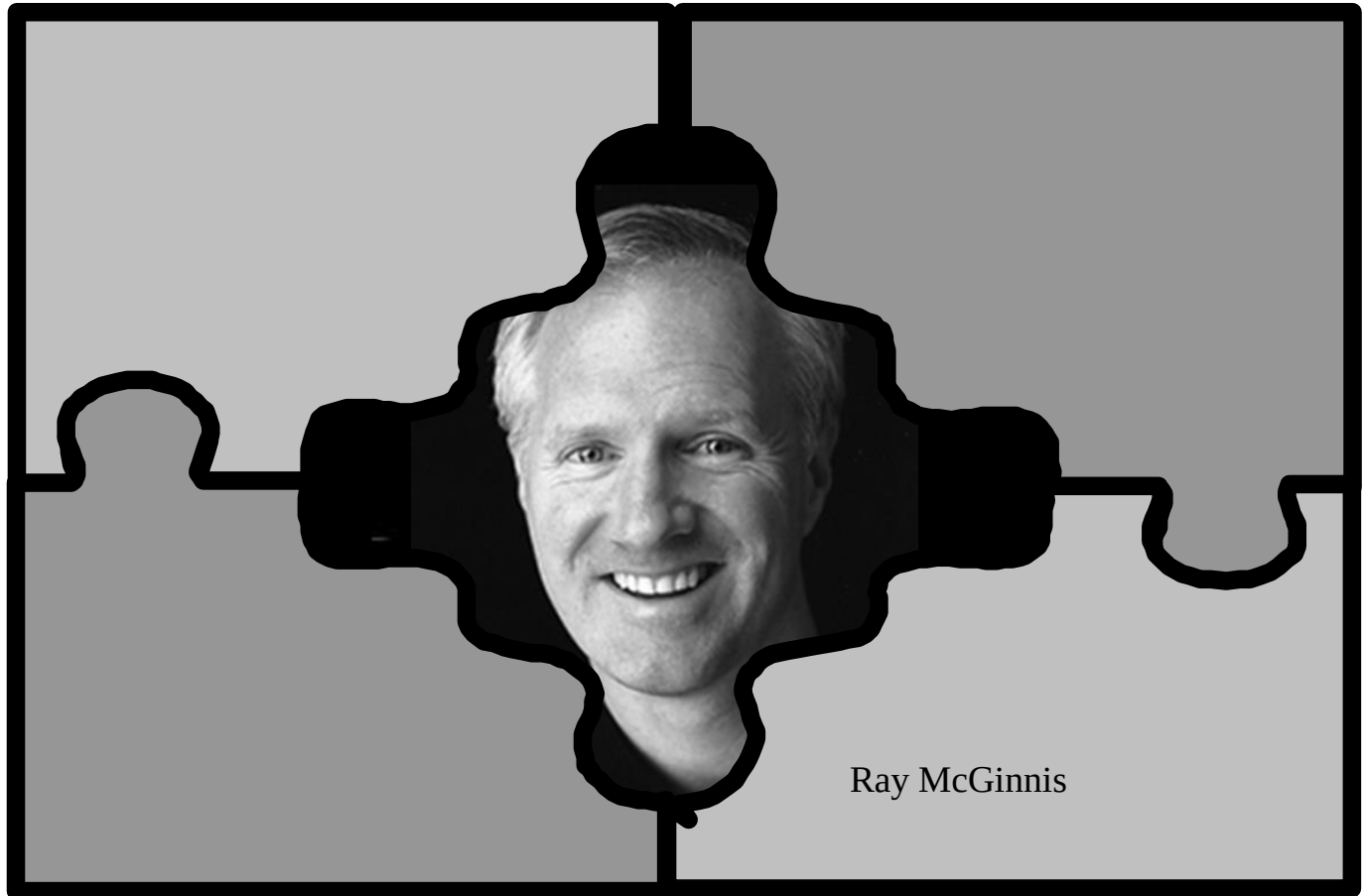


ADOPTION CIRCLES

Published by the Forget Me Not Family Society

Canada's Post-Adoption Quarterly

Issue #65 Spring 2013 \$3.50



Reframing Blame and Shame

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ADOPTION CIRCLES is published quarterly by the Forget Me Not Family Society, a non-profit organization.

Annual Memberships:

Single: \$30.00

Couples: \$50.00

Corporate: \$65.00

Please send cheque payable to the **Forget Me Not Family Society** at:

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FMNFS FACTS:

Forget Me Not Family Society is a provincially registered, non-profit society and a federally registered charity (#88908 4869 RR0001.) Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$25.00. Our Society was formed for education, consultation, peer counseling and to offer support to all those touched by adoption: adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents, and concerned professionals. Our primary source of income is through membership fees. These funds go directly towards printing, postage, telephone, wireless expenses and supplies.

WHAT WE OFFER:

Experience shows that at various times in life, the issues and concerns of adoption need to be addressed. We provide our members with opportunities to gain further understanding of adoption issues through:

- Conducting monthly support groups in New Westminster, Cloverdale and Kamloops, B.C.
- Individual peer support
- Resource library
- Referrals to professionals and other service groups
- Speakers Bureau to educate groups on post-adoption issues
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Annual weekend workshops

OUR MANDATE:

- To encourage and develop a recognition of the benefits of family preservation and openness in adoption practice.
- To establish and operate a Post Adoption Resource Centre providing education, consultation, counseling and support to those touched by adoption: adoptees, birthparents, adoptive parents, and concerned professionals.
- To provide community education programs, panel presentations and workshops on post adoption issues for any members of the community who wish to learn more about adoption and reunion issues.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER:

ADOPTION CIRCLES is published quarterly and is available by subscription to our Society. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in adoption and post-adoption issues. Comments and contributions are always welcome. Please mail submissions to our office or forward to the Editor at: bjrymer@telus.net The Forget Me Not Society reserves the right to edit all material submitted on the basis of space, relevance, and suitability.

Please note that the material published in the Newsletter, including the article by the Editor, does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Forget Me Not Family Society.

President's Message

by Marnie Tetz

Hi Everyone!

Welcome to our Spring Edition of Adoption Circles! By the time you receive this it will be summer.

I have to admit that this spring hasn't been all that bad. Our gardens are looking pretty darn good. Hearing the birds first thing in the morning makes me smile as I click off the alarm and get ready for work.



The focus of this issue is “Reframing Blame and Shame” and some of our members will share what it means to them. As a reunited adoptee, I am going to share my own thoughts in an article.

I invite you to be in your cozy chair, with your favourite drop to enjoy this issue of Adoption Circles.

