

# Forever Angels



*Hello Everyone,*

*I do hope your holiday season was peaceful and that you were able to find a place to collect your thoughts and breath. Not always an easy thing for bereaved parents, grandparents, siblings and friends at a family-focused time of year. Some of you will have gone through your first holiday season without your loved one(s). Nothing about that is easy or acceptable. I hope you were able to find a balance that worked for you.*

*I received a couple of interesting letters into my Web-Site earlier in the past couple of weeks and I wanted to share them with you in case something resonated with you. Sometimes, without meaning too, adults can influence survivors with their own limitations, denials, grief, and also perhaps, without realizing it, withdraw from their survivor(s). The reasons can be numerous and perhaps explained away, "if I love her, will I lose her too?" "If I don't talk about him it will hurt less." If this is the case, in reality we can do more harm than good to innocent parties in the mix. It is not easy to face the loss of a much-wanted child, but what about the survivors, and it could be another set of multiples, or even a singleton child? Do not our living children deserve the best of us? Must they always live in the shadow of what should have been? Do they not deserve the truth about their beginnings so that the family can cry and grieve together? We are so much stronger when we are a part of a loving group, be they family, friends, peers or loss support groups. Read on to hear from one young woman how she was blocked time and time again over years, from learning news of her deceased sister.*

*If you change your e-mail address and wish to continue receiving Forever Angels, please let us know so we can change our records. We appreciate hearing from you about anything at all.*

*Thinking of you,  
Lynda*

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## **A Surviving Twin Sister's Pain of Loss.....**

Hi Lynda, I have an identical twin sister who died a few days after we were born. My parents did not tell me for a long time, but I always had some sort of a feeling. As a child I was obsessed with twins. I told my mother I wanted to have twins when I grew up. I always pointed them out. I always talked about how I wished I had one. At one point when I was a little girl my grandmother told me that I had a twin sister who died, but when I tried to ask my mother about it she told me that was nonsense, and for many years I wrote off the entire event as having been a dream. Around thirteen my mother finally told me and it was... both not surprising and at the same time completely rocked my life.

My sister and I were premature and we both caught pneumonia. The doctors had no idea and my sister died as a result. In doing so she saved my life because she alerted the doctors to the fact that I was sick as well. I have a lot of trouble dealing with this. I can't think about my sister without bursting into tears and feeling grief so intense the pain is almost physical. I can't talk to my parents because it's obvious every time it comes up, they are not comfortable talking about her. And their discomfort ends up making me feel incredibly uncomfortable; I burn with shame for reminding them of her every time she is mentioned.

We were born in Soviet Russia and all medical records have long since been lost. As far as I know there are no keepsakes, no photos, and almost no information. I visited her grave for the first time a year ago and it was incredibly painful for me. I recently tried writing a letter to my sister, knowing it's a common therapy technique, but now she just feels that much more real to me and the pain is even more acute. A lot of the time I can cope with it simply because I am not thinking about it, but other times the grief is unbearable. I feel so angry because I feel that she \*should\* have lived and it was just pure carelessness. I can almost taste every feeling and emotion that would have bound us together, and it's like slamming into a brick wall every time I realize that it's been permanently denied to me. I have no idea how to reconcile myself with the fact that I can't have her back. I miss her terribly.

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**Lynda responds:** I am truly sorry for your loss and I am also sorry that your parents are/were unable to deal with their own grief around the loss of their child that you had to suffer the consequences. I don't think adults mean to inflict such pain but, even inadvertently, we can impose our feelings and insecurities on our children and they carry not only the adults' emotions but their own as well as they try to come to terms with and understand family secrets and pain.

I'd like to encourage you to leave your parents aside now (there comes a time when we can realize how we may have been let down on the parenting front, but we need to take steps to protect our present and future as we are no longer a helpless child. In other words, our pasts can make us or break us, the choice becomes ours.) and take the steps you need to ensure that you learn as much about your heritage as you can, perhaps look for grief counseling or connection with other lone twins. So much can be gained when we take positive steps to understand and integrate the unfair cards we have been dealt when we have no control.

