It was 1977 I was only 15 years old, a child myself when I let them take my son away. I was not sure, not capable and certainly not in command of the situation, I had experienced the pain of birth both physically and mentally in a naïve and cruel way, two months before the due date. I had no pre natal class, no idea or understanding of what to expect or what was to happen when I went into labour. My memory of this experience is rather minimal, surrendering to a situation I was never to have control of. I never saw my child after child birth and I am not sure how long I remained in hospital for, I remember not getting out of bed for some time and feeling extremely isolated, ashamed and lonely after this ordeal. I do not remember signing consent forms, whether this was prior to birth or at the hospital in Brisbane. I shared a ward with other women who were to experience the joy of birth, happy moments with loved ones rather than a loss alone, I did not at the time understand.

I was told to forget the past and get on with my life, time would heal all wounds and the door was closed.

Initially I did try to forget and get on with my life. I returned to school to complete my senior year after my "cyst" had been removed. I had no interest on my return to school to listen, learn and develop to further my education and continue studying towards a successful career as I had no confidence or belief at this stage that I had a future. My high school friends were unaware of what had occurred and I disassociated from all by the end of the year, it felt an easier and safer option for me to spend my time alone exercising.

During my twenties I went from the extremities of intense exercise to intense night clubbing and found I could surround myself with many friends, enjoy many happy experiences and forget any pain. As these friendships and relationships developed situations changed, sharing the joy of my friends marriages and family was a wonderful time. I never thought I would be worthy of such an experience due to my own lack of confidence, ability to bond or even show trust in a relationship. I had become ashamed of my past and felt I had betrayed so many friends and lost trust in my family due to my teenage birth. I often avoided sharing, displaying interest, joy, or even empathy to many of my closest friends during their many discussions on conception, pre and post natal child birth. I shared the excitement of the news of new born babies with my closest of friends but frequently made many excuses when invited to visit. It seemed easier, and still does to this day, to avoid hospital maternity ward visits, new born home visits, as I fear too many painful memories would arise. I tend to distance myself frequently from friends as they enjoy their newborns children, not through jealousy, but to avoid my own pain.

I remember the advertising of Mothers Day on television would leave me drained, sobbing and questioning my ability to ever have the nurturing relationship, shown through advertising, to care and raise my own child. My son's birthday, one week before my own, would bring the memories and pain back leaving me feeling alone, rejected and unsure what my true values in life were. After 20 years I had spoken to no one of his birth, I chose to keep my thoughts and loss to myself fearing critism and negative judgement that my friends may have of me, I always assumed it would not be a positive experience.

It was in 1997 after too many painful reoccurring experiences alone I decided to try and seek help and intervention through Jigsaw Adoption Services in Brisbane. The search and counselling sessions began and fortunately after anxious 3 months, contact was made and we met for the first time. I did find this to be truly positive and enlightening experience, after so many years of self torment as I wanted my son to know the reason behind his adoption and that he had never been forgotton. It was through Jigsaw that I was to learn of sedation practices used during adoption practices, I had always believed I had been given medication to prevent lactating (it was obvious this was not the case).

Sleep deprivation is reoccurring, and has been since I can remember. It is not through waking after realistic or unrealistic dreams or nightmares, I often sleep for a couple of hours then wake suddenly, unable to return to a deep sleep. During this time I tend to analyse past and present day occurrences. I seek advice and try different methods to help with my sleeping disorder.

It is an enormous task and extremely difficult to constantly bring up my experience of adoption as I have strived to fit into what I believe is main stream society. I am fearful of being sidelined once more and I am always fearful of risking further suffering to not just myself but those I love. I never went on to have any more children and still prefer times of social isolation. I go to great lengths to express joy, care and support to friends and associates people to avoid my own pain.

I share a loss so many other women have experienced and one which will always be so difficult to understand or explain.