File Name: Interview with Joe and Jana Robbins, Foster-To-Adopt Family
File Length: 00:38

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Mike Berry: Well, welcome to video 3 in the Adoptive Parent Toolbox and once again, thank you so much for downloading this series and thank you for being an adoptive family. Whether you're a pre-adoptive parent or you're in post-adopt … you're a post-adoptive parent. We're just thankful for you and we really hope that this resource helps you and gives you great insight. In this video, we're gonna be talking about fostering to adopt, and I'm very pleased to be joined with Joe and Jenna Robbins who are foster-to-adopt parents and they've also adopted privately. So Joe and Jenna, thank you guys so much for being in this video and taking part in this.

Jana Robbins: Thank you for having us.

Mike Berry: And you guys have really … what I would say is unique story. Uhmm, you're very similar to our family in that you've adopted privately and then you've also gone through the foster care system and been foster parents and you have adopted through the foster care. What I want to do as we've done with all of these videos is just give you guys a chance to share this unique story. So if you would share your story with us.

Joe Robbins: It, uhh … it started about little over 15 years ago. My wife, uhmm, worked with a lady whose teenage daughter was pregnant and they have a lot of discussions about that and you know things that were going on their life and things that were going on with our life and we have discussed adoption and you know, things around that and, uhh, that we currently didn't have any children but we were interested, you know, in being a family and starting a family and apparently behind the scenes of that, there were a lot of discussions going on in their family...

Mike Berry: Okay.

Joe Robbins: …about the situation with her daughter and what they were going to do and you know, she was young. She was a teenager. Uhmm, and how that was gonna work in the family and what was going to happen. And eventually over time, the discussions really morphed into," Would you be interested in adopting the child?" Uhh, we went through a lot of prayer and considerations about that and kind of just dropped one day, you know, when they're having a normal discussion. And, uhh, we expressed our fears you know over adoption. How a lot of times that can, uhh, their thoughts and opinions on that can change through the course of the pregnancy. But eventually we did agree. Everything went well. Uhmm, my wife was in the hospital room when the baby was born. Uhmm, and we took her home after like the second day and, uhh, we'll never forget

on the 10th day that we had Mariah, our daughter at home with us, uhh, they called and wanted to change their mind. And of course that was just a very …

Mike Berry: It's devastating.

Joe Robbins: Oh, absolutely. Beyond what you could describe. And, uhh, to make the very long story very short, we, uhmm, fought and went through the court systems all the way up to the highest court in Indiana. And eventually we did come out of that with the adoption intact. There were some legal issues that when we went through the process we didn't consider and, uhh, on the other side of that, we have a good relationship with the birth parents. Mariah our daughter continues to have visitation with them and I think we made the best out of a bad situation that could be, uhmm, and you know, she's about to turn 15 years old and, uhmm, is a very important part of both of our families. And we're very thankful for that.

And shortly after we … that battle that lasted four years, uhh, and so after we came out of that on the other side we began to discuss adoption again. Believe it or not. And with … rather than look back toward the private adoption, I don't know if that was our fear, but we kinda felt that, but we started looking towards the state and you know children that we knew have been in foster care or whatever their situation was and what it would take to look at adopting some of those children and we discussed that for quite a long time actually. Probably about a year. Uhh, before we were ready emotionally and financially and you know, all of those things after we're recovering from the other situation. We began to look at adoption through the state. Uhmm, and the training that you go through for that, uhmm, adoption just simply adopting a child that's in the foster care system or actually becoming a foster parent are identical up until the very end, as you guys all know.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: Uhmm, so as we're traveling down that road of training to become an adoptive parent through the state, you know, they're also talking about foster parenting and the things that are involved in that and you know some of the issues and they're touching a wide variety of topics, and we began to discuss with each other, you know, opening our home to be a foster family. So as you travel through that, it … you know, it takes like four full Saturdays to do all this training. And about on the third Saturday, when we're finishing up that portion of it, we really decided amongst ourselves that we would really abandon the plan to simply adopt and become a foster family, and then work with adoption as it presents itself through the foster care situations that you're in to be open to adoption. You know, because technically, the goal that never be when the state removes the child to place them with another family. In the beginning, they want … they honestly want to put that family back together if it's possible. But in certain situations, it's just not.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: The damage is too great or bio-parents are unwilling or unable to do whatever it is that the state says you need to do to put your family back together. And in these situations, foster children then become available for adoption. Whether it be the foster parents that they're with or someone else like we would've been in the beginning that didn't come in to be a foster parent but wanted to adopt a foster child, uhmm, that the foster family for whatever reason and that's okay choose not to adopt them. Uhmm, so we just simply prayed extensively that we would be open to adoption and then a child that came into our home that that's the direction that it went. Uhmm, and through that, uhh, we had a number of placements. We had 21 children come through our home in a very short amount of time. We were only foster parents for …

Jana Robbins: Three years I think.

