

# Forever Angels



Hello Everyone,

Welcome to summer. I hope you have some fun and adventurous vacation time planned. It is always a good thing to have a change of pace, perhaps in a different location, perhaps taking in some of the museums, restaurants or architecture of your home town. It is amazing what we miss where we live. It can only be with visitors that we get to experience what our own town or city can offer. I remember a trip of the Peace Tower in Ottawa which came about because we had a German exchange student spending six weeks with us. We also took in Niagara Falls and Upper Canada Village. All of them, wonderful memories.

May the sun offer its warmth to you, may colour, fragrance, bird songs and laughter find you, and may you be gentle with yourself.

Thinking of you,  
Lynda

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Letter to the Editor.....

Dear Lynda, My wife and I lost one of our triplets about two years ago; she was 5 days old when she passed away from NEC. Coping with that has always been difficult, but nothing has been more devastating for me than realizing (just now after reviewing the questionnaire responses on your website) how this may influence the surviving triplets. They are among the most cheerful, open and engaging kids I've ever seen, and it absolutely kills me to think that growing up with survivor's burden might alter that.

I always felt that their growth into such wonderful beings is helping us overcome the loss to a large extent. It is physically painful to think that the same tragic event that took our daughter is still not 'done with us', and will now take away the peace of mind of her little brother and sister. It makes me think of it as a cruel and hideous monster that will never cease to torment us. I've only known it for a few hours, but I already hate it from the bottom of my heart; I haven't felt such intense anger for a long time.

No matter what we do to help them with that, the impact appears so inevitable...  
Thanks for reading, S.

**Lynda Responds:** Dear S, I am so sorry to hear of the loss of your precious daughter. Nothing can prepare one for such a loss. I am so touched by your letter and I need to assure you that being loving parents and sharing with your surviving triplets their history, your sadness at the loss of their sister but celebration of her short life goes a long way to bridging their gap of loss. They are not doomed to a life of misery, sadness, emptiness nor will they be unable to move on with their lives and live a full and productive life complete with meaningful relationships because they lost a triplet sister. You will note that many of the people who have written me to share their stories fall into a couple of categories: 1) their parents never told them until much later in life when the news changes the fabric of who they thought they

were; or 2) older adult multiples who lost their special womb mate and their pain of adjusting from 'we' to 'I' (their journey is a whole 'nother kettle of fish). I have also come across multiples who lost their womb mate early but because of loving, sharing, caring parents with a healthy response to their grief have done very well in understanding who they are, their origins and been given a chance for a healthy integration of their loss into their lives. I absolutely promise your children are not 'doomed' because they are survivors. With a kind and caring father such as yourself understanding the challenges they might face and supporting them when and if necessary through it, they can only succeed in becoming healthy adults.

Our children take their cues from us and if we work through issues, cry if we have to, negotiate, share, look for solutions, your children will learn to do so too. If we are uptight, angry, loud and resentful, they will learn to handle things the same way complete with all of the possible insecurities that can come attached to such an approach. Don't underestimate your gifts to your children. You can still turn things around while sharing the truth of their origins. We, as parents, aren't required to be perfect but it is helpful if we are honest and approachable. If you think you might need professional help in any way along the path, give it a try. It isn't a demeaning thing to ask for guidance when we are stuck. In fact it is a smart thing to do. When you are talking to them, and earlier is better than later in my opinion, use age-appropriate language and answer all questions honestly and openly. They will appreciate that from you. I think earlier is better because if we don't choose the right words or tone at 2 years old, it doesn't have the same impact as it does when they are 14 years old, plus that type of news later on changes who they thought they were and there is a very good chance they will not forgive you for holding out on them (think of it as much the same as learning, and when, one is adopted). They will no doubt also wonder what else you have been holding back on.

