

The most difficult decision a birth parent or an adoptee must take to reunite with one another is a firm resolve to pursue the search until it's over.

That may sound simple, but it's not.

Do not embark on a search for a loved one without knowing with absolute certainty that it's what you want to do. You owe that much to yourself as well as the other person.

When you get the information on how to contact the person, it should be just a matter of time before you utilize it, however you choose to use it.

Everyone of us does it differently, even though we're all the same, searching for someone, a son, a daughter, mother or father or perhaps a brother or sister.

It doesn't matter. We all feel there's something missing; a hole in our heart, perhaps or a painful memory. It could be just a desire to know more about ourselves.

It's with those thoughts that I contacted Kinsolving Investigations last June and asked them to locate my son, born 28 years ago. I was told it would be a rewarding experience.

I wasn't so sure. I had abandoned my son at birth; his birth mother and I put him up for adoption.

I had no idea what had happened to him, where he lived (if at all), who his adoptive parents were, whether he got a good home, and on and on.

KI found Jeff in six days. They called me with the information. I almost hyperventilated with excitement.

I called my son later that week, after thinking about what I would say and bracing myself for rejection. KI said he would probably be overjoyed to hear my voice. I didn't have such confidence. They were right. I was wrong.

The rest is a happy story that thus far has only a beginning. I have no idea where the story will take me and Jeff. But I am going to find out.

Here's my story about how we met for the first time. As the plane set down on the runway in Lincoln, Neb., where I held my first job in daily journalism, a tableau of

memories and faces passed through my mind. It was my first time back, since the 1960s.

Jeff and I had agreed that we would meet for dinner that night and check each other out.

I drove to his house parked my rental car, then tried to decide what to say or what not to say and appear uncool.

I got out of the car and walked up to the door and knocked. The door opened. I stuck out my hand and introduced myself. Jeff smiled, sort of grabbed my hand, then went for the hug.

What a sublime feeling to be embraced by a son. It left me breathless and wordless. It was an auspicious start.

When I had first talked to Jeff on the telephone, I tried to explain to him why I didn't think I could care for him as a father or commit in marriage to his birth mother.

It was not an easy decision to sign the papers relinquishing parental right. I can still remember sitting in the adoption agency, fretting and nervous.

Yes, I never forgot that I had a son. In the 1970s I tried to locate him, but decided it best wait until he was a mature adult. I didn't want to disrupt his adoptive home.

Jeff had told his adoptive parents that I was coming. He said neither felt threatened and both wished him well.

I asked when he first learned that he was adopted. "I always knew," he replied.

Jeff told me earlier in a letter that he also knew that we would meet someday. I had the same intuitive thought.

We went to a buffet dinner, because it was convenient. I wasn't hungry. I looked over at Jeff. He was nervous and drummed his thumbs on the table top.

I told him to relax. We small talked, then discussed football. Hey, that's what dads and sons do.

A concern of mine was that once the novelty of meeting me had worn off, he would say, "See ya. Nice to meet ya."

Not at all. Jeff invited me into every facet of his life. I met more than 20 of his friends at a skateboard meet. I was so pumped at being introduced as "my dad from Frisco" by my son. It was so cool, Jeff calling me "my dad."

Before I got too carried away with parental pride, I also realized that it was a convenient way to name and locate me; an easy handle.

We attended the Nebraska-Baylor football game. We also watched the 49ers lose to the Packers on Monday Night Football at this house with his friends. He's a Raiders fan (a genetic mutation), but was kind and didn't rub it in.

He also invited me to visit him at work, where he drives a forklift in a warehouse. He showed me what he does to feed, cloth and house himself.

When I looked at my son, I saw some of myself. He's 5-foot-11 and 180 pounds. I'm 5-foot-8 and 150 pounds. But he walks like I do, has my skin color and texture but luckily didn't inherit my nose. He got his birth mother's blue eyes.

His quips are thoughtful. Mine are acerbic. He is patient and easy-going. I'm hurried and hyped. He wears tattoos. I wore an earring 20 years ago. He shaves his head. I have longish hair. He has a boa tee. I have a beard.

Seeing him in his daily life and meeting his friends gave me an insight into my son, but I really learned who he is when we talked about what is meaningful in life.

