

Adoption: The Long View Transcript

Kathy Mackechney, LCSW

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Lori Holden, Greeting

This is Adoption: The Long View, a podcast brought to you by Adopting.com. I'm your host, Lori Holden, author of [The Open-Hearted Way to Open Adoption](#) and [Adoption Unfiltered](#). Join me as we take a closer look at what happens *after* you adopt your child and begin parenting them. Your adoption journey isn't over then -- it's just beginning.

In this podcast, you'll hear from a variety of thought-provoking and influential guests as we help you make the most of your adoption journey. Like any trip worth taking, there will be ups and downs and challenges. Here's what you're going to wish you'd known from the start.

Ready? Let's go.

Lori Holden, Intro

Hello, dear listeners. This episode is the last regularly scheduled interview I'll be presenting on Adoption: The Long View. Next month, as usual, we will close the season with the Best Advice from each guest throughout the year, but after this interview, there will be no more monthly interviews. More on wrapping up this 5 year endeavor in the next – and last – episode.

For now, though, I'd like to talk about parts. If you're like me, you may have noticed that at times, different parts of your Self come out. For example, I have a strong inner critic who loves to tell me the many things I could do better. Or the worrier, who sometimes makes sure I think about every possible thing that could go wrong (especially when I'm trying to get to sleep!). Also taking charge at times is a manager, who, on her good days ensures that I get things done, but on her bad days comes out as a control freak.

There are so many more parts I'm acquainted with, and perhaps some I'm not. What can explain all these parts of my one self? The Internal Family Systems (IFS) framework asserts that everybody consists of different parts. Our guest today, **Kathy Mackechney**, LCSW, IFS therapist, and adoptee, further believes that for adoptees, "not all parts get adopted."

How can that be and what does it mean for the adoptees we love and for us as their parents?

Do you want to know more about why some parts are left behind? How we adoptive parents may inadvertently contribute to this phenomenon? And what about the idea that the adoptee has parts that don't *want* to be adopted by us? Would you like to know more about supporting our adoptees' lifelong quest to figure out who they are, to pursue self-acceptance, integration, and wholeness?

I do. Every guest I've interviewed and every topic I've covered has been because it's something I'm curious about and wish I'd known more about earlier. No time like the now, so here, for all of us to get curious about understanding parts and integration today, let's welcome Kathy Mackechney!

Lori Holden: Hi, Kathy.

Kathy Mackechney: Hi. Thank you so much for having me.

Lori: It's so great to have you here. We both live in Denver. We've both been in different circles together through Heritage Camps, and you were on our panel at the [Adoption Unfiltered](#) book launch when it came to Denver. So it's so great to be sitting with you here today.

Kathy: Oh, thank you. I feel honored to be your final guest, at least for now.

Lori: An honored spot! Let me tell you about you. Kathy Mackechney, LCSW (that's Licensed Clinical Social Worker) is an adoptee and a therapist who specializes in working with other adoptees, which she started doing after her own experience in therapy, where she had to educate her therapist about the issues adoptees commonly face.

Kathy is an Internal Family Systems or IFS-certified therapist and consultant in Denver and the creator of the "Not All Parts Get Adopted" IFS workshop. Kathy wrote a chapter on Internal Family Systems and Adoptees for the book, *Altogether Us*, about the integration of the IFS model with different populations, modalities, and trends. So, Kathy, once again, welcome.

Kathy: Thank you.

Lori: To get us started, let's set the table. Briefly tell us your two paths: (1) to becoming an adoptee, and (2) to becoming an Internal Family Systems therapist.

Kathy: Yeah. Sure. So I became an adoptee because my mom (my original mom; birth mom) was pregnant and not married in 1968 during the Baby Scoop era. And her mother told her, "You will not come home with that baby." And she gave birth to me and relinquished me in the hospital where I was for a couple of weeks. This was in Oklahoma.

