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**THE HAVING-BEEN-NESS
AND
THE BEING-IN-THE-WORLD
OF TWIN SURVIVORS**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

This study uses Heideggerian interpretive phenomenology to examine the experience of being a twin, then being a twin survivor in the world. Heidegger's terminology is selectively used to shape the interpretation of the twins' narratives.

The phenomenological method focuses on participant descriptions of their everyday life; there are no conclusions and no scientific results. While there have been many scientific studies using twins as subjects, there seems to be very few published studies using twin narrative.

Every participant wished to be part of this study because they felt that it might help others in similar situations. They described their life as a twin, their reaction to the death of their co-twin, and the intense loneliness that they have felt ever since. In describing their experiences, they have managed to portray a picture of twinship seldom made so explicit.

The intense reliance on each other that results from living together closely since conception, has a particular impact on their being-in-the-world. Many of those interviewed felt that half of them had gone forever after the death of their twin, and struggled to develop their own sense of identity as a lone twin. As survivors, the participants now view the world differently, and although others may see them as a singleton, they will always remain a twin.

Foreword

THE WORDS OF A TWIN SURVIVOR: ONE CANNOT SURVIVE ON ANGER ALONE

On another continent I sit with my pen in my hand. The area is similar to that of where your cross rests. Mountains surround, giving a serenity and beauty that many people come to admire. The blue green tinted waters of a glacier flow here too. The sun above transcends light rays which bisect, dancing, sparkling like a prize emerald.

On the fifth anniversary of the day I last saw you alive, I ventured out in a canoe to be alone, at one with nature, at one with myself, at one with you. It was a time of reflection. Reflections over the last five years since that tragic day; reflections of the life we shared together for over seventeen years.

It was also a time of remembrance, for I will never forget you. You are part of my soul, as you will always be. I remember the short time we shared together. That time was your life; short but fulfilled. Fulfilled with happiness, youth, vitality and a relentless quest to conquer challenges and be rewarded with the greatest prize, that of the satisfaction of achievement.

For achieve we did. Never believing we wouldn't make it to Europe to wear the silver. We trained, schooled and worked to get there. No one can ever take that away from us, my twin, my friend. With unsurpassed help by friends and family we got there in the end.

Your life was short, but it was far from empty. I remember with pain the day you died. The memories are vivid, sometimes sorrowful, sometimes anguishing, even sometimes accepting. In such times anger is the initial reaction, yet one cannot live on anger alone. Acceptance, this is a must. A gift to enable those left behind to cope. During the past five years I have learned to accept your death. At times it hasn't been easy. Like time erodes away a giant angulated razor sharp rock, leaving smoothness, time too has worn away the anger, acceptance left in its place.

Here in the Canadian Rockies people also come to test their skill against nature. Most are rewarded. Some will not return, just as we were rewarded for many years, just as you never returned. I am at one with nature now, as we were then. The means are different, the intensity less, but nevertheless, at one. I am at one with myself. I will always be at one with you, my twin. I miss you so much. The tears do not run any more, but the deep loss will always be there.

Five years later on another continent I sit with pen in hand. When I think of you a sorrow wells up from the depth of my soul, but with the gift of acceptance I am forced to think of the good times we shared, and a smile appears on my lips.

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I would like to acknowledge the meaningfulness of those few people worldwide whose research has made it possible for me to write this thesis. Their work is a milestone in the understanding of twin loss, and has certainly helped me in supporting those lone twins I have had the privilege to know and care about. In particular I would like to name Jean Kollianti of Alaska, Betty Jean Case of Canada, William Brandt of America, and Elizabeth Byron of England. Their interest in my work, and enthusiasm for their own, remains an inspiration.

Perhaps the most significant people in my development are my twin sons, to whom this work is dedicated. To Adrian who has learned to live again as a surviving twin, and to Carlton who left us forever one beautiful sunny day, from the river Soca in Slovenia, at the triumph of his young life. A day that began full of happiness and ended in tragedy, with Carlton never to return and Adrian left unable to comprehend the enormity of his loss.

My thesis represents ten years of learning since Carlton's death. A long journey for Adrian and myself, and one that we continue to have the privilege to share with others in similar situations.

It is a very special thanks that I wish to extend to the lone twins who so willingly offered to relive their experiences as a twin, then as a lone twin. I want you to know that I treasure your trust, and that without you this thesis could not have been written.

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines twin survivorship by using Heideggerian interpretive phenomenology to explore the experiences described by twins about their life as a twin. Traditionally, twins have been used by researchers as valuable subjects for exploring environmental and genetic influences of society. There are also many twin studies in the field of mental health and education, where deviations from the norm are explored by researchers. There is a common assumption that twins provide the perfect control for experimentation on a variety of issues other than to examine twinship itself.

A search through the literature provides an extremely limited amount of information about lone twin survivorship, suggesting that further research in this area is needed. There appears to be little evidence of research involving descriptions about twins by twins. International writers who have published research include Segal (1989), Siemon (1980), Rosambeau (1987), Koch (1966), and Cassill (1982). It is the author's belief that only twins can really describe what it is like to be a twin. By using a phenomenological approach to guide this enquiry it is hoped to uncover their understandings of their experience.

If a goal of nursing science is to uncover not only factors that compromise well-being but also those that facilitate it, then discovering the personal and cultural meanings and strategies that enable individuals to cope with

crisis in constructive, and self enhancing ways is essential (Stuhlmiller, 1994, p.323).

A clearer understanding of twin survivorship will allow health workers to provide more appropriate support when they encounter people in this situation. This enquiry suggests that once born a twin, a person remains a twin throughout life, despite being viewed by the world as a singleton. The writer's previous involvement with the International Twin Conference in Wellington (1990) indicated that there are surviving twins who have not resolved their grief up to fifty years later. Many survivors of perinatal twin death experience feelings ranging from profound loss to a constant feeling that something is missing from their lives. This suggests a need for understanding the complexity of twinship, and its influence on the surviving twin when their co-twin dies.

The overall aim of this study is to describe the experience of what it is to be a twin, and what it is to be a surviving twin. Modern technology has increased the likelihood of twin births. One study participant, in her seventies, commented that when she was at primary school she was always noticed because twins were quite uncommon. Today multiple births are not so rare. Consequently twin death can be expected to increase, but as yet there is little in the way of any support system in place to aid the surviving twins. Certainly New Zealand has no such system in place.

Society adopts a specific attitude towards twins which may influence the nature of the relationship twins have with each other. This must also be shaped by the proximity twins have to each other from the time of conception. Since human time began, twins have played a significant role in the mythology of countries around the world. They are assigned importance in many cultures, and in some they have been regarded as having magical powers related to the sun and moon (Siemon, 1980). According to Scheinfeld (1967), interest in twins can be traced back as far as records exist, and it also goes well beyond fact into the realms of myth, fantasy, folklore and fiction. The Bible has several significant stories. There are many mythical stories of twins. Even astronomy has Gemini as a twin constellation.

To have the ability to know just how life is for another person is regarded by others as a rare and exciting ability. Twinship is the closest association between two human beings, and because of this it is fraught with psychological hazards. At the 1990 living twin conference participants were asked why they were attending. Responses included:

meeting other twins with similar problems;

to see if I am normal;

my relationship with my twin is so special;

I want to meet others that feel the same way, and I need to find my identity.

One twin stated, *When I married, if my husband had died it would have been hard, but to lose my twin is unthinkable.*

The degree of difficulty experienced by a surviving twin in restructuring their life after the death of a co-twin seems to depend upon the kind of relationship the twins had with each other, and the feelings they have about being a twin. This study confirms that the way twins view their relationship is influenced more by the intensity of their perception of similarity than by the degree of physical likeness. For some twins there is no separation even in adulthood, and for these people co-twin loss is a hurdle they may not be able to overcome without support. Such people may never see themselves as individuals or be able to form intimate relationships with others.

It is the reluctant twins, moulded by societal expectations, parental attitudes, and physical similarity into a bond they did not choose, but which is an integral part of their identity, who experience emotional distress when separation forces them to be individuals rather than a unit (Siemon, 1980, p.388).

In this thesis, chapter one is a review of selective literature beginning with an overview of Heideggerian interpretive phenomenology as it is used in this study. Twin mythology is then discussed, and how twins have been used throughout time to portray a different way of being. The effects of parental influence on

twinship are highlighted, followed by comments on the importance of twins becoming individuals, and their need to gain their own identity. Completing this chapter is a further discussion on the effects that being a twin has on a twin survivor, and the difficulties that this close bond has for the surviving twin.

Chapter two details the research process, while chapters three and four present the research outcome organised under two main themes. Chapter three focuses on the theme of living in the world together. The experience of living life as a twin is discussed using the words of participants to illustrate the major theme and associated sub themes.

Chapter four focuses on the second theme of being in the world alone. Twin survivorship is discussed using the perceptions of participants to support the presentation of the major theme and sub themes.

Chapter five is a brief final discussion. Consistent with the research approach no conclusions are presented; no recommendations are made.

Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

HEIDEGGERIAN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology has a particular viewpoint that moves away from the scientific method and the Cartesian epistemological point of view. It is not so much concerned with how we know what we know, but how we experience life; it is not about the way we know the world, but about the way we are within the world, and the understanding that comes from everyday existence. Interpretive phenomenology aims at interpreting and clarifying our everyday common sense world (Polkinghorne, 1983). It enables researchers to explore areas that are inaccessible to empirical analytical research, because it is difficult and arguably impossible to objectively analyse human feelings and experiences. Benner and Wrubel (1988) and Parse (1985) both suggest that phenomenology seeks to empower and support through understanding, rather than prediction and control. Thus the findings of this type of research are descriptive rather than predictive, and help give greater understanding of human experience (Rose, 1994; Van Manen, 1990).

This way of viewing knowledge enables the participant to become the expert, rather than the researcher (Merleau-Ponty, 1967). By asking the participants to describe their experiences of entities such as guilt, anger, courage, grief, or hope,

these elusive concepts can be expressed as they are experienced by the people concerned. Describing past experience is also reliable data because it expresses the participant's feelings that belong to the phenomena under study (Koch, 1994). All humans are potential participants in phenomenological research because they are beings-in-the-world, and their experiences are expressed within particular contexts. Exploring these contexts allows the researcher to provide descriptive data that helps to gain insight into specific life events (Walters, 1994).

Cohen (1987) remarks that we take life's happenings for granted, and in doing so fail to realise the meaning of commonplace activities. It is these commonplace activities that make up our everyday lives and create the very essence of our existence. Documenting participants' descriptions of these events helps create pictures that provide us with a greater understanding of human nature.

Phenomenology as both a philosophy and a method of inquiry has many forms. However, there are two primary schools of thought - Husserlian and Heideggerian. Both schools endeavour to understand the meaning that is expressed within human concern. Edmond Husserl founded the modern movement based on the Cartesian view of the world, prior to World War 1. At that time Martin Heidegger was a pupil of Husserl's, but he became more and more convinced that phenomenology should have an ontological approach rather than an epistemological one. The epistemological thinkers believed their research should be based on the study of realities that could be grasped by examining the

essence of lived experience, thus portraying the consciousness of our human world (Koch, 1994).

Martin Heidegger was concerned with the nature and grounds of knowledge. His interpretive approach yields the methodology used in this study. Heidegger believed that it was important to investigate the ontological nature of how human beings relate to the world (Cohen & Omery, 1994). His hermeneutic interpretive approach seeks to understand human action and everyday experiences. He also generates the meaning of Sein or presence, and being or Dasein. In other words, being there. The concept inherent in the term Dasein is used throughout this study to portray the essence within the participants' narratives. This is different from the word Being as in person, as it implies an active participation in time.

According to Leonard (1989), these descriptions of experience can only be understood through interpretation. Hermeneutics makes the assumption that people are influenced by their culture and language, and these influences will give them specific viewpoints from which they interpret their experiences. This understanding is never fully reached as it involves an endless process of searching. Heidegger refers to this as the hermeneutic circle in which understanding is fundamental to interpretation. People and their world cannot be separated, and are interpreted along side each other. They are inextricably intertwined and understood through their own definitions. In the same manner the researcher also brings understanding to the description (Koch 1994). This

understanding must be influenced by the researcher's own experiences, which Heidegger believes adds substance to the interpretation. He stresses that it is impossible to interpret dialogue that is bias free.

Leonard (1994) supports this view by stating that there is no such thing as an interpretive free account of any event. There are no technical procedures for validating the truth. It is the intelligence with which it is interpreted amongst a shared background that discloses our world. The discourse incorporates past as well as the present, as the participant moves between the two, in order to better describe what being-in-the-world means to them (Bauman, 1978).

This study of twin survivors could not use an empirical method to yield a scientific result. The Cartesian model of what constitutes truth does not fit the exploration of twinship or twin survivorship, as no one but twins can identify what it is to be one. Phenomenological inquiry provides a more useful method of interpreting the lived experience of being a twin, and being a twin survivor. Heidegger's description of life situations seems to relate well to the experience of being a twin in the world, and then being a lone twin in the world. This study explores twinship from the participants' perspective as the survivors describe their everyday activities and practices of being a twin in the world. The term twin survivor and lone twin are used interchangeably throughout the study.

Heidegger reflects on the meaning of a Being's "being-in-the-world" or Dasein. His concern is with the present context of being which provides a description of human existence unfolding between life and death. Present actions are rooted in past meaning that directs them towards some future state (Guignon, 1993). Dasein is perceived as being thrown into a situation that guides a person's cultural and historical path within the environment in which they live. Heidegger (1962) uses the term thrownness to describe how we are placed in the world. The thrownness of twins into a dual existence must provide a different view of the world from those not subject to closeness from conception.

The twins' world is discursive in that it is articulated by interactions within situations, and expressed through language. Their Dasein involves each other. Being -in-the-world for a twin must involve not only the self, but the habitual body of the co-twin.

Heideggerian phenomenology is also concerned with temporality. Leonard (1989) explains this as an accrual of events that withstand time. It develops prior to our sense of time and relates to being there, rather than a linear viewpoint of past, present and future. According to Benner (1994), being-in-time can only be studied within the context of having-been-ness, and this is evident within the narrative of the twin participants in this study. For a twin survivor, the life they share with their co-twin, their having-been-ness, must influence their way of being-in-time as they face the world alone.