I asked him directly what was most important to him? "Human rights," he said without hesitation. I was stunned. My son said that! I was so proud. I wanted a definition to his human rights answer. I asked if that means he opposes racism, sexism and homo phobia, and discrimination, even "ageism" against geezers like me. "Yes," he replied. What else is there?

I thought often during my six day visit of how to tell Jeff that I still regret not being there as his father. I didn't think there was more I could say. I asked if we could become friends.

He says we should work on a friendship. Work it we will.

I drew one conclusion from meeting him. That it would not be wise ever to play the role of "father knows best." As a friend of mine says.

I also learned that he makes decisions at his pace. After finding him in July, I wanted us to meet soon thereafter. He put the brakes on, suggesting that I visit in September or October.

I invited him to join me for Thanksgiving or Christmas or New Years. He said maybe in six months he'll come to San Francisco. He's planning to fly here in early March for a week or so.

When I was about to leave, Jeff said something vague about thinking of moving to San Diego, where he has friends. He may also consider going back to college. He'd be a junior. I could hear my internal voice yelling, "Yes, yes." San Diego? It's closer to Frisco than Lincoln, Nebraska.

D.  
CA.



Dear Kinsolving,

Once I received the information from you I made the call to my birth mother. We cried and cried. We compared notes. I was so glad to hear her say she had always wondered what had happened to me and she had worried so much all these years. A week after the telephone call we met. When she walked into that room I knew she was my mother. We look so much alike. Her husband cried like a baby. He's known about me from the beginning. I felt so sorry for her because I knew in my heart she was glad I found her but was now devastated because she didn't know how in the world she would even begin to tell her five children. We talked the following week on the phone several times.

Three weeks later, on a Saturday morning, the telephone rang and it was my birth mother crying her heart out. I asked what was wrong and she only said that someone wanted to talk to me. It was my brother, Peter and my sister Donna. They were wonderful! They thanked me for finding her so she could finally be rid of the guilt. They couldn't believe that she and other family members had kept this secret for forty-four years. The next day the telephone rang and it was my birth mother asking me to come to her home that afternoon. She had her husband meet me on the front porch. We hugged and cried. Her husband took me by the shoulders and said they were ready for me to come in and meet the rest of the family. I was so scared, but they all received me like they'd always known me. The older daughter looked at me and told me she was so

glad I'd found my way back home. They have all called, written and by now, told all of their friends. My youngest brother lives in Kansas, so I haven't met him yet.

We're already making plans for family reunions, holiday events and plans for a big beach trip next summer. They are wonderful people. My birth mother is a great lady - a refined southern lady, as my husband says.

Thank you again and again.

Sincerely,  
A.  
S.C.



Dear Kinsolving,

I drove from my home to Fayetteville and parked at the Hotel 6. I combed my hair, switched off the engine of the car and said a prayer. "Lord, I've got to go to the door. Please help me."

The almost like an answer to my prayer the door opened and a husky, smiling young man stood, looking at me.

I knew he was my son even though I have not seen him since the day he was born, 31 years ago.

He walked a few feet toward the car and said, "You've come this far. You just as well come on in."

I didn't know what to do. I got out of the car and walked up to him. I didn't know whether to shake his hand or hug him. I think I started to reach out my hand to him not knowing exactly what to do. My son made it easy and I thank God for that. He said, "Come here, I want a big hug!"

I hugged him and he hugged me and we began to cry and to tell each other that we loved each other. I can't describe how I felt at that moment. I can't tell you everything that was said or what happened. It would take too long.

I am filled with so much love and happiness. I don't feel empty anymore. The pain I used to have in my heart is no longer there. I thank God for the good mama and daddy he had to raise him.

I thank you for the part you played in helping me to find my son.

With much gratitude,  
E.  
N.C.



