

Finding out who you are is one of the most challenging events in a person's life - but also one of the most important.

One of the most unique things about me is that I am adopted. I was adopted seven days after I turned seven years old. It was one of the most important days of my life. Life-changing in so many ways, I wouldn't change it for the world. However, for many years of my life I wasn't sure what to make of being adopted.

People would make fun of me being adopted by saying that I was unwanted. For a harder part of my life, I even thought this myself. I knew who my biological parents were and I can clearly remember what life used to be like for me. It wasn't good at all. I am glad to have come out of it. But that didn't do anything to help me figure out who I was.

To add to this confusing mix, I also happen to be biracial. The problem is that my biological parents didn't share a lot of information with anyone on what their actual ethnicities are. My mom now doesn't know, and neither do my older siblings. This has actually caused more problems than I thought it ever could in my life. I never knew that my race could be such a big part of my story. A few times I was treated wrong because of my race, but that for the most part, this was not the biggest problem. The most prominent part of it for me was not knowing who I belonged to.

What I mean by this is that white people would say that I wasn't white enough to be white, and black people would say that I wasn't black enough to be black. Even when my mom asks me who I identify with, I don't know what to say. I didn't know if I was white or if I was black.

Throughout elementary, middle, and even now in high

school, I would be teased because of my race. I went to a formerly all-white school that still regulated what other ethnicities they allowed in. I never realized how bad this was for me. Throughout the years, but last year especially, I was called a “cracker-monkey,” something that would make me very upset. I would laugh it off, like it wasn’t a big deal, but on the inside every word, every jab, and every cruel comment hit me like a bullet.

This year many kids have made fun of the way I talk saying that I am “trying to be black.” These are people whose opinions shouldn’t matter to me. I don’t know them, and they don’t know me.

Them saying I was trying to act black was something that I really had to wrestle with. When I spoke before I never aimed to sound like a certain race, I was just talking like me. This made me start to overanalyze everything I said. Did I sound too black? Too white? It was exhausting. I spent too much time contemplating how to be a me who other people would like that I forgot who I really was.

I may not be black or white but I am still both of those things. I may have been given up and am adopted but that doesn’t mean I am unloved. I have had some hard experiences but I have come out of them. I am a girl who is smart, determined, loved, caring, driven, amazing, weird, biracial, adopted, and everything else that makes me me.

Recently I have started to realize this and am starting to build up my confidence back up. I might not fit the picture of someone else's version of who I should be but that is okay because I know who I am.

I am exactly who I was meant to be.