

TWINLESS TIMES

WINTER 2020

HELPING TWINS WHO
HAVE LOST THEIR TWIN



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Twins,

As we approach the holiday season, I recognize that this is a difficult time for many twins dealing with bereavement and loss. This year, in particular, is more difficult because many of us will also be separated from our loved ones physically due to the pandemic. I also know that COVID-19 has impacted us all, but that we don't always know what each of us is facing personally. For example, we have twins who have had COVID-19 directly and recovered or who are currently battling it. And we have some new twinless twins who have lost their twins due to COVID-19. Even if you haven't contracted COVID-19 directly, there are stresses we are facing - We have twins struggling with distance learning for their school aged children; We have twins who are grieving the loss of a loved one from COVID-19 or other reasons; We have twins worried about the health of themselves or their loved ones because of being considered high risk; We have twins who are struggling financially because they or their partner lost their job or is furloughed due to COVID-19 and the resulting economic crisis; We have twins struggling to work from home due to not having a quiet secluded workspace; We have twins who wish they could work from home but who bravely go on-site each day; We have twins suffering from extreme loneliness since they are homebound and disconnected from family and friends; We have twins who are impacted by more than one of these things that I just listed and by other challenges not listed. This organization is comprised of twin volunteers who are also going through these challenges as well.

This is why it is really important that we be kind to ourselves and others right now. My advice is to give each other the benefit of the doubt, to be patient, and to assume positive intent. Remember that the tone of written communication can be hard to understand even in nonstressful times. During the pandemic, we are relying on technology more and more to connect and it is so frustrating when technology fails or there is user error or there are misunderstood

words. So, when technology fails or you get frustrated, don't be so hard on yourself or others. And please check in with yourself to determine how you are coping with these stresses and if you need help, please reach out and ask for it. You are not alone.

I continue to be amazed at the power of our resiliency, both as individual twins and as an organization, and I am deeply grateful for what we have been able to accomplish despite these stresses that we have. At times, I feel like we should be doing more, but then I remind myself that we are doing the best we can be doing under the circumstances. What we have been able to accomplish is due to the wonderful twin volunteers and our dedicated twin Executive Director, Michelle Getchell, who give their time and talents to make sure TTSGI continues to exist to provide a safe and compassionate community for twinless twins to experience healing and understanding.

Despite the pandemic, our work continues. The board of directors is getting ready to meet virtually for our winter board meeting where we will continue to strategize how to better connect with and support twins during this pandemic. Our regional coordinators are hard at work hosting numerous virtual gatherings. Our Facebook moderators are welcoming and tending to the ever-growing Facebook membership. We again have a generous twin who has agreed to match year-end donations dollar for dollar in our annual "double the donation" campaign. We also have our dedicated Twinless Times Co-editors who spend weeks lovingly preparing these quarterly newsletters. There is so much love and generosity in this organization, and I am so thankful to be a part of it. I am also so thankful for all the twins who have reached out and supported another twin. That is who we are and what we do. As we embark on the holiday season, this is the time to be kind to yourself, to check in on each other, and to know that you are not alone.

Lea Eriksen, President



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THE EMPTY CHAIR

by Sandy Goad, twin to Jim

SHELTERING TREES

Samuel Coleridge, upon observing trees in his garden one day remarked: "Friendship is a sheltering tree." What a beautiful description of that special relationship. We all need sheltering trees. Sheltering

trees are special people that are put in each of our lives. They stand strong beside us so we can face the highest mountain and the climb won't feel so high or cross the darkest valley and it won't seem so wide.

Twinless twin friendships are like sheltering trees. During the storms of our lives, their presence provides a place of refuge where we can run to find support, encouragement, acceptance, love, and hope . . . and know that we are not alone. They not only stick with us as we grow, but they also make us want to be better versions of ourselves. Through their example and their kindness genuine friends bring out the best in us.

Donna VanLiere, in her book titled *Sheltering Trees* states, "A friend doesn't have a particular size or face, skin color or age, position or wealth. There are no rules or demands, conditions or limitations - friends are simply people who choose to open their lives to someone else, sharing joys and burdens, hardships and triumphs - not because they have to, but because they want to."

