

Rachel's experience of finding a half-sibling – reprinted from the DCN Journal Spring 2010

I found out that I was donor-conceived in 2008 at the age of 25 whilst pregnant with my son, my first child. As soon as I found out I knew I wanted contact with my unknown biological family, for both my own sake and my son's. Research online quickly led me to the UK Donorlink website and I registered. I tried to accept that nothing might ever come of it but I couldn't help hoping. My son was born and life got very busy. However I often thought about my donor and the half-siblings who were almost certainly out there and what they might be like.

Then one morning in May 2009 I got the phone call. Donorlink had found my half-brother and did I want contact with him? Yes! The next day I got another call letting me know he wanted contact with me too. It was then that I learned his name was Nick and he had a daughter – I was an auntie! This was a big deal for me as I grew up an only child thinking that this was an experience I'd never have. Half an hour later Nick sent me an e-mail and we've been in almost daily contact ever since, mostly via e-mail and text. We chat about our day-to-day lives, our pasts, our hopes and plans for the future. I always believed that I would get on with my half-siblings because of our shared genetic inheritance – I was sure we would have enough in common to overcome any differences. When we were first put in touch I did worry a bit about whether or not Nick would like me but after corresponding with him for just a short while I realised we are similar in many ways. For example, we both like the arts and have absolutely no interest in sport! It helps that we are the same age – 27 (he's older by 6 months). We are, I believe, the youngest siblings matched by Donorlink so far.

Speaking to him on the phone for the first time, a few months later, was nerve-racking but exciting too, as was meeting for the first time not long after that. Nick came down to Leicester to see me and we went for a meal then for drinks. We look alike – we have the same eyes! – looking at him was fascinating. When he got on the train to go home and was at the window waving goodbye I could really see myself reflected in him.

It's not been all plain-sailing. We've still only met the one time partly due to lack of money but also partly due to wariness on Nick's part. I remain optimistic about my ability to get on and forge some kind of relationship with our donor and any half-siblings should we be able to trace them and they want contact with us, but, though wanting contact, Nick is more cautious, worried about

getting hurt and not entirely sure that they (and I) won't ultimately reject him. That said, we both feel a connection and I've no doubt we will be a part of each other's lives from here on. I'm very lucky to have found him.