~ Marnie

~~~~~

From your Editor ~ **Rymer Writes**  
**Reframing Blame and Shame**  
by Bernadette Rymer



I hope you had a wonderful Spring and that your summer so far is grand. Here in Ashcroft we are sizzling (30-40 degrees Celsius for the 3 past weeks). As retirees, our days begin very early. I am up and out the door doggie walking by 6 a.m. Then after a quick brecky (Aussie for breakfast) I'm out again for exercise, then home for yard work, other chores then indoors by noon. The rest of the day is spent indoors doing whatever pleases us. This indoor time has been a blessing as I have had time to research our theme which is very interesting and most challenging.

I suggested the theme of **Reframing Blame and Shame** for very personal reasons: in a nutshell I have struggled for survival under the yoke of shame and blame for many tens of years and I realize that I am now in a place in my healing journey where I have to move forward and let go of the blame and shame if I am to continue to grow.

So with the theme decided, I tootled off on holidays for a month and came home to the stark reality of AC newsletter preparations around the theme: Reframing Shame and Blame. My first thoughts were “Heck: I know a lot about shame and blame because I have lived with them for so long, but how the dickens do I explain Reframing?”

Thus began a web based adventure into many scholarly articles on the concepts of Reframing, and on Shame and Blame. My call for contributions on the

theme from our members and readers was again answered with openness, sincerity and generosity, and for some authors, with willingness to be vulnerable.

I lay no claim to being a scientific or clinical expert in these very complex concepts about human emotions and our reactions to experiences. All thanks go to the scientists and researchers whose work I studied in preparation for this AC, and to each of our contributing authors.

I DO claim expertise in the area of my personal human development for I have lived with shaming and blaming for more years than I wish to admit.

This AC represents my best efforts to provide you with new information about the concepts which will, we hope, lead to a deeper understanding and then translate into action for healing in your lives.

This AC is not for the faint of heart. You will be faced with some tough realities of what living with shame and blame has done to you and to your loved ones. Will you take on the challenge of Reframing...or not? If you have the courage to put the principles into practise I believe you can change your life.

I have made my choice: what about you?

# Personality Profile

Ray McGinnis  
Author, Workshop Presenter



## Introduction

**R**ay, we are delighted that you will be our facilitator for our annual workshop in October. Your international experience in leading groups in creating paths of healing through personal writing will be a new beginning for many of us. We know that we will benefit from your expertise in leading us to discover the writer within each of our hearts, and in many other ways that now we probably can't imagine.

Please share with us why you write, how it helps you and how you see personal writing helping those in pain to come to a place of healing.

## Why did you start writing?

When I was in grade six I was having my first adolescent feelings of attraction. I couldn't imagine talking to my parents about it. I couldn't even imagine my parents ever having sex, though they must have. I got a notebook at an IGA and wrote a few notes about what I was thinking. It helped me get in touch with my feelings, which included embarrassment about my appearance, with the onslaught of my first few pimples. Before I started to write something down in my notebook (journal or diary) whenever I had a strong feeling I felt totally overwhelmed. It was as if my emotion of the moment ~ sadness, anger, confusion, boredom ~ was in total control, and I had no way to get any perspective on my feelings. This changed with writing in a journal. From time to time, I'd write about things I thought were unfair in school, at home, or with other friends on my track and field team. I remember writing about a visit to my cousins in Winnipeg, and my cousin, Shauna, who was newly

adopted into my Uncle Bob and Aunt Lenore's family. Sometimes I was surprised at how wise I sounded to myself, even though I was only eleven, twelve or thirteen.

## Why is writing so healing?

There are many kinds of writing. Technical writing for reports at a place of work, essays in school, and books are some examples. The kind of writing I relate to most is writing in a journal or diary. Writing can be an ally in healing in many ways. One example is immediacy and availability. If I wake up in the middle of the night and have something on my mind that I need to sort out, I can grab my journal. It lessens the need to rely on friends and family to talk through problems and helps me affirm my own experience and inner wisdom. The important work of healing often brings with it a host of perfectly normal, but difficult, feelings ~ anger, despair, frustration. Your journal absorbs these feelings without judgment, censure or reprisal. The insight gained from *catharsis* is an important step in healing.

Journal writing encourages self-reliance and self-responsibility. The healing journey is literally mapped out, one page at a time, in your own "voice." The accumulation of life experience and wisdom adds up to the recognition that we are, in fact, pivotal creative forces in our own lives.

Another healing benefit of writing is to release past hurts and judgments. Holding onto the past is a sure-fire energy drain. Resentment, guilt, shame, blame and bottled-up grief block access to inner resources

for healing. The safe container of your journal receives it all, filling up and becoming more in the process. It prepares you to release old wounds and extend forgiveness to yourself and others.

Finally, writing down notes about your life provides an ongoing record of your own healing journey. Months and years down the road, you can look past the pages you've kept to assure yourself that you are making progress and that you can heal.

### **Why do you do writing workshops?**

I've sat in small circles at workshops with over 12,000 people across North America in the past fourteen years. I've led programs with a diverse range of people. These include with a literacy group in a program with First Nations Native Canadians, cancer survivor groups, school children in classes as young as Kindergarten, a program for women in safe houses from domestic abuse, first responders, public libraries, community centers, churches, mental health clients, synagogues, nurses and hospice societies. Typically, while there may be some people in a workshop who have a regular practice with writing, often over half the people in the room don't write much or at all. What I experience over and over again is the writing in the workshops is a jumping off point for conversations, sharing of stories, of listening and witnessing each other without judgment. While writing on our own lets us ponder our own thoughts and feelings, in the workshop people have an opportunity to connect with other people. The outcome is people feeling less isolated, accepted, listened to, understood and valued. While people may come with friends to a workshop, many participants comment on how amazed they are that they were able to build trust so quickly with people who they didn't know, but who also signed up for the workshop or conference. One participant said that it made the world seem like a more hospitable place.

### **What are some examples of changes and transformations you have witnessed in your**

### **writing workshops?**

One woman who had been recently divorced was finding it hard to trust people again after an experience that she named as betrayal. Her self-esteem was quite low. She said this was the first time she had signed up for a workshop or course in a public setting for over a year. Over the course of the workshop she seemed to relax. Several things contributed to this. One was the safe guidelines I set at the start of the workshop, including keeping confidential anything that was shared in the room. My examples for each exercise helped her focus and she was soon furiously writing onto the page what was bottled up inside. Over the course of that workshop there were three rounds of writing, followed with sharing in pairs with another participant. This woman met with three different individuals who she shared some of her writing with, and listened to the others share as well. This woman felt engaged by the quality of communication between each of the people she paired up with. She had a first-hand experience of being listened to and not talked down to or lied to. This helped her focus on the present moment which she was finding satisfying, instead of the hurtful past experiences in her previous marriage. At the end of the workshop, she thanked me and said maybe she could see some hope for herself, and was going to keep a journal from time to time.

### **Do you have an exercise our readers could try, which relates to our theme?**

Yes. Here is one where you write down the left hand margin of a blank page a phrase, in this case, REFRAMING BLAME AND SHAME. Each letter of the phrase has its own line. Next, consider the meaning of the phrase. How has this been, or is, a theme in your life? What insights, wisdom, and experience can you draw on to start to write, beginning with the first line that starts with the letter R? I have written an example of what came to mind for me as I considered the phrase, reframing blame and shame.

