

InterCountry Adoptee Perspectives:

Search & Reunion
with Natural Family

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NINE FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVES

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Contributors' original words, names and historical references retained.

Note: ICASN was the name of our adoptee-led organisation from 1998 until 2015, when it was renamed InterCountry Adoptee Voices (ICAV).

Inter Country Adoptee Voices

Inter-Country Adoptee Perspectives: Search & Reunion with Natural Family

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01
Lou

As you know I went over to Chile, South America to find my birth mother and not only did I meet her 3 times I discovered I have 4 beautiful sisters.

I have dealt with my adoption throughout my life with many, many difficulties. I have struggled with identity, depression, anxiety, anger, suicide, pain and much more.

I especially have had difficulties with my relationships growing up mainly with my adoptive mother and my partners. Jealousy, anger all of the above.

I thought finding my birth mother would 'fix' me and put all my problems away....but coming back to Sydney and to the same problems I realise my problems are much more than finding my birth mother which has depressed me GREATLY.

I have changed in some ways but the pain in my heart is still there and saying good bye to my birth mother was torture.

I hate to put a whole negative spin on the whole reunion but it is hard even when you finally found what you're looking for, the pain never leaves you.

I look to my future and I hopefully see myself slowly becoming happy which is all I ever wanted.

Thanks for listening and having ICASN in my world has helped so much.

Lou

02
Gabbie

When I was growing up, each night I would pray for the opportunity to at least see a picture of my birth mother so I could say if I had her nose or her eyes. Each night I would pray that she would be safe, wherever she was and maybe one day I would love the opportunity to meet my birth parents and ask them why I was put up for adoption. But this was only a dream of mine. I never thought even in my wildest dreams that I would ever have the blessing of meeting my birth parents to embrace and love them ... but I did!

When I was 19 I travelled to Sri Lanka with my mum and my twin sister. Mum and I had spent the last 3 weeks in an orphanage in India that she had helped set up. The next part of our journey involved spending time in Sri Lanka, seeing the country of our birth for the first time and having the opportunity to meet our birth mother and share our stories with her. It was the 10th of December, 2000, on a day I remember like it was yesterday. My birth mother was able to embrace me and I her for what seemed like an eternity, yet was such a short time in comparison for the loss of the past 19 years. It was a truly beautiful moment. She was crying yet I believe they were tears mixed with the emotions of joy, happiness and tinged with sadness, regret and closure because in my opinion, she made the biggest sacrifice of her life. In my mind it must have been unimaginable the pain and suffering she went through having to face the decision to give up her twin daughters for international adoption.

I hold no animosity, hate or ill feeling towards her. She made the ultimate sacrifice to give up her children to have a better life and to have opportunities of education, stability and access to health care that she could not provide. I love the fact that I now know the reasons why I was put up for adoption, and if you ask me I will gladly tell you. I love the fact that I am now proud to call my self a Sri Lankan born Australian. Reuniting with my birth family opened my mind to becoming a link between two cultures. I know I am very 'Aussie' in terms of my thinking, the way I dress and my accent. I can't help it, I am not going to pretend that I am something I am not. I enjoy learning about my Sri Lankan heritage, the food, art, culture and lifestyle and I know it can compliment my 'Australianess'.

Returning to Sri Lanka saved my life, there is no other way I can describe it. Before locating my birth family I struggled with finding my sense of self, thought that the answer to my questions about identity were found in escaping through drugs and alcohol - they weren't. I was fortunate to be a part of a family who loved me no matter how hard I tried to push them away. I found it so hard to live life each day with the questions about my past hanging over my head like a black cloud.

I realise that everyone is not able to meet their birth family, yet I believe everyone is able to connect in some way to their birth culture. I believe the key to finding yourself is accepting where you come from. Once I did that I gave myself permission to accept myself.

I continue to develop my relationships with my birth family. I have visited them twice in the last 8 years. I was in Sri Lanka just before the tsunami of 2004 and that event made meeting my family even more

important because I was able to be a part of my younger sister's wedding and meet more of my extended family. I was able to spend time with my younger brother and we travelled round together for about a week. It was great playing the role of 'akka' big sister in Singhala (the language commonly spoke throughout Sri Lanka).

My advice to other people who are thinking about searching for their birth family is get to know your birth culture first. I think that knowing and understanding where you come from is the key to understanding yourself.

