

Chamila

Lifelong impacts of Abuse in Adoption

Text: Chamila adopted from Sri Lanka at 4 years old

I came out to Australia in 1978. I was born in 1974 and I came from Sri Lanka. So, I've pretty much been in Australia all my life.

I did experience trauma prior to going into the orphanage, as I had burns, cigarette burns, or cigar burns on my body, so I've got some kind of trauma. I have no idea why I was put up for adoption. I'm just assuming that possibly a pregnancy outside of marriage, or to do with the mum being way too young.

Many times as an adult, I've questioned why I came to Australia. I mean, mom always said that she wanted a little girl, but I kind of often wonder whether it was more she wanted, a servant. So, there was a lot of aspects of my childhood that I couldn't come to terms with or grips with. Like I, I could never understand why I had to do all the housework, or I had to do all the dishes. When I think about it now, I just don't really feel that I was actually treated per se like a daughter.

No I never felt safe because I never knew, when I was going to be abused. The one place that you should feel safe and feel protected, I wasn't, and I was quite, couldn't understand why my parents couldn't see the signs, when I would freak out about having to go somewhere.

I have very, very clear memories of abuse. And when it finally came out, in the open, my parents didn't believe me. Yeah, it's taken me a long time to sort of deal with it. I don't know if I ever actually have dealt with it. And I realize now that, at 47 years of age, that when my parents die, I have no one. So it's just me and my daughter.

I don't have much confidence in who I am. When you're beaten down a lot, which metaphorically speaking, pretty much being told that you're never gonna be anything or do anything, or your brain dropped three feet or, you know, you're never going to stick at anything long enough to actually have a life or a career. That really, really is ingrained in you, and you don't know how to take compliments. You don't know how to see yourself as a worthy human being. Because all your life you've been pretty much stood on.

And, you know, even as an adult, it still happens. I'm a grown woman and I still have dramas with my parents. And in that saying, I struggle with the fact that there's the moral side of me that says I should be loving towards my parents. But then there's the other side of me, that's like, your job was to protect me and you didn't protect me. And that's what I struggle with, is my, the morals and what I really feel because I am not allowed to feel. And I have to respect the fact that they bought me here and they've given me a life, but really, I sit and think if all the traumas hadn't happened to me. would my life have gone a completely different direction?

And I think with all the traumas, I don't think I've actually ever really, really, been able to be my full potential, 'cause I don't even know my full potential because I've never, ever been told that I'm worthy enough.