

[00:00:01.150] - Lisa Qualls

Welcome to the Adoption and Connection podcast where we share resources by and for adoptive and foster moms. I'm Lisa Qualls.

[00:00:09.040] - Melissa Corkum

And this is Melissa Corkum. Don't worry, we get it, and we're here for you.

[00:00:14.500] - Lisa Qualls

Welcome to the Adoption Connection podcast, episode 137. In honor of Father's Day, we're devoting the month of June to a series we're calling Dad Connection. For each of the five Tuesdays this month, we're featuring a different foster or adoptive dad. Here at the adoption connection, we value hearing from a wide range of voices and we're excited to bring these special dad conversations to you.

[00:00:40.270] - Melissa Corkum

So this week we are featuring adoptive and foster dad, Peter Mutabazi. For the past 20 years, Peter has worked for several, global, non-profits, as well as local charity organizations that promote wellness and development of children. He is a surviving street child, foster dad, single dad, entrepreneur, and founder of Now I Am Known, which he is getting ready to tell you about in our conversation together. Here's my conversation with Peter.

[00:01:11.880] - Melissa Corkum

Peter, welcome to the Adoption Connection podcast.

[00:01:15.120] - Peter Mutabazi

Well, thank you. I'm really excited to be here, Melissa, to join you and share my story.

[00:01:21.000] - Melissa Corkum

As we've asked all the dads in the month of June, will you just give us a quick rundown of who all lives in your family right now? And I know you do some foster care, so maybe that changes, but who all makes up your family?

[00:01:32.670] - Peter Mutabazi

Well, right now we are five. You know, it's five of us. I'm a single dad and I have three foster kids or foster children and my adoptive child. So, you know, so I have 5, 6, 14, and 17 year old. So that's my family. That's my full house on for sure.

[00:01:53.550] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, so you're busy guy.

[00:01:56.130] - Peter Mutabazi

Busy, yes. Hands full, no. No moment that goes boring or nothing. It's a full on 24/7. So and we love it. Truly love it.

[00:02:06.160] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. I think the hardest part about having so many kids, and I can imagine as a single parent, OK, maybe not the hardest part, but I'm just thinking logically in our family, my husband and I share so much of the logistics of like picking kids up and getting them to where they're going, and I know that's changed somewhat with covid, but I imagine maybe you spend a lot of time in the car, like, getting kids to different activities and places.

[00:02:31.670] - Peter Mutabazi

Yes. You know, my kids go to different schools. So four of them go to three different schools and they go in at different times and come out at different times. So you can imagine what I have to arrange. Who do we drop off first? Who do we park first or who do we, you know, and of course, as a single dad, I can't leave any child behind, you know, the 17 and 14 year old, I can leave them behind, but the little ones have to be with me everywhere I go. Even to the store for just a quick, you know, 20 minutes, I have to take them with me. So, you know, spending time in the car is what we do best. And

it's also an opportunity to really get to know who they are when we are in that closed car, we really get to know each one's character in some way.

[00:03:20.730] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, they're a captive audience in the car, right?

[00:03:23.280] - Peter Mutabazi

Yes.

[00:03:24.120] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. Well, I appreciate that perspective. It's kind of find the silver lining in even the business of that. So, will you tell our listeners about your decision to become a foster and adoptive dad?

