

# Seattle Journal for Social Justice

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Volume 7 | Issue 2

Article 17

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May 2008

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### Recommended Citation

Smith, Rhonda (2008) "Reconnecting with My Dad," *Seattle Journal for Social Justice*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 2 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/sjsj/vol7/iss2/17>

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## Reconnecting With My Dad

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Rhonda Smith

When I first met my dad, I was shocked to see how much we looked alike. My mom always used to tell me how much I looked like him. I always used to think to myself, “Yeah, I don’t look like nobody but myself.” But sure enough, when I saw my dad, I saw we look almost alike. The only difference is that he has gray hair, and I am a female. He is dark skinned and short like me. When I first talked to him in person, I felt kind of shy, and then I had this feeling like I had already known him. It was a weird feeling but, then again, not a bad feeling.

My dad is a great guy! Sometimes, I think he is trying too hard though. He is stuck on the thought that I am a kid still. I love him to death because he is my dad, and if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t be here today. He is always talking to me about moving in with him. I really do not like hurting people’s feelings especially if I do not know them. So, when he asks me that, I always just say, “I don’t know.” Then he replies, “Just think about it.” He says he is going to get me everything I need and want so I would never have to leave the house. That comment kind of scares me because I am young, and I like to hang out with my friends and party and go to the club.

One of these days it’s going to hit him that he missed nineteen years of my life. Just because he wasn’t there doesn’t slow time down any. I need to step up and let him into my life. I am just scared. I hate being judged. It happens from day to day, but when family does it, it hurts a lot. I don’t like getting hurt. It has happened so much, you would think that it wouldn’t even matter. But it’s like the more people I let in, the more they hurt me, and the more and more it hurts me inside. I don’t want my dad to have to

suffer from all the other people's mistakes. He shouldn't have to. I should let the past go and let him in. That's way easier said than done, though.

I guess I'm not used to all this parent stuff. I mean, I've had many foster parents but it's not the same. I don't want to say they didn't care; they just had a different way of caring than I thought natural parents would have for their kids. Maybe I'm tripping, too, because I wasn't expecting him to be all involved, being there for me and stuff. My mom has never been involved with my life the way my dad is trying to be. I feel lucky because I'm my dad's only child, and he's always telling me that I'm the one that's going to turn his old lifestyle around. He says he's glad he has responsibilities in his life now and that nothing will ever tear us apart ever again.

I really don't know him too well. We have only seen each other a couple of times. I am glad he is in my life. I just wish he would step back sometimes, give me my space, and stop being all up in my business. The whole relationship with me and my dad is going to take some time. He's got things he needs to get used to and so do I. One of these days we will be close. I know we will.