

Robin Rose

I was born on November 12th 1954 at the Bethesda Catholic Home next to Crown Street Woman's Hospital in Sydney. My mother was only sixteen so as she had no choice I was taken from her and adopted out from the hospital.

I was very lucky to have been placed in a loving home with a very hard working Father and doting Mother. There was also a very good support group as my Grandmother lived next door.

My Father's mother was also very supportive when my Mother had a nervous breakdown and was admitted to St Margaret's Hospital where she received shock treatment. This treatment was barbaric in nature and she was never the same, my grandmother took care of me for about three months. I was always her favourite among her many grandchildren and didn't realise why until I understood what had happened to my mother and the obvious bond that must have occurred whilst my Grandmother took care of me.

The house was full of music and there was a player piano, my mother played the piano and sang every day, so at an early age I grew to love the piano and started lessons at the age of seven. That became my chosen career as I had two uncles who were in the business.

In the fifties adoptive parents were advise not to tell the children they were adopted, so I never knew, never had a clue and found out by accident when I was 38 . It slipped out during a conversation with an aunty. I was devastated, angry, confused, wanted to abuse everyone in the family. They all assumed that I knew and the subject was never brought up as they considered that I didn't want to talk about.

The day I found out, my Father had already passed and my Mother was in a nursing home with dementia, so she couldn't answer any questions. I suffered and had a mild nervous breakdown, for years every time I performed I would search the audience to see if someone could be my natural Mother. I let it go for several years but it became the topic of conversation into the wee small hours of the morning with my wife.

I had a very unpleasant experience with my passport at the Australian Embassy in New York in the mid 80's. They suspected me of having a false indentity as my original birth certificate must have come up on the computer. After producing a new copy of my birth certificate they still didn't believe I was who said I was and I had to sign a statutory declaration.

Eventually when the secrecy laws were changed in about 1999 my wife decided that I needed closure so we visited the office of Births, Deaths and Marriages and did a search. Later that day they called me and said they had found my natural Mother in Perth and also a half Brother in Cairns who was adopted in 1956.

So in 2000 we arranged to meet my Mother and went to Cairns so we could meet my half brother

He had no idea that I existed and was quite angry when I phoned him. After speaking to his mother and clarifying my story everything was fine and we are now great mates and very close.

I also have two more half brothers and two half sisters. In the beginning they were reluctant to have anything to do with me as I was there worst nightmare come home. Apparently my Mother had phantom Birthday parties for her two boys that she lost.

i still have one half brother who won't have any contact except for the one letter he sent me explaining his position and feelings and his reasons for cutting himself loose from the entire family.

This year I met my two half sisters and half brother for the first time. At every occasion I have felt no emotion whatsoever, except my half brother in Cairns. We are closer simply because we had the same experience of being adopted.

My natural Mother has a had a rough life and her children did it tough, from the stories i've been told, I was very fortunate to have been adopted and experience a normal household full of love and opportunity. My Father worked two jobs to give me the things I needed in life and of course piano lessons.

I will always be a member of the family that I was adopted into. They are solid and loving and we are very close. I must add that when I found out that I was adopted, several things sprang to mind as far as attitude towards me, especially during my teenage years. Obviously not being a blood relative determines relatives opinions when you doing something wrong, i.e buy a motor bike, become a musician, date an older lady with child. When my Father died, I was accused of putting him into an early grave.

In finishing my story I feel it is extremely important that adopted children be told of their origins at an appropriate age, when they are mature enough to understand the full story and appreciate the parents they have and the sacrifice they made to give them a home.

As far as seeking out your natural Mother and perhaps Father, that is a personal choose.

It will bring closure and it's also very important as to medical history.

Robin Rose

30th May 2011