



Episode 002—Intro

Welcome! You're listening to Adopted into Allyship, a podcast about loving wholeheartedly and fighting for connection. I'm Jamie K Corbin and this is episode two, Intro.

This is the second episode of a three-part mini-series meant to provide context for what you can expect here on the Adopted Into Allyship podcast. Before we get started, I just want to offer a loving reminder that conversations around adoption and allyship are nuanced and sensitive, and what follows may be hard to hear if you are connected to adoption. Today, this is especially true if you are connected to transracial adoption. Please enter this space with grace and care for yourself and those around you.

If you haven't listened to episode one: Adopted, I would encourage you to hit pause and check it out before we jump into today's topic.

In this episode, I will tackle a tension that exists in *all* adoptions and explain how acknowledging and caring for this tension in a healthy way creates a bridge that leads us into allyship, which will be the topic of next week's episode. We'll start by naming what I was adopted into, and conversely, out of and then exploring the space between the two.

Every Christmas my parents' gift is the same. They pretend to act surprised, which a joke between all of us, who show up in October so our photographer can capture the circus that is three households of diverse family members attempting the nearly impossible: make sure all the outfits match, don't play and get said clothes dirty, hold still, and yes, everyone has to smile. If a picture is worth a thousand words, there is a beautiful tragedy written on my parents' living room wall.

I was adopted into an amazing family.

I briefly mentioned my sister in the last episode, her name is Kari, she is two years younger than me, but I have always looked up to her. She and I are incredibly different from one another, but we have a couple of things in common: We are both Mexican American, we love our parents, we both struggle with attachment issues stemming from our adoptions, we have faith in Jesus, and we love one another's daughters like they are our own, oh and we are both responsible for our parents' graying hair as we have always been opinionated and strong-willed.

Kari is fierce and full of grit – she is a single mom of three phenomenal girls and she's an adventurous one-legged para-athlete who makes traditional, able-bodied sports look

boring and uninspired. She is the family medic and culinary guru, and she has always been one of my most supportive friends. Kari doesn't hesitate to call me out when I'm in need of an attitude or reality check, and a girl could not ask for a better little sister.

My parents were born in Eastern Idaho. They are descendants of English and Danish pioneers, and they grew up in the Latter-Day Saints tradition during the 50's and 60's. One of them was has polygamous Mormon clergy not too far back in the family tree, and the other had an immediate family member whose church sanctioned summer mission was to spread the word that skin with extra melanin was a mark of evil. My parents' LDS upbringing never felt right to either of them, and they left the church as soon as they could.

My dad is an Air Force veteran, and a real-life MacGyver whose brilliance and resourcefulness has saved our family on numerous occasions. My mom is a successful small business owner, and an accidental homeschool extraordinaire – she did a fabulous job teaching my sister and I all sorts of useful life skills that we forget to teach in traditional school. Together they raised my sister and me on eleven acres in a rural town in the mountains, where we found all sorts of adventures.

All of this to say, I was adopted *into* a family that loves one another very much, is old-school Idaho in many ways, has experienced a fair amount of church hurt from the very beginning, and was largely unaware of the challenges we would face in light of the transracial adoption that brought us together. Our family is far from perfect, but I think each of us would agree that God orchestrated something beautiful and really, really good when he brought us together.

Here is the less fun, but equally true conversation about my adoption.

I was adopted out of attachment, and the natural sense of security that develops between babies and their biological mothers before birth.

I was adopted out of any connection to my Mexican American culture, including my inheritance of being a native Spanish speaker.

I was adopted out of growing up and knowing anyone who shared my genetics.

I was adopted out of being able to contribute anything to the conversations about which relatives on *my* side of the family that my daughters might show a resemblance of.

I was adopted out of being rooted in a family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who would never consider me "other".

I was adopted out of knowing any of the answers on the family medical history questionnaire at the doctor's office.

I was adopted out of an unexpected pregnancy between two unmarried teenagers, and thus out of the opportunity to feel like anything other than a mistake.

And, I was adopted out of ever feeling confident that I truly belonged anywhere.

If that list sounds painful, it is.

Enter, a form of pain relief – my Holy family adoption.

With this adoption, I was adopted out of a deep, damaging sense of not belonging.

I was adopted out of a narrow definition of family, based on shared genetics and culture.

I was adopted out of the need to know my family's medical history.

I was adopted out of the disorienting sense of being alone even when I was surrounded by family.

I was adopted out of any national identity.

I was adopted out of my selfish desires for comfort and power.

I was adopted out of entitlement.

I was adopted out of shame.

When I was adopted into the family of God, I was adopted into an image bearing kaleidoscope of genetics that renders the concept of "other" unrecognizable.

