

[00:00:00.480] - Lisa Qualls

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[00:00:07.230] - Melissa Corkums

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[00:00:32.550] - Lisa Qualls

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[00:00:53.400] - Melissa Corkums

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[00:01:04.640] - Lisa Qualls

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

[00:01:12.530] - Melissa Corkums

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

[00:01:18.320] - Melissa Corkums

Hey friends, welcome to Episode 138 of the Adoption Connection podcast. In honor of Father's Day this month, we're devoting the entire month to a series we're calling Dad Connection. For each of the five Tuesdays, we featured a different foster or adoptive dad. Here at the adoption connection, we value hearing from a wide range of voices and we are so excited to bring these special dad conversations to you. This is our last one, which are a little sad about so, if you missed the first four, make sure you go back and catch them because they were all fantastic.

[00:01:53.190] - Lisa Qualls

Yes, so our final interview is with our friend Ryan North. Ryan and his wife Kayla have six children. They spent 10 years as foster parents and learned many of the things that they share with families, churches, and schools just simply being a family. He is the co-founder of One Big Happy Home and is considered an expert on childhood trauma and its impacts. He speaks at churches, schools, conferences, and retreats nationwide. And together, he and his wife, Kayla, have developed training materials and programs for churches, schools, and parents, educating them on trauma and its impacts. I hope you enjoy this conversation with Ryan North. Hello, Ryan, welcome to the Adoption Connection podcast.

[00:02:43.990] - Ryan North

Hey, Lisa, thank you for having me on with you.

[00:02:46.510] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, we're really excited about this month of featuring dads for every episode and you were at the very top of our list, I will have to say.

[00:02:56.920] - Ryan North

Oh, that's very sweet of you to say and I, as a dad, thrilled that I'm doing a feature for dads, because a lot of times and you and I talked about this before, sort of the inroad into this world is more often than not through mom. I remember when we first started training parents, we would ask, why are you

wanting to take this course alive in the room? And the moms would always give a really heartfelt like, you know, I want to reach my child's heart, but we're really struggling, I want to find out how to connect and all and all the kinds of things that you might expect somebody to say. Sometimes moms even cry. And then we'd look at the dad and say, well, why are you? Like 80% of the time they say, my wife said I had to come.

[00:03:38.020] - Lisa Qualls  
Yeah.

[00:03:40.270] - Ryan North  
So I love that we're engaging dads and calling dads up to higher involvements and responsibility and understanding in this because we play an important part that's not self-serving to say that. Dads play an important part and I think for too long, some of us have abdicated that responsibility in parenting and I think we should reclaim it, so thank you for being part of the reclaiming of that.

[00:04:08.050] - Lisa Qualls  
Yeah, well, it's definitely our privilege. We're excited about it. So tell us who makes up your family.

[00:04:15.280] - Ryan North  
OK, so we'll start with my lovely bride. She's the only one whose age I won't to share in this because for obvious reasons. So my wife, Kayla, we celebrated our 19th wedding anniversary in January of 2021. And then our oldest is our son Tyler, he's 18. He came home about three months before his fourth birthday. And then our next is Tori, she's 16. She was four months old when she came home. Then there's Josh who is 13. He just turned 13 in January as well, coincidentally. And he was, had just turned four when he came home and then our fourth child is Brooklyn, she's 12. She is our first bio kiddo and obviously she came home the day after she was born. And then there is Addison, who will be 10 in June of this year. She was about nine months old when she came home. Her and Josh are biological siblings. And then our youngest is Libby, who is 8. And she is, she's our bio kiddo as well. So we span 8 to 18 and we went from three to six kids in six months, one year, so.

[00:05:40.720] - Lisa Qualls  
That's a lot. That's, that must've been a very big adjustment. So you actually started your family as foster parents, right?

[00:05:49.160] - Ryan North  
Yes.

[00:05:50.020] - Lisa Qualls  
Can you tell us about your decision to foster and how you and Kayla kind of navigated that? Who, which one of you had the big idea? Tell us a little bit about that.

