Talking About First Parents: Finding the Balance

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I like to recommend foster and adoptive parents to also talk well about their child's first parents. By this, everything has already been said. Because I didn't just write "speak well", but "also speak well", which means: "don't hide the bad sides".

Nevertheless, I would like to go into more detail because a foster mother spoke to me about this issue today. She is the mother of a 10-year-old son who came to her husband and her family as a 1-year-old severely traumatized. I don't want to go into detail about what was done to the little boy by his first parents.

I can understand his mother having a problem hearing me say in a radio interview that the adoptive and foster parents should please talk positively about the first parents. (I think I unfortunately forgot to say the word "also".)

“Our boy needs distance from his parents and protection from them. Every victim of violence is granted that, but it's often different with foster children," she told me.

I'm on her side. To depict the behavior of such parents only positively towards the child would have devastating consequences. No, the evil that the parents have done to the child must be allowed to be named. This gives the child security. (The fact that there must also be consequences such as visits only under supervision or a ban on contact is another topic.)

In general, it is clear to me - and I emphasize this as often as possible - that there must have been major problems in the child's first family, to put it mildly. Otherwise it would not have been given away or removed by social workers.

Nevertheless, as an adopted child, it is important for me that my first parents are also spoken about in a positive way. If I only hear bad things about them (this can also be non-verbal!) or nothing at all, then it does something to my self-esteem.

By the way, when we talk about balance I see the greater danger in speakin too badly or not enough positively about the first parents. There may be enough reason for this and the temptation may be great, but nevertheless: Talk also positively about my parents! And I'd be happy if you could think of more than just "They gave birth to you."