



EP 046: My Adoption Story

This is the Fertile Mindset Podcast, where we explore all the emotional aspects of fertility to support you on your path to parenthood. My name is Sarah Holland. I'm the Fertile Mindset coach and a mother to two children after my own fertility challenges. I hope you find all the support and inspiration you need within this podcast, to carry you forward on your fertility journey towards your own successful outcome.

It's also my wish that through listening to these episodes, you rediscover how to enjoy life now and live it to the full while you wait for your baby.

Now let's begin today's episode.

Hello, and welcome back to the Fertile Mindset Podcast. Now today's episode is a continuation of my own story. It started when I recorded the episode on adoption and there was a lot of interest to hear more about our adoption story. But before I shared that, I felt it was right to look at my story in a chronological order and start with the fertility story first, which was the last episode.

And then move on to the adoption story next, which is now. So, if you have listened to that last episode, you'll hear that I started thinking about adoption really, really early on. As early as my own childhood, I knew that adoption was an option. It was one that appealed to me, and it was always kind of in the back of my mind, if you like.

So when we were on our fertility journey and we knew that we were having fertility problems, we didn't know when, or if we would be able to conceive a baby, adoption was always there in the background as well. And as we got close to towards the end, although we didn't know it was the end of that particular chapter, I remember saying to my husband that, or kind of having a chat about it, if you like, and agreeing that we would try for five years. Five years just felt like a good period of time to commit to trying to conceive, have our own biological child. And if it didn't happen after five years, we wanted to then be open to switching paths and looking at adoption. That was our next choice.

And I did the research beforehand. I said it in the last episode, how I got the information packs from local adoption agencies. I had a quick look at them and then I put them in a drawer, just knowing that they were there if, and when we needed them. So, we did conceive our first baby, as you know, from the last episode and once he was, let me think, 18 months, two years old, I guess. We started thinking again about trying for another baby.

So, we thought it would be a very similar story to the first time, you know, we'd kind of figured out what worked for us in that we both made changes to our diet and our lifestyle, we had regular acupuncture, I charted my cycles, I kept an eye on my luteal phase, and looked at my progesterone levels. But the truth was, my cycles were even shorter, my luteal phase was even shorter, my progesterone levels were even lower, despite whatever I did with my

diet, with my lifestyle. And what I kind of put it down to at the time and that made sense to me, is that I was depleted. I had a new baby, that baby wasn't sleeping. That baby was now a toddler and still not sleeping. And I felt exhausted, and I thought, well, how can my body possibly function at the same level? You know. It was hard enough to get pregnant the first time, and this time round it seems even more difficult.

I did sign up for regular acupuncture again, but to be honest, I went once or twice. I didn't have the time and space in my life to commit to acupuncture like I did beforehand, with a pre-schooler at home, running my own business still, it felt really hard actually second time round, in a different way to how it had the first time. I had all the time and energy in the world to devote to it, and the second time around it wasn't so much.

However, we knew that progesterone was still my major issue. So I went back to my clinic, I had some scans, and it was found that yeah, my progesterone levels were very low, and it was recommended that I took progesterone every single cycle, not to wait until I got pregnant this time, but to take it just after ovulation. So, continue charting, find out when I ovulate, then take the progesterone throughout the luteal phase so that if I did get pregnant, if an egg fertilised, and was traveling down and wants to implant, my luteal phase would be long enough. My lining would be thick enough to support my pregnancy. Well, I took progesterone in that way with every cycle, which was more often than monthly, because I had short cycles, so it was probably about 15, 16 cycles that I did over the course of a year, with just one pregnancy. And that turned out again to be a chemical pregnancy that lasted just one day and then didn't sustain even with the progesterone there.

So, we went back to the drawing board a little bit. We had a chat, we were like, what shall we do now? My husband had already been following all the lifestyle changes and things that he'd done before. Up to a point. I know we were both finding it more challenging the second time round, and I put adoption back on the table, literally brought out the brochures and put it back on the table. And my husband said, actually, I think I should be tested first. You know, we've been focusing on you. You've been having progesterone. We've kind of assumed that I'm okay because my levels, you know, increased last time, and we'd been doing much of the same stuff, but I haven't had the tests done. So, he went along, had a semen analysis. And we were shocked to discover that he had a super low sperm count.

