

[00:00:01.135] - Melissa Corkum

This episode is sponsored by our new class, exploring grief, trauma and rejection with the Enneagram, this is an Enneagram group for foster and adoptive moms.

[00:00:11.635] - Lisa Qualls

Melissa and I have both found the Enneagram to be helpful in understanding ourselves and the people we love. In 2020, we decided to become certified Enneagram coaches so we could better serve the foster and adoption community.

[00:00:23.785] - Melissa Corkum

While adoption can be beautifully redemptive, it does start with loss. A birth family loses a child, a child loses a family, and for some families, adoption comes after a long journey of infertility and possibly pregnancy loss. Sometimes parents find it difficult if their child seems to be rejecting them. This is another loss. Not to mention feeling like we lose what we dreamt our families might have been.

[00:00:47.365] - Lisa Qualls

The Enneagram is a powerful tool that helps us not just understand how we experience loss and rejection, but gives us simple practices to become healthier versions of ourselves despite hardship. So join us during the month of February to do some deep reflection and healing. This group is open to adoptive and foster moms. You must be able to join us live at all four sessions. There are two time slots and space is limited. To find out more or to sign up, go to [theadoptionconnection.com/enneagram](http://theadoptionconnection.com/enneagram). Welcome to The Adoption Connection Podcast where we share resources by and for adoptive and foster moms. I'm Lisa Qualls.

[00:01:27.625] - Melissa Corkum

And this is Melissa Corkum. Don't worry. We get it, and we're here for you.

[00:01:33.415] - Melissa Corkum

Hi, friends, welcome to Episode 113 of The Adoption Connection Podcast. This is our last episode for 2020. And we thought it would be fun to reach out to you, our community, and ask you about some of the most memorable gifts you've received.

[00:01:48.565] - Lisa Qualls

And before we go into those stories that you shared, we thought we'd take a moment to reflect on some of the highlights of 2020 for The Adoption Connection. So first of all, this year, we've been able to do a lot more speaking together. Apart, but together.

[00:02:04.945] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, one of the covid benefits, right, is that everyone can be together all the time through Zoom. Although, it started with an in-person speaking appearance that we were going to have at refresh that ultimately got canceled. So we kind of started 2020 off with a bang.

[00:02:20.335] - Lisa Qualls

Yes, we did. And since then, we've been able to speak quite a number of times together and do some teaching. It's been really, really wonderful despite having to do it on Zoom. Another highlight is we got our Enneagram coach certification, both of us. So that's been really neat and of course we have big plans for 2021. Another highlight is we hit our one 100th episode of The Adoption Connection Podcast and I have to say, given our lives, given everything, I'm really quite proud of us that we've managed to be so consistent. It's, it's really pretty remarkable. So and thank you to all of you who listen, it means so much to us in fact, I'm just going to put a little plug here. It would be the nicest Christmas gift you could give us if you would go into the app where you listen to your podcast and leave us a review, especially a good one, because reviews really do help other adoptive parents find the podcast and we're just so happy when we can reach more people.

[00:03:20.335] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, and one of the things that totally makes our day too, is when we are out speaking or we have an

opportunity to interact with you, a lot of you will come up and tell us that you listen. And of course, that always makes our day as well.

[00:03:31.885] - Lisa Qualls

And then lastly, we now have more than two thousand people following us on Facebook and separately on Instagram. So, again, we're just so thankful that we are reaching more and more parents. This is definitely a journey you do not want to do alone and we're just thrilled to be able to connect with more of you.

[00:03:51.565] - Melissa Corkum

All right, let's jump into some of the memorable gifts that you guys shared. This is from Shelby.

[00:03:56.725] - Shelby

I've done foster care for about seven years. We've had about 50 kids come and go. About half a dozen of those were long term six months to over a year. Two of them we adopted. We are hanging up our license after all this time and all these kids. I like to give my oldest kids a gift as a thank you after some of our long term placements leave, especially more difficult ones. So it doesn't happen often enough that they expect it, it's not like a payment, but they work really hard and they sacrificed a lot. And a lot of times they'll share their toys and they'll get broken, or they'll share their room, or they'll help make decisions and it's been a lot of work for them. So my 13, 12 and 10 year old have been asking for a dog and my three oldest, my three bios, they've been asking for a dog for a couple of years and my husband has always said no. So, I had the great idea, this year we're going, we're saying goodbye to our placement right now in a couple of weeks. And for Christmas, I was going to say thank you to my kids by getting a dog. But my husband doesn't want a dog. I don't recommend getting dogs for Christmas because statistically, they end up in the pound if people haven't put a lot of thought into it or they don't pick out their own dog. But as a gift to me, my husband said yes to the dog because he knows how important it is to me. I just started therapy and my therapist said that I need a therapy dog or that it would be a good thing for me. So just to have him value my own self care and my own healing after all this time was kind of like a "thank you" for me. And that was really the kindest gift that I have ever. Thanks so much.