Heidegger makes another point when he stresses that, from a phenomenological viewpoint, rather than having a body, we are embodied (Leonard, 1989). Baron (1985) notes that this embodied self is taken for granted, and yet it can break down in illness or grief, and then the ready-to-hand understanding that we have of ourselves does not work any more. This is especially so for twins, as their understanding involves sharing a closeness with another human being. If this is shattered by death of the co-twin, it can cause a rupture in their ability to understand the world.

Heidegger (1975) uses the concept of world as having great meaning, in that it comes beforehand, not afterwards. It remains self evident, and is unveiled in advance. The twins' world is already there when they are born. They are conceived and develop close contact in utero. This closeness continues after birth as a togetherness that is hard for singletons to fully comprehend, unless one of the pair is taken permanently away, as in death. When this occurs the surviving twin's way of being-in-the-world must change. To others this life may seem no different from that of a singleton, but when one is part of a pair, the view of the world may be very different. The Dasein for the surviving twin depends on the twin's concept of self - a self that involves two people rather than one.

According to Hall (1993), Heidegger's Dasein becomes itself in what it does, what it avoids, and what is ready-to-hand. These are proximal concerns that are hardly noticed everyday events, but influence what we are. These same effects

also direct the way twins perceive each other, and the relationship they have both in the world, and on the world. It is their invisible functioning and intimate knowledge of each other that portrays to the world their relationship. Heidegger (1975) uses the analogy of a hammer to describe everyday ready-to-hand-ness. A hammer is more than the definition of what it is. It also includes what it does. Like Heidegger's description of the hammer, it is not just how twins look, but what they do together, that causes people to recognize them as twins. When one twin dies this web is broken, and the network of relations within which they function ceases to be, leaving a yawning gap that is no longer ready-to-hand.

For surviving twins the past must influence their present and their future. Heidegger (1975) describes the past as having-been-ness. Dasein can as little get rid of the by-gone-ness as escape death. This suggests that the surviving twin must always remain a twin, and to enact silence of their by-gone-ness may well be a form of suppression denying the surviving twin's having-been-ness. A suppression that can make the road to recovery stoney and slow.

Guignon (1993) believes there is a totality of functional relations that makes meaning and life inseparable. For twins that world is a we-world rather than an I-world and, like the hammer, is an expression of being - being-in-the-world as two people rather than one. Heidegger suggests that the first beginning predefines the subsequent ways of viewing the world, and has done so since the beginning of civilization. As life is a function of every day interdependent

relationships, Dasein describes the present as seen by the twin. A present built on the past and moving towards the future. It emerges as an ontological theme being interpreted by the way it is understood (Guigon, 1993; Heidegger, 1975).

Life experience is gained from being-in-the-world. It is about experiences that are lived throughout life by the person participating in them. Of importance then, is the concept of habitual body as described by Merleau-Ponty (1962). He believes the person is the absolute source of itself, and this source does not come from the environment, but moves out to support all the cultural norms and practices of human beings. It is the present, but includes the past as it moves towards the future. The world forms around the body, existing for it, and nurturing it. Thus there is a link between the habitual body of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger's concept of embodiment - being-in-the-world.

Within us there is an inbuilt sensor that determines our perceptions and how we will respond to life. Some lose their world as parts are removed, and must abandon their habitual way of life. When a co-twin dies the duality of the habitual body is shattered, breaking the sensory and physical contact of the twin world as lived experience. Heidegger (1975) suggests we turn away from the silence in order to avoid the nothingness that death of a loved one forces upon us. For a twin this is difficult to do, as the essence of twinship involves the ambivalent presence of another human being; the inter-involvement of two beings together in utero, bound by biological and psychological forces to a life long

awareness of each other. The surviving twin experiences an ongoing sense of vulnerability, and death becomes a living issue.

Hoffman (1995) believes the basic certainty of Dasein is that we will all die, and it is only in doing so that we can say, 'I am.' This may have a severe effect on twins, for if one twin dies this may constitute half of the surviving twin gone forever. Either way the surviving twin must reshape and redefine their life and Dasein. Twins on the death of their co twin, may find part of their own life force escaping from them. The surviving twin must then decide what is worthy of being retrieved from the past, and carry this into the future. Thus the Dasein incorporates the strength of the past twin relationship into the present being-in-the-world.

The surviving twin must discern between the habitual body and the body at this moment without becoming imprisoned in the attempt. "Impersonal time continues its course, but personal time is arrested" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.83).

Life becomes liveable through the temporal texture of experience, and the double sensations that occur in changing from the role of twin to that of lone twin. A change that involves spatiality, as the size and space of two people is diminished to that of one. Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty expound the meaning of life as part of being-in-the-world. Merleau-Ponty's concern with the habitual body has significance for twin spatiality, and along with Heidegger, provides useful

thought when contemplating being-in-the-world as a twin, and then as a surviving twin.

The word twin is better understood by referring to two different people born at the same time, and possibly looking alike. It is impossible to step into the twin's circle. Those of us who are not twins must forever remain outside, and by doing so it is easy to misunderstand the experience of being a twin, and then a lone twin. It is therefore the context in which twins live that must be studied, rather than the likeness or comparison of twins.

Leonard (1994) believes that the phenomenological method identifies people as having meaning in their lives which is valued, and signifies who they are and how they experience the world. Dreyfus (1987) upholds the belief that Heidegger's concept of Dasein allows things to matter, because they are significant.

Dasein finds itself primarily and constantly in things because tending them, distressed by them it always in some way or other rests in things. Each one of us is what he pursues and cares for. In everyday terms we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we care for (Heidegger, 1975 p.158).

For twins those things are cemented in the throwness of their existence. The validity of the interpretation is shown when participants comment that the dialogue expresses how they feel, but have not been able to put these feelings into words (Dreyfus 1991).

In summary, Heideggerian phenomenology does not use the Cartesian model of objectivity. It does not examine how we know what we know. Instead it views the world from an ontological perspective, searching for meaning as expressed through the lives of everyday people. Heidegger (1975) describes the past as having-been-ness. The *dasein* or being-in-the-world can as little get rid of its by-gone-ness as escape death. Based on this assumption, it follows that when a twin loses a co-twin, the surviving twin must always remain a twin. Smothering the by-gone-ness suppresses the existing twin's having-been-ness.

TWIN MYTHOLOGY

Both Rosambeau (1987) and Segal (1989) discuss the fascination of twins in ancient times. Astronomers named Gemini the constellation positioned immediately above and to the East of Orion. There dwell Pollux and Castor, twin stars named after the warrior sons of Zeus in Greek mythology. These two stars represent the head, while a series of smaller stars complete the two bodies who appear to be looking at each other.

Some tribes use twin symbols for particular meanings. West African tribes are said to substitute twin dolls for a lost twin. These are given to the mother to carry. A doll is also usually carried by the surviving twin throughout childhood. Twin dolls can be used to make magic to encourage fertility, while a twin rattle can be used to warn people of multiple birth.

According to Rosambeau (1987) there is a unique scientific building in Rome devoted to the study of twins. The Gregor Mendel Institute is a living symbol of a city founded by twins Romulus and Remus. Opened in 1953, it is the centre of thousands of studies of twins, the results of which can be read in scientific journals. Twins have also appeared in many children's books. Mark Twain uses pseudo twins in some of his stories, and pretended he was a twin himself. Lewis Carroll's classic *Through The Looking Glass*, is another example. Dumas used twins in several of his novels, while even musicians such as Wagner were inspired to write such opera as *Die Walkure*. Poets, too, have used the twin theme. Thornton Wilder, a twin himself, draws on the so called mystic nature of twins in his book *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927), in which he relates a classic tragedy of twinship. Even Shakespeare used twins in his *Comedy of Errors*. Twins seem to be used to symbolise comedy, good luck, and tragedy in literature as well as tribal custom. Throughout history twins have been associated with myths and magic, possibly due to the disquietening likeness of identical twins.

Not all cultures view twins in the same vein. Rosambeau (1987) suggests that Japanese nobility considered twins born into the family as a disgrace, likening the event to an animal giving birth to a litter. This led to one twin being hidden or given away. Aborigines were encouraged to kill one twin at birth. It is highly probable that these customs grew out of necessity. A nomadic mother might be able to manage one child, but possibly not two. Where twins were welcomed, the mother was often held in high esteem. Rosambeau remarks that amongst the Kaffirs, the mother of twins was the only woman allowed to sit with the men at social gatherings. Sadly, in other cases twins were abandoned in the jungle to die. Some mothers of twins were considered tainted and forbidden to take an active part of tribal life. Galton (1875) is stated as being the first scientist to take an active interest in twins in his now famous paper *The History of Twins as a Criterion of the Relative Powers of Nature and Nurture*. He was influenced By Darwin, and set out to discover individual differences in people using twins as subjects.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE

Twin pregnancy often has complications and even if all has gone well premature delivery can occur. Many twins do not survive to full term, and many others die soon after birth. The writer has received numerous phone calls from adult twins who lost their twin around the perinatal time. The callers have all expressed their feelings of loss, and that part of them seems missing. Rosambeau (1987) remarks that it is easy to be sceptical, but one cannot ignore the multitude of such stories.

There can be a feeling of being incomplete, and a continual searching for some missing link that never seems to be found.

Often newly born twins can miss out on bonding with the mother if one or both of them require medical intervention. Even the healthiest babies can require adjustment by the parents. Efficient organisation is needed to feed and care for two human beings whose needs may demand attention at the same time. Rosambeau (1987) suggests that parents may feel disappointment if the twins do not resemble each other. She also comments that twins may be aware of each other in utero, and that single survivors can be haunted by this.

Parental upbringing influences the way twins view the world. Constant comparisons, and the fact that children take cues from their parents that guide the role they are expected to play, help to create a particular developmental path. Case (1991) states that many twins feel the sting of comparison, although they realise that being a twin causes this comparison.

*I'm not what I think I am; I'm not what you think I am; I am what I think
you think I am (Case, 1991 p.53).*

Every infant has a need to be cared for beyond routine necessities, but parent-infant bonding can be more difficult with twins. Showers and Mcleery (1984) state that it is harder for the mother to relate to twins as individuals, which can

make it difficult for them to self-differentiate. Constant identification as 'the twins' as a unit rather than individuals, can lead to problems of individuation (Ortmyer 1970, Terry 1975, Siemon 1980). Dressing twins alike can also accentuate the children being seen as a unit rather than as individuals. As twins reach adulthood some find this acceptable, but many do not. Those twins who do not differentiate successfully are likely to experience greater difficulty in adjusting to life without their co- twin than those who do.

Mothers of twins often have difficulty sharing their attention with each twin, whereas a single child has undivided attention. This can also mean that twins have less time, and shared communication with their caregiver, which may help attribute to slowness of speech sometimes observed by speech assessors (Rutter and Redshaw 1991).

Failure of parents to recognize the separateness and uniqueness of each twin can delay, or even prevent, the separation-individuation process. This may result in an excessive attention by twins towards each other (Frank and Cohen, 1980; Goshen-Gottstein, 1980; Myers, 1982).

INDIVIDUATION

There are some areas where being a twin adds extra dimensions to life. Rosembeau (1987) quotes Zasso, a researcher in twin studies, as using the term *couple effect* to describe what is also known as *the twin situation*. Rosambeau (1987)

likens the effect to twin railway carriages separate, but joined together. The movement of one is dictated by the movement of the other, no matter which end is being pulled. This could be identified by Heidegger's concept of thrownness. It suggests a continuous process of action and reaction. Whatever is done by one twin is controlled by the effect it may have on the other. Regretfully this response can be accentuated by mothers who find difficulty in relating to their twins as individuals (Leonard, 1961; Cassil, 1982).

Individuation becomes a significant milestone in any child's life. At about three years of age The degree to which it is successful plays a vital role in development. At this time twins must separate from their co- twin, which may be difficult to achieve when family, friends, and the world see them as 'the twins.' Consequently, the twins also learn to see themselves as a single unit rather than as individuals. If individuation is not achieved, there are usually ramifications if one twin dies, as it leaves the other as an incomplete unit, (Ainslie, 1985; Siemon, 1980). For some twins there is no separation even in adulthood. They may continue to dress alike, follow similar careers, and share life, sometimes even marrying twin partners.

Often they are reluctant pairs, moulded by societal expectations, parental attitudes, and physical similarity into a bond they did not choose, but which is an integral part of their identity (Siemon, 1980, p.388).

If one twin dies denial can often be indicated by the surviving twin still thinking and even speaking in plural terms. Some twins will find a twin substitute in an effort to feel alive and whole. Having lived as a twin, the distinction between self and twin is no longer clear, causing a deep need for another to provide an identity for self. The surviving twin may know they are not their co- twin, but they may also no longer know who they are themselves (Siemon, 1980).

SEPARATING THE INSEPARABLE

Turning "we" to 'I' is not easy for a twin. Emotional estrangement can bring anguish, guilt, loneliness and confusion as each twin tries to sort out their feelings and their understanding of themselves and their twin. When a twin loses their twin to death it is a long process and a painful one as they work towards thinking of themselves as one person instead of two
(Case, 1993 Intro).

The intensity of reaction will depend on the degree of closeness between the two. Case describes a twin who wrote to her stating that to think of life without her twin put her in a bout of despair. The writer asked 200 pairs of twins at an International conference, if they had thought about life alone. No one, it seemed, could contemplate life without their twin, and were not prepared to consider such a situation. One lone twin felt that her life was hanging in limbo.

Parents who lose one twin during the perinatal period have great difficulty in adjusting to this situation. Society quickly forgets the dead baby, and focuses on the surviving one. The parents are urged to do likewise, and by doing so, often omit mourning for their dead child as they would have done if the child was a singleton. Life provides a constant reminder in the surviving twin, that there should have been two. There is evidence that the lone twin can suffer personality problems in later life as a result of this loss, and it would seem important that the twinship is acknowledged (Byran, 1986). Farber (1981) believes that, despite years of research, we still lack an adequate conceptualisation for the psychological characteristics of twins. This can lead to misidentification by the surviving twin or the mother, or it can cause the mother to idolise the dead twin and be over critical of the survivor. Indeed, many mothers are haunted by the vision of their dead child when they look at the living twin. Lewis (1987) clearly believes that most mothers need to grieve their dead baby before they can relate properly to the surviving twin.