It was just 1 million and that was quite alarming. It rang alarm bells for his general health and wellbeing as well. And the doctor ran a few more tests, but no apparent reason could be found for such a low count. However, it did show that that was probably one of the major reasons that despite all the progesterone I'd been taking, that I wasn't getting pregnant.

So, my husband said, look, before we look at adoption, give me three months to really clean up my diet, really take the supplements, do everything I can, and let's see whether that works. And you know that three months was a really strange time for me because whilst I could hear what he was saying, and I completely understood it. In my heart, I had already kind of switched paths and I'd put adoption right in front of me. And it felt like the natural next step. It felt like my baby was out there somewhere. Even if they weren't conceived or born yet, it felt like my baby would be out there and would be coming to me through adoption. However, I could hear how important this was to my husband to know that he'd done his part, so we did commit to that three months.

And the very last month I had some kind of symptoms, and feelings like I could be pregnant. And then I felt so conflicted, because on the one hand, this is what I'd been working towards. It was amazing that it could happen naturally again, but very strongly, on the other hand, I felt like, well, I'm not going to be adopting that child, that baby, that I set my heart on. I didn't know who this baby, who this child was, but it was a very strange feeling that I felt kind of committed to the adoption side, even though we were still trying naturally. And I think that's really important to recognise if you are, if you are looking at the adoption path. Whether

you're just kind of researching it now, or deciding to go down that path later, or whenever it is, I do think it's really important to feel 100% committed and comfortable with that path. Not to be trying to conceive and going down the adoption pathway at the same time, hoping that one will come up, and that will make your decision, but to actually make that decision at the outset.

And if it is trying to conceive naturally, or it is IVF treatments, to come to a place where you can stop them. You can understand why you're stopping, you feel comfortable with that decision, and then you can switch your path to adoption.

Now that's me speaking personally, I've known other people take different approaches and research, or even beyond both paths at the same time. But for me personally, I needed to have that distinction between the two.

So that was at the end of the third month of trying and it turned out I wasn't pregnant. Definitely wasn't pregnant. So, that took us down the adoption path of course. And I started with lots of energy then, researching where our nearest and most appropriate adoption agencies would be, applying to them, going along to open days, open evenings, hearing all about what the adoption process meant, and then having interviews as well to be accepted by agencies as prospective adoptive parents.

So we had our interview and a big part of that was talking about our birth child because adopting with a birth child is very different to adopting your first child, because obviously the birth child needs to be taken into account, their age, whether that would be an easy transition for them and we were told all along that they liked, I believe it was two, a two year age gap between children. However, as time went on, we learned that the accepted approach was to have as big an age gap as possible, which I believe my son was around...How old was he? Four years old perhaps, when we started the process. So, by then we knew there would be a bigger age gap. So that was good.

So, what happened next? Well, this is going to be different, according to where you live in the country. If you're in the UK, where you are in the world, and bear in mind that our adoption process finished 8 years ago, and it started 10 years ago. So, we're talking about a lot of time that has passed and things may have changed in the world of adoption. So, whilst I am going to be talking about some of the steps that we went on, the training, the assessment, and so on. I'm also mostly going to be sharing, you know, what the experience was like for us and how it affected us personally, and what we did personally to support that process of adopting.

Our first steps, as well as applying to the adoption agency, and having our interview and waiting to see if we'd be accepted, that also involved a visit to our home, to meet us, to meet our son so they could make a decision as to whether they wanted to proceed with our application. We started doing our own research as well, and that involved lots of reading of books about adoption and about early trauma in children and all the different issues that could come up when adopting a child. And it also involves lots of talking and meeting up with people.

I was fortunate in our immediate circles, to have friends that had adopted, or had been adopted themselves. So, I made lots of coffee dates and sat down and talked to people about what their experience was like of adoption. And that was fascinating. It was pretty eye opening. It was kind of no-holds-barred conversations about the reality of what it means to adopt a child from the care system, to adopt a child that has been through trauma and loss, and maybe has been affected by drugs or alcohol.