One of the hardest things in life is having words in your heart  
that you cannot utter. ~ James Earl Jones

## Creative Writing Exercise

### Reframing Shame and Blame

Remember

Every day is a new day. Today I will

Face into

Restricting

Attitudes of

Myself,

In

Need of

Grace

Blaming myself, or others, is not

Letting me

Advance to the place I want to grow into.

Manipulation and negative thinking

Erodes

Acceptance of self and others.

Naming without judgment what has occurred.

Describing with evaluating keeps me

Steadier.

Hateful self-talk and

Abuse from others only drains

Me. Time to step back from this cycle and

Explore what was first meant by the phrase, "to err is human."

Now it's your turn. Write down the letters of a phrase or word you'd like to work on. Then take some time to write as few or as many words in each line as you wish. Whenever you think of a word that begins with the next letter on the line below, drop down to that line to continue writing.

~ Ray McGinnis

## Upcoming Events

### **Forget Me Not Family Society ANNUAL FALL WORKSHOP**

**October 26 - 27, 2013**

#### **“Releasing our Voices ~ The Healing Continues”**

Executive Airport Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre, Richmond, B.C

We are delighted to announce that our annual workshop will be held at this new venue. Our meeting room has a seating capacity for 50 people. It is on the top floor and has lots of natural light, private restrooms and a large private balcony, PLUS private access to a roof top garden and running/walking track.

Saturday Oct 26:

- Ray McGinnis will facilitate morning and afternoon sessions.
- Sharon Jinkerson will lead a Native Talking Circle and Glida, a tribal elder, will perform drumming and singing later in the afternoon.

Sunday Oct 27:

- Support Group led by Nancy Kato or Marnie Tetz

Breakfasts, lunches and coffee breaks are included in the workshop fees. Dinner is not included.

More event details and registration form are at [www.adoptioncircles.net](http://www.adoptioncircles.net)



Drop by the FMNFS display booth if you are attending the

### ***Finding Your Roots Genealogical Seminar***

Saturday October 19 , 2013, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

at the Family History Centre, 6270 – 126 St. Surrey, BC

Class descriptions will be posted in September at [www.findingyourroots.ca](http://www.findingyourroots.ca)

## About Our Workshop Facilitators

**Ray McGinnis** is an internationally acclaimed author and workshop leader renowned for his personal, sensitive and respectful approach to helping participants discover the writer within their hearts. He specializes in developing and facilitating workshops to meet the unique needs of each group with a focus on strategies for using personal writing as one avenue in their healing process. Although Ray has previously worked with church groups, there will be no religious content in our workshop.



His workshops are engaging and interactive. Participants learn new, proven techniques vital to enhancing motivation, communication, creative self-expression, awareness, wisdom, love and healing. He uses a variety of interactive activities from writing, games, art and creative self-expression.

Participants do not need to perform, write a poem or short story. The focus is how you can learn to express yourself comfortably, in ways that can lead to healing.

Ray has led workshops for a variety of organizations including public libraries, public schools, community centres, mental health units, bereavement groups, hospitals, retreat settings, churches, professional and business associations. He is based in Vancouver and spends much of his time on the road.

In preparation for our workshop Ray attended a FMNFS support group meeting in Cloverdale so he could gain a deeper understanding of adoption loss trauma. Ray was delighted to meet some members and is very enthusiastic about our annual workshop.



**Sharon Jinkerson**, a past member of the Forget Me Not Family Society, shares with us about Talking Circles: "Talking Circles are a time honoured tradition in many First Nations Communities across Turtle Island (North America) since time immemorial. The Talking Circle is a place where everyone can share their truth in a respectful environment. Participants are encouraged to speak; however, it is perfectly okay to be a witness. Elders encourage people to listen to each other with your whole being and an open heart. The purpose of the circle is to be there for yourself!

First Nation's people believe that sharing your story is an important way to heal and also a basic human right. My Grandmother used to say "how do you know who you 'really are' if you never share your story?"

# Zero – The Power of the Circle

by Sharon Jinkerson

**A**nishinabi people have always known the power of the number zero because it is a circle.

Most of our rituals emulate this infinite symbol of life. The Rain Dances, Sweat Lodges, feasts and community gatherings are all held in a circle. When we come together elders insist on everyone maintaining a circle formation. This is because there is a mysterious, unseen force that is invoked when we sit in a circle. The circle has no beginning and no end, it goes on forever.

The physical structure of a talking circle provides for automatic equality because everyone is shoulder to shoulder and each person can be seen by all the others. Tables are considered a barrier that interrupts the flow of energy. Circles provide an equal opportunity for participants to speak, there is no need to compete for air time, when it is your turn you can talk until you feel complete and no one will interrupt. Our elders ask us to listen to each other with our hearts; they say listening is more important than talking. This ancient ceremony creates an opportunity for deep intimacy because the formation allows for physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual connectedness.

A purification ritual called a smudge is performed by the elder and people are brought together by a prayer that asks for everyone to be present, to be in their truth, to listen to each other with compassion and for the wisdom and spirits of our ancestors be present. Of course each prayer is different but this is the general essence expressed. My first experience with talking circles was overwhelming, I noticed the gentle calm that seemed to prevail but more than this people were very honest about their life experiences and their feelings. The world I grew up in required one to be polite and to keep real feelings a secret. Being self-

righteous and judgemental was frowned upon but these behaviours were still common.

Crying is a very uncomfortable experience in mainstream society. In recent years on Pender Island, I have witnessed people being congratulated at funerals for being “strong” by not weeping. Anishinabi people say “when you cry you can heal yourself.” We believe that when a person is crying they are in their power, they are being who they truly are in the world and that each tear is cleansing the wounds of loss, hurt or pain. We are taught to never interrupt a person when they are in this holiest of human moments. It is thought that the need to rush over to a person when they are crying is about our own insecurities and fears. We see the person grieving as powerful, whole and close to the creator.



Getting to one's truth is a process. For many years I sat in circles and bless my heart, I presented an ideal picture of my life and self. It took years for me to understand that no one would ever know me if I kept up this pretence and worse I might not even know myself. My people stood by me, even congratulated me for sharing and never once judged what I had to say. I still shudder at my arrogance but I also realize that this was all I had to offer at the time.

My whole truth is still evolving but my story is more complete today. The holiest moment I have ever experienced as a human was crying with my entire being and not worrying about looking cool or sounding wise. I sobbed so hard I didn't know if I could come back. When I stopped weeping, I looked around the circle and saw complete love and acceptance and probably relief because I was finally being real. The circle holds a sacred power that allows every human being the opportunity to be who they truly are. My people call this sacred journey a warrior's path, the relentless pursuit of one's own truths.

# Understanding Reframing, Shaming and Blaming

By Bernadette Rymer

## Introduction

**T**his article is a brief summary of material researched in journals of medicine, psychology and social work.

I offer my sincere thanks to the many psychologists, counsellors, doctors and university professors whose work I have studied during the past month.

To our members and readers: this summary article is literally the tip of the iceberg. Should you be interested in more detailed explanations of the concepts of reframing, shaming and blaming, a web search will provide you with many sources.

## WHAT IS REFRAMING?

Reframing is a way of changing what you are thinking. Cognitive reframing consists of changing the way we see things and trying to find alternative ways of viewing ideas, events, situations, or a variety of other concepts. It is the act of taking a situation, event, interaction, etc. you feel negatively about and changing how you view and feel about it.

