

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

TWINS™

**Special
28th Birthday
Issue!**

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**A Must-
Have List of
Everything
You Need
'Before' Babies
Come Home**

**Hidden Surprises of
Twin Birthday
Parties...**

**When Parents
Have a Favorite
Twin**

Coping with Noise

January/February 2012



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Featuring the very best Multiple Mom and Dad bloggers in the business

Raising Twins through Each Age & Stage



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Meet Harry and Rose, 3-year-old fraternal twins from New York City. They're two peas in a pod but as different as can be. Both love music, dancing and Nick Jr shows, especially The Fresh Beat Band. Harry loves sports, cooking, hip-hop dancing and trips to the Museum of Natural History with Grandma and Grandpa. Rose loves books, swings, playing in the ball pit at gym class, and trips to the petting zoo with Grandma and Grandpa. They're friendly, sweet, and put smiles on the faces of everyone who meets them!

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Cover Photo taken by **Heidi Green Photography**. Heidi Green, mother of our cover twins, is a well-known family and celebrity photographer specializing in kids' parties, special events, and unique family portraits. Visit her website at www.heidigreen.com

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Jam Versus Jelly. . .it's a choice!

by Christa D. Reed, Editor-in-Chief

The other day, as I was packing my youngest son's lunch with his favorite choice of sandwich, the beloved PB&J, I started thinking about something that I just couldn't get off my mind. While spreading some grape jam across his bread I started thinking about what the real differences between jam and jelly exactly were. I know it may not be one of the world's most pressing questions but still, have you ever stopped to think about the real differences between jam and jelly?

After doing a little research I was surprised to learn that jelly is merely an imitation of jam. Jelly is made strictly from the sugary juice of the fruit with additional additives and no real substance. Jam, on the other hand, contains both fruit juice and whole fruit cut into pieces or crushed and then preserved. Good jam has a soft even consistency, a bright color, a good fruit flavor and a semi-jellied texture that is easy to spread but has no free liquid. Jam is made with real bits of fruit where jelly is not. Jam is a preserved substance that gets better and better with time and jelly just turns into a runny liquid. Jam is the real thing and jelly is not.

As we begin our 28th year as the premiere publication for parenting twins/multiples, we are so proud of our magazine and website and everything we have accomplished over the years. In many ways we are like jam. . .providing information in our magazine that offers *even consistency, bright color, has good*

fruit flavor and is easy to spread. In other words, our magazine has helped thousands of families over the years tackle the most challenging parenting issues in the most consistent and 'real' way. We have published the most up-to-date research data and other important studies on raising twins; answered your tough parenting questions and we continue to provide real-life advice parents need when raising two, three or more children at one time. We believe that we do this in a way that not only educates our readers but also entertains parents needing respite from the day-to-day challenges they face.

We are the "real bits of fruit" you find versus a sticky imitation that is filled with additives and not made with anything real. So in many ways, TWINS™ Magazine is very much like jam because we have proven to be a consistent, full-flavored preserve that is filled with substance and just gets better and better with time. Therefore, when the question comes up jam versus jelly the answer seems very clear. . .jam is the real thing and jelly is not.

To celebrate our 28th birthday this year, we are excited to bring you this issue with our special section dedicated to twin birthdays. We have provided a ton of great tips and things to consider when planning their next birthday party and have included some hidden surprises and wonderful advice you won't want to miss. Our 28th year will bring some exciting and interesting topics for the magazine and we will continue to dedicate all of our content to specific twin-related issues.

Thank you to all of you for your continued loyalty and support for TWINS™ Magazine.

Christa D. Reed has been the Editor-in-Chief of TWINS™ Magazine since December 2007 and is also a professional Media/PR specialist. Christa lives in Colorado with her husband Aaron and four boys, including a set of fraternal twins.



Sincerely,

Christa D. Reed

Christa Reed

Editor-in-Chief



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Lee University Retires Jerseys for Twin Sister Soccer Standouts

The jerseys of former Lee University (Cleveland, TN) soccer standouts, Christiane Christensen (age 27) and her twin sister Linn were officially retired during the halftime ceremonies at the recent Lee University homecoming basketball game. They were leaders of two NAIA National Championship teams and both were NAIA Scholar Athletes. The twin sisters, from Oslo, Norway, were instrumen-



tal in Lee University's first two national championships.

Christiane was twice named the MVP of the National Championship and was the NAIA National Player of the Year. A talented forward, she was twice named the Tournament MVP of the NAIA National Championship as she led Lee to two straight national titles. In her two-year career, she was named First Team All American in 2008 and 2009, and the SSAC Player of the Year in 2008 and 2009 as well. After leading Lee to their second national championship in 2009 she would go on to be named the NAIA

National Player of the Year. In her career she would score 32 goals and add 23 assists. As talented as she was on the field, she was equally exceptional in the classroom graduating Summa Cum Laude with a degree in business and was named as an NSCAA Academic All-American in both the 2008 and 2009 seasons. Christensen's No. 27 has now officially been retired and is hanging alongside her twin sister's No. 28 in the rafters of Walker Arena.

Her twin sister, Linn Christensen was an exceptional defender for the Lady Flames during the 2008 and 2009 National Championship seasons. In her time as a part of Lee's team the defense would only concede 19 goals over the course of 50 games, and in 2009 allowed an incredibly miniscule number of just six goals in 24 games on the season. A talented defender,

Christensen was equally exceptional going forward recording eight goals and adding 17 assists in her career. For her efforts she was named to the NAIA All American First Team in 2008 and 2009, and was also named SSAC Defensive Player of the Year in 2008 and 2009. As talented as she was on the field, she was equally exceptional in the classroom graduating Summa Cum Laude with a degree in business and was named as an NSCAA Academic All-American in both the 2008 and 2009 seasons.

The twins are joined in this photo by Lee University Athletic Director Larry Carpenter (left) and women's soccer coach Matt Yelton. Photo by Mike Wesson ♥

The iconic game show "The Price is Right" is having a Twin's Special



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noon we're calling all sets of twins to 'Come On Down' to CBS TV City for a chance to win fabulous cash and prizes! You'll be bidding as a team on contestant's row, playing our pricing games and even spinning the wheel together! You must be over 18 and all other eligibility rules apply. So break out that matching wardrobe and print your free tickets now! ♥

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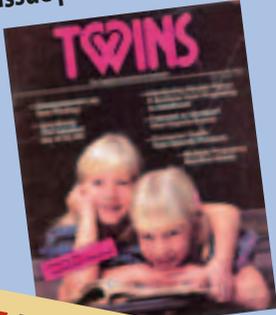
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TWINS Magazine Turns 28!

In honor of our 28th birthday, we wanted to test your TWINS Magazine trivia with these 5 fun facts about our history...

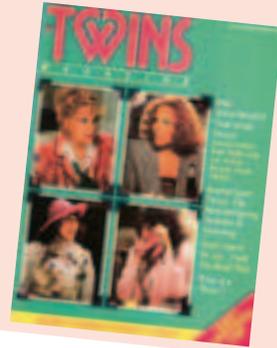
1 When was our very first issue published and where?



2 When did TWINS Magazine first launch our website?



3 Why was Lily Tomlin and Bette Midler featured on our cover in 1988?



5 What two famous TV sisters were on our cover in 1993?



4 What favorite 'Terminator' was on our cover in 1989 with 19-year-old Special Olympian twins?



1. Answer: Jun/Jul 1984 in Kansas City, Kansas

2. Answer: We first launched our website 16 years ago in 1996

3. Answer: They were promoting "The Year of the Twin" movie...

4. Answer: Arnold Swartzenegger

5. Answer: Mary Kate & Ashley Olsen while on the TV program Full House

Are Your Twins Identical?

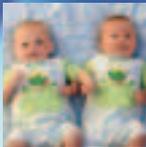
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TWIN ETIQUETTE 101:

5 DO'S and DON'TS WHEN APPROACHING TWINS

By Dr. Joan A. Friedman from *Emotionally Healthy Twins.com*

Whenever I speak to parents of twins, inevitably someone in the audience feels compelled to share his/her most recent story about the most annoying, hurtful, outrageous, unbelievable, or exasperating twin comment they have experienced. A resounding groan of empathic understanding and laughter resonates throughout the audience. So, in light of these cosmic occurrences, I have decided to create my own Emily Post "post" to help educate the uninitiated about how to approach twins and their parents with sensitivity, emotional intelligence, and tact. Feel free to print this page out and share it with all the people in your life that need this information!

TIP 1

DON'T ASK THE EXPECTABLE QUESTIONS (not in any expectable order)

- Who is older?
- Is she (he) the shy one?
- Who walked first?
- Were they natural or did you have IVF?
- Which one is your favorite?
- Why is the redheaded twin more talkative than her sister?
- Why are they fighting with each other?
- Are you sure they are identical?

Parents of twins do understand that these questions and inquiries are well-intentioned attempts (*most of the time*) to find a way to differentiate one twin from the other. Try the following approach and see what happens.

DO ASK

- What are their names?
- How shall I remember who is who?
- How are they different?
- What are their personalities like?
- What does each one like to do?
- What are their preferences?

Tell me about each of them. Make your own observations about each twin just as you would if there were one baby – and do it twice.

The goal is to help family, friends, and strangers focus on each twin's uniqueness and individuality. Approaching twins in

these ways helps parents mitigate their concerns about how much their children are being labeled and compared. They will sincerely appreciate your efforts to relate to their children as two separate people.

Don't make comparative or labeling statements in front of the twins themselves. Contrary to popular thought, even babies as young as toddlers understand these communications and take them to heart.

Parents whose twins look remarkably alike need to help outsiders identify each twin by dressing them in different colors, pointing out any distinguishing features, or styling different haircuts.

TIP 2

DON'T FEEL COMPELLED TO SHARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT RAISING TWINS

- How do you tell them apart?
- Double trouble, right?
- Glad it's you and not me...
- How do you do it?
- I have kids that are close in age, and it's the same as having twins.

DO REMARK:

You are doing an amazing job. I admire how you are able to manage two babies at the same time. They are lucky to have such a patient and loving mom/dad.

TIP 3

DON'T MAKE IDEALIZED STATEMENTS ABOUT BEING A TWIN:

- They must be best friends.
- They won't ever have to worry about being alone.
- They are each other's soul mate.
- They probably never fight.

It is a blessing on many levels to be a twin; however twins and their families are unduly influenced by our cultural fascination with twins. If twins grow up imbued with these sorts of twin myths, they may feel as if something is wrong with them if they don't feel this way about their twin relationship. Help your family and friends appreciate the twins' relationship rather than romanticize it.

DO REMARK:

IT'S WONDERFUL THAT THEY HAVE EACH OTHER AND LEAVE IT AT THAT. If you want to add a bit more, say something along the lines that as in any partnership, there are ups and downs.

TIP 4

DON'T CONFRONT A PARENT WHO IS ALONE WITH ONE OF THE TWINS BY ASKING

Where is his twin?

- How can you take out one and leave the other alone?
- Aren't you going to ruin the twinship?
- Isn't he miserable and sad without his twin?

DO REMARK:

It's great that you are giving each twin alone time. I imagine it takes a bit of creative juggling to make it happen. I admire you for making this a priority. It must be wonderful for you and each twin to have time alone together.

TIP 5

DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO THE TWINS FIRST IF THEY ARE WITH OTHER SIBLINGS

Don't judge the sibling's behavior as rude or impolite if he appears sullen or upset. Be empathic and understanding. Siblings of twins have it rough sometimes, and they deserve recognition and acknowledgment. Talk to them about the challenges of being a twin, such as having to share so many things and being compared so much of the time.

DO REMARK:

Ask the siblings their names, age, and preferences. Ask them about themselves, not about their relationship to the twins. If he/she seems does not feel like engaging with you, just acknowledge politely that he/she doesn't feel like talking. Then you can turn your attention to the parents and the twins. Keep this advice in mind. Parents of twins and the twins themselves will be forever grateful. ♥

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THE BLOG SPOT

Q&A



This year, **TWINS™ Magazine** is excited to launch a NEW column called “The Blog Spot” which will feature some of the very best Multiple MOM bloggers on the internet. We want to highlight all the wonderful things they present in their parenting blogs and share with you their inspiration. To kick off 2012 we want you to learn more about the blog written by one of our favorite contributors/writers Christina Baglivi Tinglof and her “**Blog About Twins**”...

Q What is the name of your blog and how did you come up with your concept?

