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## backtalk



By Tanna Guthrie

## What about Kris?

**K**ris\* is 14 years old and can't live without music, but he's living without the love of parents who want him for always. I read about him in *The Kansas City Star*, where they publish bios of children in need of adoption. There was something about his eyes that made me call the toll-free number. He looks like my son and my husband, at that age.

I believe it was Tiger Woods who said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Or maybe that was Socrates. I sometimes get the two confused. For the past couple of years, I've thought of becoming a foster or adoptive parent. It pains me to think of children who have no one, especially the older ones who aren't cuddly. I see their faces and think, "I hope someone takes care of them." What if that someone is me?

It's a family affair. My son, Sterling, says he'd like a younger brother. My husband, Jeff, has joined me in the adoption process, filling out the weekly booklets before our meetings with Christine – the social worker who decides if we're fit to be parents.

There's fear. What if I can't love another child the way I love Sterling. What if he doesn't love us?

Twenty years ago, I left Miami, fired from a radio station and dumped by my long-time boyfriend. After the firing and breakup, I checked into a fleabag hotel, trying to figure out my life. Although it was on South Beach, it wasn't where the pretty people hung out. It was the last stop for the down and out. While there, I befriended a 5-year-old boy named Joshua. His mother was delusional and neglectful. I fed and read to Joshua, and he provided the spark to keep me going. When I got a job back in Kansas City, saying goodbye to him was one of the hardest things I've ever done. I often felt that I failed him. I should have convinced his mom to let him come with me, to a better life. I told myself that I was single and emotionally fragile but, really, I was scared to take on the responsibility of another life.

Maybe it's time to stop being afraid.

*Tanna is the afternoon host on 98.1 KUDL. She's also the co-founder of the auction division of Prudential Kansas City Realty and a charity fundraising auctioneer. She's incredibly lucky to be married to such a kind-hearted man as Jeff and mother to a 15-year-old who's wise beyond his years. She can be reached at 913-568-4888.*

*\*Not his real name.*

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