It is critical to understand that reframing is NEVER about trying to change the content of the event, just the way you think and feel about it. Pretending to yourself that an event was different to how it actually was just to feel better is delusional and not very useful because you will start to distrust yourself.

Reframing can turn a stressful event into either a major trauma or a challenge to be bravely overcome. By reframing we can see a negative event as a learning experience.

Reframing is a way that we can alter our perceptions of stressors which helps to relieve significant amounts of stress and create a more positive life.

## How Does Reframing Affect Stress?

Reframing techniques can change your physical responses to stress because your body's stress response is triggered by *perceived* stress, not actual events. If you perceive that you are threatened - physically or psychologically - by a situation, your fight-or-flight response will kick in. Your stress response can be triggered by events ranging from annoying to frightening, and can remain triggered long after the triggering event has passed, especially if you're not practicing relaxation techniques. Reframing techniques are a way of minimizing the stressors you perceive in your life, thus easing the process of relaxation.

## How Does Reframing Work?

Using reframing techniques can be simple and easy, especially with practice.

1. **Learn About Thinking Patterns:** Educate yourself about some of your negative thinking patterns that may worsen your stress levels.
2. **Notice Your Thoughts:** Catch yourself when you're slipping into overly negative and stress-inducing patterns of thinking. Being aware of them is an important part of challenging and ultimately changing them.
3. **Challenge Your Thoughts:** Examine the truth and accuracy (or lack thereof) of these thoughts. Are the things you're telling yourself even true? Also, what are some other ways to interpret the same set of events? Which ways of seeing things serve you better?

4. **Replace Your Thoughts With More Positive Thoughts:** When you're looking at something negative, see if you can change your-self talk to use less strong, less negative emotions. When you're looking at a potentially stressful situation, see if you can view it as a challenge vs. a threat. Look for the 'gift' in each situation, and see if you can see your stressors on the more positive edge of reality: see them in a way that still fits the facts of your situation, but that is less negative and more optimistic and positive.

## WHAT IS SHAME?

Many researchers have studied the effects of shame in people who have survived traumatic events. Findings strongly indicate that people who experience traumatic events are prone to shame. Another strong indicator of PTSD and an important contributing factor to feelings of shame is the negatively perceived social support in the aftermath of traumatic injury.

Shame is an emotion in which the self is perceived as defective, unacceptable, or fundamentally damaged. Shame is often confused with guilt, which is a related but distinct emotion in which a specific behavior is viewed as unacceptable or wrong, rather than the entire self.

Shame is a soul eating emotion.

~C.G. Jung ~

Brené Brown Ph.D. LMSW (licensed social worker) describes shame as an intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging. Shame creates feelings of fear, blame and disconnection. It also has far reaching and pervasive effects on our physical and emotional well being. Brown states "...while it feels like shame hides in our darkest corners, it actually tends to lurk in all of the familiar places, including appearance and body image, motherhood, family, parenting, money and work, mental and physical health, addiction, sex, aging and religion,"

## What is Post-Traumatic Shame?

**Post-traumatic shame** has been defined as both acute and prolonged feelings and secondary feelings of the damaged social self, and core identity. It is associated with diminished personal value including the loss of face, self-esteem and self-worth: virtue and moral integrity; feelings of powerlessness and inadequacy, failure, smallness, compromised personal and social relations, social withdrawal and isolation, self-annihilation and suicidality.

Traumatic shame tends to make some people overcompensate with unrealistic goals followed by more shame at failure in a classic binge/purge cycle. For people with PTSD, all experiences tend to be processed by the brain as extremes, all black or white, with no grey. The loss of "the ability to operate in a balanced way...further adds to shameful feelings." Shame based people also have a tendency to re-create childhood traumas in adulthood.

According to Dr. Judith Lewis Herman, M.D., Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School, "...traumatic events violate the autonomy of the person at the level of bodily integrity. The body is invaded, injured, defiled. ...Shame is a response to helplessness, the violation of bodily integrity, and the indignity suffered in the eyes of another person" (p. 53 *I Thought It Was Just Me*).

## How Can We Overcome Shame?

Many experts agree that even though we can't eliminate shame, we can become more resilient to it. We can develop the ability to recognize shame when we experience it, and move through it in a constructive way that helps us to maintain our authenticity and grow from our experiences. We can do this by recognizing those things that trigger feelings of shame and reaching out to others.

Because shame derives its power from being unspeakable, Brené Brown believes that reaching out to others is the single most powerful act of resilience. She writes "Regardless of who we are, how we were raised or what we believe, all of us fight hidden, silent battles against not being good enough, not having enough and not belonging enough. When we find the

courage to share our experiences and the compassion to hear others tell their stories, we force shame out of hiding, and end the silence.” If we are going to find our way out of shame and back to each other, vulnerability is the path and courage is the light. If we can share our story with someone who responds with empathy and understanding, shame can't survive.”

## WHAT IS BLAME?

Blame is an accusation that a person has committed a misdeed. The misdeed is usually an undesirable act that goes against the values of the accuser. It is often a specific act, such as doing or saying something. We blame ourselves, others and sometimes organizations and a social class, or ‘the world’. When used as a verb, blame is act of accusation. When used as a noun, it casts blame as a kind of cloud that hangs over the accused person, marking them as guilty.

Blame implies that the person or organization has/had intent when carrying out the act, knowingly breaking values or causing suffering to others, which by definition makes them a bad person. Because they are bad, they therefore deserve punishment.

Blame may say as much about the accuser as the accused. In blaming, the accuser is positioning themselves as morally superior. They take the role of judge and jury in finding the accused person guilty and deserving of the punishment they mete out.

### Justifiable Blame

In some situations it is justifiable to blame others if they were really responsible for the event or course of action, and if blaming them is going to prevent similar mistakes in the future.

### What Blame Does

Blame focuses responsibility on the blamed one, not on the problem and it implies the desire to punish. There is the assumption that there is no responsibility on the BLAMER’S part. In blaming, we miss the opportunity to resolve the conflict, often prolonging the conflict.

## Why Do We Blame Others?

The reasons are complex and difficult to explain in the context and space available in this AC. Major reasons include:

1. **Feelings of helplessness, fear, panic and loss of control:** Some people panic when they lose control of a situation and so they try to restore the sense of being in control by blaming others!!
2. **Unable to accept what happened:** People blame others when they fail to accept something that happened. Had those people learned how to properly accept events they would have never blamed others.
3. **Refusing to admit that they are responsible.**
4. **They learned it from their parents.**

Blame is the creed of the disempowered

~ Steve Maraboli

## Why Do We Blame Ourselves?

Many of the reasons we blame ourselves where blame is not warranted are similar to reasons why we blame others. Additional factors and dynamics that contribute to self-blame include:

1. **Abuse** is by its nature a humiliating, dehumanizing, experience.
2. **The illusion of control:** Believing you are to blame can give survivors a sense of control, however illusory, over the abuse.
3. **Your belief system:** If you believe it happened because of something you are doing then you can maintain hope for change.
4. **You learned it from your parents.** Many children are told directly and repeatedly that they are to blame.
5. Self-blame enables survivors **to protect abusers**, thus attempting to maintain some sort of attachment with important others.

6. **Survivor self-blame** is reinforced by our culture's victim blaming.

### What To Do Instead of Blaming

Try to identify the real issues as you see them. If you aren't sure what the real issue is, ask the other to help you determine it. When people are invited to be involved in a positive way they feel appreciated and less threatened and the tendency for cooperation increases.

