



Episode 14 Turning *Little Stones* show notes
Family Matters (1)
Listen to a conversation with Rachel from
'Home for Good' about Opening our Hearts
and Homes.

Family Matters (1):
***Open Hearts, Open
Homes – Home for
GOOD!***
with Rachel Divall

Introducing Rachel...

Rachel has a birth son (now in his 20's), an adopted daughter (11) and foster son (7) who also has additional needs... and juggles family life as a single working parent!

She is also a teacher and an ambassador for the charity *Home for Good*.

As Rachel shares her story, we realise how much is relevant for all families...

Rachel's back story

Rachel was adopted when she was 5 ½ weeks old. Her parents then adopted a brother for Rachel six years later. From different birth parents, they look and are very different, but "we are definitely brother and sister"

Rachel's parents opened their hearts and home to Rachel & her brother.

Reflections on family life...

Rachel reminds us that love' is an *action*... "my parents 100% opened their hearts up to us."

To hear her mother publicly say, "I totally forgot that I didn't have you grow in my tummy" was awesome for Rachel to hear.

Rachel fully understands and knows it is completely true. As a mother of a birth, adopted and foster child, she uses the phrase, "you grew in my heart, not my tummy." Her parents clearly *showed* their love to both their adopted children.

Emotional reflections

Rachel confidently affirms that she was and is "100% securely attached" to her parents. However, she doesn't deny she has "jelly foundations...moments when I don't know who I am". These times are common for all children, but especially those who are adopted or fostered.

She advocates the need to "recognise and name the wobble". We need to accept that it is part of our story... we cannot eradicate it.

Some practicalities

There are moments in time when all of us need to review how adults show our love practically.

Rachel explains that it is important to find what works for your family dynamics. This is key! She finds ways to spend quality time with each child individually... doing things that they love to do... ceramics with daughter, watching his choice of films, listening to her son's choice of podcasts...

Using the African proverb, 'It takes a village to raise a child', Rachel shares how she has purposefully worked out and has engineered her 'village'. She has nurtured her adult



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friendships. Her 'village' includes family and friends who will be there at a moment's notice for the crisis moments and to help facilitate time with each of her children.

Everyone's story is different!

Rachel explains that always knew that she wanted her own birth children (quite common for adopted children) and always knew that she wanted to adopt and/or foster. But everyone's journey is different and the reasons for wanting to adopt are many.

Not only is everyone's story different, and in our society today, there are many eclectic versions of family ... birth families, blended families, fostering families... we are more accepting of different ways that families are. Rachel reminds us that all versions of family should be respected for the sake of the children. Significantly, she grew up believing and accepting that being adopted was a 'norm', which is not everyone's experience.

Adults should always be mindful of our children's story. It is their story is not ours to tell. True for every parent...

In families where children are adopted or looked after, the regulations are strict, meaning that adopting parents and foster carers have a legal obligation to protect their children. And Rachel reminds us that this is true for all of us. Every adult is legally required to protect their children and we should all be mindful about what and how we share our children's stories. Social media presents a minefield for all families; they can be particularly painful for fostering, adopting and blended families. They cannot share in the same way that friends freely share their family's fun-filled moments.

Takeaway reflections...

How do we show our love to our children, whatever our family makeup?

Rachel's parents cared for others, who came into their home, juggling their work without impacting their own children. How do we balance the demands of work whilst ensuring that each of our child(ren) feel loved?

Are we in a 'village' that helps raise children in that village? More from Rachel next time!

Further information about Home for Good can be found at www.homeforgood.org.uk



Further practical guidance and advice are available through

Turning Little Stones

Delving a little Deeper

See website for details