



pact's

point of view

The newsletter for adoptive families with children of color

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Ask Pact

Is There Something Wrong With Me?

This issue we received a series of questions from a sixteen year old adoptee. We contacted her directly and reprint here some of the exchange that we shared. Many of her questions, assumptions and the implications that she drew from what was said, as well as what was not, are very instructive, serving as an important reminder that conversations with children about their adoption are essential. Don't delay. Start today.

16yo: *My parents told me I was adopted when I was a young girl but they don't want me to talk about it. They have always told me that it is my private information and since we look so much alike, I don't have to share it with anyone I don't want to. But secretly I have always wanted to know more about my birth mother and my older sister (I grew up in my family as an only child.) I have all these questions and especially I want to know why I was given up for adoption. Is it normal for parents not to want to talk about adoption?*

Pact: This is really normal. Everyone, especially people your age, is working to figure out who they are and who they want to become. Typically that means looking at how your parents and family and deciding how you want to be like them and how you want to be different. When you have two families, a lot of kids have even more questions and want to find answers by comparing themselves to both sets of parents. Sometimes parents are afraid that their adopted children may feel like they aren't as good because they are adopted, because society believes that "blood is thicker than water." Then because they want to protect their children some of them are afraid to talk about it with their children because they think if they don't talk about it maybe their children will forget and not feel anything negative or painful. Why do you think you were placed for adoption?

16yo: *Sometimes I wonder if there is something wrong with me. What if I have a disease and I am going to die or something so my birth mother didn't want to keep me? My parents never talk about it so there must be something they don't want me to know. A couple of months ago my older sister and I found each other on Facebook. Now I am talking to my birth mother and sister and I found out I have a younger sister too. I want to visit them but I am afraid to ask her too, because I am afraid that maybe she just didn't love me or didn't care.*

Pact: Have you told your adoptive parents? How have they responded?

16yo: *My parents aren't happy about it and they are worried my schoolwork will fall apart. But I really need to get my questions answered? Sometimes I feel like I am crazy. I want to call her all day and then when I can sometimes I feel mad at her because she left me anyway so why should I care so much when she obviously didn't.*