



No one ever wants to feel all alone. Unfortunately when one is experiencing infertility they do feel all alone. Everywhere they look they see strollers, bulging pregnant bellies and toddlers running around. They cannot see the other ?members? of the infertility community. Since one in six couples experience infertility, these ?members? must be out in public. The problem is that they look like everyone else. Unfortunately, you won't see a man wearing a t-shirt saying, ?My sperm are abnormal. How about yours?? or a woman with ?I'm on Clomid in order to get pregnant!? plastered on the back of her jacket. My husband, Paul, and I definitely felt alone and were looking around for others who we could relate to.

Oh Oh! Look!

When Paul and I were considering adoption, we started again to look around as not to feel so alone. We quickly become crazy voyeurs when in public because suddenly we noticed adoptive couples everywhere we went. I am not sure if they were all hiding out in a shack waiting to be released on cue when we walked outside of our home but it sure felt like it.

At almost every restaurant or store I would see at least one Caucasian parent with a child of a different race. It was if I just spotted Johnny Depp by how excited I got seeing a transracial family. I would nudge Paul in the ribs and excitedly whisper, ?Look! There's one!?. His response was usually, ?Where? Where??. Then we would just stare at the parent and child with big dopey smiles on our faces. If any of these parents spotted us they probably thought we were weirdos who noticed them because they stuck out like a sore thumb.

Why Look?

We knew that there were many other adoptive families that did not stand out in a crowd. But I couldn't approach every Mother and ask, ?Is your child from your womb or someone else's?? so we had to only notice the transracial families. I am also sure some of these families we gawked at were not adoptive families but multiracial ones. Yet in Paul and my minds they were all adoptive families that we could become someday.

In actuality I know why we stared at them. We wanted to see an adoptive family acting like any other family. We wanted to witness the bond between the parents and the child. We needed to know that if ever adopted we would function as a "normal" family. By observing these families we knew we wouldn't be the only family formed by adoption and that made us feel less alone.

Once Paul and I did decide to adopt and were open to other ethnicities we continued to oogle every potential transracial family in sight. But now we also whispered to one another and say things like, "What if our Son has beautiful complexion like his?" or "I love how they braided her hair." To an outsider they would only see us nudge one another, point, stare and whisper to one another. It must not have looked very polite but to us we did this to feel normal. Soon we'd be part of the adoption community and wanted to know who the current "members" were.

Look at Us!

Soon enough we became "members" of the adoption community by adopting three Hispanic children over the course of five years. Now when we are in public I notice the stares from strangers. Some I can tell are people fascinated by the looks of our family. Some are elderly people who are overwhelmed by the cuteness of my children (not that I'm biased). But now and then I notice the longing stares from couples. I see them nudging one another and whispering. I could be offended by them oogling my family but I don't mind it one bit. I want perspective adoptive parents to see how "normal" my family is no matter how completely different we look from one another. If it's the one in six couple who is struggling with infertility looking at us and they find hope by observing my crazy and loving children, then I would be thrilled.

I don't mind at all being a representative of a "member" of the adoption community. So I say stare away and for as long as you like.

But please no pictures.

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