Since there has been renewed fighting in Sri Lanka of late between the Tamils and the Singhalese, I have been unable to travel back and spend time with my birth family. In the future I hope that peace prevails in the beautiful island, the place of my birth.

Gabbie

03
Kristin-Liliana Manzur

Reaching the decision to search for a birth-mother / birth-family is NOT easy. For some adoptees even considering the idea of searching or thinking about birth-origin is hard, as it may arouse deep feelings of guilt, shame, anger, fear, etc. Seriously, getting to the point of mounting a search for some requires A LOT (years) of difficult mental preparation. Then, once we decide to search, another emotional journey begins. For me, an adoptee from Colombia, making the decision to search and finally going to do it took 23 years (more or less).

The thing with searching is that we adoptees have to be completely ready. We must be sure of our choice and then be prepared to learn things about our birth-mother / birth-family that we may not have considered. For example, a birth-mother may be disabled (mentally and/or physically), dead, dirt poor, addicted to drugs, may have been a victim of rape, and / or not want any contact with us. We may also find that the information, if any, we have about our birth-mother / birth-family was a lie and will not lead us to them.

The good news is that those are some of the worse scenarios that I know of. On the other hand, the outcome of searching (even if there is no reunion) can be amazingly fulfilling.

Let's imagine for a moment that you find your birth-mother. There is always the chance she is a beautifully kind woman (regardless of economic status), who will be happy to see you and welcome you into her heart and home. This could begin the healing/moving forward process for both of you. In the least it will surely provide the opportunity to address questions you've had. Then if you both wish, you may try to maintain a relationship, or not. You may also find that she has a great extended birth-family or learn that you have a/many full/half brother(s) and sister(s) that may, or may not, look like you -- an important concept for adoptees -- to find someone who looks like us or, crazy as this may sound, confirm we actually came from somebody's womb. Whatever the case, the first step to searching is acknowledging and making peace with whatever may come.

The actual search itself is, unfortunately, another emotional endeavor. I would like to say that once an adoptee decides to search, the searching part is easy. Unfortunately, it is not always easy. In addition, the search itself, due to travel, may be costly.

> **THE GREAT NEWS IS THAT OF ALL THE ADOPTEES (THE 30+ THAT I KNOW) WHO SEARCHED AND FOUND, OR DID NOT FIND, THEIR BIRTH-FAMILIES --ARE HAPPY THEY SEARCHED (OR ARE SEARCHING) AND WOULD DO IT AGAIN.**

I would say one of the first steps to take in searching is getting in contact with trustworthy people who know your birth-country/birth-city/birth-town well. For example, it would be great if you know someone, of or can befriend someone, who lives/lived there and/or may have some friends or relatives

there. The reason for this is that almost every country has some sort of established search organization/detective-like business that helps find people. However, the only people who would know about these places and/or be able to find/contact them are people who know the country. They may even know an individual who can do this type of search for you on their own. Although, I feel the authenticity of search results by an inexperienced person can be questionable (even if they do have the best intentions). However, this too depends on the individual.

Hopefully, you have a legitimate document(s) with the name of your birth-mother on it and a valid "social security-like" number. If you have this, finding her could be a snap. Often during a search when the right information goes into the right hands, locating someone can happen VERY quickly. Otherwise it may take weeks, months, or years. No-one really knows in the beginning of search how this could turn out. Therefore, patience is key!

You might also try to get some information from the adoption agency that you came from (if relevant). However, I would not be surprised if this party doesn't help. In fact, they may even discourage you from searching. Some people do not understand an adoptee's desire to search. The need some of us have to know where we came from seems completely normal to me. However, there are many people who think the opposite. They believe that adoptees should not care about their past, get over it, and just be grateful for where they are now. Honestly, I really hate this mentality but sadly, it does exist. However, if you really want this, to search and to learn new things about yourself, you will have to ignore the "haters" and carry on by pursuing other/all venues. Remember this is your life, your decision, and regardless of what people may say or think, you are doing this for YOU!

In fact, have you taken yourself on a vacation lately? The reason I ask is because you may want to take a trip to your birth country (the birth-town / birth-city or close by, if you happen to know where you were born) to simply check it out. This could be a great way for you to reconnect with your country of origin, to get your feet wet. While there you could check out the sights, see the people, eat the food. And, if you feel compelled, ask around to see if anyone knows of a trusted organization / individual who can help you search.

