

## A brother and sister reunited – his perspective

I was touched by my sister's article that I decided I would like to give my perspective to anybody out there in a similar position to myself. Hopefully the two articles can be read at the same time.

Our story may seem like a sad story that may touch people emotionally or maybe it only affects those who can truly relate.

I was born in 1969 in a country hospital and after being held in the hospital for 2 months due to my mother trying all ways to be able to keep me but with all avenues expired, I was adopted out to my adoptive parents who were unable to have children themselves. I also have an adoptive sister who just so happens to be of similar age to my natural sister. We were both told from an early age that we were adopted because our natural parents loved us so much that they wanted us to have a life that they felt they couldn't provide themselves. We still to this day celebrate the day that we both arrived with our adoptive parents.

Throughout my life I have always wondered what my natural parents looked like, what similarities do I have? What behavioural traits in fact are hereditary? These thoughts were intensified when I was expecting my first child. There was always the times through growing up that many questions could not be answered. There were always these missing pieces that if I had the answers to I would have felt complete.

I often thought that because I was born in a country hospital there would be no hope of finding my natural mother. As for finding my father that was an even slimmer chance, as I did know that he was a married man that had an affair. I had this perception that she had been sent away to give birth without any family knowing, as it was socially unacceptable to have a child out of wedlock around the late sixties. Lucky for me abortion was not a big thing at the time.

I suppose the question I would often ask myself was "why was I given up?" What circumstances could lead my mother to make this decision, a decision that would in my mind live with her everyday. I would often wonder if she thought about me on my birthday and at Christmas etc.

I was very fortunate that I have had a very good life, never denied of any opportunities but not to the point of being spoilt either.

When I finally decided it was time to see if I could find my natural parents in 1998 I applied for my original birth certificate. This was helpful in that it had my mother's name on it. From this I thought the rest would be easy. Unfortunately electoral rolls weren't national until 1988 and since I now know my mother deceased in 1983 I had no earlier traces of where she was because I didn't know where she lived. I only had a name. I began to lose hope and I thought maybe the name on my birth certificate was not really hers. It was suggested to me to do a death search but for whatever reason I decided against it, emotionally I may not have wanted to do this because I was scared that this may be the end of my searching and had I done the search I would probably have stopped here. The Adoption Act of 2000 was the opening of information for me that has led me to solve those missing pieces of

my life. Unfortunately I was not aware of this information until 2006 and during this time my natural father has also passed away.

In May 2006 I found out I had 2 half brothers, I also knew my father would probably not be alive as he was 57 when I was born. I had another dilemma and that was I had my father's first name but not his surname. Luckily his name was not common and I had scratchy information about his schooling from a social history report filled out by my mother at the time of my adoption. This led me to ringing his school and thankfully due to the efforts of a lovely lady, I managed to get his surname in the space of 5 minutes. From this I knew I now had my half brothers' surname also and surely the rest would now fall into place. Another problem was I had no names or initials of my half brothers.

Whether it be a greater power helping me, I am not sure but I had found out that the women living next door to my mother at the time of her death still lived there and ironically shared the same surname. Naturally I initially thought she was related so I rang her. She was quite abrupt with me, as I may have brought up memories she had pushed aside but she did give me the name of the man my mother was living with at the time of her death. My mother had a son to him but unfortunately he drowned at the age of 4 ½. This man's name was uncommon thus he was easy to track down. On speaking with his wife I was told I actually had a full-blooded sister. I was determined to find my sister and quickly. She is married and her surname was not known. I devoted all spare time to finding my sister. It only took a couple of days.

With the efforts of my partner and the power of the Internet, we managed to find the death notice of my father in the paper; this gave me the names of my half brothers and my sister. From here it was then that I went to the electoral rolls to find where my half brothers lived. One was in Australia the other actually lives overseas (he was not going to be found easily). I was so excited with the findings I had to go and meet this half brother of mine. I had no telephone number, as he was not listed so it was a case of just turning up at the door. This I would not recommend but in my situation I had already found out that I was known about to all involved so it was a little easier.

I spoke with my sister that evening also but she had already been called by my half brother with the news. I met her the next day. It has been an emotional roller coaster with emotions that are hard to explain. Anger on the part that I was denied the opportunity to grow up with my sister, sadness at the situation that I never got to meet my mother and she never got to meet me, resentment at the system that kept information from me for so long and stopped my sister from finding me years ago when she had tried in 1990. For her the emotions are harder as she has known about me since she was young. I also missed the opportunity to meet my father and have feelings of being cheated. However I now have many years ahead to enjoy with my sister and half brothers and their families and them with mine.

I am not sure what it is but for me and my sister although we hardly know each other there does seem to be a special bond which I can't explain and if she ever reads this I want her to know how glad I am to have had this opportunity to start to get to know her even though it has been a long time coming, we can not dwell on what could have been and move forward. I love her with all my heart as she is a very special person and I am extremely lucky to have found her. To all those in similar situations, never give up hope, if you hit hurdles, persevere and keep going you may be surprised with what you find. All the best to those in similar situations I hope this can help others begin their search.

To Lisa who gave me the support through all of this I am forever grateful.