Considering your role and your responsibility in the event will help you to focus on the problem and hopefully assist in determining a resolution. This may sound easy, but it is hard work for most of us.

The alternative however – that is to keep blaming others – is, I believe, much harder work as it blocks our clear reflections in creating resolutions, and therefore prolongs the conflict and the suffering.

### SUMMARY

The reality of the effects of shame and blame on ourselves and on our loved ones is well documented in many clinical studies, in many areas of medicine, psychology and human development, by a variety of researchers over many years.

Many of us in the adoption loss community are well aware of the effects since most of us have lived with

the shame and blame for longer than we want to remember.

Now we are faced with a new challenge: to take on the task of Reframing our shame and blame. It's a challenge we must seriously consider if we are committed to our personal growth.

### REFLECTIONS

Since becoming involved in the Forget Me Not Family Society (October 2008), I have been in the process of facing and then accepting the shame and blame of my adoption loss experiences. I am now in a place where I realize a couple of things:

1. I know that while I have begun the process of Reframing my shame and blame, I will never be finished Reframing.
2. The more I am able to Reframe, the happier I am.

### Works referenced:

Brown, Brené. *I Thought It Was Just Me*. Gotham Books/Penguin Group, 2007

Herman, Dr. Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery*. Basic Books/Perseus Press, 1992. 1997

Shame is the demon that keeps many of us trapped in our pain; healing comes when we gain the courage to confront our demon(s)." ~ J'son M. Lee, *One Family's AIDS*

You will never become who you want to be if you keep blaming everyone else for who you are." ~ Habeeb Akande

I think it's very important that you make your own decision about what you are. Therefore you're responsible for your actions, so you don't blame other people.  
~ Prince William

# Tell Yourself the Truth

By Amy Newman

**I**n my experience, emotions are always preceded by a thought, which may be conscious or subconscious. We all have automatic thoughts powered by our subconscious mind; many are useful and keep us safe. But some of these automatic thoughts are simply not true, and they are the root of much of our unhappiness.

Negative thoughts and emotions are disempowering. They drain your energy. They can lead to poor choices in word, thought and deed.

The most common theme of negative self-talk is “I’m not good enough” or a variation of that. We usually come to this conclusion early in childhood from ‘shame and blame’ parenting techniques, critical playmates, teachers etc. Some kids become deeply discouraged and others are more resilient. Even people who feel they have a good self-esteem have some negative self-talk.

“He got out of the wrong side of the bed this morning” How do people get into bad moods? They start off with a negative thought, add a bunch more and spiral down into being miserable for the rest of the day.

Try this exercise the next time you are feeling unhappy or a lack of energy. It can help shift shame and blame thoughts, and other negative self-talk.

- What is happening? (The event or trigger)
- Notice your body position – are you slouching? What are you feeling within your body? Where?
- Ask “What am I telling myself?” Speak the thought out loud and write it down.
- Take an objective, logical look at it. Is this true? Partly true? What is the full truth?
- Stand or sit up straight. Reframe it: tell yourself the truth out loud and write it down.
- Is there any action to take? Accept responsibility for your errors without putting yourself down. Think: “What can I do next time?”
- Repeat!

When we speak our negative thoughts out loud, we often realize immediately how false the words are.

Example:

- Event: Yelled at the kids
- Feeling: Frustrated/discouraged/bad
- Self-Talk: I’m not good enough...to be a mother
- Truth: I’m usually a great mom! I do my best and I’m not perfect. I made a mistake. It’s normal for moms to lose their cool sometimes.
- Action/Next time: Apologize for yelling. Next time I will instruct them calmly.

The exercise is simple but it can be hard to do! The first challenge is becoming aware of your feelings and their effect on your body. Also, your subconscious ego will resist making changes to these mistaken beliefs it has created to “keep you safe”. If you are really keen to work on this, check your self-talk every few hours for at least one week to get into the habit. It’s even better if you have an accountability buddy - someone you can report to and say “I did my self-talk exercise 4 times today, my goal is 6 tomorrow.”

Watch what you are saying or thinking about other people. Is it a blaming or put-down thought? There is a difference between blaming and holding someone accountable for their behaviour.

People who feel worthless are the ones most likely to point the shame and blame finger. Our egos try to make us feel good enough, sometimes by making someone else look bad in comparison. The superior feeling of being “right” doesn’t last and never solves the problem. If you are dealing with people who have a habit of being angry and negative, always finding fault with others, try viewing them with compassion. They probably feel small inside.

You can reframe blame, shame and regret into a learning opportunity for acceptance, forgiveness, responsibility, accountability and the truth.

# Reframing Blame and Shame Puts Me in a Good Place

By Patricia Buchanan

When I think of this subject, Reframing Shame and Blame, it brings to mind a sentence on page 256 of Nancy Verrier's book "Coming Home to Self" in which she says *"Many of you lived in a time when what the neighbours thought of you was considered by your parents as more important than knowing what happened to their grandchildren"*. For my parents in 1967 / 1968, that was certainly the case. When I realized that I was pregnant and finally went to them for help, there was never any option presented other than to be put on a plane to the city and sent to live in a home for unwed mothers until my baby was born and the adoption papers were signed. I'm ashamed to say that I just fell into line with what seemed to be the "easiest way out of my predicament" at the time. The situation was never again discussed by my parents.

My father is now deceased but my mother, who is 85 years old but very well, still cannot talk about the relinquishment to adoption of her first grandchild, or what I may have gone through at that time or might be going through now, having been reunited with my son three years ago.

Do I blame them? **No, I do not.** They were part of society at a time when adoption was considered a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Although my resources and skills as a capable mother would have been sadly lacking at the age of 19, I can't believe that they could let their own grandchild be handed over to perfect strangers, but I do not blame them. I know that they were uninformed as to the repercussions of relinquishment and adoption and thankfully society is changing its way of thinking about adoption. I know that this same situation would never be let happen to my children or grandchildren. It's been said many times, and rightly so, "when you know better, you do better."

I know very well the pain that comes with adoption reunion when you open yourself up to it and I don't know that I want to put my mother through that at her age. If denial is how she manages to cope with her lack of participation in my situation in 1968 then that is her choice. I just feel very sad that she is so guarded and out of touch with her feelings and emotions that she can't allow herself the pleasure of meeting her grandson (and possibly her great granddaughter).

As far as the social worker that I dealt with during that time, I don't feel that I want to put any blame on her either. She was educated and trained to deal with unwed mothers and I assume that *"this girl is an unwed mother and will put her baby up for adoption"* was written all over me because I don't remember ever discussing any other options. I can only think that I made it very easy for her to make arrangements to have my son adopted. I do remember

at the time, of having some misguided sense of being grateful to her because she was the **only** adult that ever really talked to me during my entire pregnancy and the adoption arrangements

that followed. It horrifies me to think of how alone I was during that entire time.

It is taking everything I have every day to deal with my own feelings and emotions regarding the loss of my son to adoption and reunion situation. To put blame on someone else for my situation would be hurtful, futile and just a waste of energy. I must remember that, in spite of the trauma and sadness I experienced and knowing that those who could have helped me just stood by and watched, I must concentrate on putting all my energy and positive thoughts into my own healing. I just know that when I reach the age my mother is now, I don't want to be in denial and I want to be able to say that I am in a good place in my reunion with my son.

Many of you lived in a time when what the neighbours thought of you was considered by your parents to be more important than what happened to their grandchildren.

~ Nancy Verrier

