



*community over  
comparison*

*written by*  
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## *community over comparison*

*"May you learn to embrace the freedom  
that has long been calling your name  
so you can liberate courage in others so they can do the same."*

*-Morgan Harper Nichols*

I love Kristen Wiig. Send me a video of her doing the tiny hands, Target Lady, Garth and Kat, and you'll find me laughing deliriously. One of my favorite skits she used to do on *SNL* that I think is severely underrated was Penelope the One-Upper. She was the girl who at every social gathering would "subtly" one-up everybody else. Someone would talk about having a traffic ticket, and she would pop up beside them with her quiet voice, pulling at the ends of her hair, saying something like, "Well, I have thirty-two traffic tickets and there's a warrant out for my arrest, sooo..."

In true *SNL* fashion, it becomes ridiculous by the end of the skit. Like the time Penelope was volunteering at a soup kitchen on Thanksgiving and pulled out an enormous, oversized spoon so she could scoop better than anyone else, and she was, "Thankful five, not just thankful for, sooo..."

I love it because even though it becomes over-the-top by the end, we all know someone like that in real life, right? This became ever-present for me in motherhood, the constant comparison. I see this in social media groups, I've heard this in playdates, it's everywhere. I've both participated in it and been an off-handed recipient of it. If there's

one thing I've seen over the past seven years when my journey to motherhood began, it's the toxicity that comparison brings in places where community should be found.

There's lots of reasons we fall prey to the comparison trap. Sometimes, we compare in an effort to relate to someone's situation. Other times, we compare to try and validate our own struggles and be heard. And most often, we become the prey of comparison because of our own insecurities. In each of these situations, what ends up happening is people leave feeling dismissed, disappointed, and disqualified.

Comparison isn't necessarily all bad, as it simply means "*to view in relation to.*" Where danger lies and divides deepen, however, is who we are comparing ourselves to or being compared to, why it is happening, and what our own response to it is. What I see happen most in motherhood in regards to comparison and where I have seen that dismissive, disappointment, and disqualification come into play is comparing one person's struggles over another.

I wanted to share some of my personal stories with comparison, as this has been a long-time fight for me. By the grace of God I have found more freedom in this area, but the fight has also opened my eyes to the damage it is causing in community, especially among women and moms. I hope that in sharing how this struggle has played out for me, it will encourage others to spot it, to fight against it, and to protect the connection and community that God so sweetly designed for us.

### *comparison in an attempt to relate*

In chapters two and four, I talked about how it wasn't the plan, but because of the urgency of our adoption situation, we had to fundraise right away. About that same time, there was another couple who had

started their international adoption process from a different country. For the sake of anonymity, we're going to refer to them as The Bings.

My husband knew them from college, but I didn't know them well personally. However, we ended up having a lot of mutual friends. Soon after we moved, they launched a really creative adoption fundraiser that was gaining a lot of traction and participation via social media, amongst our mutual friend group, and within our previous church. I didn't think anything of it until an interaction that soon became the norm for a few months. After we moved, we joined a new church that was a plant of our previous one and visited a community group. At the time, everyone else in the group had children, and getting to know one another, we of course mentioned that we were in the process to adopt.

"Oh you're adopting! Do you know The Bings?"

"I know who they are, but haven't really talked to them. Jonathan does, though."

"Yeah, they're adopting too! Did you see that fundraiser they're doing?"

"I did. It's a super-cool idea."

"It's genius! Why aren't you guys doing something like that?"

I don't even know how I responded, but that pointed question and others like it continued to happen over and over again over the course of the coming months. We were constantly compared to The Bings. Even though we were different people, adopting from different countries, and working through different processes, every time The Bings put an update out there, we heard about it.

"Did you see that The Bings are now number twenty on the wait-list? Where are you guys at with your process?"

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"Um...yeah, our agency doesn't really have a waitlist like that."