S, forgive me but I have read through your note again and I am drawn to your last line of the third paragraph. I was wondering if you are suffering more than you might think? You have had a tremendous loss and children are not interchangeable so having the two most engaging kids in the world doesn't make up for what should have been. I was wondering if you are still feeling grief and pain at the loss of your wee daughter and identifying the anger that you feel at the fact that your two may have difficulties in the future, allows you to touch the depth and breadth of your grief on their behalf rather than on your own behalf? It is important that parents look after themselves as well so that we can do the important job of raising our children. Too often we put ourselves on the bottom of our "To Do" list. Please consider thinking about looking at the possible unresolved and justifiable feelings you may have regarding your loss. There are counsellors who specialize in grief and most communities have Bereaved Families and Compassionate Friends branches. Your religious affiliate or doctor may also be able to recommend someone.

Trust yourself. You can make a positive difference for your kiddies. Learn from what you have read, ask for professional guidance if you feel you need it, look after yourself and your children's mother and do the best you can to make sure your children love who they are and what they can become in spite of their sad beginnings.

Please write back at any time should you wish.  
Enclosing the very best of wishes,  
Lynda

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*On the Net.....*

[www.synspectrum.com](http://www.synspectrum.com)

Comprehensive and informative Site for bereaved multiple-birth parents. Run by Dr. Beth Pector, a Mom with a surviving twin.

[www.climb-support.org](http://www.climb-support.org)

Centre for Loss in Multiple Birth Provides support, information and resources for parents losing one, more or all multiple-birth babies.

<http://www.twinlesstwins.org>

In depth resources and support for not only bereaved parents, but also for surviving co-multiples

[www.twinloss.org.nz/Twin\\_Loss\\_NZ/Home.html](http://www.twinloss.org.nz/Twin_Loss_NZ/Home.html)

Support, resources and newsletter for parents losing one, more or all multiple-birth babies

[www.grieving.com](http://www.grieving.com)

This month's newsletter offers ideas on what to say when someone is grieving

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*Book Review.....*

WHO MOVED THE SUN? A twin remembers, Ron McKenzie, D.E.M. Publishing, paperback, 94 pages, US\$24.95, ISBN 978-0-578-04753-9

We know multiples are bonded in the womb and research has shown that they are aware of each other certainly by 18 weeks gestation. The bond they have with each other is well established before any bonding with their parents, which occurs after birth. Multiples have a unique relationship and are usually very in tune with each other, especially monozygotics (identicals). While dizygotics (fraternals) are basically siblings born at the same time, they too have a special connection and it isn't recommended that anyone interfere with that relationship either. Multiples arrive together but it is quite unlikely that they will depart this earth together. We need to understand what it is like for the survivors and how better to support them as they make the adjustment to the loss of their "other half."

It has taken a long time before healthcare professionals, counselors, doctors, funeral directors, and others have paid particular attention to the unique relationship between multiples and thankfully this is changing. It is changing because surviving co-multiples are writing about and sharing their feelings, pain, guilt, emptiness and sense of despair at losing their co-multiple. Such survivors have come to be known as Twinless Twins or Lone Twins.

Ron McKenzie's book about his relationship with his monozygotic brother, Don, and his brother's death at age 62 years in 2008 is one of those books that clearly sets out the dynamics of a multiples' unique relationship. Ron shares his pain, love, and details of their relationship and what it meant for both of them. Succinctly, Ron also shares: "You may be in heaven, Don, but I am in hell." It is not an easy step from spending a life time as "we" and having to become "I." When 61 birthdays have been shared, when shaving in the morning becomes a painful memory of losing Don, and the treasures of texting each other or speaking on the phone each day are no longer an option, no wonder it feels like 'hell.'

McKenzie's book is a must-read for a first hand account of not only a tribute to a much-loved twin brother, but an eye-opening journey to better understanding what it means to lose a co-multiple, the consequences and the loneliness while still trying to continue on. Only by understanding what it means to lose your co-multiple can we, as a society, reach out to better offer help, resources and support.

Lynda P. Haddon

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**Please feel free to write to me about anything at all. I can be reached at [loss@multiplebirthscanada.org](mailto:loss@multiplebirthscanada.org) ~ Lynda**