

Dear Readers,

When I was asked to write my story, I hesitated - Where would I start? I assume many of you adoptees grew up knowing they were adopted - not in my case. For reasons known only to my parents, they chose to never tell me. Both sides of the family, respecting their wishes, kept silent. So I grew up believing that I was a miracle - a baby the doctor said my mother could never have! This continued on for 36 years until my mother fell ill and through blood typing I realized I could not be my parent's biological child. Sadly, my mother was in ICU and died before I could confront her. After stewing for a couple more years I set out to learn the truth. I called my mother's sister and she confirmed that I was adopted.

This led me to Kinsolving and through them, my birth mother and my sister were located in eight days! All my life I had longed for a sibling and to know I had a sister.... Well, I just can't put the feeling into words. I called my birth mother right away so as not to lose my nerve. She was shocked, stunned and finally delighted. I mean forty years is a long time! She told my sister the next day and after her initial shock she too, was quite pleased.

We all met on January 16, 1999 and then on the 17th I met all my other relatives - Aunts, Uncles and some cousins. They accepted me without reservation and had fun telling me who I looked like.

I can't say enough good things about Kinsolving. I did not have time on my side and Kinsolving sure took care of that. If you are reading this and you wonder whether to give Kinsolving the go ahead, I urge you to take the plunge. Even if your reunion turns out to be less than wonderful - not knowing to me would be worse.

My story does not end here. It's only just begun. Best of luck to everyone.

C.
S.C.

Dear Kinsolving,

Based on some of the stories published in your magazine, I feel most fortunate that my reconciliation has been much smoother than theirs, although it was not without some twists, and turns, bumps, and bruises along the way.

Your service brought new perspectives, and family that I would not have had otherwise. Thank you for making my biological family connection open to me.

W.



Dear Kinsolving:

When I found out I had a brother; approximately 3 years ago, at first I was shocked, then I was thrilled. The only down side was that 40 years had passed, and family members that knew of his birth could not remember much. The only thing I had to go on was the county where he was born. And of course it is one of the largest counties in the state. After investigating on my own and running into dead ends, I turned to Kinsolving. To be honest I didn't have a lot of hope in finding him, with just the little information I had, but I had lots of prayers.

Then that call came from Kinsolving, they had located my brother. Again I was in shock and thrilled. It turns out he lives less than 8 miles from me. He has a wonderful wife and two children, his adopted mother is just a delight and his sister and her family are wonderful also. We all keep in touch with each other and my brother and I visit with each other every week by phone or he comes by the house.

It didn't take long for my brother and myself to bond, after, we sorted through a few things. I feel we have developed a relationship that is very deep and very meaningful and can never be broken. I gained a brother and a whole new family, and we all live in a short driving distance from each other.

I thank God, for this is a miracle, and I thank Kinsolving for making it possible.

TCH & PAC - NC

Dear Kinsolving,

Back in September, you did a search to find my birth family... You did it within 7 hours. Anyway, my reunion hasn't gone as I expected, but that's okay.

I just wanted to let you know that you can DEFINITELY use me as a ref. You guys are terrific!

Thanks,

M.



Dear Kinsolving,

I don't know how to thank you. Words seem so inadequate. If it weren't for you and your team of investigators my search for my birth family would never have come to an end.

I sent a letter to my birth mother because I was too afraid to make that telephone call. A week later a response came. She is delighted that I have found her! She told me about her life and about my half sibling. She told me that giving me up was the most painful thing she ever had to do.

We are planning to meet in the near future, as soon as we can all arrange our work schedules and get some time off.

I will send you an update soon. Again, thank you for all that you do to help so many. If you ever need a reference, please feel free to use my name. I will forever be grateful.

With appreciation,

S.
NM

Dear Kinsolving,

Thank You! You have helped to open many doors for me and future generations. I am so grateful to your agency. Your time and effort are so appreciated. My words and thoughts are hard to even get on paper right now. It is a time of mixed emotions but absolutely no regret in whatever the outcome. I have been waiting a long time for this day and at 32, it is the right time. I will handle this incredible experience with love and grace. My gratitude is overwhelming.

With much love,
G.



Dear Kinsolving,

If you ever need a reference USE ME!

My birth mom and I continue to talk every two weeks and I met her last December. Thanks again for all your help.

Best wishes,
D. F.
NY



Dear Kinsolving,

All I can say is thank you. My birth mom is incredible and I am so happy to have met her...thanks to you! I appreciate all you did for us. Without you my dream could not have been a reality. You gave us an amazing gift!!!

Thanks Again,
S.
MI

p.s. I will call you to share all the wonderful details.

Dear Kinsolving:

I'm writing to let you know the outcome of the four year saga of my search for my 32 year old son, to let you all know that he and his fiancée were here in Oakland last weekend for our first face to face visit, which went very well. Very, very well, in fact.

