

Adoptees and Birthparents Connected by Design: Surprising Synchronicities in Histories of Union/Loss/Reunion

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Publication info: Pre- and Peri-natal Psychology Journal 7. 4 (Summer 1993): 267-286.

[ProQuest document link](#)

Abstract: None available.

Full Text: Headnote ABSTRACT: The recently burgeoning phenomenon of search and reunion by adult adoptees and their birth families has uncovered fascinating information. During the author's doctoral research, reunited parents and children related uncanny coincidences that occurred during the years of their separation (e.g., dreaming of one's child in specific danger, naming a later child by the unknown name of the firstborn, knowing the day of a mother's death, vacationing in the same location, making identical purchases, and beginning to search at the same time). In this inquiry, synchronicity as an acausal principle of the unconscious organizing of archetypes (Jung) or as a unifying correlation by affinity (Kammerer) may be balanced with causality: the psychology of separation and loss reactions; prenatal memory; identity and the loss of self; a system in need of information; the architecture of developmental behavioral genetics; and cognitive meaning-making from numinous experience. The psychological impact of separation and loss by closed, secret adoption has been delineated in recent research as lifelong and pervasive in both adoptees and birthparents (Anderson, 1987; Brodzinsky & Schechter, 1990; Kirschner & Nagel, 1988; Millen & Roll, 1985; Sorosky, Baran, & Pannor, 1989; Verrier, 1987). Psychological and experiential factors relating to the decision to search for a lost child or parent and the therapeutic nature of the search and reunion process have been studied (Adelberg, 1986; Andersen, 1989; Dudrear, 1991; Gediman & Brown, 1989; Silverman, et al., 1988). The impact of reunion is often described as connection and completion of a broken Gestalt, or the recovery of a missing part of one's self. After their initial contact, reunited families begin to piece together the years that have intervened since their early postpartum separation. They may discover mutual physical characteristics, creative abilities, emotional styles, personal mannerisms, and idiosyncrasies. Particularly surprising are the recall, recognition, and validation of incidents of fantasy, intuition, and synchronicity that suggest a continuance of the prenatal bond, a psychic nexus that transcends space and time (Gediman & Brown, 1989; Miller-Havens, 1990; Rillera, 1991; Stiffler, 1991). Example: I am an adoptee who found some of my maternal family 10 years ago. My birthmother was deceased by the time I found them. One of the first things I asked was, "When did she die?" I could not wait to go home to see if I had written a recognition of it in my journal. The dates were indeed the same. I remember that day very well, and I wrote in my journal, "I feel someone close to me has died." IS THERE CONNECTION BY DESIGN? What is the nature of the anomalistic phenomena reported as uncanny coincidences, somehow marked in the mind and realized as significant 20 or 40 years later, at reunion? Do these experiences hint at a form of extrasensory communication, divine guidance, or a connecting genetic program far more intricate than yet unraveled by imaginative scientists? What is, in fact, the extent of the mother-child bond? the father-child bond? Is a continuing psychic connection strictly genetic? One might explain similar occupations, clothing preferences, and the trait of shyness, for example, on the basis of genetic research and studies of twins reared apart (Bouchard, 1984; Bouchard, et al., 1990). We know that preference for certain music and speech has a prenatal-memory component (DeCasper, 1985; DeCasper & Fifer, 1980; Panneton, 1985), and that babies remember their birth (Chamberlain, 1988). But from whence come the vivid dreams, the naming of an imaginary playmate, or the strange drawing toward a particular location? Carl Jung (1960) called this phenomenon "synchronicity." He believed it to be a subjective experience with significant timing and meaning for the participant, a clue to an underlying numinous system involving archetypes and the collective unconscious. Jung's contemporary, the ill-fated Austrian biologist Paul Kammerer (1919), agreed with him that the principle of