Dear Kinsolving,

I have been trying to find the time to fill you in on the wonderful world you have opened up for my husband and I. Thank you so much - we are now the luckiest people on the planet! Our daughter is strong and beautiful and is very independent, happy, positive, open, affectionate, and self-confident. In other words, she knows exactly what she likes and what she wants and has great confidence in herself and her decisions; qualities I value greatly. She loves her adoptive family and loves us too and she is very happy that we are back in the picture. She said that she has had so many questions that she always wanted to ask and now can just pick up the phone and do so. We have been able to get to know her fairly well over the past months during many long phone calls, letters and in her recent weekend visit with us, and we already love her more than I can ever describe. She makes us laugh, and feel good - it is her own poise, confidence, and affectionate manner that has made it all so easy to get beyond the nervous aspects of the situation. She is everything we could have hoped she would turn out to be, not because we think she is absolute perfection (she is too human and independent for that!), but predominantly because she is so happy, loving and strong. What more could we ask for, really?

My husband is absolutely in awe of her and has never been happier in his life. He told me that seeing her and being with her was the most emotional, wonderful experience he has ever had. He and our youngest son have always been extremely close, like two peas in a pod, and still are, of course, but it has been quite an experience for him to see his own daughter, looking so much like him, with his own genes and some of his traits! The latest research on the subject has established that about 50% of your personality is determined by genes, and 50% of your environment, so it doesn't just affect looks! Her mom told her that she should have figured that if anyone could find her, it would be someone like me. She told our daughter that she had been told by the agency 23 years

ago that her natural mother was a very strong-willed, assertive young woman, so she said she wouldn't be surprised that I found her or that she is like that herself.

Her adoptive parents were excellent choices - her mother is a nurse and her father owns his own business, and they have always given our daughter the best of everything and have done a really good job of raising her. Her parents asked her not to stay in contact with us until they had a chance to prove that we are who we say we are, so they first called the agency who denied them the information. They got their attorney to petition against the court in Richmond for her original birth certificate and she now has it and has seen both of our names on it as well as her original name. I'm glad they did that - there can be no doubts on their part now about who we are.

The boys are both very happy about their sister and both think she is really terrific. Both of them immediately took the best pictures of her for their wallets.

Our daughter told us that she had very much wanted to know all about us and the rest of her genetic family. When she was sixteen, she became upset in this regard and had a lot of questions her parents couldn't answer. She just plain wanted to know as much about us as she could find out, and became very frustrated. Her parents took her back to the agency so that she could personally review the information. She was told by the agency at that time that she was one of the few adopted children whose mother and father had been both willing to go to that effort. The records are blacked out to such a degree though that she really found out very little about either of us and none of it was of any importance or identifiable, so she left there frustrated and would have never been able to have answers to her questions if it hadn't been for YOU.

Well, now you have "the rest of the story," and you wrote the key parts. You can imagine that we are living our dreams right now. No one could be as lucky as we have been in this life, and I thank God for everything He has done for us all, and He worked through YOU. I have always had such a happy life and have been so fortunate in family and personal matters but now I've come full circle with the past, and it is just so unbelievable, the extra peace it brings.

We cannot thank you enough for helping us find her after all these years, especially with a married name and in a different state. I would have gone crazy without your support, compassion and warmth! I grew to love you along the way, trust you completely (and correctly so), and will never forget you. Thank You, Thank You, Thank You - you should never wonder if you have made a difference in this world.... YOU HAVE!!

Fondly,  
M & G VA.

Dear Kinsolving,

A "thank you" is hardly enough to say to you for all that you have given back to me. My life has come full circle and I am building a relationship with my son who I lost to adoption 29 years ago. I promise to share more with you at a later date. My head is spinning and I'm still trying to process all that has been happening. It is so exciting and so wonderful.

God bless you and all that you do to reunite families.

Sincerely,  
J., Tx.

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Dear Kinsolving,

I believe that all success stories should have their day in the sun. Therefore for your enjoyment and pleasure, a summary of this success story is provided to you with the hope it will add a little more "sun" to your day.

After receiving your pleasing information which provided a great deal of personal relief and satisfaction I wrote a letter to my Birth mother. The letter was written more in the form of a request for information. Not knowing her current family situation, health condition or personal feelings the letter provided a very brief knowledge of my birth history and current standing. Also, the letter provided her enough information to let her know I was alive and well, but it also provided her with an escape should she not want to communicate. The letter was mailed registered and restricted delivery for receipt and signature of addressee only. During that week I was traveling. My intense schedule kept me very busy. Unfortunately, it did not keep me busy enough to dismiss the thoughts of what results the letter would bring to me and my family. Frankly, the idea of a rejection by my Birth mother was not a very pleasing thought.