And our eyes were wide open from the start. You know, we weren't living in any kind of fantasy fairy tale land with this. We knew that adopting a child could bring in extra

challenges. That wouldn't be there if we conceived another child naturally or wouldn't necessarily be there. So that research, that reading, that talking to others felt like a really, really important first step.

And as we started our process of training and assessment, it became clear that that was required of us anyway, to continue that, to have our eyes wide open our heart wide open and to all the adoption entails. So, the assessment took place with our social worker who was allocated to us, who was a wonderful woman, so compassionate, so kind, we were really lucky to be matched with her. And she told me that in her previous role, she had been an infertility counsellor. So, she had a real depth of understanding of what it meant to transition from trying for your baby naturally, through fertility treatment, and then onto adoption.

And we would meet with her, at one point we were meeting every week. And it was around three hours at a time. She'd come around to our house, we'd make sure it was all very clean and tidy, and we had lovely biscuits available and coffee, and we'd all sit down on the sofas and talk for, say around three hours at a time, it was, it was intense, but it was also really fascinating because each week that we met, there was a different topic that we would focus on.

So, whether that was our own childhood, our work, our families, we would have a topic that we talked about with her. And then we'd also have an assignment to write about that topic as well. And all of these essays that we were writing, all the questions that we were answering, all the notes that she was taking all were compiled into what is called a par, which is a prospective adopters report. And this is huge. It's all about us, about who we are as a family, so that whoever looks at that report can understand who we are and understand who would be the best child to match with us. So, all of the assessment process was working towards that.

The other side was the training, which still, as I say, the word training, it feels kind of weird, you know, to say you're being trained to be an adoptive parent. There is no training available to be a birth parent, is there? You know. This isn't available. It isn't an option. Although having been through both the assessment and the training, I could see it would be a good idea, you know, to have that space and that chance to talk, and explore, and notice your differences and your similarities in the way that you want to parent. Yeah, I did find it really helpful, more than just being for our adoption. It felt helpful for us as a couple and us as a family. But the training itself took place in different ways.

We had all kinds of general adoption training, where we were in a group of around six couples, I believe. And everyone was coming from a different direction. We were the only ones there with a birth child, but there were others who had been through lots of fertility treatment. And there was also a couple in our course who were looking to adopt a relative. So, all coming from, you know, different places with that training, but going through all of the basics of what would be required of us during this process and what adoption meant.

And then there were more specialist training that we went on. One was specifically for families with birth children already. And we talked around all the extra issues that could come up there. And, and other training were about contact with birth parents and other issues. And other aspects that when you first go into adoption, you know, you don't even know will be there. You don't realise it's part of it.

And I think that's one of the problems with modern day adoption now, is that a lot of us think about adoption being adopting a baby, perhaps from newborn that has been given up by a mother who couldn't take care of that baby. Maybe they were a teenager or some other reason why they chose to give up their baby for adoption. And of course, this is how adoption used to be. At least here in the UK, when we're looking back to say the 1950s, before the contraceptive pill was available, before single parents were supported, before it

was kind of accepted as a society as well, that single parents could keep their children and, and have that more rounded approach to what families can look like.

But nowadays the truth is that almost 100% of babies that are adopted at least here in the UK, do come through the care system. They are children who have been neglected. They may have been abused. They may have come into contact with alcohol and drugs during pregnancy, and any number of issues can be involved. And therefore, it is, I feel, a lot more of a complex situation now than perhaps we think of in the olden days' adoption, when we just would take that newborn baby home from hospital. And that's why all the research at the start, all the reading, all the talking to friends, and then the training that we went through with our adoption agency, was so, so important. Because we'd done the research before, I didn't feel at any point that anything was shocking or new to me, and I was aware on our course that for some couples, it was, you know, the very fact that we would possibly be facing a baby that had drug withdrawal symptoms at birth. And what that could mean to their ongoing health was extremely shocking and alarming to some others in the course. And along the way, you are always told that you have a choice of the kind of issues, the kind of risk factors that you are willing to accept. And the ones that you're not willing to accept. And at one point towards the end of our assessment and training, we were given a form to complete.