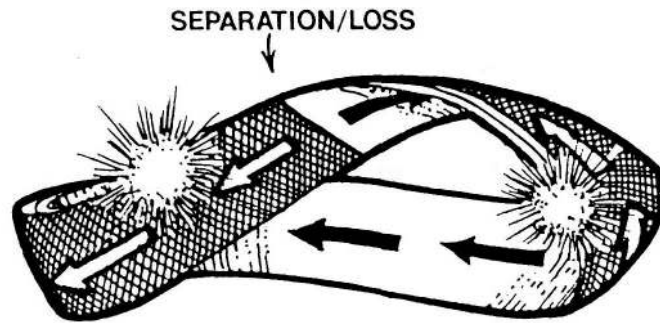
acausality was of equal rank with causality in the interaction of humans with their world; both men kept logbooks of coincidences. Kammerer differed by favoring simple physical analogies and defined "the law of seriality" as a unifying principle at work in the universe, correlating by affinity (as real and mysterious as the law of gravity, which acts indiscriminately on all mass). He believed this pull toward unity produces concurrent or serial events in space and time, bringing like and like together. The affinity or likeness might be in symbols, function, form, or substance (Kammerer, 1919; Koestler, 1971, 1972). Imaginative thinkers have long been intrigued by coincidences but disagree as to how to approach them. Some argue that statistics of probability are appropriate in a controlled laboratory situation or when dealing with large numbers of similar events, but they are inappropriate for unrepeatable, subjective, real-life experiences. "In dealing with unique events in hindsight there is no sensible or meaningful way of estimating their likelihood" said Michael Shallis (1983, p. 136) of Oxford. Yet statistical mathematicians Persi Diaconis and Frederick Hosteller (1989) of Harvard find certain general- and special-purpose models useful and informative in some circumstances. They are working toward a general theory of coincidences and have suggested four principles that must be considered: hidden cause, psychology, multiple endpoints and the cost of "close," and the law of truly large numbers. The more we work in this area, the more we feel that Kammerer and Jung are right. We are swimming in an ocean of coincidences. Our perception is that nature and we ourselves are creating these, sometimes causally, and also partly through perception and partly through objective accidental relationships, (p. 860) Because meaningful coincidences are personal and individual, they are not easily subject to scientific examination or statistical analysis. If they have meaning for others, it is because those persons share, with the one to whom the coincidence occurred, some measure of significance in an otherwise neutral event.

WAYS OF KNOWING We know truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart, and it is in this last way that we know first principles; and reason, which has no part in it, tries in vain to impugn them. (Pascal, *Pensée* 282, 1660/1958, p. 79) How does synchronicity or coincidence function when an adoptee is separated from his or her birth family? Are reunions the result of answered prayer or a cathexis of unconscious longing? Is the technologically focused epistemology of the Western world sufficient to consider the impact of mother-child separation and loss? Anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1988) commented that the old, well-established ideas about human epistemology reflected an obsolete knowledge of physics and living things: "It was as if members of the species, man, were supposed to be totally unique and totally materialistic against the background of a living universe which was generalized (rather than unique) and spiritual (rather than materialistic)" (pp. 5-6). Bateson's (1988) phrase for the symmetry of all life was "the pattern which connects" (p. 13), which he thought of primarily as a dance of interacting parts only secondarily held in place by physical and organismic limits. Schopenhauer (1891) visualized the pattern of causally determined sequences in parallel lives as the meridian lines on a globe, and acausal coincidences in two or more lives as the parallel circles. The cross diagram of Pauli and Jung (Jung 1960, p. 514) balanced dual perceptions of the same underlying reality: constant connection through effect (causality) at the left; inconstant connection through contingency, equivalence, or meaning (synchronicity) at the right; indestructible energy at the top; and the space-time continuum at the bottom. In a statement we might extend to the specific unity of mother and child, Gribbin (1984) wrote of recent research in quantum theory: "Particles that were once together in an interaction remain in some sense parts of a single system, which responds together in future interactions" (p. 229).

MÖBIUS-CONNECTION PARADIGM To add movement to these concepts, a simple Möbius-band paradigm has been helpful to this investigator as a graphic representation of the mother-child nexus throughout the union/loss/reunion experience. Separation by adoption is the point at which a two-sided strip (with a different design on each side to represent mother and child) is twisted 180° and connected by the mutual event of loss into a one-sided Möbius band (Figure 1). From that moment of loss, arrows representing the life course direction of mother and child may be thought of as moving away from each other in opposite directions; yet they remain somehow constantly connected through effect (causality).

