

[00:00:00.000] - Lisa C. Qualls

Welcome to the Adoption Connection podcast, where we offer resources to equip you and stories to inspire you on your adoption journey. I'm Lisa Qualls.

[00:00:09.990] - Melissa Corkum

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

[00:00:18.040] - Lisa C. Qualls

Hey, friends, welcome to Episode 221 of the Adoption Connection podcast. We're really happy that you're here. We've been looking forward to doing this episode. I think it was December, we did an episode where we just talked about what we learned in 2022 and some reflections. And we enjoyed that so much. And we got a ton of feedback from all of you saying that you really enjoyed it, too. And we thought, maybe it'd be fun to do that twice a year. So this is our midyear reflections on 2023. We're looking back at the winter and the spring, and I just came up with a few questions, Melissa and I are going to chat about, and we hope that they might be questions that you would want to talk about with your friends or your partner and just reflect on the first half of this year like we are today. What do you think, Melissa?

[00:01:14.070] - Melissa Corkum

Let's do it.

[00:01:15.820] - Lisa C. Qualls

Okay. All right. So I'll share the first question with you and you can start reflecting first and we'll just go from there. So here we are halfway through 2023. Share something that you discovered in the first half of this year.

[00:01:33.170] - Melissa Corkum

Well, I literally had to get out my five year journal and flip through it because I just don't think backwards very well.

[00:01:42.750] - Lisa C. Qualls

That's a good idea. I should have done that.

[00:01:45.980] - Melissa Corkum

I know. I think there's some carryovers from the end of last year. We had another big family loss in January. My mom's brother passed away pretty suddenly. We came up on the anniversary of my dad's passing this spring. It was this accumulation of grief and finishing a year of grief in the first. I think one of the things that we're discovering about this is how well little kids intuitively know how to grieve. One of the first things that made me really emotional thinking about my dad's passing was thinking about his relationship with Ava, our granddaughter, who was just three when he passed. I was thinking, man, she loves him, spending time with him so much now. And the crazy thing is, because she's only three, when she's an adult, she's not even going to remember him. Everyone else will remember him, but she'll remember us talking about him and she'll be able to see pictures. But will she really actually remember him? And what's crazy is she's the one who talks about him the most. And Mia and I were just actually talking about this last night. Do we think she actually remembers him, or does she talk about him so much that now she remembers about him because she remembers talking about him.

[00:03:23.290] - Melissa Corkum

But we recently had a tent set up in our backyard for our Mother's Day/May birthday gathering. And she saw it and she said, Oh, who's getting married? Well, our son, for those of you who follow this crazy story of our lives, our son got married in our backyard two days after my dad died. And it was like the whole thing. It's like they turned our house into a wedding venue. And we had one of those massive tents that you rent in this big whatever. And so that was a memory she had. She remembered John's wedding from a year ago. And so it makes me think that she really does have actual memories of my dad. And she has the sweetest way of just talking about him, blurting things out, talking about how she wished it was different. The other day she had his all in tears because she

asked my mom, or she was praying out loud, spontaneously in the car with my mom and asked if God would send...

[00:04:20.230] - Lisa C. Qualls
That right there is so sweet.

[00:04:21.720] - Melissa Corkum
I know, isn't it? Well, her and my mom spend a ton of time together in the car because she's in my mom's preschool class and my mom drives her a half an hour back and forth to preschool three times a week. So they get a lot of interesting car conversations together. And she prayed out loud if God would send the right vitamin and bandaid to make him come back.

[00:04:48.090] - Lisa C. Qualls
Oh, wow.

[00:04:49.620] - Melissa Corkum
I know. And she gets up every morning and tells Kayla how much she misses him and how she wishes he would come back. So I think we're just discovering a lot about what it looks like to grieve without any cultural... She doesn't have any of those cultural expectations or she doesn't have any of the shame or is this the right way to do this? She just does it. And I also think she's in the independent stance if you're an enneagram person. She just does life the way she wants to do life anyway. So, yeah, it's been really sweet to just watch her do that without really caring what anyone else thinks.