"Did you see that all the money they needed came in from that *one fundraiser?! Where are you guys at with yours?"*

"Um...we came in less than we were hoping."

"Did you see that The Bings were matched with a boy? Have you guys heard anything?"

"No. Still waiting."

"Did you see what The Bings are naming their son? Do you guys know yet if you're getting a boy or a girl?"

"No. Still waiting."

"Did you see The Bings are traveling soon? When are you guys going to get to go?"

"..."

To make things more complicated for us, The Bings had a more typical international adoption process. They had more concrete numbers, they definitely had more concrete updates to give and answers to people's questions. That just wasn't our situation. And after awhile, all the comparison that came up from other people started to feel like a cruel running joke to me. It wasn't a fair comparison, and I often felt like I couldn't get any words out without first hearing about someone else's great news being thrown in my face during a difficult season.

I felt...attacked.

Looking back now, I see that what I viewed as a personal attack was really people's attempt to connect and relate to us. When you are making conversation and trying to find something in common, you go to the first connection in your mind, right? This is why I think we also heard the "horror stories" of adoption from people, just like I know moms who during their pregnancy get told all about other people's labor and delivery "horror stories." When Jonathan and I first got engaged, we heard the "horror stories" of the first year of marriage.

Do you see what I mean? Because we are wired for connection, I think we sometimes feel the need to grasp at whatever we can in an attempt to find common ground.

The problem this type of comparison causes though - even when it's unintentional - is people feel more dismissed and more alone. Most of the time, we are speaking about what we *don't know*, what we've never experienced, and so what comes out is usually information based on a lack of understanding. In our experience being compared to The Bings, I felt like it was just people reminding us we weren't as good as them.

The comparison was unfair...but so was my response. In my hurt, I pulled away. I would shut down in social gatherings or just not go. I started hiding people on social media because I couldn't stand to see another update. I became incredibly bitter at a couple I didn't even know instead of allowing their story to propel me in hope, and that hurt took away the possibility to create community with a couple who was going through a similar season.

Three things I learned from this situation:

One, give people some grace. You don't know what you don't know. I really don't think anyone was intending to make me feel dismissed, not good enough, or uncared for - they were just attempting to

make a connection the only way they knew how. It didn't make it *right*, but I could have been more understanding.

Two, I can't control other people's comparisons of me, but I *can* control my response to it. Because these types of comparisons were coming from people that we knew, I could have used it as an opportunity to educate. "Every international adoption process is different, so ours isn't going to look the same as theirs. You can't really compare one against the other." That type of response could have educated our friends more about how adoption works, and also show that's not a real great way to connect. "Hey, whenever you bring up the Bings and then make jokes, or ask things about us after the fact, it makes me feel like you don't actually care what's going on with us." I could have been kind, yet direct and honest and let them know, "This is how it makes me feel, so please don't do that."

But I'm someone who very much struggles to tell people what it is I need, so sometimes I expect people to just *know* or figure it out, but this is unfair. People aren't mind readers and part of being in community with people means sometimes having uncomfortable conversations.

Three, instead of trying to *reach* for common ground with someone, it is better to build connection through understanding the person right in front of us. The Bings didn't have to be brought up at all. What would have built more bridges instead of dig trenches would have just been for people to ask about our situation and seek to understand how they could better support us, especially if that was the original intent. People feel most cared for when they are heard, so we need to be better about listening and allowing connection to come naturally just through knowing someone better.

## *comparison in an attempt to validate*

After we brought Kai home, I learned real quick that finding where I fit in this motherhood community was a daunting task. I *thought* once I became a mom, that would cure that weird unseen feeling I had during the process.

When we moved, I left one group of friends, most of whom had not become moms yet and walked into another community where I was one of the few who *wasn't* a mom. I often felt excluded, as I literally could not turn my head at our new church without seeing another pregnant belly. Not to mention the church was overflowing with children (seriously children far outnumbered the adults). There were all kinds of ministries and get togethers and “night outs” for moms, but I didn’t see myself fitting in the event descriptions since I didn’t have a growing belly that signaled I was in process of becoming a mama.