The blog is called, “**Blog About Twins**” (<http://christinabaglivitinglof.com>). Not very original but I wanted it to be a complement to my website, “**Talk about Twins**”. While the website is informational, a go-to spot for finding out the facts on a variety of twin issues from pregnancy through the school years, my blog, on the other hand, focuses more on my opinions. It’s my voice on hot-topic subjects or just my experiences as a mom to teenage twins. My blog is more free-form, more conversational. My goal is to offer an alternative point of view on twin-related subjects. I want to make a point; I don’t want to just ramble. (*Please write to me if I do!*)

Q What has been the best thing about writing your blog?

I love expressing my opinion on a wide range of subjects. I’m never at a loss for words! (I am an Italian-American, after all!) It’s very cathartic. Unlike my website where I use an even hand and explore both sides to an issue, interviewing both experts and parents of twins, my blog is where I offer my personal view. I enjoy sharing my experiences with other moms of twins. When I read online twin forums, I find that so many new moms to twins are nervous, or lonely, or frustrated, or just in need of a few tips. I

enjoy sharing what has helped me through the tough times.

Q What is the downside for you about writing your blog?

I would say coming up with new, fresh, and interesting topics that my readers can relate to. Every time I write a post, I think, “That’s it! I’m out of ideas!” (Honestly, most writers feel that way.) But then something magical happens—I’ll hear something on the news or read an article in the newspaper that relates to raising twins, or my kids will say something so pertinent to the twin experience, that my ears pop up and I think, “That’s it! That’s my next blog post!” Then it’s a race to my computer before I forget the point that I want to share.

Q What was the topic that created the most buzz on your blog? Explain.

That’s easy. It was a post on why I dislike when parents dress their twins alike. I disagree with the practice, especially when twins pass the toddler years, and wrote about it. I don’t know why I’m so truly amazed at how many Moms and Dads love to dress their twins in matching outfits! I guess I’m in the minority but that’s ok. I want my blog to be a bit edgy, to encourage discussion and exchange ideas. You don’t need to agree with me on everything. That’s what makes it so fun to write. The push-back on that one was strong, though.

Q What has touched/affected you the most since you have been connecting with others writing your blog?

I’m deeply touched when parents with twin-related problems reach out to me for help. For instance, parents will write to me when they want desperately for their twins to be together in school and their district won’t allow it, or sometimes parents write

for advice when their twins simply don’t get along and it saddens them. I try to tell them what the research says about their particular problem or where they can go for further help. At the very least, I offer a shoulder to lean on. I try to answer everyone who writes to me or comments on my blog.

Q What is the best advice you have ever received about parenting multiples?

My twins are nearly 16 so when I was pregnant with twins, I didn’t know anyone else who had twins! But I’d have to say the best advice I ever got was never be afraid to ask for help. And over the years, I’ve been blessed with plenty of help from both family and friends, and on several occasions, even strangers!

Q What are the names, ages of your multiples/children?

My fraternal twins are Joseph (Baby A) and Michael (Baby B), almost 16. They have a younger brother, Matthew, who is 13.

*Christina Baglivi Tinglof is a parenting twins guru and the author of five books including **Double Duty 2e** and **Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples**. Her parenting features have appeared in **Parents, L.A. Parent, Central California Parent** and **Parents and Kids** magazines, as well as online journals including **Tibesti.com** and **BabyZ-one.com**. She’s also the editor of **Talk About Twins** (www.talk-about-twins.com), a website devoted to twins and twin relationships, and is a regular contributor to **TWINS magazine**.*

Are you a MOM blogger and would like to be considered for this new column? Feel free to send us your blog link and some information on why you think it would be a good fit to share with our readers to: twinseditor@twinsmagazine.com.

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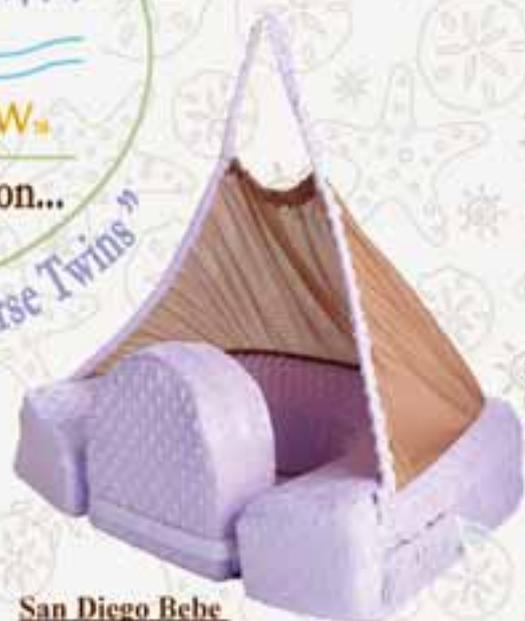
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A Must-Have List of Everything

By Linda Baraban, R.N.

A MOM OF MULTIPLES 'REALLY' NEEDS BEFORE BABIES COME HOME!

Linda Baraban, R.N.

is the founder of the Kansas City higher multiples group and is a proud mom of triplets.



When 20 mothers of triplets and quadruplets responded to a survey about their babies' needs during infancy, the following essential and useful supplementary items were identified. Since purchasing triple (or more) the amounts of equipment and baby supplies at one time involves a major expenditure. These mothers of multiples' comments are designed to help expectant parents of multiples avoid costly buying mistakes. This advice works for twins, too!

LINENS

Fitted crib sheets: One per crib, plus one for emergency linen changes. Two per crib is ideal. If trying to avoid a variety of sheet patterns in a shared nursery, buy all crib sheets alike to avoid changing three or more crib sheets when only one is soiled.

Receiving Blankets: Two for each baby.

Crib Blankets: One for each baby they outgrow their receiving blankets.

Decorative crib quilts that match bumper sets are expensive and heavy, constituting a suffocation hazard to newborns. Lightweight, thermal blankets cling to active little ones; air flows more freely should a baby's head get trapped under a blanket.

Bumper pad: One set for each crib.

Flannel lap pads: Two for each baby; used under the babies' bottoms to protect the crib sheets, saving linen changes.

Hooded bath towels:

One per child; a nice, nonessential item.

Infant wash cloths: Two for each baby; also a nonessential.

CLOTHING

Sleepers: Three each in cool climates.

The least expensive sleepers are sized smaller and fit four to five pound babies well. Expensive preemie clothing is outgrown in two to four weeks.

Onesies: In warm climates, three each of these light, one-piece outfits.

T-Shirts: Seldom used; three per baby if they have difficulty maintaining body temperature.

Sweaters: One each; hooded sweaters with back zippers are most convenient. Since sleeves on the 9 to 12-month size can be used most of the first year.

Booties: Two pair each; discount stores carry booties—sold three pair to a package—that are small, stretchy and stay on tiny preemie feet.

Pram suits: One per child in cold climates; these are warm enough for trips in the car, or stroller rides on a chilly day. Buy over-sized, one-piece suits with a single zipper, since babies grow quickly

and must fit in these suits fully clothed. Avoid unwieldy snow suits that separate hand and foot covers; they are time-consuming to put on singletons, let alone multiples.

Clothing quantities listed above and linen quantities listed below are based on doing laundry every two days.

FEEDING ITEMS

Bottles: Most formula-fed newborns eat every three hours, adding up to eight bottles daily per baby. If preparing formula daily, 24 bottles will be enough for triplets. Nursing mothers will need one to two bottles per baby to give water or juice. To keep bottles straight, buy a specific colored bottle for each baby. Have the hospital nurses save the disposable four-ounce glass formula bottles use for babies in the nursery; wash and reuse them until newborns take amounts large enough for the eight-ounce plastic bottles. Nipples and collars come with most bottles. Small babies have difficulty latching onto the nipples of disposable nurser bottles, making them unpopular with most parents.

Nipple caddy: Buy one or two of these inexpensive baskets to hold bottle nipples and collars for cleaning in the dishwasher.

Breast pump: Electric pumps provide the quickest emptying. If you are pumping to supply hospitalized babies with milk, a physician-ordered pump can be rented from medical supply stores with an apparatus that allows both breasts to be pumped simultaneously.

Formula: Amounts depend upon how many ounces babies take and how often. Most hospitals send a one-to-two day supply home with each baby. Don't get too far ahead on formula stock, since babies are often switched to other formulas. Powdered formula is least expensive and very portable. Most people surveyed preferred the canned concentrated formulas, which are less expensive than ready-to-pour formulas, but quicker to mix than powdered preparations. Drug companies may supply free formula for triplets, quadruplets or more.

Pacifiers: Two each, often provided by the hospital nursery.

Feeding spoons: One each; since most parents we surveyed fed the babies simultaneously, directly out of shared baby food jars.

Bibs: One each; plastic bibs that cover and snap over the shoulders with a pocket to catch spills were preferred.

Diaper pail: One, or two for people with a two-story house. Some parents surveyed did not use diaper pails at all and would take diapers directly to their trash.

Diapers: Calculate need based on the fact that each newborn requires 10 to 12 diaper changes daily. Small disposable diapers can be folded to fit four-pound preemies. Ask people to save diaper and baby wipe coupons for you, the savings really add up! Even if using disposable diapers, buy at least one package of pre-folded cloth diapers to use for burp cloths and to place under the heads of babies in their crib.

Baby wipes: Newborn triplets require one to two boxes weekly.

Diaper bags: One large bag for long outings, plus a small stroller bag that snaps or ties to strollers and grocery cart handles. Always keep extra diapers, wipes, zip-loc bags for disposing dirty diapers and pacifiers in your diaper bags so you will always have everything you need on the go.

FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT

Cribs: One crib holds three babies for several weeks; one crib for each baby is ideal once the babies become active. Some families managed with two multiples per crib until the children were ready for big beds. Fold-up play pens can substitute for cribs.

Changing table: One is essential if caregivers have back problems. Many indicated they would change babies on their bed, couch or even the floor.

Playpen: A nice, nonessential item that provides a safe place for unattended babies. One large playpen holds two babies. When outgrown, playpens can be used to store toys or as a young toddler's "time-out" place. Connecting play yards give even more space inside our outside.

Infant seats: One for each baby (some newborn to 6-month-old car seats will double for this.) Seats that can be rocked or bounced with a parent's foot to soothe a restless baby—while arms are occupied holding or feeding other babies—are essential.

Car seats: (newborn to 6-month size to 4-year-old size) one for each baby. Infant car seats are often available for low-cost rental at hospitals or local health departments. After babies reach the weight of 20+ pounds is when you need to switch to the next size of car seat. Many parents polled felt full-sized car seats were too roomy for use with newborn preemies.

Strollers: The tandem arranged triplet stroller is cumbersome but essential if caregivers plan on taking babies out alone. Parents of triplets who have helpers may prefer a single and a twin stroller. Parents of quads successfully used one side-by-side twin stroller with

two newborns per reclining seat, or two toddlers sitting one behind the other in a reclined seat. Triplet strollers are often special-order items that may take several weeks to arrive. The most common triplet stroller requires easy, partial disassembly to fit in cars and minivans.

High Chairs: One for each baby, but not necessarily until the babies are at least 6-months of age. Some parents successfully fed babies in their infant seats and walkers until table-ready. Wooden stacking high chairs seen in restaurants are useful in homes with limited space.

Swings: One is essential; one for each baby is ideal, but costly and space consuming.

Walkers or jumpers: These are nonessential, but they help entertain and confine babies as they get older. Walkers with trays are useful for holding toys and snacks.

Crib Mobiles: nonessential, but great entertainment. One can be rotated to the different cribs as well.

SPECIAL ITEMS

Hand-held vacuum: For quick and easy clean-ups!

Small (two to four shelf) utility cart on wheels: Keeps diapers, changing and bath supplies organized and portable.

Cool air humidifier: For the first unexpected 2:00 am case of croup.

Plastic tablecloth liner: Buy one long enough to place under high chairs for easy clean-up.

Power drill: Helps parents quickly assemble cribs and toys and apply safety latches to cupboards, etc.

Automobile: For many parents, the arrival of triplets requires a larger family vehicle. When choosing, consider the large triplet stroller that completely occupies the back of a standard minivan or medium sized car trunk. In addition, check to see if the car's bench seat that has three seat belts that can accommodate three bulky, full-sized car seats.

Continued on page 34



by Sandy Jones

Coping With Noise

Sandy Jones is a psychologist and the author of four books including *'Crying Baby, Sleepless Nights.'*

Babies and toddlers speak their minds through screaming and crying. Don't scream back! Learn how to read their minds to interpret the needs this "noise" signals.

Nancy Fielding, mother of 2-month-old twins, Jeffrey and Jenna, looks harassed and tired these days. "Just when I get one baby settled down, the other one starts crying," she regularly moans.

