

Debra's Story

Debra had always encouraged her husband to seek contact with his birth family, but was not prepared for the impact his reunion with his siblings would have on her...

Hello,

I wanted to thank you for your article entitled "Partners of Adoptees". My husband and I have been married for 29 years and have 6 children. We were very content with our lives. Then it was turned up-side down when my husband's birth siblings found him. He was adopted at age 3 months to a wonderful loving couple. He grew up an only child but very happy. He never had an interest in finding his siblings or birth parents while his adoptive parents were still living out of respect for them. He knew he was adopted from a very early age. He was always taught to appreciate his birth mother by his adoptive mother. I encouraged him on several occasions to search for his birth family but he would have nothing to do with it.

One day he received a call from the state child welfare department that his siblings were searching for him. There were 15 of them! He was number 9. His birth father divorced his birth mother while she was 5 months pregnant with my husband and she found herself a single mother with 8 children under the age of 9 with a baby on the way! She put my husband up for adoption as she felt she had no choice. Six years later she remarried and had four more children adding up to a total of 13. Then his birth dad remarried and had three children. These three are not among the siblings who were searching for my husband. Unfortunately, his birth mom died a year and a half before the family found him.

Well, I encouraged my husband to at least receive mail from his birth family. We then could see the heart of love they had for him and that they only had good intentions. Our meetings were as follows. Three came to our home one evening. All went very well. I was more excited than my husband! Then a brother and his wife came for the day and this also went very well. We were then invited to his sister's camp to meet three more siblings. We spent 24 hours with them and had a wonderful time. Most of his siblings live near us but a few live about 1500 miles away including a sister and her daughter who did most of the searching for my husband. We had already planned a vacation near their home at a popular theme park resort so we invited his sister and niece to join us for a day. They informed us that they would be staying for four

days! My husband and I are pretty passive people and not likely to speak our minds so we went along with it.

Upon arriving, my husband's sister and niece met us at the airport and did not leave our side for three solid days. For the first two days things went pretty well. This sister, however, was very different from the other siblings we met. She was very possessive of my husband and physically affectionate. I understood her to be a very needy person who was thrilled to find her long-lost brother, so I gave them plenty of space to get acquainted. My husband had no problem with the physical affection and by the end of the second day, he felt comfortable enough to display what I would describe as undignified familiar behaviour with her which shocked and embarrassed me. I said nothing. I kept telling myself; "this is his sister", but my heart was saying "this is a stranger we met two days ago". The afternoon of the third day the physical behaviour became unbearable for me and I suffered through several hours of panic attacks as I tried to keep my self-control for the sake of my parents who were on vacation with us.

At 12:30 that third night I lost control of myself and suffered a breakdown which lasted till 4:30 in the morning. Needless to say my husband said goodbye to his sister and niece in the morning and they left. I saw my doctor when we got home and he put me on meds. Until I came across your article I could not understand what happened to me. I never saw it coming. No one at home seemed to understand. I started to see a family counsellor with my husband who is now very apologetic and is taking wonderful care of me. I am still struggling with all the emotions mentioned in your article. I know it has only been 2 months but I am anxious to be well. I can't believe that I went from one extreme to another so quickly. I was so happy for my husband and now I can't even think of seeing any of his birth family. He is being so gracious and putting the new family on hold while I heal. The new family are being very respectful and leaving us alone.

I am a follower of Christ and I know full well the importance of forgiveness and how anger and resentment must be put away from me if I expect to be whole again. If you have any more literature pertaining to my experience I would appreciate your help. Your article has already helped me so much. I now realize that I'm not crazy and other people experience the same thing I did. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and I hope to hear from you soon.

