

# UNLIKELY DAD

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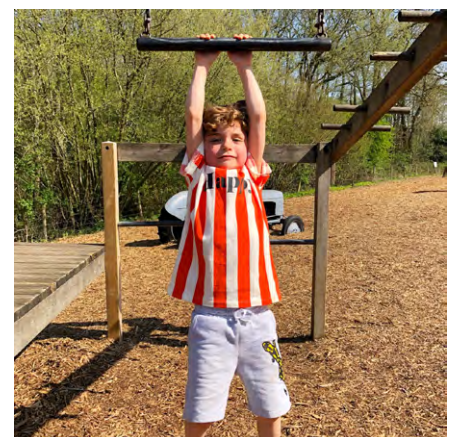
[www.theunlikelydad.com](http://www.theunlikelydad.com)

## Father's Day is coming up and it often makes me think what does being a dad mean? What does being a gay dad mean? How about a gay, adoptive dad?

My husband and I started our journey to becoming dads in July 2014. Not to bypass it in a blasé fashion as it is very intense and a little bit of a rollercoaster, but within nine months our baby boy (aged fourteen months) came home to us. It was like our own version of a full-term pregnancy with contractions and labour pains thrown in for good measure! We were so amazed at how the process went for us and how quickly we found our little boy (but I like to think he found us too...) for us the meetings, assessments, training sessions were all a joy. Each part just felt like we were getting closer to creating our family. We got to have training and workshops all centred around building our family and we felt really supported. It all felt exciting, like we were on the cusp of something amazing. And we were.

It was the most surreal thing I think I have ever been through. And before we could even take a breath our beautiful boy, Kai, was home with us. Rather quickly, we got into our flow. Or make that, we HAD to get into our flow. I took two and a half months off and my husband took the year of parental leave off work (and never returned...lucky man!) It was without a doubt the best two and a half months of my life. Also probably the most terrifying too, suddenly having to look after this beautiful little human. But from the get-go I was learning what it meant to be a dad. I was asking myself questions I never thought I would, like what kind of dad did I want to be? I was suddenly thinking of so much more than what I had to think of before. My brain, and heart, was on overload.

From going through the process which felt at a really good pace for us to being approved to adopt to then starting the matching process... It was all a steep learning curve. We were thrown in at the deep end with Kai. I guess every adopter is. There (more often than not) isn't a new born handed to you that sleeps, poops and feeds... we had our 14-month-old boy who was mobile, loud and so inquisitive (I loved it! still do...) There was no sleeping baby needing a boob every hour or so, the stork delivered us a cruising/







crawling little boy who demanded every waking minute of our day. Luckily, he came fully loaded with a routine which we'll be eternally grateful to his foster carer for! From day one he has loved his sleep. Over the four years we've been a family we've certainly had our fair share of insane sleep phases. But he always goes down to sleep wonderfully.

So, it's now been four years since we became a family. Wow. Four years. When I say it like that I can't quite believe it. The clichés are true. You literally cannot remember what it's like before they arrived. Four years since we became dads and we've accomplished and learned a hell of a lot. The toddler groups, the playdates, dashes to A&E when he got a pea stuck up his nose, the sleepless nights, wonderful beach holidays, eating sand, getting sand in his eyes, nappy explosions, grabbing my willy when we have a bath together, the clinging onto our legs as he doesn't want to be dropped off at nursery, the "daddy cuddle!!" when I head to work in the morning as he tries to stall me leaving the house and the "daddy home, daddy home!!" as I come through the door at the end of the day... it's all just so, so priceless. And hard. Do not be mistaken, it's the hardest role I have ever done and ever will do. But one I gladly do and will do for the rest of my life. See, when I became his dad my identity changed. I was no longer Tom who wanted to do everything for himself. To have more city breaks. To have all day to myself and swan around. That changes. And you have to be ready and willing to shed that old skin to allow for something new. And that something new is amazing. It's not without its challenges yes... and I love getting a day to myself now and then like you wouldn't believe but at the same time, I am longing for him come pick up time. It's the way of parenting, I'm told.

It may have been four years now, but this is just the beginning. We have the rest of our lives together. New experiences, new challenges and the wonderful teenage years all to look forward to. And I really do look forward to it.

I might have adopted Kai. He may not have grown inside of me. But he grew in my heart. The universe had such a plan when it put us both on this path. Kai is my son. I am his dad. It really is that simple.

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