But of course, it only got more complicated after the fact. Still to this day, I’m uncomfortable at baby showers and mom’s night outs are often my worst nightmare. In these types of gatherings or groups, I have nothing to contribute to the conversation that is *fraught* with comparison. Women are standing around, comparing their pregnancies, birthing stories with each kid, after-birth struggles, breastfeeding, newborn woes, four month sleep regressions, giving advice on all the must-have things that helped them, and I literally have *nothing* to add in.

So I am usually uncomfortably sipping something that I hope has alcohol in it and praying I don’t get called on for a game that I don’t know the answers to because I’ve never experienced it. In my community group, I would voice concerns I had about Kai that were quickly shot down with things like, “He won’t remember,” or “practical” advice that didn’t even fit our situation and was unsolicited. I was seeking

community for this new season, and I often left gatherings lonelier than ever at the realization that the very way in which I became a mother divided me from the fold.

This struggle continued for years following. When Kai was two years old, a mom and her son who was Kai's age came over for a playdate. This was the season that we were really struggling, wading through the effects of trauma and figuring out sensory processing disorder. The playdate had already gone on for too long and Kai was starting to lose it. The mom asked me if we planned to adopt again, and I told her, "Absolutely, this is the way we feel led to grow our family."

She nodded thoughtfully and then said, "I guess you'll have to find a better way to discipline then."

I was still trying to find where I fit in this motherhood community, and this added to what I had already been feeling: *Nobody understands me. Nobody understands my unique struggles as a mom via adoption. Nobody understands the reasons why my child is struggling. Nobody understands why we chose the method of discipline we are practicing.*

I couldn't control the way I was viewed or how other people compared me. But my response was letting the sting overwhelm me, harden me, and believing the lies that comparison brought with it. After a few too many scenarios like this, I just felt invalidated. So, in an attempt to validate my own struggles, I took that "nobody understands me" bitterness, and made *sure* that everyone else knew how hard I *really* had it.

My social media posts became really condescending, because the very thing I hated, I started doing: *Comparing my hard to everyone else's.* If a mom complained that her child didn't sleep that night, I would *scoff* and let her know how Kai hadn't slept through the night since we brought him home...so basically I didn't want to hear her complaining how "hard" one night was.

While most moms were worried about which method to use for potty training, I was rolling my eyes as I was knee deep in books for a course we were taking about how trauma affects the brain. I didn't have time for that "nonsense." I already *felt* isolated, and this kind of attitude only added to it. I'm sure I was a real peach to be around during that season as I turned into Penelope The One-Upper.

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One day though, thanks to the grace of God and love from a friend, I got called out.

I received a super-long message that, at first glance, I was delighted to see because it was from a longtime family friend. As I began reading, however, I felt my stomach sink into a pit. She told me that she understood that my motherhood looked different than hers having three biological children, and she loved hearing my perspective and learning from me. But she reminded me that, just like having biological children was all she knew, adoption was all I knew, and I was making it sound like those who hadn't fostered or adopted had it *easy*, as if it was roses and their struggles weren't valid.

*Motherhood, no matter what, is hard.* Every situation is different. She knew that I likely wasn't meaning to communicate in a way that put down others, but that's how I was coming across. Specifically, she noticed a change in me using *comparison language* I hadn't used before. And as a faithful sister in Christ, she just wanted me to know, not to put me down, but to encourage me that as someone who does love Jesus

and represents the Lord in my motherhood and work, she wanted me to be aware.

I have to confess, I did *not* receive that or respond to it well at first. I told her I felt like she was picking me apart and assuming the worst about me. But as we continued to dialogue, the Spirit used that one conversation via a social media app to open my eyes to the division I had allowed in my life that came through comparison. If I was speaking that way on a platform people were paying attention to and learning from me as a voice in adoption and foster care, how then was I coming across to people in real life? Likely the same. This friend was not off base, she was *absolutely* right, and I am now forever thankful that she had the courage to have a hard conversation with me.