Segal (1989) stresses the importance of considering the implications of twin loss due to accident or illness. Sadly, the survivor is a constant reminder of the dead twin and this can affect relationships with siblings as well as parents. Thus the remaining twin not only loses their most treasured companion, but has to face changes in relationships with those who have been part of their support network, including school mates, or work colleagues, and even people who have shared sporting and leisure activities with both twins. Frequently these people are unable

to cope with the devastation experienced by the surviving twin, and move away, adding isolation to the twin's feelings of loss.

A twin is never anything but a twin until separation by death, and there is no way of untwinning except by death. In the most intimate of bereavements, the surviving twin finds the foundations of his or her own identity undermined, because twinhood bestows the singular oddity of a plural identity (Stark, 1989).

The sense of isolation of the newly untwinned is absolute, and when birthdays and anniversaries occur this sense of isolation and devastation returns. Time smooths the edge of despair, but never occludes the moments of memory; memory of what was, and what is now. It is the loss of the other habitual body, and the Dasein of being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Heidegger, 1962).

There is an absence of research on twin death. Segal (1989) comments, as does Case (1991), that as yet research on twin loss is limited. Segal goes as far as to suggest that this is well reflected in a 1984 National Academy of Sciences publication on Bereavement. In the 312 pages there is not a single mention of twin loss. Now, twelve years later, the subject has still not been addressed in any detail by researchers in death and dying. Segal (1989) questions this. She asks why this has been so neglected by professionals, and wonders if people erroneously assume that twin loss is the same as loss of singletons. She further reasons that many twins who do come for help are hesitant to express the extent of their grief,

sensing that it is inappropriate in its severity, and believing that there is something wrong with them.

Simeon (1975) describes twins as not seeing themselves as individuals, or having to learn to identify themselves as individuals, because the only person that mattered was their twin. Woodward (1988) describes similar feelings. She states that some twins in her study expressed a sense of loneliness so intent and constant that nobody could help ease it. Polarisation caused a sense of only being half when one's co-twin died.

Terry (1975) refers to the twin bond as symbiotic, meaning that each twin regards the other as contained within the same boundary. If part of this boundary is shattered, the safety net of the surviving twin is broken and vanishes. This can cause endless seeking for what can never again be a reality. The *we* nature of twinship is forced by death into an *I* existence into which the twin is thrown, without preparation or experience.

Surviving twins are often preoccupied with their dead sibling, and feel they have lost a part of themselves. This can cause disbelief, especially for identical twins whose mirror image has been shattered, often creating a fear of dying in the same way as their twin, or a wish to join the dead one to escape hurt. Rosambeau (1987) asked twins to express their loss. One wrote that watching his brother die was the same as seeing himself die. Another felt it was impossible to prepare for such a situation, and could not imagine ever being able to deal with it. Yet

another stated that a major part of her life was laid to rest when her twin died. She commented that for 23 years one half of her was her twin, and she doubted if that could change.

Engel (1975) has written a self analysis of his life after the death of his co-twin. In it he describes the effects of birthdays and anniversaries, and the depression he was unable to escape from during those times. He mentions being mistaken for his twin. Before his brother's death this caused amusement, but after death the amusement changed to horror and pain. Neither he nor his twin addressed each other by name. They used the term *oth* meaning *other man* which both differentiated self from each other, while maintaining dual twin identity.

There are many different aspects of twin loss. Perhaps the most common is the cumulative effect. The loss of a co- twin frequently leads to other losses. Many twins follow a path of continual seeking, not knowing what for, or how to sustain themselves. For some, religious beliefs helped. Others believe they can contact their lost twin. Yet others believe they will join their twin upon death. Some take on the characteristics of their dead twin and, in a sense, absorbed their spirit (Woodward 1988). Above all, according to Segal (1989) surviving twins believe that they are still twins, and wish to be recognized as such.

Chapter 2

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

As a researcher I wanted to access the experience of what it is to be a twin, and then what it is to live out one's life as a lone twin. As a mother of twins, I have experienced the loss of a twin. Ten years of participating in, and learning from the grief process, helped me realise that twin loss is more complicated than singleton loss. The lack of documentation of this particular loss experience led me to decide to use my own experience as a background, and explore the issue in order that others may have a greater understanding. I also feel that my years of work experience as a nurse, and ten years as a grief counsellor, have taught me to listen and relate to twins experiencing loss. Despite this preparation, throughout the research I remained apprehensive in case I did not do justice to the participants in this research. My goal is to act as an advocate and support person for twin survivors, and to help those who read this study to understand a little of the pain of separation for those who began life as a unit, while in utero.

My son, who has travelled a long journey since the death of his co-twin, was one of the participants, sharing his thoughts along with fourteen others. Talking with each person has made me realise that only a twin can truly understand what it is like to live life without their co-twin. Heideggerian interpretive phenomenology was chosen to explore this issue so that twins could be given the opportunity to express for themselves their unique experience.

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology utilised in this paper follows interpretive phenomenology as developed by Heidegger, and interpreted by selected modern writers. Thematic analysis was used to examine the narrative accounts of the participants' everyday lives. During this process I was aware of Benner and Wrubel's (1989) suggestion that this form of analysis focuses on five elements:

Situation: How the person fits in to their social structure, both historically and in the present.

Embodiment: The embodied knowing of being-in-the-world involving experiences and emotions.

Temporality: The experiences of the past and the future as it impinges on the present.

Concerns: The way the person derives meaning from situations and experiences.

Common meanings: The cultural and spoken meanings that say what is noticeable and acceptable, as opposed to what is ignored and frowned upon.

Heidegger uses the term "world" and emphasises that it comes beforehand, not afterwards, and is not unveiled in advance (Heidegger, 1962). This concept seems to be very appropriate for twins as their existence together begins in utero, and develops as they emerge into the world together as a pair. They know no other way of being until one is separated from the other through death or traumatic experience. They are born into twinship, rather than being taught how to play

their role.

RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

A proposal was written and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. The Multiple Birth Society offered to send letters of invitation to participate in the study to any members known to have lost a co-twin through death. This took considerable time to negotiate, and only provided one participant who fulfilled the criteria for inclusion in this research, namely the experience of being a twin, and being a twin survivor. Several replies were received from people whose co-twin had died during the perinatal period so had not had the experience of living together.

When it became apparent that this avenue was not going to provide the necessary number of participants, I advertised in a number of newspapers and these replies were also limited to twins suffering perinatal loss. My next advertisement went into a national magazine. In response, I was again contacted by twins, this time a large number, who had lost their co-twin around the perinatal period. Nearly all of them described feeling a tremendous loss in their lives which they had difficulty in overcoming. Both surviving twins themselves, and mothers of twins telephoned. Their concern was that they had not found anyone who really understood how they felt. This occupied considerable time, because I felt obligated to talk to these callers who seemed to want a listening, and hopefully, understanding ear. The respondents' feelings ranged from a sense of significant

loss while being able to get on with their lives, to one person who frequently assumed the characteristics of her dead twin as she imagined that twin would be.

One mother shared her despair at not really knowing which twin had died, and which one now lived as an adult. The death of the lost twin occurred soon after birth while they were still in the hospital, and the mother was told what had happened, but was not shown both the twins at that time. She had already named the twins, and to this day is not convinced that she correctly knows which twin died, and which one lives.

As I talked with these people, it became clear that there needs to be further research on the effects of twin perinatal loss, and the effect on the mother, of losing one twin, while experiencing the growth and development of the other. But this is not the topic of this study.

Following the magazine advertisement my son and I were contacted by another national magazine which published an article on twin loss using us as subjects. Twin survivors who thought they met the inclusion criteria then wrote to me via the magazine. They wanted to discuss their own experiences, and to be part of my research. Fourteen participants were recruited as a result of the article. These, and the one participant from the Multiple Birth Society, comprise the participant group.

It is important to note that every twin who asked to participate, stated they wanted to do so because they hoped it might help, even if only slightly, the pain that they knew others in similar circumstances must experience.

DATA COLLECTION

An appointment time was negotiated and consent was obtained using the consent form authorised by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. All surviving twins included in the study participated in a recorded interview. Each participant was advised to that they were at liberty to stop the tape any time they felt unable to carry on. Although there were tears in a number of interviews the tape was not turned off because all participants stated that they found the interview experience helpful for them. They felt they could clarify their personal feelings with someone who had some understanding of their predicament.

The interviews were then transcribed and sent back to each participant for their approval. This was followed by a phone call from me to confirm both the content of the interview and the inclusion of the data in the analysis. A few participants made minor changes to the transcripts; most made no changes.

During every interview the twin participant commented that they would find it helpful to meet others in similar situations. This led to the organisation of a day in which research findings were shared amongst participants, and those present decided to form a lone twin network.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Fifteen participants were interviewed. Their ages ranged from 13 to 70 years; seven were males and eight were females; nine twins were non-identical, and of these six were opposite sex, and three were the same sex; six of the participants were identical twins. The ages of the twins at the time of the co-twin's death ranged between three and 69 years; the length of time since the co-twin's death ranged from one to fifty years.

THE RESEARCH OUTCOME

Analysis of the interviews provided some fundamental themes which have consistently emerged in the data. When the participants discussed being a twin survivor, they talked about twinship. It became apparent that lone twins were able to describe twinship with great clarity, possibly more so than twins with existing co-twins, who may never have spent time contemplating the uniqueness of their relationship with another human being so like themselves. For twins with living partners, that is their world, their *dasein*. There is no need for them to interpret its meaning. It is simply their way of being-in-the-world.

The aim of the study was primarily to explore twin survivorship, but perhaps the most dominating focus of the discussion revolved around their experiences of life as a twin. This was something they understood and enjoyed talking about. The participants' faces would light up as they discussed their past, and their relationship with their co-twin. They spoke of a time of security, and a life that

they believed was theirs by virtue of their conception and birth. It was a safe world because they had each other. For one participant in particular, life was anything but secure, yet the one stable factor for him was that he was a twin and had one other human being within his world; the only other being he could really trust.

Participant discussion centred around relationships with their twin, their parents, life at school, friendship, living together, living separately, living through the death of their twin, and living life now as a twin survivor. The day to day details were different, but there was very little deviation in the overall themes as they commented on aspects of twinship, and living as a twin survivor. During the interview participants were also invited to tell a story of twinship, and to offer advice to other lone twins.

Throughout the discussion which follows the term lone twin is used interchangeably with that of twin survivor. Both these meanings represent the life of the twin after the death of their co-twin. Another term used in literature on twins is twinless twins (Brandt, 1996). However, several participants in this study felt uncomfortable with this terminology, and so it has not been used.

Two major themes developed during the dialogue with twin survivors:

Being in the world together

Being in the world alone

In the discussion of these themes which follow there is a blending of literature as well as the words of the participants.

Chapter 3

THEME: BEING- IN- THE- WORLD TOGETHER

The word twin refers to two people born at the same time, and possibly looking alike. Singletons cannot step into the twins' circle, and by remaining outside may find difficulty in understanding what it is to be a twin, and how loss of this relationship affects survival of the remaining twin. Twins often try to repress their by-gone-ness, but their being-in-time, the "now" of the surviving twin's life, cannot be explored without embodying the past.

BEING IN THE WORLD TOGETHER

There are some areas where being a twin adds extra dimensions to life. Rosambeau (1987) likens the effect to twin railway carriages being separate, but joined together. The movement of one is dictated by the movement of the other, no matter which one is being pulled. This idea can be identified in Heidegger's concept of thrownness. It suggests a continuous process of action and reaction in which two human beings are bound in a close relationship, which is predetermined through genetic or accidental double ovulation. Nine months of conception, followed by a close physical environment and consequent bonding, determines whatever is done by one twin is controlled by the effect it may have on the other (Cassil, 1982).

We complemented each other. She gave me a figurative kick to think about

things. She was always there, and I relied on her to push me along a bit. We did everything together. One of us would have our hair cut, and the other one would say, " Please cut my hair." We both grew our hair, and we both got it cut off at the same time. I was closer to her than I am to my husband. She just knew instinctively. She understood more than anyone else, and better. We knew our innermost thoughts.

Twins often feel they complement each other. A twin describes the relationship he had with his identical brother:

We were very close. We spent a lot of time together. He was my best friend. We trusted each other a lot, and we enjoyed each other's company. I think it's quite lucky to be a twin. I guess we just understood each other more. We did everything together, and we followed the same interest, and pretty much had the same friends. Because my brother died at 17 we never got to do anything separately. You're brought up in an environment where you share personality, and you don't know what life is like without having a twin around.

For some twins there was a belief that life came in pairs.

I used to think everybody was a twin. It didn't occur to me that everybody didn't come in pairs. Only because we were twins. We didn't seem to have

any christian names. We were always known as the twins. We were one unit always.

This perception of being a single unit means that it is very difficult to function as a whole, on the death of the co-twin. According to Case (1991), the success of this depends largely on the individuation process that twins must undergo to be able to function as individuals. If they remain together throughout childhood and beyond their teenage years, their ability to function as individuals and live separate lives becomes more difficult. One reason that twins tend to see themselves as a unit is because they are the same age, and proceed through the childhood developmental stages at more or less the same time.

My twin and I used to spend hours and hours making tree houses. We used to play hockey. Just to be together and have a special time together.

Another twin commented:

We started Brownies together, and we started university together. We weren't alone. We could go in together.

Singletons have to learn fairly early on in life to become independent and do things alone. Most twins have each other. However, when one twin has a disability, major milestones can cause grief and anxiety, as one twin overtakes the other (Case, 1991). Although four participants in this study had co-twins who had

a lesser ability in some areas, it was recognised but not identified as a major difficulty.

Companionship was always available. There was never the need to find a friend to do things with.

We didn't have boyfriends and girlfriends. We didn't need anybody but each other. My twin escorted me to dances, and we went home together. It was just that we never really needed a relationship, having one another. We loved dancing together.

This participant twin is of an older age group, and grew up during the war when ballroom dancing was a very common form of entertainment. It required total understanding of your partner's movements in order to be enjoyable. For opposite sex twins used to living in the same environment, familiarity with each other would ease the learning process of the more intricate dance movements.