[00:05:28.330] - Lisa C. Qualls
I like that. That's really sweet. It's amazing when we have a little more capacity to really observe and enjoy the children. Life is not so challenging for either of us now like it used to be that we can actually take it in and observe them. It's incredible to watch their development.

[00:05:52.050] - Melissa Corkum
Well, I know, and she's not ultimately my responsibility, and I know so much more about the nervous system. It makes me wonder, not that I have any desire to start over and do this again, but there's always this piece of like, Well, she's my grandkid, so it's probably totally different anyway. But part of me wonders, because she is living here and we're helping to raise her, if so much of how I see her behaviors differently is just from what we've learned about the nervous system. I just don't see her behaviors in the same way that I viewed our kids behaviors when they were toddlers. And so because I view them differently, I respond differently, and she responds differently. It's a fascinating thing to observe, to watch. I'm glad I have enough space and wherewithal to watch that all go down.

[00:06:47.400] - Lisa C. Qualls
Similarly, I have two granddaughters now and I have way more capacity to just enjoy and watch them developing and growing. The thing I see so clearly is the beauty of secure attachment. It's unbelievable when you've parented children who experience trauma and adversity and so much hardship and secure attachment is not easy to develop. And of course, we're always working toward that. But to see these little girls who both have been born to very emotionally available, healthy parents who know how to meet their needs and have the capacity. They have the support from each other and the knowledge to meet the needs over and over again. And just the security these little girls both experience, especially my granddaughter, who's a little older, who's now getting mobile. I watch her and she ventures out and she looks back at her parents, checks in. Yes, they're still there. Okay, she ventures a little more. And then she thinks, I think I need to go check back in. You can see her crawl back to mom and dad, get a little snuggle, and then she goes off again. And she completely expects them both to be present and to meet her needs.

[00:08:13.010] - Lisa C. Qualls
She never expects her needs not to be met because they have been met over and over. And I watch that. It is both really beautiful and also really makes me think about the kids who don't have that and how differently they develop. And this whole idea like, well, at least you adopted your child before they turned a year old. I think, oh, my word, do we know? Can we even let ourselves think about what

happens in an entire year of a child's life? That first year of life is so important, so formative. And it's just not a quick thing that is over and done. And okay, well, now they're one and they're your child and take it from there. And it's all going to be easy breezy because they're only a year old. Wow. I just see how important. I always knew it, obviously, with all my kids, but I really see it now because I can step back and I have a different perspective than I had before. Okay, and can we both just say being grandmothers is pretty fantastic?

[00:09:23.360] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, I like it. It's a little complicated on our side, but I'll still take it.

[00:09:30.120] - Lisa C. Qualls

And you're a super young grandma, and I definitely became a grandma much older than I thought I would. I thought I'd be a young grandma, and that didn't really happen. But it's all good. It's all okay. I was very much in the thick of being a mom forever. So it's all good.

[00:09:42.130] - Melissa Corkum

You still are.

[00:09:43.180] - Lisa C. Qualls

I am still, yes, but it's different. I don't have little ones anymore.

[00:09:49.100] - Melissa Corkum

Your answer was tangential to mine. Do you have anything else that you have discovered this year?

[00:10:02.080] - Lisa C. Qualls

Is your adoption journey turning out differently than you imagined? You had so much love to give, but now you feel ashamed and bewildered by your lack of compassion. You may be experiencing blocked care, a self protective mechanism in your nervous system that makes it difficult to connect with your child and maintain compassion. When this happens, it's like your heart seems to have left the relationship. But the good news is you are not a bad parent. You can heal from blocked care and compassion can be rekindled in your heart.

[00:10:35.340] - Melissa Corkum

This episode is sponsored by our book *Reclaim Compassion: the Adoptive Parent's Guide to Overcoming Blocked Care with Neuroscience and Faith*. This practical and powerful guide offers a simple step by step process for reclaiming compassion for your child and yourself. Included in the book is a blocked care assessment which is now free to you, our listeners. You can take the assessment at reclaimcompassion.com/assessment.