And my adoptive parents, or the people who became my adoptive parents had two biological sons and had tried for a while to get pregnant a third time and were unable to. And my mom really wanted a girl. And my parents decided to pursue adoption. They had friends who had adopted, and so that made my parents feel comfortable with it. And so, they decided to adopt through the State of Oklahoma, and I was placed with them 8 weeks, I think it was 10 weeks after I was born.

Lori: Do you know where you were during that time?

Kathy: I was in foster care. When I did my search in my late 20s, early 30s, I learned that apparently in Oklahoma at that time, that was a common waiting period. It's not what my mom (my birth mom) – it's not what she was told would happen. I know her now, and she was told that I would be placed immediately. She was actually upset to learn that that's not what had happened, that I'd gone to a foster home. But apparently, that was standard practice at that time.

So I was adopted into this family. I grew up knowing that I had been adopted. I think my parents started telling me before I could even understand what that meant. To fast forward a lot, once I got into my late 20s, and I was thinking about turning 30, and where I was in my life, I was

married to my first husband, and friends of ours were having children, and there was conversation about whether we would do that, which we didn't because we wound up getting divorced. But through that process of being where I was in my life and being at a point where I was thinking about what I was doing with my life, career-wise, the work I was doing, because I have an undergraduate degree in journalism and I was working in journalism as a writer and editor, and I was thinking about what else I might want to do.

And I realized that I'm the kind of person that, to know what I really want to do, I need to know who I fully am. And for me, that meant finding the missing pieces from the beginning of my life, which meant finding the missing people who held those pieces, all of which led me to search.

So I searched and interestingly enough, coincidentally enough, 9 months later (the incubation period later) I was able to contact my mom and she was receptive. I was fortunate. She wanted to hear from me. She was glad to hear from me. She had not kept me a secret. So her family knew about me. Her family wanted to meet me, and she also had the information that allowed me to contact my birth father. And likewise, I was fortunate with how he received me too. He was open. He also had family who were open. And it was actually all a bit overwhelming for me at that time because I had prepared myself for every possible worst-case scenario, every possible form of rejection again, that they wouldn't want to hear from me, that they wouldn't be open, that they might be dead, that, you know, they could be in prison. I mean, you know, any form of no. And I had not ever thought about preparing myself for the *best* possible scenario, which is really what I got.

So, it was pretty overwhelming, and it was great. It was great to meet them and to know them and to know who I came from. And I have been in contact with them to some degree ever since then, and that was 24 years ago. So, it's been a long time now.

Unfortunately, my mom has pretty severe dementia now, and now she no longer remembers that she had a daughter that she did not raise. She remembers only the daughter who came after me, whom she did raise. But that's okay. So I don't have much contact with her now because I can't, because she can't. But I do have contact with her brother (my uncle) and his wife, and their kids (my cousins). And on my birth father's side, I don't have much contact with him because I'm not crazy about him. But I have a wonderful relationship with his sister (my aunt). So, that's a little bit about me as an adoptee and my journey through that.

Lori: Somehow you shifted from journalism to therapy and then to Internal Family Systems. What was that journey like?

Kathy: Yeah. So I made that shift in my early 30s because I was in therapy at that time. I had decided to enter therapy to start exploring the impact on me of having been relinquished and adopted. And I read *The Primal Wound* and did some other reading. And so I went into therapy, actually pretty educated about the issues that adoptees commonly face. And what I discovered is that none of my therapists were educated about those issues. And so, I was having to spend some of my valuable therapy time educating them. And I thought, "There's a need here for the therapist who get it." And I thought, "Maybe I could do that. Maybe I could become a therapist for other adoptees." I went to career counseling to make sure that was going to be a good fit for me before I spend all that money on grad school.

And actually, in career counseling, I met a therapist who did get it. So, she was a psychologist who did, like, all that testing that you do in career counseling. And she also used – I can't tell you much about this because I didn't study this. I just know a little bit about it, but she used object relations theory, which was really helpful to me. And she was the first therapist who really got what I was telling her about my experiences, as someone who was relinquished and adopted.