Fielding is experiencing what could be labeled "crying baby stress syndrome," a kind of parent burnout especially common in parenting twins. It comes from constantly monitoring and responding to baby noises to the point of parental exhaustion. Like most mothers of twins, Fielding will soon learn how to interpret baby noises—which to respond to and which to ignore.

Research had shown that even the most experienced mothers and fathers can't interpret babies' crying beyond basic messages like hunger, pain, or rage. When carefully trained researchers listened to tape-recorded cries of babies, they guessed a baby's reasons for crying only 60% of the time. Studies have found that mothers and fathers can interpret three for four reasons behind their babies' cries with 90% accuracy.

Babies crying have always been hard for some people to tolerate; now research is documenting why crying is so stressful. In the *New England Journal of Medicine*, reporter Dr. Bruce Bostrom shared the results of tests on the loudness of babies' cries. A baby's

cry recorded six inches from his mouth registers between 100 and 117 decibels, which is louder than a car horn measured at the usual distance of 16 feet. It is 30 times louder than adult conversation and only a few decibels less loud than a pneumatic jack hammer. Multiply the intensity and loudness of baby crying by two and you have a real noise problem on your hands!

With the help of computers, scientists have been able to use recorded cries to analyze their usefulness in diagnosing hidden neurological problems in babies. It is known, for instance, that many premature babies have high-pitched, intense cries. Some researchers believe that there may be a connection between the irritating nature of premature infants' cries and the unusually high incidence of child abuse among this population.

WHAT MAKES MY BABIES CRY?

Although it may take practice, most parents can interpret their twins' noise signals. For example, if the babies have been asleep for several hours and wake up crying, some parents know that means the children are hungry. If they've been



up for several hours and begin to fuss or bat at their ears, children may be trying to tell Mom and Dad it's nap time, according to some parents.

When a baby wakes his parents in the middle of the night with shrill screams, they may suspect pain is from a string of his sleeper wrapped around his little toe, or from a bubble of gas trapped in a loop of his intestines.

A baby's hunger cries usually begin as rhythmical, short cries followed by a pause to catch his breath before another cry begins. Some babies mouth their fists or suck on their fingers at the first signs of hunger.

Breastfed babies usually get restless and 'hyper' when it's feeding time, make whining noises, and nuzzle at the mother's chest. It's not unusual for breastfed babies to have sieges when they appear to want to nurse more than normal. This may be caused by the onset of illness or the beginning of a growth spurt. According to scientists, hunger cries quickly turn into pain cries when left unanswered.

A twin's unique personality affects why he cries. One twin may be mellow and rather patient about waiting to be fed or picked up, while the other may be unstable, quick to cry and unable to soothe himself well. While some babies love to be held and rocked, others hate too much touching.

Sometimes the uncuddly or 'skin sensitive' baby has an immature nervous system that can't tolerate incoming stimulation. These babies need repetitive soothing strategies that last long enough to 'bore' their overly irritated nervous systems.

Very young babies don't have good temperature regulation mechanisms; this often causes them to cry fiercely when their diapers are changed or they are being bathed. One useful hint is to bathe them under a warm receiving blanket with a warm wash cloth rather than stripping them down and putting them in a tub.

Similarly, young babies often get upset by abrupt handling, sudden noises, or light changes. It's wise to handle babies in a fun, slow manner.

BABY-SOOTHING TECHNIQUES

All babies need to be physically close to their parents; the most potent baby soothing techniques are those that involve closeness and motion. Putting a baby on one's shoulder often interrupts crying. Rocking or wrapping each one firmly in a receiving blanket so that his arms and legs are restrained (swaddling) works well to ease fussiness, too.

By the time babies are 3-months-old they may fuss and cry simply because they are bored or because they miss keeping track of you visually. This is a good age for using upright baby seats so the twins can be moved from room to room to watch what you are doing.

By 8-months of age, most babies cry when they are approached by strangers or left with babysitters. It appears that

nature has built in this wariness as a protective mechanism at the very time when babies are most likely to be crawling around and getting into trouble.

If the babies are extraordinary fussy, they should be examined by a doctor to rule out milk allergies, hernias, urinary tract infections or a hidden infection in their inner ears.

Some babies may have colic, a term used for a mysterious form of baby fussiness that gets worse at sundown and usually disappears by the time babies are about 3-months of age.

Baby illnesses can also cause excessive crying. A few hours after immunizations or during an illness, babies will probably begin to get feverish and fretful. Signs of babies' illnesses are flushed, red faces; unusual paleness and circles under their eyes; and foreheads that feel hot to parents' lips. Breastfed babies often want to nurse more when a virus is coming on. Fussy bottle-fed babies may need extra water supplements because of the high sodium in formulas (always check with your doctor first, though!)

TODDLER NOISE

As babies mature, crying episodes usually subside and become replaced by toddler noise. Banging on toys, hitting, screaming, biting and tears—all are normal part of high-energy toddler life.

Giving tots enough opportunities for outdoor exercise and play is a critical way to siphon off toddler noise and tensions. Don't be afraid of getting them out in damp or cold weather. Swedish mothers keep their tots and babies out almost all day, on the belief that fresh air keeps their babies healthier. Tots who have had this outdoor exposure appear to be more robust and rosy-cheeked than those constantly kept indoors.

Coping with noise sometimes takes ingenuity, like removing the small plastic strip on the back of wheeled toys to eliminate its irritating, clacking sound. Practical decorating can sometimes help lessen the irritation of toddler noise. For example, using full-length drapes in the babies' room or installing a colorful fabric canopy that covers the room's ceiling are some ways to contain noise. Carpeting can also help lessen the sounds of running feet and rolling walkers or trucks. Radio stations often use cardboard egg cartons to line walls as a way of muting sounds.

Parents who live in apartments can get together and set up a basement playroom containing a sliding board, big blocks and other sturdy play equipment for rainy and snowy days. Also, tots may be enrolled in an exercise and swim program, or in special toddler gym classes.

Parents must not forget to meet their own human needs for a respite from baby crying or toddler noises. If possible, they should set aside one afternoon or night out a week for their own "time-off" from the strenuous and often loud work of caring for children. ♥



My Motto: Firm, But Gentle

by Janet Gonzalez-Mena

Janet Gonzalez-Mena lives in Napa, California and taught early childhood education at Napa Valley College. She is author of the book 'Dragon Mom' and the mother of five children.

A little girl ended up with a dislocated elbow when her father tried to keep her from running out into the street. It wasn't his fault. He was trying to protect her, but when he grabbed her arm and

jerked her back, the tendons gave. He had no idea that would happen. He felt terrible.

I've heard two stories like that one. The second was from a friend who was a preschool teacher.

She was crossing

a street with her own children, toddler twins, when the light changed. Her son held back, and she jerked his arm out of desperation as she saw the wall of cars roaring down on them in the distance. His little arm came out of its socket.

This sort of thing happens because we aren't always told how fragile children are. In fact, we are told just the opposite. I remember a pediatrician showing me how to turn over a newborn baby. He was trying to prove that kids are tough. He did the turning by taking an arm and a leg and flipping my startled son from back to front. My son was horrified; I was horrified! I still am, even at the memory.

If we were told clearly that children can be hurt when we treat them roughly, many parents would stop shaking their little ones when they want them to pay attention, for example.

I think one of the problems is that we don't understand the concept of being firm and gentle at the same time. I know I didn't. I thought firm and rough went

together. Soft and gentle had to do with giving—the opposite of standing firm.

WHAT IS APPROPRIATE PARENTAL BEHAVIOR?

Sometimes it's appropriate to be soft and giving. Other times it's important to be firm—hard and unyielding. However, *it's always appropriate to be kind and gentle, whether in the hard or soft mode.*

My opening examples were accidents. The parents weren't angry, only afraid for their children. But an even bigger problem is when parents injure their children because they are angry with them. Unfortunately, it happens all the time. As a general term, "child abuse" is the label given to injuries that occur as a result of parental anger. Why do caring parents need to be aware of the effects that parental anger can have on their children? Read on!

Advice like "be kind and gentle" sounds insane in the face of parental rage. Who can remember that advice or anything else when children draw parents to the very ends of their limits? The problem of parental rage usually begins about the time babies grow into toddlers and develop "minds of their own." There's no stage when gentle firmness is more called for, yet it's one of the hardest times to give it. Toddlers know how to push parental buttons and get a reaction. Parents have to be ultra-patient and gentle, yet it's almost impossible to do so with toddlers in the house. Difficult or not, gentleness is a mandate; to be any other way is to put children at risk for abuse.

I believe that every parent has the potential for being a child abuser. It's normal and natural to get angry enough to cause injury. In my opinion, parents need to recognize and accept that fact and then take steps to protect themselves and their children from the results of potential rage. My message then may seem to be somewhat paradoxical. I'm saying to acknowledge your rage, but don't abuse your children. Is it possible to have it both ways at once? Yes, here are some hints about how to do so:

When anger strikes, consider putting yourself in a "time-out" instead of your children.

As a preventive measure, give yourself periods of silence on a regular basis. Breathe deep and long. Count your breaths. Don't do or think anything for a period of time each day.

Meet your needs. As the flight attendant always says, 'put your own oxygen mask on first before helping others.' How can you meet your children's needs if you neglect yourself? A parent with many unmet needs is a breeding ground for parental rage.

Go beyond basic needs and 'baby' yourself whenever you possibly can. You need nurturing, too. You're a very good source for your own nurturing. After all, who knows better than you what makes you happy? Take a bath or a walk or make yourself a delicious meal or snack. Do what you like doing and do it regularly.

Get out in nature. Smell the air, hear the birds and feel the dirt and grass under your feet. Get outside every day.

As I wrote each of the previous suggestions, I could almost hear parents of multiples protesting: How can I possibly do all that? I don't have the time or the opportunity!

To avoid the parenting pitfall of feeling like you have no time to yourself, try these suggestions:

- Seek support and backup whenever you can find it.
- Don't try to tough it out until your children grow up.

- Seek out resources to help you and use them.

- Don't try to do everything yourself, no matter how much you value your independence.

Don't be 'super mom' or 'super dad'. Know your limits of stress and responsibility.

If you have toddlers, it's essential that you deal with your parental frustration and maintain a sense of self-discipline in positive ways. ♥



BEFRIENDING YOUR DRAGON

Parental anger is a problem for everybody. I'm no exception. I know my rage well; I see it as a "mean old dragon" that lives inside me. I can value being kind and gentle all I want, but that's not my "dragon's" style at all. She's wild and refuses to be tamed. As I introduce you to that side of me, let your imagination run free while you picture what my "dragon" monster does.

One way adults help children overcome their fear of monsters that appear in their dreams is to suggest that the little ones "feed the monster". It's surprising how far nurturing can go—whether it's used to tame dream monsters, children or ourselves. The key to calming wild energy is acceptance, love and understanding your own strengths and weaknesses—what makes you vulnerable to losing self-control.

Before I understood that concept, I tried keeping my internal "dragon" in check as a protective measure. But keeping her under "lock and key" didn't work. My children are too good at picking locks, pressing my "hot" buttons, as many people call it. They learned that skill in their toddler years. As a result, the dragon's "cage door" was continually coming open and then I was faced with a raging beast that had never been socialized. She didn't know how to behave out of her cage. Naturally, I was desperate to control this wild energy.

I think it's important for us to be gentle with ourselves even as we accept that we hold wild energy. As I got to know the "dragon mom" in me, I discovered that at heart she's not bad. In fact, she has some amazingly wonderful qualities, including a fierce protectiveness where her offspring are concerned.

So I'm wondering on being firm but gentle with that mean old "dragon" in me. She's wild, raw energy that needs nurturing and guidance. I'm learning to give it to her, just as I've learned to give the same to my children. Firm but gentle—that's my motto. I'm learning to be my own best friend.



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When she says, "I'm so angry!"

by Patricia Edmister

Everyone gets angry. However, most of us don't like to be the target of someone else's anger; and as parents, we usually feel that we need to do something to control and eliminate our children's anger.

However, controlling someone else's anger is impossible.

Rather parents need to try to understand what the anger is about and help the youngsters (or other adults, for that matter) develop and utilize appropriate ways for expressing their angry feelings.