From my experience, this approach to mounting a search is great. Personally, after months of unsuccessfully looking online for information I finally decided to just up and go to Colombia. While the word got around (because I told everyone) that I was looking for my birth-mother, within days I was directed to a highly recognized and established search-organization called Fundación Para El Reencuentro or Foundation for the Reencounter (http://www.reencuentros.org/adoptados.htm). This organization helped me in my search. Later they also found the birth-mothers and birth-families of other adoptees I know.

You see, in many South American countries civil war, political or military coups are common. Sadly so is the "disappearance" or displacement of people. Thus, people-finders / detectives / search groups are a common and necessary part of some societies. In fact, a friend of mine, adopted from El Salvador, went to El Salvador and also found a search organization by simply asking around. The organization then found his family and he was reunited with them within days.

Although going to the birth-country seems extreme, the fact of the matter is that sometimes little or nothing can be done from the USA. The internet can be good but tricky. Perhaps an internet search can lead you to a relevant search organization, perhaps not. Whatever the case, the problem I see with this is that most search organizations still don't have websites. Nor are many search organizations technologically savvy (technology is still a very 1st world thing). Heck, some search organizations are lucky if they even have a computer! So by just searching via the internet you run the risk of not finding what exists. In addition, with the internet you don't really know who you're dealing with. However, I guess if you're careful, using the internet can't hurt but if you do find something I highly suggest asking a "local" to check it out / confirm it's authentic. Like with anything, never send anyone money without confirming how legit they are. Personally, I prefer dealing with people in person, especially in light of all the scams out there and the emotions involved in this.

However you decide to do it, I hope your journey is all you want it to be.

Yours Kristin-Liliana Manzur

04
Trista

As you may know, I searched and found my family over seven years ago. It took a lot of hard work and determination. One of the things I noticed during my search was that the more support you have the easier it is. I have since created a non-profit called "Operation Reunite" to help others in their search journey since I realized that there was a need for search assistance. I'm grateful to know that more and more organizations like ICSAN are available to help support the birth search journey. Contact me if you would like more information about my search at www.operationreunite.com

Cheers Trista

05
Ilan

Some Considerations Prior to Visiting Your Culture/Country of Origin

By Ilan, adopted from Taiwan

1. Cultural familiarity

How familiar are you with the values, practices and language of your culture of origin? For example in some Asian cultures a 'yes' can actually mean 'yes, I hear you' not 'yes, I agree with you'. In Chinese culture, the number four is a bad number since it sounds like the word for death (so don't give gifts, eg. placemats that add up to four). I highly recommend learning as much as you can about your country of origin's cultural norms and language before you go. The more familiarity you have in advance, the better off you'll be.

2. Poverty

It is possible you might meet birth family who may be much poorer financially than you. How do you feel when you meet others who are from extremely poor backgrounds?

3. Duty and obligation

Some cultures place very strong importance on duty and obligation within family. What are your feelings about duty and obligation, particularly when it comes to family?

4. Hierarchy

How do you deal with social, particularly family, hierarchies? For example, in Taiwan, younger generations are expected to respect and honour their elders. According to a family counsellor in Taiwan, it is common for older family members to tell their younger family members what to do. Often this is their way of showing personal concern for you.

5. Personal boundaries

You might be requested for favours (eg. sponsorship for immigration, money) from people whom, while birth related, you don't know very well. How strong are you in managing personal boundaries of knowing what you are and are not prepared to do - and honouring those personal boundaries regardless of pressure from others?

6. Personal privacy

How important is your personal privacy? In some Asian cultures the concept of personal privacy is not the same as in Western societies. For example, in Taiwan it is considered normal to ask someone, especially foreigners, about their marital status and their salary.

7. Ambiguities and uncertainties

How resourceful are you in dealing with situations of ambiguity and uncertainty? Searching for one's birth family in many ways is facing the unknown. If this is your first cross-cultural visit, there are likely to be a lot of things that are unfamiliar and confusing to you. You might also have to ask for and rely on the help from strangers. Some business people who'd visited Japan for the first time described their experience as scary as being like a child lost in a big department store.