On Wednesday, May 11th, I received a telephone call, which was answered by my wife. The call was from a very humble and soft spoken lady who eventually advised my wife that she was, in fact, my Birth mother. After being informed that I was away for the week, the two of them carried on a very happy and tearful hour long conversation. Later that evening when I called to advise my wife of my whereabouts, she reported the happy event and advised me that my Birth mother was extremely happy about the

contact. Further, she did so wish for me to contact her upon my return. You will never know the relief which was lifted from me upon hearing the results were positive.

My Birth mother told my wife that she had second thoughts about her decision and very soon after giving me up for adoption, a matter of one or two days, wanted to return and attempt to get me back. She tearfully stated, she really knew at the time she had done the right thing. She went on to say that over the years she had, on several occasions, attempted to determine my whereabouts.

When I returned home, I place the most difficult telephone call of my life to my Birth mother. After a brief period of long distance silence the conversation proceeded in a very happy and tearful manner with exchange of personal history and accomplishments of both parties. The initial call ended on a very positive note with hopes from she and I that the future would bring a personal meeting. To this time contacts continue. A photo album consisting of my childhood, our family and especially her new found granddaughter was mailed for her keeping.

Before I close, I must extend to you the gracious thanks from my Birth mother. She is aware that you had a very special part in this reunion. She requested that we extend her blessings and a very special thank you for your efforts.

Your help has provided me that which I did not know. The information itself is the whole cake, the positive reunion is the "icing on the cake." Just the information alone gave me so much.

On behalf of my entire family I want to thank you for your excellent work. And thank you for being there for me and others in search of their past. May God provide you with the ability to continue your skillful efforts.

Best regards,  
R., S.C.

Dear Kinsolving,

Thank you so much for all of your help in finding my Birth mother. After I spoke with her on the telephone I went to meet her for the first time. It was a very emotional and wonderful time for both of us. All of the questions that I had were finally being answered. We still keep in touch over the telephone and we plan to get together again very soon. I am very lucky that my reunion went so well.

Enclosed is a picture of us and also a poem that I wrote when I was 14-years-old.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

J.  
S.C.

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Whoever You Are

You gave me life and I know you could have given me love,  
As sure as there is a God above.

But, all I want to know is why? Why you gave me up to the parents that I love so much.

They're the only parents that I've ever known. They've been with me through the years  
that I've grown.

I think about you day by day and whenever we meet, what will you say? Will you say  
that you've always loved me and always cared? Or will you say the words that I just  
couldn't bear.

But, no matter how things turn out, beyond a shadow of a doubt, I will always love you -  
whoever you are.

Dear Kinsolving,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart, if it were not for you, this would never have been written! Hope you have a great holiday!

I gave birth to my beautiful daughter on 8-5-71 and placed her for adoption. I was only 15 years old at the time. This was the hardest decision I ever had to make. I promised that beautiful child that someday I would find her. I was not saying good-bye forever. I was finally reunited with her 24 years later by telephone and got to hold her in my arms again 25 years, 3 months, and 6 days later. As a bonus I got to hold my new granddaughter, too. What a cutie!

I met my daughter at the airport and I did it with dry eyes. It was wonderful and she looks just like me. We hung around the house for a while, until it came time to go out to eat but first we had to stop and meet the dreaded "adoptive parents." To all b'moms who are searching I can only say that I hope you find that your child's adoptive parents are half as nice as my daughter's are. I couldn't have prayed for better parents to raise my daughter. When we arrived at their home I shook hands with her father and went to shake her mother's hand. Instead I got pulled into a hug and she and I both lost it as we cried in each other's arms. Her parents are super people. Her dad told me that he wants us to be friends for a long time. They are the kinds of parents I prayed for and since I couldn't raise her, I'm very glad they did.

I had the opportunity to show my daughter the house where I grew up and where she was conceived.