[00:03:38.580] - Peter Mutabazi

Oh, yes, I love sharing that. Well, for me, it didn't begin just one day, you know. So for me, it started years, years when I was a little boy. You know, I grew up in the, you know, from Africa, from a country, Uganda, and I grew up the poor of the poorest. Grew up in a place where no one ever told me to dream. Grew up in a place where I was given a name at the age of two because my mom was afraid that I would not make it until the age of two because most kids who were born in my village, you know, 60 percent of them would die before the age of two. So I didn't have a name until when I was two. So for me, that's the world I come from, you know, where there was absolutely no hope in any shape or form. You know, it's hard for a mom if they can't feed you, you know, for a day to tell you to dream. You know, then at the age of four, I began to realize that not only are we poor as dirt, but my dad wasn't a good dad. He was mean in every shape or form. You know, so for me, I had both worlds against me, my own family, but also the poverty that I had grown up in. So I ran away at the age of ten and because I didn't, you know, I couldn't let my dad take my own life, so I decided someone else should, you know, so I ran away and had never been twenty miles away and, you know, became a street kid in Kampala. And that became my life, you know. So three, four years once I got there, a stranger who did not know me really rescued me. He saw he saw best in me that nobody else had ever seen in me. He was the first man to ask my name for the four years no one had ever asked my name. You know, he saw a dirty little thief boy, but he saw potential in me that I could never see myself. And that's what changed my life, that he truly made me known. He truly gave me an opportunity to be seen and heard and that changed my life. So for me, when I came to United States, in some way, I think for what he had done for me, that I wanted to do the same, you know. But also when I came to U.S., I had no idea that there were kids who will be in our community that had nowhere to go. And for me, having an extra bedroom, I could not just say, man, I have a blessed bedroom, a blessed house, you know, without blessing someone. I really wanted to do what someone did for me, you know, they saw the potential in me and took a chance on me and changed my life. I wanted to do the same for all they done for me. So for me, fostering or being a foster parent, it wasn't something that came overnight, but it's really what had happened in my life. And I think I understood really very well that foster kids where, that was me at some point. So for me, it was easy to relate. It was easy to understand, but also it was easy to be in their shoes because I was one kid, I was one of them, I was one kid that needed hope, glimpses of joy, but also to be in a safe and loving home. So that's really what caused me to be a foster parent, to give back to what someone had done for me.

[00:06:35.430] - Melissa Corkum

What brought you to the United States? You know, you are in Kampala, you are being mentored by this man, and so, you know, what was the story, if you don't mind sharing, of how you ended up here in the States.

[00:06:49.110] - Peter Mutabazi

Right. So when he took me in, he gave me two choices. Say, hey, if I take you in, have to go to school. So, of course, you know, I was able to go to school and I did well in school. So I got a scholarship to go study. I studied in U.S. and also I studied in Uganda and then I went to study in England and then I got a scholarship to come and study in the United States. So that's how I came to the U.S. You know, it's amazing the kindness of one on really how it truly in some way spiraled my future in the best way that I never thought I could be. And so that's how I came to the U.S. to study. And also that's how I got

to learn about kids in foster care and I truly began to say, you know what, I think traditionally we are told, you know, you have to be married, you know, to have kids, you have to be married to do this and that. I think for me, you know, I think I wanted to be against the traditional way to say, you know, how can I be there for kids if I ever get married, sure, but while I'm waiting, what can I do to improve the life of a child? And that's kind of how I stepped in. Of course, at first, I didn't know they would allow me to be a foster parent because I always thought they only take women or married couples, but when I went in it was more how can I be a mentor? And they're like, have you ever thought of being a foster dad? I was like, sure, where do I sign up? And I signed up and, you know, in five months later, I had my first placement. So, yes, that's really what drew me or how, you know, I had the opportunity that someone gave me that brought me to the United States.

[00:08:24.120] - Melissa Corkum

Thanks for sharing that. What is something that you love about being a foster and adoptive dad?

[00:08:30.120] - Peter Mutabazi

Oh, something I love. You know, in most cases we think we're doing a favor to kids, we think we are giving them a life, but for me, I think they've given me life. You know, they have made me a better human being than I was when they found me. They've taught me what love means, they have taught me what unconditional love truly means to love someone with all the traumas, with all the baggage they come with, to love them in every shape and form. They have taught me what patient means, like, I thought I knew until I became a foster dad. I was like, wow, I am far from that, you know? So for me, I think it's more of what they've made me as a human being, as a better man than what I have done for them. So that's really what has shaped my life or what I feel like I have benefited the most. Yes, I think I provided a safe home and a loving home for the kids, but equally, I think they have improved my life as well. So for me, I think that's one lesson that I've learned through being a foster dad and adoptive dad.