He was very sweet and open to me, and physically affectionate, which was great. His fiancée was with him, sort of to give him support and check me out, and we hit it off very well. She is 25, finishing a PhD in psychology at U. of Iowa her brother and her aunt live in the Bay Area, and I think her aunt is some friends of mine's lawyer. Small world. After a couple of days, they evidently decided it was a good fit, and they invited me to attend their wedding in June, which I plan to do. They may move to the West Coast in next year or so, and they plan on having a baby not too long after.

Rebecca told me that she had been wary and protective of him at first, but sees that there is no reason to be, and that this is about the best it could possibly be for both of us. Michael was somewhat low key, probably because of being pretty nervous himself. He looks like me in some ways, and told me he feels a connection to me he never felt to his mother, even though he loved her tremendously. I really want him to love me, too, as things unfold.

We were all very friendly, laughed a lot, and enjoyed the visit. My heart is very full right now I feel like I've received a huge gift, and just need to accept it and be grateful. I know this relationship is just starting, but I'm very happy to be at this place right now, and want to thank each of you for your support and friendship along the way.

Best,
L.
CA



Dear Kinsolving,

Just a short note to let you know that I contacted my birth mother the day after I received the information from you. She was shocked after all these years to hear from me but she was absolutely delighted that I had found her and contacted her.

I will bring you up to date on the progress of our relationship as it develops. We are planning to meet face to face in just a few weeks.

I will be forever grateful for the gift you have given me.

S.,
Tx



Dear Friends,

This has been an amazing year! When I first received word from you that you had been successful in finding my family, I said to my husband, "I wonder how this is going to change my life?" I could not have imagined the happiness I have found since I met the members of my family.

You called me on September 26, 1997 and my fax arrived the next day. I grew up with my adopted parents as an "Only child." Little did I know that I had four sisters and a brother (half siblings to me.) Unfortunately, my birth mother passed on in 1974. However, she left a wonderful, loving family behind.

I contacted my older sister about nine days after I received your report and after I had gone to a support group for help in making this ever so important contact. No one in my family knew of my existence, so I was a complete shock to them. I called Renee in California, told her my name and explained that I was given up for adoption as an infant in 1945; that I had spent the last nine years searching for my birth family, and that my search had led me to her. She, apparently, did not hear the year of my birth because her initial reaction was to say, "I never gave up a baby for adoption." I kept apologizing to her for surprising her with this call, but then told her that I had reason to believe that we had the same mother. She then said, "I think I have to sit down now!" We spoke for about forty-five minutes and she told me she was expecting guests, but that she would call back that evening. Later that day, we spoke for about two hours.

The next day, I sent her, via Fed Ex, photographs of myself as a child and as an adult. Upon receipt, she called me at my office. My secretary came into my office and said, "There's a woman on the phone who says she is your sister." Needless to say, many tears were shed that day. Renee told me that I look more like my birth mother than any of my siblings.

That night, Renee called all of my other siblings, and during the course of that same week, each of them called me to welcome me to the family. Of course, they all had questions, and during the past year, we have been working together to put the pieces of the puzzle together: things my mother said during her lifetime and things she did, now make some sense to my siblings in light of the secret that she took to her grave.

The following weekend, my husband and I went down to Gaithersburg, Maryland to meet my sister, Lillian. When I saw her walking towards me as I exited my car, I dropped the gift I was carrying, because I was looking at "myself." Lillian and I look so much alike that we can pass for twins. We used the same speech patterns, the same hand movements, and the same idiomatic expressions. This is so even though she grew up in California and I grew up in Brooklyn!

Just before Thanksgiving last year, my husband and I flew to California to meet the rest of my siblings. It was a wonderful, joyful, tearful reunion. I also had the opportunity to visit my mother's grave. It was difficult, but it allowed some closure. We speak on the phone at least once a week. (Thank God for five cents a minute on Sundays!) We are in touch through e-mail and my "new" nieces and nephews are as loving and caring as their parents.

My family flew in and drove in for my son's wedding in May. When the band played "We Are Family" and we were all dancing together, there wasn't a dry eye in the place.

My daughter recently moved to California and is in the midst of our new family in the San Francisco area. She has become quite close to two of her cousins and she sees them at least once a week.

I have given you only the brief highlights of the past year. Our hearts are full of love and the void in my life has been filled.

Thank you for your help. Please continue in the quest to reunite families. While I realize that not all have had the good fortune that I have had, I truly believe that not knowing who you are is much worse than dealing with a difficult relationship.