Over the last 21 years as a member of Twinless Twins Support Group International, I have often felt sheltered by twin friends who have been

faithful to really listen, encourage and support me through the trials in my life. They have provided shade when the sun has been too hot and a refuge when the rain has poured too hard. Their trees are tall, their roots are deep, their branches wide.

In 1967, the Beatles released a song that is still an anthem for friendships today that said: I get by with a little help from my friends. I saw this being played out on a national level at our conferences and at the Mid-Atlantic meetings I have attended. I was just going through the pictures that I have taken over the years at our meetings. Many of us are still connected. Still supporting and encouraging each other. Still reaching out to other twinless twins who need to find refuge in their storms of life.

Francois Mauriac, a French novelist and laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature said, "No love, no friendship can cross the path of our destiny without leaving some mark on it forever." I want to thank those twins who were always ready and willing to give me support and encouragement over the years. Winnie the Pooh said, "If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day, so I never have to live without you."

Everyone needs someone to believe in them, care about them and encourage them. It is my hope that you, too, will find the priceless treasure of friendship through Twinless Twins and that you will offer shelter to other twinless twins when they need a place of refuge. Many of those friendships will last a lifetime.

MISSION:

TTSGL provides a safe and compassionate community within which twinless twins can experience healing, understanding, and the opportunity to help others cope with the loss of their twin.

TTSGI GUIDING PRINCIPLES: JOURNEY TO HEALING

TTSGI has four guiding principles:

1. Once A Twin, Always A Twin,
2. You Are Not Alone,
3. Healing by Helping,
4. Journey to Healing

The Winter Edition will focus on the second one:

YOU ARE NOT ALONE – Twinless twins need to be heard and to know they are “not alone” in their feelings. Every twinless twin has a history and a story to tell, a sorrow to express, a pain to endure, a twin to remember, and a life to continue to live. TTSGI encourages the sharing of stories and feelings in a mutually supportive environment without judgment or unsolicited advice. Members of TTSGI offer compassionate listening and emotional support for sharing and telling these stories. Information shared among twins is held in confidence in mutually supportive group settings.

Below is a story of a twin that illustrates what it means when you are not alone.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

By Grant Douglass, twin to Glen

In the early days of my loss, I only losing my twin but also our Just the thought of this terrified nothing. As my fear crept in, twinship and tugged insidiously when you feel our memories desperately try to gather remembering everything you and grief makes it all that much these precious moments the of reach. It was like this very fear of my memories disappearing was already coming true. The tiny few I found, like the moments we smiled together, all hurt. The most simple and beautiful ones now felt tainted by grief and had a stain that would not leave. The more I thought about them the more they hurt. Grief had found its way even into those. Now it all seemed to collapse like a house of cards. The memories I searched for evaded me, the ones I'd found had lost their joy. I hoped this wasn't going to become the new way of life.



struggled. I was scared of not memories we made together. me because I'd be left with it invaded every part of my at our bond. What happens might be under threat? You them all up by going back and can. But the mind is a funny thing harder. The more I searched for more they seemed further out

Then, for some strange reason, an idea popped into my head and looking back on it I feel my twin had something to do with it. I found one memory that didn't hurt, wasn't tainted by grief and wasn't fading away. This became my "go to memory" and the one I could instantly call on in any situation, no matter what my mood was it would keep both of us safe.

Little did I know that this memory would carry me when I was at my lowest point. It gave me hope and reminded me, that even though he had died he was still very much a part of my life. Later on, the memories were okay to revisit, some would come and go at different times. None held anymore pain and that one memory has stood the test of time. It was my life jacket in the harshest storms. It kept me afloat. So, if you get scared of losing your memories or they hurt, even the nice ones, know it's okay. Find one that doesn't hurt, one that still makes you feel good and enjoy it, use it, embrace it. It might be one of the best things you can do in tough times. I can still think of our go to memory and it still gives me an instant smile thirty years later.

HOLIDAY GIVING – GIVING SO THAT OTHERS MAY RECEIVE

As the Holidays approach, we would like to ask you all to consider giving this season to TTSGI in memory of your beloved twin.