[00:05:30.895] - Lisa Qualls

Well, Shelby, I love that story and thank you so much for sharing it with us. I absolutely agree that you should have a dog, a therapy dog for yourself, so we have a dog that we consider our unofficial therapy dog. And she really helps a lot of people in our family, including me.

[00:05:48.055] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, and I love the idea that this will be your dog. I actually have a good friend who's an adoptive mom and her therapist told her, "get a dog for you." And that way you'll know going in that the dog will be your responsibility and then you won't get all bent out of shape if the kids don't help feed it, and walk it, and clean up after it. Any one who helps will be a bonus, but you can go in fully expecting to get all the love, but also do all the work. So I think that's, I don't know if that's how it's going to work in your house, Shelby, but I thought that was a really good idea in terms of expectations coming in.

[00:06:23.935] - Lisa Qualls

This is from Nicole.

[00:06:25.315] - Nicole

When my four year old little sister picked out my favorite can of soda and wrapped it up for Christmas. I will always remember that. What a sweet memory.

[00:06:33.895] - Melissa Corkum

I love that, that's so cute.

[00:06:35.665] - Lisa Qualls

It's really cute. Elizabeth has shared.

[00:06:38.545] - Elizabeth

My son, he wrote a note saying he loved me so much that he wanted me to have all his money. He gave me eleven dollars and it brought me to tears.

[00:06:48.055] - Melissa Corkum

I love these.

[00:06:49.895] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, they're great.

[00:06:50.785] - Melissa Corkum

This is what another listener had to share.

[00:06:53.125] - Anonymous

The most memorable Christmas present that I received was a few years ago. I was at an antique store with my mom and my grandma and I saw this Goofy phone. And it was like, and when it rings Goofy's hat came off and stuff and I just said, "that's really cool." And that was probably in the summer. And on Christmas, I was at my grandma's house and I opened my present and it was that Goofy phone. So she remembered that I liked it and she bought it and gave it to me all those months later.

[00:07:23.785] - Lisa Qualls

That story reminds me of the memorable gift that I was going to share today. Years ago, I would say in the 90s, we had gone on vacation, Whidbey Island, and we'd gone to this cool antique shop. And I saw this quilt that I just loved. It was this antique handmade quilt that had, the person had embroidered each state flower. So there were pink squares interspersed with the state flowers. And for whatever reason, I just really, really loved it and Russ and I say it together. Well, actually we were living in New York when this happened. So then he graduated from grad school. We moved to Colorado and the next year we were at Whidbey Island, and we were in a different antique shop, the one that moved. Wow the store is getting kind of weird. But anyhow, I saw these quilts folded up and there was this one pink triangle sticking out. And I said, I think it's that state flower quilt. And we looked and it was it was a state flower quilt. I couldn't believe it was still in this antique shop that it had actually moved to a new location, but there was really not money for things like that. Well, that was in July. And the next Christmas, Russ gave me my Christmas present, and it was the state flower quilt. He had sent my sister to buy it and ship it to Colorado. I was so completely shocked. I have to admit, it's like one of the sweetest memories of a gift. Just that he remembered, first of all, that I seen it one year, saw it another year, and he remembered and gave it to me for Christmas, so I still have it. Was meant to be.

[00:09:00.355] - Melissa Corkum

Is it on your bed?

[00:09:01.975] - Lisa Qualls

No, it's not. It's not, it's not anywhere at the moment, but it's pretty neat. So, Melissa, what are you going to share? What is your most memorable gift?

[00:09:10.615] - Melissa Corkum

So my most memorable gift, and Lisa and I were joking about this before we recorded, I can't tell the entire story, but we've talked here before that our family celebrates airplane day as the day that we joined the family as adoptees. Probably about ten years ago, Patrick surprised me because it was my airplane day. He gave me two airplane tickets to anywhere in the lower Continental forty eight states that I wanted to go. And so I took my best friend, who's also an adoptee, and her husband, for her airplane day, gifted her the hotel room for us to stay in. And so we were able to do a girls weekend away. There's actually an entire story. It's kind of laughable. It would be like this hysterical comedy for the whole weekend to play out, but just suffice it to say that it was a super memorable weekend with a super memorable gift.

[00:09:55.765] - Lisa Qualls

I think that's a wonderful gift. Very, very nice. OK, this came from Gina.

