

From: [Yvonne May](#)
To: [forcedadoptioninquiry](#)
Subject: My Forced Adoption Experience
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Yvonne May



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The Committee Manager
Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
East Melbourne Vic 3002

Dear Manager,

My child was adopted in 1966. I was a naive, young, innocent woman, with no advice or support. At 8 months, I told my mother I was pregnant, she never suspected. Shame on her. I kept it a secret, brother, sister, no idea, until I told them about 20 years ago. My father a doctor, had no contact with me for over 20 years. I was 22 years old when I connected with my dad. He died never knowing, what I had been through.

When we went to see a Social Worker at the R.W.H.(Melb) I was 8 months pregnant. Never saw a Doctor, in this time. I look back now and marvel at my tenacity. My mother said, "I was raped." Not true. That was the only time my mother came to see Health Professionals with me. I was on my own. We never spoke about it ever again. Within 6 weeks, I had had my child and returned to Teachers College. My friends all thought I had an illness, what a lie I lived. I did see a counsellor at Teachers College twice, (perhaps instigated by the Head of the College, because he knew and had to give his permission for me to leave and then return.....what an archaic system, also decided by a man.....unbelievable), it was a complete waste of time. Consequently I did fail that year.....no surprises why??? When I did tell my friends from college in 2014, they were absolutely shocked, but they also said, if they had known, they would have helped. One friend said." She suspected I was pregnant". She said, "I so wish you had told me at the time, I would have helped you".

The Social Workers at RWH were appalling, in their negative attitude towards me. I was summed up because I said nothing and looked terrible..... no maternity clothes, no supportive bra, forlorn and confused. Adoption was the only answer. That was it, a decision made by social workers. No questions asked....that was it. I would not keep my child and I didn't. I was treated like an "idiot", which it stated in their report.

No support, no advice, no help, no suggestions, nothing.

I now know it was my resilience that saved me and allowed me to survive this. Traumatized, but I survived.

As stated my pregnancy was a secret I kept until about 6 years ago. Then I had the courage to tell my horrific story to others. My husband knew very early on, and my daughter's knew from when they were in primary school. Of course they could not comprehend what I had told them fully until later in their lives, and even then, they had difficulty understanding the painful episode in my life, that still continues.. I felt so ashamed and guilty.

In 2014 when I went looking for my son, the secret was out. Generally people tried to be compassionate, but you have to live through it to really fully understand.

ARMS has supported me since 2014. The woman know the pain and suffering, we have all experienced. Wish it had been around when I was pregnant. It is comforting to hear similar experiences to mine, and it builds a sisterhood of understanding and love, although the experiences are so different and varied. We are all very damaged women, who survived the trauma of having a child taken, the consequences we live with forever.

The birth was horrendous and so scary, screaming women and me who said not a word. No words of help or encouragement. Absolutely nothing. No Doctor or Nurse, explaining the forceps delivery and the pain, and what I had been through. Suffering never ever talked about. Treated as an ignorant, stupid, girl. No explanation of what my body had been through and it's effects.

Guilty and for ever guilty as an unmarried woman, having a bastard child. Hidden on the verandah of RWH, with all the other "naughty girls". An experience that still haunts me today. Absolute isolation from the rest of the world.

I saw my child, once, just before I was sent home..... "To get on with it!!!!!!". What an indictment of the system.

I never fed him, held him, bathed him, changed his nappy, cuddled him, heard him cry, comfort him, kiss him, talk to him, gazed into his eyes with wonder. No wonder I was a mess. My hormones were all over the place. No emotional support, I was on a downward spiral that changed my life forever. Suffering and guilt began. I just had given birth to an invisible child. He never ever felt my touch till he was 48 years old. No wonder I grieved for 48 years and still do, what a disaster. Writing about it now, words are beyond the feelings I had when we met. We met and had an eggshell (be careful, don't say this or that, don't say that I might offend, don't respond, etc etc) relationship up until recently. I was over the top with my feelings and words. A baby taken, but now a man, very difficult to reconcile, and not treat him as a baby, having not done any rituals with him as stated above. He could not and never will understand why I felt that way, in fact it was the downfall of our relationship.

Our relationship was up and down. Many many tears, feelings of guilt and sorrow. Unfortunately he terminated the relationship recently blaming me for its failure and the way I treated him. He could never accept my unconditional love. It is heartbreaking for me. I accept my part, but he is unable to let me into his heart, warts and all. Me, I am much more forgiving and of course will do anything to continue the relationship. Why????? Because being a mother is my lament, as all mother's lament, whatever the circumstances of their children. "Mothers Love".

My son, is married has 2 teenage children. He's suffering is immeasurable. He suffers debilitating depression. As a mother you hate seeing your kids suffer in any way. It is heartbreaking.

I did marry and had 2 children. One in 1973, 1975.

I was a cold, angry and found bonding with my children, near impossible. Was I about to have my children "taken"????? I tried to nurture but failed. Not what I envisaged, but the negative feelings just spilled out. Luckily my children got through this as did I, but they were also so hurt and damaged.

I did try and contact my son, in 1988, but he was advised by his adopted father, it was not a good idea, so I failed. Again in 2014, I tried again. After meeting my son, I realized I had been grieving for 48 years, for his loss. It prevented me loving, caring, nurturing of my own kids. My elder daughter had since told me, she never felt truly loved as a little one....WOW that was a slap in the face, and I know why. We are very much past that now, and our love for each other is rock solid. My younger daughter has struggled with my relationship with my son, and my love for her. It has caused a chasm in our relationship which is also devastating, and I have tried many times to close the gap, and try and get her to see my point of view, but with little progress. I respect her decision.

So the consequences of adoption, spreads its cold fingers to so, so many lives..... children, families, friends.

I am in my seventies now, and the suffering, loss, pain, guilt, continues.

All women, who have experienced the trauma of forced adoption, and the adoptees need compensation for their trauma. Of course the wider families also need help. Support groups are great for those involved in this situation. Saying "sorry" helps us women, but more needs to be done. Both Financial Compensation and Health Care Professionals compensation, also gives us some form of recognition of what we experienced, it was wrong and we need to heal.

Yours Sincerely,

Yvonne May

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