Figure 1

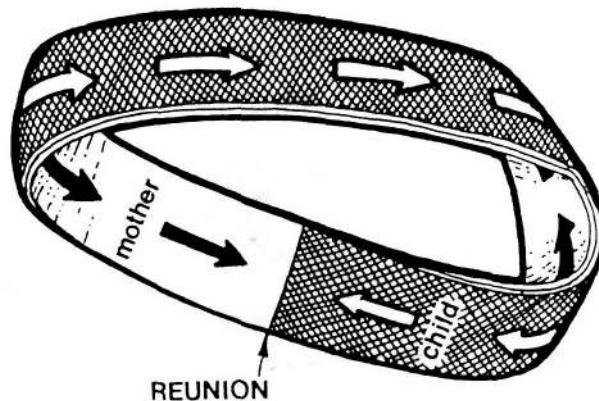
Arrows representing the life experience of mother and child are seen moving away from each other in opposite directions. Each life occasionally crosses the expanse to touch the other at various points or intersections. An inconstant connection through contingency, equivalence, or meaning occurs. Like a short power-blast of energy, information is transmitted or a synchronicity occurs.



Each life is like a woven, flexible ribbon, occasionally crossing the expanse and touching the other at various points or intersections. It is then that an inconstant connection through contingency, equivalence, or meaning occurs (synchronicity). In the meantime, the life-course arrows of mother and child keep moving, now growing closer, pointing toward the other rather than away, until they meet at the point of reunion (Figure 2). This paradigm is a visual and tactile symbol of the words of T.S. Eliot: We shall not cease from exploration And the end of all our exploring Will be to arrive where we started And know the place for the first time. Through the unknown, remembered gate When the last of earth left to discover Is that which was the beginning. (1963, Little Gidding, V) THE STORYTELLERS The sample for my exploratory, descriptive dissertation research was comprised of 70 sets of parents and their children, who had been separated by the social and legal practice of secret, stranger adoption, and who had been reunited in adulthood after a process of search. Sixty-six of the primary respondents did the major part of the search effort, and 4 were "found" or reached first by the other party.

Figure 2

The life-course arrows of mother and child keep moving, now growing closer, pointing toward the other rather than away, until they meet at the point of reunion.



(female) sibling, and 6 (female) other family members. This number totals more than 70, because more than one person in a family shared anecdotes, and because some persons hold dual roles as birthparent and adoptee. One woman has both of those roles, and is an adoptive mother as well. Most were residents of the United States (from 24 states), with a few from Canada, England, New Zealand, and Western Australia. The ongoing study was conducted during the period May 1990 to May 1991. The sample was biased, because only those who had experienced meaningful coincidences were asked to submit stories. There is no way of knowing how many parents and children have discovered, post-reunion, that they are aware of no such coincidences. The effect of publishing only the positive cases in a study such as this could convey the impression that anomalous phenomena occur frequently in all adoption-separated families; but this cannot be shown. While each respondent was or could be followed up, documentation by witnesses was based on the subjects' own statements; perceptions and memories may have been distorted over time. As it developed, the scope of this study included synchronicities between adoptees and birthfathers, and between other members of birth and adoptive families. However, the essential focus began with the assumption of a mother-child bond that begins in utero (Verny, 1982, 1987). The fact that narratives were given by 68 women and 8 men may indicate that women are more likely to discover and to discuss emotional meaning, but not that men do not have synchronicities or intuitive experiences; 67 anecdotes involved men.

PERCEPTION OF SIGNIFICANCE There is no room for debate as to what is or is not a synchronicity; what might seem to be a trivial chance incident is defined as a synchronicity in this study because it has subjective meaning for the one who experienced it. Example: My daughter and I were both in bike accidents in the same year. She fell off her bike and broke her front tooth, and I went flying over my bike and broke my front tooth. When she told me she had a cap on that tooth, I said, "So do I!" Anomalous experiences occurred and were consciously remembered at ages from preschool through adulthood. Unconscious material from prenatal and infancy periods was also conceptualized and understood by some adoptees after reunion, either in therapy sessions or in conversation with birthparents. For the participants, synchronicity seems to give a sense of focus to a backward look at a hazy past. Interpretations do not belong to the outsider, nor are they necessarily subject to Jungian analysis. For those who have endured the trauma of separation by adoption and the struggle of search, in the absence of a lifetime of other evidence, the discovery and integration of synchronicities serve to confirm, support, and deepen their bond. A mother, particularly, seems to cling to what she does know-love-as she searches for meaning. For the typical mother in this study, who missed seeing her child's first steps, science projects, and high school graduation, that meaning is simply that her constant love was endorsed in the interim by small but awesome proofs that now serve to strengthen the cord of an enduring connection. Example: I kept a diary before our reunion, and I documented the fact that when my daughter was 15 years old, I felt unusually upset over our separation. When we were reunited, she told me she had run away and had tried to find me at age 15, to no avail. For the person who encounters rejection or a graveyard at the end of a search, synchronicities take on additional importance; if there is to be no continuing relationship, the meaningful coincidences may be all one has. Example: I recently visited my mother's best friend, who is now living in the house where my mother lived for the last five years of her life. As I was packing to leave, she said, "I want to give you a book; this is a book that your mother loved so much." She went upstairs to get it. At that moment I put into my suitcase the only book that I brought with me, a book that comforts me, *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer M. Rilke in English. Then the friend came down and said, "This is for you." I unwrapped it, and it was *Letters to a Young Poet* in French. For the reunited child, parent, or sibling, a critical significance in the matching circumstances may be in what they validate for the individual: There is/was someone else in the world designed a lot like me; I am OK after all. Example: My mother and I are both poor spellers, and we misspell the same simple words. I remember when I got the first letter from my mother and left it on the kitchen counter. My twins came home from school and said, "Who are you writing to, Mom?" Our handwriting is identical too!

