

I am terrified to post this, but I know that I can't pretend that all is perfect and well. I also know that there are lots of families who are in the exact same place that we are. ❤️ You are not alone, I see you.

I've been with him here before; sitting on a hard bench with a judge staring down.

Last time, he sat beside me holding a toy truck while his sturdy legs swung back and forth, and back and forth in the adult chair. I remember that he kept tipping his head toward mine and would reach and pat my cheek with his chubby, toddler fingers.

My hands held nervous sweat and shaky fingers tightly in my lap. I stood to take a vow to give him our last name and to call him son.

And as we left, I thought the hard was over. I thought that with the closing of the courtroom doors and the signatures on the adoption paperwork, that we were leaving the hurt, the dark and the childhood trauma behind. I thought my love would fix everything.

But today, I sit on a hard courtroom bench in the public section and he's so big now. He sits by himself as a defendant against horrible juvenile crimes. Crimes with victims and destruction. This time his feet touch the floor, his angry body fills the chair and his eyes do not find mine. His fingers are gripped tightly in his lap as the judge reads his charges out loud.

Behind him I sit, my heartbeat stutters and slows as each count is read. I don't know how to do this. This was never taught in our foster care classes. We did not leave the hard behind, it followed us home that day we left the courtroom.

And yet, all I see is the two-year old boy. The boy who loved dirt and bugs. The boy who smelled of sunshine in my lap and had a lick of hair that never stayed in place. The boy I vowed to love as my son. There's a knife edge line between love and hate and today I balance between the two. He has hurt us all badly, horribly, irreparably and yet I love the little boy. He is a victim who has now created more victims. There was not enough love to fix things....I could not out-parent or outrun the trauma....I failed.

Last week I had a mom ask me, "When do you give up?" And today I wonder, is this the moment? Is today the day?

The sentence is read and his rigid frame slumps while the heart in my chest squeezes the hope from my veins.

Is this when I give up? Is today the day?

And my son is led from the room in handcuffs and I fear I will vomit.

That night the phone rings,

"Will you accept a call from an inmate at the Department of Corrections", asks the tinny recorded voice.

"Yes", I state and the line goes quiet and is filled with the shuffling noise of a shifting body and quiet breaths.

My son's trembling voice fills the silent void, "Mom?"

"I'm still here" I answer back.

And once again, my fingers are gripped sweaty tight and my heart beats steady cadence with each word.

It feels so hopeless.

But I've been here before.

Today is not the day to give up.

(Children are not born resilient)