Anger needs to be viewed as a signal that something

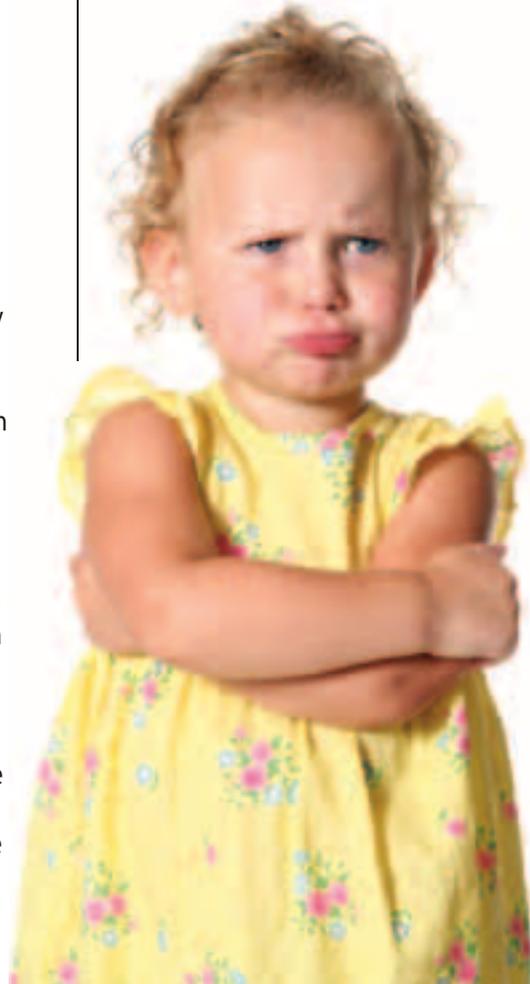
is wrong. Acting-out behaviors are usually the indication that a child feels hurt, angry or scared. When children think that they are not free to openly express these concerns verbally, they may keep them where the feelings of anger will continue to build up inside. A child may also be fearful of expressing his anger at the one with whom he is *really* mad—like Mom or Dad—so he may take it out on his sibling, a peer, or maybe even the family pet! Therefore, it's extremely important that parents help their children learn to express their feelings through appropriate means. This does not mean talking children out of feeling angry, pessimistic or sad. Rather, it means helping them identify the feelings and letting them know that you recognize why they feel the way they do. Reassure your children so that they will know that it is not bad to have angry feelings. Validate that it is okay to have big feelings, but that they need to learn to express them through appropriate means. The parents' job is to help the children distinguish between words and actions: Feel what you feel, but control what you do.

The Root of the Problem

Many children misbehave in an angry fashion for attention. They believe that they are not getting their fair share, or they may have learned from experience that one sure way to get parental attention is through misbehaving. The irony here is that most parents want to teach their children

proper behavior with the help of positive reinforcement. But too often they forget to give praise for good behaviors. Rather, they just expect good behavior instead; only give attention for the bad. With multiples, there is often a limited amount of time available, so each child may develop behavior he or she uses when feeling neglected.

When this occurs, parents need to acknowledge the anger, validate it in terms of the child's feelings, let him or her know that the parents empathize, and explain that they can't change the circumstances right now. They do this by listening intently and making



supportive statements, through body language and eye contact that are completely focused on their child.

If you are able to set aside some time to spend individually with each of your multiples, use it for fun activities where you are not always trying to teach your children something specific. Parents often get carried away with the desire to instruct their children and strive to make every moment a teaching moment.

Some children show anger in inappropriate ways if they have been given too much power and control for their developmental level. This is often the case when a child is advanced verbally and cognitively. Parents may expect that the youngster can behave in an advanced way and may not recognize that he may still have the fears of childhood. The child may be unable to understand that the parents still hold the power since he has impressed them and other adults with his verbal precocity.

This is a youngster who needs permission to be a child, to have children's fears, and to have reasonable limits set for him. With a highly verbal child, you do not always have to give in to his desire to reason everything out. You as the parent have the right to say, "This discussion is over now." If the child continues to argue or follow you, leave the room and take a breather to regain your composure so that you do not end up behaving in an inappropriate way. Avoid getting back into the argument. If such a situation escalates into name-calling or hitting on the part of the child, immediately give a 'time-out' so that he or she learns that such behavior will not be tolerated. You, not the child, must be in charge. Setting and keeping limits is critical.

Nature and Nurture

Another reason children show anger may be because of their genetic heritability and environment. One child may tend to be more quick-tempered and easy to anger than her co-twin. When

this is the case, it is often because one parent or both also has this personality trait and it has been passed on to the child genetically. In addition, parents need to look at how they are handling their own anger, as this is the environmental factor that the child is observing and modeling.

Stress can also cause angry behavior. Many children experience lots of stress in their lives—a new baby, a change in schools, a new babysitter, and a change in the availability of a parent because of work or travel. These are things that can contribute to a child's not feeling safe or in control.

Sometimes parents think that their children are being stubborn, uncooperative or unreasonably angry. But it may be that the children simply don't understand a demand or request, or may be overwhelmed with a new situation and not have the self-regulatory ability to cope.

Misbehavior is just one of the ways a child can express bad feelings, and some children act out because they don't have the words to express their feelings. One thing parents can do to help children properly express angry feelings is to try and put the child's feelings into words, even when they are directed at parents.

Separating Feelings and Behavior

Another way parents can help children learn appropriate expression of anger is to not scold the children for the angry feelings. Encourage them to talk by talking about your own feelings—using words that they can understand. Separate the *feelings of anger* from the *behaviors* to help the youngsters understand that "mean feelings" are acceptable, but "mean behaviors" are not.

Finally, if you are quick-tempered, you may also have a quick-tempered child. Even if this is the case, if both of you can learn to talk through and find appropriate ways of sharing the angry feelings, harmony can exist. ♥

HELP PREVENT ANGRY OUTBURSTS

- First, define your family rules for appropriate expression of angry feelings. Keep rules simple and minimal and the fewer the rules the better.
- Set and explain the limits. Be very clear in terms of what is and is not acceptable. "I'm going to say this one time, and then the discussion is over."
- Keep the volume down. Often arguments escalate until everyone is yelling. Lower, rather than raise your tone of voice and tell the children that you will be happy to discuss things when everyone is calm and quiet.
- Be aware of your body language. React with as little negativity on your own part as possible. Relax your body and face, slow your movements and make unemotional responses. Often kids will try to provoke parents; the impact will be lessened if you are not bothered.
- Clearly identify *behaviors* that you are annoyed about, rather than just labeling your child as a 'brat' or a 'naughty' boy.
- Help your children learn to express their feelings with words rather than just actions. Then teach them to combine those expressions with other "action-pathways"—acceptable ways for expressing anger without physically hurting someone. If the child is feeling a need to physically hit someone, give him a pillow and let him imagine that it is the person with whom he's angry. Then tell him that it is okay to punch the pillow, but it is never okay to hit a person.
- Emphasize to your children that they can talk about bad feelings and can play them out through appropriate means, such as punching a pillow as mentioned above. Reinforce that it is acceptable to have angry feelings, but that it is wrong to express them by doing actual physical harm. The job of the parents is not to change the child's feelings, but to change the child's action-pathways by which feelings are expressed.

The Hidden Surprises of Twin Birthday Parties

WAYS TO HELP YOUR TWINS CELEBRATE THEIR BIG DAY!

By Ellyce Field, Mary Ann Rutherford and Christa D. Reed

Birthday celebrations for twins can be double the work and double the fun. But they also double the chances to teach your children how to entertain their friends.

Tackle the birthday party “challenge” with the right attitude. Think of your children’s party or parties as a social learning experience. Giving a party is a social grace that must be practiced, as is learning how to act at a party.



Teaching the children the steps for planning a party and following through with it can be fun for your children and rewarding for you. Because it is their party and they are going to do much of the work, gear the “need to do” lists to their level. Don’t make it too complicated. It is better to spend an hour together at the kitchen table making invitations than running all over town finding elaborate decorations.

Guest lists should be made by each child. If the party is the same day, many parents let each child invite the same number of guests; it is perfectly acceptable for one guest to receive two invitations to the same party.



The age of the twins can help determine the number of guests to invite. Because children under 5 years of age tend to play next to each other rather than with each other, a general guideline to follow is to invite one less guest than the age that the children will be. If twins will be 4, for example, then let each child invite up to three guests to his own or a shared party.

Will you come to my party? Give each birthday child the chance to issue his or her own invitations their own style. Tell each their options—by telephone, by email, regular mail or hand delivery—according to how much time and energy you have available. Offer to help, but encourage each child to write or draw as much as they can. By teaching your twins the polite way to handle party invitations, you’ve not only completed a job, but helped teach a social skill—an extra birthday present for each of your twins! ♥



BIRTHDAY PARTIES ON LOCATION

A wide variety of restaurants, museums, childcare facilities and favorite family entertainment centers offer birthday party packages. Just be sure to ask a lot of questions and see the accommodations yourself before you reserve the place. Ask the following questions so you will not be surprised when the day arrives for the party:

- What comes with the package?
- Can you bring your own cakes?
- Can you bring your own entertainment?
- Are “goodie bags”, prizes or party favors included in the package?
- What type of child supervision is provided?
- Where will the party be held? Is an appropriate room available?
- Where are the bathrooms located?
- How will the children be transported?
- Are there a required minimum or maximum number of children allowed?
- Is there a time limit to the party?

Every city is full of special locations that lend themselves to a birthday celebration. Check your local sporting events, roller or ice skating rinks, elementary school gyms, batting cages, bowling alleys, mini golf courses, swim clubs, youth theaters, museums, science centers, youth concerts, restaurants with a magician or clown, petting farms, zoos and railroads for birthday party possibilities.



One Party or Two?

By Ellyce Field

Will your family have shared or separate parties for your multiples? This is the quintessential question, the annual topic of conversation for parents of twins everywhere. Many parents feel guilty about celebrating their twins' birthday with one party because they fear that they aren't helping each child feel unique on his special day. They also worry that the children won't receive the same number of gifts.

"Until my boy/girl twins were 8-years-old," declared one mother, "We could have their birthday parties together. But then, it became "uncool" for the boys to like the girls. So they had to draw straws to see who would have the first party and had separate parties on separate days. It was lots of work, but as two different people, I believe that my twins should each have the chance to express his or her unique desires."

"My 35-year-old husband is a twin who still resents sharing his birthday with his brother," sighed another mother of twins. "I don't want my girls to have those negative feelings all their lives, so each has her own invitations, plates and cake when it's birthday time. Right now, they have the same friends; but if that changes, I'll give each twin her own party."

Logistically, details such as the date selection need to be discussed before attempting two parties. Will each child invite the same number of children? Will the parties be back-to-back on one day, a week apart or a day apart? Will shared neighborhood or family friends be invited to both parties? If the twins are a boy and a girl, will the parties be divided by gender? When answered by the twins themselves, these questions can give valuable insight into each twin's personality and need to feel special.

Not only their personalities, but also the age of the twins, help determine the way that their birthday is celebrated. One mother of six children, ranging from 18-years-old to 2-year-old twins, suggested taking older children on special outings separately or perhaps bring along a friend. "Just one birthday child and a best friend will go out with us for dinner and a show or to a basketball game. We make it his day, and he gets all the attention," she explained.

One adult twin has unhappy memories about her shared birthday. "I have always regretted never having my own birthday party," she admitted. "My twin sister and I were born on my older sister's birthday. Because we had so many birthdays on the same day, we never had separate birthday celebrations. If we had a party, we had to have one big one together. I still remember the time my sister's friends spent the night on my birthday." Even as an adult this woman rarely entertains, but



promises that she will raise her twins with an individual birthday celebration for each.

Time, expense and effort were the top three reasons to have one party for both children, according to mother of twins, Bobbie Charnas, a Farmington, Michigan mother of 10-year-old identical twins, Jason and Craig was honest. "I really don't enjoy planning parties. We have four children and their birthdays fall within three months. The boys enjoy sharing one party because they have always shared interests and friends. There is not a lot of competition between them, so they work well together choosing the party theme, favors and cake. They think of their birthday as a special event to share and they look forward to it."

Marlene Krochmal, a mother of 5-year-old boy/girl twins, Robbie and Tracy, said that she is sensitive to the issue of giving separate parties for each of her twins. In the past, her twins have liked to give one party with a boy/girl theme, such as Minnie Mouse and Mickey Mouse. "Our friends tend to buy them compatible gifts, too," Krochmal said, "like Barbie and Ken dolls."

A shared party can be individualized through the choice of a theme and cake; most young children think of their party in these terms, anyway. Instead of insisting on a well discussed compromise, incorporate two themes and two cakes so that each will feel he has designed part of his party. Be sure to take a separate picture of each child with his own cake, too!

Separate guest lists also differentiate the two children. If one party is being given, some children enjoy sending out separate invitations, based on the theme, to separate school friends. Older children might enjoy drawing an invitation and including all the information on a piece of white construction paper.

