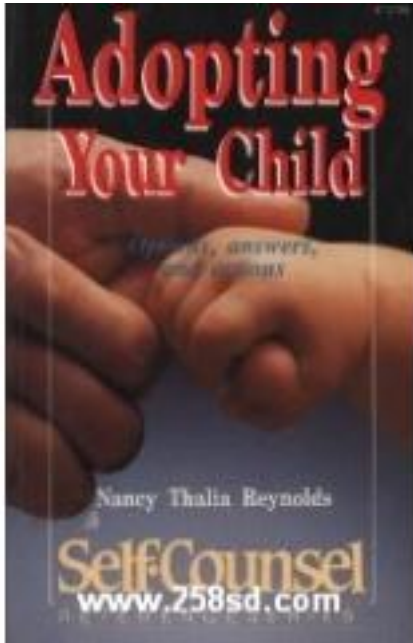


Adopting Your Child: Options, Answers, and Actions



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出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780889082953

When my husband and I began to explore adoption as a way of building our family I pictured a simple straightfor-ward process. I knew it could take a year or more from the time we signed on with an agency until we had our baby and that there would be plenty of frustrations along the way. But if we were patient I thoughti one day the magic phone call would come from our agency telling us \ "your baby is ready for you.\ " My mental picture couldn t have been further from the way it really happened -- or usually happens. Two years after we startedi we were indeed adoptive parentsi but of a baby adopted independently from Brazili without agency help. While we were thrilled with

the final
resultsi¼Œ we found ourselves following many aggravatingi¼Œ
expensivei¼Œ and unnecessary dead ends before we got there.
Although we sought and received help from a succession of
agenciesi¼Œ in the end we found our baby through networking
with other adoptive parents. Over the two yearsi¼Œ I frequently
drew on my legal and advocacy experience to help us outi¼Œ and
I often wondered how adoptive parents managed who didn t
have my background.
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