[00:06:03.170] - Ryan North  
I love telling the story because adoption and foster care is a thread that runs through both sides of our family. On my side of the family, my dad went to go live with his uncle and aunt when he was, before his first birthday and so there was nothing official or legal in regards to that, but those are the only grandparents I ever knew, my dad's uncle and aunt. We called them mama and papa. Today we would call that a kinship placement, but no such thing existed in the early 1950s when this happened so, there is that plus, my grandmother was, my dad and I were talking about her the other day, and she's the kindest person I've ever heard of in my whole life. And sometimes even though she passed thirty two years ago, I still sometimes look at my children and have a little bit of sadness for them that they didn't get to know her. She was an extremely influential person on how we viewed the world, but one of the other things she did is all the boys in the neighborhood when they were maybe in their teen years getting into trouble, she very kindly intervened in their lives and really try to help the boys. And so when we first encountered this this kind of parenting, the first time I ever heard Karen Purvis speak, she said, I'll never forget that, she said, there's nothing special about the work we're doing, we just remember the way our grandmothers treated us and we're trying to do that. And so that is such a great marker in my memory, Lisa, because because it really kind of centers me when we're when we're

drifting from what we're supposed to do, because I just remember the way my grandmother treated me. On Kayla's side of the family, her grandparents were missionaries for a while, they were foster parents for a while, and so when we got married, we had this discussion about, you know, leading up to it like, like I thought like, I need to know how many children this person wants before we stand in front of the church by the preacher. And and so in the midst of those conversations, we both discovered that the other person wanted to adopt. We both came to marriage wanting to adopt purely based on our family histories and then she worked as a nanny in college and one of those families adopted from China while she worked for them. So she was part of all of that happening and taking place and I remember going with her to the airport when the family came home. So it's a thread that's woven into our lives and then we decided, well, should we should be adopt first? Should should we try to have kids biologically first? And then we made the decision that we were going to adopt and we wanted to do that first. And then that kind of morphed into as we got into that, that we decided that we wanted to become foster parents and then adopt from the foster care system in Texas. So that's kind of the genesis of it.

[00:09:07.860] - Lisa Qualls

So that's kind of unique that you and Kayla came to this sort of equally simultaneously. That's a, I don't know that I hear that story all that often. You know, do you do you find that that's a little bit unique?

[00:09:22.050] - Ryan North

Yeah, actually, I find that to be very unique. But to sound biblical on it, we were kind of equally yoked in that in that regard, right, but yeah, we don't often hear that story. The story we hear more often is, we raise the family and now we're adopting or we tried to have a family and that didn't happen, so we're going to adopt or, you know, we have a family, we see a need in the community, we're going to become licensed foster parents. So those are the stories we typically see, but the reason that, because we were still going back and forth, Lisa, on how we wanted to start our family. And so I was born in South Africa and and I had gotten her to agree that we wouldn't have kids until we went and visited South Africa together. And we were there for three weeks and our last day in the country, you know, she had got a bunch of information from adoption agencies and after, you know, we went from on the flight out of Dallas the night when we went, I was about to watch a movie on the plane and she said, no, no, no, I have stuff for you to read and sent some bunch of information packets from agencies and said, pick one by the time we land. And so we were out there, still kind of struggling with it which way to proceed. And we went on a boat ride up to, you know, if anybody watches Shark Week where Jaws was filmed. And so we went to this boat ride, well this boat operator every Wednesday, we found out afterwards, that a local orphanage bring like eight kids at a time and would take them out there for free just as part of his service to the community. And so we ended up sitting right near these eight kids on the boat. And the thing was interesting about them is that in eight kids, they had two adults with them, caring for them. But all of these kids had some type of physical disability. Some of them were in wheelchairs, some of them were walking with like braces on their legs, someone had crutches. But it was about 30 minutes out to which we went and then 30 minutes back. All the way back they sang the whole time. They sang the whole time and I was really moved when I thought, OK, here are these kiddos who are growing up in an orphanage, they have physical disabilities, and they're filled with joy. And I almost couldn't reconcile with those three things in my mind. And I actually ended up videoing them singing. We have it somewhere, it was in 2004, so I had a handheld camcorder and I didn't have a telephone or anything to do it with. But we ended up videoing these kids because it was so beautiful and we got off the boat and as we got in the car and we both turned to each other and at the same time said, I think we're supposed to adopt. And so that kind of sealed the deal for us, and that ends up being part of our story and that's quite literally why we made the decision to build our family through adoption first.

[00:12:21.680] - Lisa Qualls

That's a wonderful story. So you already mentioned Dr. Purvis, who we both have great admiration for and appreciated her and all the work that she did for all of us. Tell me about sort of your journey of learning about connected parenting and beginning to live it out in your family.

