

LIVING WITHOUT YOUR TWIN

by Raymond W. Brandt, Ph.D., Ed.D.; Founder Twinless Twins Support Group Intl.

After hearing hundreds of one on one accounts of the devastation for survivor twins following their twin's death, I have come to certain observations that can be considered hallmarks and reliable predicates and parameters for therapy for grief loss management.

When many survivor twins, unbeknownst to each other, upon first interviews, use the same semantics, tell of the same emotional impacts, respond through life long searching to emotionally travel through the same "black hole," then those 'sameness' can be measured as certain truths. Truths symptomatic of the unique grief experienced by survivor twins who experience the loss of their physical twinning ranging from utero age death to geriatric age deaths of their twinship.

A psychic scientific professional is a non-microscope, non-chemistry lab scientist who studies comparative histories of similarities in emotional responses by patients who have certain commonness in their lives. Twins, all multiple conceived persons, have the unique phenomena of utero bonding which then is the common fabric weaving through their psychic causing them to be of one mind. The uniqueness must be accepted as the scientology of "twin-ness" which must be moved forth by scientific and clinical practitioners. As physical scientists abide by "laws of physics," so "twinologists" must accept certain "laws of multiple births."

Survivors always speak of "how do you go on with life as one when all you have every lived is life as two?" Twins intuitively think as two or in terms of two. There are hundreds of examples of twins buying two of things, focusing on numbers and objects matching. I am an example: when I built a house in the country, I chose its numbers 11220 (had to be 5 numbers). I always focused upon and was comforted by the 88 and 44 in my military number. There are many, many occasions when twins purchased each other identical gifts, some of them being incomprehensible decisions, yet the same.

Therefore, when one twin dies the survivor is thrown into a "twin spin" because they no longer know if they are still a twin. Many will say, "Am I still a twin?" "How do I now behave?" "Have I been transfixed into a single birth person all of a sudden?" "How do single conceived persons who have no utero bonding feel and behave - I am without any experience." "I know that my twin is not living but I still feel her or his presence in my life - this is all very confusing to me!!" And then there are all those well intended (hopefully) comments by family, friends, and single birth therapists who say, "You should put your twin behind you and go on with life." How can you put one half of yourself behind you? How do you go on 'alone' when alone you have never been? Twins are not chameleons and not an animal that can regenerate its tail. Twins look in the mirror and see their twin - "I know it's me, but I see my twin."

Twinless Twins always speak of their loneliness in the largest crowd. Their emptiness is even though surrounded by a loving family, never finding a spouse or a friend to fill the void. Of course, it is a chasm which can only be filled by their twin. They themselves do not understand the depth of their own loss. Bridging the separation is difficult.

How do Twinless cope with their grief and frustrations? What are the coping skills that come to be recognized for their beneficial remedies? The single most therapeutic 'jump start' is to understand that, "yes, I am still a twin!" If you are born a twin you will die as a twin. How can you split an egg and make two whole eggs, as it were. This is the most necessary acceptance, the step across the very human limiting concept that in order to be a twin there must be two persons who look alike or are alike as fraternal twins. The author struggled with this confusion for 35 years because the imprint is so strong. But when a Twinless Twin knows no other Twinless Twin with whom to share their feelings then they come to believe they are for some cause "different" and many Twinless during interviews have used that and similar semantics. "Wow, Dr. Brandt, you mean that I am not crazy after all? That all Twinless Twins feel as I do? Thank God! I am OK!"

The concept of being a single birth person is alien to the multiple birth person yet due to the extreme minority of twins in ratio to their single siblings and peers there is exceptional pressure to now assume the Twinless role as a single birth person. Being Twinless is actually a dichotomy; you are connected and born as a twin but you now live out your life as a 'singleton'. You are an apple but you have donned the skin of an orange. Underneath that façade you are still an apple.

Survivor twins experience major hurdles annually: birthdays, anniversary of their twin's date of death, and holidays are always very difficult concentrated days or seasons when all their loneliness and frustrations are heightened. These are further exacerbated by special memories like "how they would each share the same doll or each share the same bicycle, or how they would wear each other's clothing. Twinless females from a male twin death have an additional "double-whammy" - they not only suffer intensely from the loss of their womb-mate but they also suffer the loss of the male protector in their relationship. They no longer have the brother twin to look after them. Of the hundreds of Twinless interviews I am always additionally struck in sadness for the female twin who struggles on in the absence of her abiding twin brother. Sometimes one thinks there is no justice in life.

Twinless Twins Support Group, Int'l was founded in 1986 by Dr. Raymond Brandt, a Twinless identical twin, living in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This rapidly growing organization of survivor multiples provides a data roster of members and publishes Twinless Times for its members. Also, an annual Twinless Twins Conference is conducted every summer. Twinless Twins, spouses, families and friends attend - learning additional coping skills and how to support Twinless Twins.

Being Twinless is a stare of "hopelessness" turned into one of revitalized "twin wholeness." When certain predicates are accepted and practiced. The survivor accepts the reality of being Twinless yet a twin, that there are thousands of other Twinless who experience the same parameters of loss and loneliness. The energy sometimes expended in "drunken despair" are turned into one of outreach to other Twinless twins. They practice the H-H Twins: Heal by Helping others. It works and is worthy of a try.

There is no magic Twinless pill. No other human person can bear your burden; your spiritual life will be your greatest comfort. Some Twinless sadly turn to Jack Daniels; some in despair, suicide, but I always ask myself, "Is this what I would wish Robert to do if I had died instead?" Whatever your choice of response is, may it be to the glory of God and in honor and respect to your twin.