

Just a LITTLE Note, Bahahahahaha...

Today is my oldest's birthday. She was born 26 years ago today, after over 24 hours of labor. Labor that was induced. I had been hospitalized for two weeks prior. I had toxemia, today known as Pre-Eclampsia. My blood pressures were running so high that the dr. was afraid I'd go into seizures, or have a stroke. The upper number was running close to 300. I don't remember the bottom number now.

As promised after the baby was delivered, my numbers returned to normal but only for a short time. I've basically been on high blood pressure meds since being in my 20's.

Happy Birthday, Sweetie--- I'm so very glad that you are mine!!! :)

Her father was in attendance of the birth, and he christened her ET. How a man can go through such an experience and then basically abuse and abandon his children is beyond

my comprehension. But, it's all water under the bridge now. This whole thought pattern has

me very retrospective.... lately I've been spending a lot of time in contemplation.

The attorney called on Friday. The adoption papers are in the mail. Now, the big hope is that they'll be here in time for us to sign/notarize in time for Christmas. A fun, tangible way for us to tell the kids Happy Birthday, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year. A fun way for the kids to tell us the same. Group HUG??!!!

Yes, I guess it is a bit weird. Clyde is adopting three very ADULT kids. The oldest 26 the

youngest will be 19 on January 5th. But, you know, as their mom, I know better than anyone

what they have been through. For the sake of their future emotional and mental health, I see this as a thing to do. IF it makes them feel more loved and able to love, then what is a few dollars and a little bit of time? It's not like the relationships are not there already, this just formalizes them.

Today, I will talk about my 25 year old.

My 25 year old girl, is not biologically mine. She adopted me when she was about 11 or 12 years old I guess. I'd known her since she was about 10. Her mother told me that she divorced the dad over drug issues--I heard stories about her coming home, kids in tow to find him passed out, in a state of being completely disrobed on the living room floor, and on whatever illegal drug does that to a person (I have NO personal using experience). Once out on their own, the mother left house work and child rearing to the oldest, my girl. I never saw a 13 year old who could cook, clean, and take care of kids like this one could. It still boggles my mind. The resentment for mom grew...and grew. By the time daughter was 14 or so, mom was back into her old ways of drugs.... daughter was calling me mommy. Out of respect, I would support and encourage the girl, and let her spend time with me to escape, but I was very hesitant to respond to "mommy". I tried to explain to her that I didn't want to step on her real parents toes.

Watching her mother make one bad choice after the other was not easy, seeing three little girls growing up with drug addict parents is hard. IT seemed as if, they had no where to run that was healthy. The mother eventually moved to Oregon taking the two youngest with her. My girl went to San Jose to live with daddy. Oh yes, despite it all, she is a daddy's girl! My girl turned to drugs & alcohol, but somehow managed to stay responsible in terms of school, work, and other committments. She started holding jobs at 14. Regardless of the example he set, father didn't like her ways and tried to put his foot down. That doesn't work when you've set the kind

of example he did. She just rebelled more. But, when she had a major problem, she called "mommy."

When she was 16, I heard, "mommy, I think I'm pregnant, what do I do?"

When she was around 16, I'd heard enough... I called her mother in Oregon and told her what was going on. I guess by this time mother had a full blown addiction to speed or some hard drug. On the other end, I heard a cold "there's nothing I can do." She heard me out, but there was nothing she could do. I hung up not believing my ears--when is there NOTHING we can do for our children? I've driven hours to see my kids, to make it so they could see their father. I've worked three jobs at a time, and run a business on top of that... in one job I literally walked blisters onto my feet.... and I'd do it again, for my kids.

NOTHING??!!

I quit fighting being "mommy" that day. Almost 10 years ago. And with the loss of that battle, came a little more bite to my remarks. I appreciated that she would spend the night with her girlfriends when she came to visit me, so I would not see her drunk. But, I did not appreciate a 16 year old being drunk. I started treating her very much as my own, she got told! LOL. And the truth is she enjoyed the values and the boundaries. The more I acted like mom, the more love, warmth, & loyalty she's given back in return.

Her father put her out on her own when she was 16. I want you to know that this girl worked, finished high school and attended nursing college and got a certificate that qualifies her to draw blood in the state of California with little to no assistance from her father, none from her biological mother, and only emotional support from me! She's a blast... a new-day can-do girl!

Basically, she's been on her own since she was 16. Things have happened. She has made and continues to make choices I don't always agree with. I let her know, and she still loves me and calls me "mommy". She is working on a 'friendship' with her biological mother--mother has cleaned up, sobered up as of a year or so ago. But, she lost the right to call that child her daughter long, long ago.