[00:11:07.180] - Lisa C. Qualls

I think after so much hardship for our family with losses and challenges, it's been really beautiful to see that sometimes really good things happen, even when our initial response is to be scared. In the fall, our little granddaughter, and I probably mentioned this in our reflections when in December, but our little granddaughter was born with some severe heart defects. Because we have lost a child, because we've experienced really hard things, I was hopeful and prayerful, but there was definitely a part of me that was like, Oh, no, no, no, no, no, we can't go down a terrible, terrible road. We can't lose this baby girl, kind of thing. And to just watch her have incredible medical care and to come through to the point... And I don't want to overshare her medical story because it's her history and the internet lives forever. But to just see her body heal with a lot of help, and see her thriving, it blows my mind. The goodness of God and the incredible medical technology and skill and knowledge that is available now. And to just think, she's going to grow up a pretty healthy... I mean, she won't be like other kids necessarily, but she's going to be fine-ish. I don't know how to say more than that, but it blows my mind. And just to see God answer our prayers. I think there's a part of me that's why I just say, yeah, the Lord is going to answer my prayers, but maybe not in the way I hope. And to see it happen is just really beautiful. So I guess I discovered that sometimes God just answers our prayers in the very way we hope. And sometimes things that appear to be really hard and scary, we actually do come through them, and it's good. So that's probably one thing I discovered in the first half of the year.

[00:13:22.770] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, it's a good one. So what is something that's on your mind right now? So we did our reflection now we're moving into the present.

[00:13:32.550] - Lisa C. Qualls

Oh, boy. There are a lot of things on my mind right now. It's literally on my desk is my passport that I need to get renewed. But that's a small thing. Actually, I have this whole little stack of things here to remind me of all the things I need to do. I have a measuring tape, I have my passport, I have an empty prescription bottle that I need to fill. I've got all these little things gathered here to remind me.

[00:13:53.710] - Melissa Corkum

It's like a living 3D to do list.

[00:13:57.540] - Lisa C. Qualls

It is. I have the to do list too, but I just keep setting things there like, Okay, I got to take care of this today, and if I see it right here. Something on my mind right now. Well, the semester ended for my husband. He's a professor, and it ended, and he just took an incredible trip with his mom and his sister, which is pretty unbelievable. And I'm so happy for them that they got to do that. But he's coming home and our kids are wrapping up school two weeks from tomorrow. And so probably what's on my mind right now is this will come out in June, but we're recording it right before Memorial Day. And so what's on my mind is this transition into summer. And what is that going to look like? And what is it going to feel like? And one of my sons has his job locked in for the summer. The other has a job probably locked in, but I don't know what the schedule is going to look like. And we've got sports and we've got all these different things. And so I'm thinking, what is the summer going to look like? And in 2020 we had this crazy opportunity to buy this little cabin on a lake in North Idaho, and nobody's been there yet. And we need to open that. And I'm thinking a lot about that. What is it going to look like this summer?

[00:15:14.270] - Melissa Corkum

No one's been there this year.

[00:15:15.830] - Lisa C. Qualls

Oh, yeah, this summer. Yeah.

[00:15:18.830] - Melissa Corkum

It's not like you've sat on it for three years.

[00:15:21.550] - Lisa C. Qualls

No. Honestly, last summer, I hardly went at all. And when I went, I mostly went to paint and work on it and stuff. So anyhow, I just think there are a lot of changes coming. My daughter that's been living in South America on a Fulbright scholarship the last two years, they're coming back. And yeah, I think what's on my mind is what is summer going to look like for our family, and for Russ and me, and hopefully getting some time together. Yeah, I think that's it. How about you?

[00:15:51.110] - Melissa Corkum

That's it.

[00:15:52.910] - Lisa C. Qualls

I have other heavy things on my mind, but that's at the very top of my mind. How about you, Melissa?

[00:15:59.870] - Melissa Corkum

I think personally, we're really starting to ramp up for our summer road trip. Patrick and Ty and I are going to live on the road for about six weeks this summer. The end of June to the middle of August, and we're going to camp, car camp. Well, Ty is going to tent camp. Patrick and I are trying to car camp, and he went camping with Ty and a couple of friends of ours this past weekend and dry ran some things and came home with a lot of thoughts and some things we're going to have to problem

solve and think through. That's the thing that's running, even when I'm not actively thinking about it, I think that's like running, like taking up a good part of my mental space, even subconsciously.