When someone shares their struggles in a moment of open honesty and vulnerability, we don't get to decide whether or not it's "hard." In that moment, they are simply wanting to be heard. When their struggle is dismissed, they leave disheartened, disappointed, and hurt. Ever heard the phrase "hurt people hurt people"? I was a classic case of that. Because I had been hurt and felt my struggles weren't validated, I used comparison as a defense mechanism to validate myself. The only problem was when I did that, I invalidated others and hurt more people. This, more than any other way comparison fleshes itself out, is what I see damage the safety of community the most.

I found more grace, healing, and understanding after that conversation. Letting go of my bitterness created through comparison that held me captive for far too long, opened me up to finding sweet friendships with other moms. Up until that point, I hadn't really sought community with other moms whose motherhood also came through adoption. I realized, though, it would be good to have both. The friends I had made were kind and understanding even if they didn't *fully* get my struggles,

and vice-versa, but it would be nice to be around other moms who understand the complexity that adoption brings.

A couple of years ago, we changed churches and began attending and serving in the foster care and adoption ministry. We were the only family attending the support group and serving who had adopted internationally, everyone else had adopted from foster care or were currently fostering. A couple of months in, I met two other women for a leadership meeting and sat down with one while we were waiting on the other. She and I didn't know each other well, so we were chatting and she asked me about our adoption.

When she asked how old our son was when we brought him home, I replied, "Five months." Her next response, as someone who had fostered and adopted and also had biological children, took me by surprise:

"Oh! So he has no behavior problems then, since you got him as a baby."

This is often a statement I hear from those who have no experience in foster care or adoption, that "I'm so lucky" to have gotten a baby "who has no problems."

Friends, there are so *many* things wrong with this statement, and I do not have the time here (or in person) to dive into the science of how early childhood trauma, *including in the womb*, not only affects, but physically *rewires* the brain. Not only is this a dismissive assumption, it also communicates something I don't like about older children who need to be adopted, as if their "baggage" is "too much" to handle.

Coming from a fellow adoptive mom, I was so taken aback, I'm not even sure how I responded. I let it go, but then about a month later, it happened again.

Sitting around a table at another meeting with foster and adoptive parents, that same mom was sitting beside me. Another mom who was

new to the group was sitting beside her, asking about her family and how old her kids were when they were adopted. She then asked about my family, and I responded.

She leaned closer to the other mom and with a lowered voice said, "It's so much harder adopting an older child than adopting a *baby*, right?"

I lowered my head, mind spinning. I fit here, at least, I fit the *description* of who this group and ministry was for, and yet, I felt like I didn't belong at all! Not just that, but this kind of comparing one struggle over another made me feel like this was clearly not a safe place where my vulnerability would be met with understanding.

I kept trying, addressed the leader about these types of conversations but nothing changed. I ended up shying away, not having the emotional capacity to continue to go back to this "support group" where I left each time feeling more lonely. A few months later, there was a different group I found for foster and adoptive moms, and I was excited to hear that someone was coming to talk about international adoption.

"Yes!" I thought. "Maybe this time I won't be the only one!" It was last minute, and Jonathan rushed home so I could go. I ended up home two hours later with fried food in my hand and wearing the defeat of the night.

It was my first time to that group and there were about ten other women. I quickly found out...*all* foster moms except one who was undecided about what route her family should take. The guest speaker for the evening was a social worker with twenty years experience in the field, and most recently had been working as a director for an international adoption agency. As she began to talk, grown women were having their own side conversations and when she finally just stopped

and said we could just keep it conversational, she asked what questions people had.

For the next thirty minutes, I listened as these women asked things like:

“I just don’t understand why anyone would want to adopt from another country when there are so many children *here* who need homes.”

