

I am a therapist and adoptee in private practice exclusively with adoptees and their families. I am founder of Adoption Education & Family Counseling LLC. I have published in the peer reviewed journal The international Journal of Trauma Research and practice regarding the inherent trauma in every adoption. What must be understood is that infants merely hours old are able to record long term memory.

"Infants only a few days old can record long term memories. *"Infants do not think but they do process emotions and long term memories are stored as affective schemas"* (Geansbauer, 2002). An infant separated from its first mother will record a memory of that event. Memories of this nature are called preverbal memory representations and they have a unique quality that must be understood by adoptive parents. *"Infant memories are recalled in adulthood the same way they were recorded at the time they occurred. It is difficult possibly impossible for children to map newly acquired verbal skills on to existing preverbal memory representations"* (Richardson, R., & Hayne, H. 2007). An older adoptee who recalls an emotional memory will experience it the same way it was felt as an infant. Adoptees can have troubling memories that they cannot identify in words. This means that they cannot understand what they are feeling and without a vocabulary they cannot even ask for help. This leads to a cognitive /emotional disconnection. *"Children fail to translate their preverbal memories into language"*(Simcock, Hayne, 2002)."

Parenting The Adopted Child by Robert Allan Hafetz

Closed adoptions can't protect an adoptee from the awareness that there has been a significant traumatic loss has occurred in their lives. It reinforces the feeling of shame by keeping the knowledge of the birth mother a secret. It intensifies the confusion and leads to problem behaviors as adoptees struggle to understand why they have such overwhelming emotions that they cannot express in words. How then can they ask for help? Closed adoptions invalidate these emotions and disenfranchises the adoptee from the powerful grief that is in long term memory. When a loved one dies we have a funeral to help them grieve. The loss of the birth mother is a literal death to the child and there is no funeral for them. Adoptees must grieve in silence and isolation, never completing the grief process. Maladaptive behaviors occur to block the pain that

cant be resolved. Thats why adoptees are over represented in mental health treatment, addiction, and emotional disturbances.

I have mediated many reunions and none of them are simple but every one of them benefits both birth mother and adoptee. No two people have more power to heal each other then these two who have shared the same existence for 9 months. No relationship in the human condition is as powerful and permanent then the bond that connects mother and child. Adoption does not replace this bond it creates a new one and the reality of every adoptee is that they have two mothers. The law must recognize this fact or it becomes a tool of unintended harm.

It is long past time when we respect the rights of an adoptee and grant them the same rights non adopess have, to know their parents, their family history, their medical history, their identity and their heritage. There is no law in any state that grants birth mother secrecy.

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE STATE OF OREGON (98C-20424; CA A107235)

"We conclude that the state legitimately may choose to disseminate such data to the child whose birth is recorded on such a birth certificate without infringing on any fundamental right to privacy of the birth mother who does not desire contact with the child."

The Supreme Court Refused to hear an appeal... Sandra Day O'Conner Presiding.

My name is Robert Allan Hafetz. When I was born I had another name. I was in foster care for six months then adopted.I was denied that knowledge until I overcame the closed adoption barriers and found my mother when I was 52 years old. I discovered she died at the young age of 42. The grief I experienced was beyond words to describe. How can that be possible when I never knew her? The truth is I always knew her. It was the state that kept us apart. I still cant understand why since no one was better off because of it.

[Robert Hafetz - Academia.edu](http://RobertHafetz-Academia.edu) More of my articles can be read and downloaded at no cost here