How to Deal The Wait to Adopt and Not Go Crazy

Infant Adoption Guide Podcast Episode 105

Today on the Infant Adoption Guide Podcast, we're going to talk about how to deal with the wait to adopt and not go crazy. This episode is just you and me talking about adoption because a lot of people ask me about this sometimes painful waiting time that we all got to go through when you are adopting a baby. My wife and I have adopted three times. We hear things like:  
“The hardest thing for me is just the waiting. It's so painful.”

Or “Every day passes just feels like I've been rejected.”

Or “I think I'm not pretty enough to be chosen, or we're not good enough to be chosen, or our pictures aren't good enough to be chosen. We're not the right people. Nobody wants to pick us.”

Or “It's extremely hard to go through all the gathering of all the paperwork, cleaning our home again and again and again, do another home study because the one we did, it's been 12 months and it's expired and we got to go and do it all over again because we're waiting so long.”

It's really about losing hope and I get it. Maybe this is you or maybe you're not quite there right now, but it's something to be considered, something to consider as you might get there. It might be some point in your journey to adopt that you do find yourself there. I've been in your shoes. You're certainly not alone. There are tons of people that feel like they get stuck or they feel like the wait is never going to end.

It's never going to happen for you. And you've heard a lot of cliches, I'm sure, like ‘just stick with it’ and ‘a baby's out there waiting for you.’ Those may be true, but it doesn't really help you. I get it. I've been there. It doesn't really help you while you're in the wait, especially if you've waited through infertility and gone through that whole ordeal like my wife and I did. It just sucks even more to get into the adoption and wait there too.

But today I want to talk about the wait and share some practical ways how to handle it, what we've learned through our three adoptions, what talking to so many others who have endured the wait to adopt, and just how we can really get through these times. Because one fact about adoption that you may not know is if you're just starting out is no one can tell you how long it's going to take to adopt. No one.

If anybody actually promises, oh, it's going to take you 12 months, or it's only going to take you six weeks, they're not telling the truth. Because the only way you know how long it's going to take to adopt is if you actually match with an expect that mom, you actually get that call, you actually match with her, the baby is actually placed with you.

Nobody knows what's going to make that connection. It just takes time to make that right connection for that person, that expected mom to see your profile, see you for who you are and what life will be like for her baby and to choose you. So you just never know how long it's going to take for you to connect. And we've been through it three times. I've seen tons of other people same way. There's no set amount. So just in case you don't know it, that is the truth about adopting a baby in the US.

But does that mean you can do nothing about it? You just wait, wonder, go crazy watching your phone? No, we're going to get into all this right now. And really, let's define waiting. I mean, waiting is an arbitrary term.

The way I think about it, there are two waiting phases.

One phase is when you’ve just started. You're waiting, you're excited, you're nervous. You're waiting for a phone call.

The second phase is you're about to go crazy. You're screaming for help. Is this ever going to happen for us? It’s the ‘We're going nuts’ phase.

PHASE 1 of Waiting:

So let's talk about phase one. You get through your home study, a few months into your waiting, you got all your to do list done, your mountains of paperwork done, your checklist done, your profile s done. You just find yourself waiting. You're wondering how long it's going to take to get a call about an unexpected mom. And you've heard some people only wait weeks. You're like, how does that happen? Some people wait years.

Again, it's not always up to you, but there are some things you can do. And I would say in this phase, it's really important just to stay busy or distracted, however you like to look at it. And I created a free guide called The 25 Tips For Surviving The Adoption Wait. And you can get this free guide, no email to enter, you don't have to do anything but go to this link and you can get this free guide. And it's over at

[25 Tips For Surviving The Adoption Wait](https://infantadoptionguide.com/25tips" \t "_blank)

It's a really nice guide of 25 different things that I found and that we've done and other people have done to survive the adoption wait.

So here’s a little bit of our story. Our first adoption wait was only, quote unquote, nine months, which is ironic, right? This is from the time that we got everything done to the point where we were matched. And we didn't get too crazy about any adoption. And then about the six months into the wait, we had really interesting things happen to us.

We had two situations outside of our agency that were just connections that we found that were possible matches with an unexpected mom. The one, baby had already been born. Expected mom was deciding between us and and another couple. And that was like about six months in. So we didn't actually get chosen for that one. But it did wake us up and got like, whoa, are we even prepared to bring a baby in our house right now? I mean, we started looking at some things, we picked up some things, and we had the necessary things, but we didn't have it organized. We didn't have room painted.