RESULTS An objective of this study was to explore the nature of apparently coincidental behavior and meaningful information transfer that occurred

when normal sensory contact was absent. It was designed as a descriptive, observational study to categorize and classify the kinds and frequency of things thought remarkable by the participating families, rather than to prove the existence, quality, or quantity of experiences of synchronicity. In Table 1, frequency distribution represents certain predominant classes of synchronicities reported by the sample of 70 reunited families, where some volunteered information to fit more than one class.

Table 1
Commonly reported synchronicities in 70 reunited families

<i>Classes</i>	<i>Relative frequency</i>	<i>Percentage of frequency</i>
Places	39/70	55.7
Genetic architecture	35/70	50.0
Names	32/70	45.7
Family time	27/70	38.6
Timing of search	23/70	32.9
Dreams, intuition	23/70	32.9
Memory	17/70	24.3

Because relationships are in many cases new and still developing, anecdotes related initially do not represent the totality of the participants' ongoing discovery of coincidences. A detailed questionnaire was not used; responses were voluntary, self-selected, and open-ended. Characteristic of coincidences, one often led into another, unfolding and enfolding as a related series in a Möbius movement. Places In the 39 families who found meaning in the way their lives had intersected at certain locations or places, 26 were instances involving ordinary residence, work, or migration; 13 involved vacation spots; 9 were related to search activity; and 6 involved persistent thought of a certain place. One mother had unknowingly spent an annual Columbus Day weekend in the same motel as her daughter. Another adoptee for nine years chose to spend her vacations in a small, remote area where several generations of her birth family had property. A mother and daughter migrated from Hawaii and New England to Arizona before finding each other there. The following words were used by some to describe what they believed to be an extraordinary drawing toward particular locations: "pull," "distinct energy," "like a distant magnet," "strong connection," "mid-point," and "our paths crossed." Names Of the 32 families who encountered similar names (including many unusual ones), there were 22 meaningful matches between adoptive and birth families; and 10 between birth relatives. Seventeen had more than one or runs of multiple matches. Four sets of birth siblings chose the same names for their actual (or desired) children. Four mothers named another child by the unknown, adoptive name of the firstborn. Four adoptees in some way knew or made unusual use of their mothers' names, as for imaginary friends. The frequency of similarities in names was noteworthy. Some names were the coincidental choice of adoptive families, and some might have had a pre- and perinatal memory component. Further investigation into the significance and selection of names would be a compelling project. In commenting on a child's development of concrete thinking, Piaget (1930) said: Names are, to begin with, situated in objects. They form part of things in the same way as do color and form. Things have always had their names. It has always been sufficient to look at things to know their names. . . . To deform the name is to deform the thing, (p. 243) In this study, some names were "known" prior to their objects' being observed. Brodzinsky (1987,1990) has found that an adoptee's sense of family loss occurs at the concrete operational stage, when cognitive reasoning brings realization of lack of biological connectedness; there are no names for the fantasied parents. It is remarkable that anomalistic information about names came frequently to the unsuspecting, separated family members in this study. Example: My son had a nickname that his adoptive brother called him when he was younger-Eudolf. At our recent reunion, I told him what my father's name was: Rudolf Matthew, but he chose to be called Matt. He had been named Rudolf after his own father. So my son's nickname was the same as both his grandfather and his great-grandfather! It is also interesting to