Sincerely,
J.R.
NY

Dear Kinsolving,

My phone reunion went better than I ever hoped. We spoke for over an hour, and I heard more "I love you" than I heard in an entire lifetime from a family! I sent Margaret birth mom a photo "history" of my life mailed last Thursday. Now what? Should I ask for a reunion I told her I would be happy to fly to Florida when/if she wanted to meet me. I want to give her time to "digest" this none of my 6 sibs know about me. Any advice? Should I wait a few weeks for a letter in response? Should I call again soon? Thanks so much for giving me my birth mom!

F.



Dear Kinsolving,

Thank you so much for what you have done..I got hold of my son last night and we talked for hours. It was so wonderful...I felt as though I always knew him..and I could feel the pain lifting and being replaced with joy....thank you..forever...

S.

We plan to keep in touch regularly and are already sending each other our photos..

He was very happy to be found. I hope it stays this good. Don't want the feeling to end..thanks again



Dear Kinsolving,

On the 17th of April, Allan called his b'mom for the first time. They talked for a little over an hour. She called back on Sat. night to arrange for her visit. They again talked for about an hour. She called Mon. evening the 19th to say that she was only a couple hours away so they would be here Mon. night instead of Tuesday. afternoon. They arrived here on Mon. evening around 7:00 p.m. Allan took two dozen red roses to meet her.

They arrived at our house and what a time we had!! Of course, I cried and so did she, as we hugged each other. She brought me a bouquet of Spring flowers to thank me. They stayed until about 11:30 p.m. Allan went and picked them up the next day around lunch time and we spent the day together talking and looking at more pictures. On Wed. we had the whole day as they came over in the morning. They had their conversation about everything that afternoon.

We had a very nice time with her and the boys did too!! She is a very nice, open, honest person and has nothing to hide. She was so grateful that we found her, as she was told she was never to interfere with his life. She has had a very hard life, part of that from having to give him up. I have never seen Allan Sooo happy. His sisters are absolutely beautiful!!! He has facial resemblance to the older one and personality to the younger one.

We are going to Myrtle Beach on the 8th of May to see his younger sister graduate college and to meet the rest of the immediate family. His grandparents, sisters, and new niece. We are looking forward to it. He has a lot in common with his grandpa. His grandma is bringing all the photo albums for us to see, and some pictures for him to keep. We have had copies made of the pictures that his mom brought for us to look at. He does call her mom. He said he does not feel like a stranger to her or his sisters at all. His younger sister has called and they talked for about an hour, and his older sister has emailed a beautiful letter. His mom has always told them about Allan so they have always known that they had an older brother. They wanted her to go get him back, as they did not quite understand since they were only 6 and 8. They were upset with her for a while about it. They were all getting ready to start searching in May when they all got together at graduation.

His mom is coming back here on Mon. afternoon and leaving Wed. They travel a lot Everybody has open, welcoming arms for him and for us. She never kept him a secret. They are planning a family reunion sometime in November. that they want us to go to. We probably will if we can. What a wonderful experience this has been. It has also been a healing one for Allan. He said he now feels whole! He looks so much like her family! She did say that when he was in his later years of high school he favored his b'dad. She said that he looks just like her brother.

I just can't believe how all of this has turned out! I am so happy for him and for her. I just sat back and watched them sometimes. Their faces just light up!! There are no words for something like this. I keep saying it is AWESOME, but that doesn't even come close. She and I get along great. We feel close to them all ready. That is the type people that they are. She treats us just like family and like there hasn't been any time lapse between us. So do his sisters. His grandparents are so excited to meet us and to have

two great grandchildren that are boys added to the family! We could not have asked for this to go any better.

Thank you so much for all of your help, support, and advice. You will never be forgotten. She would also like to thank you for finding her and providing us a way to reach her. She is very grateful.

Thank you,
G.
FL

Dear Kinsolving,

I will be eternally grateful to you as long as I live for giving me the knowledge of where my daughter is. I contacted her and her initial reaction was that of shock and disbelief. She had never been told that she was adopted. Initially she told me that I must be mistaken but she took my name and telephone number.

She called me back the next day in tears. She had confronted her parents and they confessed the truth to her. They know now how secrecy hurts and a lot of healing is beginning now for all of us.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

C.,
PA

Dear Kinsolving,

I wanted to take this opportunity to write you about my experience of finding my birth family. I had looked on my own for about eight years and hit every roadblock you can imagine along the way. Every time I would give up my search I would see a show on television about reunions. That would fire me up and I would hit the same walls over and over again.

Your number was included in the only literature that I received from the state, and I finally decided to give you a call. I felt very comfortable with you and your staff, and just sensed that you really cared about helping me find my birth mother. After supplying you with every little piece of information I had (which wasn't much), you said you could complete the search.