We had a thoroughly enjoyable visit. We went to the beach and collected shells, watched videos of my daughter's beauty contest and her wedding. It kills me that I didn't find her before her wedding. We went and had photographs taken. It was fascinating to see how much genetics va. environment. My daughter looks like me, talks like me, walks like me and moves like me. Watching her was like watching a younger version of myself, with a smitten of my mother and my sister. I just couldn't get over it. My daughter is an excellent dancer, which doesn't surprise me, as I am too. She plays piano, organ, and several other instruments as does my grandmother and sister. She might not have known about some of her talents had environment helped her. Her parents provided the lessons but all the lessons in the world would not help someone who doesn't have the talent.

All in all it was a wonderful visit I hope and pray that we have a lifetime more of them. For you who are searching and find, I hope that your relationships are as wonderful as mine is with my daughter and her parents.

A.

Reunited by phone 6/12/96

Back in my arms again 11/13/96



Dear Kinsolving Investigations,

How can I ever begin to thank you for finding me for my most precious son. To have him back in my life after forty years of praying for him is beyond belief!

On September 11th I returned home from Atlanta to find a message on my answering machine. After playing the message, my heart began to race as it was a young man's voice asking me to call him. September 11th has always been hard for me because it is the birthday of my dear son who had been given up for adoption forty years ago. I dialed the number at exactly 11:27 am and was overwhelmed - my son said, "I love you mom." It was his 40th birthday.

At exactly 11:45 p.m. my son, his darling wife and my adorable grandson flew into town and I was able to hug him after all these years. The week that followed was so very special and my broken heart was mended. He and his family returned for Thanksgiving and I thank God for his answer to my many prayers.

The greatest gift one can have in life is love and when I asked my son how he could love me when I gave him up for adoption he said, "Mom, you gave me life....." The tremendous bond between us is so strong and I love him more than life itself.

May you continue with your wonderful mending of so many lives.

Very sincerely,  
E., S.C.

Dear Kinsolving,

HELLO! I know this letter has been meant for me to write a hundred thousand times. I got my second newsletter today, that so inspired me to make that phone call for you to do my search. And so it was, in less than 48 hours on my phone call and putting my letter in the mail to you, I got that "call." Boy, was it exhilarating!

I have enclosed a picture for you of myself and my three brothers. Don't we all look alike??!

The story about my Birth mother goes something like this: You told me that she had been dead since 1977 of natural causes. The truth of the matter is, they found her dead in the Saluda River in February 1977. She had been missing since New Years Day. That was the last time any of my brothers had contact. They all lived side by side with their father, my Birth mother's first husband. They say it was an accidental drowning, unknown, unclear, never resolved case. It has been so long the police didn't have any evidence or leads for murder. She apparently had been shot in the shoulder a few months before and had gotten real depressed after the incident. One of the brothers told me she talked about me while in the hospital and really missed me. She apparently had a very active life.

There was a lot of talk of her liking to go out with military men and bar, she liked to waitress, etc. Well after learning a great deal, two or three days passed after meeting the "boys," as they were called, and I should say they were very open and compassionate. Naturally, with my mother having me at 38 years old, the boys knew of me and she always told them my name was going to be Deborah Ann, so they have had to carry around in their hearts the knowledge of having a sister named Deborah Ann. I was very touched by the story. And I had always dealt with the "not knowing" part, they had always known about me. I had a great reunion with all of my mothers brothers and sisters. I have spent a lot of time with my brothers and their wives and children. I have a niece and 2 nephews. My niece and I look identical. She is 24 and I am 28. It knocked their socks off when we first met. There was absolutely NO doubt!

After the initial shock wore off, the reality "hit home" right square in my heart. I cried from morning till night, at work, driving, in bed for 3 days straight all about my mother and she was dead/murdered. I would have never met her when I started searching over 10 years ago. I felt more depressed than I ever had.

I didn't know what steps to take, what to think, how I should act. I had tried and tried to prepare myself for the worst. I wracked my brain driving that one hour to come see you and tried to anticipate for the best and worst information that you were about to give me.

Well, there is no preparation for it, people can give in their all, it doesn't work. I have never had her and I never will. But I've got my "boys." They have been my world since July. We have shed many tears, more mine than theirs, because they have dealt with her death. I have just begun. We talked about taking this day forward and living the furrier with 200%. I'm all for it but I still have so much pain and it's been over 7 months.

