

My Son
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My son's conception was not intended. No one planned for the perfect day to conceive him. No one took prenatal vitamins and followed all of the rules with a longing hope and a sweet anticipation that a precious life would be created from a union of true love. He was exposed to crack cocaine, nicotine, and alcohol before he was even born. He never received any prenatal care, and there was no one to be excited about the thump-thump of his little heart on the ultrasound machine. There was no one to lovingly tape the grainy little pictures from the sonogram into a baby book. No one made plans for his future, no one bought a layette, and no one started a college fund. There were no baby showers for my son, and there were no gifts carefully wrapped in pretty blue ribbons.

My son was born on a cracked, dirty linoleum floor with a clogged toilet and a scummy sink as witnesses. His umbilical cord was torn from his body and twisted shut with a dirty bread tie. He didn't initiate his first breath, probably in protest to his tainted introduction to this world. He was given CPR by a neighbor who had the smell of pot on his breath. My son was flown by a rescue helicopter from his birthplace, a dilapidated trailer with cracked windows and a rotten porch, to the hospital, where he was fed peanut butter by his biological mother before he had even been alive for 24 hours. He had a team of social workers assigned to him before he was three days old.

My son was discharged from the hospital into the care and supervision of his grandmother, who liked to smoke crack, take pills, and ride a Harley. He never went for a well baby checkup at pediatrician's office, and he didn't have his two-month immunizations. My son has a large pale scar on his neck; I am not sure how it got there. The doctor says that it is a burn scar. The social worker says that he has seen this type of scar before, mothers who can't get the baby to stop crying, well, things get out of hand. My son had pneumonia when he was one month old, but he didn't get any medication to make it go away. He had to fight for every breath that he took for the first 45 days of his life.

At eight weeks old, my son found his family. He found the family that he was destined to become a part of. He found a mother, a father, and three siblings that love him unconditionally. He went to the doctor, and he received his immunizations. Gifts poured in by the bagful: cards, clothes, and a brand new baby book filled with details about his new teeth, when he smiled for the first time, and what day he first said "da-da." He was visited by friends, family, and neighbors. He had his first portrait made with his new family, and even the largest package didn't contain enough pictures for all who wanted one. He was loved, wanted, and welcomed by the loving arms and warm hearts of an entire community. I hope that he has no memories of his life prior to coming to live with us. I pray that he doesn't recall the turmoil of his introduction to the world; it is surely buried somewhere deep in his sub consciousness.

My son is a blessing to me. Although the financial burden placed on our family was difficult to bear, the blessings that our son brings to us every day make us wealthy. I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to embrace this child, to look into his soft, brown eyes and to see the potential that he holds. One day, when he is older, I will explain to him how I became his mother. I pray that he will understand how he has changed my life and that I

couldn't imagine life without him. It is my strongest wish that he will always be surrounded by love, trust, and honesty. I dream of him growing up in a world of tolerance, acceptance, and hope. I pray that he never dwells on where he came from but always rejoices in where he can go from here.

November is not only the month that we celebrate Thanksgiving, but it is also Adoption Awareness Month. This year, as I tell my adoption story, I will pause to give thanks to my son. We are all given opportunities to change the world, to do something to make the universe a better place. I want to say "thank you" to my son James, for making a difference in my life and making my world a better place.