

The actions of the government of Australia, in denying my mother of the right to keep her baby, have in turn denied me the opportunity to know my sister in childhood. While I am incredibly thankful that my Mum fought and endeavoured to be reconciled to her child, the years of separation have resulted in a loss of shared history which are an essential part of family bonding.

We always knew we had a sister, to the point where I cannot remember hearing about her for the first time. She was always a missing part of us. We used to write letters to the adoption agency hoping somehow that our sister would read them, and Mum used to put birthday notices in the paper for her.

One of my Year 12 papers was about adoption laws as it was about this time in 1985 when laws changed and we were allowed to contact our sister via the adoption agency.

The incredible discovery of her identity and our ensuing meeting was very exciting and fraught with anxiety too because we were so worried about what (...) would think of us. To us, (...) seemed so beautiful and perfect that we did not seem worthy of her. She was a bit of a celebrity in our house. That is not what should happen in a family.

For me, it was difficult and confusing to be the eldest child in the home but always knowing I had an older sister that should be in that place. I wanted to put her first because I felt in some way guilty for being in her spot if that makes sense.

Family resemblances are wonderful. I love that (...) looks like Mum, sounds like me, has asthma like (...), creates a home like (...) and more. It makes me sad to hear her call Mum '(...)' or 'your Mum'. It is awkward mentioning times from our childhood when (...) was not there but could have been had Mum been given the chance to mother her too.

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