Another participant, still of school age, also refers to the companionship in twinship also, but in a different way. He believes that being a twin is different.

You get so used to two of you being there. You've got someone else to do things with. We used to play a lot. We used to muck around a lot, and fight a lot, and after a fight we'd make up, and it was good. We always did things together. We thought of us as twins.

A major factor in twinship is that there is always someone else around who understands you, has the same interests, is the same age, and is there to talk when the need is there.

I'd never known loneliness. Right from the word go that I was aware of life, I always had a companion. To me, that was extremely important in growing up. I always had someone to talk to. We were extremely close. I don't think we ever had any differences. We both had our first children in the month of July. One was born on the 22nd and one on the 23rd July, and then three years later, I had a daughter and he had a son. He was very protective. He was wonderful the way he protected me and made sure I had a home.

This twin divorced at a time when single women with children found life very difficult. The community did not approve of broken marriages, and certainly did not provide the support women needed when this occurred. The traditional role espoused for women was homemaker for a male breadwinner. In this instance, the woman's twin ensured that she was provided for in the same manner that he provided for his own wife and children.

One twin remarked that:

I was always aware of there being two of us. It was different to being a single person. We used to say that when we got old we'll be able to look

after one another, and then when we got sick we talked about helping each other. My twin had bad kidneys, and I would say that if anything happened I could give her a kidney, and she used to say she could give me some veins.

Yet another noted that:

We did things together. We went for walks together, and we always went into each other's room at night to talk. We spent every morning and every evening together talking. I don't think anyone could tell us apart. Some of the photos of when we were young, even I don't know who's who.

All the identical twins interviewed showed photographs portraying their likeness to their absent twin. It was interesting to hear each one of them comment that they had moments when they were not sure which one was which. This was also a situation that I experienced with my sons. After the death of my son, there was one particular photograph in which I could not decide which twin was which, and I felt some considerable guilt about this. For one twin participant this likeness caused both satisfaction and pain. When his dead twin's children run to him and call him by their father's name, he said . . . *that's the thing that singletons haven't got. I can say to them, "This is what your father looked like"* as he points to himself.

When asked about the experience of being a twin, the comments were similar.

You're always together. You're always inseparable.

There was always something there, and friends have talked about the bond between us, and because we were different, people could never understand us.

Twins tended to look out for each other, and protect each other. This seemed to be especially so when one twin seemed to be better at some thing than the other. The more able twin would go to great lengths to cover for any perceived deficiency in their co-twin and, always excused their co-twin for being less able. One such twin stated that he

...did a lot of talking for him when we were children, and part of his problem was that I did this. I started speaking for him. We used to speak in our own language, and I knew what it meant, and I would talk for him.

He is referring to his co-twin's language difficulties. Twins often have a special language that is not readily understood by others. This may be influenced by the fact that when two people have a lot in common, they learn to listen well to each other, and do not need to be as explicit or give as much detail as others who are less close.

This twin goes on:

Probably as far back as I remember, he was different, and I always felt I

should look after him. Not that being different bothered him. He knew it, but it didn't bother him at all. I always thought I should look after him. That was my role, and I took that on myself. We were called "the twins" and I loved it. We were really pleased and proud to be twins.

Protecting each other played a dominant part in the twins' lives. One twin who was a gang member dramatically describes this attachment to each other. After a horrific fight between gang members in a local hotel, this participant twin was knocked unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he dragged himself up, and crossed over to join his brother, whom he had witnessed being stabbed several times with a knife. His brother was sitting at the bar,

... and he said to me, "Are you alright bro?" I said "Yea," and he fell off his chair and died. Straight like that. It was just like he was staying alive to see if I was alright. Those things are always on my mind. The way he said, "Are you alright bro?" and just turned around on the stool and fell off.

When one twin was asked what being a twin brings to mind, her reply was:

The symbol of Gemini. The symbol of the two children together. It's a joining. It's an insoluble union. It's the playing, and supporting, and togetherness.

This twin lost her brother at three years of age, but will live her life out

remembering this togetherness.

This special closeness of two people bonded together from birth is present in the words of another participant who also refers to her childhood:

There was always somebody there for you. Somebody you could relate to.

The fact that he was a boy and I was a girl didn't make a lot of difference.

We sort of had different personalities, but we complemented each other.

We'd be there for each other. I'd be there for him, and he'd be there for me.

As these twins grew into their teens, the need to see each other lessened.

You didn't have to see each other to have that closeness. That's what the

bond is, isn't it? All those years of growing up together.

An older twin survivor commented that:

Looking back over my life I don't think I feel that on my own I have much

significance. It was as a twin that I was always noticed, and always had

significance We were the best of friends. We were always together. If I talk

about my childhood, it's always we. I think it's wonderful to be a twin.

The participants talked about twinship being different from the life experience of singletons. Several commented that this is difficult to define, and impossible for non twins to understand. They described togetherness as always doing things

together and never experiencing loneliness, which they perceived as a very real part of singleton life to a greater or lesser degree, depending upon family and network systems. They also referred to their pride in being a twin, and being known as “the twins.” This togetherness is well illustrated in the following excerpt.

No matter how you explain it to somebody, they can never understand.

Having a twin is a sharing of everything. For us it was the sharing of the same initials, closeness, the looking out for each other. The communication process is so different between twins. It's so bitsy. You don't have to finish sentences. A look can mean a thousand things. It's built up of shared experiences. One of my friends who is very psychic, said he couldn't bear to be in the same room with both of us at the same time, because he found our strength far too much to contemplate.

COMPLEMENTING EACH OTHER

People frequently believe that there is always a dominant and a submissive twin within a pair. This may be more obvious to the onlooker than to the twins themselves. Of the 15 participants, only four commented on different roles, and yet as a mother of twins, I felt these two roles were obvious at times in my own twins. Certainly they seem to complement each other in various ways, and to look after each other. The two twins who commented on dominant and submissive roles were in the older age group, which may suggest a more

traditional perspective on men as the natural leader over women. Both had brothers whom they acknowledged as the dominant twin.

I think between you there is always one more dominant than the other. I was quite happy to hang right back. I was quite happy to buckle behind my twin. I've always felt like that. He was the dominant one.

And again :

I don't think we ever had any differences. I don't recall any. As far as I was concerned, his word was law.

All participants felt that they were not the same as their co-twin. Rather, they were a unit, the different parts of which made up the whole.

We were good mates. We were quite close, but we weren't exactly the same. One was a lot better at one thing, and the other at other things, and I guess I have really missed that side of a twin. We complemented each other. She'd make me take a bit more notice of myself. I wasn't quite as bothered as she was. She'd buy me a jersey and say, "Get with it!" We did complement each other. She'd give me a figurative kick to think about things. She was always there, and I relied on her to push me along.

Now as a surviving twin of 23 years she goes on to say:

I'm not sure I've ever picked it up. After all these years I don't think I've

really ever managed to overcome it.

Although this twin was the more academic of the two, she still feels the need to be guided in personal things in a way that only her co-twin could do.

Another aspect of complementing each other is observed by another twin.

You always had somebody there for you. Somebody you could relate to. The

fact that he was a boy and I was a girl didn't make a lot of difference. We

had quite different personalities, but we sort of complemented each other.

We'd sort of be there for each other. Invariably we'd stick together, and

going through school he'd look after me, and I'd look after him.

Siemon (1987) describes the complementary role as the we-self. She suggests that each twin develops ways of complementing each other, and thus enhancing the function of the unit. She believes that twins are not copies of each other, but supply the missing attributes for each other. Unfortunately, not all twins are as academically able as their co-twin. This did cause some unease at times amongst participants, mostly by the more able twin.

Probably as far back as I can remember he was different, and I always felt

I should look after him. He was not as able. Not that it bothered him. He

knew, but it didn't bother him at all. He had a great attitude to life. I

always thought I should look after him. I don't know why I took that on

myself. That was my role. I'd look after him.

RELATING TO PARENTS

Mothers of twins often have difficulty sharing their attention equally with each twin, whereas a single child has undivided attention. According to Rutter and Renshaw (1991), mothers give less eye contact to twins. During feeding time this has to be shared as the mother takes turns to look at each infant. If, however, one child is more demanding than the other, or cries more than the other, this twin is likely to gain more attention than the more passive one.

Showers and Mcleery (1984) believe the degree of twin differentiation depends on the effort that parents take to relate to their twins as individuals persons rather than a unit. Ortmyer (1970), Terry (1975), and Siemon (1987), support this suggestion. Dressing twins alike, rather than allowing individual choices, reinforces the feeling of being a unit rather than an individual. As twins reach adulthood some find this acceptable, but many do not.

Participants viewed their parents in different ways.

We were my Mother's pride and joy. She got attention because of us. She dressed us alike. She just wanted us to be twins.

Whereas another didn't know his parents existed until he and his twin were 12 years old.

I was never really with my parents. I met them once. We had a shocking

upbringing. Our childhood is something that we don't like to think about.

You know how they say that childhood is the best time of your life? Well,

ours was the worst memories of our lives - when we were kids.

This participant is having great difficulty in coming to terms with his twin's death. He still uses *we* instead of *I* when talking of the present, and is unable to differentiate successfully as yet.

Some twins did not really get on with their parents. One twin lost her co-twin at three years of age and has experienced an overwhelming sensation of loss throughout her existence. She feels that this is due to the attitudes of her parents.

I'm English, and it was partly the time. I was born late during the war into a lower middle class family, and boys were held to be all that was wonderful, and I remember strongly that you did things for males, and males had worth and girls didn't, and neither did women. My Mother said things when I asked about my twin like, "Oh you used to boss him around. He'd do anything to get in your cot and have your teddy, and you'd let him if you felt like it" sort of thing. She spoke as though I always wielded a power. Not that I fought or was unkind, but I was the stronger twin and so I always got the message that I was culpable somehow and that I hadn't treated him kindly. It was always that, that she said to me.

Another twin comments:

We didn't get on with our parents. We didn't have a happy home life. We were really brought up by my Grandmother and a maiden aunt. My Father was away most of the time. My Mother wasn't a caring person. She left most of the caring of us to my Grandmother, and a maiden aunt whom I'm very fond of. As soon as we were old enough, we left home and went and lived with Grandma. Because we were twins and we didn't have a happy home life, we were lucky to have each other. Looking after one another. We'd always be there for each other, especially when we got older. We used to say when we get old we'll be able to look after one another, and then when we got sick we talked about helping each other.

Throughout this twin's life together with her co-twin, they shared an unusual, but not uncommon closeness. They always knew when the other was sick, or up to something that was different from their everyday behaviour. Because of their poor parental relationship they had formed an extremely close bond that remained with them, even although they had gone their separate ways on reaching adulthood.

Some parents had a favourite twin, and this became known to the other sibling.

But he was always my mother's favourite. My brother was the apple of my

mother's eye, and no matter what I did it never measured up to him. At the age of seven I won a hand writing competition in England out of a children's newspaper, and that is no mean feat. My mother turned round - I'll never forget it - and said my twin should have won that. She never gave us a lot of encouragement.

Another twin also had parental problems.

I could say that we certainly didn't get on with our mother. She was a very caring, loving person, but we felt very claustrophobic cause she didn't want us to go anywhere, or want to give us our freedom. In a way we resented our Mother, and stood up to her. Not in a real nasty way, but we used to get really angry when we wanted to go somewhere, or see somebody, and mother would say "oh no, you can't do that." With our father it was different, but our mother we used to really stand up to her you know. My mother was a very religious person, and there was a lot of friction between my mother and us.

However, not all participants had difficulty with their parents. One commented:

We were special because we were twins.

There were parents who fully understood the need for individual response to

each twin.

They didn't really treat us like twins in some ways. My mother, although difficult in some ways, used to say how delightful it was to have twins. She was thrilled at having twins.

One set of parents worked hard to affirm the individuality of their twins, despite the difficulty of having two children born together. In this case the children had not developed through their childhood at the same rate.

My twin was in a bad position really. I mean this was the nature of the guy. My achievements used to be, not thrown in his face, but always compared with me. Mum and Dad never, but I just used to achieve a lot more than he did I guess. That was the bottom line. Like I was the first person from either side of the family to ever go to university. Those sorts of things were really special. My Mum always pushed me. But she also understood that wasn't his thing, and she didn't put any pressure on him at all. But at the same time I was things like head prefect at school, and he was out working, but he was as proud of me as Mum and Dad. It never ever got to him. I sort of wonder if I would have handled it as well in his position.

Most parents of twins seem to feel like this participant's mother.

I think my mother was quite proud of the fact that people would stop her to have a good look at us.

BEING A V.I.P.

Being a twin is similar to having V.I.P. [very important person] status. Siblings become known as *the twins*, and get asked out as a unit more often than as individuals. Their presence can be felt in a room or a gathering of people, because they occupy double the space of a singleton, and by size alone, are more imposing. According to Siemon (1980), twins are met with envy, curiosity and excitement. Their identity as a pair substitutes for their identity as individuals.

I used to think everybody was a twin. It didn't occur to me that everyone didn't come in pairs. We were unique growing up, as twins weren't seen as much as they are today. We had our prams pushed onto the railway station for Queen Elizabeth to see us, only because we were twins, and a bit different. I can remember when we were with Mother, people stopping us in the street to look at us.

She goes on to comment

...we were both talented kids. My brother was particularly talented. He sang and danced ballet and fashion dancing for 15 years. He had a

beautiful voice, and was a member of the operatic society, and did many big shows, so while growing up we were in high demand. I accompanied him on the piano. We were cute, and we could entertain, and the second world war came, and we were in great demand then until we were about 16.

One twin describes the way she felt as a twin, which was different to the way she felt as an individual.

I don't think I feel that on my own I had much significance. It was as a twin that I was always noticed, and always had significance and special things happened as we were twins and we were noticed. So as a single person on my own, when I was younger, I think I always had the thing I was a bit special and it was because I was a twin, and then when I was on my own I wasn't special. But I still had the feeling I was a bit special and that wore off and then I found it very difficult to struggle to become myself.