And so, anyway, I did the testing. I discovered it was a good fit. And at the same time, I had started my search. And then when I met my mom, that was in the summer, June, I think, 24 years ago, or July. And I met her and then a couple weeks after that, I met my birth father. And 2 weeks after that, I started grad school. So, it was a whirlwind.

So I went to school and I became a licensed clinical social worker, as you said, and I started working with adoptees. And somewhere along the way, this was about 10 years ago. It was 10 years ago now. So, I'm trained as a social worker. I'm also trained as a licensed marriage and family therapist. I don't have that licensure because I decided to not get dual licensure and pay for two licenses. But when I was in my MSW program, my Masters of Social Work program, I co-enrolled in a Marriage and Family Therapy Training Program. And I completed that after I completed my MSW. And so, I'm steeped in systems thinking, including Family Systems Therapy thinking.

And 10 years ago, I attended the Colorado Association of Marriage and Family Therapists Annual Conference where Richard Schwartz, the founder of IFS, was speaking. And I was sitting there in the audience listening to what he was saying about parts. And I realized this is my model. This is it. Because I was at a point in my career where I had been trying to find a model of therapy that combined the personal and the professional for me. And what I mean by that is something that combined my systems orientation and my family systems thinking with my spirituality and my Buddhism and mindfulness. And I thought about studying DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) and I wasn't quite sold on that. I thought about EMDR because I had experienced some EMDR and I had found it helpful, although, temporarily, honestly. It didn't last. But I wasn't totally excited about that and everybody was studying EMDR, and I didn't want to do what everyone else was doing. And then I heard Dick speak, and I thought, "This is it. This is my model."

And as he was speaking, I flashed on this part of me that I had done some inner child work, before I knew about IFS and parts. So, not knowing that I was working with a part. I did this inner child work with this 8-year-old part of me, and I had (again, without knowing IFS) I had what we would call an IFS retrieved and unburdened her, and she was with me now in this liberated way. So, she flashed in my head when I heard Dick speak and I knew that I had actually already done some IFS, not knowing it.

Lori: Wonderful. And I really want to get into the IFS specifics, but before we do, I want to just let you know that something you said in a – you were on a roundtable for the Adoption Unfiltered podcast, maybe a little more than a year ago, and you said something there that really had a big impact on me. You said that we call it adoption, but what we're really dealing with – or also dealing with – is relinquishment. In fact, you offer an alternative title for the word "adoptee," which is "relinquishee." Could you just tell me a little bit more about why the additional or the alternative word and concept of relinquishee?

Kathy: Yeah. So, obviously, I am speaking from my experience, and this isn't true for everyone who was adopted. My experience, and what I have found with many of the adopted people that I've worked with, is that, well, I think this is true for everyone. The first trauma is the separation from one's mother and original families, maternal and paternal. That's the first trauma.

And my experience was that a lot of the issues that I have faced, as someone who was adopted, actually originate in having been relinquished, and having been given up by my mother. When we focus on that, we're getting closer to where it all starts. And the word "adoptee" centers the adoption, but something happened *before* that; something else had to happen before the adoption. And the word "adoptee" makes it seem as though that person's life starts with having been adopted, and that's not the case. It starts the same place everybody else's does. And it really started for us having been born and then, in many cases, immediately relinquished. And the trauma of that, of experiencing being given up by your mother, is at the root of a lot of the challenges that we face. And then how adoptive parents respond to that and how much they get that is a mitigating factor or not. Does that answer your question?

Lori: Absolutely. I'm thinking of how adoptive parents tend to think of the math, at least I did, where, so the adoptee lost *this*, but they get *this*. And so there's a subtraction, but there's also an addition. And in math, it works to even things out and come back to zero, like any other baby. But I think when we're dealing with trauma or separation or wounding and emotions, it doesn't.

Kathy: Yeah. It doesn't work that way. You don't come back to zero. You just don't. There's nothing that compensates for that loss. That loss is permanent. It's always there and will always be – and the wound from that will always be there. Yeah. So, I don't know. I mean, if it's math, it's like complex math.

