

Q&A with Dale and Raquel Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Parents Knew

Ideas borrowed from Sherrie Eldridge's book (no relation to Dale) and modified by Raquel and Dale:

1. I suffered a profound loss before I was adopted, and you are not responsible for my sadness about it.
2. I need to be taught that I have unique needs arising from adoption loss, and I need not be ashamed of them. Please talk about this with me from time to time.
3. If I don't grieve my loss, my ability to receive love from you or others, or attach emotionally, may be somewhat hindered. (Grieving brings healing).
4. My unresolved grief may surface in anger toward you.
5. I need your help in grieving my loss. Teach me how to get in touch with my feelings about my adoption, and please validate them.
6. Just because I don't talk about my birth family doesn't mean that I don't think about them.
7. Please take the initiative in opening conversations about my birth family.
8. I need to know the truth about my conception, birth, and family history no matter how painful or difficult the details might be. (Very difficult information should only be shared at age appropriate times in your child's development).
9. I am afraid that I was "given away" by my birth mother because I was a "bad baby." I need you to help me not feel ashamed.
10. I am afraid that you too will abandon me. (This is the universal fantasy for all adoptees).
11. I may appear more whole than I actually am. I need your help in putting the missing pieces of myself together so I can develop my independent identity and a positive sense of myself. (This is especially crucial in adolescence).
12. I need to develop a sense of personal power.
13. Please do not say that I look or act just like you, because I need you to acknowledge and celebrate our differences, as well as our similarities.
14. Let me be my own person, but don't let me cut myself off from you.
15. Please respect my privacy regarding my adoption and, when I am older enough to ask, don't tell other people my story without my consent.
16. Birthdays may be difficult for me.
17. Not knowing my full medical history can be distressing at times.
18. I am afraid that sometimes my adoption issues may be too much for you to handle.
19. When I act out my fears in obnoxious ways, please hang in there with me and respond wisely.
20. Even if I decide to search for my birth family (or visit my birth country) I will always want you to be my parents.