It was only five or six weeks later when I received the call saying that you had found my birth mother, and I was so excited that I just had to have it right that minute. Well thanks to overnight delivery I had my information the next day (Monday). Suddenly I became very scared about contacting her. Would she reject me, something I just couldn't bear, or would she be receptive to meeting with me. I was actually physically ill, thinking about that call. Well thanks to some coaching from you, and a pre-written script, I made the call on Tuesday. Just my luck no one was home. But I did get an answering machine, and there I heard my true mother's voice for the first time since my birth 38 years before. I must have called three times that night and got no answer but listened to that voice every time. (I didn't leave a message)

Wednesday happened to be a day off for me and got up the courage to try again. A woman answered the phone, and I suddenly became scared to death. I told her my name, and where I was from. Then I asked her name to make sure I had the right person. She informed me that I had, and I said that I had something of a personal nature to discuss with her, and was it a good time. She said yes, I told her where I was born and got half way through my birth date, and she interrupted me by say to her husband, excitedly, "it's my son." You can't imagine the load that was lifted off of my shoulders when I got a positive response. We talked for a long time, cried a lot, and then I asked if we could get together for a cup of coffee. She said yes when would be a good time for you, I said how about Friday. She immediately said yes, and the trip was planned.

My wife and I were so excited that we left on Thursday, and drove halfway to North Carolina from Florida. We arrived early the next day to regroup some before the reunion. I started getting nervous again, even as we drove to her house. Her home is on the edge of an apple orchard in the hills of North Carolina, what a beautiful setting. We walked up to the house and she met us on the porch. There was no doubt that this was my birth mother, as the resemblance was obvious. We hugged and cried, then we finally went inside. There we met her husband of over twenty years. We talked and looked at pictures for a long time, then she asked me if I would like to meet my half-brother and sister. I said yes and it wasn't long and we were all together and very, very happy. I also found out that I had a full blood brother that had been given up for adoption as well. He was a year older than I was.

The weekend was wonderful, and on Monday I called you to help find my brother. I guess you knew that I was going to ask, because you already had the information. Well we contacted the brother, who also lives in North Carolina, and we agreed to meet. That reunion was special because our birth mother was there also. You can't believe the look on her face the entire time. She had a glow that was contagious.

Thank you so much for all your help and understanding. I know that God sent you, and that this reunion was meant to be.

It has been 15 months since the first reunion, and I stay in touch with everyone. By the way, my brother and his family will be here this weekend for a visit. Again that you Kinsolving and God Bless.

Sincerely,
B.D.



Dear Kinsolving,

I don't think I can ever tell you enough - - Thank you.. thank you.. Our lives have been changed for the better because of you. My son and I have met and his siblings. We all got along so well and we talk every day. His adoptive family is very supportive and receptive as well. My children adore him. He is such a delight. Soon we are moving near each other and look forward to having the relationship we both always wanted. I have pictures to send to you. We look alike too. Its so cool and my life and my entire family's is so much better. This year we lost my cousin on the Swiss Air flight, which devastated us all and now having Scott who is such a joy in our lives, is a true blessing. Thanks for making that possible. My entire world has changed and for that I will always thank you.

Every chance I get I tell others about you. Maybe they can also have this much happiness through you as well. I tell everyone about you! You are wonderful! Thanks again.

S.

Dear Ones ~~ (and that is what you are at Kinsolving!!)

Isn't this a wonderful world you gave me!! My new found biological family is all that I could ever have dreamed for a dream come true. If I could have had my handsome brothers and lovely little sisters when I need them most - growing up so lonely as an only child as many adoptees do!!! ~~ gosh ~~ what I missed!

This is such a great thing you do! I hope it makes you as happy as it does those of us that you help. I really pray it does!

Having found my siblings - I have now visited "our" mothers grave ~ and now I feel she knows "I'm home" and I truly feel that.

She gave me such a gift - "Life" and Travis, Fleming, Jaslon and Grace. I wish I could "hug her tight" just one time and "kiss her" and say a big thank you for my brothers and sisters. Even though I can't feel her physically ~~ I hope and feel that she really knows! Don't you?

I must say it is still for me a "dream like state" - 70 years amiss~~~~~so much bonding to be done. But remember my greeting when I arrived to see them - they came to meet me with open arms - saying "Why did you wait so long to find us"

May that be a wake up note for all who wish to search - especially with you.

Please send copies to all of my new brothers and sisters - addresses below - "The Vanguard" is wonderful and we all look forward to it. I have come to love them so much as my husband, Daryl, also has.

May all your clients be as fortunate as my son Jed (also your client) and I.

Please have anyone call me who like to hear how wonderful you are and how wonderful you have made my life for me.

H. - NC

Dear KI,

After a very short time of sending you my information you found both my birth mother and my birth father. I was so shocked. I've spoken with both for many, many hours as well as with a half.sister. We are planning to visit in the near future . they've all completely embraced me. The story is quite incredible and I'll send the details when I have the time to sit and work them out, probably after all our reunions. You took a thought in my mind of possibly having "family" out there and made it, miraculously, into a reality. I have already referred you many times!