# Letting Go of Blame Brings Me to Namaste

By Colleen Rudd

**A**s I sit down to write this submission, parts of our city and surrounding area are in crisis from a major flood upstream! There is mud, debris, and destruction all around us. Thousands of people will be starting over. I feel the loss, I feel the knot in the pit of their stomachs - as they put one foot in front of the other to pick up and start again from scratch.

Their struggle is familiar, very familiar, because I have been in their shoes. Following the loss of my first born child to adoption, I was expected to find my own way back to normalcy. My reality was forever altered.

I later came to know that my daughter's reality would forever be altered as well - and far from what I was coerced to believe. Should there be shame in this? My answer has always been NO.

All of society, my family, my community, the general public, found it acceptable to shun me for what had happened. I never once felt shame. I held my head proudly once I was able to repress enough of the trauma to move forward!

Blame became a defense mechanism for me. I blamed my mother for not supporting me from 1970 until just a few months ago when I was privileged enough to be taking a course on "living the life you want". During one of the pair exercises I became profoundly aware of a major downward vortex in my own energy center, and of thoughts that were sucking the life out of me. After writing my story 'ad nauseam', reading it out loud to myself in my head, and then several times to my partner I just burst out

laughing. I had miraculously stumbled on the key to my suffering. The epiphanies were: 'my story is just that, my story'! It is something that I made up in my head about what happened THEN. This is **NOW!!**

As Joe Soll has so eloquently put it, "IT is never going to happen again!" I also realized I was violating my own spirit by speaking negatively about my mother. I was historically known to say that my mother took the victim stance, as though the whole traumatic thing was happening to her!

By pushing myself to 'purge this black cloud' I was able to take it one step further (over a period of several days) to conclude that by blaming my mother for the loss of my daughter I was making myself a victim. NOT where I want to be!

I had miraculously stumbled on the key to my suffering ... my story is just that, my story! It is something that I made up in my head about what happened.

Knowing this - and living it, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day I am slowly feeling peace come over me. The PTSD will always be there... I have been very triggered by the loss and devastation in the city of Calgary and our neighbouring communities: A cellular memory of loss and despair. A memory of what it is like to pick up the pieces and begin again!

I am this much wiser now, and will continue to grow, and learn, and look after my inner child with whatever it takes to maintain that peace and contentment. I am 100% responsible for my own world and 0% responsible for anybody else in their world.

Namaste.

~ Colleen

## Namaste

"I honor the place in you in which the entire universe dwells, the place of love, truth, light and peace. When we honour this place within each other we are one."

# Reframing Blame and Shame From This Adoptee's Perspective

By Marnie Tetz

I am going to share my thoughts on these words from my own experience. Each of us...adoptees, mums and dads, adoptive parents, siblings and grandparents have our own thoughts on what happened and how it made us feel.

I was always the happy adoptee, grateful that my mother had decided to place me for adoption so that I could have a 'good' life. I did have a good life, my adoptive parents and adoptive sister loved me, we had a nice home, nice things, went on great camping trips for holidays that created great memories. Honest! It was all great! Okay, that might be a bit facetious, not totally, but a bit.

What about those huge temper tantrums that I would throw? That wasn't so great for any of us. Not for my parents or sister, and not that much fun for me either. I mean what little kid wants to have that much going on inside of them that they have to act/behave that way? What does it mean for a little kid to be that angry and that sad and that out of control that they yell and scream and act out? Could it mean that that little kid was missing something...or someone? How would she know? How would the adoptive parents know? Did the psychologist she was taken to when she was around seven know that she was adopted and that it might matter, or have some impact that caused this acting out?

Is there blame or shame going on here? Does it need to be reframed?

I do think that there was shame going on. I do remember hearing those words, "Shame on you!" quite often. I mean really, how embarrassing when your little kid is acting out in public. How embarrassing when your little kid says to you in the

department store toy department "Don't treat your little girl this way" when it was time to go home, and

she wasn't quite ready to leave the toy department. So of course it's embarrassing for the parent and the child is obviously wrong... so *shame on you*. I remember clearly hearing that A LOT!

Was the shame all on me? Or was my adoptive mum feeling some shame as well because she had to adopt, she wasn't able to have her own child? I'm sure she was. Why was that shame there for her? Ahh ~ society, how sad and awkward that this couple couldn't have a child of their own, they had to adopt, and really, how do you know what kind of child you are going to get?

Shame and blame needing to be reframed!

Amazingly enough I grew to be an okay person. I graduated from high school and became a part of the retail workforce. I married, had two kids and then returned to work. All good!

Over the years my family of origin was thought about, who were they, how were they. Had they thought about me...did my mother think about me on my birthday? Had

she held me? I wanted her to know how 'grateful' I was that she had let me go.

No blame or shame needing to be reframed.

The reunion wasn't as I had dreamed it would be. It started with a brother. Turns out there had been two of us she had placed for adoption. Interesting! Yes, to be honest, a bit of blame, and a bit of shame that she had placed two children for adoption. However I discovered that I *had* a brother. How cool!

I have not failed seven hundred times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those seven hundred ways will not work. When I have eliminated all the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work.

Thomas A. Edison

When I searched and found my mother and I heard her name for the first time, that's when she became real. Then I was told she denied that she was my mother. Once again I felt shamed at being denied: who was I? Where did I come from? Why was she denying that she was my mother? Blame: I blamed her for her denial, how could she deny her own child?

Someone asked "Have you forgiven her?" I won't ever forget that question, despite her denial of me, of us (my brother and I) I thought, what an odd question. Forgiven her? What would I forgive her for? She'd done nothing wrong.

Was I reframing shame and blame? No. I hadn't blamed her for not keeping me, I always knew that she did the best she could do with what she had. I always knew that. But now, when she was denying, oh yes, I was blaming her for not allowing me to be her daughter who I clearly knew I was (and I knew that **she** clearly knew that too.)

I reframed the blame with a lot of work and very positive support and help. The support group in New Westminster with Nancy Kato was my in-person,

hands-on support. The mums who attend that group gave a face to the pain that my mother had experienced and was still experiencing in meeting me after all those years. The book by Anne Petrie, "Gone to an Aunt's" sealed the deal for me. I was learning to *reframe* the blame. Joe Soll, bless him, gently guided me. And Heather Carlini shared her thoughts on giving my Mum permission to be my Mum.

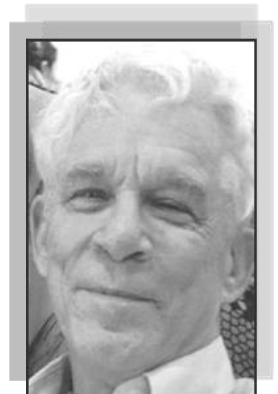
The shame of being a bad little kid was resolved when, after so many years of not saying anything, I told my sister that it hurt me whenever she told those stories about how horrendous I was as a child. My sister felt bad and apologized. I didn't say it to make her feel bad; I shared my feelings with her so that the stories wouldn't continue anymore. She had no idea how much they had hurt me. How could she if I didn't tell her?

Can we reframe blame and shame? I think so. It takes work, and I believe we are worth it.

~ Marnie

## Blame Game

by Joe Soll 조 살, LCSW,  
Psychotherapist & Author



I hear that there is a whole lot of blaming going on.

- We adoptees blame our moms for not keeping us.
- Our moms blame us for not understanding what they went through.
- We blame our moms for being difficult to deal with.
- Our moms blame us adoptees for being difficult to deal with.
- Our moms blame themselves for not keeping us.
- We blame ourselves for screwing up our relationships.

Does blaming really fix anything?

Most of US are used to being blamed.

Our moms were blamed and shamed when they got pregnant. Since children always blame themselves for what happens to them, we adoptees have a seven year old Inner Child who blames herself for not being kept.

Those who are used to being blamed usually do two things. They keep blaming themselves and they are quick to blame others.

