

Belonging to Motherhood



**Honoring What Was Missed
Tending What Is Now**

A reflection for women mothering through adoption

Welcome!

Becoming a mother--however it happens—is a profound transformation.
And yet, so much of this experience goes unnamed...especially in adoption.

You may have felt grief, disorientation, or a quiet sense that something was missed.
Even after doing “the work.”

You're not imagining it.

And you're not alone.

There is nothing wrong with you.

There is a name for this becoming—**matrescence**. *Just like adolescence marks the transition from child to adult, matrescence names the threshold into motherhood. But*, most of us were never supported through it. When it comes to adoption, it's almost completely missing.

This guide is a gentle place to pause to reflect on your own becoming. It's an invitation to begin tending what may have never been witnessed.

Wherever you are in your motherhood journey, this is a meaningful place to begin.

A little about us...



Between us, we have 48 years of mothering –birth, international adoption, foster/adoption, blended family. Our lived experience tells us that adoption is multi-dimensional, with much of it remaining unnamed.

We come from different backgrounds and experiences, but together we're committed to creating spaces where we explore not just the universality of motherhood, but also the unique complexities of adoption. We believe in the power of women's wisdom and circle wisdom to heal and thrive in motherhood. We believe in you. We are you. And we'd love to welcome you into a MotherCircle one day.

Karla & Michelle

Honoring the Journey of Becoming Mother

In many cultures, becoming a mother is understood as a rite of passage. It's a profound transformation that unfolds over time. These passages are not just events.

They are processes that change us—body, heart, identity, and place in the world.

✦ Separation

A letting go of who you were before

Sometimes this is clear, sometimes subtle.

✦ Transition

The threshold or crossing—often uncertain, disorienting, or tender. In adoption, this moment isn't always clearly marked, but it is still deeply real.

✦ Integration

Being received and supported in who you are becoming. To be witnessed, nourished, and welcomed into this new version of yourself. A time to make meaning and begin to claim your wisdom.

In our culture, this final stage—integration—is often missing.

Many mothers are expected to keep going...even though something fundamental has changed. In adoption, the journey can hold its own rhythm—often a long season of waiting, followed by a sudden shift into motherhood.

And then, so much is asked of you. Tending to your child's needs—physical, emotional, relational—while creating safety, stability, and connection in your home.

In the midst of this, there may be little space to process your own experience. And often very few who seem to understand.

And so, it can feel like grief, confusion, or disconnection living just beneath the surface of all that has changed in you.

Like nature, motherhood moves in cycles and seasons.

We may return to earlier parts of our journey that were never fully tended. This is not going backward. It is the body and heart asking for completion. It is all the unseen parts of motherhood waiting to be seen, heard and held. Returning is not failure. It is part of the rite itself.



What Mothers Need

As mothers, we are shaped across many layers—body, heart, relationships, identity, and more. Motherhood touches all of us. Not just what we do, but how we live, feel, and move through the world.

In the early days of becoming a mother, and in the many seasons that follow, our needs span the physical, emotional, and unseen parts of ourselves.

Especially in adoption, where so much can happen all at once, tending to these needs is not extra—it is what supports us in finding our center and sustains us.

6 Universal Pillars for All Mothers

- ✦ Restorative Rest
- ✦ Nourishing Food
- ✦ Community & Connection
- ✦ Loving Touch
- ✦ Connection with Nature
- ✦ Movement

Tending to these needs is not a luxury. It is essential. They are how we come back to ourselves—again and again.

They create connection.
They help us find nervous system resonance.
They remind us we are not meant to do this alone.



These needs don't belong only to the beginning of a motherhood journey.

They return across the seasons of motherhood--asking to be met in new ways over time with each transition.

Reflection

Tending to our own stories, hearts & needs IS caring for our children

Take a few quiet moments and gently reflect:

- Is there anything about your journey that has never been fully acknowledged—by yourself or others?
- Which layers of your motherhood (physical, emotional, relational, spiritual, sexual etc.) feel the most well-supported right now?
- Which layers feel tender, quiet, or harder to access?
- Which of the pillars/universal needs do you feel were met in your early mothering/post adoption experience?
- As you reflect on where you are right now in your life and mothering, is there one of these pillars that is calling you? What is one small step you could take in bringing that support into your life?



Integrating the unseen parts
can heal through generations.

These are your gems.

It's never too late. ✨

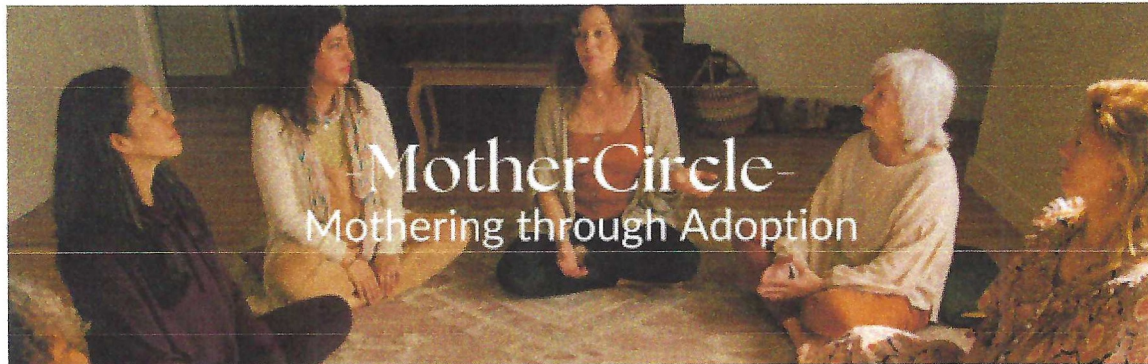
Each season will offer you
an invitation.

"It was a joy to truly be seen by mothers who shared the unique experiences of mothering children born to, and loved by, another mother... There is joy in solidarity, in not having to explain, but simply seeing recognition in the eyes and spirits of other women. That witnessing, and being softly held, was healing." --Jessica



Mother circle for adoptive moms was such a gift. Having the other women understand the nuances, challenges and love of adoption was so refreshing. --Erika

An invitation to join us...



MotherCircle is an 8-week guided course for women who are mothering children they didn't birth—through adoption. It's a unique space to explore, clarify, and **gently metabolize the often unseen and complex layers of your mothering experience.**

Together, we create a container in which we tend to what is rarely spoken or named—the physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, archetypal, and ancestral dimensions of mothering. Some are universal, others uniquely yours. We also honor the tender and complicated truths woven into the reality of raising a child born from another woman's womb.

"The best part of MotherCircle was showing up as is, not having to delve into detailed adoption explanations and story, being seen and heard and sharing in the collective as such. Profound thanks to Michelle and Karla for creating such a sacred and needed space for us." - Kimberly



"MotherCircle has given me a place to process some of the pain and shame I have experienced around becoming and being a Mother-like no other place that I have experienced before. The difference was the openness and sharing from other mothers making it feel safe for me to be vulnerable and open and therefore the experience begins to be witnessed, understood and supported; the antidote to shame. Thank you all!" - Rhonda

*Find out more and join the next
MotherCircle*

MotherCircleAdoption.com