She tells this story about V.I.P. status in twinship:

This is about when we were 14 or 15 really. We were keen on classical music. We used to go to the concerts at the town hall, and we thought that the conductor was absolutely wonderful. He was an Austrian and he had this very glamorous Swedish wife, and we used to sort of hang around the stage door. Of course because we were twins she noticed us. She had a daughter about the same age, and she stopped and asked us if we'd like to go out for tea. The daughter went away to school, and she had no company

when she was home on holiday, so it wouldn't have happened if we hadn't been twins.

This V.I.P. status has an impact on twins' personality development, and can increase their mutual dependency. Often society reinforces twin status by regarding the twins as a pair, rather than two people (Plank, 1985).

ATTENDING SCHOOL

There is much discussion about the effects of the same or different classrooms for twins. Twins themselves have mixed opinions. Every school has about this, and many have caused twins a great deal of anguish as a result of fixed policies without due regard for the best interests of the particular twins concerned. Case (1991) believes that twins should decide for themselves whether they want to remain in the same class or develop their identity in a different class. If they are forced into separate classes against their wishes, the result can be devastating, causing the twins' learning to be stunted due to their inability to function well on their own.

On the other hand, twins who have individuated successfully found their school years in separate classes rewarding.

It gave us a sense of independence. It's probably a good move, just to find out who you are, as opposed to being a unit. It gives you a little bit of time

alone. You've got to fend for yourself, and I'd be myself, and not just one of the twins, which is how I usually was.

Some began school together, but were later separated.

When we went to grammar school at 11 we got split up. We had the reputation of being the "terrible twins" so they split us up. I felt a bit smug, as though I was cleverer than my twin. In the end, she came off better, because she became form captain. We left school at 16. I mean you did in those days unless you were rich.

There were identical twins that had differing opinions about being mistaken for each other at school.

We didn't hang out together at school. We were in the same class together for quite a while, but we got sick of it because we were always fighting. People kept getting us mixed up. My twin was always hacked off when people got us mixed up. It never worried me, but she used to get snotty about it, so we both decided it was better to go into separate classes, and then we could come home and tell each other about it.

For one participant who had not had the opportunity of a happy home life, school

was a disaster. He and his co-twin passed through a series of educational institutions, as their behaviour caused disruption and frequent dismissal. They went from school to borstal to special detention centres for minors. Their education was minimal, and their self esteem non existent.

Yet another participant found school quite forbidding.

School was very difficult. It was a difficult time right through. We were separated in Standard 1. We didn't fight. We were so close they couldn't separate us, and we caused problems in the classroom because they separated us. They said to our parents that we'd fought which was a big mistruth. Then we had separate classes. I always liked my teachers, but my sister didn't like hers. But she was an absolute scholar. I always had to work twice as hard to get half the mark. So right through primary school we were in rooms next door to each other. We had different schooling. My twin's schooling was more channelled, because she was quite bright, and I was probably more manual - things like music and art and that sort of stuff. She was more academic, and she was probably more of a sportswoman than I was a sportsman. High school was a different story. We were put back in the same class together, and that was great. We were really pleased, but my mother was furious. It was great because we really helped each

other. She helped me get through, because I found high school a little more difficult. It wasn't until the fifth form that we were separated again, because of our elective studies. I excelled in my areas, and she excelled in hers, so we were looked at as being quite good students. She was always pure A's, and I always strived to get as good a mark as my twin, and I knew I couldn't, and I was resigned to that, and she knew I couldn't, but my parents didn't resign to that. She felt it was a bit unfair on me. She always looked out for me, and protected me. She'd sell her shirt to ensure I was happy.

Sadly for some twins, one achieves at a different pace from the other. Three of the participants commented on the pain that this caused them. One twin remarked:

The first year was the only one they kept us together at school. My twin dropped behind after two years. Everyone at school knew we were twins, and I remember at a very early age feeling very sorry for my twin. He knew that he'd been put behind, and I think it upset him. So while we were at school, because we were in different classes, we had different friends, but at the same time there was always something there.

Some of the participants enjoyed being together in the same class . Having their

twin close at hand provided a feeling of security, and without the stress of separation, they felt comfortable in the knowledge that their co-twin was there to support them in moments of uncertainty.

We went right school together in the same class. My friend, who is also a twin, said that they were never allowed in the same class, because she would put her hand up to answer for her twin. We were never that dominant.

Having a twin in the same class can be convenient, when it comes to seating arrangements.

We were in the same class at school, all the way to university. When there was a desk short in the class, we sat together, because boys and girls didn't like sitting together. It was o.k .except that the teachers would ask my twin why he hadn't done his homework like his sister. He was not as studious as me, although he was just as bright.

The youngest participant really summed up the feelings of the others. When asked if he liked being in the same class, he replied:

Yep. 'Cause then you know someone there, and have someone to sit with.

From listening to twin comments, it would seem that they are more likely to be

separated into different classes at school if they create some disturbance, or attract frequent attention or if one twin is more academically able than the other.

There maybe some painful experiences, especially when inappropriate attention is focused on a particular attribute of twins.

We had another set of twins at school, and the only way to describe them was a little simple. They were great big boys, and twice the size they should have been. I remember, they were the but of everybody's jokes. At times they would be walking home from school, and people would jump on them knocking their bags off. I can remember that with those twins.

Several participants suffered a good deal of anguish at being separated from their co-twin because one was brighter than the other. In every instance, those interviewed were the brighter twins by self description. They had all assumed the role of looking after their co-twin, and some expressed feelings of unshakable guilt when discussing the loss of this person. Their regret during school days was that they could not be together.

Right through school until varsity we were together, except for the sixth form. Then we were put in separate rooms, and I think that made a difference. Mine was a bit more academic, and I got a few more marks. Mine was more serious, and hers was more fun. I used to spend play time and lunch time with her friends because they went out and played hockey

and things, and went for walks. The girls in my class just sat around and talked. But she always felt that I was brighter, and she didn't like that. Probably in hindsight we should have both gone into the same class, which ever class, and that would have been much easier. I do realise that at some stage we would have actually had to split and gone our separate ways. We were similar, but there were some differences. We'd help each other with our homework, and we'd test each other, and we'd try and get one better than each other all the time, but there was no malice or anything like that in it. It was a good fun sort of thing.

Helping the less able twin could sometimes lead to hoodwinking the teacher.

I did his homework. And he got higher marks than I did. I used to slightly alter mine, and it wouldn't be quite as good as the way I'd done his. It was his writing. He'd copy it from me. There was no jealousy involved. We were very good at school, and at sport. We were never lower than fourth or fifth in the class.

Sometimes because the more able twin helped the other, they were separated into different classes, and this caused separation anxiety.

Invariably we'd stick together, and going through school he'd look after

me, or I'd look after him. I used to do his homework because he was a bit slow. He'd rather be playing, and I used to do his homework as well as my own. He got good marks when I did them, but it was because his spelling wasn't very good. He didn't like the teacher, and Mother used to let him stay home. It was the wrong thing to do really, and when we got to 11+ my brother and I passed the first exam, and then I passed the second, and he failed on his spelling. In those days if you couldn't spell you were a failure. I went to grammar school and he went to secondary modern. I just hated it. I couldn't study, and after two terms I just said I want to go to the secondary modern with my brother. I went there and we were put in the same class for the first year, and in the second year I was put in the same class, but we stayed close throughout our school years as well. I wanted to go to this school because of him. My Mother was really disappointed of course, because it's a feather in anyone's cap if you have children at the grammar school. If you can't afford private education, that's the next best thing. I just didn't like it there without him. We didn't spend the same amount of time at school. I did nine O levels. My twin never stayed at school. He left at 15 and worked on building sites.

Being identical gave some twins the opportunity to have some control over certain situations that aggravated them, or that they felt were unfair.

We got on pretty well at school. We both went to a boarding school. Teachers used to call us the binses twinses, so we used to try to separate quite a bit. You know, wouldn't always be seen together. We had our different friends and things. We'd have preferred to have been together, but because of the ribbing you might get from teachers we didn't. It does happen with twins a lot. We were in the same class all the way through, and we did things to fool the teachers many times. We used to have a shower at 6 o'clock. It was just for discipline. You just ran through it, and sometimes it was very cold in the winter, so one of us would run through twice, so it was only one of us that had to have this disciplinary shower, and they never ever - you had to go through and tick your name off - they never ever caught on to that one. When we used to go to the dances, and might take a young lady home, you had to be home by 12 o'clock, so one of us would run back to the school house and check in twice. They nearly caught up with us on that one. They became suspicious, and nearly caught up with us on that one.

There is no easy resolution to the issue of the placement of twins at school.

Teachers should not be dogmatic about whether or not they should be in the same or separate classes. They need to be aware of the affect it may have on the particular children's learning ability. When twins are stressed by separation anxiety, they cannot function within optimum capacity. Only the twins concerned, can express their real feelings, and it is a wise teacher who works with them to find a resolution which encourages the best achievable progress by both.

BEING ALIKE

Case (1991) discovered through her research that one cannot generalise about the degree of closeness of twin bonding. She suggests that identical women tend to form the closest bonds, but identical men also report closeness in their relationship. There have to be many exceptions to this, however, because several of the participants in this study commented on their close bonding with their non identical co-twin. However, it is possible that only twins who felt this loss significantly contacted me to take part in the study.

Identical twins, with their togetherness and their look-a-like features can puzzle not only society, but themselves as well at times. There are numerous examples of these twins being mistaken for each other, some instances of which have great entertainment value.

I remember walking down the main street and heard from across the street,

"Hi F---," which is what my brother was called. I wasn't going to stop

and tell him that I was the twin brother, so I kept on walking down the

street. We got opposite the door to the hotel and he said, "Have you forgotten where the door is?" I said "Look I'm sorry, but I'm his twin brother, and he didn't believe me. There were many, many times. I was walking across a pedestrian crossing, and my brother's boss pulled up in his vehicle, and he thought "That guy, he should be out working." He called the top dressing firm, and said, "What the hell is I--- doing down the main street? He's supposed to be at work." They called up on the R.T. and said "He is at work."

This same twin also had identity problems at school. When asked how teachers told them apart, he replied:

I've got a mole. They used to say that m [mole] and n [real name] were together in the alphabet, so they could tell which one was which that way.

For some, being called by each other's names did not present a problem.

We still dressed alike at 16. We were my mother's pride and joy. It just seemed natural to be dressed alike. We were constantly being told to wear our name because we were so identical you couldn't tell the difference. I got used to being called by her name, and she got used to being called by my name. We didn't get cross about it.

Identical twins can look so much alike sometimes that they even deceive themselves.

My sister used to work in a big fashion store before she went nursing. It had big mirrors so people could look at themselves in clothes. Often I'd be looking for my twin, and I'd think there she is, and I'd realise I was looking at myself in one of the mirrors.

One twin felt that having identical likeness to his co-twin, although painful after his twin's death, did have some compensation.

I can hardly talk to his kids. I get a knot in my throat. They come running up to me and say, "Ah Daddy", and I know they're thinking about my twin, who is their Father. It's just seeing them, because they click on after a while, and that's what hurts. That's the thing. Singletons haven't got that. See I can say to his kids, "This is what your Father looks like." 'Cause, like we were real good with kids. You'd think it'd be scary and they'd keep away with the tattoos and everything, but they just click on to us.

This twin is still referring to himself as "we". In order to maintain an identity, he seems to need to include his co-twin as part of himself.

KNOWING EACH OTHER

There is no doubt that some twins have a sixth sense about each other at certain times. Case (1991) refers to this as extra sensory perception, and describes several such instances. Out of the 15 participants, four related examples of such experiences, mostly to do with illness, or when something was wrong with their twin.

I was working as a tailor. I got my cup of tea at the break, and the next thing I woke up in the sick room. They put me in a taxi and sent me home, and I'd only been home for about half an hour, and my mother rang. I said I'd had a bit of a turn at work. She said, "What time was it?" I said, "Just after three o'clock." She said she was waiting outside the dentist and my twin came out about five past three, and she fainted in the middle of the street. That was the same time as I fainted. Totally amazing, 'cause there was nothing wrong with me. I didn't know she was going to the dentist. I always knew when she was having her period, because I always had a sore stomach. It was much easier when she went on the pill. If you're a twin, it's one of those experiences you come to accept.

Another twin found security in being able to predict when her twin was coming home during the war. He was very young when he was in the air force, and he was sent over to Green Island in the Pacific where he got coral poisoning and was

invalided home.

Mother hadn't heard from him for quite a time. I was coming home from work, and I saw this big plane fly over. In those days it was unusual to see a plane latish in the afternoon. When I got home I said to Mum, you'll hear tonight that he's come home. She said, "Don't be silly. How do you know that?" I said, "Well you're going to get a phone call, and he's come home." By seven o'clock that night Mother had the phone call. He'd been invalided home, and he'd like to see his Mother as soon as she could get down. At other times, on a still night I could hear the motorbike coming. When I heard that sound I always sensed it was him. He came home quite often that way.

Often twins sensed when their co-twin was ill. One participant in particular seemed to have extraordinary powers of perception.

I think the things I found most obvious about being a twin was if my twin got sick I always knew, particularly in later years when we were both sick. If I was having trouble I would ring her or go and see her to find out if it was her or me if I didn't always know the pain that I was getting - whether it was her pain or my pain.

She also knew when her twin was having a great time.

I can remember when she went to Rarotonga for a holiday, she had a great time. She was there for 10 days, and I had a lot of sleepless nights. I couldn't sleep. 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning and I'd be tossing and turning. Didn't know why I couldn't sleep, and my husband said to me after about a week of this, "You know what's wrong don't you? Your sister's out partying all night, having a good time, and having hardly any sleep, and that's why you're not sleeping." Then when she came back I was so tired. I asked her how the trip was. She said she had a neat time out partying every night. One night she was out all night. I said, "Yes, I know you were. I didn't get any sleep while you were away".

Both men and women told of instances when they were filled with apprehension. One twin began having abdominal pain before he knew that there was anything wrong with his brother. He began passing blood on digestion of food. Specialist examination did not provide an answer, and he became better, but his twin was diagnosed with cancer involving the same part of his anatomy. Just before his co-twin died he felt weighted down with premonition.