I would like to thank you very, very much for all you did.

Your newsletter is so touching and hits home to so many people who are desperate to have a successful reunion and you do it SO well. You really have closed a large chapter of my life but you did it with a very large sense of caring and understanding which we the adoptees and all of those birth parents who need to fill the gaps in their lives. It is so much appreciated.

From the bottom of my heart, thanks again....

K.  
SC

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After 44 Years, siblings find their missing link.....

For 44 years, the three Parris kids wondered what became of their baby brother.

Michael Bell - separated from his family at 2 and after adopted - never knew they existed.

all the years that divided them disappeared amid tearful embraces when the siblings reunited.

One day after contacting Kinsolving Investigations the three kids found their brother - although at first, Bell wasn't sure what to make of the strange call from California.

"This is better than winning the lottery," Bell said, "I've won a whole family."

Dear Kinsolving Investigations,

Thirty years ago I was forced to give up my son for adoption. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do. But, I couldn't let go and called the agency every few months begging them for information. They refused and even at one point said that even if he had not been adopted I could not get him back. They often suggested strongly that I need counseling. I went through a terrible first marriage, divorce and custody battle for my second son. Finally, at age 30, I met and married a wonderful man and had two other children. Even though I tried to be happy, I was not, and spent many nights crying. Although never a day went by that I didn't not think about my son or worry that he was safe, the worst time was out birthdays and holidays. My son's birthday and mine are only days apart and from the first of November until after Christmas holidays I was depressed and worried about where he was and if someone loved him that I spent most holiday nights alone in tears.

Over the years I continued to call the agency begging for any information, but they always refused. Finally, the first of March 1995, I called my family together and told them I had to search for my son, that I could not continue without knowing about him. I got up the courage and faced my mother. To my surprise her response quietly given, "Find my grandson." With the support of my family, husband and children, I again called the agency. To my surprise, I was told I had the right to "non-identifying" information about my son and all I had to do was send proof of my identity. When they received the letter the social worker called me and during our conversation told me she was sure my son was still in North Carolina and let me know he had been searching for me. She also said she would send me a list of registries. Before I got her letter I heard about Kinsolving Investigations and contacted them. They told me about different groups and the ISRR, where I also registered.

In a couple of weeks I received a letter with information about my son. I had been afraid I had measles when I was first pregnant, and my worst fear was there. He had a significant hearing loss, but he had been adopted and had a loving, Christian home. I immediately called the adoption agency. The social worker said if I sent updated medical information, she could send a letter to my son that she had the information. She said if he contacted her and asked any question on how to locate me she could tell him about the registries. I sent out the medical information immediately. Weeks went by and just before Mother's Day, the social worker called to say my son had contacted her for the information and demanded to know where to find his mother. She gave him the registry information.

A couple of weeks later Kinsolving called to tell me they had his information and later that night I spoke to my son for the first time. The following weekend he came to visit.

He was so much like the rest of the family that by the end of the weekend he was yelling, "Hey Ma" like the rest of my children.

It it a year later and he is so much a part of our life. There are good times, and not so good times. The adoption support group has been a big help in understanding his feelings and mine. Although I thought I had dealt with that pat of my life long ago, I have learned I only buried it. Now I have help to deal with the past and building a future with my son.

S.  
NC

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Dear Kinsolving,

I just wanted to take time to let you know how much I appreciate the work you did. You enabled me to reunite my family. We could not have done it without your help, My family had been searching for my uncle for over 40 years, which seemed like a lifetime. My uncle was give up at two-years-old, due to my grandmother's illness. My grandmother, who we called "Maga," passed away in 1987 not knowing where her youngest son was. I can remember her looking at his picture and reminiscing about the day she gave birth to him. I was very young then and sensitive to her needs and would tell her that I would help find her baby. Well, who would have known that our prayers would be answered on October 25, 1996, less than 24 hours after talking with Kinsolving. My mother and her two other siblings gathered together to make that first phone call that they had been waiting to make for a life time. My uncle didn't know that he had any siblings. He couldn't have been any happier to know that he had a whole family searching for him. After the initial contact, it was as if my uncle had never been missing. The whole family reunited on November 22, 1996 and it couldn't have turned out better. He is definitely one of us. Once again, thank you and we will always think of you in our prayers.

