

Hi I'm Sinitta my husband Andy and I adopted Magdalena and Zac in 2007 last year and they were nearly 2 - she was nearly 2 and he was nearly one.

Before we got married we always discussed having one natural child and adopt a child. We just always thought it was something nice to do. Even before we met each other we thought we would one day, so it was kind of already there and obviously with the complications that I was having carrying to full term, we naturally progressed to just adopting and ended up adopting two instead of one.

How did you find the process?

Its pretty intense in that obviously, even for me who is used to doing interviews for 25 years, but I think if you're someone who is not use to talking about your life other than to close friends and family you might find it intrusive Really it is once you understand that this is just for them to get as much information about you as possible, they are trying to find out who you are, where you're, from your likes, dislikes, interests so that they can properly match you with the child that they think you will be a suitable parent for.

So it is not that they are really looking for dark and awful things and some people can think its quite intimidating but I can tell you no one's had a past that's been as crazy and shakey as mine, in fact I was told because I've had all these adverse experiences that meant I was probably able to be a great parent because I knew how to cope with so much.

Once you had gone through the process and you said you were going to be matched with your children what was it like the first time you met them?

The first meeting is just unreal because we had actually sent the children little photo albums with pictures of my mother, his parents, ourselves and under my picture it said mummy and Andy's picture said daddy. They had been shown these books every day but when I first met Magdalena I discovered she'd actually been sleeping with her little photo album so when we arrived at the door she ran to her room and I thought 'uhh ohhh not good' she's running away not towards me!

But she was actually running to get her little book and she actually pointed out and said mama.

And it was just amazing. Of course at the time she didn't know I was to be her mother But it was probably just a name to her, but it was very hard not to pick her up and just squeeze her.

How has having the children changed your life?

I can say my life has completely changed in the best way. You know your life's not your own in the same way, but that was something that I really wanted - to change. You know I've been on my own for a long time so its lovely to have someone else to live for and do things with and they're great companions and they make me laugh everyday.

You know its tiring though. Imagine two toddlers racing about, so it is tiring but its incredibly rewarding. The best way I can describe it is like falling in love, actually

you fall more in love each day. You know they say “My husband I started off we couldn’t keep our hands off each other and now we’ve settled into something cosy” and you know I still cant keep my hands off the babies.

You’ve got a little girl and a little boy, do you find Zac a bit more challenging, do you think there is a difference?

It is really funny because I was a little bit worried. I’ve grown up with a single parent, just my mother and I - two women in the house. I have to say that Zac is just delicious even though Magdelana and I are probably more similar, we have things in common. She likes to put on my lipstick and things. He is the cuddliest sweetest little thing and I’m very proud to say a real mamas boy. He’s probably a bit more independent and I think that’s because he’s the youngest - even Magdalena babies him, even though there’s not much between them. He learns from her. He’s very smart. I was surprised because I thought I was going to be a ‘girls girl’ but I have to stop myself lavishing all the attention on him because he’s younger and he’s the boy. That’s what it is, he’s probably more confident, more straight forward about what he wants you know. He’ll come into a room and say “mama I want this” and he’ll reach for it, whereas she will try and persuade me to give her what she wants. Its very interesting, its almost as though the way we are as adults is how they are as babies.

Is there anything that has really surprised you?

The amazing thing is just watching them turn into people everyday. I suppose he was very little when we got him he wasn’t walking, he wasn’t talking. We used to sing him funny songs. “Will he ever walk? Will he ever talk?” Just watching them turn into these little people everyday, they say these little things and you’re like how did you know that and its just normal everyday stuff but you’re just fascinated by them all the time and I genuinely laugh everyday because they are always so funny as they are just discovering life

What would you say to people thinking about should I adopt can I adopt?

I think even if you’re thinking about it that you should pick up the phone and make an enquiry because what will happen just by that step is that they will send a social worker to talk to you about it more. So you can get more information. Then you’ll be invited to a four day training course which really deals with all your fears, all your worries, all your apprehensions and you may decide afterwards that its not for you or you’ll realise yep this is something I definitely want to do.

The good thing is that you would have already put the wheels in motion but not to make that sound worrying. Once you’ve done that, even once you’ve been through the home studying, the whole thing and been approved to adopt, you still have a three year period to decide together with your partner or social worker when the best time is to bring a child home. So you’re not going to suddenly have a child thrown at you if you’re not ready. So you have a lot of time.

I think its nice because you can sort of go through the process actually even the process itself you learn a lot about yourself as much as they are learning about you. You stop talking about things you did and understood in your past and realise how

you feel about those things now and they also teach you how to be a parent because you're learning about a lot of things in life from a child's perspective and I thought you know, what even if I had had a biological child I would have benefited from doing the home study and doing the training course.

So if somebody who listens to your interview and sees its National Adoption Week, what would you say to them would you say go for it?

Oh definitely go for it! You know all the little worries like 'will you bond with the child because its not your own child', I think we fall in love with people that are not our flesh and blood everyday. You know our closest friends, our lovers our husbands, wives.

And the best thing for me is after I lost biological twins in the surrogacy I always say to people that if God now said I'm going to give you those biological twins back and take away these two, I would say no thank you, because you know what they say - blood is thicker than water, but now I'm saying love is thicker than blood and you fall in love more and more everyday.