I was in his room, and I sort of had a funny feeling that he was going to die. So I walked out of the door, and I walked round in a circle. I didn't look at anyone, and the others wondered why I was doing that. And I went back

into the room, and I said to a sister I think he's going, and she said no, he's O.K. and then he died.

Yet another male twin had a similar kind of premonition

Ten days before she died, I was having my holiday with her, and I couldn't leave. I packed my things, and we had a hug and a cuddle in the kitchen. I got half way back, and I asked my friend to turn around as there was just something I wanted to do. She was in the doorway of the kitchen. She had tears in her eyes, and I had tears in mine, and I gave her a big hug that you could feel the electricity. She said, "Why are you doing this?" I said, "Oh, I don't know. I just can't leave you." I'll never forget that day. It was the last day I saw her alive. There was just something there.

And again this same twin tuned his senses in to his sister, and diagnosed disaster.

I knew straight away. At quarter past two on the Sunday afternoon I knew something was drastically wrong. I was with my friend at our workshop, and I was making my Mother a white, blue and red dress which she wore to the funeral. My Mother wanted a dress for an occasion, and she's never had it on her back again. I knew at quarter past two. My whole world went black, and I just knew there was something wrong. There was

something drastically wrong. I couldn't work out what it was. I was feeling so anxious. I packed up my things. My friend said. "What's wrong?" I said, "I don't know. I just have to get home," so she came home with me, and about 10 minutes after walking in the door the phone rang. It was the hospital saying that my sister has had a car accident but she was o.k. I thought, "That's bizarre," and then I rang my Mother. She said my twin has had a car accident, and then her husband rang to say it was quite severe. I couldn't work it out. It was all mixed messages so I arranged straight away to get down there.

BECOMING AN INDIVIDUAL AS TWIN

Twinship is a complemented relationship, and involves the intimate thoughts of two people, rather than one. In a sense it transcends the individuals involved, and blends both parties. Siemon (1987) discusses the positive and negative aspects of the relationship twins have for each other. She suggests that friendship, always being there for each other, and the security of the twin bond, make up for the lack of individual identity. As long as twins can function as a unit there is no psychological threat.

Siemon stresses that, despite the tendency of family and society to treat twins as one, they cannot be one person. As they do not have the advantage of other

children, who learn from around three years of age to become individuals, they may find individuation very traumatic, especially if death of the co-twin occurs before they have adjusted to living separate lives.

Some twins found some compensation for separation from their co-twin.

That was war years. My brother was a very bright person. He had been apprenticed at the age of 15 to a motor mechanic, and I remember them coming to Mum and saying they couldn't teach him any more, and it would be a great opportunity if he could get into the air force. So he went into the air force at about 17 and that's when we separated. I don't think I was upset, because in the war years there was a certain amount of pride if you said you had a brother in the air force. He used to come home quite frequently, and he'd bring a lot of other boys with him. There was an element of excitement wondering who he was going to bring this time. So it wasn't very difficult for me to accept that he had gone.

The war years also influenced the way young people were allowed to mix in society. Having a twin of the opposite sex meant that there was a ready chaperone for outings.

We were nearly 20 before we separated. Our house was always full of people, but we didn't need anybody but each other. I realised that if I didn't

leave home, I would never make the break. It was very difficult, because we were really one till then. I was 35 when I got married, and my twin was 32. I think it was just that we never really needed a relationship, having one another, because we danced together, and did things together.

Sometimes families felt it necessary to make decisions about their children's future. They did not always take twin feelings into account.

Well, my brother decided he was going to go flying, and my parents had some land, so they wanted me to go on the land, which I was not happy about. I did this because my parents threatened they were going to sell the land. I felt they were ruling my life, and I was not happy about that. I just remember us getting together and saying one of us has got to go on the land, and one of us gets to go flying. My twin said he was going to go flying. I was not happy about that, as I wanted to go flying too. We were 18 when we began living apart. It was O.K. We had our separate lives. My brother was involved in the aviation industry, and then I eventually got married at 21 years of age. We had a different circle of friends and that sort of thing, but we still used to see each other quite a lot. As long as we did see each other from time to time-- but we did see a lot of each other, so that was O.K.

Pursuing a career on entering adulthood seemed to be a natural time for separation. It could also lead to loneliness.

At first it was quite good really. A little bit later it was different. She was in the nurses' home. All the girls were together, and she had some advantages that I didn't. I used to go over and she would do some cooking. We'd go and make our own scrambled eggs together and things like that. And I spent quite a lot of time with her there. Then the following year we both went flatting, and I actually got very depressed. When I came home no one was home, and I had to turn the light on in the middle of the day. My room at home overlooked the river. You had to noticeably look up to see the sky and I didn't like it at all. It was on a main road. Very noisy. My twin's flat was in a nicer area. She had a nicer bedroom. Quiet. It looked onto the garden. It was nice being back with her. The first year both of us had a boyfriend. They were friends. She had her boyfriend and I had my boyfriend. We'd go off in great big groups. The whole lot. That was fun, but the second year it wasn't the same. My twin still had her boyfriend, and she used to spend quite a lot of time with them, and I'd feel a bit left out and I found that a bit hard. Then when I started going out with somebody she really didn't like that either 'cause she felt left out. A bit of a problem area. We felt we had to get approval from the other one. If the other one didn't approve then it was a bit tough.

Not all co-twins felt the same way about events that were part of the separation process.

It was different for both of us, because it didn't feel like it for me because

I stayed at home, but she went away, and so I had boyfriends and then I got married, so it didn't feel like I'd left home really, but she feels that I deserted her when I got married. She was really cut up about it really, and I never realised how cut up about it she was. She said that was the worst moment of her life. She felt really deserted, and I wasn't aware of that, and I didn't know how much I'd hurt her until 20 years later.

One participant has spent many years of her life coming to terms with her comments during her co-twin's illness.

I'm now 53, and I have really only one memory of him. The rest was told to me, but I do have strong feelings that I remember through growing up that relate to him, and are real. My memory of him is me standing and holding onto my mother's skirt saying she's mine and you go away, and then, poof, he was gone. That's my last memory of him. In my mind I have this memory of looking at him, and I see his face. I have no other memory. I definitely see his face, and not just photos. He's just fair and small. The sense I've made of it because I've felt guilty all my life, and I can remember asking my Mother several times, if I was a murderess. That's how I've always felt of myself.

Twins can experience feelings of desperation if their separation flings them into

a situation where they are expected to function appropriately, without prior experience. As Case (1991), says:

Twins are born with built in playmates-----Wise are the parents who recognize the need for each of the children to experience life apart from their twin.

If I am because of you,

And you are you because of me;

Then I'm not I, and you're not you.

But if I am I because of me,

And you are you because of you;

Then I am I and you are you. (P.61).

STORIES OF TOGETHERNESS

There are numerous stories about twins that captivate the imagination of singletons. The participants in this study were no exception. Often one twin would take the blame for the other.

We farmed for my grandparents and they had an enormous orchard and we were bored. I suppose like I bore my own grandchildren. I remember my brother - these incidents were always happening. He wanted some fruit from the orchard, so away we went, and I remember lying down in the long grass and saying to him, "Do you think we should do it? You know we're not supposed to." He said it was alright. So he sent me through the fence

to get the apples and he was waiting on the other side. And I got caught! It's the only time I can remember getting spanked. So I got through the fence and I had to take all the blame.

The war could sometimes be kind to what is now the older age group. There were always dances and fund raising activities. Anyone who had talent was in great demand to help fill the coffers, so one twin at 16 went everywhere. Consequently, when she went away nursing, she was unprepared for the attitude of the home sister.

When I went away nursing, I'd only been there a couple of days and the weekend came and my twin came, because we hadn't been away from each other, and I remember saying to him, "Come on, I'll show you the place and off we went, the two of us) and there was Sister standing on the steps and she says, "Matron wants to talk to you! You've been showing a man over the hospital," It never even occurred to me that he was a man. He was part of me. I always remember that. This man standing there and I couldn't understand what was wrong. He wasn't a man. He was my twin!

Twins can often think alike without knowing what their co-twin is up to. It is not uncommon for them to appear in exactly the same clothes that they have just bought, unaware that the other twin has done likewise. They can also carry out the same activities.

We were living in nearby towns, and I'd been going for driving lessons. Unbeknown to me, my twin had also made an appointment to sit the driver's test. I got out of the car, and who should be coming out of the

transport department but my twin. She'd been for her driving test, and I was the next. I said, "How did you get on?" She said. "I passed it", and the same chap had taken her. So I knew that if she could pass it I'd be alright.

Identical twins could often cause havoc when acquaintances approached the wrong twin, not always realising that their friend was a twin.

My wife was expecting. It would have been about 1963. She was several month's pregnant, and she had to go to the hospital. I went with her, and I was standing at reception with her suitcases. Next thing this nurse comes down the corridor and she seemed quite excited. Her face lit up, and she said hello, and all of a sudden she hesitated, and looked at my very pregnant wife, then looked at me, and stormed past me. So I knew that she must have known my twin brother, so I rang up my brother to tell him this had happened, and he said he knew who that was, and would get back to her.

Sometimes it is easier to take the blame than cause trouble with authority.

My brother was caught smoking at boarding school along with several others. In the morning the headmaster called out their names, because he

was going to cane them. He actually called out my name, and so I decided I would go and get caned for my brother, because we would probably both have got caned if I'd gone to him and said it was actually my brother. He would have said we'll cane you both just to make sure.

Some of the stories told showed a degree of generosity not so common amongst singletons.

I'll tell you a story about his generous nature. The day we turned 10 years old we got our bikes. We got exactly the same bike. We always used to get exactly the same gifts. And we were riding off down the road the night we got it, absolutely wrapt. Things like that which were important to both of us, you never did just by yourself.. You shared in the enjoyment the other person was getting as well, and stuff like that. You never actually talked about it, and I looked at my bike. It had none of the stickers of the make on it or anything like that. Yow know, the sort of things that are quite important to you when you are 10. I sort of mentioned it to him, and he goes, ah, do you want to have my bike? Shall we swap? And that was the nature of the guy. I'll never forget that he made the offer to make me feel better. And I remember when we had some lollies when we were in bed, and you'd eat them as fast as you could, and I remember sitting in the dark,

and he still had some left. We were 5 or 6 and he said, "No, go away." and a few seconds later clonk on the head, and there were the lollies.

Twinship continues to fascinate the world. Awareness and communication are important components of any form of interaction between two people. Twins become aware of each other within their mother's womb, and because of this awareness and closeness, they develop a relationship supported by understanding, and a communication style that often does not need language to clarify its meaning.

Chapter 4

THEME: BEING-IN-THE-WORLD ALONE

As yet, there is an absence of research on twin death. Segal (1989) comments, as does Case (1991), that research in this field is limited. Segal points out that in the 1984 National Academy of Sciences' publication on Bereavement there was not one single mention of twin loss in its 312 pages. Twelve years later there is still little evidence of research. Segal (1989) asks why this has been so neglected by professionals, and wonders if people erroneously assume that twin loss is the same as any loss of a sibling. She further reasons that many twins who do come for help are hesitant to express the extent of their grief, sensing that it is inappropriate in its severity, and that there is something wrong with them.

BEING-IN-THE-WORLD-ALONE

For the participants the death of their co-twin became a process of separating what had previously been inseparable - from we to I. Twinship is a complicated relationship at best, having both negative and positive aspects. Despite the world treating twins as one person, they are not, and never can be. Thornton Wilder, himself a twin, expresses the pain of twin death in his novel, *The Bridge of Saint Luis* Rey (1975). When one twin died the other cried that he was alone and forsaken, which describes the pain and anguish that the surviving twin feels.

Attig (1991) portrays death as a choiceless event in which survivors have little

control of timing or occasion. Bereavement is forced upon them, and beyond their command. They experience a world out of control, and become powerless to influence it in any way. Anxiety, depression, and immobilisation ensue, after making the bereaved person passive and helpless. There is little choice of path through the process. Instead, the person is assaulted by the death of their loved one, and swept along by ensuing events that unfold in sequence, in which they are once more powerless to control the consequences.

Physical exhaustion, mental confusion, spiritual crisis, and social upheaval descend upon the bereaved, who must work their way back to recovery. Attig makes the point that grief is an emotion, while grieving is an active process, and the manner in which it is worked through, relates to the person's ability to cope. Twins must also go through this process, but the added dimension of twinship makes this a heart wrenching experience. There is a desperate wanting to reverse the reality, and an agonised longing for the return of their co-twin. But there is no changing the reality, and no going back to the past. The danger is that the surviving twin will become fixed in this mode of being, unless they are supported and guided towards acceptance, as they learn to channel their feelings towards a tomorrow without their co-twin.

According to Worden (1982), there are four major tasks for those experiencing grief. They must acknowledge the reality of their loss, and work their way through the emotional turmoil. Grieving is hard work, and often the surviving

twin does not have the energy to take on such an onerous task. They must find a way to live a life with meaning. For twins this involves learning to not only to continue to exist, but to enjoy life as a single person. Worden's fourth task is possibly the most difficult for twins. He believes that survivors must loosen their ties with the deceased, and develop relationships with others. This means successfully transforming the love the twin has felt for their co-twin into the world of the living, while still retaining the love that they had for the deceased. For some twins this is an impossible task.

It is interesting to note that twin death touches the famous as well as others. Some ardent admirers of Elvis Presley believe that he longed for his twin brother, who died at birth. It is said that he felt the loss of his twin all his life, and was never able to fill this void until eventually dying himself. Another person well known to nurses, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, was born a triplet, and all three nearly died after birth. She believes that experience may have steered her path towards working with the dying. She discusses this when writing about her life, but strangely, does not mention the impact that being a triplet must have had upon her. Myra Levine a nurse therapist and teacher lost her co twin at birth. She comments, that from her earliest memory she struggled with the challenge to be both herself and her lost sister. She felt she had to be twice as good, twice as caring, and twice as conscientious, in order to keep her twin sister's memory alive. It took three years of therapy to learn to live for herself, and not for her twin. Many survivors experience this need. Some are able to extend beyond this phase, while others feel

a responsibility to live life for both.

Participants were asked to include in their interview their feelings at the time of death of their co-twin. Although painful, it gave them an opportunity to share those moments of their life that remain etched in their minds forever. As time goes on there are fewer people who wish to listen to such detail, yet for the surviving twins this moment of tragedy is there forever.