Father died a couple years ago. I did not always agree with his method. I certainly didn't agree with his lifestyle pre-divorce. And I really don't think much of a parent who will turn a kid loose at 16. Heck, I have trouble turning them loose at 18. I've told my kids over and over again, 18 is no magic number! Growing up is a process and we do it all of our lives and if I had my choice, I'd still have *MY* mother in my life! But, I do believe he tried to do the best thing he could do with the knowledge and education he had, and I've told her that. In the last couple years of his life, he basically mooched off of her, and she really resented his attitude, and frankly so did I. It wasn't fair that a man in his 40's was letting a girl in her early 20's, just starting out totally be responsible for his health and maintenance. But, then at this point, I figure he knew something about his health that he wasn't telling her cause now he's gone.

Either way, Clyde & I are who she has for parents. Her father's sister, my girls aunt, is vehemently opposed to this adoption. Oh ya, I'm going to adopt her too. Auntie says that it's a dis towards my girls father and grandparents (her aunts and fathers parents) who loved her so much. I met my girls grandparents, and there is no doubt in my mind that they adored their grandchild. They threw her a beautiful sweet 16 party that I and my kids were invited to attend. I talked to them when I was most concerned about her. Someone had to do something, and I never heard from them that they could do nothing. They might have been frustrated and concerned, but there was never "NOTHING" they could do.

Aunt Laura, though, I doubt you'll ever see this--this is not about replacing grandma and grandpa or even daddy. This is not about denying parentage or trying to take anyone away from anyone else. This is about family, formalization, and just plain love.

I am 100% positive that you have no clue all the things your niece has been through. While I know I don't know it all myself, I am reasonably sure I know a lot more than you do. I am her emotional support person, I am her 'mommy'. And this mommy appreciates her beyond anything that could ever be put into words--words enclose, they limit, they can't capture the relationship that has grown between us. We really are not changing anything on an emotional level, this is about making it legal, it just adds another dimension. It will give me grand

parenting rights. Then next time I have to call the police to tell them I'm afraid she's missing, I won't have to explain "I'm the mom, but I'm not" If something happens to her, I can take the place where she wants me to be. If something happens to me, she can take the place I want her to be. Without that piece of paper, we are robbed of those 100% complete connections.

My girl has been given a chance to say no--and she said way yes! She was told she does not have to take Clyde's name. She surprised us by saying she wants his name. Like our other children, she manages to surprise nearly every day...the joys of parenting!

This adoption story--still not completely told is really just a story of how to "make" a family. We, as humans, are capable of creating the support systems we need. We are capable of finding the love we desire and need as the imperfect souls that we are. My mother and I have not spoken for 20 years. My father is dead. My family has been torn apart by the criminal activities of my step father, and by a psychopathic ex-husband.

My answer to these situations was to survive, thrive, and rebuild. I've had many mom's & dad's over the years. Some of them knew, others didn't. Once in a blue moon, I'd refer to them as my friend, my mentor, or my pastor--whoever they were, they allowed me to pattern my behaviors after them and improve mine and my children's lives. Thank God for HUGE favors!! Our lives would not be the same without them.

I've told my children over the years, over and over, that family can be created. Family does not have to be biologically based, it doesn't have to be "legal", it doesn't matter what the genders are involved. What matters is that there is love, and lot's of it. It matters that there is healthy emotional support for those involved. It matters that it is NOT abusive. This has been a major theme in our lives. What else does a single mother do if she's to survive the world with two (and at times three & four) kids starting all over in a new town, in a new county--with one person to call a true friend? You rebuild, you reinvent, you fight, you cry, you dream, you work--you survive, & thrive--you set good examples for your kids.

Not that I'm anywhere close to perfect, believe me I'm no where near. But, the bottomline is you create a family, a support network for yourself and your kids and you carry on!!

This is what my girl has learned to do, and I'm so very proud of her. This is what all of my children have learned to do. By adopting Clyde as their father, they are opening their hearts to more love and support. And they are sharing their love and support with him.

This mom could not be more proud!! Somehow, despite all the stupid, dumb things I did, I managed to help three kids grow up to be beautiful people. And that is all I ever wanted. College is icing on the cake for me!! My main goal was to create loving, compassionate, empathetic people!!! I am so proud of them and the family that I managed to create.

I am so very proud of you: Makkie, Janea, Wesley & little Diane, too.

If you read this far, you are as sappy as I am! LOL!!! Thanks for your friendship...