Lori: Is that to say, Kathy, that all is lost?

Kathy: No. I hesitate because in a sense, yes. I mean, the life that could have been is lost completely, And the person who experiences that separation has to live a new life that was really not intended or is not what they wanted. And it makes me think about a post that I made recently to my Instagram account, @AdopteeTherapy, and I think it got the most number of likes of any post I've ever made. And it started with nobody wants to be adopted. Nobody is born wanting to be adopted, wanting to be given up by their mother and adopted by what are strangers at that point in time. And, yes, do some people want to get adopted as a result of what happens to them with their birth families or biological families? Yes. So, I'm not dismissing that, but that resonated with a lot of people. That is just a truth.

So, even in the situations where, yes, ultimately people want to get adopted as a result of abuse or neglect or whatever it may be, still, when they came into this world, they didn't want to be adopted. They wanted to stay with their mother and in their original families, and that's where people want to be. I mean, this is just natural. This is nature, and this is how it works. And I got, like, a 20% response rate on that post, I mean, which is kind of unheard of.

Lori: I remember seeing that. And that hearkens back to the time when we thought that babies were blank slates.

Kathy: Right.

Lori: And there was nothing innate about staying with your clan, your tribe, your people. And now we know better because we have neuroscience telling us differently.

And this kind of leads us into what we want to talk about, which is Internal Family Systems. I've researched it a little bit and I see that it's very comprehensive. But before we get into that in adoption, can you give us the basics of Internal Family Systems?

Kathy: Yes, I will do my best. So, in IFS, we believe that we all consist of different parts. And, like, that part of me, that baby part of me who was relinquished at birth, that relinquished baby. And that 8-year-old part of me who was the one that realized, "Oh, to have been adopted, first, someone else had to give me up." And who got that cognitive understanding that she had to have been relinquished first.

You did a beautiful job in your introduction of describing different parts of you. And like you, I also have a part that likes to be in control and can be really helpful in seeing the big picture and getting things done and can become controlling. So, we all consist of different parts, each of which has its own little personality, and thoughts, and beliefs, and also has access to the full range of emotions. So, every part can feel all of the emotions.

And we all also have, we are born with, what is called Self (with a capital S). And Self is our essence, and we come into the world with Self. And Self exists within our bodies, and it transcends our bodies and connects us to the rest of the universe and all other beings in the universe. And Self in IFS is the healing entity. It is the internal attachment figure.

What we do in IFS is facilitate connection between Self and parts. So Self is with parts in the way that they needed someone when the traumas that they experienced happened. And Self witnesses them in their experiences and gets them out of where they're stuck in the past, and then it helps them to unburden the beliefs that they took on of not being good enough and things like that, and let that go, so that the parts are relieved of those. They release them and they're gone and they're free and the parts are liberated, and that opens up space inside of us.

Lori: I'm so drawn to this because the etymology of the word "heal" and the word "whole," they come from the same root. So, bringing the pieces to wholeness is healing.

Kathy: Yes.

Lori: I really love that.

Now you offer a workshop for adult adoptees called "Not All Parts Get Adopted," and that's what I want to get into next. What are some of the reasons that parts don't come along for the ride?

Kathy: Yeah. Thanks for asking about that. I love talking about it, and it's an ongoing exploration for me. So, this idea, not all parts get adopted, it popped into my head one day, literally, while I was walking through my house. And I thought, "Yep." I think I just started nodding. It felt as though a truth had come into me. And I started sharing it with other adoptees, and they would nod because it resonated. And I knew that I had something there to explore and further flesh out. So, I started doing that, and I presented this topic at the IFS Conference in 2019, right before the pandemic hit. And then after that, I turned it into this workshop.

And where I started with this idea that not all parts get adopted is with this knowing that there were parts of me that are not an adoptee. And what I got originally was they didn't want to get adopted. Like, they saw what was coming. And going back to what I said just a little bit ago about that post, nobody wants to be adopted. These parts didn't want to be adopted, and so they didn't go along with it and they stayed where they were.

