

# A phone call that changed everything: the day we first looked into our son's eyes

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

So the Chinese proverb goes.

A single step or a single phone call.

Eight years ago today, John and I had been waiting to become parents for more than four years. We had started the adoption process a few months earlier. Just before Christmas, we finished our home study, but we knew we had a long wait ahead of us. We were just beginning to assemble the paperwork to send to China, and then our real wait would begin.

It was a chilly Sunday afternoon, and we had the whole day to ourselves. We took a leisurely trip to the grocery store and headed home for a relaxing evening. As we unloaded the groceries, we noticed a voice mail on our home phone.

The message was from our social worker. She had a referral to share with us.

A little boy.

What? That couldn't be right. We weren't ready to be matched.

I called her back to tell her she was mistaken. But she wasn't.

She was emailing us the file of a baby boy in China. We had 24 hours to say yes. I scribbled down the details she shared over the phone: his age, where he lived, his Chinese name, how very cute he was.

I hung up, and John and I looked at each other in a daze. I had just started a new job, and John was about to begin a new job, too. Would we be able to take the time off to travel and to welcome a child into our lives? We had thought this call wouldn't come for months—or maybe a year.

We were so overwhelmed and overcome, we didn't even open the email right away. We stumbled around the house, lost in thought, thinking of a child on the other side of the world. It sounds crazy to think about because we had waited for years to become parents, and suddenly it seemed so soon.



But, of course, we sat down together and opened the email. We only had dialup internet access, and it...took...well...forever to open the file. It could have been 10 minutes. It might have been 45. But then, at last, there he was. From his little black and white photo, his eyes met ours.

He was the most beautiful child I had ever seen.

John and I read every detail—his favorite foods, how big he was, his medical file, what he enjoyed most. I had never met this little boy, but I felt a connection to him even then.

We had never discussed boys' names—not once—but we looked at each other and immediately knew this little one's American name, the name we would give him in baptism, the name that fits him so perfectly, the name he has made his own.

"You'll fall in love with a picture," an adoptive mother had told me a few months earlier.

It was true. From those first moments, we started to fall in love with a child we had never met. And God gave us more than enough time to prepare to meet him, and to prepare him to meet us, 11 months later.

Last night, after our sons were in bed, I went to make sure they were sleeping soundly. I looked down on our baby boy's face. He's 9 now, and he's so grown-up in so many ways. But I still see in him the face of that child I first saw on that computer screen eight years ago. And when I look into his eyes today, I am in awe of how he came into our lives.

That day we were worried about whether we were ready. Of course we were nervous. Becoming parents is an extraordinary responsibility—and an extraordinary blessing.

We were also full of excitement and joy. God's timing is so often not ours. His plan doesn't always make sense to us. But it's always better than what we had in mind. And He has walked that journey with us—from that very first phone call eight years ago today.