Year after year TTSGI has been here for each one of us, for the twinless friends we meet at conferences and meetings, and for all new twinless twins reaching out for compassion and healing for the first time.

But the non-profit organization that supports us in our time of need also needs us to be there too! Especially in 2020. The cancellation of our annual conference due to COVID 19, has been particularly hard financially for TTSGI.

TTSGI provides us with first-class quarterly newsletters, conference planning and coordination, communication services via our website and telephone, financial management, a board of directors to provide guidance, regional coordinators, who are there for you, and so many “behind the scene” services. And, just like any organization or household we have a budget to meet, and we have a “wish-list.” *TTSGI can continue providing support and services with the loving help of all of us!*

How can we help? By sending TTSGI your donation or by making a pledge to give on a regular basis – monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually, whatever plan works best for you. By setting up a giving-plan you give TTSGI the gift of financial planning – and the essential resources to help us thrive and grow.

As in the past, we are fortunate that an anonymous donor of TTSGI will generously match all year-end donations received, so please give, knowing that your donation will be doubled for TTSGI.

If you agree that giving is receiving, please complete the donation form in this newsletter and send it to Michelle Getchell. She'll make the arrangements to deduct the amount stated from your bank account or credit card as instructed by you. Alternatively, you can send a check to Michelle on a regular basis. Donating online at our website is quick and easy. Any amount is welcome (but please “stretch” if you can!)

You can make a donation or pledge in memory of your precious twin – it's a gift that only you can give – so that TTSGI can continue to give back.

In Gratitude – Margaret Daffin, Fundraising Committee Chair



DOUBLE DONATION
Giving with the power of two!

Right now, through the generous gift of an anonymous supporter, any donation received will be matched, dollar for dollar if you give \$100, it turns into \$200!

Every gift, no matter the amount, will be used to help support hurting twinless twins around the world.

Make a donation today by visiting www.twinlesstwins.org or by sending a check made out to Twinless Twins Support Group, Inc. in the enclosed envelope.

2020 DONATION FORM



TWINLESS TWINS
Support Group INTL

Please enter the required information below if you would like to sign up as a Donor for Twinless Twins Support Group International.

Please print this form and mail it, along with your check, money order, or Visa/Master Card/Discover information to:

Twinless Twins Support Group International
P.O. Box 980481
Ypsilanti, MI 48198-0481
Or fax to: 1-888-205-8962

(Alternatively, you may make your donation online at www.twinlesstwins.org and use the DONATE button.)

Designate Funds – please check one:

- General Fund Conference Assistance Fund
 Scholarship Fund Matching Gift

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Country _____
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PAYMENT OPTIONS:

Amount of Donation: \$ _____
Canadian twins should send money orders in U.S. funds only

- In full at this time. Check enclosed Credit Card
 During the month of _____
 By making pledge payments of \$ _____ for _____ consecutive months/years.
 My company has a Matching Gifts Program. I am mailing a completed form.

Name of matching company _____

Recognition for the Newsletter _____

Name on Credit Card: _____

Type of Credit Card: _____ (Visa/MasterCard/Discover)

Credit Card Number: _____ (no dashes or spaces)

Credit Card Expiration Date: _____ (mm/dd/year)

Twinless Twins, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit tax-exempt organization and your donation is tax deductible within the limits of the law.

2021 TTSGI CONFERENCE



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DR. JOAN FRIEDMAN



Dr. Joan A. Friedman is a psychoanalytically trained psychotherapist who has devoted many years of her professional career to educating twins and their families about twins' emotional needs. Having worked through her own twinship challenges and parented her fraternal twin sons, she is a definitive expert on twin development.

She is the author of *Emotionally Healthy Twins: A New Philosophy for Parenting Two Unique Children* and *The Same but Different: How Twins Can Live, Love, and Learn to Be Individuals*. Her latest book, *Twins in Session: Case Histories in Treating Twinship Issues*, was published in June 2018. It is a book written for psychotherapists and educators who are seeking specialized insight into twin psychology. She has spoken to and consulted with culturally diverse groups of twins around the world. Dr. Friedman's work focuses on issues that adult twins confront as they adjust to life as singletons after having been raised as twins.