8. Grief, loss and bereavement

How do you deal with feelings of grief, loss and/or bereavement? During your journey, you might experience these feelings, you might discover that your birth family members have died or do not wish to have contact with you. Learn about how grief and bereavement are dealt with in your birth culture. If you find that your birth family have died, I recommend the following online support group that specializes in bereavement faced by people within the adoption triangle: http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/FoundandLostSupport/

9. Working with interpreters

Try to gain experience in communicating with interpreters before you go. Even if you don't have access to this service, you might find watching some documentaries that show people working with interpreters useful. In selecting an interpreter, find someone who is used to interpreting in highly emotional situations. In Australia, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (http://www.naati.com.au) provides a directory of translators and interpreters. When working with an interpreter, remember to speak slowly, look at both the interpreter and your birth family members, pause every few sentences so that the interpreter can digest what you're saying, and avoid slang words.

10. Mediators

Definitely find a mediator who understands and supports your needs and concerns. Even if you can't find someone who's bi-lingual, at least bring along someone for moral/emotional support.

11. Stress management

How do you manage stress, particularly in an unfamiliar environment? Many adoptees have described their search and reunion journeys as an emotional roller coaster. For example, I prefer to cycle as a way of relieving stress. However, since I found that cycling in my birth city was a lot more difficult, I joined a gym instead. Since you may be dealing with an emotional roller coaster and a lot of ambiguity in interpreting cultural cues, it is highly likely the journey will be stressful. For myself, even although I had many years of experience working in Asia, already spoke Chinese and had dealt with bereavement in the past, I was amazed at how emotionally draining my own journey was.

My other recommendation is to proceed with the reunion/search only as fast as the slowest person in the group.

12. FAQs and other resources

What support networks do you have in place to help you with dealing with a) the emotional journey (many adoptees have described it as a roller coaster), b) interpreting the cultural and linguistic aspects of your journey?

06
Sue

I don't know what you define as "success."

I met my mother 18 years ago and all I can say is hang on tight for the emotional roller coaster ride of your life. The early experience of abandonment got triggered as did an enormous amount of grief. I'm talking YEARS! But I learnt alot about myself, an incredible amount! My problems stemmed a lot from my expectations of her! Very unconscious, strong, and difficult to overcome. It’s easy to hope that she'll provide the lost 'holding' and look after me emotionally but in reality it was more like she was the child and I was the mother and I found this deeply distressing.

I am now 36 years old and she found me when I was 19.

Comparing what is better now compared to then:

- I have some boundaries and assertiveness skills. Both externally and internally. I am better at not taking on issues that aren't mine. I'm better at not feeling that I have to rescue others, especially her (she manipulated me and I let her!) Her pain is not my fault and I am aware of my tendency to feel guilty, so it’s now not so strong and influential.
- I am better at following what’s best for me rather than fearing anger and rejection when I don't meet her needs. Her intense feelings are her stuff! I cannot be that lost baby so I am unsatisfactory to her and I am accepting that is how she feels. I am still a good person.
- I'm better at seeing her position and holding my own position at the same time. Early on I could only hold one position, e.g. she denied that I felt loss so I thought I was crazy. Now I see that is her way of coping and I know I do feel huge loss.
- I'm still working on dealing with loss, staying connected to people and interests that make me feel alive. In the last two to three years, I have suddenly found my true calling in Bollywood dancing and African Gospel singing. It’s different from my adoptive family, echoed in my birth family and feels right and wonderful, it gives me enjoyment! No matter what others think of me and how painful it is I can lose myself happily in these activities.
- I am a mental health support worker (training to be a psychologist) and I identify with pain and stigma and I think this gives me an edge in my work; I enjoy supporting others and know how it feels to want comfort, be empowered, and acknowledged for my strengths.
- I should have put this first. After I met my birth mother I was stuck in depression and thought of suicide for a whole year. Then I started practicing vippassana meditation and found the path out of meaningless suffering. A recommended web site is www.dhamma.org !!
- I found a beautiful psychotherapist (it’s not easy but it’s been wonderful to have understanding)! It gets too intense sometimes but I have been going on and off for 10 years. Seeing the same person

(if they are ok) is important. I have learnt to be authentic with her, show my emotions (very difficult), and trust that I can be accepted just as I am (very powerful but bloody hard)!

I wish I had this list before I met my mother. A lot is trial and error and self examination, I still have a long way to go. I don't see my birth mother much currently because I find it too hard but I miss that genetic mirror to look in. However, I have made that decision rather than trying to meet someone else's needs and there is some peace in that, in a way.

Sue

07
Shefalie

My birth mother is Scottish and my birth father is Indian. They met and shared the same space and time for a moment and hey presto, here I am – of mixed race and having grown up in the UK, I was placed with a white British family who had 3 biological brothers.