Young twins may enjoy being the Birthday King or Queen at the head of separate tables and acting as the special captains for team games. They may also want to choose the favors for each of the guests. Many families give each guest two favors—one cone from each birthday child. ♥

Making MY Birthday Extra Special

by Judith O. Hooper

You may be swimming in double the diapers right now or up to your ears in potty-training pairs; but have you thought about how you might handle their birthdays as they get older?



Ask any child what the biggest event of the year is, and he will likely reply, "My birthday!" Very young children are usually satisfied with a "simple" party including friends, cake and presents. Twins and other multiples may be happy with a shared party (but not shared presents) in the preschool and early elementary years.

During the middle years, however, many parents find that the kind of party that was "just fine" earlier is no longer "awesome" enough to satisfy each child. Furthermore, each co-twin may begin to feel that he wants his own special party for his own special day.

Recently, I was asked at what age birthday parties should no longer be shared by co-twins. I think that the answer to this question depends very much on the particular co-twins in question. Some multiples, of course, go on sharing their party on their special day throughout their lives. Some may want separate parties early on, and may keep them separate over the years. Others may need separate parties at one point in their lives, but later decide to combine them again.

It is important for parents to listen closely to what their twins are telling them about their birthday expectations. Sometimes one twin will want a separate party while the other doesn't. Parents will need to help the co-twin who wants a shared party

accept her sister's plans for something all her own. And the child who wants a separate party may need to be encouraged to participate in her sister's party when it occurs.

In our family, we have a daughter and son-in-law whose birthdays are on the same day. Since we enjoy having as many festive family occasions as possible, we always have separate parties for the two. Usually, when the birthday falls during the week, we have one party the weekend before and one the weekend after. When 'the day' falls on a weekend, the two birthday kids draw straws to see who gets to have his or her party on the "real" day and who gets the preceding or following weekend. Parents may want to use a similar method to schedule the festivities should their multiples begin wanting separate parties.

One problem parents have to contend with when multiples ask for separate parties are increased competition of the "my-party-is-going-to-be-cooler-than-yours" variety. A simple way to deal with this problem is to put limits on the cost of the party, and thereby the overall size and "coolness".

Recently I talked to 12-year-old twins, Mike and Heather, about their recent parties. Their parents had told them that they could each have a party but that each party could not cost more than \$50.00. Mike responded by inviting 20 male friends,

giving them home-made cake (from a box) and a jumbo tub of ice cream and tons of inexpensive snacks and soda while they all played poker. An awesome time was held by all.

Heather, in contrast, invited only her best friend and arranged for her handsome 20-year-old Uncle Will to drive them both to a nice restaurant where they enjoyed an elegant meal. What could be cooler?

INDIVIDUAL DECISION-MAKING

By allowing each co-twin to decide on what kind of party to have within a very strict budget, Mike and Heather's mom and dad circumvented any competition that might have arisen. Each co-twin thought the other's party was "cool" but not what he or she wanted for himself or herself. This method of party planning seems to be an excellent way to avoid any jealousy or competition between the parties.

Parents need to take time to help each co-twin plan his own party by offering suggestions, giving help when asked and generally showing as much enthusiasm as possible. When each child believes that his wants and needs are being considered and that his parents are specifically interested in him as an individual, he experiences fewer problems with jealousy and competition.

On the other hand, I don't think that equal expenditure on each party needs to be the hard-and-fast-rule for co-twins who have separate parties. If each twin is allowed to choose the kind of party he wants, he is probably unlikely to be concerned with how much was spent on his co-twin's activity. Each child can be equally thrilled by gifts at either end of the price spectrum if they are exactly the gifts they each want.

Parents may actually experience the pressure of competition more from children of other families than from their own.

There are communities where children's birthday parties have begun to rival royal coronations or presidential inaugurations in their elaborateness and cost. The irony of these mega-parties is that the amount of fun children have at a party has nothing to do with the amount of money spend on it.

One of my daughters still talks about the one she went to as a 5-year-old where the mom had spread a green blanket on the floor in an empty room. That was the grass. Lunch was all kinds of cut-up vegetables, fruits and nuts served in a big wooden bowl on the floor. The gathered "animals" were encouraged to snort and grunt while they ate from their food dish. The little girls had a laugh riot, the party was extremely cheap and easy and afterward, the mom cleaned up by shaking the "grass" out the back door!

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

Some co-twins have shared friends; some don't. Children should be allowed to invite the same children to two different parties if that's what they want. Most parents probably won't have a problem with their children being invited twice, especially since even with a shared party they would undoubtedly bring two gifts.

It is easy for parents to get caught up in their children's shifting friendships and allegiances, especially when they see that certain children have been omitted from the guest list. As a general rule, it is preferable to allow children to make their own choices about whom to invite.

Some parents are concerned that co-twins who always want a shared party might miss out on an important experience if they do not have a separate party. Would they always regret not having their own special day? Parents may wonder.

If children know, however, that they have the *option* of having separate parties, their decision to share a party, I think, should be taken as a clear expression of their foremost desires. Perhaps they merely feel that celebrating their twinship is more special than having a day of their "own" would be on their birthday.

Birthdays are special days for all of us, and perhaps extra-special for multiples. In planning for the celebration of birthdays, it is especially important for parents of multiples to give their children a chance to express their wishes, and then to meet those wishes within limits appropriate to the family. ♥

Judith O. Hooper, Ph.D. lives in Madison, Wisconsin and is a marriage and family therapist in private practice.



BIRTHDAY BONUS PARTY PLANNING TIPS FOR TWINS

by Christa D. Reed, Editor-in-Chief

Hosting a shared twin birthday party can be hectic but also a great deal of fun... here are some tips to consider when throwing a shared party for your multiples:

 Make sure you limit the party to no more than two hours—this is a perfect amount of time for everyone to enjoy themselves without getting out of control.

 Plan small, simple parties... resist the temptation to invite double the number of children at one party!

 Save the elaborate entertainment for older twins. Most 3-to-5 year-olds like to entertain themselves. Your basement full of toys or backyard swing set might be more fun than any costly entertainment you would hire.

 Keep the food simple—stick to child pleasers like cheese pizza, chicken nuggets, hot dogs or macaroni & cheese. Consider just serving cake and ice cream to eliminate extra clean up and to cut costs!

 Enlist help! Be sure to get older siblings, cousins, friends and family members to help during the party to help with crowd control.

 Does space seem to be an issue at your house? Then plan a party away from the house! One of my

twin boys' most favorite parties we did was when they turned 4 and we had their party in a conference room at the local firehouse. We brought in cake, ice-cream and snacks and our local fire department gave everyone a plastic fire hat, coloring books and other fun favors and we watched a fire safety video and then toured the fire house! Other fun parties we have planned over the years included roller skating, an indoor swim party, movie/pizza party, mini-golf and bowling. Depending on the time of year, having a picnic at a park with playgrounds are always fun, too!

 Be sure to have a separate cake for each twin! Sounds like a lot of cake but EVERY child wants to be able to blow out their own birthday candles and make their own wish! Consider using smaller, one-layer cakes and allowing each twin to choose their cake theme and how it is decorated!

 Sing Happy Birthday to each twin separately! Be sure to explain to party guests that you want to sing to each child and which order you will sing (for example, "we are going to sing first to Nick and then to James")

 When your twins have the same interests, often they will receive the

same gifts from friends. Try using color coded bows or stickers to label each of the gifts from friends as they arrive and number them according to the giver. Then allow your twins to open #1 first then #2 and so on and makes it easy for you to keep track of the guests that gave each gift.

 Want a quick and easy idea for "thank-you" gifts/party favors? Pre-make all your thank you notes. When guests are leaving put the pre-made thank you note on a toy you purchase from the dollar store (like a kite, bubbles or sidewalk chalk) and you have saved a step when the party is over!

 Keep your eyes open for all the wonderful 'birthday clubs' offered throughout the year to receive FREE coupons and goodies for your twins. Baskin-Robbins, McDonald's and Orange Julius has great offers, and be sure to also check out local merchants, too!

 Arrange to spend a day with them—separately or together—to redeem all the birthday club coupons. If you collect all the goodies in one morning, you can take them to the park and make a day of it. Pack a picnic to save even more money! ♥

Planning a party for your twins and want to have fun, creative ideas to keep guests entertained? In need of party favors that leave a lasting impression? Consider checking out these party ideas by toy brand Melissa & Doug.

Decorate-your-own Party Favors - Pick a theme, any theme and select the perfect party favors to add fun and fancy to your next special event. For princesses and pirates, sports and horse enthusiasts, these kits provide a great party activity or take-home favor at an exceptionally high value and low price. \$4.99 - \$7.99



Birthday Gift Idea – Birthday Gift Idea – Birthday Gift Idea – Birthday Gift Idea



Looking for a great birthday gift idea or maybe even a treat for you this Valentine's Day? Check out these beautiful designs from "Custom Bracelets by Lisa". We love supporting businesses that are owned and operated by parents of multiples and owner Lisa is a single-mother to 13-year-old

fraternal twins, Connor and Brody.

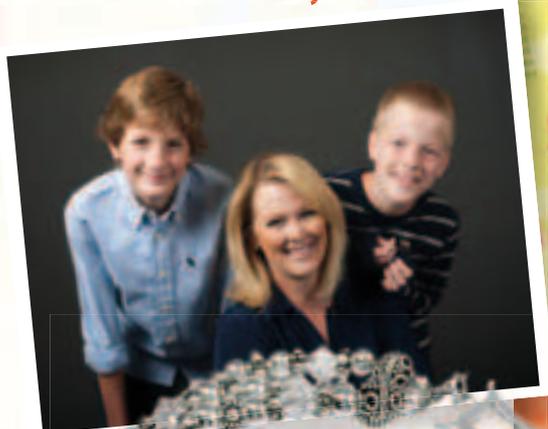
"Custom Bracelets by Lisa" first launched in 2003 and will soon be celebrating their 10th year online! When Lisa's twins were 3-years-old she actually started her business more on a whim than anything else. "I had gone to a local bead store where I live to have my mother's bracelet repaired," says Lisa. "The rest was history and I was hooked!" She restrung not only her bracelet, but also made one for her sisters, her mom and countless friends. Then she got to thinking ... "hey I can do this!" Finally she felt there was an outlet for the creative side of her. A few years later, "Custom Bracelets by Lisa"

got a big break when a national parenting magazine did an article on Lisa and her business. That is when Lisa knew her company was firmly established and she could really make a career out of this. Lisa's website, custombraceletsbylisa.com offers a huge selection of beautiful sterling silver, gold and Swarovski crystal beaded



mother's name bracelets. Lisa also designs birthstone bracelets, grandmother's bracelets and adorable children's and baby bracelets that are all in compliance with the Consumer Product Safety Commission. That means you can rest assured that the materials are lead free and safe for your children to wear! You can go online and browse the website and customize any of the designs or if you'd prefer you can work directly with Lisa and she can create a design just for you. Lisa prides herself in her customer service and hopes to never give up the personal touches she offers her customers with direct one-on-one service.

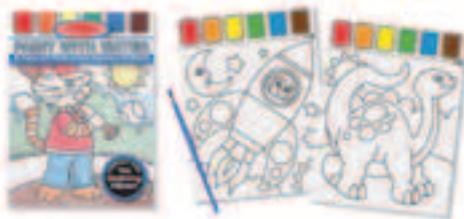
For Lisa, being a single mom has certainly proven to be challenging at times, but the business has given her some wonderful flexibility as her customers almost always understand if there is a noisy kid on the other end of the phone (probably because they usually have one on their end of the phone as well.) If you'd like to contact her directly feel free to call 303-362-1441 or visit her website at: www.custombraceletsbylisa.com. ♥



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Reusable Sticker Pads



Paint with Water



Color by Dots

by Cheryl Lock

Meet Rose Coluccio & Vicki Orrico

Twins who are 90 Years Young this Month!



From the time they were born—back on Feb. 6, 1922—to this day, twins Rose Coluccio and Vicki Orrico have spent their lives fascinating, and confusing, people.

“When we were 6-years-old, we went to the hospital to have our tonsils taken out,” Rose said. “We each had a different doctor, but we never wanted to be apart, so after the operation we stayed together in the same bed. When word got out that there were twins on the floor, there were so many people in our room who wanted to see us, our doctor got angry and had to shoo people out.”

Back in the days when the girls were growing up, a twin sighting was few and far between—and identical twins, well you hit the jackpot if you saw a pair. So from doctors to teachers to friends, the pair continued to elicit shocked responses everywhere they were seen.