“Why not just do foster care? It’s free and these children need families.”

“Why can’t we just help other countries set up their *own* foster care system? That way the kids can stay in country?”

“Well...I’m just thinking how I would feel if I heard that kids from the US were being adopted and taken to *other* countries.”

Not going to lie, the volcano that was my mouth erupted after all that. My no-chill passion gurgled, and bubbled, and boiled over. I’m pretty sure I had a rage blackout or something, because I don’t even remember what all I said, but I remember it getting pretty quiet for a minute after. Though my response wasn’t the greatest, I would no longer stand for this kind of division.

Friends, this is what happens when comparison overcomes community. Have you ever seen the movie *Mean Girls*? Katie, the not-so-popular girl at first, becomes drunk with power. And do you know how she gets there? She gets addicted to *comparison*.

It’s a sneaky feeling, because when we compare in an attempt to validate ourselves, we *feel* empowered. Suddenly we get a rush of adrenaline that makes us feel in control, so we start to value *that feeling* instead of valuing community itself. It is a false empowerment, because like Katie who ends up losing all of her friends, it continues to isolate

and cause deeper rifts. This is what happens when we compare our “hard” to someone else’s in an attempt to validate our own. People are dismissed. People leave. People are not cared for. And *division deepens*.

These situations happened two years after I was called out for comparing my struggles to others, feeling the need to “one up” other moms in order to be validated. When a friend cared enough to help me pull the log out of my own eye, I saw so clearly how the Enemy was using comparison to create disunity, distrust, and disappointment. Like an abuser with its victim, he knows if he can not only get us alone, but make us *feel* alone, then *we have less power*. We play right into his hands when we give in to comparison. One flame and it catches like wildfire.

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I think it is important to understand the way in which God created community, because oftentimes I think what we are seeking, we just aren’t going to find one hundred percent the way we want it. What I have seen in my own experience in looking for community and watching the slow burn of community happen in situations like I mentioned above, is that we want *homogeneity*. We want to find other people who are *exactly* like us, as if that’s the only way we will be fully known and fully understood. This, I believe, is impossible, because that’s not the way it was designed. If God wanted us to all be the same, He wouldn’t have created diversity in the first place.

Instead, we see the way God intended community in Romans 12:

*“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though, many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”*

-Romans 12:3-5, ESV

He designed us in such a way that, though each of us are unique in both our personalities and our struggles, we need one another to work in harmony. Like the title of one of my son’s favorite books: *We’re Different, We’re the Same*.

This is actually what I have found to be so amazingly *beautiful* about the adoption and foster care community, and honestly, motherhood in general. You will never be able to find another story that is exactly the same. And yet, you’ll find overarching similarities that we can all connect with.

So, when we come to the table bringing our differences, as we sit down and listen to different perspectives and how these similar complexities play out in each one of us, we become whole. We become better as individuals, and we make things better together as we each use our unique voice, gifts, and personal experiences. What threatens the safety is when we compare and look for homogeneity.

Later on in that same chapter in Romans, we see the true marks of a believer.

*“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. **Outdo one another in showing honor.**”*

-Romans 12:9-10, ESV

He goes on with this list, but notice that the only thing we should be outdoing - or one-upping - one another in, is *honor*. It's a lesson Penelope The One-Upper needed to learn, and so do we.

### *comparison from our own insecurities*

I love a good meme and have a friend who always posts the best ones that make me laugh. The ones that are my favorites are the “What I think I look like” vs. “What I actually look like.” For instance, looking like a model in your own mirror at home, then looking at yourself in the Target checkout line, and you look exactly like Liz Lemon in that episode of *30 Rock* where she lets herself go completely so people won't sit by her on the subway. We laugh at viral videos with impressions of the different “mom types” all judging each other, because no one told us motherhood was like stepping back into high school with the mean girls. The thing is, we end up doing this in real life. We compare based on our own insecurities.