Joe Robbins: Yeah. Three or four years.

Mike Berry: That's a lot of children in three years.

Joe Robbins: And we became known as a home that was open to taking groups of children which is something …

Mike Berry: Which is very unique. That's very unique though.

Joe Robbins: 'Coz it can be very difficult for them if they come to a situation where there's three, four, five children and they're forced to remove them and now they're looking at having to split them up into different homes and things like that, which they honestly do not wish to do. They would love to have a home where they know that, "Hey, you know, this X, Y, Z thing over here is willing to take groups of children." And we kind of became that. One of those homes in our area. So through that we have 21 placements and we ended up adopting five children. Group of three and a group of two. And that's where we are.

Mike Berry: Which is … it's incredible because, you know, a lot of people we've gotten this over the last, we were foster parents I think for eight years total, and we had 21 children well plus I would say the ones that the children we adopted which we adopted six of our children through the foster care. So that plus 21 in eight years. That was a lot. But some people would say, "You guys are crazy." And we'd say no, loving, caring. So what a cool story.

Joe Robbins: We have said this a number of times to a number of people. It was absolutely without question the most challenging thing that we've ever done.

Mike Berry: Absolutely. Yeah.

Joe Robbins: But at the exact same time, it was without question the most rewarding thing. Through all the challenges, the red tape and the government … you know, it's a government operation who were handling this. So there's a lot of red tape. A lot of things you got to do. A lot of things you can't do and you gotta ask for permission for a lot of things but it is … it's very challenging. You know, and that's before you even begin to consider the situations that the children are in.

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm.

Joe Robbins: You know, and the ramifications of that and the things that you have to deal with that. So you kinda got two different struggles going on at all times. Uhmm, but even with that, it is still without question the most rewarding thing that we've ever done to this day.

Mike Berry: Yeah. So with foster-to-adopt, uhh, it's very unique and it's not necessarily the … the type of adoption that people getting into adoption would choose right off the bat. It's not the case for us and wasn't … wasn't really the case for you guys, 'coz there's a lot of struggles. I mean this is, you deal with a lot of issues through fostering to adopt that a lot of adoptive families might not necessarily deal with at least in the beginning. So start a little bit about that. Some of the struggles that … that you've gone through personally in fostering to adopt.

Joe Robbins: It's … it is an incredible challenge. Uhh, and that's the thing that I would probably tell. Anyone that's … that's, uhh, would listen. You know, anybody that's involved in this, uhh, these studies or research that they're doing or that we would meet on the street or anything that the biggest thing that you would want to do is prepare yourself and know ahead of time that this is the most challenging thing that you're ever going to do but the most rewarding thing that you're ever going to do. And be prepared for that. You know, this is not a situation that you go into where you know, you write a check, you know, 'coz international adoption or even domestic adoption just simply in and of themselves, you know are can be a very expensive thing. And it's not just the situation where you write a check to a placement agency and they go out and find a healthy bouncy baby boy or baby girl and bring home and you live happily ever after. You know, those are great situations when they happen. But this is not that situation. Uhmm, this is a situation where you're coming into especially if you're doing it through the foster care system. There is … there are problems. You know, that's what started this whole situation.

Mike Berry: Right.

Joe Robbins: And you're coming in to a kind of midstream here for all you know, this situation has lasted for a year or two years or five years before you even came into this at all. And you know, because kids leave. They get removed from homes. They go back to homes. They come

back out again. We had more than one group come more than one time into our home. You know, because they knew us and went back home and got removed again and so you have no idea what the backstories are at first. They do a good job as best that they can of making you aware of those things when they get the opportunity. But sometimes it's 2:00 in the morning and you get a phone call because X, Y, Z situation has occurred and they don't even know a lot. All they know is that these children need to be removed from this situation and this foster family is willing to take them. So and at that point, that's all you know. You know, they'll come back later and help you along with understanding but you know, you have to be prepared to deal with that and you know, and know upfront that these situations are going to occur and that there's a lot of things there that you're going to have to deal with because you're now the parent, you know. And, uhmm...the day-to-day things are your responsibility. The case managers and the state handle the legal things and all that that has to go on. But the day-to-day stuff primarily that's now your deal and, uhh, it can be very tough, you know.