“Our mother used to dress us alike, so we could see people from the window saying, ‘Look at the twins!’ as we’d walk down the road,” Rose remembers. “Then they’d all come to the window and stare. We felt like we belonged in the circus. They were just so amazed with twins! But we didn’t like that. That’s when we stopped dressing alike.”

The confusion worked with boyfriends, too. In fact, when Vicki had a boyfriend who drove a truck she was less than fond of, the girls decided to take matters into their own hands. “Vicki really hated that truck, but I didn’t mind it, so instead of him driving her, he would pick me up and bring me to work every day, even though it was far away,” Rose said. “It was a couple of weeks before a girl at work called out my name and he found out I was Rose instead of Vicki. He was mad!”

It worked for break-ups, too. Breaking up isn't so hard to do, actually, when you have an identical twin to take care of that for you.

Growing up during the Depression with six siblings wasn't always fun and games, though. The family moved around a lot, as her father's shoe repair business would take him from New Jersey to Connecticut, and then from Brooklyn to Newburgh, N.Y., where the family finally settled.

"The Depression was hard, especially for our Mom, but she never complained," said Vicki. "As little girls, we would want a new dress, and our Mom would want to get it for us, but they couldn't afford it. Any money went towards rent, and making sure our electricity stayed on. But you learned to get along with what you had, and eventually things got better. With eight children, kids started to grow up, which means they could go to work and help out."

At work, the girls found themselves running into trouble with their looks, too. "Our boss's would come to the wrong person and try to give us the other twin's work," Rose said. "They used to get so frustrated; they'd say they were never hiring twins again."

In school the girls were even forced to go into separate classrooms when the teachers couldn't tell who was who. "When they first tried separating us, I'd cry like heck and run out into the hall to go find Vicki again," Rose said. "But eventually I knew I had to stay where I was. We've always been like that though—we hate being apart."

Even when marriage came into the picture, Rose remembers feeling happy to be starting her new life, but sad at the same time. She felt like she was leaving her sister, who she had lived with up until the day she was married. Even after marriage and children, the twins remained as close as ever. "Sometimes my daughter even gets us confused," said Rose. "Especially if one of us is at the sink with our back to her, she can hardly tell who it is."

Despite their closeness, and what Vicki calls "the feeling of always having a best friend around," there were difficult parts about being a twin, as well. "A lot of people would criticize us about not being like the other twin," said Rose. "We definitely had our own personalities. I would laugh and joke more, and Vicki was more serious, so people would say to Vicki, 'Why can't you be like your sister?' Then Vicki became a talker and I was quieter, and I'd get the same question."

To the world, the twins were just an anomaly, two girls to be admired and fascinated with. Even, it turned out, in times when

other people should have been the center of attention. "We were in our sister, Josie's, wedding, and we dressed in the same dresses as her bridesmaids," said Rose.

"As we were coming down the steps we could hear people saying, 'Look at the twins!' Josie was so beautiful that day, and we felt all the attention was on us. We never felt so bad. Had we known, we never would have been in the wedding."

Their siblings were a huge part of their lives from the very beginning. Both Rose and Vicki remember fondly growing up with all their brothers and sisters, and on the day they were born, their brother played an integral part. It was a blizzard, the day the girls were born, and each weighed in at only 3 pounds when they were delivered at home. "The doctor put a small table close to the coal stove, and he put each one of us in a shoebox and covered it with a blanket so we wouldn't

freeze," said Rose. "Then he made a tent around the table so when our brothers and sister came home from school we wouldn't be affected."

Still, with all that taken care of, the girls were having trouble eating. "No milk agreed with us," said Vicki. "But there was a lady next door who raised goats in her backyard. So the doctor gave my brother a bottle and sent him out into the blizzard to go get some goat's milk (and that, we could eat.) If that didn't work, we may very well have died. It was nice that lady had those goats so close to us."

These days, the twins are back together after both husbands have passed away, living in the house that Rose and her husband raised their two children in. The girls have lived a full, happy 90 years—I should know, I'm Rose's granddaughter.

Despite the fact that they have grown to look somewhat different, many people even to this day get them confused. "My dentist still doesn't know us apart," said Vicki. "He probably wishes we'd just go there one at a time, and not together."

The outside world and any confusion they may cause is no matter to these girls, though. As long as they have each other, and their family, they'll be happy. "Other people come in and out of your life, but they have whatever else going on in their own lives. The two of us, we're always there for each other." ♥

Cheryl Lock is an editor at the leading women's financial Website, *LearnVest.com*. Her work has been published in *Parents*, *More and Family Circle*, and online at *AOL Travel*, *Petside.com* and *The Kennedy Center*. Cheryl's grandmother is one of the twins in this story!





When *Parents* have a *Favorite Twin*

by Christina Baglivi Tinglof

Mary McDonnell* has a secret, one that she's carried with her since her four-year-old fraternal twin boys, Adam and Brian, were just babies. Is she a CIA operative? A federal air marshal? No. McDonnell is simply a mom who feels more connected to her twin son Brian.

"I feel closer to Brian and I'm having a hard time coming to terms with this," she explains. McDonnell realized that she had different feelings towards her twins early on when her boys were just babies. It was their opposite temperaments—Brian is mel-low, Adam is intense—that had an effect on her bond. "When someone came over to help out, I would always hand Adam off first. Just saying it makes me feel so horrible! But it's true."

Although she's talked to other parents about having one child that's more difficult than the other, she's never confided to anyone that she likes one of her twins better. "I feel guilty, like I must be a bad person," she says. "It's as though there's an important good parent gene missing from my genetic make-up."

So is McDonnell a terrible mom? Not at all, says Dr. Ellen Weber Libby, a psychotherapist in private practice in Washington D.C. and the author of [*The Favorite Child: How a Favorite Impacts Every Family Member for Life*](#). According to Dr. Libby, having a favorite child is normal and nothing to be ashamed of. Furthermore, favoring one child more than the other doesn't mean you

don't love them equally. Love and favoritism, Libby says, are completely different.

"There's a lot of confusion between love and favoritism," she says. "People know a lot less about favoritism which is a reflection of an attitude and varies by time and children." Loving parents are committed to all their children's overall wellbeing, safety, and health, and in return their children feel secure within the family. Favoritism, on the other hand, depends on how well the child makes the parent feel. That's why easy-going children are usually favored over difficult siblings, for instance.

HOW DOES FAVORING ONE TWIN BEGIN?

In families with multiples, favoring one twin or triplet over the others can often feel glaring, at least to the parent who feels the pull. After all, they were born on the same day, reaching developmental milestones at nearly the same time. So why don't you feel the same bond with each child?

"Even with identical twins there are no identical experiences," Libby explains. "Everybody has his own place in the womb from the very beginning and somebody does come out first. Each twin is born with his own personality and with his own character traits that will affect how a parent resonates with one or the other." In other words, it's normal to have different relationships with each of your children.

But from the moment of birth, a mother's bonding experience with her twins is different than that of a mother of a singleton, especially if one of her twins needs to stay in the hospital longer than the other.

For instance, when Arlene Norbert's boy-girl twins were born two years ago, her daughter required a 22-day stay in the NICU while her son could go home right away. "I was able to spend more time with our son than our daughter when they were infants," she says. "I felt a much stronger bond with him."

So was it that three-week head start in mother-child bonding that helped cement Norbert's stronger attachment to her son? Probably so, experts say. In fact, research has shown that mothers often develop a stronger affection to the twin that left the hospital first. And the longer one twin remains hospitalized the less favorably the mothers in the study felt towards that baby prompting some in the twin community to call for a reevaluation of when infant twins should be released from the hospital, preferably at the same time. Or, at the very least, hospitals should consider offering counseling to those families whose newborn twins require a long stay in the NICU.

In Norbert's situation, she had uninterrupted one-on-one bonding with her son each day as she fed, bathed and rocked him. Furthermore, she had to travel nearly an hour to the NICU—not the most intimate of environments—to visit her daughter.

Yet for other parents, like Allison Neiman, it's her twins' opposite personalities that made the difference. "When my daughter began talking and really started to express herself, I saw more of my personality in her and we just clash in that sense," explains Neiman, the mother to three-year-old boy-girl twins. While her son is more laid-back and loves to snuggle, her daughter is like a tornado constantly on the go. "I feel awful about it," she says of favoring her son. "I've seen how favoritism has affected my husband as his mom blatantly prefers her daughter to him, and I don't want that for my kids."

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAVORITISM

When a parent showers one child with more attention and/or privileges than the other children in the family, it can negatively affect everyone. For instance, Dr. Libby points to the brother who is the star athlete, living out his father's dream while the rest of the family is expected to schedule their lives around his practices and games. Other examples of unhealthy favoritism is when a parent brags repeatedly about one child and little about another, disproportionately agrees to the requests of one child, or rarely holds a favored child responsible for his actions.

Recent research has shown that less-favored children can battle feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, and even depression. Their relationships with the favored child suffer, too, causing a lifetime of resentment and sibling rivalry. It isn't all positive for the favored child either as he may develop a feeling of entitlement throughout his life. Furthermore, the favored child may live with tremendous guilt from his preferential treatment as well as

battle anxiety as he tries to live up to parental expectations or lose his favored status within the family.

But the way Dr. Libby sees it, admitting to having a favorite child isn't one of the biggest taboos in parenting, *not* admitting having a favorite is. Kids are smart sensing when one child is strongly favored over the others. "When kids will say, 'Tommy's the favorite.' Parents are quick to respond, 'Oh, no. I treat all my children equally,'" explains Dr. Libby. It's that defensive response that simply doesn't ring true. "The only way favoritism can be destructive is if you're defensive about it," she says. "What's really important is that parents are open to what's being talked about, and that parents listen to children's perceptions."

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Although a mother's love lasts a lifetime, favoritism may or may not. In healthy families, however, everyone at some time gets to be Mom's or Dad's favorite. As your family grows and life evolves over the years, so too will your favorite. In some families favoritism changes developmentally, some preferring the sweetness of toddlerhood while others are drawn to the challenges of the teenage years. In other families, the favorite is tied by interest—sport, hobbies, even books.

"Once you know that favoritism is normal, then you can be open to people who say, 'I know you have a special bond with Tommy but the privileges you give him are a little excessive, and the other children are feeling a little neglected,'" explains Dr. Libby. "Then you can look back and reflect and admit to that being true." Without the defensiveness, a parent can then figure out the best strategy to even the playing field among all her children.

One way is to spend quality time with the less-favored child doing what she likes to do. "If you're going to spend time with your less-favorite child you have to be thoughtful about the activity that has meaning to this child even if doesn't have meaning to you," says Dr. Libby. If you love sports but your less-favored child likes to play with Barbie, it will be meaningless for her to take her on an outing to the park.

Allison Neiman agrees and is working hard at connecting more with her daughter. "I've been trying to spend more one-on-one time with her," she says. "I think it's important for us to have that time to really build a relationship with each other and embrace our likeness."

It's her openness and willingness to change her relationship with her daughter that will make all the difference. She's on the right road.

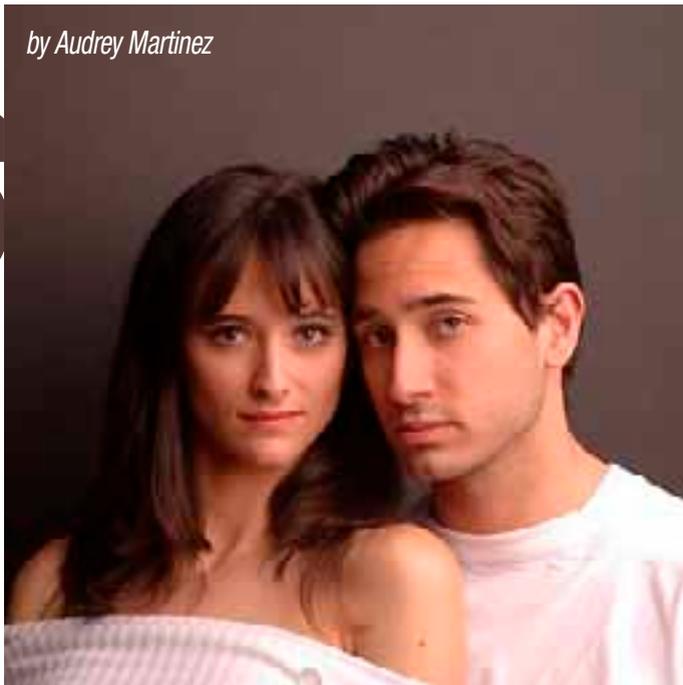
(* To protect privacy, all names have been changed.) 

