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Reunion Relationships

- EMBRACE the inevitable.
- Everyone in an adoption triad is connected for life, regardless of whether there is contact.
- Reunion relationships, by their very nature, are emotional, captivating, and dramatic.
- An adoption reunion is a continuation of a previous relationship.
- Fantasy meets reality in reunions. Sometimes the person you searched for is not who you find.
- Regression happens in reunions. Prepare to be thrown back to the past.
- Reunion relationships affect more than the triad.
- PACE yourself.
- Enjoy the honeymoon. It's short and sweet.
- A more authentic relationship develops after the initial stages of reunion.
- Genetic Sexual Attraction (GSA) exists. Keep smart boundaries.
- Respect each person's pace. Especially if it is different than your own.
- Expect unevenness – silence, retreating, bursts of connecting.
- No one likes to be pushed, pulled, prodded, or blamed.
- Listen. Ask. Acknowledge. Accept.
- You can't make someone love, respect, or call you. But you are free to love who you choose.
- COMMUNICATE with confidence.
- Have conversations, not confrontations.
- Notice what people do, not what they say.
- Discuss needs, expectations and desires for the reunion. Re-visit as often as necessary.
- Establish avenues of communication – phone, email, letters, visits, facebook, etc.
- When in doubt, tell the truth, using "I" statements.
- Don't be afraid to apologize or forgive.
- "I'm sorry for anything I have done that may have hurt you."
- SELF-CARE
- Not everyone will understand your reunion relationships. And that's OK.
- Find the support you need in adoption support groups, internet, conferences, books, etc.
- Live fully, in the present, with kindness in your heart – for yourself and others.

Marlou Russell, Ph.D. is a psychologist specializing in adoption issues, an adoptee in reunion, and the author of ***Adoption Wisdom: A Guide to the Issues and Feelings of Adoption.***
Visit Dr. Russell's website www.marlourussellphd.com for more information.