

30 Daily Activities for NAAM

A Self-Reflection Discussion Guide for Adoptees & Family

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Adoption can be an intimidating conversation, and rightfully so because it has to do with relationships and it's packed with meaning in ways that are sometimes unspeakable. This discussion guide is meant to help you speak it. Or taste. Or move. Or remember. To help you feel in ways you haven't thought about before or maybe haven't tapped into in a long time. Try one per day during adoption awareness month (or any month when it's convenient for you), and consider how it supports your identity exploration, your capacity for self reflection, content creation, and the overall sense of peace and confidence you feel about your adoption story. You might even leave with more questions than answers, which in many cases is a benefit as it means you've brought something inside of you out into the light. Thank you so much for inviting me into that process.

1. Write about an ending that happened in your life. One in which it seemed to serve you. And another in which it didn't feel as helpful.
2. Fold a piece of paper into thirds. Draw your "adoption" or your family's "adoption story" in three scenes.
3. Choose a prompt from the [Personal is Political](#) module of the Connected Conversation Series. What's a message, main point, lesson, or call to action that stuck out to you the most?
4. [Watch 100 people count to 100](#). What did you notice?
5. What's your relationship to adoption awareness month? And what compels you to participate this season?
6. Google the city in which you were born (or the city of your adopted child). What about it sticks out to you as you see it from your perspective today?

7. Light a scented candle, one that you prefer/enjoy, and write a one page letter to your birth mother (or to your child's birth mother). Tell her something you wish she could know about you. Save it, destroy it, send it, put it on hold until further notice... your choice.
8. Watch the [short clip on breathing](#). Practice for 2 minutes.
9. If possible and safe, take a casual walk around your block, no music or electronics, try the 4-7-8 technique from yesterday; take full breaths in through your nose slowly, hold it, and exhale through your mouth as if blowing out candles. As you walk, look around, notice who's there. Who's not. What do you hear? What else do you see? Any particular smells/aromas? If you walked near others, notice any tendencies to interact or avoid. When you return home, take note of how the walk went for you.
10. Remember a childhood treat or snack. If possible, recreate or purchase one, and as you enjoy it, text or email a family member and ask them what their favorite childhood treat was. Do you get the same answers? Different?
11. What does the word "identity" mean for you? And describe a pivot point in your life when yours either changed, shifted, or emerged in some way.
12. Describe what "friends" were like for you in high school. What do you remember most about them?
13. What traits do you think you inherited from your birth family?
14. What traits or characteristics do you think you learned from your adoptive family (e.g., rules, norms, traditions, preferences, etc.).
15. Imagine a newspaper headline "The Point of No Return." It's about you. What would the first paragraph say?
16. Take another walk around your neighborhood today. This time, with music of your choice. Try the same breathing and awareness techniques. Do you notice anything different with music compared with last time?

17. Find or create a metaphor that represents your adoption story (e.g., an acorn that grows into an oak once the barriers are removed, or a microphone because you've learned how to tell your story, etc.).
18. What's something your parents never let you do but you wish they did?
19. Describe a teacher or professor who had a significantly positive impact on you. What was it about them that really stays with you after all these years?
20. Have you ever had a falling out with a friend? What was that like? How would you describe the situation to a stranger? What was going on for you at the time? For them? How did this incident shape your relationship?
21. Who has been a mentor for you? How did you meet? What seems to set them apart that they would come to mind during this reflection prompt? What's a key lesson they taught you? Text or email, let them know in some way how they've made an impact in your story.
22. Did you attend college? If so, how did you choose that college? And if not, who or what influenced your decision?
23. Who, or what experience, inspired you to pursue the line of work you do today?
24. Was there a TV character or celebrity you wanted to be like as you were growing up? Do you see any themes in your life now that seem to echo that character? Or, how did / does your life perhaps unfold in a very different direction?
25. Talk about a time when your parents simply didn't get it. They misunderstood you in some way, maybe even despite their best intentions, they just really missed the mark. And then talk about what do you wish they did different?
26. When was the first time you connected with an adoptee community (in person or virtually), and what was it like, how would you describe that process?

27. Some people have a moment or a season in their life when they feel like they hit “rock bottom,” do you have one of those? How would you describe it privately in a journal to yourself? And how might you share it with another person if you had the chance? Lastly, describe what it was like to get through it (who helped, what was the process like, etc.).
28. Where do you feel the most comfortable, and why? What is it about that space, those people, that atmosphere, the situation, etc. What has it looked like to protect and access those spaces? What could it look like to explore interactions and relationships beyond them?
29. Recall a favorite song or album you had in high school, listen to a full track. As you listen, imagine your younger self writing a letter to you from the past, telling you her/his concerns, fears and doubts, disappointments, joys and celebrations, and hopes for the future. Log it in a journal or type it somewhere... after you finish writing, notice, what can you learn from your past self? And, what lesson do you wish you could reach back and share with them?
30. Make a statement about beginnings. Can you think of a time when something began in your life, and it significantly shaped the way you experience or contribute to the world around you today?

Bonus Questions

31. Make a sentence about your life, for each letter in the word ADOPTION.
32. What’s been the most permanent relationship in your life? When did it start? And how would you describe how it’s going today?
33. Create your own [Ecomap](#) to establish the supporters in your current life context (you also might notice your non-supporters). If you feel comfortable, take a picture and share with your family member(s). Notice any similarities or differences.
34. Notice your first reactions to hearing about the United States presidential election. If I was a fly on the wall, what would I see? How did you access the results/ coverage? Did anything surprise you? What do next steps look like for you and your family? What do you need and who do you need for support?

Cam Lee Small, author, clinician in private practice, and dynamic advocate for mental health and Adoption Literacy, brings lived experience and professional expertise to the forefront of his mission. His work has been featured by [TEDx Minneapolis](#), CBS Minnesota, [National Council for Adoption](#), [Christianity Today](#), University of [Minnesota](#) School of Social Work, and [Center for Adoption Support and Education](#).

Cam is both an alum and training facilitator for the cohort-based Permanency and Adoption Competency Certificate, which includes over 70 hours of continued education delivered through University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare - to increase the number of qualified permanency and adoption mental health and child welfare professionals across MN who are able to work in collaborative, cross-disciplinary, and multicultural contexts.

Cam's community-based vision for adoptee-informed advocacy is evident through his 1:1 counseling services, live workshops and support groups, Masterclass trainings, and his unique blend of content creation/collaboration across digital and grassroots platforms. His book **The Adoptee's Journey: From Loss and Trauma to Healing and Empowerment** addresses the intersection of adoption, mental health, and social responsibility. Cam's personal insight stands honestly next to his professional acumen, making him a transformative force within the adoptee community and throughout the fields of advocacy and mental health.

Additional Resources

[Cam's TEDx Talk on Adoption Literacy](#)

[Interview with CBS Minnesota](#)

Cam's Service Options

1. [Adoptee Career Workshop](#)
2. [Adoption Literacy & Wellbeing Summit for Adult Adoptees](#)
3. [Online Community for Teen Adoptees](#)
4. [Cam's Signature 12-Week Adoptive Parenting Consultation Group](#)
5. [Schedule Cam for Keynotes, Workshops, Trainings](#)
6. [Free General Resources & Discussion Guides](#)
7. [10 Facts About Adoptees](#)
8. [20 Ways Spouses Can Support Adoptees](#)

[Community Mental Health Resources](#)



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