Thank you ever so much again.

I.
CT.



Dear Kinsolving,

Thanks for giving me the life I have with my son!

J.,
NC



SPECIAL PEOPLE

The special people in this world are the most precious
and the most appreciated people of all.
No matter what happens, they always understand.
They go a million miles out of their way.
They hold your hand.

They bring you smiles, when a smile is exactly
what you need.
They listen, and they hear what is said in the spaces between the words.
They care and they let you know you're in their prayers.

Special people always know the perfect thing to do.
They can make your whole day just by saying something that no one else could have said.
Sometimes you feel like they share with you a secret language that others can't tune into.

Special people can guide you, inspire you, comfort you,
and light up your life with laughter.
Special people understand your moods and nurture your needs, and they lovingly know just what you're after.

When your feelings come from deep inside and the need to be spoken to someone;
you don't have to hide from, you share them...
with special people.

When good news comes, special people are the first ones you turn to, and when feelings overflow and tears need to fall, special people help you through it all.

Special people bring sunlight into your life.
They warm your world with their presence,
whether they are far away or close by your side.
Special people are gifts that bring happiness,
and treasures that money can't buy.



Dear Kinsolving,

Just wanted to write you and say thank you so much for what you do to help us Adoptees. I think it is wonderful, and I really can't thank you enough. No matter how all this turns out, I will at least have had the chance. That is more than most. I really never thought this day would come to be able to get this info. I will be sure to let you know how it all turns out. I have to say I am pretty nervous about the whole thing...actually I think the word would be scared to death. I don't think I have ever been so scared in my whole life...but I would rather feel like this than the way I felt before.

Thank you. K., PA

Dear Kinsolving,

I'd love to refer people to you as well as recommend you to anyone. If you ever need a referral, please do send them my way. Your input into my case was invaluable. Though my birth mother has, one year later, still not acknowledged me to her family, I have met my grandmother (with my mother's help) and the whole process has achieved the desired effect of shaping my life up a bit and letting me move on. It's been very true what you said, that the process continues to evolve and I hope that my birth mom and I will be friends down the road when and if she comes to terms with this. I do care for her a lot and feel I've become a much more patient and understanding person for all this, which was really all I could hope for.

Thanks so much! Your help was like a godsend and I wish you every success.

Liz,
CA

Dear Kinsolving,

I am so unsure of where to begin this story. It seems like I have been searching for my birth mother forever. I began my search when I was 16. Having been born in North Carolina, made my search especially difficult. Nevertheless, through the help of Kinsolving, I found my birth mother one month ago (I am 27).

After receiving all my information about her, I realized that she had been living an hour and a half away from me my entire life. I was so excited to finally know who and where she was. But, I was too nervous to call her! I had been waiting 11 years for this, and I was terribly afraid to make that phone call, and run the risk of getting rejected. It took several weeks, but finally I did call her. I'm not sure what I said, but whatever it was, it worked. Within minutes, we were both crying and talking like we had known each other all our lives. She told me that she had held me twice, once after she had delivered me, and the other time, when she came to see me at Children's Home Society. She had even saved my hospital bracelet. She remembered that I had big brown eyes, and dimples. And she told me that she named me Heather (which is what my adoptive mother was going to name me, if I had blonde hair!). We spoke for several hours, until it was time for her to go and pick up her two children (I have two brothers, ages 10 and 12). She told me that her husband knew about me, but that she had not told her kids yet. After we hung up, I had a mini panic attack, thinking that she would never call back.

She did! The very next night, we talked for another few hours. We discussed the fact that I got my impatience from her, and that we MUST see each other right away. We made plans to meet somewhere the very next weekend. Unfortunately, her children got sick and we had to reschedule. It was three weeks from our first conversation before we actually saw each other face to face. It seemed like an eternity!!!

We agreed to meet half way, at a hotel (she had still not told her children). When we (my husband went with me) got to the hotel, I requested her room number. My legs were shaking so badly, that I had to sit down in the lobby before going to her room. When I finally got the courage up, I pushed the elevator button. The doors opened, and there she was!!! It was like looking in a mirror. We look just alike. The rest of that day is like a blur to me. We spent most of it in her hotel room, looking at pictures and talking. I just kept thinking "wow, this is really happening!". The weekend went by too quickly, and all too soon, we were saying good bye. She hugged me, and told me that she loved me--I believed her... I told her that I would let her call me, since her children still had begun to get curious about her long "phone calls" . I worried the entire car ride home, that she would never call again. It seemed like forever, but finally about a week later, she called. She told me that she had still not told her children, because she was trying to get in touch with my birth father (he lives in the same small town with her, and they have remained friends). She wants to give him the chance to prepare his family (he has two children--one is the same age as my daughter), before it spreads around their town. That was one week ago. I'm not worried. I know that she will call.