And it was a form... and I've talked about this in the original adoption podcast, but it was a form of every kind of possible life circumstances, potential medical issues of these babies and children. And you could tick to say, yes, I would accept this. No, I wouldn't accept it, or the middle column of maybe, maybe I would. And the vast, vast majority of the ones that we ticked were in the maybe column, because we found it impossible to imagine whether, you know, we would be able to give a home to a child until we met that, not met that child physically one-to-one, but until we got to know that child and we learned about them, and although there might be a tick box on there that says, would you accept a child, for example, with hearing disabilities or with blindness, we didn't want to say a definite no to anybody because we thought, well, let's see what is presented to us. So let's see what, what the options are and get to know that child as an individual.

And I'm so pleased that that is the approach we took because the reality was, that once we went through all of that assessment, all of that training handed in our reports went to panel, we were approved by this panel. We were then waiting and waiting to see if a child would be found for us when that child was found. And I'll tell you about that day in a moment, but when that child was found for us and we were matched and we were told, told first of all, just the brief details of his story and later reading a lot more. I realised that his story, and his circumstances, and his background, was like nothing that I had read about was didn't compare to any of the other stories that I'd heard, because it was his unique story, you know. And it required us to take a deep breath, to really digest all of this information, and then see if that would become a part of our family story, you know. That was his story, and his family, and his birth family story. And by us adopting him, it would then become part of our family story as well, if that makes sense. So yeah, we needed that time to kind of reflect on it, and then make the decision. Would we want to adopt this baby?

So, just going back a little bit then, to where we were, we went panel, once all this PAR had been completed and we were ready, and we were very nervous, but we were ready. We went to see the panel, which was a panel of 10 people made up of adoption professionals, but also people who'd experienced adoption themselves, either as an adoptive parent or an adopted child and they were now adult on the panel. And they looked over our form. We sat in front of them for what felt like a huge amount of time, but I think it must've been no longer than 30 minutes. And they asked us questions, and they looked through our file. They had especially had questions about our parenting of our birth child and how we saw it, an adopted child fitting into our family and so on. And then they told us they had enough information, and we could leave. So, we left, it was a little kitchen that we could go off to one side while the panel then talked more about us on their own and made a decision. So, we

went out to the kitchen with our social worker, and we waited, and it was only a few minutes, but again, it felt like a long time, but in a few minutes the chair of the panel came in and said that he had the very good news that we were approved as adoptive parents. Which was amazing. We cheered, we hugged, we cried, then we texted everybody we knew that had been waiting for this news.

And yeah, that was a significant first step into adopting our child. But then the waiting began, and the waiting is the hardest part I think, because we were used to waiting, aren't we? On a fertility journey we do a lot of waiting, waiting each month to find out if we're pregnant, waiting for test results, waiting for fertility trends. And a lot is required of us. And then we go into the adoption process and it's very different, you know. There are a certain number of steps that you follow, certain trainings and assessments, and so on, that you go through and all the essays you write and everything, but you kind of know that once you get to the end of this, hopefully all being well, there will be a child for you, but you have the waiting still. So, you're approved to be an adopter and then you wait.

And we were fortunate in that we only waited, I think around three months, just over three months, I think, but that did still feel like an awful long time. And our social worker would check in with us often weekly; she'd call and see how we're doing very much for our son. She would check in or she'd stop by and see us because she was aware that if it felt like a long time to us, it definitely felt like a long time to a five-year-old when he was really ready to meet his brother or sister. And he'd been involved in the process he'd been asked; would you like a brother or a sister? And what do you think about all this? And he had been very adamant that he wants to sister. So, we went with that. We thought it's good to include him in this process, you know, and we will put forward that we want a girl if possible. So that was part of our form. That was what was completed.

And I remember a few days, probably maybe a week or more, not long before our social worker finally did phone with some news for us, my son suddenly said, actually, I'd really like a brother, I've changed my mind. And we were like, oh my goodness, all those forms were completed, and it went to the panel, and it says a girl, and now he's saying he wants a boy. And we just kind of let that go because we thought, well, he could change again next week. What do we do? Do we tell the adoption people to change our form, or do we leave it and wait and see what happens? And we decided just to leave it.

