

Why an apology is necessary, and who needs one? – Lily

I want a formal, official, public and sincere apology from the Government

The apology needs to address the following people who are always in my heart. Loving them, has given me the courage to speak make this request.

An apology must be made:

- **to me, the adopted one**, for the harm, abuse, loss, grief and developmental trauma my adoption caused, not just to me, but to the people who I loved, and who loved me ...and those that still do
- **to my children** who have lived with a mother who was not always grounded, who was not supported by either adopted or birth family, as I raised them as a single mum of 4 ... for the disfunction that I now sadly see in them sometimes as they make their way in the world...a legacy from their mother being cast adrift by an Act that severed me from the support I needed to do a better job. It takes a village to raise a child..... the Adoption Act 55 just doesn't get that! Not only severed from my first family, but regarded tainted by my broader adopted family, and my pleas to find my family ignored by government agencies when I've asked for information about my identity.
- **to my mother** who lied to try and keep me, then, after telling the truth, had me ripped from her arms by the nurses, and told to go away and forget she ever had a baby. Who feed me for the first weeks of my life, then was given no binders for her breasts that ached and ached for her baby girl. Who was told she'd never see me again, and should never look for me. For the secret, shame and grief she carried alone for 32 years. For being lied too (in her eyes) when the Adult Adoption Info Act came into place.. She was so re-traumatised and frightened by that she vetoed my birth certificate. For the mountains of dysfunction between us that still exist and that have kept us apart for a further 32 years.
- **to my mother's only 'legitimate' daughter** who told me our mother favoured her sons and treated her cruelly. When the truth of my existence came out, my half-sister was able to make some sense of this disconnect with her mother. She deserves an apology to.
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- **to my adopted brother** whose early years in a children's home, then subsequent adoption left him traumatised and vulnerable to abuse. And for the years taken from him, by the paedophiles who saw that vulnerability and captured him as a pubescent boy, then literally took him away out of NZ.
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- **to my brother's wife and daughters**, whose story is not mine to tell ...but who definitely deserve an apology too
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- **to my adopted mum** who received no support to raise her traumatised adopted son, no support when the paedophiles came, no support when she was gravely ill and dying – for basically being cast adrift from her and her husbands families because they adopted

children. She got no form of government support, or the ability to reach out to her adopted children's families when her small isolated adopted family of four imploded due to illness, death and abuse. I can't imagine how horrible it was for her, knowing she was dying and leaving us – both of us so broken, unformed and vulnerable. As a mum, this cuts me up. My adopted mum born in 1912 to be a wife and mother, desperate to meet societal norms, by any means. She kept us home because she feared losing us or being recognised by our birth mothers on the street. Me and my adopted brother were not included in broader family outings. She carried the burden of our tainted past. Yet every day, we were a reminder of her failure as a woman....unable to bear children.

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- **to my adopted dad** who raised me. Many decades after his death, I found that he was the eldest son of the eldest son right back to the 1600s in County Cork – these first sons all had the exact same first, middle and surname. He dropped the ball – he lived with that – and my brother especially lived with that. He was not the son my dad had hoped for, and I was not the daughter he'd hoped for either. He told me as much one day after my adopted mum had died – 'I don't know who you are' he said to me – he truly looked bewildered and sad. At the time, I felt huge sadness, but also anger at this statement – but I didn't know what to do with it, I was 14. Looking back from here now, I feel huge sadness for him. I was a disappointment, and I knew it before he died – I tried in my way please him, because he was all the 'family' I had. Perhaps it would have been easier all round if he'd been able to reach out to my birth family and ask for help...he certainly needed it. I certainly needed it – but the Act set us adrift on Adoption Island...and when he died I was completely alone.

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- **to my siblings** – all nine of them, who will never be my siblings in ways other than blood, because we missed those years of sibling fun and angst that I watched my four children experience, and what unites them still. I played with my sister for the first time when I was 32 – we went ice skating - I cried my way around the rink realising for the first time, what I'd lost.

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- **to my grandparents** – who anticipated me, but never meet me – never knew I existed. I spoke to my grandmother once on the phone. She didn't know I was her first-born grandchild. I couldn't tell her who I really was. My birth mother had said she had a bad heart and would die if she knew of my existence. I was a good adoptee and waited 14 years before I had the courage to reach out to her only sibling, my darling Uncle. By then my grandmother had died.

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- **to my Uncle** who, when I found him just over ten years ago, had no idea I existed, but who opened his arms, his heart and his family to me, and said, we would have welcomed you, your grandma and grandad would have welcomed you. Whoa.... All those years alone...what were they for?

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- **to the wonderful people**, adopted or not, **who got it, and who fought and have fought for decades to stop the harm of adoption.** Who literally spent their lifetimes trying to help us... me, my mothers and fathers, my siblings, and lost families. **They need an apology for not being listened to, for not being taken seriously, for basically being ignored.**

What an apology means to me... I was adopted in 1959. I have endured 63 years of being gaslighted because I allow the hurt, loss, sadness and grief of adoption that I live with, to have a

voice despite being told over and over again that I should be grateful, that I'm lucky, that my real parents are ones that raised me, that I must have a problem because the person they know who is adopted has none of these negative emotions, I'm told they are happy and grateful to be have adopted. And I say, I am grateful for the love my adopted family showed me, but before I experienced that, I had lost my entire family and heritage... like a refugee, like a colonised person, I tried to build my identity, my sense of self, my authenticity, on a lie. The Adoption Act 1955 made me a legal fiction.

The 1955 Adoption Act is my whakapapa. What kind of legacy is that?