

Benjamin

Coming to Terms with being Adopted

Text: Benjamin adopted from Brazil at 13 months old

I was actually adopted from Brazil, in the city of Belo Horizonte in 1989, so I'm now 32. Adopted by Australian parents, obviously, and moved to the Gold Coast. At the time of my adoption, I was actually one of 5,000 in my orphanage. So, I guess that feeling of very lucky, very lucky to be coming, and being plucked out of that one in 5,000.

From a young age, I was, kind of, within my own psychological, sort of, I guess, mindset, knowing that I was quite lucky to be here. Definitely shaped, I guess, how I was growing up. I actually have a brother, who was also adopted, He's a few years younger than I am, and he was adopted from Colombia. So, funnily enough, my adoptive father was also adopted. So yeah, I guess, growing up, it wasn't like there was some, sort of, pinnacle moment, where it's like, "By the way, you're adopted". It was quite obvious, you know, from the get go, that, that was part of our story, part of our journey. Which definitely shaped how I grew up, in terms of how I saw myself.

It was actually when I married, and had children of my own, that was when I felt like I'd made it in life. And obviously, a big part of that, is maybe, feeling like there's something that I missed early on, and I'm now going to create myself. Obviously, the fact that I could look into my baby's eyes, it's the first time in my life that I would look into the eyes of someone that's actually connected to me, and actually related, and maybe shares my eyes or my nose or different things. So, yeah, this here was definitely something enormous for me. Growing up, it was something I wanted to achieve, and then finally coming to that point, really did open up a lot of doors. And also, really made it quite clear, very clear that there was some work to be done internally.

If I wanted to be the best parent I could be, I really need to, maybe, go backwards and start having a look at, how am I showing up as a parent? How has, maybe, my adoption story, how has that influenced certain decisions I'm making, and, maybe, how I'm emotionally showing up and being able to be present, and emotionally present for the people in my life that matter? So, yeah, this one here is definitely something that was worth sharing.

From a young age, it wasn't I didn't feel safe, but obviously, there was something missing as far as security. So, I was a very quiet kid, very much a people pleaser. You know, very much, that seen not heard. 'Cause I thought don't rock the boat, be the perfect child, be very quiet, just do what you've got to do, stay in your lane. And then there's no reason why anyone would want to give you away. And obviously, you know, there's a whole bunch of abandonment stuff underlying there.

For me, it was, like, that feeling of you don't quite fit in any one place. So, for me, it was like, I was not Brazilian enough to be Brazilian, I was not the stereotypical Aussie of what, I guess, my subculture of where I was living and going to school, of what I looked like, or acted like. So, I was, like, not enough Aussie, to be considered Aussie. Not enough Brazilian, to be considered Brazilian. Not enough Afro, to be considered, like, Afro. So, where do you fit within that, sort of, bubble? So, you're, kind of, just bouncing around in a bit of limbo. That was definitely a feeling of what it was like for me.