GIVE WHILE YOU SHOP

You can shop online and give to TTSGI at the same time!

iGive.com

[iGive.com](https://www.igive.com) will link you to hundreds of popular retail websites. A portion of your online purchases will go directly to Twinless Twins.

GoodShop

Use [GoodShop.com](https://www.goodshop.com) when you shop online – they work with more than 2,500 major brands, have over 100,000 coupons and donate a percentage (up to 20%) of every purchase you make to us.

AmazonSmile

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.



KEVIN'S CORNER

By Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian

MANZOOM

On Sunday, September 20th, I attended TTSGI's Manzoom, an exclusive twin gathering. Manzoom was moderated by Margaret Gron, twin to Edith, Regional Coordinator and 20 gentlemen members participated from all over the United States, Canada and all the way down under Australia. I enjoyed meeting new male twins and catching up with some old friends. I hope we'll be able to host more Manzoom twinless twin gatherings, for the ones that can't make regular regional meetings where they live. Reach out to Margaret if you are interested in being notified of upcoming Manzooms.



By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith, Twinless Times Co-Editor

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I'd like to extend my thanks to you for your membership to TTSGI. It is a gift to have a twinless twin organization to call our own and I'm so grateful for the brave heart of Dr. Brandt in giving birth to such. In creating TTSGI, Dr. Brandt's vision enabled us to expand on a community where a twinless twin can be validated and supported on a journey without their co-twin. Although Dr. Brandt and I crossed paths only a brief moment in time, TTSGI organization continues on and will continue to do so with your membership. Thank you!



REGIONAL ZOOM GATHERINGS:

For upcoming Regional Zoom Gatherings please check our website <http://www.twinlesstwins.org/events/> and your Regional Coordinator.

GATHERINGS & UPDATES

NORTHEAST REGION

By Eleanor Maddy, twin to George

The Northeast region has provided an Early Loss twin gathering specific to those twins who have lost their twin in the womb through 3 years of age. The latest Zoom virtual meeting was on September 13, 2020 and there were 15 participants; two were newcomers.

Instead of our usual format, only a few of the newer people shared their twin stories. The rest of the meeting was spent on the topic: "When you are having a hard time with your grief, how do you deal with it?" First, we have to accept our feelings and allow ourselves to feel them. At some point though, we will want to move on. Many in the group talked about the tools that they use to change their thoughts and outlook. These included: talking to a friend; journaling; making a gratitude list; focusing on happy twin memories; driving; walking or other exercise; listening to music; singing and praying. An early loss twin said she volunteers at a hospital NICU to give hope and strength to others. This reminded us that when we are helping others, we get some relief from our own pain and grief. By attending these meetings, we learn that no matter where we are on our grief journey, other twinless twins are with us to help get through it.



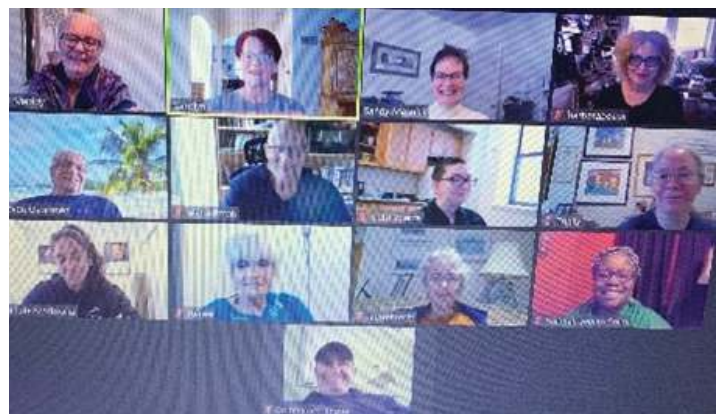
PRAYER FOR LONE TWINS

By Janet Baird, twin to Margaret

On this day when the Twin Towers fell,
We remember our twin loss.
Our twins who stood by our sides,
Whatever age they left.

