

## **20 Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Parents Knew, by Sherrie Eldridge**

[brackets added by Pastor Phil from adoption class resources for examples and further study]

Sherrie Eldridge is an adoptee herself and an author, speaker and trainer in adoption. She has written a book specifically about what adopted kids wished their parents knew, which is required reading by many U.S. adoption agencies. Below is the table of contents of her book entitled in italics above, based on her own experience as an adopted child and her research and testimonials of fellow adoptees. Not every adoptee will resonate with every line below, but this is a list of many things many adoptees at times will feel, but may not express to their parents:

1. I suffered a profound loss before I was adopted. You are not responsible. [see Eldridge quote on p. 74 of Brian Borgman, *After They Are Yours*]
2. My unresolved grief may surface in anger toward you [<https://vimeo.com/26218936>]
3. If I don't grieve my loss, my ability to receive love from you and others will be hindered [Rosaria Butterfield quote in Borgman, p. 73]
4. When I act out my fears in obnoxious ways, please hang in there with me and respond wisely. [Shari McMinn, *Adoption*, p. 213-18]
5. I am afraid you will abandon me [Borgman, p. 79]
6. I am afraid I will be too much for you to handle.
7. I need your help in grieving my loss. Teach me how to get in touch with my feelings about my adoption and then validate them.
8. I need to be taught that I have special needs arising from adoption loss, of which I need not be ashamed [Borgman, p. 76, 2nd paragraph]
9. I may appear more "whole" than I actually am. I need your help to uncover the parts of myself that I keep hidden so I can integrate all the elements of my identity.
10. Not knowing my full medical history can be distressing for me.
11. I need to gain a sense of personal power.
12. Please don't say that I look or act just like you. I need you to acknowledge and celebrate our differences.
13. Let me be my own person, but don't let me cut myself off from you.
14. Please respect my privacy regarding my adoption. Don't tell other people [details about my story or struggles] without my consent.
15. Birthdays may be difficult for me [Borgman, p. 76]
16. Just because I don't talk about my birth family doesn't mean I don't think about them.
17. I want you to take the initiative in opening conversations about my birth family.
18. I need to know the truth about my conception, birth, and family history, no matter how painful the details may be [Shari McMinn, chapters 31 & 32]
19. I'm afraid I was "given away" by my birth mother because I was a bad baby. I need you to help me dump my [unhealthy] shame [Borgman, p. 78]
20. Even if I decide to search for my birth family, I will always want you to be my parents.