[00:09:39.450] - Melissa Corkum

Do you think your experience, were you one of those kids that once you had a stable, kind of loving relationships, did you, were you able to kind of fall into that pretty easily? Or was it hard for you? Like did you have some of these challenging behaviors that we see with kids who haven't had that consistent, stable attachment relationship? And does that experience help you relate to the kids that come through your home and have more compassion or more patience for them?

[00:10:17.910] - Lisa Qualls

We're interrupting this interview to ask you to do us a favor. Really, it's not for us, but for adoptive and foster parents just like you.

[00:10:25.980] - Melissa Corkum

If you find our podcast helpful, pause this episode and revisit your podcast app where you can rate and review the show. Honestly, this isn't about making us feel good. This is about other parents finding confidence, hope, and friends who understand.

[00:10:40.980] - Lisa Qualls

Thanks so much for helping us get the word out. We really appreciate you.

[00:10:45.000] - Melissa Corkum

Now back to the conversation.

[00:10:51.030] - Melissa Corkum

Does that experience help you relate to the kids that come through your home and have more compassion or more patience for them?

[00:11:00.180] - Peter Mutabazi

Yes, you know, absolutely. I grew up in a home where all I had learned from my dad, I was garbage, I would never amount to anything, you know, and I believed it because I heard it from someone who should have been my best supporter. And when I became a street kid, the same thing I had, you

know, I was treated more like, more like a stray animal, more like I was less of a human being, you know. So the way people viewed me, the way people treat me, the way I, you know, I did not experience love or belonging or that I matter to anyone. So, of course, those can somehow damaged my childhood in some way, you know? So trust wasn't there, like I didn't believe I mattered. So if I didn't matter, why should I do anything that matters to anyone, you know? But I think along the way on how he approached loving me, he didn't wake up one morning and say, I'm going to help this kid, but he helped me once a month or twice or three times a month and he'd give me food for a period of time. So he built the trust before he could offer me the opportunity to go to school. But also, he never judged me. He didn't say, you're a thief, you're dirty. No, he just loved me as who I am and embraced me. And I think that helped me to somehow begin to see myself as valued, that I mattered, that he had me, that really builds in some way a better me in a way. They helped me shape on how I viewed myself, you know, he guided me. He didn't tell me, but he guided on how he treated me. That brought me to really begin to have that pride as a kid. And that helps me also as a foster dad, I think. You know, the mistake that we do, we forget that, you know, not 100% of our kids who come through foster care come with trauma. So for me, he loved me first with all my traumas. He loved me in every shape in that way that I think the same way that I try to do for my kids, that I have to love them with their trauma and it's my job to embrace them. And then along the way, it's up to them to see how they deal with it, but my job is to navigate and mentor them as they deal with trauma. And that's how he helped me. And I think that has really shaped me on also on how I embraced my kids, you know, to know that they I have to love them with all the trauma and all the difficulties and all the attachment issues that they have because that is not a choice they woke up and they were that way, no, but the conditions of where they were born and the situation that they went through is what has led them to to be who they are. The same way that mine looked at me, you know. To me, sitting was as normal as anything because that's all I knew, you know. But he told me along the way on how to begin changing that by not lecturing me or telling me that, but by just loving me first and then by providing then I began to realize that, oh, I don't have to go take it. He's giving it to me. You know, the same with my kids that I have to be patient, that I have to be loving, but also I have to truly love them as who they are, including their trauma, including their behaviors. And then along the way, I can figure out how I can deal with more of the internal things. I think the behaviors is more of the outward of what they are showing us, what's going on internally, you know, and that's how he looked at me, and that's what I ought to look at kids as well.

[00:14:28.440] - Melissa Corkum

Oh, so beautiful. Do you think do you share your story with the kids that come to your home and do you think that that helps them let their guard down sooner because maybe they sense that you understand where they're coming from?