One twin was enjoying a fun day with his brother, doing what they did every day of their lives. It was a special day, an adventure in another part of the world with the current world champions. A day of fun and laughter, until one of the twins became caught in turbulent waters, and was dragged under, never to return alive.

I can't really imagine a more emotionally disturbing scenario to go through than to have to lose your twin through death. I think it's a huge impact and a lot of twins, the surviving twin, has a lot of trouble emotionally, and perhaps don't see a need to live any more, don't see a need to live any more without their twin. I heard of a case when a twin wanted to commit suicide and stuff like that. I can totally relate to that in that there is no point in living because you feel such a sole destroying loss. For me I went through that phase, not actually thinking about suicide, but really I just didn't know why I was alive and what the point of living was. I didn't really care whether I was alive or dead, and until I went through that and explored who I was and decided that I did want to live, and came

out of it. There was just utter disbelief that it was happening, and not something I was prepared for. It's not something I ever imagined. It was my worst nightmare, and there it was happening in front of me, and I was just a bystander watching. The fact that I couldn't help, and just standing there with tears in my eyes, and there was nothing I could do. Just hoping that he'd pop up, but he never did.

Simeon (1975) supports the notion that twins do not see themselves as individuals, because the only person that matters is their twin. Woodyard (1988) makes similar comments. Some twins in her study expressed a sense of loneliness so intense and constant that nobody could help ease it. Polarisation creates a sense of being only half a person when one's co twin dies. This can cause an endless seeking for what can never be found. The *we* nature of twinship is forced by death into an *I* existence into which the person is thrown without preparation or experience.

One twin was really busy at work in a hospital when her co-twin was reported missing.

I just went to pieces, but I had to keep going because we were really busy.

Also, if I didn't keep going there was nothing for me to do. They did eventually find her. They had to drag the river, and I found knowing that

her body was in there pretty terrible. I went back home. My parents were terribly upset, and I ended up comforting them, but there was no one to comfort me. I kept myself busy right up to the time of the funeral which I organised. It was the last thing I could do for her. I put in the things that she loved. A special night dress. I gather that she looked pretty awful. She'd been in the river for four days.

Twenty three years later, this memory remains vivid, despite the success of this twin's present day life.

Age does not make twin loss any less difficult to bear. An older participant could not comprehend how her very fit brother died.

He'd been out in the bush over the weekend, and came home on the Monday morning, and just said he felt very woozy, and went and laid down, and that was it. He had a cerebral haemorrhage. He was buried on the Friday, and I went to the hospital on the Sunday. On arriving I had a massive blackout. When I came to, I had the arrest team working on me. They said they couldn't make out what had happened, but I can still see my brother with his hand up.

She believes that if her brother's hand changes position, it will be her time to follow.

Another older participant said:

It was rather strange. It was as though part of me had gone, in so much as this was the first time of my life I was alone. Just one. Quite odd actually. You couldn't call us "the twins" any more. You know he could have lived for another 20 years, and he deserted me, and I hated it.

The anxiety of parents can be stressful for the surviving twin. They often strive to over protect the remaining twin, which has been described as a crushing experience (Woodward, 1988). Two of the participants were still at school when they lost their co-twin through motor accidents. Both were identical twins, which is particularly difficult for parents. They must support the surviving twin, while being constantly reminded visually of the one that is no longer, by the presence of the remaining twin.

One twin could not comprehend what was happening for some time. Her co-twin did not die immediately, but continued to live on life support for some days.

I saw her lying on the ground with blood on her head. I didn't know what to think, 'caus in my head I thought it was a dream. I think I was in shock, as I was laughing at everything I was told.

Another young participant also had, and still has difficulty in verbalising his real feelings about his loss, yet that loss is very real.

The bus was going along, and it slipped and fell on one side, and one of the windows smashed, and my twin fell out the window.

The difficulty for the parent is to help the young person to express their feelings without becoming a millstone around their neck. As a mother experiencing this very situation, I believe it is an extremely difficult role. Every instinct is to protect the remaining twin, while the twin's future requires that they learn the skills required to live without a close reliance on another human being.

Other parental reactions include rejecting the surviving twin. According to Woodyard (1988), this can cause terrible feelings of guilt that the co-twin is dead. The surviving twin may feel ashamed to be alive, and believe that in some way they should have been able to prevent the death of this most loved person in their parents' lives.

My Mother told me that when he died I used to bring all his things downstairs. I would tell Daddy to go and bring him home from the hospital. In the end my Father couldn't take it any more, and he got rid of all his things. I nearly died when he died, because I wouldn't eat.

This twin, at three years, was made to feel guilty at the loss of her brother, whom she believes was more important because he was a male. Fifty three years later, she still feels that guilt. Farber (1981) believes that there is still inadequate

conceptualisation of the psychological characteristics of twins. Like others, Farber and Bryon (1986) stress that parents can be over critical of the survivor, or idealise the lost twin, to the detriment of the living. Indeed, many parents remain haunted by the vision of their lost child.

Several twins lost their co-twin through cancer, or other illness, and witnessed their life companion slowly dying before their eyes, powerless to change the course of nature.

He was working on a building site bricklaying, and he got mumps, and you know what mumps is like for a 17 year old. It's quite a serious illness. He had to stay off work for about three weeks, and he went back too soon in the middle of winter. His immune system must have been pretty low. It was what they called Asian flu at the time. It was going through the country. He just copped out, and Mother was nursing him at home for about a week, and he just died. He just died. Today they would have had him on drips and antibiotic. They'd have had him in hospital. The doctor wouldn't even put him in hospital, and my Mum was up day and night nursing him. I knew he was sick, and I went to see him, but you never expected anything like that. He died at home in a coma. He was in a coma for at least 24 hours. Not being in that profession, and not knowing, Mother just thought he was just sleeping. He wasn't eating. I was working

as a laboratory technician at the hospital at the time, and they did an autopsy on him and they couldn't find anything - anything at all. All they found was a little bit of mucus in his lungs. Maybe he choked on it and couldn't cough it back up. The policeman came and told me that he'd died, and I couldn't believe it. I just had to go up and see him. It was four or five hours since he died, and he'd gone all waxy, and I had nightmares for years after, seeing him like that. I had to see him. I had to see him to know that he was dead. You don't believe anything like that.

One identical twin had seen his twin go back and forth to hospitals and specialists for investigation of pain, only to be told by both medical and nursing staff that he was a hypochondriac, and discharged. He was eventually admitted into another hospital.

They operated on him, and then they just closed him up again, he had so much cancer inside him.

Another identical twin had journeyed between New Zealand and North America to see her ailing sister, and be with her while she had radiation therapy. On her return home she was phoned by her mother.

Mother rang me up and said she couldn't cope any more, and wanted me to come back to North America. All the way back on the flight I kept saying

to myself that if my Mother met me it would be too late, and she met me.

One participant remains uncertain as to whether his twin died of natural causes, or found life too difficult to continue.

She was going too fast, and she rolled down a bank. She was clinically dead on arrival at the hospital. I sometimes wonder if it was an accident or not. So many people to please in her life. She had to please her husband, her new partner, and my mother, and she'd tried to please me, and she was so torn between all that. I just wonder sometimes if she wanted to be released from it all.

It is not unknown for twins to have similar medical conditions. The basis for this is not really understood.

We had trouble at the same time, and we both stopped smoking then when we were 40 we began to have trouble. I started getting angina, and so did my twin. When I went to the doctor - we had different doctors of course because we were living in different towns - they were both concerned, and both our doctors were very interested in the fact that we were twins. The were always asking how the other one was getting on and what treatment we were having. And I knew when I had a bypass that she would have to

have one too, but she was trying to ignore it. I felt very guilty when she died, and it's taken me a long time to come to terms with it, but I still get angry that she didn't help herself more. I feel that she deserted me, and I get angry.

Surviving twins can become preoccupied with their dead sibling, and most certainly feel that part of themselves is lost forever. Disbelief may occur, especially for identical twins whose mirror image has been shattered. Often there is a fear of dying, especially in the same way as their twin, or a wish to join the dead one to escape their hurt. Rosambeau (1987), in her twin study, found that one twin expressed that watching his brother die was the same as seeing himself die. Another stated that it was impossible to imagine such a situation, and impossible to deal with it. Yet another stated that a major part of her life was laid to rest when her twin died. She felt that for 23 years one half of herself was her twin, and she doubted if that could ever change.

Transforming from We to I is not done over night. It is a long journey that may take years, or the rest of a lifetime. For the surviving twin travelling this path, there is a need for understanding, and an acceptance by others that the dead twin is still an essential part of their life. To be told to get on with living only adds to the pain, and acts as a reminder to the twin, of another being who would have understood their innermost feelings, and nurtured them.

FEELING LONELY

Participant discussion always included expressions of immense loneliness at losing their closest companion. Despite the willing involvement of family, the void was unable to be filled. Although twins dealt with this in different ways, they all had extreme difficulty in adjusting to life as a single individual. Not only had they lost their best friend, but they had also lost their V.I.P. status. No longer were they “the twins” whose entrance commanded notice, nor could they even create a presence by occupying the same physical room space. Some twins felt quite threatened by this, causing their already low self esteem at the loss of their co-twin, to plummet as they witnessed a change in the way they were regarded by others. Life became threatening and unsafe.

Suicide may seem like a fairly easy way to go. Twins need help through this, and maybe three or four years down the track you can actually be happy again. That's something that I couldn't have ever believed immediately after his death. I never thought I would ever be able to live again with a smile on my face. Losing your twin is a pretty big influence on your life. I can't really imagine a more emotionally disturbing scenario than to lose your twin through death. I heard of a case when a twin wanted to commit suicide, and I can totally relate to that. There's no point in living because it's such a sole destroying loss. I just didn't know why I was still alive, and what the point of living was. I was lucky. I had help. You

need this to understand what is going on, and someone who doesn't have that help may feel lost, and find suicide an easy answer.

The loneliness can be overwhelming.

I'd never experienced loneliness before. There's nothing you can do. I made a lot of friends at university who were really good to me, and listened. Having people around is very important, but it was hard. Even people who were really good friends were not enough. It wasn't what I used to have with my twin. Not that anything was said between us. It was just there, and I missed the closeness that I had with him. I still miss it, and I will probably miss it until the day I die.

The pre - interview telephone conversations with the participants many of them talked about their loneliness, although when interviewed they tended to describe this theme in different ways. The youngest said:

Life is really different. It's really boring at home. It's not the same, and I need to keep moving 'caus he's not there. I try to do things on my own, and I end up not doing them.

The constant companion is no longer there. Twins have the ability to entertain themselves without needing others. Playing tennis, tossing a ball, practising

cricket, jogging, and many other outdoor activities can be comfortably played with two people, as can some mind games, and just passing friendly conversation. Without their co twin these activities become meaningless to the survivor who is unable to replace the special closeness they have felt with another human being.

A young participant found life at home without her twin frustrating, and unbearable at times.

I always want to be around friends. I just can't stand being at home.

There's a lot of memories there, and I just want my friends around, 'caus

I'm used to having someone around. It gets so lonely. I kind of went off the

rails after she died. I was doing all sorts of things I shouldn't be doing. I

still sometimes do.

Age does not alter the depth of feeling of twin survivors. The oldest participant felt angry at her co-twin dying so soon.

He could have had another 20 years, and he deserted me, and I hated it. He

always lived such a charmed life, and he had to go and die before me.

No matter what the age, or length of time since the co-twin died, feeling settled may not be possible. Often there is a yearning to seek for a way to fill the void. This may involve dangerous activities, or just moving from place to place, or occupation to occupation.

I always feel that I'm unsettled. I sort of settle down, and then the next thing I want to do something else. I always feel there is something missing. Life doesn't function the same. I used to live life like he did. I'd try and dress like him, I thought my voice was his, and I enjoyed seeing all his friends. I then started doing a bit of flying like he used to. I started living his life.

One twin chose his own way to keep close to his dead co-twin.

We are still together. I'll be walking past a shop window, and I'll see my reflection, and I'll think that it's him looking at me. For a fraction of a second I'll think that's him. I can do it with mirrors. I look at the back of my hair, and I think he is there. I communicate with him. The wairua is heavy on the heart when you care about someone that much. If a married person loses their partner, they have only been married since adulthood, and they feel shattered. That's just half of what we feel. It's like cutting your own heart out. I was the brainy one, and now I'm just lost.

Missing their co-twin is very real for those who have experienced this loss when young. The memory still remains within them, and emerges from time to time in uncontrollable bouts of loneliness.

I felt because he was never really talked about I didn't have a right. I know now that I do have a right, and it was only this year that I cried. After 53 years I cried and cried. I cried for about three days. Before I used to think I was a murderess, and I kept wondering what was the matter with me. I felt I didn't have a memory, and I didn't have a right. When I read your term, "lone twin", it really rang a bell for me. That's why I contacted you. It's neat I really am a twin still. I've suffered a lot. I lost somebody who would have been the closest person ever. I'm always looking. When I met my husband I had this fantasy that he was my twin because he was gentle and loving, and had a head of curls like my twin.

Another participant lost her co-twin at three years. She told him to go away, and he did, forever. He became ill and died, and although this illness was not brought about by herself, she has carried strong feelings of guilt and loneliness ever since.

Perhaps one twin summed the feelings of loneliness up when he said:

Communication is the biggest thing I miss. Life is more selfish for me now. I have a life to get on with. My twin didn't have a chance, so I've carried on doing the things she would have done. I went travelling, and saw some of the places she wanted to see. I worked myself into the ground at one

stage, just trying not to have time on my hands, and not to think about her death, and a year later I fell into a screaming heap. I am still a twin, and I don't feel like a totally whole person any more.

Another participant reveals the loneliness that surviving twins feel.

I suppose I've lost the person that understands me best in all the world.

The closest person to me.

It would seem that lone twins learn to survive, and as time goes on, they manage to camouflage their loneliness. Time does not allow them to forget, and they can never replace the chasm in their hearts, as they continue to search for a remedy that may ease the ache that is as much part of their daily lives as the air they breath to stay alive.

