

Local

The 3-minute interview: Joan A. Friedman

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BALTIMORE -

As a twin and the mother of twins, Joan Friedman is concerned about the mystique that can get in the way of the emotional growth of twins. As a psychologist and an author, she published "Emotionally Healthy Twins," and recently visited the Baltimore area to speak to twins-parenting groups.

What do twins need emotionally that other children may not?

There's a lot of challenges and tribulations to being a twin, as well as the joys. It is a special bond you won't have with anybody else. You're with that person 24/7 for most of your early life.

There are some potential emotional drawbacks. Twins' attachment to each other becomes more important than the attachment to the parents as time goes by. Parents enable that. Parents think it's so cute that they're in their own little world, but it's not cute, psychologically. There's such a thing as too much togetherness.

What can parents do to prepare for twins?

It has to be discussed early on in a child's development. You say to somebody, "I'm having twins." What really needs to happen, is you need to say, "I'm having two babies."

The word twins automatically lumped into a unit or duo.

Take pictures of the two babies individually.

As they grow up, they are going to need separate pictures of themselves — pictures of themselves alone, and pictures of themselves alone with their parents — so they have a visual record that they have their own identity.

What else can you do?

Buy or borrow a single stroller. ... I found I needed that time with each boy alone.