I have searched for my birth mother, birth father, and any siblings. When I searched for my mother, I was naive about the whole thing. I had no idea about what reunion meant and I had not read any books, seen my adoption file as a whole, or had the support of an intermediary. I did not know these support resources existed to help me. I did not know I needed it! In truth, the whole issue of adoption was a landmine just ready to go off should I step in the wrong area … and sure enough it did!!

So the greatest thing I learned the hard way was to find help and support before you get into a reunion. You need the support of others who will understand. People who are not adopted and those who have not searched will have no idea what it is like for you.

I had to search in Scotland for information about my birth mother which was the hardest part of the journey. The reunion did not work out well. I wish I had known about repressed trauma and about the adoptee fantasy that "all mothers are waiting for their off spring to find them". After that experience, it took some time until I was ready to search for my birth father. It then took years to search in India for information about my father. However, all is not a waste if my experience can help another person along this road.

What I would suggest for others who are attempting to search and be reunited is the following:

- Timing is important and having support from an intermediary and their counsel to help you navigate through the minefield, not only practically but emotionally. I needed both by the time I got to deal with my father and India and the culture. There are also support groups to help you now. I found some on the internet that were in the UK. For me, speaking face to face to someone has been a life line as well as the internet forums.
- Read as much as you can cope with about reunions. The good and the bad including the high expectations that can ruin something before it even begins. Gain an understanding of how to pace yourself and deal with the highs and lows. I think I was like a run-away train hurtling down the track, on the road of searching. I knew where I was headed and where I hoped to get to. Trouble is, our birth siblings and families are not expecting us -they may not even know about us, so to be hit by a fast travelling train is just asking for damage. So go easy, and slowly.
- I now realise it would have been good to have some questions written down - of what I would like to know should I find anyone. What I want them to know about me, how much and how little. What I am willing to share and what I am not ready to share. When I finally found my Indian sisters, one wanted to know about the relationship between my mother and father and all about it. I was not able to disclose some information which made it hard for her. I know quite a bit about

India and have been there and done a lot of research into family history on the internet - but I was not prepared for how much my birth family are immersed in the culture of India even though they live in the UK and America. I am experiencing problems crossing the cultural divide, language, and expectations they have of me now they know about me. I was not ready or prepared. It is not my sister's culture to have an intermediary or go between, and she has found this hard, and has now withdrawn from saying she needs her help. Her mentality is "we can do it on our own". Maybe if I had an intermediary who was not white but Asian it might have been better for us both?

My reunions haven't really answered the questions I had about my identity. It has given me information I did not have and it has given me an understanding of where I have come from and from whom. I see similar genetic traits in us all and that is a joy after all these years of being so unlike anyone. Meeting my sister has challenged my own perception about my self and about my father (who has sadly died). She introduced me to a man who is not the same person who was written about on the adoption file so many years ago.

There is much to think about before a reunion and I find it challenges me to change within - to make space for new relationships, to give my birth family time to get used to having another sibling. As an adoptee, I've always known I had parents somewhere else, I have had years to think about them. But they need time to adjust to me coming into their lives.

For me, I'm now in my 50's and it's quite late to start changing and addressing issues, however, I've started on this journey so must continue travelling to where it leads me. I have now read more books, had some counselling, learnt to be more patient with myself, the greyness in my life has lifted, and I now see things in colour. I am learning who I am - a mixture of my whole life experiences. And most of all, I have found I have a voice and I am learning to speak the language of reunion and reconciliation!

Shefalie

08
Amy

I think there have been quite a few wonderful things as an outcome of meeting my birth family. I was able to discover I have siblings and I was able to meet my extra family & discover why I was given up for adoption. I have also been able to get to know my birth family, which has been interesting. It has also helped me confirm how incredibly blessed I am to have the life I have here, how I have so many opportunities, and that I shouldn't take anything for granted.

While my relationship with all the members of my birth family aren't what I would call intimate, it is good to know where I come from and although I don't know them very well at all, I do enjoy finding out what they're up to. They all came to visit my family and I at the beginning of this year, staying at our house for close to a month. It was rather trying and I discovered more radically how different my lifestyle is in comparison to theirs. I was able to spend quite a bit of quality time with them and learnt a few family recipes :) which was lovely.