One twin describes his journey towards adjustment to a different kind of life from one he had thought was his by virtue of his birth. He relates his feelings, and defines how he developed coping mechanisms to help him move onwards.

It was really hard for the first couple of years trying to find out how to cope. I guess I had a lot of grief to deal with, as well as gut wrenching sorrow and emptiness. I felt it was sole destroying and there was just an emptiness inside me. I had to learn to live from that emptiness, and move

on from it, and then find out who I was. That was my biggest thing after he had gone. Not to find out who the F--- twins were, but to find out who I was. What sort of temperament I had, and what sort of life I should lead. I went to university fairly soon after the accident, but the academic side of things meant very little to me. It was just a place to be while I sorted out the emotional side of who I was, and discovered myself.

Most of the participants felt that they were still searching for the right path, to a greater or lesser degree. They were not sure if they were pursuing the correct direction, and found that the lack of a sole mate to discuss such issues with, led to uncertainty that the choice they made was in their best interests.

I have a life now. I live in the outdoors, so I work where I want to be, but I still haven't pinpointed where I want to go or what I want to do. I was really lost when my twin died, and perhaps I'm still lost, and I'm still searching. When I do find what I'm looking for I'll pursue it. I used to wonder what decisions I would have made if he had been here, and it would have been very different.

LIVING WITH THE MEMORIES

Anniversaries are an especially difficult time for twin survivors. Only one participant said that they did not find this so. It was a family practice to ignore

such events, and so she had not been programmed or socialised into celebrating these occasions.

We don't celebrate birthdays. Every day is a difficult day.

All others found birthdays and the anniversary of their twin's death extremely difficult. Engel (1975), himself a psychiatrist, examines his feelings over a ten year period. He describes how he became more and more depressed as the date of his twin's death became close. All, except one participant verified this emotion. Those whose loss was more recent found this period almost unbearable, as they remembered the death event, as well as dwelling on their own relationship with life. Once the date was over it became possible to look forward again.

Birthdays are a great cause for stress. Family and friends do not realise the significance they have for the lone twin. Never again can this be a day of happiness, because it is a potent reminder of what life used to be, and what it is now. It also affirms for the twin that they are growing older, and the time of closeness to their co-twin is being lost as the years move on. That in itself is terrifying, and yet the family may want to celebrate this special day with the survivor. One participant sobbed as he talked about this difficulty. Loving though his family is, they feel that he should enjoy the children's attempts to create a party atmosphere.

My wife doesn't really understand. She says it's still my birthday, so for the children I go through the motions.

Special birthdays such as 21sts are traumatic, because family and friends like to make this an occasion, possibly also because they want to make up for the twin that is missing, and in doing so may cause extra pain. Frequently the surviving twin would prefer to spend this time cherishing their memories of their co-twin in their own way.

I always remember birthdays. Always birthdays I regret things I didn't talk about. Birthdays are such a special day.

And:

I feel some of my strength has gone with her. I just want to be on my own.

I'm not on my own, but I would like to go off somewhere and be on my own at that time.

This participant arranged to marry on her birthday, so that she would never have to be alone on that day.

We got married on my birthday. I longed for my twin's company, and I didn't want to be alone on my birthday so I got married. I thought that my husband would be there for me, but that was a big mistake. He couldn't handle it and he took off.

Conversations with the participants revealed loneliness and depression at anniversary times. The survivors have learnt to live with this as the years pass, but time does not erase the memories. It merely provides training in techniques to ease the pain.

I'd never experienced loneliness before. I miss the closeness I had with him.

I still miss it, and I'll probably miss it until the day I die. I like to get into my canoe and go into the wilderness at anniversaries, so that I can commune with him, and remember the good times.

FEELING A PRESENCE

Several participants talked about feeling their co-twin close by. This ranged from feeling a presence to having visions of their dead sibling. Such perceptions gave great comfort to those who described such events. Perception of them did not relate to educational status, or to the sex of the participant. Indeed, it did not even relate to the degree of physical contact before death, because some twins lived apart, either in the same country or different countries. One twin still feels her co-twin close despite the 23 years that have elapsed. Another twin talks to her dead twin quite frequently.

... and when she makes me angry I say to her, "Why did you die?"

Another twin's whole life is centred around his communication with his dead co-twin.

I keep him with me. Even the way I talk is the way he talked, and my laugh is his laugh. Sometimes I yell at him. We were the same and we talk to each other, and I see him everywhere.

One participant has been separated by death from her co-twin for half a life time, and yet she feels that closeness.

It's like nothing can take him away, and I talk to him a lot. He's always there.

While this is a comfort to this twin, it is not always so. Another participant says:

I keep getting these nightmares. I see his face in my dreams. His dead face.

Unless someone has experienced this they don't understand.

One participant sums up the essence of what most of the participants were trying to express.

I feel she is still with me. I feel she is by my shoulder, or sometimes sitting in a chair opposite. Just sitting with me, because often we would be together, and be quite content not to speak. Just to be there with each other. There was solace in each other's company. It was lovely. I feel very happy to be in that room and share that space with her. Whenever the going gets tough, and I need some direction, I feel she is pointing me there. There's never a day that goes past that I don't think of her, or see her.

Friends and family will with the best intentions, encourage the lone twin to "get on with their life and let go," but this may not be in their interests to do this. For

many, there is comfort in communing with their lost co-twin, and it is only when the surviving twin feels safe in the security of the love both twins experienced, that they can take faltering steps towards developing relationships of importance with others. No one can ever replace their dead twin, and the person who develops a close friendships with a lone twin, must understand that the twin relationship will always come first.

SHARING WITH OTHERS

Following the article in a local magazine about this research, all the surviving twins that contacted me voiced their distress at having no one to turn to who understood their plight. At the time of writing calls and letters are still coming. Participants were asked to give some advice that might be helpful for others.

You will never forget them. They are part of you, and you learn to live with it.

And:

I think I've learnt to grow up. Most people are on their own, but I didn't have to do that because I had someone I could share with. Life was a lot lighter and a lot easier. We got on fine, and we did very well. We were actually very successful, and that is hard. If I have to go socialising, and go to where there are a lot of people I don't know, I find it very difficult. I've had to learn to do that.

From the youngest participant:

Don't let things go on a bad journey. Just accept that it's happened.

Another young participant said:

I don't think you really appreciate what you've got until you've lost it. I'm still trying to sort myself out.

One twin urged other twins to appreciate each other, because there may be a time when one of you may die. He advises:

I get a lot out of revisiting places where my twin worked and lived, and going through personal belongings.

The pain that is experienced is very real.

People say that time's a healer. All that time does in my experience, is to let you not cry every time you think about it. You still want to, but you learn. It's like a skill you learn. You teach yourself not to cry. I would like some advice rather than giving any. The year after my twin died I didn't realise it, but I was virtually written off. I moved out of home shortly after, which seems a weird thing to do. I just had to make a break from all that. I didn't move far away. I moved into a flat about two minutes down the road, and spent most of the day in bed. I was at university, and went to

about 10% of the lectures I should have. I bluffed everybody, including my girlfriend. Definitely my parents. They thought I was off to university. Every day I'd get up, get changed, go to the bus stop, and then I just couldn't face it, so I went home to bed. I continued to play rugby, and I felt like death.

Another participant feels she has learnt a good deal.

In some ways I've learnt to cope with things better because I've had to learn to do them on my own. I've probably got a bit stronger in some ways, but I need a lot of people around.

Every participant, at some time, stated that they needed to have people around them. It seems there is an essential requirement for someone born into the world with a companion already in place, to continue linking with others. Singletons have learnt to live alone, or at least spend amounts of time alone, but for twins this aloneness can cause a good deal of agitation and stress.

This twin offers these words of wisdom:

You will never be on your own. Your twin will always be there in spirit, but there will be a huge void in your life. A massive void. Something which is incomprehensible, and my advice is to move into an environment that is

more nurturing for a while. My immediate family didn't mean a great deal to me in those days. You never forget. You go to bed thinking about them, and you get up thinking about them. I remember walking up to a girl in the super market and tapping her on the shoulder. She looked the same from the back, and she had long hair like my twin, and she dressed the same. It was the most embarrassing thing. I dropped my shopping basket and ran.

It was common for surviving twins to have moments when they felt they saw their twin. For most of them, this is a source of comfort, but these visions usually became less and less as time goes on.

One participant had some thoughts that could well be helpful to other twin survivors.

The biggest thing you need to know is that you are lucky to be a twin because you have never felt loneliness. Some people have never felt cared for. The bonding, the trust, the closeness, and the love. There's no jealousy there. They're very lucky to have felt that. Do understand that you have been lucky. You have had that, and perhaps all relationships you have after that may seem to be a bit of a disappointment in comparison to this closeness. Be aware of that, and don't expect too much of your partners or friends.

It is appropriate to complete the documentation of this section with this same participant's advice, given ten years from the time of his identical twin's death. Ten years of hard work to think beyond today, and to envisage life with a future. A future with promise. Not the promises of the past, but the hope of a new direction, based on his ability to reach fresh goals alone.

You're lucky. You're very lucky to start off with, and no matter how bad things seem, or how bad your life has been afterwards, given time you can become an individual. I can offer proof of that, having been through it all, and after my twin's accident, never believing it was possible.

His words are written here as solace for all twin survivors. They offer hope of a different but rewarding life to come. A life that carries with it living memories of love and closeness. Memories that can give strength to the survivor as their existence continues but in a new direction.

Being here now, and talking to you, is proof that there is a light at the end of a very dark tunnel.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The two major themes that emerged from participant interviews, were expressed as being in the world together, and being in the world alone. From these two categories several sub themes emerged. Of interest was the consistency with which these themes were noticed across participants. Phenomenological inquiry does not aim to provide conclusions, and so it is inappropriate to infer that these exist. It is enough to remark upon the consistency of the overall statements, and wonder if there is a real enlightenment at their similarity.

The twins that were interviewed represented a cross section of age, sex and type. This occurred merely by chance, as for some considerable time it was not obvious that the study could proceed, due to insufficient numbers. Since it has become known that this research is progressing, there have been, and still are, twin survivors who would have liked to have been part of the study.

Woodward (1988) makes some pertinent points in her twin research, and it is useful to compare her findings with this study. She found that the time between loss and recovery did not follow the traditional time frame for grief. The participants in this research also needed much more time. This grew into years rather than months, and for some, time did not heal the intermittent grief they continue to feel.

The influence of parental attitude was evident in the twins who participated. Like Woodward, this study suggests that there is a danger of parents becoming over protective to the surviving twin. This may stifle the grieving person, and create a need to move from the home nest. On the other hand, the lone twin may be made to feel guilty at being the survivor, and this may cause that person to feel like a murderer, as one of the participants expressed, when describing her torment.

Twins expressed the need to complement each other and this polarisation was beneficial while they were together. However, when one twin dies this can create feelings of being only half a person, as the survivor struggles to increase their self esteem.

By far the most discussed topic of the participants was the impact of the severe loss they had experienced. Woodward insists that a twin by definition is the nearest other person to oneself, and so it is small wonder that they suffer devastation when their co-twin dies. It also explains why several participants felt the need for company at all costs.

Turning We to I is not easy for a twin. Death can bring anguish, guilt, loneliness and confusion, as the surviving twin tries to sort out their feelings and their understanding of themselves. It is a long and painful path as the twin works towards seeing themselves as an individual. The intensity of reaction depends on

the closeness between the two.

One of the worst aspects of twin loss is the cumulative effect. Loss of the co-twin seems to lead to other losses. This causes many to continually seek ways of compensation that may not lead to fulfilment. Woodward suggests that religion is helpful for some lone twins, although this was not evident in this study. Several participants did find comfort, however, in visions they had experienced of their lost twin, and in feelings of closeness with their dead co-twin.

Interestingly, living twins show very little interest in discussing twin loss, or their preparedness for it. This seems significant, because at some stage one of every pair of twins will experience the loss of their co-twin. Only then will they begin to understand the transition from We to I.

Several of the participants began to question who they were after talking with me. They sometimes stated that they were no longer a twin, but on reflection realised that the way they viewed the world was, and still is, from a twin point of view. This is a powerful message for twin survivors, and validates that most important aspect of their lives, that of being a twin. Most participants told me that they had benefited from participating in the study, because it had given them cause to think about who they are, and to realise that they were not the only ones feeling as though they had lost their other half. To know that they are normal, and not suffering from some psychiatric illness was of immense relief to some.

Participation also allowed them to realise that they had and, by virtue of their past, still have a special place on this earth, because they have shared their innermost world in complete trust with another being, the closeness of which no singleton can realise.

This study has proved to be beneficial to both the participants and to myself as the researcher. In listening to the participants' stories, I have been able to draw a picture of not only twin survivorship, but of twinship, and the experiences that lie within this privileged way of being-in-the-world.

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APPENDIX 1

INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Jenny Glen. I am a graduate student of the Department of Nursing & Midwifery at Massey University. I am currently enrolled in my Masters thesis. Information gathered during this study is for this purpose only. I am a Registered General and Obstetric Nurse and have a certificate in grief counselling. I have spent the last eight years of my professional life working as a lecturer in Nursing Studies, and more recently as a manager of Health Promotion.

This study has grown out of my awareness as a mother of a lone twin, of the sparsity of literature available about the experience of being a lone twin. There is a very real need for information to help those left. I hope to contribute to this knowledge base by asking lone twins to tell their feelings and experiences in survivorship.

Participants are asked to consent to being interviewed. These will be audio taped, and take about thirty minutes. Information collected during the interview will be transcribed and analysed before any subsequent interviews. You may be asked to comment on the initial analysis during a subsequent interview.

If you take part in the study you have the right to:

- * Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any time.
- * Ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation.
- * Provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential to the researcher, my supervisor and the transcribing typist. All information transcribed from the tapes will not include names of people or institutions, and it will not be possible to identify you in any reports prepared from this study.
- * Be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

I can be contacted at home. Phone [REDACTED]

Appendix 2

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information sheet for this study, and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, and to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it is completely confidential.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being taped.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the information sheet of which I have a copy.

I have the right to request that the audio tape be turned off at any time.

Signed:

Name:

Contact Phone:

Address:

Date:

Please send to:

Jenny Glen. [REDACTED]