Some of them, I learned, stay because they want to stay close to where they last were with their mom or original family. They want to stay in the hospital or the orphanage or the city or the country, whatever it is, in case she comes back. In my case, what I experienced in my body was this felt sense that, no, there are parts of me that were just never burdened by any of it, that were never burdened by the experiences of relinquishment and adoption that just maintain aspects of who I uniquely am.

And I wondered, well, is that Self then? And people have said that. Well, would that be Self then (with the capital S)? And what I'm describing about it, like not having been burdened, that is true of self. But there are also parts that never got burdened because they just didn't go through those experiences, and so they weren't burdened by them.

And these were parts of me that are free and happy and just not burdened by anything. They don't carry trauma in their bodies, and they hold important information about juicy aspects of me that I don't always have access to because so much of my time is taken up with the parts that were burdened by having been relinquished and adopted and attending to them. Does that make sense?

Lori: That is so helpful. Yes. Thank you. It makes me think of the premise of my first book. My first book is called *The Open Hearted Way to Open Adoption: Helping Your Child Grow Up Whole*. And the premise of this book is that adoption – and maybe it's relinquishment *and* adoption – creates a split in an adoptee between their biology and their biography. And so what I hear you saying is that maybe some of the parts choose not to be split. They choose to stay whole. They choose to stay rooted.

Kathy: Yeah. I think that's a good way of saying it. And our access to these parts gets cut off because the parts that do get adopted are so busy dealing with the impacts of that and the impacts of relinquishment, that these parts of ourselves that aren't burdened by all of that just get cut off, and we don't have access to that wholeness and their insights into who we inherently are.

Lori: So, not all parts get adopted. Some of them choose not to get adopted or for whatever reason don't get adopted. That's on the relinquishee or adoptee side. Are there also parts that don't get adopted on the adoptive parents' side?

Kathy: Yeah. There are. And I think this has come up in maybe just about every workshop that I've had that there's at least one participant in the workshop who names that their adoptive parents did not accept all parts of them. And can this happen in biological families? Yes, absolutely. I think possibly it's more likely to happen in adoptive families because there is no genetic mirroring. That's impossible. And so, I think it is more likely that there are going to be more differences between the adoptive parents and their child. And adoptive parents are going to be faced with that, with these additional ways that their child is different from them.

And not all adoptive parents can – again, not every parent, but we're talking about adoptive parents – can accept the ways that their child is not like them. And I would say that some adoptive parents struggle with the parts of their child that may remind them of the birth parents. And one of my clients, just this week, was talking about the parts of her that her family, her adopted family, just didn't accept. That, like, the parts of her that seemed like them, they were able to embrace. The parts of her that were different from them, they couldn't. And so, those parts went into hiding. And that's how it can be for some of these parts that don't get adopted.

Lori: I would say on the adoptive parent side that underneath that, seeing your child's birth parents in your child and not responding favorably to that, I think perhaps underneath that is our own unresolved grief about not being genetically connected to our child; not being able to do the thing that we're supposed to be able to do as human beings. So, maybe there's another layer underneath that, and if we have a good therapist, if we can look at it, we can heal and bring wholeness from these parts that don't get seen and loved.

Kathy: Absolutely. Yeah.

Lori: So, I'm wondering if there's a correlation between adoptive parents who are not capable of adopting all the parts and their own inability or incapacity to recognize and love their *own* parts. Is there a connection there?

Kathy: I think so. I mean, I think there could be. I don't know for sure because I haven't explored that, and I haven't done that workshop yet with just adoptive parents. But it certainly makes sense. I mean, I think for any of us, the more parts of ourselves that we reject, the more parts of other people that we're going to reject.

Lori: Oh, that is brilliant. I just have to say that is brilliant. Yes.

Kathy: Yeah. And the more that we can embrace all parts of ourselves, the more that we can accept all parts of other people too.