I have been searching long enough to have seen every possible reunion. Mine was perfect...or as close to perfection as you can get!!! I would never have been able to do any of it without the help of Kinsolving, or the support of my adoptive mother. So, from the bottom of my heart I thank you!!!

T.
AZ



Dear Kinsolving,

I talked to my daughter last night. It was an overwhelming experience. She wants to meet me, and has always understood why I had to give her up for adoption. I can't believe it. Her parents are also all right with it. They have always told her they would support her contacting me. They even want to meet me.

I never in my dreams thought it would turn out this way. Thank you so much for making my life complete. The emptiness I've carried in my heart is healed.

We're going to send pictures to each other, so I'll send you one of us when I receive them.

Thank you again so much.

C.S.

MY SEARCH IS OVER!

Dear Kinsolving,

I talked to my birth Aunt last night, Caroline. When you sent me the report telling my b'mom was deceased, I called my b'aunt and got her answering machine. I left a message of my name that I wanted to talk to her about a private matter in regards to her sister Susan. I gave the date of my birth as a reference. I also left my phone number.

After I called and left the message on my aunt's answering machine, I just prayed that she would be receptive to me talking to her. This has been a long search for me over 9 years. At times, I would ask God, "Why is she not looking for me?" or I would plead with him to have me find her. Since I believe in a loving God who would not hold back from me my heart's true desire, I could only try to reason in my human brain, that there must be a reason that I was not finding her. Perhaps he was protecting me until I was ready to know the truth.

My search started when I was 27 and it concluded when I was 35. In that period of time, I had my second child, and first daughter, Julie. My husband and I celebrated our 11th yr. anniversary. I went back to school to finish my degree. Our son, Nick turned 10. I quit smoking, changed jobs, and adopted 3 dogs. In that time, I really got to know who I am (the best one can). In the last 6 years, I found a church family, attend a weekly bible study and invited God into my heart. I have a wonderful family and precious friends. As it was so hard to see before, I now know the wisdom of the wait. God will only give me what I can handle - and for this I needed a really good foundation.

My birth mom, Susan, never had another child, never got married and never held a job. The reality is even more painful. When I talked to Caroline (my birth mom older sister by 3 years), I talked to a very kind, discerning woman. We talked over two hours. By the

nature of what I am about to discuss, it might be hard for me to convey just how protective Caroline was of my feelings but I will try.

My birth mom was very unstable. She was normal as a child, but emotional problems set in during her teens. She was manic-depressive, schizophrenic, and a sociopath. Please don't think Caroline just blurted this out. She only used "unstable" until much later in the conversation when I asked other questions and probed deeper. Susan (my birth mom) was in and out of institutions her whole life or in jail. She was a major substance abuser who pinged, purged, shot up heroin, took laxatives, was on heavy prescription medicine as well as other illegal drugs. She was probably an alcoholic. She was promiscuous. She couldn't hold a job. When she did get out of an institution, it wasn't long before her parents had to bail her out. She would use money for drugs and get evicted from her apartments.

I had to ask if she was overweight (cause I am). "No," Caroline said, "just the opposite too skinny." "Was she mean?" I asked "No, I can't say she was mean." "Why do you think she was so unstable?" I asked Caroline. "She was mentally ill," she told me softly. "My parents tried everything Susan put them through hell." Caroline went on to add that her parents were wonderful extremely caring. Caroline had known about me, but not a lot of the details. "Family matters were private", she said, "to protect each sibling." Caroline had just gotten married the year I was born and was living out of state that much of the 1963 was a blur to her. She has no idea what my birth father name was. She did say that there was no way that my birth mom could have kept me. She said that she would have possibly injured me physically or destroyed me emotionally. Her parents convinced Susan to give me up for my safety and well being. Susan finally consented. Years later, around Caroline's 3 kids, Susan would say things like...I wish I had my own children... or I wonder how Carlisa (my birth name) is.... But not much. At a couple points in the conversation, Caroline apologized to me for holding back, telling me she didn't want me to feel worse. She also said that because this is such a shock for her that until she trusts the situation better, she felt reserved about sharing a lot private information. But she added, "it is your business also." Caroline alleviated any trepidation by telling me it was my right to search and find.

Caroline was real interested in my adoptive parents, my life, and me. She applauded my going back to school and laughed over my stories of kids and dogs. She asked me about my husband. When I told her how long I have been married, she said, perhaps if Susan had found the right man at the right time she might have been in a better place emotionally. I asked her if there were any Penn State Alumnus, but she laughed and said, sorry and named the colleges her 3 kids went to. I asked if Susan ever finished her degree. Caroline said she was incapable of doing so. Susan had gone part time at a community college but it was beyond her to stay with it. "My parents were so supportive

of education that they would have encouraged her any way they could." "My parents were too," I said," and a few years ago I had the courage to go back." Caroline said that her parents would have been so happy to know I got the parents they wanted me to have. (They are both deceased now)

When I asked Caroline how my birth mom died, she said she was not exactly sure. "Basically, substance abuse. She abused her body until it just couldn't take it anymore and it gave out. Heart attack, liver failure, etc. " When I asked if it was a surprise when she died, she said it was and wasn't.

