

Jonas

Reconciling it all and finding my Peace

Text: Jonas adopted from Haiti at 6 years old

I was born in Haiti and adopted to Australia when I was six years old. I arrived in Ballarat, Victoria.

For me, the only time I felt normal, like part of a family, was when I was in Haiti with Mum and Dad and my brother, Jeanwell. That was, it was all just normal. We were absolutely poor. We didn't have anything. We had the roof over our heads and the clothes on our back, but it was normal.

When I got to Australia, it was anything but normal, and I didn't feel an ounce of love. I was not given or shown an ounce of love, and I did not fit in with their white kids. My adoptive parents took me from Haiti, where there's no infrastructure, no public transport, very, very Third World situation. They took me straight from there to Disneyland? And took me on rides where I was screaming the whole time, not understanding what's going on. But then to come to Australia, you land at the airport, you're surrounded by white people and you're the center of attention. But you're more of a, you're more of a subject, a specimen, you don't, you feel weird.

I was disciplined for acknowledging my birth parents. There was no talk of them, I was only told when my dad died about six months after I'd come to Australia, I was told about that. But I didn't really know how to feel about it. I didn't know how to react about it or anything like that.

Was it a good thing that I was adopted or was it not? I still wrestle with that. I've got a beautiful, beautiful family. I've got a successful business, I've found my way through the dark after being independent, leaving my adoptive family at 13. But I still wrestle with that question a bit because I think about my family and my kids and my mum, who I have in my life now.

I've considered both sides and I've lived both sides of adoption. I've got friends that have had very positive experiences with adoption. I've got many friends that have had negative experiences like myself. You know, ultimately my true feeling and belief is that if you really want to support a vulnerable child, you support them where they are, help them keep with their family because it will, in my opinion, or in my case, it would have stopped a lot of mental trauma, it would have stopped a lot of abuse. And if you can stop abuse to children, it's a good thing.

If I wanted to help a young person, a young impressionable person, I'd just be there. I'd gift them something, I'd pay for their education. I wouldn't be trying to take them from their family because that sense of belonging, even though you have got to face that adversity and fight the struggle of growing up poor or whatever it may be, as long as you've got love, that is half the battle. And it gives them the confidence to be able to pursue and to move forward because you feel loved. You can find yourself, I think is what I'm going a long way around saying.

I've lived a life like everybody else, been through a lot of ups and downs and struggles surrounding my adoption. But now I see myself as a father, a husband, a business owner. A successful one at that, because I've done so much work on myself, I've been fortunate enough to do so much work on myself. I had a lot of close calls and I turned a corner about four years ago, which has helped me find peace. So this is part of that journey for me. This work with ICAV for instance, finding the support with ICAV, this is another piece of that puzzle that's gonna help me continue to be a better father, better husband, a better businessman, you know.

I'd say that I'm the most content and at peace with myself than I've ever been in my life, now, 2021.