Help us to be strong,
As we think of them today.
Like the Towers, we can never stand
together again.

Connect us with other lone twins,
Give us the courage to help them along
their path,
So, we can stand by each other and
find ourselves again.



GATHERINGS & UPDATES

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith

This regional gathering was held on October 16, 2020. We were privileged in viewing Penn State Universities newly released documentary *Speaking Grief*. Afterwards, we discussed what was learned from this documentary in smaller breakout groups and before leaving we finished our gathering with informal bonding and giggles amongst the best kind of friends; twin friends.



WEST COAST REGION

By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith

You are not alone is true in California. Twinless twins from California and Hawaii have Zoomed together a couple times recently. It's always a special time as we share twin stories.



TWINS: WHAT SCIENCE TELLS US

By Ruth O. Selig, twin to Rollyn

As all twins know, the non-twin world finds us fascinating. Most people know that identical twins, *monozygotic* (MZ) twins, develop from a single fertilized egg or zygote that splits into two identical halves, usually within the first two weeks after fertilization. By the time this splitting occurs, there are many cells in the zygote, but each cell carries within it virtually the same chromosomes with the same genetic code. Fraternal twins are *dizygotic* (DZ): they develop from two different eggs fertilized by two different sperm. Fraternal twins, like all siblings, share an average of 50% of their genes by descent, while identical twins share 100% of their genes.

Because of this unique biology, twins provide an elegant natural laboratory in which scientists can compare the effects of genetic and environmental factors, weighing the relative influence of what we are born with (nature) and what happens to us as we grow up under environmental influences (nurture).

In medical twin studies, researchers use large data sets of twin pairs - including information on disease incidence in one or both twins - to compare how often a particular disease occurs in both identical twins and both fraternal twins. If the disease occurs in much greater frequency in both identical twins than in both fraternal twins, this is evidence of genetic influence. By comparing large numbers of twins, researchers can understand more about the varied roles of genetic effects, shared environment, and unique environmental events in shaping the emergence of disease.

It is these studies that give us extremely useful statistics on the genetic risks of diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer. One study, for example, [estimated individual risk for 23 different cancers](#) using data on 200,000 twins in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland, countries where many twin studies take place because of the national health data registries available. Researchers estimate that when one fraternal twin is diagnosed with any cancer, the co-twin's risk of getting cancer is 37 percent; among identical twins, the risk jumps to 46 percent. The

study also showed that some cancers carry much higher genetic risks than others: for example, skin melanoma and reproductive cancers, such as prostate, ovarian, breast and uterine cancer.

Twin studies have been used to study numerous traits, from physical and mental abilities reflected in achievement in sports, mathematics, and musical performance to the incidence of a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia. Even personality traits like extroversion and motivation or behaviors such as religiosity and sexuality have been compared through twin studies. For many parents, twin studies demonstrating the genetic component of hyperactivity, eating disorders, drug and alcohol addiction, or autism spectrum disorders have given them hope that someday researchers will be able to identify causes and possible treatments for these behavioral difficulties that were once ascribed to poor parenting or other environmental factors.

A large number of twin studies are discussed at length by twin specialist Dr. Nancy L. Segal, Professor of Psychology at California State University, Fullerton (and former TTSGI Conference Keynote speaker, as well as a fraternal twin) in her 1999 book *Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell Us About Human Behavior*. In addition, Segal's website lists current twin studies in which twins and twinless twins can participate, as well as information about the many publications that Dr. Segal has written about twins throughout the past several decades. (<http://drnancysegaltwins.org>).

THE MINNESOTA STUDY OF TWINS REARED APART

Entwined Lives's chapter "Twist of Fate: Twins Reared Apart" tells the personal story of Segal's early involvement in twin research, when she joined the team at the University of Minnesota's Study of Twins Reared Apart, begun in 1979 by Dr. Thomas J. Bouchard, Jr. in the University's Department of Psychology. Her 2012 award-winning book, *Born Together-Reared Apart: The Landmark Minnesota Twin Study*, provides an even more detailed and comprehensive look at

this fascinating investigation. Other researchers had previously studied small numbers of identical twins reared apart, but Bouchard was interested in studying large numbers of both identical and fraternal twins who were separated at birth and reared in different families, a natural laboratory for assessing the different impacts that genetics and the environment make on a child growing into adulthood.