[00:12:46.490] - Ryan North

Like I mentioned, well, I think I mentioned my wife nannied for a couple of families while she was in college, you know, while she had never been a parent, she certainly had a better understanding of how to supervise children, for lack of a better term, and how to take care of them than I did. I mean, I had no, I had no idea about any of that kind of stuff. And so we became parents and part of why I'm grateful that we're focusing more, that you're wanting to focus on dads this month, is because I was the dad who had really sort of abdicated his responsibility as a parent to his wife. And so my life can either serve as a cautionary tale or an inspirational tale because there is movement in the right direction, it is possible. But I was really leaning very heavily on Kayla during this time and then, you know, and then our daughter, who came home at four months old, she was a micro preemie, so there obviously was some medical issues there, but we didn't understand anything about trauma, about in utero experiences, or anything. We were just like, this baby came home from the hospital, everything's fantastic, right? And so, and part of that was, you know, it was really managing her feeding and medication schedule and doctor's appointments, right? And that was my understanding of what it took to be a parent. Well, then Tyler arrives and he's almost four years old. And he, like, knows people we don't know. And there's information about his story that we don't know, and he has thoughts, and he has feelings. And, you know, in about three months after he came home, things started to change very negatively in terms of his behaviors. And I remember, you know, like I said, I was born in South Africa, part of the British Commonwealth. Drinking hot tea is very important to me, it's ritualistic. And so every night after we put the kids to bed, we'd go down and have hot tea together and just kind of hang out a little bit. So I went downstairs, she was singing, singing to him and rocking him. And I went downstairs, made the tea, and there was no sign of her. And so I went upstairs to look for her and she was sitting outside of his bedroom door crying, just absolutely sobbing. And I sat down next to her and put my arm around her shoulder, she leaned her head on me, and I said, Babe, what's going on? What happened? And she said, I don't know how to help him. And I think that for anybody who's been involved in a recovery program or has or knows anybody involved in a recovery program, I mean, we really had to enter parental recovery. And the genesis of that was us admitting that that we were helpless to help ourselves. And so she called a friend of hers, Amanda, and said, because Amanda, her and her husband had adopted from foster care as well, and so she called Amanda and told Amanda of her struggles and Amanda invited her to something called Tapestry. And my wife said, what's that? Amanda looked at her quizzically and said, that's the adoption foster care ministry at the church you attend. Like, we had no idea that our church had adoption, foster ministry. So we got involved in that and, you know, one of the resources that had just come out, that they were pushing pretty hard was the Connected child. We read that, we were asked, because at the time, like, a lot of people don't remember, like, you know, Karen Purvis is Karen Purvis. But Karen Purvis wasn't always Karen Purvis. You know, you may remember when the book first came out, the churches really wanted nothing to do with it because it wasn't addressing corporal punishment specifically. There weren't Bible verses in it. And so we were asked to read it and then write a review from the point of view and they said, look, as Christian parents, if you see the heart of God in these pages, we'd like you to review this book from that standpoint. And so we did. And that really kind of opened our eyes. It opened our eyes to in utero trauma, it opened our eyes to a lot of things. Again, my wife was all in. I was like, that sounds like a lot of hugs, Kayla, even though that's not really specifically addressed because I was raised in a, do this or else kind of environment. And the book is counter to the do this or else environment. At the time, you know, some new things were happening. Tapestry had worked with with Karen directly to create something called Empower to Connect. At the time it was part of what Tapestry was doing. It's independent now. And then the curriculum was created and we were asked to pilot it at the curriculum. So we were one of eight families that went through the class. Karen actually came to class. We got to meet her and get to know her that way. And then in the course of all of that, she was doing a neurotransmitter study and our our daughter, who's now 16, they asked if she would participate and they said, look, we want to track you. We want to measure all these neurotransmitters, which is really eye opening for us because we didn't know much about at the time. And we want you, parents, exclusively this way for 12 months to see if this makes an actual change in a child's brain in a chemical level. So we were really committed to doing it that way. And that really kind of was sort of the threw us in the deep end of this because we'd agree to do it. And then, of course, we made the decision, well, if we're going to parent the three year old this way, we're going to parent the seven year old, I forget how old they were. At the time, the brother was older than her. We're going to parent them both this way and started to see really, really great, we started to see some change not just in the kids, but in us. And so that's kind of the genesis of us making that shift.

[00:18:57.710] - Lisa Qualls

Obviously, Karen Purvis in her work and the work of the institute also changed our family and our lives in so many ways. So how has this whole journey of fostering and adopting shaped your life? And I know that is a big question, you could go lots of directions, but it has shaped so many aspects of your life.