[00:14:41.940] - Peter Mutabazi

Yes, if they're older than nine, you know, because they are able to understand, I have videos that I can show where I come from, my story. So for most of my older kids, I want them to, when they come to me to know, like, wow, if he can make it in life, I can make it too, you know, by not hiding my bad past life. That really gives them a clue of man, Peter has a really nice house, but to see them like, well, but where he come from, it's not like he was born in a nice house, he was born in even a worst place than me, but he's made it through life and he wants to love me. He wants to give me the best, yet he has a history that they get to relate, you know. Or sometimes, you know, when they're going through those difficult times. I say, I was there, I understand, you know, and my job I'm here to come alongside you. And it's not a lie, it's not a gimmick that they know, yes, you are one of us, you know, but at the same time that I can understand in that way, that I can relate with them, that truly helps them in some way, yes, to let their guards down, to in some way to feel like, you know, this guy understands me, but above all, that he loves me as who I am.

[00:16:00.120] - Melissa Corkum

Yes. You mention a lot of this, knowing your kids, loving them exactly where they are for who they are, regardless of whether they're struggling from the outside like you were, whether they're struggling with those internal struggles that so many kids that have struggled with complex trauma struggle with. So tell us a little bit about this project that you've been working on called Now I Am known.

[00:16:30.360] - Peter Mutabazi

Well, Now I Am known is an amazing opportunity, you know, and I come by also through this man who rescued me. So as I said before, all I had from people, I was nothing, I was garbage, I will never amount to anything. That's what I had from my own family and also the people that saw me on the streets. But when he took me in, he began using words of affirmation. You know, I think for the first time I heard him say, Peter, you matter. And I was like, are you sure? Are you sure? You know, and he would say, Peter, you know, sometimes I would be mad and I just want to just say every word I could find, you know? And he would say, yeah, I hear you. Yeah, I hear you. I'm not mad, you know, tell me, what do you feel? You know, I never knew I was a gift. He would say, Peter, you are a gift to us. And as much as I had those words of affirmation, I've begun to believe in them, you know? But because he showed me that I was that worth that I matter, that I was, you know, that I belonged, that I was not alone. That really began to help me in some ways shave the negative and the things that I've had through my childhood. And time the best way in, you know, see the best in me that he saw in me. And so I decided that, you know, they are really changing my life, that if I ever become a parent, I'm also going to use the words of affirmation to encourage my kids, you know. So, of course, once I became a foster dad I thought, wow, he used words of encouragement me and there were 12 of them and I wanted to do the same to tell my kids that you matter, you belong, you're chosen, you're not alone, you're heard, you're seen, you know, you're a gift, you're brave for what you've gone through to see how far you've come. I wanted my kids to hear them often, so I wrote them on a piece of paper, so I put it on the fridge, on my steering wheel, and in my bedroom so I can always remember to say those words of affirmation. Then we got a dog and then I realized that my kids sometimes, when they go through trauma and they don't want to talk to dad, they go to their bedroom and they don't want to see me. And then I found a way on how I can still encourage them when they are in those moments, you know? And so I created a bandana and our dog wears those twelve words of affirmation because they always take the dog with them. So I was like, OK, while you're playing with the dogs, you can read those words with them. And so that was a way to really encourage them and help them through those moments when the trauma shows up to know that you're not alone, you know. But then it was working well for me that I thought, how can I encourage other foster parents, adoptive parents, or even just any parents, you know? So we created a duplicate of our dog. And he wears the, you know, those words of affirmation, you know, as you can see right here, you know, this is a duplicate, exact duplicate of our dog, Simba. And where's the bandana with those twelve words, you know, because we wanted other moms, other dads, other kids to hear those words as well. And so that's how now I'm known to create as a platform, but also to encourage kids. So basically what we do is we sell one and then we give one to kids in the foster care or kids at the hospital because we partner with agencies and foundation that we help kids who are ill sick in the hospital. We encourage them that you're not alone, that you're special, that we're listening to you. But also, I wanted to give a platform to especially for kids here in the United States to feel that they can be seen and it can be heard. So that's what we do, basically, you know, we sell one, but at the same time we give one. Also, as a dad, you know, I decided to really changed my profession to be a full time dad and advocate for kids in the foster care. So by me in some way selling one plushy, it helps me also to be an advocate for kids and also be a full time dad in some way, you know. So that's the platform or how we came out with Now I Am Known to encourage people and families to do more for kids.

