



SO WHAT IS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE ANYWAY?

Bari Benjamin

BEFORE I TRAVELED TO MOSCOW 16 years ago to adopt my two-year-old brown-eyed baby girl, I fantasized what she and *we* would be like together. I imagined she would be cuddly, sweet and feminine, wearing frilly dresses and brightly colored barrettes in her carefully brushed hair. I dreamed how I would hold her in my arms at bedtime, rock her to sleep and softly sing lullabies until her eyes gently closed. I pictured her running to me when frightened, and I would swoop her up, crooning “sha, sha” in her ear, until her heartbeat slowed and she was calm.

Because I am a clinical social worker and had practiced psychotherapy for 15 years, I felt confident I could handle any difficulties that could arise. No, I didn’t work