[00:16:47.470] - Lisa C. Qualls

You need to go to your task manager and turn some things off in your.

[00:16:52.880] - Melissa Corkum

I know, yeah, for sure. Well, and the thing that's adding, I think, in what's weighing heavily on my mind is where that intersects with work for us. So the first part of our trip is actually to drive to a speaking engagement that I have in St. Louis, and then we'll continue on from there. But like, mid trip, I have to come back to I'm going to fly back to Kansas City to meet you to speak at NACAC. So it's also this idea of packing light for a lot of hiking and outdoor stuff, but then also being able to have four or five days of business casual clothes lined up and all the table supply, like things that we'll need for the two events. So from a work perspective, we're working on a new curriculum version of our book. So that's running through my mind a lot. We've both been really distracted by Instagram Reels and how to make them and how to make them useful in our business. So if you guys don't follow us on Instagram, there's some interesting things going on over there. So you can find us @PostAdoptionResources. I'm thinking a lot about social media lately, which I have this love/hate relationship. Part of me is like, well, if I could just be an Instagram influencer, "just." If that was my job to sit on Instagram all day and dream up new fun reels and think of new catchy little tidbits that we wanted to communicate to you guys. I could get lost in that forever. But as it turns out, our company is just a tad more than that. And so there's other things to keep on top of and all of that stuff.

[00:18:40.430] - Lisa C. Qualls

Yeah. I know I'm thinking about the curriculum a lot because I'm trying to knock some of it out. We had a really good meeting yesterday and we got a bunch of work done on it, but that's definitely on my mind, too. We're excited about that. And just so you know, when it comes, it's going to be a curriculum for groups and there'll be a facilitator guide and participant guides. We are making it a non faith based curriculum specifically so that organizations can use it that serve a broader community and or organizations that are government funded. So it can be used by everybody to help parents overcome black care. So we're excited about that.

[00:19:23.010] - Melissa Corkum

We actually are also trying to make it accessible to non adoptive families. We've had a lot of questions about can this happen in non adoptive families? And of course it can. Obviously, our main audience, if you're listening and you're an adoptive family, is you. But we recognize that there's space to expand this and no one else is really doing it. So the curriculum will have a broader scope than the book does. And yeah, so we're excited about being able to take that to some places this summer, like the National Council for Adoption and NACAC, which is the North American Council on Adoptable Children. It's just been a wild ride this year with the book coming out. So all of that is always also floating around in my mind.

[00:20:11.270] - Lisa C. Qualls

When we decided to do this, if you're listening, we finished the book and we started talking about this curriculum. I was like, No, I don't want to write another book. But I didn't have to start from scratch with this because we had our whole book already written. We had a lot of the content already done. But yeah, I wasn't sure if I was quite up for it. But I'm

[00:20:37.270] - Melissa Corkum

If we come up with another project after this that involves writing, someone might have to smack both of us.

[00:20:46.640] - Lisa C. Qualls

Let's take a little time off. Let's take a little time off from that. That's good. Probably one other thing I mentioned that's on my mind right now is I just had this a little bit of a health scare, if you've ever heard of Bell's Palsy. I had this thing where I got a little bit of temporary paralysis in my face. And because of my medical history and some autoimmune disorder stuff I have, people are very alarmed

and I had to do all this screening for a stroke and everything because I have a blood disorder. And I will tell you that it immediately took me back years to when I went through a season of a long time where I was very sick. And Melissa knows because I was a little freaked out, like, I can't do it again. I can't go back to being sick like that. There were so many years where I was the person who needed all the help because I was so sick and had surgeries and treatments and all these things. And I'm really, really thankful to say that it turns out that it is not going to become a major thing as far as I know. But I'm reminded of how these memories are held in our bodies and the fear I felt. It was a little bit of a faith journey for me, especially because Russ was out of town, too, which didn't really help. I was going through it a little bit on my own. That's been a little bit on my mind. I don't want to over dwell on what it would have been like had this turned into a big thing, but I'm also contemplating how that felt. I don't have any big answers. It's definitely been on my mind a lot.

[00:22:35.360] - Melissa Corkum

I think it's also a testament because most of the advice you got, even when they didn't know exactly what it was, was like, You should lie low and decrease the stress in your life.