[00:20:30.860] - Melissa Corkum

I love that and remind me, I think you had a profession that was kind of fun before you had four or five kids you had to chase after, what did you do before you were completely, 100% taking your life to kids who needed to know that they were known?

[00:20:49.740] - Peter Mutabazi

Yeah. So I, you know, again, you know, for me, I've always been an advocate for kids, so I worked for Companions National being an advocate for kids, the most vulnerable kids all over the world. So I would travel all over the world speaking on behalf of kids. And then I've been working for WorldVision doing the same, really speaking and raising funds for the kids. So that's what I did. But also, I knew that having an eight to five job wasn't easy being a single dad, you know. So I took on flipping houses, actually, that's where my name Foster Dad Flipper because I thought, you know, if I can do a job that can help me be my own boss, I'll be a better parent. So I quit my job to flip houses, but also that will enable me to be there with my kids to go to the hospital, when they need to see therapy, when they

need to visit their parents, you know, that on a whim I can just leave and not feel guilty of who I was working for. So I wanted to work for myself. So that's what I did before. But it's been amazing and the joy truly to be able to do that.

[00:21:53.680] - Melissa Corkum

Well, I'll tell you, you were kind enough to send me a little mini version of Simba and I opened it and one of my kids who I'll let remain anonymous, opened it up and looked at the bandana and said, oh, a bandana, I want, can I have that when you're finished with this mom? And then looked at the words and said, I love it, like the words so just went right to her heart and words of affirmation are not my primary love language, so I was just so touched to see how impactful just opening the box and seeing that bright yellow bandanna was. And of course, then our two year old wandered in and found the plushy and now she's attached. So it's super soft, really cute, and what a beautiful gift, you know, with the words in a way that kids can relate to and even almost have like this little friend to go and tell other big feelings to and have someone who, you know, is a trusted little plushy who also won't judge them, right.

[00:23:06.800] - Peter Mutabazi

Right. Right, right. Right.

[00:23:09.810] - Melissa Corkum

So, Peter, what would you say to pre-foster or pre-adoptive dads who are getting ready or thinking about doing this? What are some things maybe that you had wished you had known before you got in to what you're doing now?

[00:23:27.570] - Peter Mutabazi

For me, I think I, I think I wish I had all earlier, you know, like that was maybe my hardest, like, I just wish I'd started earlier because I realized they were 10 years where I could have changed, you know, the kid's lives. But also I knew the moments I had, that was a time I couldn't do so, but I was really, truly encouraged, you know, I think for me, I wish I had known, like, men are allowed to be foster parents, you know, single like I didn't know, you know, even when I went in, you know, I thought, like, they will not allow me, but they might allow me to be a mentor. And also something also that I really did not know was how especially our boys in the foster care, how so much they are looking for someone to mentor them, especially the male, you know, and I realized just how that is a lock. You know, the I'm not faulting the females, but they're the majority. You know, even those who have mom and dad at home, dad is at work and they spend time more with mom. So I realize just the the you know, the longing for a man and the longing for a man to come alongside and somehow show them the little, little steps here and they're not looking for the best shoe or go shoot hoops in there, they're just looking for another man to say, hey, it's going to be OK. You know, I'm your dad and and you can do it. And I think anyone who's really thinking about doing it, it's not, it's not the money you make, it's not the things you give them, it's the little time you get to spend with them that matters the most. You know, I found out that my kids, if I can wrestle or arm wrestle, like, that, it means so much than any pair of shoes I could buy or ice cream I could ever buy because that's what they want the most it's what they are looking for the most, you know, a mentor, someone who can say it's going to be OK, you know, and I think as men we have more to offer than that, so if we can walk in knowing it's not the stuff I want to give them or rather the little moments to inspire them to say you can do it and I'm here to watch you do that.