Mike Berry: Yeah. Jenna, what would you say are … are has been a big struggle for you personally? This is great. No, no. This is perfect. So …

Jana Robbins: I think for me it was just understanding that even though it was a bad situation these kids came from, they still love their parents. And it's hard to understand you know, coming from whether they were abused or neglected. Whatever it was. In my mind, it was hard. How could they still want to go home to that situation and how can they you know, still be excited when they get to go visit and that kind of thing that and as a foster parent, you have to be prepared for them to look at you and say, you're not my Mom. You're not my Dad. I hate you. Those kind of things. And some of that too is, they feel safe with you because you are an adult that's there and providing them a safe environment. And so one hand, it hurts you really bad to hear them say these things and then on another hand, it makes you feel good because they trust you enough that they don't … that we can say this and you have to be prepared to still love them after they say those things to you because that's what they're looking for is something, a very stable, loving adult that's gonna show them the boundaries that they may not have before. 'Coz all kids love that boundaries. Whether they admit it or not.

Mike Berry: Deep in their heart.

Jana Robbins: They want to have the boundaries. They want to have the rules that this is what I can do. This is what I can't do and I think that was one of the harder things. Was kind of adjusting my emotions to be told you're not my Mom. You're not my Dad. I hate you. Those kind of things. I think that was kind of hard but once you've heard them a couple of times, I don't see you get used to it that you begin to understand it a lot more. Once you've heard it.

Mike Berry: You bring up a very good point. I actually wrote about this recently that you know, a lot of those … those moments where they're melting down. Where there's this, this rage or these outbursts or this you know, violence towards you. Not saying that necessarily happens but that happens in foster care and children that are adopted from foster care that a lot of times and we've dealt with this. But we look at it like you know, first of all, I'm fuming because I'm a Dad and my wife Kristen is fuming 'coz she's a Mom and then suddenly you step back and you're like, wow, they're speaking from a place that we don't even understand. A traumatic, dark place, that path before they came into our home. So it's tough to navigate that.

Joe Robbins: Yes. One of the most revealing things that I ever saw during our training, uhmm, kids are resilient.

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm.

Joe Robbins: It's amazing to me the things that they can endure and go through and come out on the other side. Not every child does. Obviously there's some children that are damaged, uhmm, because of everything that has happened and those are traumatic situations that you have to deal with. They present it as a circle and it showed that the younger the child, the more that they need the adult.

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm.

Joe Robbins: How this circle works and every time that they need something, when you're there for them, it continues to keep the circle turning and the younger the child is, the more that they need you. So it's easier to establish this wheel of trust or whatever it was that they're called. Uhmm, because they need you a lot more. So every time that you respond affirmatively and provide that need or provide that protection, whatever the situation is, you know, like a baby, they need you every 20 minutes. So that's quick to bond with a baby 'coz they need you all the time and you're there all the time. But as the child gets older, the less that they need you, the slower that wheel turns, you know. So the older the child that you have that comes through the foster care system and has damage and history and baggage and all that, they don't need you as much. So we didn't … we had a couple of teenagers come us, through our family, uhmm, and that wheel turned very slowly. 'Coz they don't need you to you know, do everything for them. They don't necessarily need you to cook a big dinner for them or whatever. If they don't like what you're cooking, they can take care of themselves. Like right now, if we're gone and our teenager's at home, and she can fend for herself. She can even fend for the … the younger children in our home. So that wheel turns more slowly. If you're coming into their life at that point, it takes a long time to build a relationship, uhmm, so that is also something to consider as you're looking into this. You know, the older the child, the slower these things are going to happen in your family. So don't … don't you know, think that it's necessarily a personal thing between you. It's just a fact of life that

you know, you're not kicking that can down the road as fast as you would if you're only going a foot at a time. Their life is kind of established now. So that's something to think about.

Mike Berry: Absolutely. Yeah. You're always playing catchup.

Joe Robbins: Mm-hmm. Absolutely.

Mike Berry: We foster them and then adopt them that you're playing catchup. You know, you're getting to the game late. So there's a lot of catching up to do.

