

Making Better Babies



Professor Lee Silver and journalist Meredith Vieira, in the roles of a husband and wife expecting a baby, face the troubling decision of whether to bring to term an embryo that has a chance of having a serious genetic defect.

JOHN HOCKENBERRY:

What I wanna focus on here is you have said that somehow it reflects on the parenting of these two people, if they were to make a decision going in to a test like amniocentesis that there were certain outcomes that would result in termination.

ADRIENNE ASCH:

I want to see my friends be the best parents that they can be. I think that a child with a disability can be as gratifying a child as any other child. But if they don't, that has to be the decision that they make for all kinds of reasons.

LEE SILVER:

But our goal is to have a child. I mean, if it's not this time, it will be the next time hopefully.

ADRIENNE ASCH:

Well, no. Your goal it sounds...

LEE SILVER:

And don't you think we'll be good parents?

ADRIENNE ASCH:

...as though your goal is to have a particular kind of child.

LEE SILVER:

We're not trying to have a particular kind of child.

MEREDITH VIEIRA:

Well, you sort of are.

LEE SILVER:

No, I'm just trying to...

ADRIENNE ASCH:

I think you are. Yeah, I think that you have to be.

MEREDITH VIEIRA:

You're sort of harassing me to do the test.

ADRIENNE ASCH:

I think you have to be honest and say that you are. You wanna avoid certain kinds of children that you think will have bad lives.

LEE SILVER:

There's no way I can predict what the child will become, except that if we have a test and we can avoid certain medical problems, then that's great.

PAUL MILLER::

But my living a healthier life, does that mean to you living a better life?

FAYE WATTLETON:

Yes, it's better than going to the hospital and not being able to breath.
And being free of that is better.

ADRIENNE ASCH:

It's different, but I don't know that it is better.

FAYE WATTLETON:

Do any of us as prospective parents want to bring a child into the world and see that child... Life brings with it its own set of sufferings without our getting involved in that. But do we knowingly want to participate in that? Wouldn't we like to have, yes, a healthy child?