

Jena Heath: Lucy, I'm going to ask you one more question then I'm going to ask your mom some questions, okay? How old are you?

Lucy Berry: Three...four.

Jena: You like to be a wiggly worm. You like the iPhone. You like to watch your shows on YouTube. What's your favorite show?

Lucy: *PJ Masks*.

Jena: *PJ*, that's a new one since my daughter was --

Lucy: -- Baba find it.

Patricia Berry: Baba found it.

Jena: Baba found it. Good for Baba. He's so smart.

Patricia: Where do you go in the week? Do you take ballet?

Lucy: Take ballet.

Patricia: Can you show them how you do ballet?

Jena: That's a plié. Very good.

Patricia: Relève. Good job.

Jena: Now, I'm going to ask your mom some questions. Is that okay?

Lucy: I'll do it.

Jena: You'll do it? We'll do it together. How's that? Can you tell us a little bit about your decision --

Lucy: -- I was a baby.

Patricia: You were a baby, yes.

Lucy: Mama and Baba picked me up.

Patricia: Mama and Baba picked you up.

Jena: I'm going to ask Mama now to tell me about that. Why China?

Patricia: The criteria fit us.

Jena: In what way?

Patricia: Their financials, the timeframe.

Jim Berry: Time in country.

Patricia: Time in country was a big factor. We both worked. A lot of countries wanted you a couple trips. A lot of countries wanted you to stay a month. They were like, "Two weeks and you can come home." That was a big factor for us. Actually, before we even really signed the paperwork I always kind of had a heart for China. I don't know why. It was just a thing that we had talked about.

Jena: Had you read about it?

Patricia: Yeah, here and there in stories. Adoption was near and dear to my heart because of my niece and nephew. If Romania still would've been open, might have even leaned towards Romania, but it wasn't. That wasn't even an option.

Jena: So you went with China?

Patricia: We went with China.

Jena: You said the financials. Was it that it's relatively affordable compared to a lot of the other countries?

Patricia: It is. Absolutely. We're both middle class working people.

Jena: What do you guys do?

Patricia: He's a plant manager. I'm a hairdresser.

Jena: You got to think about the bottom line. Most of us do.

Patricia: There are some people that don't have to. It was a factor for us. Leaving our jobs for a month wasn't feasible.

Jena: How was it at work leaving for two weeks? How were your colleagues about it all and your boss and everything? Were they excited for you?

Patricia: Everybody in our work, our family was -- he had just started a new job. He didn't have the vacation time. They're like, "Don't worry about it. Paid. Bye." They were wonderful about it.

Jena: That's great. That's nice. It's nice when you have that support.

Patricia: Oh, yeah. Of course my family would support me with --

Jena: -- two nieces from Romania. How old are they again?

Patricia: My nephew just turned seventeen. My niece is eighteen.

Jena: You said two weeks. How long did you wait from the time you put your paperwork in to the time you got your referral?

Patricia: We put our paperwork in in September. We got our referral at the end of March.

Jena: Of what year?

Patricia: Started the home study, signed with the agency, September 2012. We accepted the referral, I believe it was March 28th, 2013.

Jena: Wow, that went fast.

Patricia: We went in September to get her.

Jena: Was she on the special needs, waiting child?

Patricia: Yes. Cleft lip and palate.

Jena: Cleft lip and palate. Tell me what that's involved, or will involve, in terms of medical care. She's just had a surgery.

Patricia: She has had two surgeries in China on the lip. Then when she came home, she had her palate fixed, her tonsils out, and now the pharyngeal, so three since she's been home.

Jena: She's had five surgeries total so far. She's four years old. Wow. Was it a good process in that did you have information about what it would involve? Did you pretty much understand?

Patricia: Yes. We were prepared for that. I think of special needs as a major handicap. Cleft lip and palate, to me, is not a handicap. It was a couple surgeries.

Jena: Did you think about doing that because you were aware that the wait otherwise was much longer?

Patricia: Absolutely. If we could help a child that could get the surgery that they needed and live a "normal life," then fine. We can do that. We have insurance. Why not? It's feasible.

Jena: Since she's been home, what was it like when you brought her home? What have been the surprises? What have been the challenges? How has it gone?

Patricia: We really didn't have many surprises, honestly.

Jim: She's a typical four-year-old. Everything about her is a surprise. There are surprises all the time. As far as any major surprise, as far as any medical history that wasn't disclosed, anything like that, nothing.

Jena: Basically, it all went pretty much like clockwork?

Patricia: We know we're not the norm, but it did. She bonded with, especially me, from day one. The minute she saw me, she walked right up to me and put her hands up for me to pick her up. I was not prepared for that. Even our guide at the time was like, "Oh, my god. That never happens." If you believe in meant to be or God or whatever, it was what was supposed to happen.

Jena: Had you been prepared by the agency for the bonding and attachment stuff?

Patricia: Yes. I pictured nights in the hotel crying or inconsolable. This is what I had in my head. I was scared to death. I was scared to death that medically something else was going to go wrong that they weren't disclosing. I had a whole bunch of fears.

Jim: We had prepared ourselves for worst-case scenario. Throughout the process we had to go through a lot of different training, read a lot of different books, especially about bonding and attachment issues. We had prepared ourselves for the worst-case scenario. Maybe that's why it seemed to go so smoothly is because we were prepared for the worst.

Jena: How old are you both? Do you mind if I ask?

Patricia: I'm forty-one.

Jim: I'm forty-four.

Jena: Had you tried on your own? Did you arrive at the decision through having --

Patricia: -- Yeah. I had three miscarriages. After the third I said, "Nope. Done." Thanks to my grandfather who had passed away, as soon as I had my third miscarriage my sister came over and pulled him aside and said, "Tell her when she's ready, but you guys have the money to adopt now."

Jim: He had left money. He had passed away about two weeks before the third miscarriage. He had left a substantial amount of money that would cover the adoption. We found out about it the morning we came back from the hospital with the third miscarriage. Really, the

whole process has just had this whole feeling of it was meant to be and was supposed to happen.

Jena: Let me ask you this question I always ask everybody at the end of the interview. Is there anything you'd like to tell people, you'd like people to know about adopting from China or adopting in general? Do you get asked many questions? You have a family where international adoption was not unusual to the family. Did you have concerns, for instance, about having a biracial, multiracial family? Were there any questions or concerns? Do you get asked any dumb questions, any of that kind of thing?

Patricia: There's always dumb questions. "She must've cost you a lot." I have learned that I walk away from those kind of people. I'm a pretty blunt person. If you ask me an intelligent question, I will answer it. Most of the time they say, "That's great that you saved a child." His standard answer is, "She really saved us." [emotional] It wasn't about saving.

Jim: It was about making a family. That was our goal, to have a child we could raise together.