So, I was in town one day shopping, and I was walking home, and my phone rang, and I saw on my phone, it was our social worker. Our lovely social worker calling for what, for what I thought was another check-in. And I was walking, and I still remember exactly where I was walking because as soon as she said the words, we found you a baby, I just stopped walking. I stopped still. There's no way I could walk, or think, or do anything other than listen to her. And she said, we found you a baby. This is how old he is. This is his name. This is what he looks like. Would you be interested? We think he's a great match for you.

And it was just perfect, right from what his name was, to the fact that it was a boy when my son had just changed his mind, you know, and they didn't know that they just obviously felt this was a good match despite our saying that we'd prefer a girl. And everything sounded right.

But all we needed to do at that stage was say yes, and then they would set all the, everything else in motion. So, what that would mean is that we would be sent a lot more information. It would be his information forms and records that we would be sent, they would send us some photographs, we would get to meet with his paediatrician, who would tell us all about any health concerns within him or anything that was relevant in the family. And we'd also get to meet with the foster carers too. Not to meet our baby yet, but to meet the foster carers who had been caring for him, so they could give us more information and an insight into what he was like.

And gosh, that visit to his foster carers was surreal, because he was being looked after by their next-door neighbour just for the half hour or so that we were there. So, we knew that he was next door. And we were sitting down talking to the foster carers all about him and what it had been like for him being there, what his personality was like, what his routine was like, everything they wanted to share. And one of the most special moments was when they asked us if we wanted to see his nursery. And we went upstairs and saw the cot that he was sleeping in. We saw the wardrobe filled with his clothes. Oh, it was, it was magical, but we didn't meet him yet. We were just learning about him. So, once we learned everything we needed to, we'd asked all our questions, we decided that yes, this felt right, and we would love to adopt. So, this again was put forward to the panel, to the same panel. I don't know if some of the 10 people were slightly different in the months that had passed, but I remember the chairman of the panel was the same.

And that was kind of a more relaxed feeling at the panel because we were already approved. It was like a welcome back to the panel from everybody, which was lovely. But at the same time, there was even more at stake now because we'd got to know this little baby. We hadn't met them yet, but we'd read all about him, we'd seen pictures, we felt like we knew him already. And we really, really wanted him to be part of our family. So, there was a lot of tension that day, like the stakes felt really high.

So, we went through all the information again with them, we answered their questions, we were sent out to the little kitchen again while they made their decision. And then they came back and said, yes, we approve that you can adopt this baby. And, oh my goodness, the celebration that time was way huger than the first celebration. We, me and my husband, my social worker in this huge group hug, huddled, jumping up and down, cheering and crying, and it was just amazing. It was so special.

And then everything happened very quickly. Within days of that approval at panel, we were given a plan for introductions, and part of that plan was that we created a video for him, all about us and about our home, and about where he would sleep and all sorts of things. So, we recorded this little video to introduce ourselves. I also slept with a little Teddy bear that he would get my scent from that Teddy bear. So, and we printed off lots and lots of pictures as well, A4 colour photos of all of us in the family. And we sent all of this via the social workers to the foster carers.

And while we were waiting for introductions to start, they shared all of this with our baby. So, the pictures she posted up all around his cot and where he was living, she played the DVD to him lots and lots of times so he could see us and hear our voices and the little Teddy bear that I'd been sleeping with, getting my scent, was put in his cot as well.

So, he was getting to know us already before he even knew that we would be arriving, which I found to be a really wonderful part of the process. And it definitely helped because what I'm going to tell you next was quite magical.

So, then we had this introduction period set up, which I think was over around 10 days. And the first day we were to visit, and we were to visit for just one hour, and we weren't to hold our baby. We just needed him to see us, to get to know us, and be in the same environment with us.

And then the next day our son could come along as well. And then after, it would increase every day, we'd spend a bit longer. About halfway through that time we would go out, with the foster carers and with us, for a little walk around the park and go out together.

Then the next day we would go out on our own with him, in the foster carers town and be allowed on our own with the baby. And then one of the later days, the foster carers brought

him over to us for a visit, and they just stayed with him for an hour or so, got him to be in the house and get used to the house and then they took him back.

And then they brought him, the day before he finally came home to us. They brought him over for a visit, and they left him with us and then we drove him back later. And then finally the day came where we could go and pick him up.

