



pact's

point of view

The newsletter for adoptive families with children of color

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## Teen Corner

# Psychological Heavy-Lifting

*Young people must do a lot of psychological heavy-lifting during their adolescence. As they experience major changes in their self-images, personal responsibilities, and relationships to the central people in their lives, they develop a more independent sense of identity. A healthy self-identity is based on many characteristics, including similarities and differences from parents and other influential adults.*

*Research has shown that adoption complicates the developmental steps adolescents must take-as does race. While the overall adjustment of adopted youth of color is often good, their emotional journey can be more complex than youth who are not facing some of the stresses inherent to the negotiation of race and adoption. The need to give up parental dependency and become self-sufficient (one of the defining tasks of adolescence for all youth) reawakens loss issues for many adopted teens. As they restructure their self-esteem and identification there is often a temptation to idealize and fantasize about racial role models from the media (particularly for adolescents without direct contact with significant numbers of adults of their own race or ethnicity) and/or birth parents, who are sometimes unavailable for direct relationships.*

*We are grateful to 14-year-old writer Lilah Goldthwaite for allowing us to publish her poems, because they offer us insight into often good, their emotional journey can be more complex than youth who are not facing some of the stresses inherent to the negotiation of race and adoption. The need to give up parental an adolescent's experience of working to put together the disparate pieces of her identity as she grows from girl to woman.*

## Weapons

In every war there are weapons  
Guns, knives, bombs  
But sometimes I feel the strongest weapons are  
Peace, love and understanding  
Along with ...  
Trust, hope and dignity  
What do you think the strongest weapon is?  
Dr maybe there shouldn't be weapons at all  
Nothing but. ..  
Peace  
Love  
Understanding  
Trust  
Hope  
And dignity

# Still On My Mind

It's like being stolen  
For real  
People say it ain't a big deal  
But it is  
Cause I said  
I miss my family  
I want my family  
Sometimes I want to go home  
Cause I feel so alone  
Wish I could just pick up the phone  
Have momma's voice on the other line ... so we  
can talk  
I need to stop running from my feelings and walk  
Missing them is like a hole in my heart  
We're so far apart  
These are some of the feelings of being fostered  
or adopted  
You sometimes feel rejection  
Like you have no protection  
It's like a blanket that doesn't warm you  
Doesn't do what it's supposed to  
Sometimes feels like no one loves you  
Lonely, forgotten  
You feel like a fruit that's rotten  
Left in the dark  
All you can hear is a dog's bark  
The feeling of anger and frustration  
Nowhere to run and hide  
It's like a bad rollercoaster ride  
No one by your side  
Feeling like you're in the middle of a lie  
Just want to cry  
Dr sleep  
Cause you're in way too deep  
This mountain of feelings is way too steep  
You just want to curl up in a ball  
Sleep against a brick wall  
And wish all the bricks would just fall  
Tears have been running down my cheeks

The last couple weeks  
I want them to stop  
I can't take it anymore  
Yes, I've had these feelings before  
It's been hard, just like an apple's core  
What should I do?  
I just need a break from all this  
To change my life around  
I wish my life wasn't lost and found  
I have feelings I can't explain  
And can't change  
Dr even exchange  
This is for real  
Like an orange you can't peel  
Like diamonds you can't steal  
Sometimes I just need a kiss  
Cause I can't change all this  
I need someone as sweet as a dove  
To give me a hug  
Dr even some love  
I need the angel's songs from above  
So I can focus on the future  
Learn to love myself, I ain't no strange preacher  
I'm a human being  
That's something I need to start seeing  
And believing  
Never stop dreaming  
I want to open my mouth and start screaming  
My ears feel like they're steaming  
I'm on fire  
Burning like a flame  
No one to blame  
I don't want to be the same  
As before  
I want to close that door  
Be myself  
Love where I am now  
And where I'm gonna be  
A good future is what I see