy, you hit many walls that are difficult to break through. Sometimes, help is needed to break through these walls and end up in a better place, but what separates “help” from “pushing?”

As someone who experienced both during her unplanned pregnancy, I can look back now and see which were helpful, and which were not. I received help from many people, my parents, my sisters, my friends and extended family, and my counselor. I was also pushed quite a bit, often by the same group of people. Sometimes, it was clear which was help and which was pushing. But often, at the time, it would feel like pushing when, as I see it now, it was actually very helpful.

Providing information is clearly a way to help. When I was given straight facts that I could then use to form my own opinions and decisions, I clearly recognized this as helpful and was grateful. At other times, people would share their opinions and decisions and expect me to do the same as they would, and I saw this clearly as pushing.

The things that fall in between are harder to describe. The clearest example I have is what happened between me and my father after leaving the hospital, and my baby behind. While I had not felt any pushing from my father in regards to making a choice for adoption versus parenting, after making my choice the pushing seemed a constant. Dad was constantly asking me questions such as “Are you going to go find a job today? Do you know where you’ll live? Have you figured out what you’re going to do next?” When the questions got him (and me) nowhere he stepped it up a notch and would demand I get in the car because he was going to spend the day driving me to different businesses to apply for a job.

I was very angry at my Dad during this time. His pushing seemed unreasonable to me. I just wanted to sit and cry, why couldn’t he just leave me alone and give me some time? I felt the pushing was unfair and wrong and began to hate him for it.

Since he didn’t stop, I decided the only way to get away from him and the pushing was to get a job so I could afford my own apartment and move away from him, which I did. I won – or did he? After all, I had just done exactly what he had been pushing me to do! I didn’t regret getting a job and moving out, I was very happy about it. I finally began to make my life move in a forward motion again and it felt good. I decided to stay mad at him.

Years later, he confided in me that he had only pushed me so hard because he couldn’t bear to see me wallow in mourning and self pity the way my Grandmother had when my Grandfather died. She gave up on life and because of it I never got to know her for the vivacious, creative woman she was before. Dad couldn’t bear to watch this happen again to someone he loved and vowed to

put aside his own grief in losing a grandson and be the parent – and push me back into my life. I couldn't be more grateful.

I see now how “helpful” that actually was. At the time I was too consumed with my own anxieties to think clearly and choose a path, I needed someone to push me a little.

I was fortunate enough not to be pushed into a decision for adoption, but I have talked with birthmother's who have felt this way and I see the difference in how they were treated. I also see birthmother's who may feel they are being pushed right now, that I know someday will understand it better and see it for the help it truly is.

The reason I saw my Dad's actions as pushing and not help was because he never explained to my WHY he was pushing me, he just did it. I believe that was a mistake on his part. Not that I think I would have been okay with the pushing or thought he was right and somehow stopped being mad at him for it – because at the time my emotions were ruling my thoughts, not my brain. But, at least I would have understood that he was not kicking me out of the house because he was mean or didn't think I could make my own decisions. I would have at least understood that he was doing it because he loved me and he was trying to help me.

It seems like I do a lot of repeating the mantra “Take time to understand the why.” I just used this phrase at a child care conference keynote I gave last weekend. But it applies to so many facets of our lives. And adoption is no exception. For birthmothers, when going through their decision making time, their emotions will slowly begin to creep in and take over. This makes it extremely difficult for them to understand why anyone is doing anything. So a counselor, for example, who begins to push them into making their decision is going to seem like nothing more than someone who is being mean because they are asking the birthmother to think at a time when all she seems capable of doing is to feel! Birthmothers may not be able to take the time to understand why – but that doesn't mean they shouldn't hear it.

Like with my Dad, I know I wouldn't have understood it at the time, but slowly, as I started to finally get control of my emotions and think, it would have started to make sense – and the anger would be gone. There are times when a birthmother does need a push. But there are reasons why. Putting off a decision is painful for adoptive parents who are hoping with all of their heart that this time will be it. The more a birthmother meets potential adoptive parents the more hope she is giving them, to wait long periods after this to make a decision is very hurtful to them and she needs to clearly understand this.

It is very easy to get selfish during the course of making an unselfish decision. When considering adoption, birthmothers are well aware of what a tough, selfless

decision it would be. So it only seems fair that they should be able to be a little selfish in asking that they get all the time in the world to make the decision.

It's up to counselors to provide the "why." Give the birthmother the reason why prolonging her decision does nothing to make it easier. Especially for her. The longer a birthmother stays in "decision making" mode, the more pain she is inflicting on herself. It's one of the toughest places to be. Once a decision is made, she can breathe, she can begin to follow through on a plan and gain a sense of direction again. For adoptive parents, prolonged decisions hurt their sense of hope, sometimes discouraging them altogether from being a part of the adoption process. Then, if the decision is prolonged even after the birth of the child, the child is the one who suffers. Infants need stability and security. Feelings of attachment are formed very early, beginning directly after the birth. For an infant to go from being with a birthmother for a couple of days in the hospital, to a foster home while she works on her decision, then to back to the birthmother or on to the adoptive parents is a lot of transition for an infant who just wants to know he can depend on the people around him to stick around. This is a particularly difficult concept for very young birthmothers. Teenagers, and sometimes even older adults, do not have a good understanding of the brain development in infants. Counselors need to provide this information. Having the decision made in a timely manner so the child can go "home" (wherever that is) as soon as possible after birth is not just a nice concept, it is a very real medical necessity. Infant's brains are making literally thousands of connections every day, and the more change that occurs in their early life, the more these connections are disrupted.