[00:10:01.135] - Gina

My daughter made me a homemade nativity two years ago when she was twelve years old and she took a cardboard box that she painted and added popsicle sticks to to make it look more realistic. She created all of the people out of air and the animals and she hand painted all the pieces. It's just incredible. It's like, it made me cry when I received it and every year when I pull it out, it just reminds me of her and her thoughtfulness and I just adore homemade gifts, so that's my, one of my favorite Christmas gifts.

[00:10:36.835] - Melissa Corkum

I love homemade gifts too and I know that this next listener who shared, Jennifer, also makes fantastic homemade gifts.

[00:10:44.975] - Jennifer

Hi, this is Jennifer and I'm an adoptive mom. And the best gift that I've ever received was the hug from my daughter's birth mother when we met her for the first time in, about 10 years ago. It was filled with such love and peace knowing that her baby was safe and loved. She never thought that she'd see her again.

[00:11:06.685] - Lisa Qualls

That is very, very beautiful. I will not get choked up, but it is very, very beautiful. And along the same lines, Sandra shared.

[00:11:16.405] - Sandra

The best gift I've ever received from my son's biological family is a sign that came from their biological grandmother. And we have a very open adoption and we do absolutely everything together. I'm talking right down to wrestling tournaments and baseball games, every birthday, every holiday, her birthday, their birthdays, our birthdays, we do everything together. And the sign meant so much to me. She gave it to me at Christmas and it said, "being a part of this family means you will love and be loved for the rest of your life." She also signed the package, Mom. So it meant a lot to me to be loved that much by her. And we have a biological son who surprised showed up after the adoption was final and she calls him grandson and treats him just as a grandson, as the other two boys. So we are very blessed by open adoption. Thank you very much and merry Christmas to all of you.

[00:12:15.595] - Melissa Corkum

This is from Jenny.

[00:12:17.035] - Jenny

My son's school had gifts donated so all the kids could give their parents something for Christmas and he was so excited. The presents were already unwrapped when he got off the bus and he was unwilling to wait till Christmas. We had to open them that moment. I remember his smile as he gave me the bracelets that he picked out.

[00:12:38.335] - Lisa Qualls

I love that. I love when the kids get so excited that they have to unwrap it themselves, like they just can't stand it.

[00:12:43.645] - Melissa Corkum

I know.

[00:12:45.775] - Lisa Qualls

So cute. And I wish we had a picture of this next one, but Susan wrote her most memorable gift is a full grown sunflower. Like, that's big.

[00:12:55.285] - Melissa Corkum

I know, how do you that.

[00:12:57.115] - Lisa Qualls

I know, I don't know, but it's a pretty fun gift, so. All right, we have one more special one to share.

[00:13:05.095] - Lisa

Hello, my name is Lisa. When I was thirty two, I suffered a massive stroke and was not expected to survive. But God had a plan and I am still here today, almost 10 years later. So my for my 40th birthday, my husband wanted to do something very special. A day before my birthday, he told me that the next day, on my birthday, we would be spending the entire day in Disneyland. Now we live near Seattle, Washington. And so we had to take a plane and it was the most surreal experience because we had no luggage, we had nothing. It was just the three of us, my husband and my daughter. And we got to the park before opening. We took the first flight out and we left the park at about 11 p.m. that night. And it was fantastic. I felt so special. I have never been wished Happy Birthday by more people in my life. So that is definitely the most memorable gift I've ever received and it was incredibly special.

[00:14:12.925] - Lisa Qualls

I don't think it gets a whole lot better than that. That is a really sweet and memorable gift.

[00:14:17.875] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, and if anyone does birthdays well, it's Disney. They really know how to make someone feel super, super special.

[00:14:24.745] - Lisa Qualls

Well, speaking of special, we hope that your holidays are going to be filled with so many special things. I know this year has been highly unusual, but we hope that you will have some moments of connection and some moments of peace with your family.

[00:14:41.035] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, thank you so much for everyone who made this episode really special. If you feel like you need a little bit more support as you go through the holidays and you haven't already joined us in our Facebook group, you can get there by going to [theadoptionconnection.com/facebook](https://theadoptionconnection.com/facebook) and we will see you all in 2021.

[00:15:00.565] - Lisa Qualls

Before you go, we'd love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Facebook or Instagram as [@theadoptionconnection](https://theadoptionconnection.com).

[00:15:08.185] - Melissa Corkum

Thanks so much for listening. We love having you. If you enjoyed this episode, please leave a quick review over on iTunes. It will help us reach more moms who may be feeling alone.

[00:15:18.385] - Lisa Qualls

And remember, until next week, you're a good mom, doing good work and we're here for you.

[00:15:25.555] - Melissa Corkum

The music for the podcast is called New Day and was created by Lee Rosevere.