[00:22:47.930] - Lisa C. Qualls

The emergency room physician said, This is very related to stress. You really need to just cut all stress right now. I didn't laugh in his face, but I was thinking, Yeah, I don't know. But I have had to cut things way back for almost three weeks while I was dealing with this because I really did actually feel quite sick as well. But yeah, cutting all the stress, like, okay, well...

[00:23:14.380] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. Well, I think it's just a reminder that the life that we all live, which includes having to take care of ourselves, and then also other kids with a lot of needs and whose behaviors stress us out and we can't control that. It's just this reminder of if you feel like your body is also falling apart along with everything else, there's a reason for that. You're not crazy if you feel like this life is taking a toll on your body because I think I'm positive it is.

[00:23:47.190] - Lisa C. Qualls

Yes, and I know it really has. Russ was out of the country and I was messaging him and saying, Okay, it is time for us to stop and take a serious look at our life and our health and how we're going to take care of ourselves. Because if we keep running at the pace we're running, I really don't want to have a stroke. I don't want my autoimmune disorder to come back in a serious, serious way. I deal with it at a low level a lot. And we can't control illness always, but I at least should do what I can, right? We should at least do what we can to take good care.

[00:24:29.880] - Melissa Corkum

Give yourself a fighting chance.

[00:24:31.830] - Lisa C. Qualls

Well, and I keep thinking, okay, we are two years away from our youngest graduating from high school. There is no way I want my body falling apart now because I want to really enjoy some time. There's so many things that Russ and I want to do and travel. Most of our friends have had their kids grown and out of home for a long time. And we've been at this. By the time he graduates, we will have kids in our home that we've been parenting for 38 years. And we're really looking forward to some time where we aren't in that intense parenting. Got to keep my body healthy to the best of my ability. So that was a lot of what's been on my mind.

[00:25:18.700] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. Well, there's a lot on our minds all the time, I think.

[00:25:23.440] - Lisa C. Qualls

All right, Melissa, last question. What is one thing you want to learn this summer?

[00:25:30.920] - Melissa Corkum

Well, I think I'm going to learn a whole lot about car camping.

[00:25:33.470] - Lisa C. Qualls
And fly fishing.

[00:25:34.560] - Melissa Corkum
And fly fishing. Yeah. I think I'm going to do some, like, watercolor stuff. I don't know. My spiritual director has been challenging me to think about what I want out of this trip. I probably will do some fishing, but honestly, I would be just as happy reading a book or taking in nature in some other way. We'll probably do a lot of hiking. I think what's interesting about something like this, too, is planning around it, planning doctor's appointments. One of our kids needs wisdom teeth taken out. I'm like, I don't know if I want to try to squeeze that in before we leave, but that means, can it wait until August, mid August? Some things that we have taken for granted that happened over the summers, like a garden. We didn't do a garden last year because we're trying to reset our land. But then this year, no one wants to be around to really take care of it. So we'll probably forego that. But I think the other thing to circle back around is just learning how to slow down. Part of me is afraid of this trip because I don't know how I'm going to react to the slowness that I've built into it. We've planned things in the business to be lighter so that neither of us have to do as much as we normally do in the day to day. So that what I need to do can be done from my phone's WiFi connection on a laptop, working from the back of a car, and those types of things. I'm sure Patrick and Ty and I are going to learn a lot about each other. I mean, it's not like we don't live together or not together a lot, but I think there's something about camping together for six weeks that will probably reveal a lot more.

[00:27:29.120] - Lisa C. Qualls
Well, decades ago, I remember reading a book by Gary Smally, and he talked about how a camping is good for families because you grow close in adversity. So there you go. And those were not his words at all. And I am pretty sure I read it in a book that he wrote, but it was so many years ago that I don't remember for sure. But I just remember something sticking in my mind about that, that camping draws you closer because of adversity.