Jana Robbins: It's hard with teenagers because they have their values set. They have their rules set that they came from. When they come to your home and you have a completely different set of rules. And we're more of a strict family because we have so many children. You have to be able to be a bit more strict. We have this kind of wakeup call for teenager. I was allowed to do this. I'm sorry. We don't allow that. So that was hard. You're trying to be mindful of their concerns but still establish our family rules because we have younger kids in the home that were watching everything that was going on.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: And they did not end up staying in their home … in our home you know, they both moved on to different situations but what if they do? You know, they have to know how things operate where they are now. You know, if you know, between the two of us, our family and them, and our family and you know, the state and we end up establishing that as a friendly relationship. That's forever. So they have to understand you know, how things operate in their new world. It may be totally foreign to them. But those are things that you have to talk about.

Mike Berry: Right. Absolutely. Okay so, with foster care, uhmm, a lot of times in the news we hear the bad stories. We hear the, you know …

Joe Robbins: It's very frustrating.

Mike Berry: It's very frustrating. And even those of us like myself who write about it on a regular basis, sometimes we tend to focus a little more on the struggles you know which we've talked about which is huge. Huge for everybody considering this form of option to know that walking into it. But let's talk a little bit about the advantages of fostering to adopt.

Joe Robbins: I will just put this out there. When I said that it's frustrating. It is … as a foster parent, it is sad to see that in public light like on television shows and movies and things like that, foster care is routinely presented in a negative light.

Mike Berry: Absolutely. Yeah.

Joe Robbins: And I want to tell you that are listening from the inside, it's not like that. It can be. But that's not routine, you know. You hear a lot foster homes are painted as negative and things like that. That's very frustrating to see because our experience was … was overwhelmingly positive. Don't get me wrong. There are struggles and there are things that are frustrating but it was overwhelmingly positive. I believe that overall, case workers and the state and everyone involved ***[inaudible 21:11]*** and all those people truly have the children's best interest in mind and most foster parents truly have the best interest of the children in mind. I'm sure that like any other group of people, there are foster parents out there that are … their motives are questionable.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: But that's just people in general. But overall …

Mike Berry: With the exception.

Joe Robbins: They are. Yeah. For the things that we've talked about and the things that you have to deal to with, you really have to be in this from your heart. And no other reason. Uhmm, but we had a very positive experience with our case workers, with, uhh, court appearances and things that went well, uhmm, you know, there are certainly things that, uhmm, are difficult. I think we've said that clearly. Uhmm, but overall, our situation was positive. When children came to our home and stayed and then went back home for the most part, it's because this situations were redeemed. You know, whatever was causing the problem for the children to be removed, uhmm, was taken care of and you know, we had a few situations where you know, but again, I believe that the state truly does have the best interest of the children in mind. And you know, some of the advantages are having those advocates on your side as well. You know, when you go to a case worker, you go to a guardian and you, uhmm, express situations that you believe need taken care of or hesitations that you have or things that you've seen during visits that concerned you or whatever. You know, I believe that those things really are for the most part dealt with appropriately. Uhmm, when you're invited into court hearings and case conferences and things like that, I honestly belief that your opinion is for the most part valued and taken into consideration. So you know, they really do and in all fronts that we had seen, try to make a difference. You know, that's what they're there for. That's what all this is about. Is making … it's not about the parents. It's not about foster parents. It's not about the guardian. It's not about the judge. It's about the child and you know, and you have powerful forces on your side and that's what you have to remember when things really get frustrating. You really do have to remember that at the end of the day. They really do have the child's best interest in mind. Even when sometimes you don't feel that, I would take that as an advantage because you're in the foster care system, you need help. You need

forces on your side to say, to listen to you because at the time, you're the one that really is in the trenches and knows what's going on, uhmm...they are good provider. You know, don't come into this situation and worry about how you're going to provide. You know, that's the state's job.

Mike Berry: Right.

Joe Robbins: It's your job to do the day-to-day stuff and put dinner on the table and get them to school and do all that stuff but while you're in the system, it's the state's job to provide for them. They are their provider. And I honestly believe again that the state does well at that. You know and in the end if it does come to adoption, again, uhmm, the state has a part in that. You know and I believe that that is in the best interest of the child. To you know, not put them in a situation where all of a sudden they're just going to say, "Hey, there you go." You know, because this is a situation where you don't have to adopt them, you know. And I believe it would be unfair to expect you know, let's say that you're going to take a gaggle of children, I believe it would be unfair to the foster parents and ultimately to the children to just say, "Well, our part's done here. See you later. "You know, there are clearly certain advantages in taxes and things like that that help you after the fact, uhmm, but don't let that ever be a roadblock.

Mike Berry: Right.