"I wonder if in some ways, it was a relief when she died," I said. Caroline said, "I didn't want to say that but in some ways it was. I don't know if my parents felt that way, but the rest of us just never knew what she would do next."

"Well, she did one good thing", I said, "She had me, and gave my parents a lot of joy...except for some difficult teenage years." "I have had a wonderful life" "She did do that," Caroline said. Caroline asked for my address, phone #, email and told me she would send some pictures of my birth mom to me. She said that because Susan had deteriorated so much as an adult, she would send me pictures of her when she was a child and happy.

I asked her if she wanted me to send her pictures. "I don't know" she said, "I need to think about that." "I understand completely," I assured her. Caroline gave me medical history .longevity, relatively good health, and no other mental illness except my birth mom and a distant cousin. "Get a mammogram every year" she warned. Breast cancer is prevalent. She had it, her mom and her mom's sister died of it. Her mom had Alzheimer's and her dad died of a brain tumor. They lived into their eighties. "Oh, and we all have bad knees," she added with a chuckle. " I just have had knee surgery for the second time."

We found out we both do step aerobics (even with her bad knees), and love to walk. She has freckles also. "You can connect the dots" she told me. I told her how my daughter Julie is real mad at me for giving her freckles.

Caroline lives only minutes from my sister and 4 hours from me. I thanked her for sharing so much with me telling her how very much it meant to finally know where I came from. Caroline said that she didn't know if anyone had coached me, but how I approached her on the phone was the best way possible. After Caroline had told me it was as good a time as any to talk, I had started out with, "Let me tell you what I know..."

As we hung up, her last words were, "Welcome to the family, Amy" A., SC

Dear Kinsolving,

I'm finally meeting my daughter tomorrow. My husband and I are flying to Cheyenne, WY, to meet her, and her family.

My heartfelt thanks to you and your staff for making this possible. I never dreamed that I could be so blessed. I'll let you know how everything went when I return.

Thank you again,
C., OH

Dear Kinsolving,

It is Monday morning and what an emotional weekend. I finally got in touch with Mark Saturday night at 8:00. We talked for 45 minutes and it was so great. I asked for him by name like you said, then told him my name and asked him if he could talk. I told him I was his birth mother and he said "I know" and the conversation went from there. He said he and his family have talked about me weekly for the past year since the state had contacted him and he was torn. He was just in St. Paul early this month and stayed in a suburb 15 min. from me. He has been in a relationship with a woman for the past 8 years (never married but live together) and have 3 sons (he said but don't get excited they are not your grandchildren they are her children from a previous marriage. Anyway, I can't even remember everything that was said. He is sending me a picture. He had received the picture I had sent him of my kids and he told me if I wanted to know what he looked like just look at my oldest son and add gray hair. I am so excited to get the picture. He said he had no reservations about meeting me but kept stressing he had no emotional bond to me which of course I understand but both of us got emotional so I am sure he was happy with the phone call. He has had a great life - many similarities regarding work and recreation (my husband and one of my sons have their private pilot license as does Mark) and my oldest son and Mark are in similar occupations. He seems to be a nice, confident man with a great sense of humor. I can't thank you enough and am so high I don't know when I will come down. He says he knows he has biological siblings and is torn about that but maybe someday will meet them all. Right now he is only interested in meeting me.

Will write you again. Again, thanks a million!

P., NC

Dear Kinsolving,

I have talked with Susan several times. She is delightful She knew she was adopted and was encouraged by her parents to find eventually.

She is divorced, has two children.....a girl 9 and a boy 6. She has told them that she was adopted so they are excited about our finding.

I can not tell you how wonderful this is for both of us personally. Susan's adopted mother is having some reservations now but I am sure she will get over it.

My husband and I are planning to go to Phoenix in April to visit with his parents as well as meet Susan and the children. And I have sent some pictures as well as some genealogy from my family. Thank you so very much....the stone which I was carrying around has rolled off my shoulders!!!

J. B., WA

Dear Kinsolving,

I want to drop you a note to let you know that you will always be special in my heart for bringing me a precious gift my Mom. I contacted her on Sunday after playing tag with her over the phone every time I called she had just gone out. I started the conversation just as you said and after I gave my DOB and adoption info there was total silence, so I asked if this sounded familiar she said of course you're my baby girl. Well with that the tears flowed from both of us, but we managed to still talk for two hours. She was so open about everything, she has been so afraid over the years that I would hate her and not understand, I tried so hard to reassure her that was not the case, she's my Mom and I love her. Well we are planning on meeting sometime soon even though we both know the tears will flow again.