[00:19:20.650] - Ryan North

You know, it is positive and then some negatives that became positive. So I want to talk about the negatives that became positives, because it's the reality of our lives, it's also our jobs. And so there was never any break from it, which was the negative. The positive then is that somebody, some outside advice was given to us and said, look, you guys need to disconnect from this. You guys need to find something that you like to do together that you may like to do as individuals that has nothing to do with parenting or helping other families. And so my love of the guitar was rekindled. All of my guitars at the time, I have seven of them, were all in guitar cases and closets and under beds. I hadn't played them in years and I took it out of the bed and from under the bed and started playing them again. Kayla loves to read and she had really neglected anything she was reading was some books that would help us better understand trauma, attachment, or the brain. She now reads, reads books that have nothing to do with that. She consumes them. And so we, the positive that it helped us with, is it helped us understand that we need to have healthy boundaries. And so I'm grateful for that because having healthy boundaries is something that everybody needs. So so that's a positive net, positive change for us. The other way it changed our lives was because of the request, the requirement excuse me, that we had a parent with these connected parenting principles for a year to see if it made a difference at the neurotransmitter level, so my wife said, look, in order for us to be honest, I'm going to journal about this. I would encourage you to journal as well. And I'm like, journaling. Haven't you heard of these new handy dandy things called blogs? And so we actually started a blog that we just called One Big Happy Home. It was kind of Kayla's prophetic word. We had two children at the time, three children at the time, two and an infant. And and I think, you know, she's always wanted six kids and so she was naming it and claiming it. There was One Big Happy Home. And so we wrote about that on the blog for a while. It was just us basically having a shared space because blogs at the time were basically online journals, right. And so it was just a shared space for us to talk about our struggles and our successes and kind of just sort of therapeutic really. Well, somebody that Kayla knows, you know, read one of them and she passed it on to Michael Monroe, who had started Tapestry and Empower to Connect, and he read it and he asked us if we would speak at a conference at the Tapestry conference that year. We agreed, we did that, and then he also asked if they could actually use the content on their blog. And then he called me and he said, hey, I showed Karen your writing and she likes it and her and I want you guys to write for Empower to Connect. And so, as you know, Lisa, because some of your writings are featured there as well, that that's an enormous audience. Everything we do professionally now, my wife is the executive director of Tapestry, we turned One Big Happy Home into a company where we create create curriculum and classes and coaching and and we have the podcast that you've been on before with us, all of that under there. And then I also have a job as director of training and development for a child placing agency in Dallas Fort Worth. And so, I mean, it changed the trajectory of our family, it changed the trajectory of our careers, it changed everything about our lives and it allows us now to tell people like, look, it's hard. I'm not going to lie to you, it's hard, but if you will hang in there, if you will consistently do these things over time, you will see the positive change. You cannot have a short term view of this. It's helped us in relationship with our children obviously, it's helped us in relationship with our parents. I understand my dad and mom a lot better than I did before. She understands her mom and dad a lot better than we did before. It's allowed us to have a lot of grace for them, some of the mistakes they made in our childhood. And just it's just been it's been healing for us as individuals and it's given us a platform to to invest in the lives of other people. So there's not one sphere of our lives, personally and professionally, that has not been positively impacted by by us looking at each other in the car that day on the dock in Cape Town, South Africa, and saying, I think we're supposed to adopt.

[00:24:11.380] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, that's that's amazing. I mean, it really has shaped your life, your adult life in many, many ways. I mean, I feel like for us there was before we were adoptive parents, and now there's after. Like life

changed so dramatically and like you said, a lot of hard, but to the glory of God, you know, I'm really thankful, really, for who we are continuing to become. I was going to say who we've become but continuing to become and the ways God has allowed us to serve other families. So, yeah, I love hearing that.

[00:24:53.020] - Ryan North

What is that? Is it the Dan Allender book? How Kids, Children Raise Their Parents? Am I getting that right?

[00:24:57.970] - Lisa Qualls

I don't know, but I like that title.

[00:24:58.570] - Ryan North

I'm sure somebody can correct me on that. I believe, I haven't read that in a long, long time, but in this book, he makes the point about how how our children are one of the ways God sanctifies adults.

[00:25:12.080] - Lisa Qualls

Yes.

[00:25:12.760] - Ryan North

And and I'm like, you don't even have to say, can I get a witness? Because I'm like amen. Tell em.

[00:25:19.180] - Lisa Qualls

So for those of you listening out there, I will look at that book and we will have it in the show notes for sure.

[00:25:24.800] - Ryan North

Sorry to throw that curveball.

