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Family & Relationships

The Choice of a Lifetime: What You Need to Know Before Adopting
Kyle N. Weir
NTI Upstream
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The adoption journey can be a maze, and the options overwhelming. Potential adoptive parents face difficult choices that people who haven't adopted would never suspect—from the type of adoption they choose (domestic, international, or foster care) to what special needs they might accept. In *The Choice of a Lifetime*, Dr. Kyle Weir provides a guidebook through the labyrinth.

Weir thoroughly discusses the issues potential adoptive parents must consider, from the means of adoption available to how to discuss adoption with their child. As an adoptive parent himself, he clearly understands the very deep questions and concerns adoption raises. They include: What about the attachment (family bonding) problems we hear about? What might we face if our child's birth mother used drugs or alcohol during pregnancy? Can we handle medical special needs? What would it mean for my child and family if our racial backgrounds differ? Is there help available if things get difficult? Each chapter addresses one of these concerns, candidly outlines the realities families will face, then explains how families can work through most problems.

Weir addresses each question directly, honestly, gently, and with hope. For example, when discussing adopting previously abused children, Weir explains, "Abuse can temporarily disguise [children's] natural good will…but encouraging, consistent parenting, when coupled with professional therapy, can restore hope in a child and eliminate many of the behavioral problems we tend to find."

Weir's book helps potential adoptive parents and current adoptive parents honestly evaluate what they are able and willing to take on. As an associate professor of marriage and family therapy, a therapist whose practice focuses on adoptive families, and an adoptive parent himself, Weir brings unique, insider insights to his topic. Potential adoptive parents will especially appreciate his expertise, as many concerns they have may require a family counselor's perspective and are often intensely personal and difficult to discuss with those in

their social circle. Weir also offers practical parenting advice specifically for adoptive parents.

Although the chapter on the various forms of family therapy available does get more detailed than may be necessary, it reflects one main message Weir hopes to convey: There's no need to fear the negative things you may hear about adoption. There's hope, and there is help. And with open eyes and hearts ready, adoption offers one of the most positive and beautiful choices you can make for your family.

Diane Gardner