

PROS AND CONS OF APPROACHING ADOPTIVE PARENTS: FOR BIRTH PARENTS

PROS

- They may be very supportive and anxious to help.
- If the adopted person is not aware of the adoption, it is preferable that the 'telling' comes from the adoptive parents rather than the birth parent.
- Support for the adopted person is in-built.
- There is a clear indication that the birth parent is acknowledging their role.
- They can convey an indication of the readiness or otherwise of the adopted person for contact.

CONS

- If the adopted person is in his/her early twenties, he/she may still be in the late throes of adolescence. The adoptive parents would hold the power if the approach was made to them - and the adopted person may resent being put back in the position of being a child.
- The birth parent has to deal with the adoptive parents' feelings as well as her own - and so does the adopted person. Contacting the adoptee directly bypasses this added complication.
- The adoptive parents might act as a barrier to the birth parent getting in touch with the adoptee.
- The adoptive parents' opinion of the adoptee's readiness or not for contact would be from their own viewpoint and would not necessarily accurately reflect the adoptee's situation.
- The adopted person could be angry that the birth parent has approached his/her parents rather than contacting him/her directly.
- The adoptive parents could make a decision on behalf of their adult child, instead of involving him/her, especially if feeling threatened by the birth parent.
- If the adoptee does not know of his/her adoption and the adoptive parents refuse to 'tell' then the birth parent faces the dilemma of whether or not to approach the adoptee directly.

The birth parent could consider writing to both the adoptee and the adoptive parents if the adopted person is living at home, so that neither party feels dismissed.

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