Sincerely,  
K., CA.

This represents my grandma's nickname:

Michael  
An Angel Taken away  
Gods Most Wonderful Gift Given Back  
A Rainy Night in November showered with Grandma's Resting tears.....

## A Birth mother's Journey Toward Reunion

Allow me to take you on a journey momentarily, to a place where for me, time once stood still. It is August 21, 1996, and a hot sultry day in London, Ontario. A little girl has just made her debut into the world.

I was the mother of that little girl. Along with the gift of life, my daughter was given her heritage and her birth name Rebecca Anne. The moment I said good-bye to my child sleeping contentedly in the hospital nursery, was a moment "frozen in time."

Leaving the hospital, I chose to be confident that my daughter would be placed with a loving family, who would give her what I could not. I continued on with my life, totally unaware of the latent impact relinquishment could have on both mother and child. It was to be twenty five years before I became aware of the importance of allowing myself to begin to fully grieve the loss of my daughter. That awareness came through the guise of a depression.

Part of my healing journey over the past five years has consisted of putting my name on the Adoption Disclosure Registry, writing and then waiting for Rebecca's non-identifying information, familiarizing myself with adoption circle issues by reading and attending conferences, and finally breaking my silence by designing and facilitating wellness workshops and retreats for Birth parents.

When I received information of where I could contact my daughter, I risked by sending her a registered package which among other things contained a letter telling her my reasons for searching. One of those reasons was to confirm what my heart always knew, that she had been nurtured in love; the other was to make her aware of a letter I had placed in her file that would hopefully answer questions she had the right to ask about her adoption. I also told her that I wanted her to know that when she was ready to reach out I would be there.

Shortly after receiving this package, my daughter initiated what I have affectionately called out e-mail reunion. That was September 26th and it is now November 17th. Our lives have taken on an added dimension as we continue to nurture a bond that once again has begun to reaffirm itself. Those seeds of friendship, we have cultivated have indeed taken root.

The medium of e-mail helped create a relationship in which elements of emotional intensity, humor and spirituality are all present. The development of trust and appreciation of one another, resulting from sharing thoughts, feelings, experiences and

reflecting upon these, paved the way for a successful reunion the weekend of October 25th.

As Julie and I continue to create opportunities to share in each others lives, close family members are also becoming a part of this process. It is wonderful to realize that in reconnecting with my daughter I will had an opportunity to be a grandmother to my granddaughter and a friend to my daughter's husband. My husband and I welcome this new dimension that finding my daughter has brought into our lives.

In Ontario, insensitive law still govern adoption disclosure, leaving searching Birth parents and adoptees feeling unempowered and distressed. These laws leave little choice but to look for alternative ways of searching. I am grateful that Kinsolving Investigations found my daughter, and I am also grateful that organizations such as Kinsolving Investigations are fulfilling a need in a discreet and confidential manner.

Persistent lobby groups in British Columbia have been instrumental in influencing the Government to make significant changes to the Adoption Act. I can only hope similar changes will soon be adopted through out Canada.

In order to ensure that a reunion be an emotionally healthy experience, adequate preparation is essential. Adequate preparation can be facilitated in part by government making a commitment to provide support services in the form of counseling and workshops for members of the adoption circle to share their fears and concerns. Opening up dialogue can help to address misconceptions, promote understanding and begin the process of healing. In concluding, I'd like to state that I also believe no government or individual has the right to deny the adoptee information about his or her heritage.

J., reunited Birth mother

Dear Kinsolving,

I wanted to tell you how grateful I am for the work that you do. Words can never express how it feels to be reunited with my son. He is wonderful, his family is wonderful and we are working on building a wonderful relationship. His adoptive family has welcomed me into their life as well, and considers all of us a part of their family.

My only regret is that I waited so long to contact you. That should have been my first step instead of my last. I will always be indebted to you. I wish I could shout from the housetops about how wonderful you are. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Fondly,  
C., MI