

The Lone Twin: Understanding Twin Bereavement and Loss

Joan Woodward

(1998) London/New York: Free Association Books 165pp. UK £ Sterling 15.95

Joan Woodward has made a hugely significant contribution to our understanding of the psychology of twins through this book. Her interest arose from personal experience; her training as a psychotherapist and her reflection that in two major analyses this loss was never explored. She established the Lone Twin Network and through media interest in her research project has been able to interview over two hundred surviving twins. Woodward builds a unique picture of the complexities of life for lone twins coping with the trauma of a felt, but unacknowledged, loss.

She examines the responses from the theoretical perspectives of Bowlby's attachment theory and the therapeutic insights of Alice Miller and the Relational therapy of Jean

Baker Miller. By validating the experience of so many lone twins Woodward has mined a rich vein of material that can be understood from both qualitative and quantitative research perspectives.

This work throws considerable light on the psychological development of twins in general, not just lone twins. This is a significant bonus for this ground-breaking book. One illuminating discovery is that 81% of lone twins viewed their loss as having a severe or marked effect on their lives — even when the death of their co-twin was before the age of six months.

I found this a moving book, touching as it does on my own personal material as a twin growing up in a family with a lone twin. It is also stimulating as Woodward develops new connections between raw experi-

ence and theoretical understanding, though I found the work of Alice Miller and Jean Baker Miller less helpful than Bowlby's. I would have liked more detailed reflection on the different attachment styles rather than just the concept of the secure base. However the proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say. The lone twins to whom I have lent my copy have found it uniquely helpful and say it has given them words and ideas with which to interpret feelings they have experienced for years but not known why.

Alistair Ross

Lecturer in Counselling and Research
Fellow at The Queen's Foundation for
Ecumenical Theological Education,
Birmingham.

Guidelines for Professionals – Multiple Births and their Impact on the Families

Section 3: Bereavement

Elizabeth Bryan and Faith Hallett

(1997–2000) London: Multiple Births Foundation

Set of 5 (*Facts about Multiple Births; Multiple Pregnancy; Bereavement; Special Needs; The First Five Years and Beyond*) UK £ Sterling 25
Section 3 UK £ Sterling 7.99

This booklet, one in a series of five guidelines on the care of families with multiple births, is aimed at all professionals involved with the care of families with multiple births, from infertility specialists, those concerned with obstetric and paediatric care in

hospital and community settings, to teachers and social workers. It is written in an accessible, easily understood format incorporating background information on one page with recommendations on the facing page. The recommendations are practical and possible for any professional to implement.

We all value being able to do something when faced with any baby's or child's death and this booklet guides us sensitively through the steps we can take and the advice we can offer the families.

Parents of multiple births are more likely to experience bereavement

than those of singletons, not only because they have two or more children at risk but because of increased mortality rates from the moment of conception.

The guidelines cover death at many stages, from intra-uterine death to neonatal death, sudden infant death syndrome and death in child-

hood. Intra-uterine death includes the vanishing twin syndrome, spontaneous abortion or miscarriage, fetus papyraceous and selective fetocide. Higher order multiple births are also covered including a sympathetic and helpful discussion of fetal reduction.

The booklet ends with a valuable section about the surviving twin who

needs to be treated as such and whose needs are as great if not greater than those of his parents.

This booklet will be invaluable both as informative reading and for ongoing reference and guidance.

Ilona Bendefy

Paediatrician, Sheffield, UK

Multiple Births Bereavement Information Kit

Multiple Births Canada/ Naissances multiples Canada 2001

(regularly updated) Canada: Multiple Births Canada/Naissances multiples, Canada. US \$7.50

This kit is an excellent source of relevant reading material covering topics from 'pregnancy' and 'prematurity' through to books for 'kids' and on 'humour'. There is also a short list of publications for health professionals and a suggested reading list for bereaved parents. The fact sheets provide readily accessible information on the loss of one or more babies; managing their grief; grieving grandparents; and how to survive holidays whilst grieving. The Resource Guide has over 20 pages of contact addresses, telephone numbers and web sites.

The newsletter for multiple birth parents, 'Multiple Moments', is packed full with useful articles for parents and news items including a good write up of the International Congress on Twin Studies and the Bereavement Symposium, of July 2001. The newsletter for bereaved parents, 'Forever Angels', is brief but the three 'The Loss of a Multiple' booklets go some way to make up for this. They include parent's own stories which from my experience many bereaved parents find valuable. The valuable 'Childhood, Teens' booklet discusses young children's concept of death and suggests how to commu-

nicate about it with young people. The final booklet in the trio, 'The Role of a Parents of Multiples Club', includes good advice on how best to support bereaved parents. All three booklets are sensitively written although professionals may find them lacking in advice on direct working with grieving parents and surviving siblings.

Barbara Read

Counsellor, Multiple Births Foundation, UK

Sophie's Heart *Video*

Nordisk Tvillingnet 2001 (producer)

Duration: 13 minutes. With English subtitles VHS (PAL) £ Sterling 18; VHS (NTSC) US\$20. For copies and further information, contact Abelone Glahn at info@tvilling.net or fax +45 54 49 00 77 or write: Fjendstrupvej 2, 4850 Stubbekobing, Denmark

This is a very sensitive film showing the response of Sophie, a little girl of six years old, to the loss of her twin brother. It is set in the home of her grandmother who she is visiting for the

first time since her brother's death. A 'flash-back' shows how her brother died when they were playing a game of hide and seek in her grandmother's garden.

Sophie shows all the usual feelings of deep loss — sadness, anger and

bewilderment. In sharing these feelings her grandmother is able to respond to Sophie with such profound understanding that it becomes a moving experience to share in the love they have for each other

and its healing effect. This is not a sentimental film, but one that touched me deeply on watching it for the first time in Copenhagen, even when I did not understand

a word that was spoken. Later, when I watched it with English subtitles, I thought the film is not just relevant to twin loss, but valuable for anyone who has been bereaved.

Joan Woodward

Psychotherapist and founder member of The Lone Twin Network. UK



A list of multiple birth bereavement websites

Parents of Multiples Forever

– personal stories and memorial site

www.erichad.com/pom/

Angels Forever

– parental support, on-line chats, links.

Click on 'Multiple Loss'

www.angels4ever.com

Loss in Multiple Birth Outreach (LIMBO)

– personal stories, on-line chats

www.geocities.com/heartland/lake/5142/index.html

Loss of All in Multiple Birth Support (LAMBS)

<http://ripletconnection.org/publicat.html>

Parents wishing to be in touch with other parents

www.owc.net/~twins/bereavement.html

Personal stories

www.geocities.com/heartland/cottage/7991/index.html

www.hannah.org/ministries/penpal/limb.htm

– Christian E-mail pal and prayer support. NOT for those who have chosen multifetal pregnancy reduction.

Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome

– information, education, connection

www.twin2twin.org
– United Kingdom Site

www.twinhope.com
– United States Site

www.tttsfoundation.org
– United States Site

Conjoined Twins

www.twinstuff.com/conjoined.htm

Monoamniotic twin pregnancy support and loss

www.monoamniotic.org

Premature and Preterm Babies

www.comeunity.com/premature/premiepgs.html

www.vicnet.net.au/~garyh/premie.htm

Memorial Site

www.aplacetoremember.com

Center for Study of Multiple Births

Chicago, U.S.A. – provides support for multiples with special problems and needs.

www.multiplebirth.com