There are quite a few things that I probably wasn't prepared for when I met them. For example, while we were doing an interview at the Christian Salvation Service in Taiwan, the TV interviewer asked on film why I was adopted out and that was the first time I heard why. It was shocking because I don't think I was ready to ask such a question after only meeting my birth family a few days before.

Another thing I had trouble coping with at the time was my birth mother trying to buy me everything and anything I looked at or touched. I couldn't understand at the time why she thought she had to make up for lost time. It made me feel very uncomfortable. However, looking back I realize how it must have been for her and I understand her actions. I think my finding my birth family was a really good thing because if I hadn't I'd be wondering about my heritage now and not knowing would be difficult to deal with. I always felt there was a hole and to find out more about my birth family was able to help that situation.

I wouldn't say that having my birth family in my life has gotten more complicated, it's changed as the years have gone on. We don't contact each other that regularly, it's only on occasion since the beginning of this year that we've been in contact. I think they don't wish to interfere in my life and they're very busy people so I guess it works out well. It's just difficult to get to know someone when they're miles away and don't understand the language you use. I would like to get to know them better but at this stage it's not a simple thing.

I'm not sure at this stage what impact it has had on me. I guess it's helped me mature and understand about life situations and massive culture differences. Being adopted is a part of who I am, but it doesn't define me. I am just so thankful that I am here and able to live everyday to the fullest in such a great country - with so many opportunities open to me. I am just like everyone else, special & unique, I just happen to have a more complex story than others :-)

I think that finding your birth family is reliant on how much you want answers or blanks filled in. I know that I wouldn't have been happy if I hadn't asked more questions and found out more about my birth family. It gives me comfort knowing about my heritage. However, I'm Aussie through and through and I'm never going to be convinced otherwise :-)

Amy

09
Gemma

I was born on the 21 December 1981 in South Korea and adopted into an Australian family when I was 6 months old. It was only when I was approaching 25 I decided to do some research into finding my Birth Mother.

I have found the Search process quite easy. I contacted the Dept of Human Services – Inter-Country Adoption unit in Victoria and they informed me all I had to do was write a letter stating who I am and why I want to search for my Birth Mother. They then send this letter to the Eastern Child Welfare Society in Korea (where I was originally adopted from) and see whether or not in their records my Birth Mother had allowed contact between us. It only took 6 weeks before I got a phone call stating they had found my Birth Mother who was married to my Birth Father and subsequently had 2 children. I being the middle child. What a shock it was! I was also told she had sent a letter to me complete with a family picture!

Receiving the photo was all I ever wanted! I guess as most adoptees feel we just want to 'look' like someone! My Birth Mother's initial letter was short and sweet. I found it hard to interpret certain grammar as the language barrier and English translations make interpretation of certain words/phrases hard to understand the true meaning. Since our correspondence I have been in touch with a friend who has married a Korean girl, she now translates my letters into English which is a big help! I think it is beneficial to have a friend or someone who is sensitive to the nature of the letters to translate them.

The hardest thing for me to come to terms with was that some of my personal information was different to what I had thought. In my correspondence with her, I have asked many questions, i.e., my name in Korean, what time I was born, reasons why she gave me up, etc. To her credit, she has answered most of my questions and out of them all, the answer that shocked me the most was finding out my birth date was different! In all my documents my birth date states the 21 Dec 1981 but now my birth mother has informed me I was actually born on the 26 Dec 1981, so that was a big shock!

In relation to my Birth parents still being together and the fact they have 2 biological children and I being the middle child was adopted out - I am ok about this. I guess everyone has their reasons and my Birth Mother has informed me she was very sick at that time and the family had to give up everything. I still don't really know the circumstances as to why I was adopted. And when I think about it, until I possibly meet her, I may never know the real answers. Actually, I may never know the real reason anyway - she may never tell me the truth. I guess it helps to keep an open mind and there are always two sides to every story.

One day I think I will meet my Birth Mother and family but I don't think I'm quite ready for it yet. It has already been quite a journey (it's been 2 years since we first had contact) and I have decided to take my time and do things on my terms. We are now communicating via email which is much easier than letters.

I don't really have any advice to give except that I think I was a bit naïve when I started this search. I don't think I thought I would have so many emotions with finding my Birth Mother! Boy was I wrong! I have cried, been angry, been sad, and been happy! I guess its all very character building!

I have a feeling the journey with my Birth Mother is just beginning. I am now waiting for the next letter that will no doubt confuse me even more! ☺

Gemma