The born together-reared apart study found that an identical twin reared away from his or her co-twin had an equal chance of being as similar to the co-twin in terms of personality, interests, and attitudes as a twin who had been reared with his or her co-twin in the same environment. The role of genetics in determining such similarities was undisputed, and Segal's excitement at sharing in the happy reunions of such twins makes the chapter's stories electrifying. The conclusions Segal explains are equally dramatic, since the systematic study of large numbers of these twins confirmed the finding that "virtually all behavioral and physical traits are under genetic influence." At the same time, it was also clear to researchers that environmental factors and events experienced by only one twin also shaped every trait the scientists measured.

Because these twins had been raised apart, the study went to great lengths to measure the feelings of closeness twins felt to one another after reuniting. Here the difference between the identical and fraternal twins that emerged from the study was striking, illuminating both how shared genes and physical similarities or resemblance affect the closeness people feel to one another. Segal explained her experimental design:

"Twins responded to four questions concerning initial and current feelings of closeness and familiarity by selecting one choice on a six-point scale, ranging from 'closer than best friends' to 'less close than most people I meet for the first time' and from feeling 'more familiar than best friends' to 'less familiar than most people I meet for the first time.'"

When meeting for the first time, identical twins were more likely than fraternal twins to 1) anticipate becoming closer than best friends, and 2) find the twin more familiar than a best friend.

Segal writes in *Entwined Lives* that she found the study's results "dazzling": "Clearly the most revealing finding remains identical and fraternal twins' different perceptions of their new twinship."

The finding, however, was by no means absolute. After all, only a smaller proportion of fraternal twins (61%) felt "closer than best friends" compared to the proportion of identical twins (69%). For both fraternal and identical twins who had not grown up together, the proportion of twins with feelings of extreme closeness was well over 50%.

In the fall 2020 issue of *Twinless Times*, I discussed several twin studies of twins' relationships with their nieces and nephews and the role that physical resemblance may play in feelings of closeness both in these relationships and also among the cousins in the next generation (see [tt_2020_03_fall_web2.pdf](#)). These studies also emphasized the role that physical resemblance seems to play along with genetic inheritance in twins' perceptions of social, family, and personal closeness. Perhaps future studies will shed additional light on the relationship between physical resemblance and social closeness as well as other questions raised by these important twin studies.

Ruth O. Selig, recently retired from the Smithsonian Institution, serves on the board of the Twinless Twins Support Group International (TTSGI).

HONORED AND AWARDED

By Eileen Jensen, twin to Elaine

2020 is a strange year, one that we will never want to repeat. Thankful for TTSGI and the online Conference. It was absolutely wonderful to see faces and hear voices of twins. I do apologize for being so ignorant to Zoom that I cut in on a dear twinless twin. Really missed all the twin hugs and sharing in person as I am sure everyone did. A huge thanks for all those who helped in getting the Zoom meeting together. Remembering the Huntsville Conference in 2019 as I was honored to be the recipient of the Dr. Brandt Award. I was totally shocked and I do not remember what I said at the time of receiving this award. A huge thank you to all for this huge honor and award.



My identical twin, Elaine, was killed in a trucking accident in March of 1997. She and her husband started truck driving just eight months earlier. She walked in front of a parked semi, the driver had no idea she was there and pulled forward to close his back doors. She was knocked down and ran over, killed instantly. My twin's death ended my wonderful twin world, threw me into another world that I didn't know where I was or who I was. The pain that engulfed me is known only to twinless twins. I had no idea how to live, how to move and I really wanted to die and join my twin. Elaine was my leader, my confidant, half of me. I would sit and cry, unable to move, think, or concentrate. I could only pray "Please God help me". Twins are expected to live as one half after the death of their twin and singletons think we can just pick up and go on with life - but what life do we have?