speculate whether or not the actual learning of names after reunion is one key to enabling a person whose development was frozen to resume leaps in psychological growth, through addressing deficiencies from the concrete operational stage. Family Time Averil Earnshaw (1987) has hypothesized that emotional crises of parents are reflected in altered DNA and erupt in physical and emotional events at predictable ages in their children. In this study, synchronicities in dates of "family time" or of important family events for 27 genetically related families included birth, death, marriage, and major life changes at dates or ages of significance to the family. Thirteen persons reported multiple incidents. Eight families told of matches in birthday dates. Nine reported coincidences in both family time and in the timing of search activity; for example, when her father died on her lost son's birthday, one mother was moved to search aggressively for this son. Timing of Search Activity Some of the more notable anecdotes were provided by those of the 23 families who perceived as remarkable the timing of their search; how an unusual correspondence of space, time, and circumstance resulted in reunion. Two searching adoptees were drawn to timely encounters with judges who unexpectedly opened records for them; four persons were approached by strangers who offered surprising information. A mother and daughter began working at the same store within days of each other. Another mother reached her son just before his planned move to a distant country. Members of four families began to make inquiries in a search for one another at the same time (within days or weeks). Dreams or Intuition Among the 23 families who reported experiences of accurate dreams or intuition, the following data emerged relative to individual experiences: * 17 experienced accurate hunches or intuition; * 8 had dreams that matched reality; * 6 experienced knowledge of a crisis; * 3 daughters intuitively knew when their mothers died; * 10 experienced shared kinesthetic sensation; * 6 experienced shared internal visual representations; * 5 reported shared internal auditory knowledge of names or advice; * 20 adults experienced accurate dreams or an intuition (17 female, 3 male); * 7 children experienced accurate dreams or intuition (6 female, 1 male). Five individuals felt, as young children, that they knew they had siblings. One demanded that her adoptive parents adopt a sister for her (and they did) at the same time that her birthmother died and her natural sister was placed in welfare homes. Another child was preoccupied with the study of farming in the same year that her paternal grandparents sold the family farm. Anomalous information perceived through internal visual submodalities was most astonishingly demonstrated in two female artists who had no idea that they were drawing accurate representations of their mothers' homes-one an exterior view, the other a specific room. Neither woman had had any prior contact or exchange of information with the mother, and neither experience was related to prenatal memory. In another case, a birthmother dreamt her child's adoptive family name in colorful block letters. These experiences of receiving information telepathically, precognitively, and clairvoyantly, through intuition, dreams, hallucination, or sensation, particularly in times of crisis, may begin to answer the When? and How? of anomalous cognition and communication. Unusual knowledge in these accounts was characteristically perceived with certainty and marked in the mind; it was then acted upon, told to a witness, or recorded on paper. Memory Of the 70 families, 17 related one or more anecdotes suggesting a memory component: * 4 female adoptees knew or made use of their mother's name, as for an imaginary friend; * 1 male adoptee used an older sister's name and the name of his mother's hometown in naming his own daughter; * 4 adoptees (3 male, 1 female) were drawn to the state of their birth; * 2 female adoptees had fears related to specific prenatal trauma, such as a car accident; * 2 adoptees (1 male, 1 female) experienced very early memories in therapy; * 3 female adoptees evidenced possible memory of language: French, German, and sign language; * 4 female adoptees thought hobbies-horses, skiing, sailing, and enjoyment of specific music-might have been influenced by prenatal memory. Memory may be one link that sorted and selected between the choices involved in the previous categories, and in the following lifestyle traits, now thought to be genetically influenced. Genetic Architecture A sub-sample of 35 families from the original 70 reunited families (50 percent) reported surprising, meaningful coincidences under the following categories. In Table 2, some participants are, once again, represented in more than one category, depending on the range of information they provided. Occupation. Fifteen reunited families were amazed to find similarities in occupational

choice; some between parent and child, and some between siblings. No one seemed more surprised than the woman who found that both she and her mother had operated housekeeping businesses for most of their adult lives, although they were socially different people: the mother was an alcoholic, and the daughter did not drink at all. Another mother-daughter pair had both "pumped petrol." Others shared the occupations of teacher, typist, mechanic, or nurse: occupations common enough to carry a likelihood of being matched, but ones that were nonetheless perceived as emotionally significant.