Lori: Thank you for that. I think that is so profound and it's some of the work I'm doing on myself about being judgmental and being loving and improving my relationships by improving my relationship with myself first.

Kathy: That's right. Right. With your parts. Right. That's exactly right. The more that we do that internally with our parts, the more we are able to do that with other people and offer that to other people.

Lori: So, Kathy, what are some of the keys then to this integration, this wholeness, this bringing back together that which was splintered or split, for us as adoptive parents and maybe for the adoptive parents who really want to love all of their adoptees' parts?

Kathy: I think it is about being willing to take a journey through your own system and go on a journey yourself of getting to know your parts, of discovering your parts and getting to know them, and bringing them healing. And the more that you do that with your own parts, the more and more and more and more parts of you that you heal, the more access you will have to Self, and you'll be able to offer that to your child. And that's how it works in all of our relationships. The more access we have to Self (with the capital S) the more available it is not only to our

parts, but to other people in the world. And the more we can show up in this self-led way with self-energy. Some of the qualities of which are openness, expansiveness, calm, compassion, connection, creativity, curiosity. There are 8 C's of self. Clarity, confidence, courage. I'm sure I'm missing a couple. But the more we do that work with our own parts, then the more available we are to accept and embrace our child's parts.

Lori: This harkens back to something that I think has been said almost every episode in the last 5 years: adoptive parents, do your own work, people.

Kathy: Yeah. Yeah.

Lori: When I first started this journey, it was about open adoption, and that meant dealing with birth parents. And so all the work was about dealing with them or dealing with your adoptee. But what it really has turned out to be in my journey is dealing with it here, and I'm pointing to my own heart, my own self, my own integration and healing, because the quality of all of that out there is limited by the quality of this in here.

Kathy: Yes. Yeah. That's so well said. And that's true for all of us. I am a step-parent. I have bonus children, and I have discovered that I've got my own parts that I have to attend to in order to show up as the parental figure that I want to for those kids. And that is my work.

Lori: You mentioned something earlier about Internal Family Systems coming out of a Buddhist perspective. Is it relatable and doable to people who are not from a certain Buddhist perspective?

Kathy: Oh, totally. Yeah.

So I don't know if Dick – the founder of the model, Richard Schwartz – I don't know if he identifies as Buddhist or not, but he certainly is informed by a lot of eastern practices. But absolutely 100%, and people who don't identify with that spirituality identify with this model because Self has also been called God within, the divine within. I have a friend and colleague who wrote about IFS from a Christian perspective, utilizing stories from the Bible to explain concepts of Self and the whole concept of self-to-part relationship. So, yes.

Lori: Wonderful. That's helpful. Do you have any other bits of insight for adoptive parents who really want to love their whole child wholly?

Kathy: I think maybe the first step is to slow down when you notice yourself reacting to your child and do what in IFS is called a YOU-turn (a Y O U-turn), and ask yourself, "What's going on inside me right now? What is happening inside of me right now?" Because that will take you straight to the part of you that is having the reaction.

And if you can attend to that part, even in the moment, by saying something as simple as, "I hear you" or "I feel you. Let me get back to you." If you can do that in the moment, that can help you access enough calm to respond to your child more in the way that you want to, where you're not just reacting to a part of them and actually seeing them in that moment just as that part rather than as the whole person, the whole Self that they are. Does that answer your question?

Lori: It does. And I love that so much because when I lead workshops for adoptive parents, one of the points I try to make is to turn a reaction into a response. And often that difference is simply a breath or a moment to drop in and be mindful. And instead of having your reaction automatically from somewhere – possibly an exiled part – it comes from a decision, a choice you've made of how to respond with connection, not from a trigger.

Kathy: Right. It's all about responding from that spaciousness, that compassion, that calm, that connection, that curiosity. That's another one of them.

Lori: From the expanded me instead of the contracted fearful me.

Kathy: Right. Expanded me would be Self, and the contracted, fearful me would be a part. Probably a protective part.