[00:25:26.410] - Lisa Qualls

No, that's OK. That's so interesting though. OK, what do you love about being an adoptive dad? Apart from ministry and work? What do you love personally about being a foster and adoptive dad?

[00:25:40.720] - Ryan North

You know what, Lisa? Of all the questions you've asked so far, that's potentially the hardest, because at some point the answer has the potential for sounding self-serving, right. And so I don't mean that, but I love watching my children heal. Like, I love, I love seeing them being in a better place and then I also love understanding that we were allowed to help them get there, that we were allowed to help them get there. And that brings me a great deal of satisfaction, knowing that that there are, you know, a handful of young men and women on our planet now who because God connected their story with ours and equipped us to help them, you know, when we first came to this thing, we had the "we're going to rescue some kids" mentality. 15 years later, our mentality is "what a privilege to be allowed to help," you know, and our son is 18 now and has really had to come to terms with a lot of his history in the last few months. It's really kind of collided some stuff in his life. He won't mind me telling you this because because it's been a real great time of personal growth for him. You know how you can you can hear the truth, but you don't actually ever hear it unless you're ready to hear it? And this certain parts of his story that we had shared with him that that he just hadn't really come to terms with. And so he asked if he could read his case files a few months ago. And we said absolutely. If you'd like us to read them with you, if you'd like them just have them by yourself. He said, I'd like to read them by myself. And he sat down over the course of a few days and just wrote notes and questions and all kinds of stuff. And so, and we go to visit with him it was over the course of about two months that we were having frequent, almost daily conversations. A lot of them he discovered that he was very angry and a lot of them involved yelling and crying, but all involved in the conversations. But one of the things that happened, that is all of the anger that he had towards his birth mother, he has now been able to release. And so that's really, really beautiful to watch, but also then to watch him actually start to relate to people differently because he's been able to release that, it just I mean, I literally, Kayla and I were talking last night, like, I just really feel so proud of him because of some of the ways they did

that.

[00:28:19.110] - Ryan North

So I guess the short answer to your question is, well the thing that I love is is watching our kids grow into the people they were always supposed to be.

[00:28:30.240] - Lisa Qualls

Yes, that's that's awesome. OK, final question. Kind of two pronged question.

[00:28:39.060] - Ryan North

OK.

[00:28:39.810] - Lisa Qualls

What message do you want to pass on to dads who are maybe in-process are trying to make the decision about fostering and adopting? And the second half of that would be what message do you want to pass on to adoptive dads who are in the thick of it?

[00:28:58.780] - Ryan North

So the first part is, dads who are considering or are in process, um, I would say to you, get all of the equipment that you can. And by that I mean, read the right things, so we'll start with the connected parents there. That's an example of a right thing to read because there are a lot of books on parenting and the vast majority of them that I've encountered will give you bad counsel in terms of raising kids with trauma histories. And understanding trauma and understanding that even if you adopt a newborn, that is still a traumatic experience for that newborn, because that person that they've come to know, whose voice they know is just gone and they and they and they they can't process that loss because they can't understand it. And so things like that, that was a really helpful thing with us, with our daughter we brought home from the hospital, for example, coming to understand that. Um, but but anything you can do to equip yourself in understanding the brain, how trauma impacts the brain, how attachment, how relationships are formed, that be really, really helpful. And if you don't want to read those things, here's the only piece of advice that, you know, in case of emergency smash glass advice, be kind, whatever you can do to make sure that your responses are kind, even when they, when you can't find it in yourself, take a couple of deep breaths and be kind and kindness isn't saying yes, being kind isn't permissive, because if I know that there's a party where drugs are going to be freely available and my teenager says I want to go, the kindest thing I can do is to say no. So so don't confuse kindness with permissive. Don't confuse kindness with permissive, be kind and and that's, you know, has helped us through so many struggles by just us taking a breath and being kind. So I suppose that's advice for both both sets of dads there, Lisa. But I would say equip yourself on the way in and understand what what's going in. Go in with in with your eyes wide open, knowing that there will be struggles. So that's why equipping yourself for those struggles is important. To the dads are already doing it, I would say always remember especially that you and your spouse or a team that you need to be nurture and structure in yourself. Don't play good cop, bad cop, Mom isn't hugs, Dad isn't punishment. Mom isn't love, Dad isn't boundaries. Both you and your spouse have to be equally able to do both of those things because the children need nurture to feel loved and they need boundaries to feel safe. And so a lot of times dad will sweep in as the enforcer. Don't be the enforcer on the one hand, but also don't make your wife be the heavy on the other hand. Don't be fun Dad. Be fun Dad, but not at the expense of your wife having to do all of the parenting. You're in this together and I promise you, gents, that your wife will look at you differently in a good way if, when she comes to understand that you're fully committed to this thing and that you are equipping yourself, you're constantly growing and learning, you're constantly walking beside her, and it's not that she gets to parent and you get to have all the fun or be the enforcer. But you're doing this together and from personal experience, the fact that I have chosen to do that in our family has certainly strengthened our marriage, which is an important byproduct of that, in my opinion.

