I've always known that I was adopted. It was never a secret or held from me.

I knew that my birth mother loved me so much that she wanted to give me a better life. And my parents, Jerry and Junie Chenoweth, were looking to adopt a baby and found me—literally less than one week after I was born.

Growing up, my parents explained my adoption by telling me, “We chose you.” It was a wonderful way to put it to an adopted child. And I think it’s true. An adoption is a full-circle blessing.
First of all, it’s a blessing (and a huge sacrifice) for a birth parent to make the decision to give his/her baby a better life. Sometimes people can’t take care of that baby just yet. (And their circumstances might change in 15 years.) But what a gift they are giving to both that child and the family who wants to adopt.

Next, if you’re thinking about adopting a child, remember that it’s a gift you’re getting and it comes with just as much responsibility as if you had your child biologically. On top of that, it’s a beautiful blessing that you were chosen to take care of this child and become his or her parent.
And then, lastly—as an adopted child—I encourage other adoptees to remember what blessed lives we have. We weren’t abandoned; we were chosen. We were given a chance. I’m not saying it’s not hard or that it’s easy for people to understand. But it really isn’t for the world to understand; it’s for the people who are involved.

People always ask me: “Have you ever wanted to find your parents?”

I have discovered a little bit about my biological parents and each piece of information helps me, but ultimately I tell people: “I have my parents.”

If anything, I would thank my birth mother for loving me enough to make such a huge sacrifice. It’s a great gift for me to be able to say: “I know that I came from love, and I know that I have love.”
In fact, I’ve always felt this deep desire: that if I were to have a baby, I would adopt. That’s the way I would do it, 100%. But I have a lot of kids in my life who I love and mentor. So, in a way, I feel like I’ve done it, even though I don’t have a child who lives with me.

Whether we decide to become parents or simply volunteer our love and time, it’s our job as a community to take care of our kids. On National Adoption Day, I hope you remember just that.

To learn more about National Adoption Day, go here.