Your sister was real, you indicate she saved your life and there is no greater gift one human being can give another. I am very sure she would not want you to change places with her and that she would want to live a full and happy life, remembering her and honouring her, on your birthday, or perhaps with contributions and kindnesses in your community and not let her death be in vain. One of the best things we can do for the deceased (and ultimately ourselves as well) is to remember them, no matter how short their lives.

If your grandmother, aunts, uncles or any other older relatives are still around, ask them privately what they know of her. Did they know her name? If not and your parents will not tell you, name her yourself. I am sure she would love that. Perhaps find yourself a beautiful box and keep your letters, cards, notes about your sister within. She may not be able to be with you physically, but she can spiritually. She is your Special Guiding Light.

Please accept my sincere condolences on the loss of your sister.

Hugs, Lynda

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There is no tragedy like the death of a child. Things can't get back to normal.

Dwight Eisenhower

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*You are always in our minds,  
No matter what we do.  
All the time within our hearts  
There are thoughts of you.  
The most beautiful things in our lives  
cannot be seen or touched.  
They must be felt in our hearts.*

~~~from an obituary

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A Mother's Pain.....

On June 30, 2007 I had twins but one of my sweet angels passed away at 31 weeks . On June 6, 2008 I had another set of twin girls but I can't get close to them because I am still hurting over my daughter's passing away. I think it was selfish of me to get pregnant again. I don't know how to explain to my surviving daughter why her twin died but her sisters have each other. To see my daughter it hurts. They look alike. I cry every single day. I don't know how to let her go. I held her in my arms, heard her little heart (beat) and felt her little kicks inside of me. I still tell people I have two sets of twins but I don't tell them one has passed away. Is that wrong of me? Do you think I should just let her go so she can finally rest in peace?

*Lynda responds:* Hello, I am so sorry to hear about the loss of your twin daughter. I can "hear" your pain between the lines of your note. I want to offer you some thoughts. When we decide to become parents, it is with the understanding that we will do the best we can for ALL of our children. As is often the case, each needs (and deserves) a different parenting style from us. However, we are the adults and our children are innocent bystanders to so much of what goes on in their early life. It is important that we be able to provide comfort, support, guidance, unconditional love and understanding as we direct them towards adult hood. The journey isn't always easy and certainly our own feelings might come into play. What is important to understand is that nothing about what happened to your daughter is either your fault nor the fault of your other children, especially her twin. She needs not to be "punished" because she survived. If you are having difficulty with dealing with the loss of your daughter, for the sake of all of your children, yourself and your partner, consider taking steps to help yourself cope with your loss. Enlisting professional help will certainly help in that regard. It is a huge burden for our living children to have to 1) try and make their parents happy in extenuating circumstances; and 2) live up to the ideal ghost of a dead sibling. Both of these things are impossible and each is sure to be a loser and by association, the parents will have failed at raising happy, emotionally healthy children.

I'm not saying you have an easy road to follow. You lost a precious child and then had two more girls so you have a constant reminder in front of you, times two, of what should have been. Please think of your living children and do what you need to do to make each feel secure and unique. Children internalize things as a way of coping and your surviving co-multiple, when she constantly sees and hears your sadness and takes on the burden of your message that she is a "loner," will only make her feel worse and perhaps have a profound negative impact for her whole life. This doesn't mean you shouldn't speak of your deceased daughter, and certainly sharing sadness and regret in a healthy manner teaches our children to handle disappointments and grief. It also doesn't mean that you can't mourn your daughter as an adult couple or on your own. Your discussions with the girls needs to be open and certainly not make your one daughter feel less than adequate because she does not have a "mate." She can still be a competent, productive, happy member of society and with your help and guidance this will come to pass. Is this not what we wish for all of our children whether they arrive in twos or not?

I hope these thoughts have been helpful. You (and your partner) are the leaders here. Please offer all of your children the love and help they will need in coming to terms with their situation. And also look after yourself and your own grief. You have had much to handle and perhaps for a time, professional help will be of value. It isn't that you will let your daughter "go and rest in peace." Truly we never get over the loss of a precious child, but we can learn to keep a little piece of our heart for this child for the rest of our lives as well as learn to live, love and laugh again. Not every day is easy, so owning our own grief, handling it tenderly and in a healthy manner, and remembering the blessings that still surround us means a win/win for all.