

BOOK REVIEWS

Beyond the Bond by Joan Friedman, PhD

By Mary Prigel Adcock

President

Have you heard the story about the twin girls who were born holding hands? Yes, it really happened! They were born at Akron Children's Hospital on May 9, 2014.

"Naturally it drew the attention of media with some even proclaiming it was a sure sign the two would be 'best friends' their entire lives," Dr. Joan Friedman shares in her new book, *Beyond the Bond: Insights into Navigating the Challenges of Being or Raising a Twin*.

Some might even say it's further proof that all twins are destined to have a close relationship forever. However, as Friedman explains in *Beyond the Bond*, "While many twins are best friends and remain so throughout their lifetimes, many are not."

In the book, Friedman helps readers explore that contradiction. She utilizes a series of essays written in response to questions posed on her blog to address both the closeness and the challenges of growing up as a twin.

"Both parents of twins and twins themselves have told me how much they appreciate finally finding a place where their twinship questions and dilemmas are addressed by a professional who understands what they're going through," Friedman writes in the book's preface. For one, that's because as an identical twin and a parent of twins, Friedman offers that advice from a lived perspective as well as from her expertise and experience.

"So much of my own story has been built on the lessons I learned growing up as a twin," Friedman writes. "My relationship with my identical twin sister was somewhat fretful and difficult—but not to the outside world or our family. Others did not notice how both of us rushed to open our birthday presents because the slower twin would have the surprise spoiled since we always received identical gifts."

For parents of twins, the questions go beyond birthday presents. There's the distress felt by mothers following childbirth because their multiple babies were born by C-section instead of vaginal birth, or by a mother of twins who feels unable to bond with her children. There are concerns about finding a balance in paying attention to the needs of a regularly developing twin when one multiple is special needs, or finding peace when there's constant teasing or fighting between teenage twins. There's a need to understand the dynamics when just one twin starts dating, or navigate a way forward when one twin feels compelled to take care of the other.

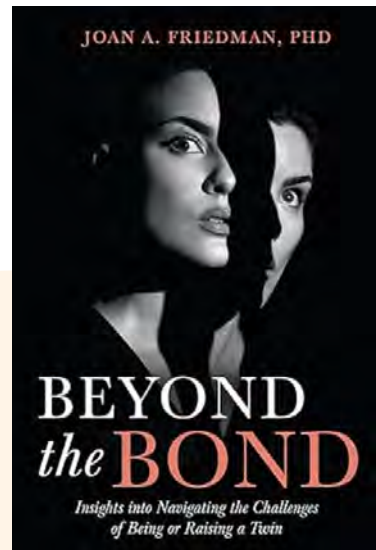
In brief, Friedman advises parents make "a concerted, ongoing effort to attach to each child rather than to the pair as a unit and let go of the self-imposed obligation to make everything in the twins' lives fair and equal."

For twins, the questions can come with the friction of everyday happenings: when one multiple learns to ride her bike before her co-twin, or when one multiple develops an interest in playing the piano and is praised for her talent, but the co-twin has no interest in music. They can also span the bigger moments of life: when heading off to college means separating from your co-twin for the first time, or when the spouse of a married twin feels intimidated by the strength of the twin bond.

Yes, these types of scenarios can happen with any siblings, but Friedman contends "twins often experience growing pains and developmental challenges uniquely relevant to their twinhood."

In all, the essays in *Beyond the Bond* delve into seven categories:

1. Parenting Twins
2. Parenting Adolescent Twins
3. Caretaking Behaviors
4. Young Adult Twins
5. Romantic and Marital Relationships Involving Twins
6. Older Adult Twins
7. Twin Loss and Estrangement



continued ...

“Helping twins find themselves after growing up in a twinship is an arduous journey,” Friedman notes. “Yet the joys and the returns are priceless. Recapturing twin magic after years of loss and despair is undeniably a dream come true.”

These essays describe that journey, giving an in-depth look at life as a twin. Each essay is a quick read that can lead to personal reflection or offer direction for change.

Beyond the Bond: Insights into Navigating the Challenges of Being or Raising a Twin (Rocky Pines Press) is available through Amazon or Barnes & Noble.

Dr. Joan Friedman is a prominent twin expert who has earned doctorates from two psychoanalytic training programs in southern California. An identical twin and the mother of five, including fraternal twin sons, she has social work experience in community mental health facilities and hospitals, has conducted groups for parents of twins and offered individual consultations with twins and parents. She has been writing about twins for more than two decades and is the author of three other books about twins: Emotionally Healthy Twins, The Same but Different, and Twins in Session. Connect with her on Instagram @dr.joanfriedmantwinexpert.

Our First ABC of Twins & Our First ABC of Triplets

By Sara Barr

Media & Publications Vice President

Mamans Pieuvres, a French-Canadian resource for parents of twins and triplets, offers free information, support and prenatal classes for parents of multiples. Most of their resources are written in French, but they are excited to announce they’ve just translated two of their new children’s books into English: [Our First ABC of Twins](#), and [Our First ABC of Triplets](#).

According to Lethicia Romeo, co-founder of Mamans Pieuvres, these books were “made with love, and with twins and triplets in mind because we are so underrepresented in the literacy world! We thought we would share the news since we all have the same goal: to support families of multiples.”

These cute books are great for young multiples as a book to read to them as babies or as toddlers and preschoolers who are first learning the alphabet — and learning to appreciate their twin- or triplethood!

I’ll admit the books have a few awkward quirks, possibly due to the language translation, but they offer sweet images, cute illustrations and a great opportunity for young children to learn the alphabet, as well as learn to count low numbers.