Table 2

Genetic architecture mentioned by 35 reunited families

<i>Classes</i>	<i>Relative frequency</i>	<i>Percentage of frequency</i>
Occupation	15/35	42.9
Physical idiosyncrasies	14/35	40.0
Religiosity	11/35	31.4
Education	8/35	22.9
Grooming	8/35	22.9
Mating patterns	8/35	22.9
Collecting, orderliness	6/35	17.1
Handwriting	6/35	17.1
Voice	4/35	11.4

Another undoubtedly meaningful association was that found by the female adoptee who shared with a deceased grandfather a zeal and dedication in long-term employment with the American Red Cross. Yet another adoptee had found that both she and her deceased mother had been active in the work of Amnesty International, and had begun this work at around the same time. One father discovered that his daughter is employed in the film business, as he is, and further, was doubly surprised to learn that she lives just five blocks from him. There is also the story of the searching mother and daughter who lived in the same neighborhood and worked in the same store for six months before discovering their relationship. Physical idiosyncrasies. Unusual physical characteristics were mentioned as surprising links for 14 families. These ranged from shared weight patterns to nervous habits, posture, beards, a transgenerational bump on the ear lobe, and identical injuries. Religiosity. Speculation as to the confounding effects of genetic heritage on religious and cultural preferences might be made: finding similar values and beliefs in newly reunited relatives was highly meaningful to 11 families. Two adoptees had evidenced an unusual affinity for their Jewish heritage. A Baptist preacher was delighted to find that two great-grandfathers (one paternal and one maternal) also had been Baptist preachers; while no one in his adoptive family was in the ministry. One father and daughter shared an intense fear of death. Another father and son had each been heavily on drugs before going on a spiritual search. Education. Similarities in both IQ and educational choice were mentioned by eight families. Amusing but meaningful to one pair was the news that the mother had started out majoring in sociology in college but then had changed to education, while the daughter had started out in education and ended up in sociology. A 13-year-old adoptee argued obstinately with her adoptive parents, threatening to run away from home if they would not permit her to study French; she now knows that her mother spent her lifetime teaching French. Another mother and daughter attended colleges just 10 miles apart (at different times), and neither completed her degree. Grooming. Surprises mentioned by eight families included identical jewellery, clothing fashion and colors, hairstyles, and even color and brand of nail polish. Five women in three generations of one family felt a special connection when they learned that all of them use the same skin lotion. Mating patterns. Eight families told of a variety of similarities in courtship and marriage patterns, particularly between mothers and daughters. In one instance, both the mother and daughter had married and divorced men with the same name who both had alcohol problems. In another pair, each married first-generation Polish men. Another mother and daughter had each married young and lost a child through a divorce. Collecting and orderliness. Six families were surprised to

discover that characteristics previously thought to be learned might have a genetic component. Shared housekeeping habits and "pack rat" tendencies were noted, as were collections of identical memorabilia, the purchase of identical items, or mutual treasuring of a particular book. Handwriting. Six families noted similarities in handwriting: five between a mother and child; one between identical twins; and once between a child and a paternal aunt. Voice. Similarities in voices were mentioned in four parent-child accounts. Other. While the preceding categories were those most frequently mentioned, other distinctive preferences shared by parents and their children who had no normal sensory contact during the years of their separation involved: unusual foods, music, colors, phrases, foreign languages, sports, hobbies, and the writing of limericks. Based on the studies of twins reared apart, such distinctive preferences might be assumed in some way to be related to genetic makeup. Perhaps these studies point to many synchronicities as being a result of a common genetic pool.

Meaning and Significance The preceding summary of the anecdotes is cursory. The best data analysis must remain a thorough reading of each story for its unique, subjective contribution. When a synchronicity is related as meaningful to someone, it becomes its own explanation. Subjective words, visual images, and feelings are its essence, rather than accumulated, objective data. For the participants, numinous experience and cognitive meaning-making are like a synesthesia, alternating as stimuli and joining in response. Many of the 70 participating families did not even attempt a verbal expression of their feelings of awe, beyond surprise and wonder, at the discovery of coincidences and the overall synchronicity of reunion. Twenty-two persons expressed the meaning of their experiences in terms of personal development and human relationships, using such words and phrases as: "connection," "we meshed," "a feeling of oneness," "in common," "my identity," "a complete person," "part of a family," "my ancestry," "love," and "a happy ending." Nineteen persons described a more metaphysical meaning-making in numinous language. Eight felt God's direct, personal involvement, mentioning: "prayer," "timing," "meant to be," "prepared me," "led me," "planned," and "our miracle meeting." Eleven others described a sense of higher purpose, destiny, or extrasensory connection at work, in such terms as: "there is something there," "congruity in the world," "preplanned," "a destiny," "identical paths," "trust one's instincts," "our inner voices," "psychic energy," "ESP," "telepathy," "precognition," "clairvoyance," "unexplainable in the natural," and "an innate ability and need to find blood bonds."

