The Open University

Exploring Psychology

Exploring Psychology: Twins 2

Narrator
Daphne, and her identical twin Barbara, were born in Britain and adopted into two different families. This is Daphne.

Daphne
Maybe I was about six weeks old when I was separated from my sister. I was adopted through a child agency and then I went to live in Luton. I was told, when I was eleven that I was adopted which I think, at that time, it was pretty good. Because children were told,…were never told. But I was told. And my grandma said 'You have a double' which I took to be a twin, an identical twin. When you're eleven you get things all muddled up in your head and I'd been doing piano lessons and my teacher was emigrating to Canada and she wouldn't recommend me to anybody else and my mother said to her 'Daphne's mother had gone somewhere' and I took it into my head it was Australia. Because a great aunt had gone to Australia and I thought 'She's gone to Australia. She's taken my twin with her. That's alright. I'm very happy as I am.'
Funnily enough, it was my father's second wife. He'd been married before. He'd got two older daughters, a lot older than I was. And I didn't discover until many, many years later. That he said to his wife that she could take one twin, or no twins. Evidently there were twins in the family that were terrors. So whether that put him off and he was about 26 years older than my mother. So I suppose being his second marriage, he was an older man, and couldn't face the prospect of having twins.

Narrator
After several failed attempts to contact Daphne, Barbara finally succeeded in tracking down her lost twin.

Daphne
Well I think we felt comfortable at meeting on sort of neutral ground. I was in Yorkshire. Barbara was in Ken and my husband had a trip to go to America. So we travelled down to London, and of course Barbara travelled up. And good old Kings Cross Station, that's where we met. I came down on an inter-city, which is a very, very long train. I opened the train door. I didn't have to look anywhere for Barbara. As I opened the door, she was standing on the platform, immediately in front of me. We just said 'Hi'. Walked down the station busy chattering to each other, forgot that our husbands didn't know each other. They hadn't even spoken on the phone to each other. We left them, humping all the cases off the train. And we went off nattering down the platform. It felt like meeting an old friend, that you hadn't met for a long, long time.

I think our sense of humour is one of the biggest things. I mean to say we can just look at each other, and laugh and know exactly what we're laughing about. I mean we'll read the same books. We knit the same things. We cook the same things. Personality wise - we don't always express our feelings, I don't think. We laugh at things, and possibly that's hiding something. I know it sound stupid. But we both think that we are quite shy people because we don't necessarily ask questions to people. We will wait until somebody asks us, and we will answer. But I think, a lot of the time, we are hiding things, when we laugh and you can get away with a lot by laughing.

Narrator
Do you think that the similarity, and the things that you've talked about, are things that often are similar between people anyway. Do you think that you've become more similar since you met up again?

Barbara
No. Not necessarily. I tell you for why. Because when we were at school I know my schooling was very, very poor. Never passed the 11 plus. Hated maths and I believe Daphne didn't like maths at all. I didn't mind art. I didn't like physical exercise. So even then, I think some of the things were very similar. I used to like reading and Daphne possibly had the better books than I did. But I still used to go to the library and get books. So I think sometimes even then although Daphne had a brother, I was on my own. But I was quite happy to be on my own. So I think possibly going back, some of the things could have been similar.