There was a lot of things that we wanted to do, but we just hadn't got that far until this call, this situation came up. When this adoption didn’t work out it still woke us up to that. Of course, we could have made it work. We would have been able to bring the baby in and we would have been fine. It just reminded us that probably want to be a little more ready than we were.

Being prepared is different for everybody, but think about it in your world, what you are comfortable with? What won't make you go crazy? If you start clearing space in your home for the baby's arrival, maybe you want to set up the crib. Maybe you don't. Maybe having a fully set up nursery would drive you crazy to walk up by that room every day and realize then it's empty and what you don't have. But if it does work for you and you're not going to go crazy, I would recommend setting it up or at least making a plan for how fast you can get this stuff done when you do get the call.

Because that call could come when the baby is born or the baby is born within a week. That's what happened on our first adoption, the baby was born within a week of us getting the call. So you really do need to think about it and be prepared as much as you can without being a little crazy. But some other things to do while you're staying busy or distracted in phase one is just educate yourself. And I know you probably did a lot of this going through your home study, but there are online courses, webinars, books, and podcasts like ours.

Just learning about the joys, the challenges of parenting an adopted child or just reading and listening to other adoption stories. We've had a lot of them on the Infant Adoption Guide Podcast and each from different parts of the triad. We've had birth moms on, we've had adoptees on, we've had adoptive parents on all telling their stories.

You can find a lot out about people's stories and every adoption story is different. So you're just going to see how things happen. And one thing I really recommend is really understand open adoption, how that works, and how you can be open to your child's birth parent, especially as you adopt, especially after placement.

Outside of that, there are things you can do. What we did were home improvement projects, found new hobbies, worked on a hobby we haven't worked on in a while, even took some short trips. You can do the same. Just make a little bit of a list of things you maybe always wanted to do and you might not be able to do or it'd be harder do when a little one arrives.

Date nights are always a good thing. We did that on hosting family and friends at your house. Just do some small things and create some memories. And maybe even in the back of our head, we always did this, is while you're doing these things, take some pictures because you never know if you're going to get an update in your profile. And we'll get into that in phase two. But always thinking about, oh, this would be a great picture. We'd love to do this hobby. Take a picture of ourselves doing the hobby or taking your short trip or doing a home improvement project.

Take those pictures, those action shots. You might want to use those in your profile if you need to update it later on. But phase one really is the waiting part there, just more about keeping busy, staying hopeful. You're really not sure how long it's going to take you just stay hopeful and organized and hopefully you don't get into phase two.

PHASE 2:

So phase two is like, “Is this ever going to happen for us?” “We're going to about to go nuts.”

Maybe you are already going crazy. You're just constantly asking, When is this going to happen? Or “I don't know if we're ever going to get chosen” or maybe “We're just not good enough for this” or maybe “We should just stop and quit and I don't know if this is all worth it.”

If those kinds of thoughts or especially if you're saying these things to other people or your spouse, you're probably in phase two. There's no specific timetable for phase two. You're not going to know. It's not going to be specifically year or two or whatever. It's experience. It's feeling like ‘this is never going to happen for us.

There are a couple of places you can be inside of phase two in my experience, and this is how I look at it.

One place is a race against time. Maybe you feel like your age is getting up there. It's starting to make a difference in that you want to adopt as soon as possible because you start doing the math. You're calculating your age and what your age of your children will be if you adopted right now. What if it took another year and you'd be even older and you don't want to be in your 50s and potty training a child? Those kinds of things.

We've had those thoughts in our world trying to not make age an issue, but it really is. And this is what we were on our third adoption. Both my wife and I were in our 40s. We felt like every day, every week, every month that passed was us getting older as we waited for another baby to join our family. And we were calculating all the time. Well, what about this milestone? If they graduate high school and they get married or they have their own kids, how old are we going to be on each of one of these milestones? It's just hard not to think about those things as time takes on. And that's part of phase two in my mind.

The other place in phase two could be when age is not an issue for you, but you just feel like this is dragging on. There's just no end in sight. You're starting to go nuts. Maybe you're getting the point where you're just super discouraged, don't want to go on any further. And if you're a person of faith like me, maybe you're just feeling like, God, we're waiting, we're praying, we're doing everything and you're just doing nothing. What's up? We have had those times in our waiting periods during our three adoptions.