Joe Robbins: Because I believe that the state does well by foster parents when they choose to adopt children that have from bad situations.

Mike Berry: I agree with you and you know, it's like with any situation, you get into a big life decision, the experience is what you make it. And that is what we've learned. I mean we've had … we've had … we've worked with great case workers. We've had a few that are like ahhh, you might need to find a different line of work but for the most part, we had some phenomenal case managers and case workers who were advocates for us. Called us. Emailed us. That stood by us. Listened to us. But really at the end of the day it came down to our attitude and our focus. You know, yes it's hard. Yes it's not an easy road. You're gonna deal with issues and trauma and you know, potential, uhh, drug exposure and things like that but it is what we made it.

Joe Robbins: And also, you have to remember, all they do is put out fires all day long.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: And I'm willing to take a little guff, you know, a little frustration on their part and stuff like that from … from people that really mean well and all they do all day long is put out fires from here and there

and that's okay. You know, it's okay for them to be frustrated too sometimes.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: And but again, you have to be prepared ahead of time to understand that they're in this journey with you and when you're frustrated about something, they probably are too.

Mike Berry: Right.

Joe Robbins: And this is a … this is a struggle for them too. So I will always come to that for a good case worker.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: Even if they forget to call you. If they forget to email you. These are some of the things that happen, you know. If they forget to share something with you, uhmm, because that's … this is their job all day long is putting out little fires all over the place.

Mike Berry: Now we know one advantage which we can … we can talk about, uhh, when in terms of adoption role has to do with the cost. So we know with international adoption, the most expensive. Domestic adoption, private adoptions which we've both been through.

Joe Robbins: Yes.

Mike Berry: It's costly. But it's foster-to-adopt is a little different.

Joe Robbins: It is very different. Uhmm, again, it is in the state's best interest to see that a foster child is adopted.

Mike Berry: Right.

Joe Robbins: You know, they're no longer bouncing from house to house which we all know happens with a lot of foster children. Uhmm, they go from this placement to that placement. That's over when they're adopted. Uhh, there's no more case managers, you know. That case is now off of their load. Uhmm, so there … the state is definitely interested in seeing that foster children get adopted. And in that, they're willing to … to take care of everything that it needs …

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm.

Joe Robbins: To get the situation resolved and that includes your attorney, that includes all your court calls and everything. That's … until the child is adopted, that's still the state's responsibility. So that is something that is not even a consideration because really, as we know, uhmm, an adoption can be a very simple thing to do. It's not much different than selling a car. You know, as far as like the legal stuff and the paperwork and all that goes, it's a very simple thing to do. So once you got the background and all those situations out of the way and the child is then, uhh, weren't of the state and no longer has any

parents really, uhmm, the adoption is a very simple thing. As long as your case manager is on board with you and you've got your home study and everybody is a green and all that, it … from that point, it's a breeze. And they take care of everything. All you have to do is show up.

Mike Berry: Okay. Yeah. So, uhh, if you had the opportunity to sit down with, uhh, a couple or family or an individual who was considering fostering to adopt, what would you … what would you tell them?

Jana Robbins: Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't feel embarrassed if you don't know the answer to something. Don't be embarrassed to take advantage of the services that are honored.

Joe Robbins: Absolutely.

Jana Robbins: Because we've had some people say, I won't do that because that's embarrassing. Well, you have to keep in mind it may be embarrassing for you but it's what's best for the child.

Joe Robbins: Mm-hmm.

Jana Robbins: Take advantage of these things. Get them into the counselling that they need or you know the special ed classes if they need them. Don't be embarrassed about those things because if you want to set this child up to succeed, whether they have special needs or anything like that, it's … you've got to take advantage because there's tons of things out there to use. And we've been very blessed that our school system has worked well with us. It was very open to us having these foster kids. They would provide stuff for us without us even asking.

Mike Berry: That's good.

Jana Robbins: And just because we were open with them about the situations and said okay, this is what's going on. They're like, oh we'll take care of things.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Jana Robbins: But if you don't … if you're not willing to speak up, you're not gonna get any help. You are gonna need help. This is not a journey that you can do by yourself. You should be able to speak up and say, "Hey, I don't understand this. I'm having difficulties dealing with this issue that we're having or this behavior's really causing trouble. What can you do?" And there's things out there that will help you. There's counseling services. There's just all kinds of stuff. Don't be afraid to ask.

Mike Berry: Great insight. Absolutely.

Joe Robbins: Be their advocate.

