

Excited as the Sun

by Gail

I'm sure that any of us who've adopted a child can remember in vivid detail the story of that child's arrival. Our daughter is almost 9 and I remember it as if it were yesterday. I remember feeling we were totally prepared to be parents until we got the call that our daughter's birth mother was in labor. The scene that transpired over the next several hours as we tried to secure airline tickets, hotel accommodations, and a rental car would have made the Keystone Cops proud.

In spite of ourselves, we actually arrived in California the next day in time to witness the birth of Katie, our beautiful baby girl. I remember the feelings of awe and gratitude that briefly overtook the feelings of panic that had surfaced the night before. I remember walking out of the hospital with Katie all of seventeen hours old. I remember walking into a hotel 3,000 miles away from everyone we knew. And I remember beginning our life as a family.

In all of the years since, I can honestly say the feelings of awe and gratitude have never left and the feelings of total confidence and preparedness have never returned. Those are feelings that most parents share regardless of how their children arrived in their lives. But I know there are ways in

which adoption has changed the type of mother that I have ultimately become. I believe that I am more honest with my child than I might have been. Once the cat's out of the bag about how babies are really made, topics like friendship, changing bodies, hopes and dreams don't seem quite so hard to really open up about. I know that I am more willing to ask for professional help when issues arise. When social workers are the people who helped make your dreams of a family a reality, you understand professional help is just that – help. I feel a responsibility to the lives of other children and a connection to different types of families that I may not have had before.

As I sit here and try to put so much into words, Katie stops by and offers to help. She suggests that I describe how truly excited I was when I knew she was going to be born. She asks, "Were you excited? Were you really excited? Were you as excited as the sun?" And I answer, "Yes, I was as excited as the sun." I live with a whirling dervish of a child, who grabs all she can from life, who holds nothing back, who knows what it is like to be as excited as the sun. I am incredibly thankful for all she has taught me and am grateful to call myself her mother.