All of our wait times for our three adoptions, the first one was about nine months. The second one about two years. And the third one, same. So we had to go through updating our home study and getting fingerprints retaken and all those things. Times, it really made the wait time even harder and it does start to make you go crazy. So what I would say is in our experience and talking to others, if you feel like you're in phase two and you're about in a year or more with no match or maybe even nothing even happening.

You don't even know if an expected mom is viewing your profile. You're starting to go crazy, then I would say it's time to do something. And let's talk about what you can do.

There are some things you can do that are smaller and things that you can do are bigger. First one, I always say, and we did this ourselves, was if you're in that year or so time frame and you haven't updated your profile, it's probably time to start looking at that. You can look at your photos, your profile video if you don't want to, which I highly recommend you do.

But how could you update what your life is like right now? That's really your profile is about describing what your life will be like for a child who would join your family. That's what an expect the mom wants to know. Reread what you wrote in your profile. Take a look at those pictures in your profile. Are there updates you can do? Maybe you've taken some great shots of things that you've done while you're in phase one and you're doing some hobbies or you were taking a trip or something. And those were like, oh, this shows us even better what life is like in our family.

That certainly happened for us. And one of the times, one of our adoptions, I know for sure we redid our video, I think, twice because each time we watched it again, we're like, we didn't sound very genuine there. We didn't really talk about this part of our life that really does make a difference. So we took a shot at updating our profile videos and it definitely happened.

I thought, at least on our third adoption, that it really made a difference because after that video was changed, we were matched pretty quickly after that on our third adoption. So we just felt like after we did that profile change and that profile video change, we felt it was a clear picture of what our family was like.

And you just don't know what to expect that mom will find in your video or in your profile that will connect with you. For us, all three of ours, ironically, was that our faith that we're Catholic and that they wanted a Catholic family, and that was important to them. That was one of the connections we made. One of them was just how we looked. One of them was just what they commented about how genuine we came across in our videos.

I think redoing the videos definitely helped. It's work, I get it. But if you got time and you're going crazy waiting, it feels good to do something. And if you could do something that furthers your adoption, I think that's huge.

Another thing you might want to do is check in with your agency or attorney or social worker about your preferences. Now, this is something that you probably went over really early on, and you don't want to make too big of changes to your preferences. So what I mean by that is, if you're wanting to adopt only a newborn or you maybe have a gender selection, like I only want to adopt a boy or only want to adopt a girl, maybe you think about broadening that a little bit.

Just look at it, reassess your adoption preferences, talk to your agency and don't go crazy and do something you're not comfortable with doing or changing just to change. But just relook at them and see if there's something you might consider opening up about.

Connection

So the one big thing I always suggest too, and you can do this in phase one or phase two, but certainly in phase two is if you're going crazy and you're not ready for big changes of your profile or anything like that, it could be you're just missing connection.

What do I mean by that? Well, you need to connect with other families, especially other families that are waiting. I mean, that's huge. My wife and I found about it. It was so helpful for us on all three of our adoptions, connecting with people that are in the same boat as you. I mean, naturally, you're going to talk to your friends and your family, and they're going to be there for you. And they want to be positive. They're always wanting to hear positive things from you. So it's hard to go into any a hard conversation or a negative conversation with them because they want you to be positive. They may keep telling you to just be positive, you're going to adopt.

But the people that are going through the adoption wait like you are, they're going to get it more. They're going to understand where you're at. You can talk to talk and walk the walk because they're right there with you. So you can be a lot more vulnerable with people that are in the same boat as you are waiting. And having that connection and understanding or finding other people like you, it just gives you hope.

It unlocks hope. It unlocks these feelings like “Oh, I can do this.” Somebody else is there, too, and they're doing it. And you can bounce ideas off each other. Have you tried this? Have you tried that? Have you worked on your profile? Have you done things outside of your profile? So how do you find these people?

Your agency may or may not be able to help you find people like this that are local. I mean, local is always better if you can find people in person, no question. I would ask your agency if you can see if you can find that that. But certainly you can go into online support groups. I mean, our Facebook adoption support group is amazing. I'll put a link in the show notes for you there. There are tons of people there. It's a great way to meet others, ask questions, learn, and just share your feelings.