Christina Baglivi Tinglof lives in Southern California and is the mother of three sons, including 15-year-old fraternal twin boys and a 13-year-old singleton. She's also the author of *Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples*, and *Double Duty*. She blogs at christinabaglivitinglof.com and runs the website talk-about-twins.com.

Gilles

A twin's celebration of her other half

by Audrey Martinez



Did you ever meet someone before you were born? I'm not talking about a past life, for I do not believe in resurrection, rather about a miracle... a miracle which takes place in the mother's womb.

I met Gilles at the time he

Audrey Martinez is a writer and biographer based in Los Angeles who specializes in inspirational memoir-writing for successful CEOs and entrepreneurs. Audrey's twin Gilles also lives and works in Los Angeles.

wasn't Gilles. I knew him for nine months before seeing the light of day. We took shape together; we made our way to the outside world together. Did we move at the same time, inside this warm place? Were we perfectly symmetrical, or rather disorganized, my head touching his tiny toes? Curled up against each other like saints, we were wonders of life.

A DIALOGUE— WE'RE TEN

Audrey: Gilles...Gilles, wake up...please...

Gilles: Mmmm...

Audrey: Please wake up, I'm scared...She touches his arm gently.

Gilles (half asleep): What is it...?

Audrey: I'm scared. It's the movie we saw. I keep thinking the Terminator will come into my room...

Gilles: Okay, okay. He rolls over towards the wall, making space for her in the single bed... enough to welcome her into his sleepy world. She hops in silently, experienced. It's warm in there. She can now sleep.

'FAKE TWINS'?

In French they call us "fake*" twins, as opposed to the "real" ones who are unisex and identical. But we are very real, Gilles

and I are both real, both extremely complex. Our genes have worked to make us very different human beings, yet we are, in many ways, the same. I couldn't really explain how that happens, it just does.

If the "real" in the concept "real twins" is based strictly on physical resemblance, then of course we are not real, for we are not flawless replicates. "You have the same eyes" is as far as it goes. Still I insist in claiming the full real potential of our twinship, not basing it on outward appearance but deeper below the surface, in the heart, the mind. We think at the same time, we feel what the other feels, the instant they feel it. We'll stay hours without talking and when we finally do, we come at each other with the same word or thought. Start singing the same song out of the blue. Our telepathic vibes never cease to amaze me. His laugh is an echo in my heart, his pain a pinch in my



heart. I see him cry and I cry. My voice takes on this funny tone; it's quivering and I feel the pull in my throat. We are either both happy, or both sad—but never one in each state.

HEADQUARTERS

Secret agents report to headquarters after a mission. Headquarters can be money mines, drug mines; where men in black suits hide behind black shades. Where secret files circulate on the murderer we try to arrest, or the agent we try to murder. Yet we redefined headquarters, he and I. An analogy-free word, it became. Headquarters was Gilles for me, me for Gilles. Usually it took place after the family meals, during the traditional afternoon nap or before going to bed, although any time was good for Headquarters. It was this place where we would be free; we would be together. No material thing could make us feel this content. It was so simple, yet so true, so right. I would snuggle against him in his bed, or mine; he would rest his head on my chest, his hair touching the skin below my chin. Just so I could lay thousands of kisses on his head, his forehead. So I could caress his hair and hear the muffled groans of pleasure.

He came out first and made a clear statement of it, too. It was a messy, butt-first arrival into the world, a very dangerous way to be born, according to gynecologists. I followed, gliding out, "like a bar of soap," mom always says... "With elegance and in a matter of minutes, too" People always ask: "Who's the oldest?" and I tease him with the *'Theory of Twins'*. That theory states that whichever twin was born last is the oldest. I tell him it's because the one to come out second has been refined more than the other one, more "polished" as it stayed longer inside the womb. It is just a tease, for he is so complete, so perfect. He fascinates me.

ABOUT DREAMS

I wake up crying. I'm confused, disoriented, and miserable. A dream; it was just a dream. Uncontrollable tears running down my cheeks. I don't stop them; I need the relief. Gilles died in my dream. It was all so confusing, as dreams tend to be. You could be a fish in a dream, and it would feel normal, to breathe in water and bubble along. Dreams are irrational and transcendent. They are the unconscious unfolding its unreasonable imagination. They offer merely snapshots of people, places and situations which have been recorded and rearranged with other unconscious thoughts to give them a new twist. In my dream we were on a plane, then suddenly I wasn't on it anymore and it crashed. Gilles went down with it. How could I possibly go on? How can you breathe without air for your lungs?

He is my half, my reason to live. Love of my life, of my heart, of my existence, I tell him. He is a song in my mind, a happy and beautiful melody about love and trust and respect. I saw him grow, from my "little baby" as I called him, to a grown man. I protected him and now he protects me. I led the way, encour-

aged him and now he walks by my side, confident, aware. I love everything he is every day that goes by. It seems like only yesterday when he showed me the first hairs on his chin and how excited he was at shaving them off. That he made his first cake for me and offered me the first present he chose on his own. The memories blend together and they are eternal. We know our twinship knows no bounds and have demonstrated this bond our entire life. ♥

**"Faux jumeaux"* in French is the accepted term for fraternal twins.



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The Costco Hug

I drop the jumbo package of string cheese in my oversized Costco cart. With that final thud, all items on my shopping list are checked off. I

point the cart toward the checkout line and heave it forward. My twins, Amelia and Truman trail behind me, each balancing handfuls of white paper cups and nibbling the remains of their samples.

As we approach the checkout aisles, I scan the rows of waiting people to find the shortest line. All the lines have at least five costumers. I pull to a stop behind a man whose cart is

filled with paper cups and plates and begin the long wait. In the bright florescent light my eyes wander from the mountain of empty boxes stacked against the far wall to the granola bars and fruit snacks strategically placed so close to the check-out lines.

"Can we have a hotdog?" Amelia asks holding out her empty white cups and looking longingly at the hotdog counter. I glance at Truman. Unlike his sister, he has savored his samples. He still has a pile of jelly bellies and half a dinosaur-shaped chicken nugget left.

"Not today," I tell her. "We've got to get back to meet the school bus. Elise and Madi will be home soon."

Amelia's disappointment fades quickly as she turns her attention to the shopping cart. She climbs it like a jungle gym placing her feet on the bottom rim, holding onto the side bar, and leaning back.

"Careful," I warn as I hold the handle more firmly. Truman pops the last chicken nugget in his mouth then joins

his sister on the opposite side of the cart. He holds on one-handed, the other clutching the cup with jelly bellies. I let them play—at least, with both on either side, there's less chance of the cart tipping over.

I urge the cart forward, carefully now that it has passengers. And as I do, a commotion erupts in the checkout line next to ours. I turn to look. A woman stands in line, clearly in distress. Her cart holds two baby carriers. One carrier is in the bed of the cart, the other is hooked to the handle. Groceries are piled in the nooks and crannies around the baby carriers making it look like an overflowing gypsy caravan. Both babies are crying. The woman pulls two pacifiers from her purse, and stretches her arms out trying to reach both babies at the same time. A third child, just a toddler, pulls on her pant leg.

"Mommy," she cries. "Hold me!"

As I watch a few seconds more, I see the woman wipe away her own tears. Clearly, she is at her wits end. And oh, how I know what she's going through. Looking at her is like looking at me just a few years before.

When my twins, Amelia and Truman, were born, I had a three year old and a two year old (*Madi and Elise*) at home. During that first year, I forgot what it was like to sleep more than one and a half hours at a time. That was the year I changed more than 3500 diapers. Showers were a weekly (*not daily*) luxury, mealtime was a marathon, the kids' bath time felt like a WWE wrestling match, and going to the grocery store was not an outing...it was a test of sheer endurance. That first year, I thought I was failing motherhood on every level.

Looking at the woman in Costco, I recognize the shadows under her eyes, the unwashed hair, and the tears of pure exhaustion and frustration. I pull my cart out of line and go over to her. "Can I help

you?" I say, smiling as encouragingly as I can.

"Yes, please," she says, barely looking at me. She hands me a pacifier. "If you can get him to be quiet, then I'll work on her." I peek into the first carrier. There is a beautiful baby boy dressed in blue, his face red with crying. I tip the pacifier into his mouth and gently stroke his cheek with my fingers. After a few moments, he quiets. Truman offers the toddler a jelly bean, and she stops crying.

When all is calm, I turn to the woman and say, "I have twins, too." I point to Truman and Amelia. "They're five now and in morning Kindergarten." I go on to explain that I also had young children at home when the twins were born.

"It's really hard," she confesses. "I know," I tell her. "But you're doing a great job." Then quietly so that only she can hear, I add, "It gets easier." "Really?" she asks. "Really!"

Her eyes moisten again, but this time it's not frustration. It is hope. And then something unexpected happens. She reaches out and hugs me. Right there in the middle of Costco...amongst the other shoppers and carts and under the hum of the florescent lights. And... because I've been there—been there in the exhaustion, been there in the self doubt, been there needing the assurance that not only am I doing a good job, but that it does, indeed, get easier—I hug her back.

Mothering twins has changed me in many ways. I can multitask like never before. I can whip up a meal in three minutes flat. I can tolerate stereo crying. I can hold four children on my lap at once. But mothering twins did something else. It made me an instant sister with other mothers of multiples. Because of being a mother of twins, I can hug a complete stranger in Costco—and it doesn't feel strange at all. ♥

Holly Abbe is a mother of five children, including twins. Her hometown is Hamilton, Virginia, but she currently lives in Jakarta, Indonesia (where she misses Costco greatly!) She is a writer of stories, an adjunct professor of English, a baker of pies, a reader of good books, and a novice international traveler. She is a full-time mom, and she loves her job.

TRAINING KIDS

by Dave Couch

We wish as parents that our kids will always respect us, listen to our hard won advice, and do the chores quickly and on time. It all comes down to the training you give your children, passing on all your accumulated knowledge in a thoughtful, straight-forward manner. Plans are made for babies prior to their arrival, their development all charted out; starting from the first day babies arrive at home.

We now know this is all a crock. Most of us had no idea what to do with the squirming little munchkins when we got home from the hospital. We flew by the seat of our pants, handling things on the fly and trying to keep up with the changes in our home life (*i.e. lack of sleep*). Get advice from our parents and grandparents? Sure, if you could remember your name from day to day, you might even remember to ask them what the heck was coming next. If they were honest with you, they would tell you "Hang on, you stay just as busy, but in a different way".

If they were sympathetic, they wouldn't laugh outright at your questions. That little jig they do when your back is turned will be the same dance you do when your kids have kids.

I started training my kids actively when they were just newborns, by accident. With twins, there was no chance of me getting away without helping with the feeding, changing, holding, etc. My darling wife would finish feeding one then I would burp and change the first while she was working on the second. By the time I would put the first to sleep, the second would be ready and my wife would head to bed while I chanted softly into their ears, "Burp for me, burp for me, burp for me, kiddo". Life in the fast lane at four in the morning let me tell you.

About a year later, I was feeding the kids' breakfast, one at each end of the table in their highchairs, me shuttling back and forth with the curvy spoons full of porridge. Somewhere

in the conversation with my wife, one of us said "burp". It was probably me. After all, it's a guy thing. Anyway, as I was trying to feed my daughter, she looked at me and said, "Aaacck". Blinking twice, I tried to feed her again when my wife said "What's with your son" (He's always *my son* when he's doing something questionable - which is appropriate, if truth be told). I looked over at the boy and he was straining to get something out of his month. He paused and tried again, mouth wide open and pushing air out. All of a sudden they stopped and motioned for more porridge. My wife and I looked at each other with fear in our eyes, suddenly realizing we had two alien creatures in our midst. Do we call 911 or the local exorcist? They don't cover stuff like this in pre-natal class.

Just before the panic of the unknown set in, it came to me in a flash. I said, "Burp for me, kids" and again my daughter lets out a hearty "Aaack" and my son tries his best to let a ripper go. Unbelievable and more to the point, more fun than a barrel of monkeys! Everywhere I went with the kids, I had to show off their talents like every good father does. I got a free round of beer from the Fire Chief but a dirty look from his wife. The butcher had a great laugh and complemented me on how talented the kids were becoming. I got the cold shoulder and rolled eyes from the cashier lady, but it didn't matter.

I now knew that I was going to be alright - children were trainable, and I had trained mine without even knowing. If that isn't perfection, nothing is. ♥

Dave Couch spent 26 years in Public Safety before becoming a Technical Writer. He then wanted to do something fun for himself so he now writes a bi-weekly column for his local weekly newspaper reminiscing about all the interesting things he has experienced in his life. He has three kids, including a set of boy/girl twins, now nineteen years old and a seventeen year old son.



