The Long-Term Effects of
Adoption and Sexual Abuse
By
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Adoption, when paired with abuse stains the soul like blood on white linen — forever ghostly invisible.

Adoption—even when it is loving and deeply well-intentioned—can leave a profound wound. When it occurs before a child can reason, at the level of core identity, adoption can be remembered as abandonment that

"is my fault."

If there had been real support around my adoption, the abuse could have been stopped. I could have begun healing while I was still a child. I could have spent more of my life having safety, happiness, and health instead of learning how to survive without them.

A therapist asked me to share my childhood abuse experiences with men incarcerated for sexual offenses. I heard clear beliefs in their responses. Some:

- acknowledged the harm they caused and wanted to change
- believed they were entitled to whatever they wanted
- believed society was wrong
- believed their actions were loving and beautiful - this is the group I'm addressing.

Your desire erased consent before I understood what consent meant. From four to twelve, my body learned that compliance was a condition of safety. By fifteen, I was living inside compulsions that felt like desire—but weren't.

- I would not have chosen to seduce elderly men in my teens
- I would never have chosen to wear my sexuality like a price tag
- I would never have chosen to deny myself pleasure because pain felt more deserved than kindness
- I did not learn; I had a right to say no
- I would not have waited until my sixties to have a healthy sexual relationship

These were not choices. These were long-term adaptations for survival.

A barrier to healing is society's refusal to face a hard truth. Children can appear complicit by following sexualized pathways to get safety, attention, and approval—not because a child wants sex, but because they want to survive. We become victims who adapt brilliantly to impossible circumstances.

When sexual abuse is layered on top of abandonment, survival itself becomes conditional. Love becomes transactional. All behavior is tied to survival.

In my twenties, after another abandonment, I had no money and nowhere to go. A restaurant owner hired me. I slept in the restaurant believing he didn't know. He and his wife offered me a place to stay temporarily because he did know.

I replied, *"Thank you for not trying to rape me."*

He started to cry—he understood that sentence meant this was the standard I had learned to expect from men.