Sometimes being in a large support group online isn't going to give you everything you need. You may not get the connection you want. These people may, and the groups may not even want, they may not be so supportive of you. We try like crazy to keep that from happening in our support group, but you may be part of a support group where people won't want you to be so vulnerable and won't want you to complain or be looking like you're losing hope.

So how do you combat that? Well, I highly recommend finding smaller support groups. They're not easy to find, certainly locally they're not easy to find, but we've created a place online. It's a one of a kind community, and we call it the Infant Adoption Guide Community. And it's just a safe private online space. We bring people together. I mean, to get you into a small group is huge. And that's exactly what we do. We put you with 5 to 10 other people, create a private place for you to chat, share experiences, learn together, encourage together. And I encourage everybody to get on Zoom or some video call so you can actually see each other and talk to each other that way and really work on your relationship and just friendship and supporting each other when you can see each other and talk to each other, not just through typing words in a chat or being in a big Facebook group of several thousand people.

Engaging with other families that have adopted is so powerful. It can provide a great deal of hope for you, something you can't get anywhere else, especially not through your family and friends, no matter how positive or excited they may be in support of you.

And I'm sure they are. But go to <https://Infantadoptionguide.com/community> and see what we're all about there. We're just getting started bringing people in. But check it out or email me at   
[tim@infantadoptionguide.com](mailto:tim@infantadoptionguide.com) if you have questions about how it really works. Happy to talk to you about that.

So let's say you've done these things or you're feeling hopeless and you're just going crazy and you're like, This is all great, but I've done it all and I'm still going crazy. Well, you may want to consider something even bigger. So changing gears, trying to find a new agency, a new professional. Maybe you're looking at maybe even switching gears and doing a private adoption through an attorney or conducting your own outreach through social media.

There are things like that you can do. And I've done a lot of research. And if you find yourself in this place, I have a free starter guide that's called How To Find The Right Adoption Agency In Four Steps. Maybe you’re thinking that you have already found an agency and don't want to find another one. But if you're not getting what you need from them and you feeling like you need to make a bigger change, this may be the right thing for you to do.

So you can go to [FindMyAdoptionAgency.com](https://findmyadoptionagency.com). You can get that free guide that walks you through how to evaluate them and choose the right one for your journey. And it is a free guide. So it's short and sweet, summarized. But if you want faster and much more in-depth help with a lot of resources and step by step videos and everything.

I created an online course that brings you all the way through that and you can go as fast or slow as you want to get through the course. It's going to help you figure out how to find the right adoption agency for you and why and why you want to find her. What is the right adoption agency for you and why you want to find that? Go to [FindMyAdoptionAgency.com](https://findmyadoptionagency.com) and you'll see how to get started there.

All right, just to wrap this up, this journey adopting a baby, it's not for the weak. It could put a lot of stress on you and your spouse. My wife and I have seen it. We've been through it three times. But wherever you are in the wait, be there and do what you can. Just take one step forward.

And I know it's cliché ish, but it certainly worked for us. Don't get too far ahead of yourself. Don't worry about everybody else. Somebody else adopted in two weeks, somebody else adopted in two months, and it's taken us two years. It will happen for you if you don't give up. Keep going. Your story is unfolding. This is your family. This is your story. This is your journey.

So if you're one of those people that are sitting and waiting and praying in that darkness and losing hope and getting discouraged, don't give up. Try to find people that will support you and be around you, even if it's online. And we're there for you through our Facebook group and our community. Because adopting a child isn't about luck. It's about persistence and faith and working on your dream of bringing a baby into your family. I firmly believe that.

As we wrap up here, I just want to encourage you to go back and check out an episode that my wife and I did. It's called Top 10 Things We Learned Through 3 Infant Adoptions. If you want to hear her side of some stories that we did through our 3 infant adoptions, it's a great show.

It's Episode 62. I'll put a link in the show notes. But Episode 62 where my wife and I talk about what we learn through our three adoptions. Don't forget to go get that 25 tips for surviving the adoption wait. <https://Infantadoptionguide.com/25tips>. All the links will be in the show notes today. If you're driving or don't remember all the links, that's fine. Just go to <https://Infantadoptionguide.com/105>. This is Episode 105. Everything will be in there for you.

Thank you so much for listening. Until next time, you are my prayers as you go on the journey to build your family through Infant adoption. God bless. We'll talk to you next time.