My son and daughter in law found TTSGI as they had access to computers. That was the beginning of this long Twinless Twins journey and a wonderful place to share, cry, and hug so many twinless twins who knew exactly where I was

and all the feelings I was having. Twinless Twins journey is the hardest journey ever and I found that helping other twins did in fact help me. At the time of Elaine's death, I did not have internet, computer or cell phone, so letter writing was 'it'. Of course, I did have a phone, but to pay for each minute used was adding up too fast. I wrote letters to anyone who answered and not only twinless twins but also my two sisters.

My first 'conference' was in St. Louis, MO and the shock was that Dr. Brandt knew me just from my photo. We met in an old Monastery at \$25.00 per night! The introductions were amazing as Dr. Brandt stood next to each twin for support in telling our twin story. My husband and I were at a table with about three other twins. I was dreading when my time came, especially when Rick Lemmon, twin to Ron, said 'it just doesn't get any easier'. Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie, was also at my table and following her tragic story, I was able to get through mine. No matter how difficult telling one's story, it does help in the healing process. I have attended many conferences over the years, written many, many letters. I did manage to get a computer and cell phone which does change the letter writing to emails. I served as Regional Coordinator for the Southwest Region for a number of years. I was honored with the Angel Award in 2004. Paul Heiden, twin to Paul, presented the award and we both cried. Being twinless is a lifelong journey. My twin heart goes out to all twinless twins especially new ones as we all struggle along this path. We are here together and together we can survive this journey.

WHAT I AM LEARNING ABOUT GRIEF

Susan Schneider, twin to Robin



My identical twin died of ovarian cancer. We had never been sick, a day in our lives, never missed a day of school or a day of work. Twenty-two years into owning our business, Twin Horizons Travel, out of the blue, she was diagnosed on our birthday. We fought tremendously hard but, ultimately, this horrid disease was the one dragon that, together, we could not slay.

I moved in with Mom and Dad to help Mom care for Dad who was ill. He died one year after Robin, two weeks prior to Mom and Dad's 59th wedding anniversary. Almost immediately, Mom got a different kind of cancer, and I became her home hospice caregiver for several years till her death. We still have two living younger brothers and a sister in law, but almost half of our close family departed this earth within a few years. After some time, the sharp, jagged pain of grief subsides a little. My parents raised four children in an intact, loving home, and they were the best. They were also both very sick and I believe that they now have a radiant existence. As does my sister, I am certain, but we were not elderly when she died. For the rest of my life, I will deeply mourn her. Yet, I found myself volunteering for every worthwhile cause I could. Our friends and remaining family teased me about all my commitments, I told them that I was compelled to give back. So, when I read David Kessler's new book "Finding Meaning, the Sixth Stage of Grief", I instantly recognized the path I had chosen. All my efforts were to bring meaning to my life, and to theirs.

Then National Public Radio's poet invited listeners to create a group poem. He titled it "What I Am Learning About Grief" and asked contributors to start with that line, and write a personal

observation. Of course, he was probably asking people to consider their pandemic experiences, and many did. I went another way. As I was composing it, twice I stopped. I knew the feelings I wanted to convey, but could not find the right word. Both times, I asked Robin for the word I was searching for. Both times, I then emptied my mind and waited. And, both times, the exact word I was groping for popped into my head. Think what you will, but no one can dissuade me of the certainty that Robin and I created this poem together.

I would like to share the poem fragment that we wrote with all of you. I imagine that it will strongly resonate with some.

When Sadness swells, unbidden,
Threatening to overwhelm my soul

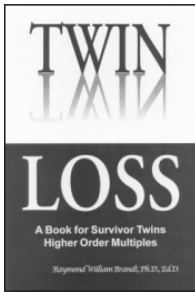
Kindness swoops from the misty bliss
Vanquishing sorrow
Bestowing healing grace

What I am learning about grief...

Loneliness is hard
But solitude transforms

The eloquent Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl wrote: "Man is destroyed not by suffering alone, he is destroyed by suffering without meaning." The Red Cross informed me that I had coronavirus antibodies in the blood I donated. Just yesterday I was blessed to be able to give convalescent plasma. My plasma will go to three sick people, one each in honor of Robin, mom and dad. For the remainder of my life, I will keep striving to fashion meaning out of mourning.