[00:28:00.860] - Melissa Corkum
Well, it's funny you mentioned that because most of our camping trips pre adoption were really fun. That's how we just vacationed. It's how we made it affordable. We have lots of good story. And I love a good experience story to tell. So camping has produced lots of stories that we can tell over and over again. What's interesting is our son has really taken up camping as their family's form of vacationing as well. And what's interesting is we only really camped two or three times after our kids from Ethiopia came home. And both of those, the two times that I know that we camped, there were significant adversity. So it's interesting to me how he took that away as something he wanted to institute in his family, like that he must have remembered the good times. Or the memories. Memory is a funny thing. So the memories, almost 10 years later are different in such a way that he feels like it was a connecting time. And that's something that he wants to continue on because I think, man, if those had been my only two camping experiences, I don't know if I would be.

[00:29:12.750] - Lisa C. Qualls
Yeah. Wow. Well, that's neat. That's really good. I'm excited for your trip. I'm looking forward to... It's too bad you're not going to come just a tiny bit further West to where I live, but you never know.

[00:29:26.850] - Melissa Corkum
I know. Well, we have it all mapped out on this app/website called Wander Log. We'll put a link to the show notes. It's like not an affiliate link. We've planned two trips on it so far, and it's just I'm such a visual person and to have everything in one place. It is so helpful. So, yeah, we're pretty much fully planned. I don't think we're coming as far West as you, but at least we'll be on similar time zones for just a couple of weeks.

[00:30:00.080] - Lisa C. Qualls
Well, that will be a miracle. I was here for those of you listening. I was telling Melissa the other day, I feel like she's on the East Coast and I'm Pacific time. And so I wake up in the morning and get my kids out the door to school and I'm already behind. At the beginning of the day, I'm already behind because

Melissa has been up and she's done all this work and I'm all day trying to catch up on things. But it's just a funny thing about living on the opposite sides of the country. That'll be nice.

[00:30:37.290] - Melissa Corkum

So what are you learning or what would you like to learn in the summer?

[00:30:42.810] - Lisa C. Qualls

I'm learning so much. I'm actually reading a lot more about the nervous system and really wanting to have a deeper understanding of the nervous system. And I know we've been talking about it a lot because obviously we wrote our book and it includes neuroscience and things about the nervous system. But some of it was still pretty new to me in the last couple of years. And now I feel like I've set some other things aside that I've been learning in order to dive a little bit deeper. And things are falling into place. I'm understanding more and more and more and really interested in that. We just had a conversation about that earlier today before we recorded.

[00:31:20.400] - Melissa Corkum

It's validating when you're like, Yeah, it all makes sense. I get why you're always talking about the nervous system now.

[00:31:26.990] - Lisa C. Qualls

Yeah, right. Exactly. It's been interesting because the one book I would recommend to people, we can drop this in the show notes, is a book called *Anchored* by Deb Dana. It is a fantastic book if you want to learn more about the nervous system. I like the way she writes and I'm really enjoying it a lot. I'd encourage anybody who wants to learn more that that's a great early book to read. I'm reading it in a funny order because it would have been great to read it before I learned all the things I learned, but it's helping things make even more sense to me, so I like that.

[00:32:02.430] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, and it's really gentle. It's not like a super sciencey read.

[00:32:06.510] - Lisa C. Qualls

No, it's really gentle. She provides all kinds of great exercises and things that you can do, which I think are wonderful. Other thing I'm learning, one of the things we tell parents in our *Reclaim Compassion* book and our group, and it'll be in our new curriculum, is to really renew some things that you've done in your life that you enjoyed. So like, reclaim old hobbies you used to have. So two things. One, I used to love to knit, and I completely quit knitting probably 20 years ago. And I loved it. I taught my kids how to knit, but it just went away when I just didn't have time. But one of my daughters in particular is a really good knitter. I told her one day, we always talk about how activities that are rhythmic, repetitive, and relational are regulating. Dr. Bruce Perry taught us that. And I realized, Knitting is a regulating activity. It's very repetitive, it's very rhythmic. And often she's with someone else when she's knitting, she's sitting by her husband or we're talking. For years I've been saying, I need to get back into knitting, I need to get back into knitting. And so finally I said to my daughter, I said, okay, let's go to the yarn store. I want to pick out a simple pattern, but something that I'll enjoy, that won't be super taxing, but that also be rewarding. So I found a simple sweater pattern. I've never knit a sweater for myself. I've knit them for other people, but never for myself. And I found some yarn. I splurged on a really nice set of needles that you can put on different cables and so you can make them different lengths, all these different things. I said, I'm going to do it. I started knitting this sweater and it is such a delight. Now, once it gets too hot, I won't want to work on it because who wants to use wool when you're really hot? But I'm getting ready to put the sleeves on. I'm relearning a lot of things that I used to know. I didn't have YouTube back then. I had books and I had to look at diagrams and I really learn well by watching other people. I mean, Melissa, you know this. I'm always saying, Okay, show me how to do it, and then I'll remember when it involves technology, especially. Anyhow, having both my daughter and YouTube is like, oh, all I have to do is look up how to do this particular stitch and I can do it. That is a really delightful thing that I'm relearning. Then the other thing I'm learning that I'm going to do more this summer is our friends got us into playing pickle ball. I know it's a super hot popular thing, but we only got to play a couple of times last fall before the weather turned. I bought paddles and Russ and I are working on putting more joy in our lives, more time outdoors. Although

