

My life is an unsolved mystery. As a child, I became aware of a huge concept that is a part of my everyday life. This concept was the reason why I didn't look like my parents or my family for that matter, why my passport states that I was born in Colombia and why I am now an 18 year old Colombian girl living in Princeton Junction, New Jersey. I was adopted. For much of my childhood, starting around age 4, my parents had bombarded me with information about being adopted. My bookshelf was filled with picture books about adoption and they always asked me if I had any questions about my birth parents, Colombia or the orphanage I stayed in.

The truth is that I have always accepted the fact that I was adopted from an orphanage called FANA when I was only three months old. For some children, adoption is difficult to understand but for me, it had always been something I was proud of because it made me unique. I remember one day back in kindergarten when my mom came to pick me up, a boy ran up to me and said, "Is that your mom?" I immediately replied, yes. He looked confused and said, "oh" before he turned and walked away. No matter how many times my classmates approached me with that question or one similar such as, "why don't you look like your parents?" it never affected me because I loved explaining to people that I was adopted, even if they didn't understand.

As I grew older, I would imagine how my life would have been if I wasn't adopted and I admit from time to time I still do this. Although I have only seen pictures of Bogota Colombia and have never been there, I imagined myself living near a coffee plantation with a beautiful view of the tall mountains. I would be a student and I would speak fluent Spanish. This was as far as I could picture my life if

I were living in Colombia because the thought was just far too peculiar. I mean my name wouldn't be Jennifer Slavin, I wouldn't have the amazing family and friends that I have, I wouldn't have had the experience of going to sleep away camp or playing the sports that I love, I wouldn't have the chance to graduate with a great group of girls or have gotten the chance to attend Temple University in the fall of 2010. The list goes on and it will continue to get longer as my life moves onward. I just can't imagine being anywhere else or not living the life that I am living right now. Basically, I am thankful for being adopted because I would have missed out on so many great experiences that have helped me to grow. Although my family can be crazy at times, the unlimited love and support that they provide to me has helped me realize that just because I am not related to them by blood, doesn't mean anything.

My parents have always been the closest people to me because they have taught me so many important things in life. They are the reason why I have such a positive outlook on life and why I am so ambitious with everything that I do. My dad has always told me that I could do anything I set my mind to and I have never doubted him. I have never let the concept of adoption come between my family and I because I am so appreciative of how far I have gotten in life all because of my parents. This is not to say that I have forgotten the importance of coming from Colombia and having a birthmother because that is still a huge part of my life that will never change. Within the next couple of year I plan to travel with my family to Bogota Colombia and try and find my birthmother, which might be more of an emotional event than it seems to be in my mind. If I do get a chance to meet her, I

would be ecstatic and even if I didn't get the chance, I'd still be grateful for the fact that she did the right thing for her and myself by putting me up for adoption. I enjoy a part of my life being a mystery because I couldn't ask for a better family and I definitely wouldn't change a thing.