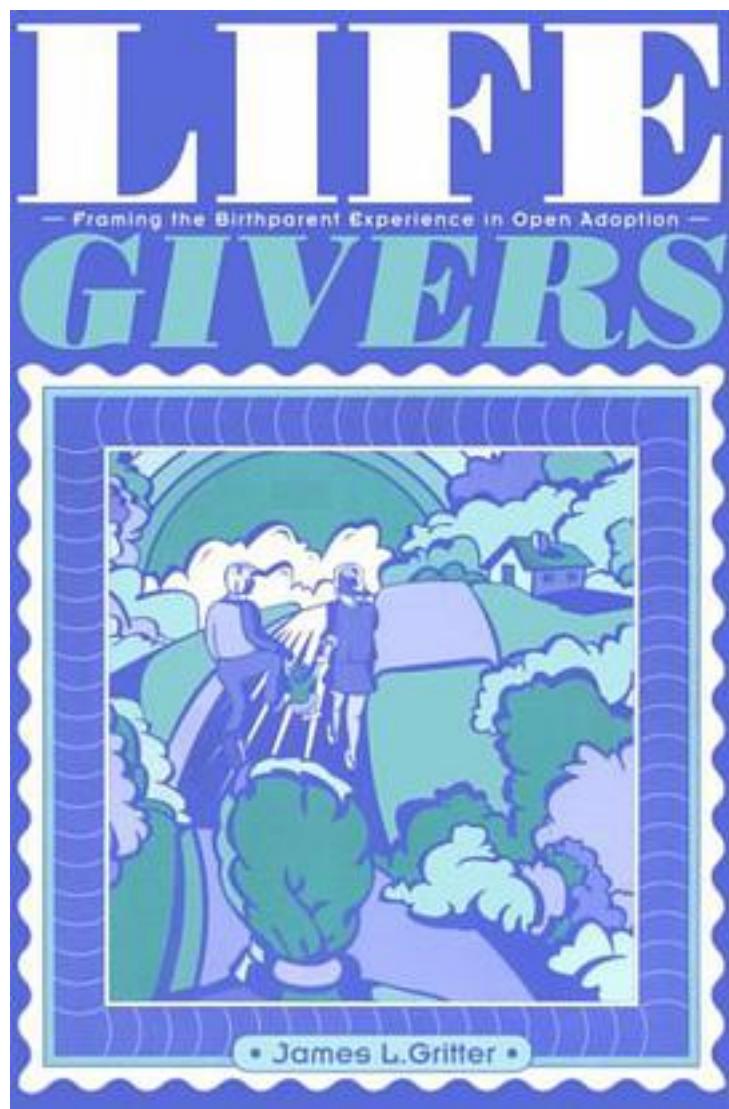


Lifegivers



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著者:Gritter, James L.

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No one seems sure what to make of birthparents. Most of the time, birthparents are simply discounted; the adoption system is pleased when they fade into the woodwork. We seldom afford birthparents an influential or enduring place in the adoption process. In *Lifegivers: Framing the Birthparent Experience in Open Adoption*, open adoption practitioner James Gritter examines all the ways in which birthparents are marginalized. He provides a glimpse of the birthparents' emotional roller coaster ride as they struggle with grief, ambivalence, and regret. Most importantly, he makes the persuasive case that if the institution of adoption exists to benefit children, then adopted children are best served when birthparents and adoptive parents work together to ensure that the birthparents remain a part of their children's lives. Gritter challenges us to treat everyone involved in the adoption process -- birthparents, adoptive families, and, above all, the children -- with honor and respect.

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