This conversation happened a few weeks ago, as a new friend of mine told me she had a meltdown the day before:

“I feel so guilty, I bet you *never* have meltdowns or lose it with Kai, right?”

I literally laughed out loud. “OF COURSE I have meltdowns! We all have those days, I'm not perfect!”

“Really?! I cannot picture you doing that ever. I mean, you homeschool, you’re so amazing with Kai, you write. I don’t know how you do it all.”

This sweet mama confessed what we all often do in our heads: we compare our worst moments and struggles to someone else’s best moments and successes. We compare everything *they* are doing that’s so great to everything that we *aren’t* doing, and we are often left with that pit of “not enough.”

Friend, let me tell you something. As soon as you allow yourself to slide into that pit, it is really difficult to climb your way out of it. This is a classic case of what we call “not running your own race.”

You see someone else’s kid already saying fifty words, while yours is the same age and only saying two. So you start thinking, *I know she reads aloud a lot. Maybe I need to start reading more books. I should get a library card and we should go to the library once a week for story time and pick up ten books for the week. I should call and check with the pediatrician too. Maybe he needs speech therapy? Oh my goodness, what if he’s delayed, and we don’t catch it in time, and then he’s already behind when he starts school in four years?!*

We do this all the time. We compare, which again, is the easiest form of distraction to take our eyes off of what we are meant to be doing, running our own race, and we start to veer into someone else’s lane.

I did things like this most when I first started homeschooling. Instead of sitting down and really envisioning what would work best for our family, for Kai, and for me, I cherry-picked from twenty other sources and within three months was burned-out and overwhelmed. This is why when a seasoned homeschooling mama sat down with me, she pointed me back to my own race. This is why when new home-

schooling mamas ask me what my day-to-day looks like, the first thing I tell them is, “Everyone’s day is going to look different. So I’ll tell you what works for *us in this season*, but the beauty of homeschool is having the freedom to do what works best *for you and your family*.”

Because guess what? Pretty soon after you look around, compare what you are not doing to what everyone else *is* doing, you’ve gone from schooling from one hour a day, to adding ten extra subjects, an orchestra time, learning four languages, a science experiment and art project every single day, and no one is happy.

It is *so* easy, especially with the highlight reel of social media, to forget that no one has this figured out, and this fight for *enough* as a mom is a knife the Enemy loves to twist. Comparison is one way we do that, and it can end the possibility of community before it even starts. We often shrink back when we start to compare out of our own insecurities. As you are listening to other moms in a conversation, your mind is racing that you don't add up to their value. So instead, you shy away. You decide before ever giving it a chance that you simply don’t fit in, or you underestimate yourself and don't share who you really are.

## *bearing the burden*

I decided to title this chapter “Community Over Comparison,” because I have found that comparison does the exact opposite of what community is designed to do. Where community brings people together, comparison leaves people in isolation. Where community is meant to carry and support one another in different seasons, comparison leaves people feeling empty and carrying a load that is too heavy for them. Where community is meant to build one another up and make us better,

comparison tears down and brings out the worst in us. Community was something God knew we needed, even *before* The Fall happened.

I think we often forget - or at least I do - that after all of creation was said and done, the only thing that God found *not good* was for Adam to be *alone*. Adam, Eve, and their Good Father lived in perfect community. Community was not the answer to the sin problem that had entered the world. Nothing could cure that brokenness but Jesus. Community was simply part of the perfect design we long for.

It's important for us to keep community in its rightful place and not elevate it to the point where the community around us becomes our number one priority, but it's also important to remember that we were created to connect in community with one another. Therefore, community is worth fighting for.