Counselors who know and understand all these downfalls of a prolonged decision may begin to push. If the birthmother does not understand the reason for the pushing this can lead to a negative relationship between counselor and birthmother at a time when it needs to be solid. To avoid this, counselors can do their best to explain in the detail why they are pushing and assure the birthmother that they care a great deal about her and respect her needs, but that as a mother they now need to respect the needs of their child as well.

I am very grateful to my father for his pushing. His pushing had nothing to do with trying to force me to make a specific decision he felt I should make, rather, he pushed me to simply move forward and make my own decisions. I think this is what separates "help" from a "push." My father was helping me, and I'll be forever thankful. As long as the pushing is done to help the person to move forward, to create an action based on their own decisions, then it is help. And everyone needs a little help sometimes.

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PARENTS CORNER: The Alphabet Game  
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Once your child begins to know the letters of the alphabet, this game can help keep them busy for your next shopping trip...

Simply have them find the letters (starting with A of course!) on labels and other items in the store until they've worked their way to Z! They can find the letter anywhere (even in the middle of words) then as they get older have them find only words that begin with the letter. For the younger ones who aren't sure of the entire alphabet, there are a couple of options. They can find the letters just that are in their own name. You can write the alphabet onto index cards, and give them one at a time to find a match for. Or, you could play the same game using colors – name a color and see if they can find it. Making a game out of going to the store is the surest way to make it an enjoyable (and possibly a learning) experience for all!

*For more great tips, check out my booklet: "101 Tips & Tricks: Ideas to make your job easier, save you money and save you time in your child care business! (Also great for parents!) At: [www.patriciadischler.com/books.htm](http://www.patriciadischler.com/books.htm).*

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IN THE NEWS  
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**W.I.S.E. UP! Workshop:** Saturday, October 16, 2010 9-11 a.m. or 1-3 p.m., JCYS Northwest Family Center, 1700 Weiland Road, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089 The WISE UP! program provides a simple yet powerful way for children and families to handle comments and personal questions about their adoption journey. This workshop, offered by Adoptive Families Today, will be lead by trained facilitators. Children will be grouped by grade level. Space is limited to 10 children and 20 adults per session. Pre-registration is required. Registration deadline is October 8, 2010. For complete information and registration visit: [www.adoptivefamiiliestoday.org](http://www.adoptivefamiiliestoday.org).

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THIS MONTH'S SALE ITEMS  
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**September Sale Item: From Babysitter to Business Owner – 15% Off!**  
Boost your professionalism and raise your quality in every area of your business – From Babysitter to Business Owner is everything you need to know to make your business a success, create a high quality program, and build successful relationships with parents. This book was a key resource for the creation of the BAS, and is considered “the bible for every family child care provider” by many Resource and Referral agencies across the country. If you are a family child care provider, you need this book! If you are a resource and referral agency that wants to raise the professionalism of providers in your area – give them this book! Packed with no nonsense advice based on my 17 years as a provider, I promise

you this book will help you avoid mistakes and get you to the top of your game quickly!

**Regular Price: \$17.95 Sale Price: \$15.26**

**October Sale Item: Because I Loved You**

A roadmap for anyone touched by the adoption process, this is the ONLY book written about open adoption from a birthmother's point of view giving new insight to the adoption process. Part resource, part memoir, this book provides keys to success for any adoption. Endorsed by 5 national adoption agencies and used nationwide by pregnancy counseling centers, this book not only will help guide birthmothers in their unplanned pregnancy choices, but provide insight to adoptees as to what it takes for a birthmother to follow through on the choice for adoption, and give adoptive parents the secret to success in building their family by providing them with the missing puzzle piece of their adopted child's life. The story will make you cry, laugh, and understand that families are built by love.

**Regular Price: \$16.95 Sale Price \$12.00**

**Order yours today at: [www.patriciadischler.com](http://www.patriciadischler.com) or [www.KIDBIZResources.com](http://www.KIDBIZResources.com)!**

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UPCOMING EVENTS  
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September 7, 2010

Nick Lawrence Radio Show

WEEU Radio 830 AM

Reading, Pennsylvania

*Open Adoption*

Interview is archived at: [www.weeu.com](http://www.weeu.com)

*Listen to it TODAY!*

September 11, 2010

Child Care Directors Symposium

Full Day Training for FCC Providers: *From Babysitter to Business Owner:*

*Turning the Job You Love Into the Career You'll Keep!*

Austin, Texas

For more information call: Workforce Solutions, 512-597-7198

September 25, 2010

*Pre-YoungStar WECA/WFCCA Accreditation Mentoring Project Mentor Training*

Madison, Wisconsin

For more information visit: [www.wecanaeyc.org](http://www.wecanaeyc.org)

October 9, 2010

*NAFCC Accreditation*

Madison, Wisconsin

For more information visit: [www.wecanaeyc.org](http://www.wecanaeyc.org)

October 30, 2010

*NAFCC Accreditation*

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

For more information visit: [www.wecanaeyc.org](http://www.wecanaeyc.org)

If you are a member of a group planning a training event and would like to book one of my keynotes or workshops, visit the Lecture page on my website and contact me for availability. Visit [www.patriciadischler.com/lecture.php](http://www.patriciadischler.com/lecture.php).

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Patricia Dischler  
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