Lori: I also want to make sure I mention that you are going to be offering a version of your “Not All Parts Get Adopted” workshop for adoptive parents in December of 2024. So, depending on when people are listening to this, they may be listening in time to get in on that. I have already registered. I can't wait to hear more about this – Internal Family Systems overlaid with adoption. So, I'll be there. I hope to see other people there.

If people listen to this later, what's a way to keep up with you? And we'll make sure that that link for the December offering is in our show notes, but how can people keep up with you if they're listening later than that?

Kathy: I think the best way is probably on Instagram. That's where I do my posting.

I think, actually, some perhaps worthwhile reading for adoptive parents would be the chapter that I wrote on IFS and Adoptees in that book that you mentioned, *Altogether Us*.

But in terms of keeping up with me, I would say primarily on Instagram ([@AdopteeTherapy](#)).

Lori: I will make sure that that link is in our show notes and so is the link to the book that you wrote a chapter for. If you have trouble finding the show notes listeners, you can come to [LavenderLuz.com](#) and find the post about this episode. You can also go to [Adopting.com](#) and they have show notes there if it doesn't show up in your podcast app.

Kathy, it's time for our last question, which I'm asking of all Season 5 guests. What do you wish that all adoptive parents knew from Day 1 or from this moment?

Kathy: This is not necessarily going to be easy for people to hear. From Day 1, I want adoptive parents to remember you are raising someone else's child. And that's going to feel to you like your child, and it's going to feel that way to you sooner than it does to the child. And your child needs to be able to go through their own process of claiming you as their parent. So, remember, you are raising someone else's child and that child does long for their parent, their original parent, no matter what. Even if there was abuse and neglect, that child longs for that parent to not act in abusive and neglectful ways and be able to be their parent.

Lori: I really appreciate you saying that because I think about 10 or 11 years ago, that thought dawned on me, and I wrote about it. And I forget what I said, but I'm going to put that link in our

show notes as well, because I think that's a part. I'm raising my child because I am the mom, and I'm raising someone else's child because she is also the mom, and he is also the dad. So, those are two parts, and my work on this is to integrate those two parts and to allow both of those things to be true at the same time. I don't remember if that's what I said.

Kathy: And I believe that the more that an adoptive parent embraces that, the more that child will actually become your child.

Lori: Isn't that a paradox? Yeah.

Kathy: Right, exactly. Because if you can embrace that, that is going to be conveyed to your child, and that's going to be meaningful to them. Yes, your child needs you to be their parent and needs you to feel like you are their parent. But the more that you can hold what you described simultaneously; you can hold that truth along with your truth that you are their parent, the more you are going to become their parent to them.

Lori: I'm really glad you brought that up because I think that probably remains under the surface for a lot of adoptive parents for much of the time. When it pops up to the surface, our choice is either to react to it and smush it back down or to respond to it in a more integrative and healthy way. I know that was hard to bring up and thank you for bringing it up. And I have a lot of faith in the audience of Adoption: The Long View to be able to take that and really hear it.

Kathy: Yeah. Great.

Lori: Thank you for being with us, Kathy. I'm so grateful to have learned about Internal Family Systems and to be taking this new class with you and just to be able to sit down with you again today. Thank you.

Kathy: Thank you, Lori. It's been my pleasure.

Lori Holden, Close:

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With each episode of Adoption: The Long View, we bring you guests who expand your knowledge of, and ease with adoptive parenting. Thanks to each of you for tuning in and investing in your adoptions, long view. May you meet everything on your road ahead with confidence, curiosity, and compassion, and integration.

Show Notes

- **Website:** AdopteeTherapy.com
- **Email:** kathy@adopteetherapy.com
- **Instagram:** [@adopteetherapy](https://www.instagram.com/adopteetherapy)
- **Book:** [*Altogether Us*](#)
- **Adoption Unfiltered** [Roundtable](#) (mentioned)

- **December 2024 workshop for Adoptive Parents:** [Not All Parts Get Adopted](#)
- [What if I'm Raising Someone Else's Child?](#) (mentioned)