CONNECTION THROUGH INFORMATION

The reunion of adoptees with their birth families and the subsequent discovery of numinous, humorous, or simply surprising incidents of synchronicity were reported and categorized in this exploratory study from observation points ranging from philosophy to genetics. Anecdotes from the 70 participating families have confirmed in a unique way the findings of the extant literature regarding the relevance of information: (a) the trauma of the lack of it for separated family members; (b) the therapeutic value of its acquisition through search and reunion; (c) its meaning and unifying power in the form of synchronicity; (d) its numinous source in universal truths; (e) its expression in numbers, names, and verbal concepts; (f) its storage in various types of memory; (g) its anomalous transfer in flashes of intuition or telepathy; and (h) its timed, regulated transfer through genetic mechanisms. The histories of the 70 families seem to support the finding of developmental behavioral geneticists that DNA, which is present in all body cells as the repository of inherited characteristics, carries programs which fire at various times, and which affect physical growth and decline, personality, choices, and major life events. There is speculation that the RNA which may carry memory has prenatal, genetic, and cellular input (Buchheimer, 1987; Farrant, 1987). Further, it is thought that the psychological depth of the engram, the permanent effect of memory, when a mother and child are unnaturally separated, contributes to a wrenching, primal injury. Nancy Verrier's (1987) study of this "primal wound" is ongoing. This study has suggested interrelationships between psychopathology (separation and loss), psychophysiology (longing and pain), and the anomalistic psychological phenomena of intuition and synchronicity. These phenomena seem to be related to a human being's deepest yearnings, repressions, doubts, and faith. Separation by closed, secret adoption has lifelong effects, often characterized by feelings of abandonment in the children and grief in the parents. A cathexis or emotional investment in the separated persons may serve to predispose and strengthen the

likelihood of synchronicity in their lives. Further, this study has suggested to its investigator that a living family system, unnaturally broken, continues to be governed by mechanistic DNA, but with a teleological movement that enfolds information or memory and unfolds a transcendent awareness of the missing parts; and that there is a natural balance of causal and acausal factors in that movement. The participants in this study often reported an awareness of a master plan that left them with the same sense described by William James (1920): In the pulse of inner life immediately present now in each one of us is a little past, a little future, a little awareness of our own body, of each other's persons, of these sublimities we are trying to talk about, of the earth's geography and the direction of history, of truth and error, of good and bad, and of who knows how much more? (pp. 286-287) This exploration is not presumed to be a definitive psychology with a set of unifying interpretations of consciousness or behavior. It is rather an open-ended, descriptive slice from the histories of a scattered sample of parents and their adult children who are forging their own experiments and making their own conclusions. The data are still being assembled, in order to comprehend a surprising but commonsense connection that endures through union, loss, and reunion.

SUMMARY The unnatural separation of families through closed adoption practice results in a lasting trauma for many. Even though unconscious at times, a cathexis in the missing parts may strengthen the likelihood of synchronicity. Evidence of direction through prenatal memory, intricate genetic programming, dreams, intuition, and simultaneous timing of search activity has come from post-reunion accounts. An egocentric bias may be a factor in assigning subjective meaning to the coincidences, as each sorts for "sameness" in the recovered part of one's self. Further inquiry is compelling, and therapists may find the integration of synchronicities to be a useful part of post-adoption work.

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Publication title: Pre- and Peri-natal Psychology Journal

Volume: 7

Issue: 4

Pages: 267-286

Number of pages: 20

Publication year: 1993

Publication date: Summer 1993

Year: 1993

Publisher: Association for Pre&Perinatal Psychology and Health

Place of publication: New York

Country of publication: United States

Journal subject: Medical Sciences--Obstetrics And Gynecology, Psychology, Birth Control

ISSN: 08833095

Source type: Scholarly Journals

Language of publication: English

Document type: General Information

ProQuest document ID: 198778730

Document URL: <http://search.proquest.com/docview/198778730?accountid=36557>

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Last updated: 2010-06-06

Database: ProQuest Public Health

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