Now, before I talk about that day, which is the day. Before I talk about that day, going back to day one of that introduction, the 10 days of introductions. When we walked into the house, we'd been told, you know, you're not going to be holding the baby. It would be too much, too overwhelming, we need him just to get used to you being there. He's bonded to the foster carers, and it needs to take time, you know?

So, when we walked in, he was being held by the foster carer, and he recognised our voices, probably recognised our smell and what we looked like and everything. And he turned his head round and he reached his arms towards me. And he wanted to be held. And the foster carer was there, and she just smiled and nodded, and he was handed to me, and we held him. We both held him that day. We were still only there for just over an hour. It was still a short trip, a short visit, but how amazing, you know, that moment when he looked straight into my eyes and it felt like the bond was there immediately, that's honestly how it felt for me.

He was a young baby, yes. He was still pre-being on solid food. He was, you know, being bottle fed, he wasn't yet sitting up or crawling or anything. He was still quite a young baby and having that connection there with him from day one, with the eye contact, with the reaching out, and being held, and him being comfortable, it was, yeah so beautiful. And it felt to me like the bonding process with our adopted child was way easier than I thought it would be. And I know that depends on the child, the age of the child, the circumstances. But I really feel that that pre introduction period where we got to know him and he most importantly got to know us, I think was so, so important.

And all the senses that involved, you know, as well. With the scent, and the sight, and the hearing of our voice, I think that went a long way to really creating a bond from early on. So, we went through that 10 days. It was the most exhausting 10 days of my life. We needed to make sure we had like meals planned, and we didn't have to think of anything else because every time we came home, we were just emotionally and physically exhausted by the whole process. We were putting our whole heart and souls into this.

And then the day came at the end of that, where we got to take him home. We showed up at the house, we had the car seat in the back of the car, and we were told that it needed to be a quick process. We mustn't linger. We mustn't have too many tears or too many farewells. We were to put them in the car seat, say our goodbyes and put them in the car and drive away. And that we would meet up with the foster carers again in a couple of weeks, but we had to have this time for him to be with us and to bond with us first. And I'm not gonna sugar coat this in any way, but it was, it was very emotional, and it was emotionally painful for me to watch the foster carers and see their hearts breaking, you know, they'd nurtured him, and they'd done the night feeds with him. They'd been there to support him in his earliest weeks and months. And now we were taking them away. And it was so emotional, and I'm so pleased our social worker was there to oversee the transition. She kept her very calm. She kept it moving and we did put him into the car seat, put the car seat into the car, said our goodbyes and drove away.

And then we were a family, a family of four driving home, bringing our baby to his new home. Introducing him to his room and his cot, which he had actually laid in the day before when he'd had a visit. And yeah, it was just beautiful. And we did the usual kind of baby moon kind of time, you know. My husband had leave from work, my son was off from school anyway on his school holidays, and we had lots of visits and lots of presents and lots of celebrations.

And it was wonderful to have a new baby in such a beautiful, beautiful way. A beautiful transition.

One very funny thing that happened was my mum set the house up when we arrived home, she put the new baby boy banner on the door, and we had celebrations and everything. And then a few days later when the banner was still on the door and I was carrying my son in a sling, I wanted to kind of increase that bonding and continue it as much as I possibly could. And I wanted to keep him as close to my heart as I could. So, I had him in a sling most of the time and I'd be walking around the house, and he'd be with me all the time. And the window cleaner came, and he cleaned the windows and he obviously cleaned around this new baby banner on the door. And then he rang the doorbell, and he came to collect his money for the window cleaning. And he was looking down, kind of writing the receipt going, oh, congratulations I see you've had a baby, you know, with the banner there. And then he looked up as he gave me the receipt and he went, Oh, my goodness he's huge. Because he was already five months old. He was five months old, so quite a big baby. And this the window cleaner guy thought I just had a brand newborn baby because of the banner. So that made me chuckle. Really, maybe Chuckle. I was thinking, goodness, he must think I've given birth to the world's largest baby.