[00:25:42.980] - Melissa Corkum

What fabulous encouragement. So you touched on it a little bit, but what encouragement would you have to say to dads who are where you are? They're in it. They're in it with two, three, four or five or more kids. And maybe they're feeling discouraged or they're wondering, you know, why it's so hard or, you know, wondering what did we get ourselves into. So what words of encouragement do you have for the dads who are right where you are?

[00:26:17.120] - Peter Mutabazi

Oh, yes, I hear them, I feel them for when they go through, I do, you know, but I think for us who are in it every day. Sometimes we're in the trenches more than we are on top of the hill and it's easy to get

discouraged, but I think, you know, I've had 16 kids, sometimes, you know, it's when they go back to their parents that I realized the impact I made, you know, but while I was in it, I didn't fully see it, but to see them in some way where they ask their mom, can I talk to Mr. Peter or some of them who call me dad, that for me, where I get to see the results of the investment that I put in, you know? So I want to encourage you as you're in it, sometimes, yes, you're in the trenches and it's hard to really see, am I making an impact? You know, or you feel more of can I survive this? You know, but I think the results get to come know sometimes to the least expected or when we really don't expect, you know, the nights, you know, sometimes I have kids who cry for hours or kind of go through trauma 20 times in a day. And by the time I put them to bed and I'm exhausted, you know, he's one thing that has always encouraged me when the kid looks me in the eye and say, Dad, I love you so much, you know? And in my head sometimes I'm like, I wish you told me that about noon. It would have made a difference. But but at the end of the night, as I go to bed, that it gives me that the, yes, I can see, I don't see the result, but that one word, that one word is enough to encourage me to face tomorrow with joy, but also with the thrill that I'm going to make a difference by just you know, that I love you, that that's all of the end of the day that I had from from my kids. But sometimes that is all that I need to know, that I'm making an impact. So for me, yes, I would say, you know, hang in there. And the other part is it's OK to be vulnerable. I think as a you know, as a male at first, you know, I was afraid to ask, you know, I'm like, well, I'm a man. I sign up for this, I'm going to do it. And then I realized not really, you know, as in Africa, we say it takes a village to realize that I have other moms and dads in the force that can really help me kind of come alongside me, kind of have a coffee with me when I need that. So to it's OK to be vulnerable. The the last one, I think is for me as a single dad, you know, sometimes people look at me like, well, but do you provide what the moms do provide for the kids? And I always say, I've had sixteen kids. No one has ever come to me and say, I wish we had a mom. None. No one. You know why? Because I've learned to be that all to the kids, you know, to be tender, to be caring, to be compassionate. You know, I think the stereotype of people want to put us in a box it's the mind shape they have. It's how they were taught. But for me, I'm learning that it's not what the society tells me to be, but rather what the kids are looking for, you know, to be tender, to be loving, you know, even sometimes to be vulnerable to them. But they get to see that. They get to hear that, oh, dad has challenges, but he still loves it so that it's OK, you know, and to avoid the stereotype, you know, I think sometimes you you know, I get that, you know, my kids are Caucasian and I'm a black dad. You know, sometimes I guess people will say, how dare you? How could you be there, Dad? I mean, are you qualified? You do you know how to you know. Before me I think the to stay to what my calling is, my calling is to be a dad. It's not to see through what people think of me, you know, or what they expect of me, but for me to what my kids expect of me, you know, that has really helped me be the best that I can be, not what others think, but what my kids think, you know, that I can be silly, that I can, you know, cry sometimes. They get to see me crying, but at the end of the day that they know, you know, he's as human as we are. And it's really been a joy. So, again, it's okay to be vulnerable as men. It's okay to ask for help. And I think that takes us, you know, on how best we can be for kids.

[00:30:33.770] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. And you touched on so much stuff there and even glossed over some of the trans racial pieces of being a black dad with white kids. That's probably an entire different conversation and a really interesting one. But I appreciate your vulnerability and I can imagine you have some stories to tell when it comes to the reactions of when folks see you guys out in public. You are also the only single dad we have on this month for this adoptive and foster dad series. How do you fill your own bucket up to keep showing up and being the one guy whose both the tender compassionate one and also the you know, the disciplinarian and the rule, the guide, the structure, what are the things that have helped you still have the energy to keep doing this?

