Being a Birth Father

by David Leymone Jones

I can remember countless times that I have watched Oprah or Phil with some "expert" on their shows discussing a traumatic experience in their lives. I would think to myself, "Well, hell, I've had my share of bullshit happen to me, too! I must also be an 'expert." I could not have been more wrong. My immaturity was definitely getting the best of me. I now understand that these people weren't all just trying to get on television; they had a message to send. These incest victims, family members of alcoholics, and the alcoholics themselves were there not to get paid, as I had formerly believed, but to educate. I now understand because I, too, have something to share. I have feelings that I need to let out, and perhaps I can stop being the bully laughing at everyone else and become the man who does everything in his power to help. I desperately hope so.

I am assuming that you are reading this because you are involved with an adoption, as either a birth or an adoptive parent. Through whatever circumstance you have come to receive this article, I hope that something I offer will help make this time a little easier for you.

You are about to embark upon an incredible journey. It will be one full of love, happiness, sadness, commitment, contentment, and also respect. Though no person can be inside of your soul to feel your feelings, I think that by my being a birth parent, we are somehow kin.

It was February of 1993 when I found out that my future wife was pregnant with our second child. Even though we already had a nine-month-old son it took our every penny to support, I was nonetheless very excited. I would say that about five months had passed before I could clearly see what I had always known, but never wanted to admit. I had inside of me more than enough love for the soon-to-be-born child, but not even one-fourth of the resources that it would take to support another life.

I can remember the sleepless nights that I spent awake, wondering about how I was going to support this magnificent life that I, with help, had created. The stress was incredible. My confidence and self-esteem went down the tubes. I even developed an ulcer. Although times have changed from the era when it was believed that the man should be the sole provider of the family, I still feel that it is merited even today. (Narrow-minded thinking, huh?) Well, for me to know that I was going to have two children depending on me was an awesome realization. Was I going to be able to provide for these children? Could I really give them the lives that they deserved? I barely was able to take care of one child; how could I support two? I did not know if I could do it I knew that I could not do it!

I have talked to people about adoption in general, most recently at a Pact birth parents' support group. I went to the meeting thinking that I could contribute something, but left it with more than I gave. I received a new respect for birth mothers. Most of them don't have the luxury (though I don't know how luxurious it is) of having a man standing beside them throughout this entire process. I guess

the birth fathers were never men in the first place. And people think that adoption is an easy way out. BALONEY!!! Abortion is an easy way out. Carrying a child for nine months, I've heard, isn't exactly a picnic. Besides, you must love a child very dearly to carry him or her inside your body, for nine months, and then be able to let the child live with, be raised by, and call somebody else Mommy and Daddy. I salute you!

It is a very important decision that you are making and you must choose wisely. Take your time to do what is right. I, personally, don't agree with abortion, but I do agree that a woman has a right to be in control of her own body. A man would not relinquish that right, and neither should a woman. Everyone at Pact is there to help you. Use them. Let their genuine love for the child be an impartial friend to you. Pact wants what is going to be best for the baby, much as you do. So whether it be you or an adoptive family who raises the child, as long as you've chosen wisely, everyone is happy. Weigh all of your options; then make an intelligent and educated decision. This way you can't go wrong.

Being able to choose the family that would raise this very special part of me was of the utmost importance. I can't say enough about the couple we chose. I can, however, say that miracles do happen, because nothing short of a miracle could have brought these two people into my life. There is no way I could even begin to imagine that adoptive parents as perfect as these even existed. Other than watching my own son grow and develop each day, this is most beautiful thing that has ever happened to me in my life. Someone,

somewhere, is definitely watching over me.

It's not very often in our lives that we are responsible for such an important decision. We must always do our best to do our best. You see, we never know when those important decisions will happen along, and we need to be ready. When I think of my adoption experience I can't help be happy. Sure, I would have loved to be able to keep my beautiful girl, but I couldn't. Instead, I gave the gift of love happiness to two people who previously could not have children. I also gave a wonderful little girl the beginnings of a wonderful little life. I remember the adoptive mother telling us that she is the greatest gift they ever received. And so it should be. Even if I do no more good in my life, as long as there really is a Heaven, I know that I'll be there. Hey, Bye-Bye.

Update:

David has maintained contact with his birth child placed for adoption and his other children also have a relationship with the adoptive family and his daughter, who is now a teenager. The kids consider one another their brothers and sisters and don't seem to care much, which are by birth and which by adoption, they value all of their relationships and love it best when they get together for their large family photos of kids from all the different families!