And there were a few things, you know, as, as life went on there, there were a few times that people would see me with a baby and they would be like, oh, is this your baby? Who, who does this belong to? Because they hadn't seen me pregnant beforehand. They might have been someone that was more of a kind of acquaintance that I knew in the school playground or something, rather than a friend that knew all about our journey. So, there were quite a few moments there, where I felt like we needed to explain, or we had the choice whether to explain. And it is quite a different way of course, to bring a child in. And you need to be clear on what you're going to say, who you're going to share things with. There is a level of privacy that is absolutely needed for the safety of your child, depending on circumstances. But we absolutely needed privacy, which is why you will never hear me say his name or give out any identifying features or share photos or anything of the like, because he needs to be kept safe. And that is our top priority.

And I remember when I first went out with him in the pram, and like all babies in prams tend to get a lot of attention, but I felt really protective of him in a different way than I had for my first baby. And I remember a lady leaned over the pram and said, oh, he's gorgeous. What is his name? And I gave her a false name because I thought, who are you? Who are you? What do you recognise this baby? Do you know the birth family? I'm going to give you a false name. And I did without even thinking. And that awareness was definitely there, quite heightened at first. Needlessly so, you know, he was safe, we didn't need to worry so much. But that kind of awareness and protectiveness was there, and it's still there today, you know. All these years later. It's still there. In that we don't approve photos to be taken at school, and shared in the public domain, you know.

And he understands that as well you know, we've had to share his story with him of course, at age-appropriate times. And he understands that it's his personal information and it's not to be shared, which does make me laugh when we have like a doctor's appointment or something. And the doctor's asking about his early childhood and any genetic issues or whatever and I'll say, well, he was adopted so we don't have that information. And he'll look at me and go, mummy, that's my personal information. And I say, it's okay we can share this with the doctor, but you're right we don't just give out that information to anybody. So, bless him, it's lovely to see how he lives his life as an adopted child, knowing that he was chosen, that he was matched with us as an ideal family for him. And we may have not been with him right at the start of his life, but he is with us now for the rest of his life. And he is as much of a part of our family as our birth son is. And the bond between them is beautiful too, you know. There's over five years age difference, five-and-a-half-year age difference between them. And also, my birth child is very tall for his age, and my adopted child is very short for his age.

So there's quite a difference in height between them as well, but they have a beautiful bond. They will sit and read stories together and cuddle up in front of the TV together and play together, even though there is this large age gap.

And that was something that concerned me at first, I always imagined that I would have two children, quite close together, probably with just a two-year age gap. And that didn't happen. We ended up with a five-and-a-half-year gap, but actually I really appreciated that gap, you know, it meant that we had a more independent child when we brought home our baby. And he had an understanding of what was going on, and it wasn't like having a toddler and a baby fighting over the same toys or something, you know, it was yeah, an environment that felt very easy to bring a baby into. It doesn't mean it's all been easy by any means at all. We come up against challenges, of course, like any family would and additional challenges that we have perhaps through adoption as well. But for us, it has worked out just beautifully.

So, if you are considering adoption for yourself, I hope you've enjoyed listening to this story because as I was telling it to you, I was reminded of, of all the stories that I had heard, you know, from my friends, from the people that I spoke to before we went down this, this path and how hearing their stories really helped me understand what adoption meant, what it could be like for me and help us make that decision as to whether adoption was right for us. So, I hope this has been helpful for you. If you have any further questions, feel free to get in touch anytime at mail@fertilemindset.com and I look forward to speaking to you again, next time.

Thank you for listening to the Fertile Mindset Podcast.

If the topics talked about here sounded like I was speaking directly to you and your thoughts, then I would really love to invite you into the Fertile Mindset Sanctuary.

This is my fertility support membership, where you can free yourself from stress, worry and any emotions that don't feel helpful, so you can then create a naturally supportive mindset, your Fertile Mindset.

In the Sanctuary I'll guide you through using the emotional healing technique I use at Fertile Mindset called EFT, and you'll soon be feeling less stressed and more joyful.

If you're not already in the Sanctuary, do come and join us now, starting with the BUD level of membership, which is completely free of charge.

Go to www.fertilemindset.com/sanctuary to join, and then watch the welcome class, which will give you a fast start into taking back control over the emotional side of your fertility.

I look forward to seeing you there, and at the next episode of the Fertile Mindset Podcast.