

Mother Can't Stop Thinking About Baby She Gave Up

By Abigail Van Buren

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DEAR ABBY: In early 1970, I wrote to you. I was 14 and pregnant. I wanted to give up the baby and needed information on homes for unwed mothers. You wrote back and gave me several options. My mother contacted the Department of Human Services and a caseworker arranged for me to go to a place less than an hour from my home. I was away from July until November, a very lonely child. The baby's father was my uncle, and our entire family suffered.

I tried to keep my friends from finding out, but word got out and people still ask, "Didn't you have a baby years ago?" Because I felt an extra responsibility to protect my reputation, I married right after high school. It lasted about two years.

I later married a wonderful man and we had a boy and a girl. It lasted 12 years. I have been divorced three years, and I am content as a single mom. I put my children first and do not bring my dates home to meet them. My friends say this is silly, but it works for me. I have a good job and my life has worked out better than I ever thought it would.

Through the years I have written the Department of Human Services for information on my daughter. I had them put a letter in her file so that if she tried to contact me she would have all the information. Last week I was informed that the records on my daughter will not be opened unless it is a life-and-death situation.

Abby, I need to know if she is alive or dead. If she is alive, I will wait to see if she tries to contact me. If she is dead, then I can stop thinking about my phone ringing someday and that it might be her.

Where do you think I might go to locate her? I cannot afford a private detective, nor expensive legal proceedings. If you could suggest a group or agency that might be able to help, I would greatly appreciate it. I have never forgotten how you helped a little girl with comforting

words and support when she needed it most. I will always remember you for that, and now, 22 years later, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

GRATEFUL READER
IN MORRISTOWN, TENN.

DEAR READER: Thank you for a beautiful letter. You have done much with your life, and I wish you happiness. I am glad I could help more than 20 years ago, and I'll try to help again.

There is a group called the International Soundex Reunion Registry (ISSR), P.O. Box 2312, Carson City, Nev. 89702. Birth parents and adopted children can register, and when the children become of legal age, if both parties are registered and want to find each other, a match is made. Send a long, stamped, self-addressed envelope to the above registry, and request Soundex forms.

I have dealt with the people at Soundex for many years and have found them to be efficient, honest, and in total agreement with my feelings that neither the identity of the birth parents nor the adopted child shall be disclosed unless all parties are agreeable to a reunion.

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— DEAR ABBY: Here's another sign to hang on your front door as a message for the uninvited:

"If You Didn't Bother to Call — Don't Bother to Knock!" (Rude, perhaps, but very effective.)

T.P. IN ST. PAUL, MINN.

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For Abby's favorite family recipes, send a long, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$3.95 (\$4.50 in Canada) to: Dear Abby, Cookhooklet No. 1, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054. (Postage is included.)