Russ gets tons of time outdoors, but more for me. Having fun together, which fun does not really come naturally to me. I'm a little goal oriented. So yeah, pickle ball and knitting. There's my combo.

[00:34:59.030] - Melissa Corkum

Pickleball is really big around here, too, but we've not gone down the pickleball rabbit hole. We've been in the cornhole rabbit hole instead. And then Mia and I are firmly down the Lindy Hop rabbit hole as well.

[00:35:11.200] - Lisa C. Qualls

Yes. Well, I'll let you know how the pickle ball rabbit hole goes. There's actually an elementary school that's very close to the university. Well, it's almost on campus. And they put in some pickle ball courts adjacent to the university, the elementary school, and a park. So it's just steps away from where Russ works. So I was thinking, I haven't told Russ this yet. But that maybe early in the morning, even just once a week, I'd go with him when he leaves for work, and we'd play pickle ball together. Then I'd come home and do my work and he'd go to his office. So we'll see. I will give you an update on it

[00:35:50.590] - Melissa Corkum

Does he shower at the gym at the university?

[00:35:52.670] - Lisa C. Qualls

Yeah, he could. Yeah. Although I don't know if we're good enough to get really worked up and sweat yet. Except for chasing the ball that I miss all the time, that probably will be the thing that will be the biggest thing for me.

[00:36:06.780] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. Whenever Patrick has an office where he can shower, he's always better at working out because he can go to the gym on the way. He used to bike to work, which for the commute he had was actually pretty impressive. But he'd have to be able to shower when you got to work.

[00:36:23.990] - Lisa C. Qualls

Well, friends, I hope that our conversation about these just reflection questions, sit down with a friend or with your spouse or somebody and do some of these reflections together. It's really quite fun because you never know where your brain is going to go. We did not plan any of our responses at all, which you can probably tell. It's good to pause and reflect. That's been an emphasis by both of our spiritual directors. We have different spiritual directors. Sometimes we think about reflecting, we think, Oh, we have to write it down in a journal. But really sit down with a friend with something to drink and talk about. What did you discover in the first half of the year? What's on your mind right now? And what's one thing you want to learn this summer? You might be surprised at even what you say, but especially what the other person might say as well. Just take time to listen to each other.

[00:37:16.100] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, we love that. And we'd love to hear your responses to any of the questions. What did you discover in the first half of this year? Share something that's on your mind right now, or what is one thing you'd like to learn this summer? You can always hop into our free Facebook group at [theadoptionconnection.com/Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/theadoptionconnection) and share with our community over there as well.

[00:37:37.430] - Lisa C. Qualls

Thanks so much for listening. We appreciate you probably more than you even know. You all keep us podcasting because knowing someone's out there listening, it just inspires us to keep going.

[00:37:47.410] - Melissa Corkum

Before you go, we'd love to connect with you on social media. Our new Instagram handle is [@postadoptionresources](https://www.instagram.com/postadoptionresources). Or better yet join our free Facebook community at [theadoptionconnection.Com/Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/theadoptionconnection).

[00:37:58.140] - Lisa C. Qualls

Thanks so much for listening. We love having you. Remember, you're a good parent doing good work.

[00:38:03.460] - Melissa Corkum

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