

The Seven Wonders of Adoption

by Betsy Keefer Smalley, LSW

When children first learn they are adopted, they are immediately filled with many different emotions and tough questions. If pieces of their adoption stories are missing, the process of coming to terms with their new identities can be especially difficult. These children are often left wondering about their birth families, their adoptive families, and most of all, themselves.



Wonder # 1: Loss and Grief

"I wonder why I lose everyone and everything that is important to me. What is the matter with me?"

Wonder # 2: Rejection and Abandonment

"I wonder if these people are really going to keep me."

Wonder # 3: Guilt and Shame

"I wonder what I did to make my own parents throw me away."

Wonder # 4: Trust

"I wonder if I can believe what these people are telling me."

Wonder # 5: Identity

"I wonder who my people are and if I will be like them."

Wonder # 6: Control

"I wonder why everyone else makes decisions about my family, my name, how much information I get, and how old I have to be to meet my siblings or birth parents. When do I get to make important decisions about my life?"

Wonder # 7: Divided Loyalties

"I wonder if I should remain loyal to my birth family or if I should allow myself to love and be loved by my adoptive family."