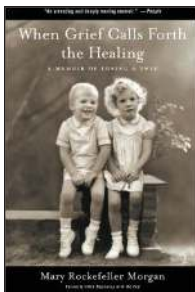
RECOMMENDED TWIN BOOKS



“TWIN LOSS”

By Raymond W. Brandt, PhD

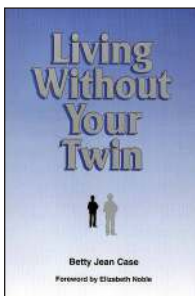
Dr. Brandt was the founder of Twinless Twins Support Group International and was considered by many an authority on twin loss. The 400-page book discusses all aspects of the loss and also speaks to the family members on how to help the survivor twin.



“WHEN GRIEF CALLS FORTH THE HEALING”

By Mary Rockefeller Morgan

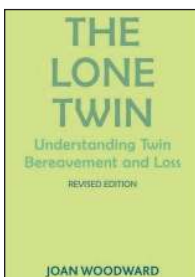
In this startlingly frank and moving memoir, Mary R. Morgan struggles to claim an individual identity, enabling her to face her twin brother Michael's death and the huge loss it engendered. With remarkable candor, she shares her spiritually evocative healing journey, which moves her forward into a life of new beginnings and meaning, especially in her work with others who have lost a twin.



“LIVING WITHOUT YOUR TWIN”

By Betty Jean Case

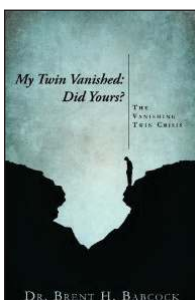
TTSGI receives a donation each time one of author Betty Jean Case's books is purchased through us. Betty was a twin, who grew up with twin siblings and had a set of twin grandsons. This 150-page book discusses how to keep living without your twin and best friend by your side. It also explores the uniqueness of twin loss.



“THE LONE TWIN: A STUDY IN BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS”

By Joan Woodward

The reader is taken through the closeness of being a twin, including its negative aspects and twins' need to be different to one another. But what happens when twins are separated, especially by death? The text examines death and bereavement of twins, including the parental attitudes to the surviving twin, the surviving twin's guilt, coping, bereavement in childhood and adulthood. The book also covers the psychological effects in later life for children who lost their twin at birth. Throughout, the book is illustrated by the words of lone twins themselves. This book is available through the TTSGI website or through the distributor, International Specialized Book Services. <http://www.isbs.com/partnumber.asp?pnid=307963>



“MY TWIN VANISHED DID YOURS?”

by Dr. Brent Babcock

A survivor himself of a vanished twin, Dr. Brent H. Babcock is sharing with the public for the first time his knowledge concerning the vanishing twin.



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WRITE FOR THE TWINLESS TIMES NEWSLETTER

All members are invited to submit articles for publication in the Twinless Times. The email subject should be “Twinless Times Submission.”

Submit to: twinlesstimes@yahoo.com

Stories about you and your twin are always welcome and rewarding to see in print. Our founder, Dr. Brandt, encouraged the act of writing as a means to healing.

We value articles about twin meetings, conferences, your healing journey, twin book reviews, poems, or words of wisdom. Photos can be emailed with your article in JPEG format. Please be sure to identify each person in your photos.

All articles should be sent as a Word document and we ask that you keep any article to 500 words or one page.

TWINLESS TIMES BY MAIL

We hope you are enjoying the full color electronic copy of the Twinless Times. However, if you are still interested in receiving the Twinless Times as a mailed hard copy, please send your name and address to Michelle Getchell at contact@twinlesstwins.org and she will mail it to you. Please note that the holiday issue will still be mailed to everyone.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Spring Issue: February 10th

Summer Issue: May 12th

Fall Issue: August 11th

Winter Issue: October 20th

Submissions should be emailed to:
twinlesstimes@yahoo.com

Twinless Times Co-Editors:
Margaret Gron & Emily Heekin

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