We need to remember that we are all trauma victims. The word victim means 'not responsible' so we need

to stop blaming each other. (There is a wonderful little book called "Blaming the Victim" that you might wish to read.)

We need to have empathy for each other instead of animosity.

We are not responsible for the problems we have from our trauma, resulting in our PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We are responsible for working on our problems but that takes time and we need to allow for the fact that some of us can face our pain quicker than others. And remember that trauma is not negotiable

Our moms often have an Inner Child who is very angry at her lost child for being the way she is. We adoptees ALWAYS have a 7 year old Inner Child who is angry at not being kept.

If we have an angry Inner Child, then we look at the world through anger colored glasses and our adult self will NEVER be able to be objective about the person she lost through adoption.

Therefore moms need to help their inner child understand that it is not her lost child's fault that she is the way she is and that it's okay to be angry but it's not fair to blame her lost child.

And we adoptees need to help our child understand that it is not our moms' fault that she couldn't keep us, that it's okay to be angry but it's not fair to blame mom.

When we can help our inner children understand all this and stop blaming the person we lost, stop being angry at the person we lost, have total empathy for the person we lost - a victim just like us - we will stop looking through anger colored glasses.

We must remember that just because WE are ready to face our pain, it does not mean that our mother or child is ready.

The fact that they do not call or write or answer our attempts at communication does not mean they don't care. It is not rude or disrespectful, it is a sign of their terror of facing the pain of losing you. Terror is not negotiable and we must respect their terror.

Try to remember the you who existed before you started to face your pain. Think about why you didn't do it sooner. Do you remember your terror?

One of my favorite professors said that what each of us does is exactly on time for us. Our mother or child is doing it exactly on time for them. We must not blame them for being on their own schedule. They have no way to change it. Be patient with them and yourself and do not blame them or yourself

I think there is often one more hidden dynamic. If we can keep blaming the other person, making them BAD, then we devalue them and therefore the loss is not such a big deal. On a conscious level this may work but unconsciously it doesn't diminish our pain at all.

One of the things we must do as part of our campaign to stop blaming is to grieve what we lost. To have a good relationship with anyone, we have to take care of our relationship with our inner self first and then when we do enough grieving for what we lost, we can start to have good relationships with the people we lost.

In the words of John F Kennedy, *"Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future."*

When we do that, we can stop the blame game, take care of ourselves and be a lot happier.

Namasté

~ Joe

Free yourself from the need to blame others. There are two reasons that you are where you are right now; action or inaction. ~ Steve Maraboli

# FORGET ME NOT FAMILY SOCIETY AGM

## PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

by Marnie Tetz

Presented 25th April, 2013

Another year has come and gone. Since the AGM in May of 2012 your Board has met on an almost monthly basis to discuss what we need to do for our members of the Forget Me Not Family Society. Many thanks go to our members who support the Board as we continue to facilitate our support groups and publish the amazing Adoption Circles newsletter. The Board has continued to work on offering our annual fall workshop and at least one other event that allows our members to learn, share and socialize.

As always the Board of the Forget Me Not Family Society (the Society) have been working hard and even harder now that we are four. Our membership is amazing and very important to us. We appreciate your ongoing support in renewing your memberships. It's that membership money and donations that keep us going. Through our newsletter, Adoption Circles, we are learning what you our members want to talk about. Please, if there is a topic that you would like to see us focus on in the AC, let Bernadette know!

At our last AGM we bid farewell to three valuable members of our Executive and Board. Due to personal reasons Audrey Harrington our VP, Gloria Sweder our Secretary and Board member Heather Albrecht left us. They didn't go too far though. Audrey continues on as our Continuing Education Chairperson ...and also manned the registration table at our Fall Workshop presented by Brian Stanton. Audrey also did a great job as group leader during the afternoon portion of the workshop (their presentation provoked much thought!). Gloria helped with the transition of the membership list and continues to maintain the stock of T-shirts and pins for sale. As well, Gloria once again put together the great goodie bags we have all come to look forward to for the workshop, and we hope she will continue...yes Glo, that's a hint! Heather has continued on as our Archivist, and we are looking forward to seeing her handiwork in October. At the 2012 AGM we watched

the movie "Mother and Child" starring Annette Benning which was followed by a discussion lead by Bernadette. Although a small group was in attendance it was a very diverse one. We welcomed new members Sol and Shanti from Australia (Please refer to issue 62 of the newsletter to read Sol's story). We also welcomed member Bonnie from Ontario who was passing through after a trip to Hawaii.

In April 2012 Audrey and I attended the American Adoption Congress's "Mile High Expectations" Conference in Denver, Colorado. We were both excited, overwhelmed and very thankful to have had the opportunity to attend such an amazing event where we were able to breakfast with Nancy Verrier, learn from a legislative panel what is being done in some US states to work towards opening records, and view Ann Fessler's documentary "A Girl Like Her".

In September we held "An Afternoon with Shari Ulrich." Shari is a reunited mother who shared her story of loss and reunion with us in a very intimate setting. We gathered in the Owner's Lounge of Amy's condo building as if we were old friends. Shari was amazingly open with her story and welcomed questions and listened with interest as the participants shared their stories of adoption loss and reunion.

There wasn't a dry eye as she sang in her crystal clear voice "By the Grace of Goodbye". We all went home feeling like we really are a part of a wonderful warm and caring family...the Forget Me Not Family Society!

In October Amy, Gail and Nancy had a booth at the "Finding your Roots" seminar held at the Family History Centre in Surrey. T-shirts, pins and newsletters were available for sale to those who stopped by the booth to check out who and what the Society is. Nancy held a workshop titled "Family Tree or Family Stump...The Adoption Perspective." We hope that the trio will return again in 2013 for the event.



We are also pleased to have a librarian for the Society's lending library. Margaret Ferguson has volunteered to take this job on. She has the "library", and we now need to let the membership know what books we have and the procedure to borrow one. Thanks Margaret!

Our Fall Workshop "Releasing our Voices" was held in November this year... and unfortunately wasn't as well attended as we had anticipated. However...those that chose to spend the weekend workshop with Brian Stanton were not disappointed! Brian joined us for dinner on Friday evening, and then Saturday morning enchanted us as he presented his one man play BLANK. Brian shares his innermost thoughts and feelings by playing many characters, from his adoptive mother to an acting teacher, and many in between...some made us laugh, and some made us cry....mostly he made us think. Good thing, because we had to do a lot of thinking for the afternoon session. For those of you who attended you know what fun the afternoon turned out to be, once our butterflies settled down and we realized that our interactive portion of the day was actually a chance to do what the title suggested "Release our Voices"! A new structure for our fall workshop was in place, making it interactive. We weren't just sitting and listening, we were a part of it. Again a new venue was tried, and even though we aren't using the same hotel this year, the Richmond location seems to be working.

Without further ado I am now getting to the part of my message that I like the best: honouring the Board, the amazing women that I have been able to work with this year.

Where do I begin? And I hope that I don't cry this year! I know! How about if I go in alphabetical order? Amy... Like last year, Bernadette and I... we are so grateful to you for your work on the newsletter. This year you really seem to have found your stride with the layout, you have a keen eye for spacing, fonts and other details. We also appreciate that you have offered the use of your Owner's lounge for several events in the past, most recently the Afternoon with Shari Ulrich and the AGM tonight. You really are the hostess with the mostest, making sure that we are settled and that there's coffee, tea and goodies. Thank you! And, since our Board meetings are now done via telephone, we appreciate that you look after the 'techie' side of things...Gail and I are so glad to not