[00:32:44.220] - Lisa Qualls

Ryan, I appreciate the wisdom that you're sharing here and the encouragement for dads and for all the moms listening too. This is just such an important conversation, I think, that we're having and you are just newly starting a new project to support dads. Can you just share briefly about that? And then

again, for you listening, we will have all the information in the show notes. If you're driving, doing something, don't worry about writing it all down. We will have it there for you.

[00:33:18.010] - Ryan North

Lisa, as you well know, you can search "retreat's for moms" and you'll get a lot, but not "retreats for dads." You can, if you go in social media and Facebook, there are a lot of those those groups, adoption, foster parenting groups that are the primarily moms posting and get resources from. But dads need help, too. And the old joke wives always say that they accused their husbands of never asking for directions when we're traveling anywhere or reading the directions when we're building anything at home, it's part of getting to all of that, but but the dads aren't great at asking for help. So one of the things we want to do is create a space where dads can lean on other dads in sort of in a private way. So so we were starting something called Empowered Dads Mentoring Group. You know, the genesis of that, the idea is your hope circle that you do for moms. You and I talked about this and you said, hey, I think there's there's a need for this for dads. Do you want to do it? And then I said yes, and take a little bit longer to get it in the air than I'd hope, but in this group, we're going to, like, like I want to challenge the dads to do better. I want to challenge the dads to lean into it more, to provide the kind of environment to to help facilitate the kind of environment in their homes where their children can heal. Not only do the children feel safe, but their spouses feel safe as well. So so it'll be there'll be discussions and they're just throwing questions out will be challenges and they'll be videos. We'll pick some books to go through, books that have changed the way I view the world. You know, like we talked earlier in the episode, Kayla and I have a company where we have training and classes, so we'll have discounts for the products we have. We'll have some giveaways like free registrations for classes, free one on one coaching, things of that that nature and and as as things kind of try to open up more now, I have some other ideas, but my wife cautions me that I shouldn't share my ideas in a public forum until they're more than ideas. But, um, but yeah, we're excited about that. It's much needed. And we kind of informally do this with with a group of dads across the country. We kind of check in on each other and stuff. And so I'm happy to do it formally now. And yeah, I'm just really excited about getting about it being underway.

[00:35:42.700] - Lisa Qualls

Well, I'm really excited because, you know, as you mentioned, I have the hope circle for adoptive moms, which is my private membership Facebook group, which any of you moms out there listening, I would absolutely love for you to join us, but I get so many moms saying, wow, I love this so much, I wish there was something for my husband. And it happens over and over and as I thought about that, I thought, well, clearly I cannot start a group for dads and you were the person who came to my mind. And I'm so happy to see this happening. So I look forward to watching that group grow and I just thank you so much for being here today.

[00:36:21.160] - Ryan North

Oh, thank you so much for having me on and for everything you do and for all the ways that you inspire Kayla and I, we appreciate you, Lisa.

[00:36:34.360] - Melissa Corkums

That was a great conversation with Ryan, I really appreciated their adoption story and just how it was both of them kind of from different angles and the way that God just kind of worked in their life to bring adoption to fruition and then just everything that they've learned. And I also appreciated how candidly he just talked about learning how to parent differently and how he really knew nothing coming into fatherhood. And of course, now he's teaching dads and mentoring them and what a fantastic journey.

[00:37:08.980] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, he and Kayla are just great people to know, so I would just encourage you all to follow them. You can hear more from Ryan on the Empowered Parent podcast and you can read his thoughts at One Big Happy Home. You can also find them on Facebook and Instagram as @onebighappyhome. So pretty easy to find, I would say. You can find links to all of these places to connect with Ryan in the show notes for today's episode as well as a link to his new Empowered Dads group. So if you want more information on that, you can find it all in our show notes at [theadoptionconnection.com/138](http://theadoptionconnection.com/138).

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

[00:37:58.810] - Melissa Corkums

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.

[00:38:08.980] - Lisa Qualls

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

[00:38:16.150] - Melissa Corkums

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