[00:31:31.160] - Peter Mutabazi

You know, I run, I do exercise, like, once I became a parent, I didn't stop doing so. I found other ways on how to do it and bring my kids, include them. So I run, but they can bike. My kids can't run, but we go for, I go for a run to process and think through while they are biking. So I found a way of really still love what I do, but bring them, you know bring them along side. Then the other part as as I said to being vulnerable, like, I really go to other moms and say, hey, you know, my, my kids are teenagers now, so I need to really, could you help me talk to them on how they need to respect women or how they need to, you know, things where I know I don't have the tools, but I have people I trust that I can

go to, you know. The other part is revisiting my own mother's way on how she ways to remember on what she did, how she was telling them, how she really instilled values and principles in me that I can do the same, remember what my mom did and be able to use that in so to be there for my kids in those tender moments and those precious moments where they are looking for, you know, not having a mom that I can be that that mom. So those things that are really helped me, you know, I have friends who I the one thing I think I've already done is to be accountable. You know, I know not everyone can be a foster parent, but I have friends who can't not be but can take me for coffee. I demanded I say, look, I'm a foster parent, so I'm going to ask you to do this for me. And they do that for me. Sometimes I run out of milk or eggs and I'm able to call my single friends. It's 10:00 am, 10:00 p.m., I'm like, hey, I cannot leave the house, so I need milk, and eggs, and juice. Could you? And it's a way they can serve and they are looking for that as well, that I give them an opportunity to really be helpful to us, but also a joy to be part of our journey. So I'm willing to ask others, I'm willing to be accountable for, I think that has really helped me stay in tune, but also have people in my life that can help me when I cannot do what I'm required to do as a parent.

[00:33:52.090] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, I think that's good advice for all of us, so thank you so much, Peter, for being so open about your story, for the way that you show up every day to love your kids for the work that you're doing, for the greater good of vulnerable kids in our country and in other places. And for the grace that you've handled, I'm sure some really difficult conversations and situations and observations about your family. So we appreciate you here at the adoption connection and just appreciate you sharing your story with us today.

[00:34:27.820] - Peter Mutabazi

Well, thank you. And on behalf of my kids and the kids and of who you represent, we want to thank you for standing up and for giving a voice to our kids. So thank you.

[00:34:41.570] - Lisa Qualls

There are so many things I liked about this conversation, Melissa, it's just, it was delightful to hear, I think, such a unique story. I mean, his story is very hope filled. And I hope that all of us listening are also encouraged by the impact a loving, caring adult can have on a child and how this has now impacted Peter's life so much and is now impacting the next generation with all the children he's serving. So I just thought it was a great conversation.

[00:35:19.220] - Melissa Corkum

Absolutely. So here's a fun thing, Peter talked a little bit about these plushies that they're using to create awareness for foster children and also to comfort kids going into the foster care system. And so if you haven't seen it already over in our Instagram feed, we posted yesterday about a giveaway we're doing. One family is going to get a Now I Am Known plushy. They're super cute. Our granddaughter has one and she just took it outside the other day as her little friend to go with her. So we'll have links to that Instagram post. If you want to enter that giveaway, you can also follow Peter @fosterdadflipper on Instagram. And his organization is [nowiamknown.com](http://nowiamknown.com). Of course, all of that will be in one tiny little place at the show notes at [theadoptionconnection.com/137](http://theadoptionconnection.com/137).

[00:36:17.420] - Lisa Qualls

Before you go, we'd love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Facebook or Instagram as @theadoptionconnection.

[00:36:25.070] - Melissa Corkum

Thanks so much for listening, we love having you. If you enjoyed this episode, please leave a quick review over on iTunes. It will help us reach more moms who may be feeling alone.

[00:36:35.210] - Lisa Qualls

And remember, until next week, you're a good mom, doing good work and we're here for you.

[00:36:42.400] - Melissa Corkum

The music for the podcast is called New Day and was created by Lee Rosevere.