Double Takes



1 Finlay & Sheadon
FR – 1-years-old
Baldwinsville, NY



2 Baillie and Chase
FR – 11-years-old
Northampton, PA



3 Kailey & Kole
FR – 6-years-old
Aurora, CO



7 Sydney & Shelby
FR – Age 1 in photo but now they are 7
Slidell, LA



8 Krista & Kayla
ID – 4-years-old
Dundee OH



9 Savannah Jane & Sawyer Jonathon
FR – 18 months old
Lone Jack, MO



13 Isabella & Victoria
(Twin-Type) – 1-years-old
(City/State)



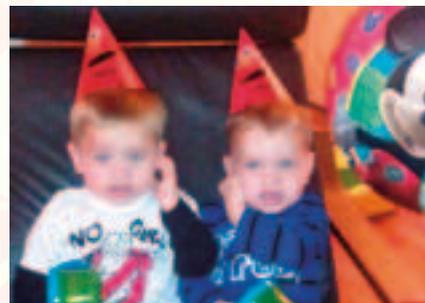
14 Stavroula & Georgia
ID – Age 6 in photo but now they are 11
Glen Head, NY



15 Nickolas & Caleb
FR – Age 1
Ocala, Florida



19 Luke & Nathan
ID – 3 years old
Miami, FL



20 Caleb & Colin
ID – Age 2
Howell, Michigan



21 Grady Dow & Ramsey Jack
FR – 1-years-old
Pasco, WA 99301



4 Sarah Caleigh & Ashley Marie
FR – 5-years-old
Level Green, PA



5 Kevin & Corey
ID – Age 1 in photo but now they are 8
Martinsburg, WV



6 Maddi & Kenzi
ID – Age 1 in photo but now they are 14
Slidell, LA



10 Joshua and Emily
FR – 4 years old
Phoenix, Arizona



11 Miley & Callie
FR (Easter Birthday) – 3 years old
Royston, GA



12 Alexis & Natalie
FR – 3-years-old
Augusta, Maine



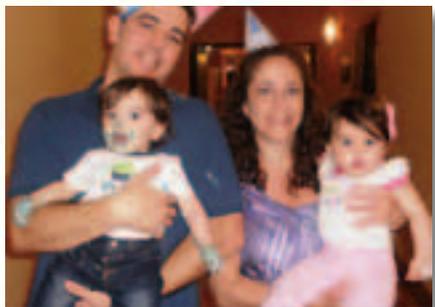
16 Wicher & Lauris
ID – Age 1 in photo but now age 2
The Netherlands



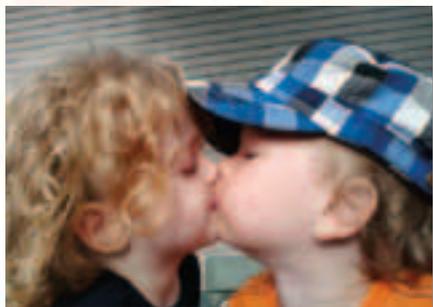
17 David & Dylan
ID, – 7-years-old
Miami, Florida



18 Aleah & Aliza
ID – Age 1 in photo but now age 7
Chattanooga, TN



22 Lola & Dominick
FR – 1st birthday in photo but now age 2
Tampa, FL



23 Noah & Grayce
FR – 3 years old in photo but now age 4
Vancouver Canada



24 ?? Kimberly Bolz-Sweebe is mom
FR – 1-years-old
Jonesville, MI



Continued from page 11

PREGNANCY

HYGIENE

Bath sponge: One is essential. Baby bath tubs may be awkward and were seldom used by the surveyed mothers.

Nasal aspirator: One for each baby to clear oral and nasal secretions. Most hospitals provide these.

Infant nail clippers; Baby Soap; Shampoo; Lotion; Baby thermometer: one of each item for entire set of multiples ♡

LOL—Our Quest for Some Sleep continued from page 37

know what an Allen key was before that day, but I thought I had figured it out enough to tighten up the hardware. When I was finished, I placed William in his crib and Adam in his crib to try them out. William, the more rambunctious of the two, jumped around and shook the bars on the side like a monkey in a zoo. Adam thought he was so hilarious, that he grabbed the bars and started shaking, too. Oh, I thought, look how much they are learning from each other. This move is going to be so good for them!

That evening, during after-dinner drinks, Dharmesh put the boys in their new room and tucked them into their cribs. Neither seemed very tired, and I had to go upstairs several times to tell them to go night-night. Thinking they were going to settle down, I pulled up a stool at the counter next to my girlfriend, ready to chat. I had just picked up my glass when, suddenly, we all felt a thunk and a bang through the ceiling just below

their room. Dharmesh and I flew up the stairs holding our breath, waiting to hear screams through the door.

What we heard was far from howls of pain. William stood next to his crib, holding the side rail as it dangled by one corner on the floor. He cackled and giggled and shook it, making monkey sounds the whole time. Adam, had shaken his crib railing so hard, a slat broke off and lay on the floor. He was crawling halfway out the hole when he saw us. Both looked up at us with toothy grins and then back to each other in laughter. My twins had committed their first caper together.

Once again Dharmesh and I lost sleep for a period of time, this time from listening for little renegade footsteps in the night. I learned two valuable lessons from this experience. Never assume you know how to use an Allan key. And buckle yourself in tight for a rollercoaster ride with twins. You may be tired, but you will never be bored. ♡

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Shopping Spree – Set up a miniature shopping mall, complete with several mirrors. Offer items such as friends' play clothes for dress-up games and garage sale treasures. Give each guest a purse of pennies or play money to buy her dresses, jewelry, hats, scarves, accessories, as well as makeup!

Top the afternoon off with a tea at your own "restaurant" on little tables and chairs.

Scavenger Hunt – Make a list of items to be scavenged, putting a time limit on the hunt. The team who finds the most items wins.

Craft projects – Make seasonal crafts, such as ornaments, colored eggs or decorated cookies.

Little Theater – Let young children dress up in simple costumes and act out a play, with an adult as the narrator. Substitute names of the guests and hosts for names in the play!

TV Show – Let the children perform a TV show, giving guests' parts to play like the host, celebrity guests, commercial announcers, newscasters and sportscasters. Allow the guests to invent their own script, or write one of your own before they arrive and record the 'show' on a video recorder to show everyone when they are done!

by Mary Ann Rutherford

From the Heart...what is the real deal with **Valentine's Day?**

February 14 is the day we express heartfelt greetings to someone special. Do you know the origins of the various Valentine's Day traditions, many of which date back hundreds of years?

During the middle ages, young men and women drew names to see who would be their valentines. They would pin the names to their sleeves, hence wearing your heart on your sleeve.

A love seat is an oversized chair made for a woman wearing a wide dress. Sometime later, the seat had two sections so that a couple could sit together.

After the Duke of Orleans was captured at the battle of Agincourt in the fifteenth century, he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. He wrote love poems to his wife—

beautiful valentines. Many of them are now displayed at the British Museum.

One of the Henry IV of France's daughters gave a St. Valentine party and each lady received a bouquet, starting the tradition of sending flowers on Valentine's Day.

So, whether you're hoping for a declaration of devotion, a bouquet of blossoms or a romantic rendezvous, mark your calendar with a bright red heart. You never can tell what cupid has in store for you! ♥

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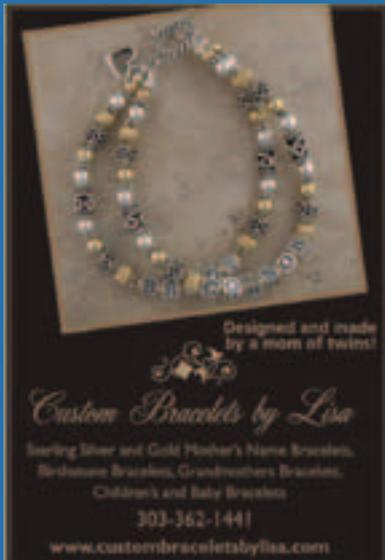
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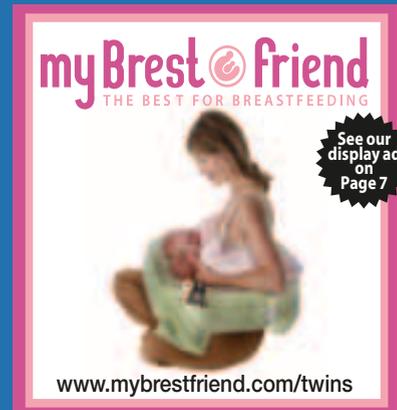
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Our Quest for Some Sleep

by Sheryl Parbhoo

There I was, propped up by pillows in bed, nursing my two newborn babies. It was our first night home from the hospital and my husband, exhausted by all that he had been through with the twins' birth, snored beside me. I peered at the boys' tiny faces, which were illuminated by the glow of a nightlight, and watched their eyes.

But I wasn't admiring their beauty. I was studying them for signs of sleep. Eyes shutting, tiny fists relaxing, any sign of sleep would do. But the sandman had skipped them and made a beeline for me instead. While they made precious gulping noises and wriggled their itty bitty fingers as they nursed, my head began bobbing. I had to will myself to stay upright. When I came to, I looked down at them, hoping to see two slumbering bundles. Instead, I saw what was to be the beginning of my new life with twins. Adam was relaxed, mouth open, eyes closed in my right arm. In my left arm lay William, staring up at me and kicking his miniature toes into Adam's belly. Right then, I knew my nights of REM sleep were a thing of the past.

From that moment, my husband (*after I woke him up*) and I embarked on a desperate quest for sleep that lasted well into William and Adam's toddler years. I can count on two fingers the number of times the boys slept at the same time during the first year. Desperation was my middle name. Dharmesh came home from work once a week with a new book about how to get your child to sleep. They were informative books, but they missed one key element: how to force, cajole, or hypnotize two people with two different personalities to just go to sleep in unison! So, we tried another plan of

attack. We listened to other people's advice.

"Feed them at the same time. Then they will sleep at the same time." This idea came from a neighbor with three dogs, and no children. But my children had different appetites and I couldn't put them in the backyard when they made noise.

"Put them in the crib together. They will comfort one another," was another well-intentioned bit of wisdom passed down to us. It sounded like a good idea when an elderly lady in the mall elevator suggested it. However, this tactic would only have worked if my boys were comforted by fingers up their noses or feet in their faces. We found that they didn't really enjoy it.

"Try separating them in different rooms. The silence will help them sleep." Okay, it sounded good. And it worked. Thanks, Mom. Once separated, the twins didn't always sleep in unison. But when one woke up, at least the other one didn't. So, by the time they were eighteen months old, Dharmesh and I were seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. But alas, as everything does with young children, it all changed.

Suddenly, the boys became truly aware of each other. They would fight over a ball, or steal the other one's cup. They smiled at

each other and fed each other cheerios. As a mother, watching their interaction melted my heart and I wanted to encourage the bonding process. So, I decided, ignoring Dharmesh's pleas to let a sleeping dog lie, to move their cribs into one room and let William and Adam fully experience being twins. They were getting to be big boys, I thought. They were ready.

Piece by piece, I lugged the dismantled cribs into one room and to set them up next to each other. It was a Saturday, and we were expecting dinner guests, so I worked fast. I didn't

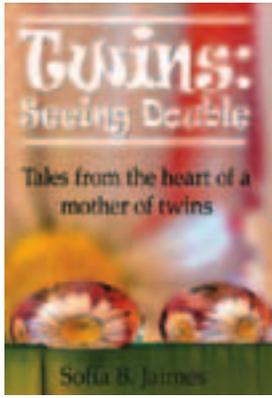
Continued on page 34



Sheryl Parbhoo is a stay-at-home mom and freelance writer. She lives in the Atlanta area with her husband Dharmesh and they have five children, Nick age 17; Alyssa, age 15; William & Adam, age 11 and Chase is four years-old.



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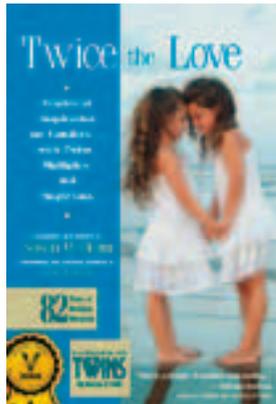
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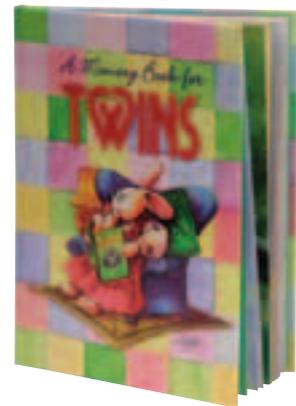
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