have to make the drive to meetings as we aren't getting any younger!

Bernadette! You continue to inspire me with the newsletter...the AC. Your dedication to choosing topics that make us think, that make us go to our core, and then share what we find has brought the AC to a whole new level. Your warmth that you share in your editorials makes our readers want to open up and write what is inside...their story. I know those who attend the Cloverdale group appreciate the regular dinner get together prior to the meeting. When I send out the reminder about the support group, it never fails that I get an email asking...."What about dinner?" As well, your support at the meetings means so much to me...as it does to those in attendance. We are family!

Gail As I have said in the past, has been with the Society since before it was the Society. Looking back at my message from last year and the year before, apparently I am a broken record with this one! Gail, you are our history...and as long as I have a say, you aren't going ANYWHERE! You are an absolute delight to work with! As I type this, I can hear your laugh and see your smile! I can feel your gentle way. Thank you for stepping up and taking on another 'hat' with the Society... you have gone full circle and are once again the Secretary/Treasurer. You do such a great job of keeping our finances in order... and we both know that I will continue to ask you the same questions forever! It's good that you are the Treasurer and I'm 'only' the President! (at least at this typing I am!) Not to mention you do a pretty dang good job on the minutes!

So, to each of you on the Board, THANK YOU! For all that you do, and all that you have done...and all that you will continue to do. Because of your efforts it appears that workshops just happen, newsletters are produced and magically appear in mailboxes and support groups are a given. I however know the real scoop! It's because of you that it all happens! Like magic... like Santa and the Easter Bunny! Along with our volunteer elves...and you know who you are!

To our members who are here tonight, a huge thank you for your support...because you continue to renew your memberships and attend our workshops and support groups, and share your thoughts in the newsletter...we are Family!

~ Marnie Tetz

# News from Around the World

It's about time!



## **Oregon to allow first mothers easier access to child's adoption records.**

From "[Birth Mother] First Mother Forum"

Posted Tuesday, June 18, 2013

by Jane Edwards

Mothers of children they relinquished for adoption will have an easier time learning their lost child's new name and the names of his adoptive parents after January of next year, representing a sea change in attitudes toward birth mothers. This law, signed by Gov. John Kitzhaber earlier this month, requires a judge to allow access to much of the court records of their children's adoptions unless there's a good reason not to. This is a switch from current law, where judges deny access unless they find a compelling reason for it. This will be the first time in the country where the legal presumption favors a birth mother's access to the information, rather than deny it.

The new law, SB 623, also allows Oregon adoptees 18 and over to access their court adoption files--except the home study of the adoptive parents--just by going to the courthouse and asking for them. No court order will be required. Additionally the new law allows adoptive parents to access all their child's court adoption records without a court order.

### **YOUR REASON FOR WANTING TO KNOW YOUR CHILD, MADAM?**

As it stands now, a judge has a great deal of leeway to decide what is a good reason to release court information to the mother, who must go before a judge and state her reasons. However, as the law does not state what a good reason is, one judge might consider a mother's reason to be a good reason, while another judge given the same reason might deny the request. Simply wanting to know her child's name so she can find him and tell him she loves him and thinks about him every day is not a good reason. If it were, a great many files would already have been opened.

The new law says that once her child turns 18, mothers may file a motion to see her child's file and...

*For the rest of the story see <http://networkedblogs.com/Mjntk>*

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## LEAN ON ME

Telephone/E-mail Support List



### **Reunited Adoptees:**

Cecelia Reekie (cecelia\_r@telus.net) (604) 857-2125  
Betty Anderson (bettboop@telus.net) (604) 531-4074  
Dan Carson (604) 557-0230  
(ariete\_132@hotmail.com)

Marnie Tetz (604) 535-4434  
(marnietetz@shaw.ca)

Kimberley-Ann Jandl – Abbotsford, BC (604) 852-9663  
(kajandl@yahoo.ca)

Judy Lanyon- Courtenay, BC (250) 338-2429  
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Leanne Neighbour – Kamloops, BC (250) 374-0990  
(neighbourhoodz@shaw.ca)

Lynn Carrier- Edmonton, AB (780) 455-8528  
(carrierlynn@hotmail.com)

### **Reunited with Siblings:**

Michael Hodgson (778) 395-0206  
(tiggerboots@shaw.ca)

### **Reunited Birth Parents:**

Nancy Kato (katosan@telus.net) (604) 777-2920  
Susan Wiesendahl (604) 275-3243  
(susanwiesendahl@yahoo.ca)

Alice McKinnon – Chilliwack, BC (604) 858-9970  
(chkekrry@shaw.ca)

John Post - Castlegar, BC (250) 365-5991  
Diane Herbert – Abbotsford, BC (604) 870-1821  
(dalendi@shaw.ca)

Bernadette Rymer - Ashcroft, BC (250) 453-2360  
(bjrymer@telus.net)

Kathy Chambers (604) 541-6267  
(chattycats@telus.net)

### **Searching Step-Adoptee:**

Edith Archibald (604) 583-7792  
(earchibald@shaw.ca)

### **Interested Professionals:**

Judy Archer, MSW, RSW, (250) 758-1275  
Counselor and Consultant in Adoption  
(judyarcher@shaw.ca)

Lee Crawford, M.Ed. R.C.C. (604) 875-9957  
(leecrawford@shaw.ca)

John Thomas - Quesnel, BC (250) 992-5688

Christine M. Gatzke, M.Ed., CPAC/ARC  
Psychotherapist (306) 352-4069  
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J. Amy Newman, Newman Research Services

Genealogist/People Finder, Burnaby, BC  
(info@nrsfind.com) 1-877-521-3463 (604) 521-3463

### **Genetic Attraction:**

Anne Tasko, M.A. R.C.C. (250) 721-5995  
(anntasko@shaw.ca)

This is a peer support service.

Please contact our office if you wish to be included in the  
LEAN ON ME Support List.

## Forget Me Not Family Society

### Support Groups



The FMNFS holds three support groups a month, for adoptees, birth/natural/first parents, adoptive parents and those in a supportive role:

**Cloverdale, B.C.** meets the first Thursday of each month.

September through June from 6:30 - 8:30 pm.

Cloverdale Public Library 2nd floor

5642-176 A Street, Cloverdale, B.C.

Contact Marnie Tetz (marnietetz@shaw.ca) or 604-535-4434.

**New Westminster, B.C.** meets the second Tuesday of each month year-round from 7 - 9 pm. New Westminster Public Library 2nd floor, 716 - 6th Ave, New Westminster, B.C.

Contact Nancy Kato (katosan@telus.net) or 604-777-2920.

**Kamloops, B.C. Interior Support Group** meets once a month (days and times vary). For information please contact Bernadette Rymer at (bjrymer@telus.net) or 1-250-453-2360.

### Other Support Groups

**Vancouver, BC: The Adoptees Association** holds a discussion group for adopted adults the third Tuesday of each month starting at 7 pm at the Rhizome Cafe, 317 East Broadway (near Main Street). Please contact Catherine at (katiesue@shaw.ca) or visit [www.adopteesassociation.ca](http://www.adopteesassociation.ca) for more information.

Please note that the "Other Support Groups" do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of FMNFS. They are listed above for your information only.

## Adoption Circles is Your Newsletter ~ Your Voice!

Our quarterly newsletter is created and produced by volunteers. We love this work and are excited to bring you informative and healing articles to support you in your journey. We sincerely appreciate each and every contribution and we encourage you to share your thoughts and reflections on the topics. Tell us your story. Editorial support is available. Send to <bjrymer@telus.net> or by mail c/o the Society.

| Issue       | Topic                | Submission Deadline | Distribution |
|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Summer 2013 | Dealing With Anger   | September 15        | September 30 |
| Fall 2013   | Write From the Heart | November 30         | December 21  |

### ~~~~~ Have you renewed your MEMBERSHIP?



Membership to the **Forget Me Not Family Society** includes:

- ✓ Subscription to **Adoption Circles**, a quarterly publication
- ✓ Reduction in workshop fees
- ✓ Information on books and support groups

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Province/State \_\_\_\_\_

Postal/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership \$30.00/year  
Couples Membership \$50.00/year  
International Membership \$50.00/year  
Corporate Membership \$65.00/year

Please send cheque payable to the  
Forget Me Not Family Society  
#102-1860 Southmere Cres. E.,  
Surrey, BC V4A 6Y7

Residents of the U.S. please send  
U.S. funds

Birth Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Adoptee \_\_\_\_\_ Adoptive Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Sibling \_\_\_\_\_ Reunited \_\_\_\_\_

Prospective Adoptive Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Adoption Professional \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Change of Address \_\_\_\_\_