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: They've not had that and they need that. Be the child's advocate. You … you are everything now for them. Uhmm, and hold your ground. Uhmm, there are situations where you would not be willfully directed on the wrong way.

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm.

Joe Robbins: But when you have a gut feeling or a conviction about something, hold your ground.

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm.

Joe Robbins: Because those … you are now the primary advocate for this child and for your family. You know, especially if you're coming into a situation like we were when we already had an adopted child. We have an established family. Uhh, and we had some real rules. We had some ground rules and we had some things that we were willing to compromise on. Some things that we were not willing to compromise on. And whatever those are, obviously you got to be flexible. This whole situation is in flux. You know, you're having children come and go and be open for adoption and not open for adoption, uncontested and contested. And some of those things are like legal terms that you begin to understand as you come through this but when you're convinced that this is a thing that you need to stand firm on, then stand firm on it.

Mike Berry: Sure.

Joe Robbins: Uhmm, because, uhmm...the allies that you have out there are going to understand that, you know. It might be a little burn or sad for a moment but at the end of the day, again we say that they're going to understand. You know, there are certain, uhh, negotiations over things that you're going to go through when you go into the final process of the adoption and set your rules and set your boundaries and stick to those. Uhmm, because at the end of the day, it's what's best for the child and what's best for your family as a whole because when you come out of the other side of this, it's just your family. Now there's no more case workers, don't get me wrong. You could … there are certainly things that you can avail yourself as a post-adoptive family, uhh, but … but they're not nearly as much … you don't have nearly as many things that are available to you as you do when you're still a foster family.

Mike Berry: Sure.

Joe Robbins: You know, so, uhh, make yourself aware. Be informed.

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm.

Joe Robbins: Make yourself aware of the things you know, uhmm, let friends help you. You know, when you're frustrated and need an eye out, tell somebody that. You know, 'coz you're … you're going to come into a kind of a new world of foster families and we know that. You know,

you're gonna have people that understand you know, your situation and your day-to-day life and when you need to go, tell someone that. You know, have a couple of … you know, I'm not a big fan as you guys have expressed in your blog and things like that, I'm not a big fan of just sharing a whole bunch of information about the history of the child and all that and their family, uhh, to just anybody. But have a couple of friends or family members that really know the down and dirty of the things that go on in your life so that when you … all you got to do is say, "I need to take a drive around the block. Can you come over for a minute?"

Mike Berry: Yeah.

Joe Robbins: Or my wife and I need to disappear for 24 hours, certainly will be there if the house catches on fire but we need a break. And … and have those people that can … that can be there for you and just have that support system. It's really important.

Mike Berry: Yeah. I can agree with both of you more and this is great insight. I mean asking questions. That's something if I went back 10 years in the past, I wish you know, as a shy early 20's or mid-20's or where I was, I wish I would've said hey, I have a question about this and we've actually learned. I mean that's great. And we've also learned the value of community and being with people and … and being able to like you said, stand your ground and say, "No, this is my family and this is first." So guys, thank you so much for being a part of this. I really, really appreciate it. You guys have given great insight. Great content that's gonna enrich so many people's lives. And you guys, your story is awesome and you guys were awesome for adopting. So I really appreciate you guys being a part of this.

Joe Robbins: Thank you very much. We do hope that we've encouraged somebody.

Mike Berry: Absolutely.

Joe Robbins: It's a struggle. As we've said several times because it's so true. It is the hardest thing that you will ever do.

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm.

Joe Robbins: But it is absolutely the most rewarding thing. When a child looks at you which has happened to us and I'm sure hundreds and hundreds of foster parents, when a child looks at you says, "You're the best Daddy I've ever had" or "You're the best Mommy I've ever had," it makes all the surrounding things go away.

Mike Berry: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Joe Robbins: Because that's what it's about. And we just hope that we've encouraged somebody to … that's thinking about this to get in, to get their feet in.

Mike Berry: Absolutely. Well I will echo that. We hope that we've encouraged you and if you're considering this form of adoption, we hope that you've gained some insight. As I said before, the goal of the Adoptive Parent Toolbox is to enrich your life and to give you great real-life content. So thanks again so much for downloading this and as we've said previously, I will say it again. This is not a one-way conversation. We would love to hear from you. Uhmm, below this video, there's a comments section. We … I encourage you to leave a comment, ask a question. Uhmm, since you are a member, exclusive member of the Adoptive Parent Toolbox, you're able to do that but you're also able to email us directly by clicking on the email icon. So definitely contact us. Ask questions. Dialog with us. We would love to hear from you.

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