Again thank you from the bottom of my heart, you are an Angel sent from God.

L.
Reunited w/ BMOM 11/8/98 by phone
Thank You

Dear Kinsolving

Just wanted to touch base and let you know how things are going with my reunion. Things are moving along quite nicely. Two days after I called Vicki, I went to Asheville to meet her. She was very excited to meet me. We spent the day together and I got to meet my grandparents, my 1/2 brother and her husband. Meeting me helped the family to put some guilty feelings behind them. They said that a hole in their hearts had been filled that day.

The following weekend, Vicki came to Charlotte with my 1/2 sister so that my husband could meet them and so that we could begin to take turns w/ regular visits.

My husband said that once he saw Vicki, he knew you had found the right person for sure. What a great experience for me and what a fascinating job you must have. I look forward to sharing more with you.

Sincerely,
S., Me



Dear Kinsolving,

I thank God for you and your dedication in searching for us all. You have given me, with God's help, the best anyone could access and opportunity to bond with my mama and sister.

K., Ca.



The Journey for Heather

I became pregnant with my daughter the night of my senior prom. When I realized I was pregnant and had no support from my family, my only alternative was to place my daughter for adoption. If she was placed through an agency she would spend months in foster care and since I wanted her to be placed immediately after birth I went to San Francisco under the care of a physician who my father had found. This doctor explained

to me that he had placed many children in good homes and that he matched up the adoptive parents as close as he could to the birth mother=s nationality, religion etc. He told that he found parents for my baby when I was almost 5 months pregnant and they paid for all of my medical expenses.

My pregnancy lasted over 10 months. I guess I didn't want to give her up because as long as I was carrying her, she was still my child. When I went into labor the doctor arrived and told me that my child's adoptive parents were on their way to the hospital. I had a very hard labor and after 36 hours Heather came into this world. I was knocked out when she was born so I could not see her and then I was taken to a surgical ward away from the maternity ward and Heather was given to her adoptive parents and I had a hole in my soul.

My life went on but not a day went by that I didn't think of Heather. I wanted her in my life. I had always wanted Heather but she had a family of her own and I was just her birth mother with a hole in my soul.

About 14 years ago I started my search for Heather. There was medical information she needed to know about. In my search, every door was shut to me. I joined organizations and I read books, and wrote letters. Then someone gave me the phone number for Kinsolving Investigations. I contacted them and within days Kinsolving located my daughter.

The telephone call to Heather was a difficult one but we both got through it. Then 32 years, 1 month and 15 days after Heather's birth I was privileged to meet this wonderful young woman filled with love and happiness. When we hugged I didn't want to let go. Then Heather told me the best thing I could have ever done was to place her with her adoptive family. She had a wonderful life growing up. Both her mother and father were great. Her brothers and sisters were wonderful and her life was very good.

During college she found her One and only, Matt and they have been married for 10 year and have two beautiful sons. The time that Heather and I spent together was filled with so much joy for me. I had some family heirlooms to pass onto her. I got to be grandma for 2 days. I had gifts for the baby boys. The happiness was more than I can put into words. She has a wonderful husband who really loves her. They had a glow that made them one.

When the time came for them all to go home and they drove away I felt as if I was being ripped apart inside. It was harder than when I placed her with her parents. But that hole in my soul is now filled. She grew up happy, she now has a wonderful husband and two wonderful sons. For the two days I had with her it was worth all the pain for 32 years.

Those two days were filled with love and joy. Just before she left she said the boys need a grandma and another grandfather would be nice too.

Heather wants us in their lives and we are now building a relationship one step at a time. Between phone calls and letters we are really getting to know each other. The hole in my soul is filled and I have a wonderful family.

Thank you Kinsolving for the most wonderful miracle of my life.

L.
WA



Dear Kinsolving,

A thank you for all you have done for me. I hardly know where to begin. After 15 years of searching on my own I was simply amazed at the few days it took you to complete your investigation and find my family.

You were my last bit of hope. I knew if you couldn't find my birth mother that no one could. I could hardly believe you found her so quickly. Your time and advice throughout the process of contact have been indispensable. I don't know how I would have made that first phone call without your help. You provided succinct ways to make important points and perhaps most importantly, the encouragement to make that call. (and the reassurance that it would go well.

You have held my hand every step of the way and for that I will forever be grateful. Thank you for helping to make one of my greatest dreams come true. I look forward to sharing more with you in the future.

E.

P.S. I sing your praises constantly and I've recommended you to several people. If I can ever be of any assistance, feel free to call.