I was adopted into immediate access to love and belonging at the foot of the cross.

I was adopted into a modeling of compassionate and generous living.

I was adopted into the supernatural citizenry of heaven that scandalously dismisses all geo-political borders and transcends our understanding of time and space.

I was adopted into the way of compassion, mercy, justice, and self-sacrificial love.

Acknowledging and accepting these tensions can help us cope with our grief.

Pain's purpose is to tell us that something needs to change. This is something I learned as a first-time mom and something I taught to my childbirth education and birth doula clients. Additionally, there is a difference between pain and suffering, and failing to find a way to cope with pain is a surefire way to find yourself miserable in suffering.

So, what are we to do with the painful parts of the adopted into and out of conversations? The answer is counterintuitive, and I think that's why so many of us struggle to find it. But, my experience is that healing can be found in the pain.

Consider the work of Jesus on the cross, the ultimate grief that exists in our heavenly adoptions. The good news that we would be freed from the bondage of our sins and the beautiful healing that is born from that truth comes directly out of the pain of Christ's crucifixion that precedes the miracle of his resurrection. We cannot accept, or even

recognize, the divine blessing that is our salvation without first beholding the brutal beatings our brother Jesus endured before they nailed his body to the cross. ***Miraculous healing can be found in the pain.***

If we can learn to attend to the tension that exists between the adopted into and adopted out of conversations, that is fully acknowledge it and accept it for what it is, no matter how painful or difficult it may be, we create opportunity to find healing for those painful wounds. We will be able to name what is causing us pain and then allow that pain to fulfill its purpose by causing us to move toward change.

This process by the way? It's so much easier said than done. I almost want to slap myself on your behalf for even suggesting it. I know what your intuition is telling you right now. *Lean into the pain? Hard pass.* But here's the thing, I spent the better part of 28 years trying to avoid the pain and it didn't go well. In fact, it was life-threatening in more than one way. But, all of those stories are for future episodes.

So, I just want to reassure you that it's okay to start small. In fact, I would encourage you to ease into this work very slowly. One of the small practices we do here at Corbin Casa is called "Thankfuls and Gratefals" – named by my oldest when she was about four years old because she always had more than one thing she wanted to name with gratitude. Practicing Thankfuls and Gratefals is as simple as it gets, and if your mind is going straight to Thanksgiving dinner, you're on the right track.

The idea is that we practice regularly naming something we are thankful for and something that we are grateful for, but here's the twist – we do our best to make one of them something that is challenging, that doesn't immediately seem like something we should be thankful for and requires a little extra effort to uncover the blessing.

Let me give you an example. We might be eating dinner and decide it's time to name some thankfuls and gratefals. We have young kids y'all so we do a lot of thanking for my parents dogs and random things like the dining room table or spoons. But, I might say that I am thankful for the girls doing their schoolwork with a good attitude that day and that even though it was a bit chaotic because I forgot my wallet at home, I am grateful for the ability to go to a grocery store and buy food for our family. You'll notice that I don't shy away from naming the pain point in this practice, but I follow it up with something redemptive. This might be a tangible object, like groceries, or that I'm growing in understanding, empathy, patience, maturity, or faith.

I have found that practicing this skill over small conversations around the dinner table has softened my reactions to bigger, more challenging situations.

One of the ways that we can live into adoption and allyship is by maintaining steady, prayerful connection with our creator. It reminds us that we are his beloved children,

whom he created for a purpose, and that He invites us to play a part in bringing forth healing and justice amidst a broken world. It is an honor to pray with and for you, now.

Father God,

We come to you desperate to understand and utilize the tension of what we have been adopted into and out of, what our babies have been adopted into and out of.

We thank you that you understand all the complicated nuances of in-between spaces, since you came for us as fully God and fully human.

We confess that this tension is uncomfortable and instinctively we want to deny it, avoid it, or ignore it by pretending it's anything else by smothering it in silver linings and toxic words of comparison espousing how it could be worse.

When we read your word and examine your love story, we see that we are not the only ones who have struggled in this type of tension. Moses, Ruth, and Esther come to mind as people who can see their stories in terms of what they were adopted into and out of, God help us follow in their footsteps and use the tension to find your healing, for your glory.

Father, show us how to use our pain as a catalyst to bring your kingdom more fully into the world around us.

In our brother Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Thank you for joining me for another episode of Adopted into Allyship, produced by Day Three Studios. If you gained insight or encouragement from this episode, yay! I would be most grateful if you would take a minute and rate the podcast, leave a review, and share it with those you know who could benefit from joining us as we work toward loving wholeheartedly and fighting for connection. I will be back with more next Thursday, but until then, know that I am cheering for you!