*comparison tears down and brings  
out the worst in us.*

There are a couple of things I think we need to remember as we seek community:

First, no community is perfect. Friction is bound to arise at some point, and honestly I would say that is a healthy sign in a community. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." (NIV)

Have you ever seen iron being sharpened? I had to look up videos on YouTube because #millennial, but watch it. Sparks fly. Heat is used. There's lots of loud clanking going on. If your community always agrees with each other one hundred percent of the time, I would hon-

estly question the health of that. You do not grow if you are never challenged.

What is important to discern when seeking community is whether that friction is coming from a place of toxicity or genuine love and care. However, if you find yourself hopping from group to group, friend circle to friend circle, church to church, I would ask yourself what exactly are you looking for? Because if perfection ends up being the answer, you will not find that. Part of being in community is not leaving every time it gets hard, but bearing with one another and weathering the seasons.

Second, be the solution. It finally hit me after a couple of years of bitterness that if I didn't like something that was going on in the community, or found that the culture wasn't very welcoming, or whatever it was, instead of just complaining about it, I could *do* something about it.

Sometimes we get comfortable and we need fresh perspective. This, I believe, is also part of what it means when Scripture says we should be "bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2, NIV) We have to stay long enough to allow community to grow, change, and work out the kinks.

About nine months after that situation happened where all the foster moms beat down international adoption, I received an email from one of the leaders of that group asking me to come speak about our international adoption and my workbook. I was floored. I couldn't believe what I was reading, especially because I never went back after that night.

My first inclination was, "Ha, absolutely not," because I was afraid something like that would happen again, and I didn't have the emotional capacity for it. But I also knew that if I didn't go, things like that would just continue to happen.

I ended up sitting down with this leader over coffee and letting her know my concerns and she agreed with me. Their group could do better. But none of them knew where to start because it's not something they had experienced. So even though I was nervous, I said yes.

In order to get to the bottom of it all, I ended up creating an anonymous survey to see where this group was at now in their understanding of international adoption. As I received the responses, they weren't exactly pretty to read. But I realized that, as the majority said they had never even researched international adoption, so much of their views were based on misunderstanding and misinformation. So it was my job, then, to spark the change.

That night, I was so nervous, but as I spoke truth and brought light to the misunderstandings, I saw compassion rise. Another mom came to the group that night who had adopted internationally, and it was her first time to come. She only came, because like me one year prior, someone was finally talking about it. She felt seen and heard.

Other women came up after and thanked me for sharing because they didn't realize international adoption wasn't an "excuse" to not do foster care like they had thought. And my hurt from this community the previous year was lifted. Not because anyone apologized - it was a completely different group of women that night - but because community was chosen over comparison.

Sometimes, it's going to have to be you to lead the way to help foster or even create the culture that is lacking in your life. It will take time and you will have to be willing to be the solution and bear with the community along the way. You might end up finding community in the least likely of places.

If you are in a season where community is sparse, I want to encourage you that it is worth fighting for. If you are in a season where community is great, I want to encourage you to keep the peace, and always

be open to new things He might be asking you to do. If you are in a season where you are bearing with others to make this work, I want to encourage you to be patient. It's messy because we bring the mess, but it's also beautiful because God works and somehow uses it all in spite of ourselves. And most of all, *be on guard*. Be aware of your own comparison game and that of others that threatens the safety of community.

*“As a prisoner of the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**”*

-Ephesians 4:1-3, NIV

## *about the author*



Christa Jordan is the blogger behind Spoonful of Jordan and the author of a workbook for hopeful adoptive parents titled [\*Before You Adopt: A Guide to the Questions You Should Be Asking\*](#). This ebook is an excerpt from her second book [\*Moving Mountains\*](#), chronicling the ups-and-downs she has endured through ten years of marriage, ministry, and motherhood. She is a foster care and adoption educator and regular contributor to Kindred + Co. She lives in Dallas, TX with her husband Jonathan, their six-year-old son Kai, and their popcorn-loving pup Sirius.

“COMMUNITY OVER COMPARISON”

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An excerpt from the book

*MOVING MOUNTAINS*

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