

Womb Twin Survivors

The sole survivors of a twin or multiple conception



Althea Hayton

Womb Twin Survivors
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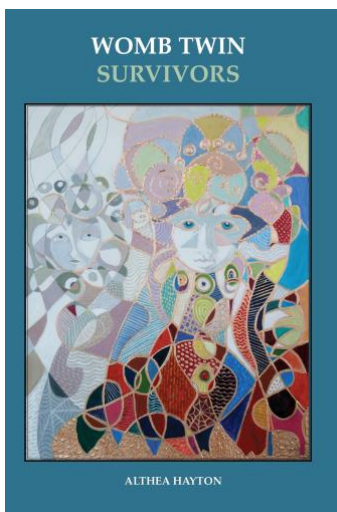
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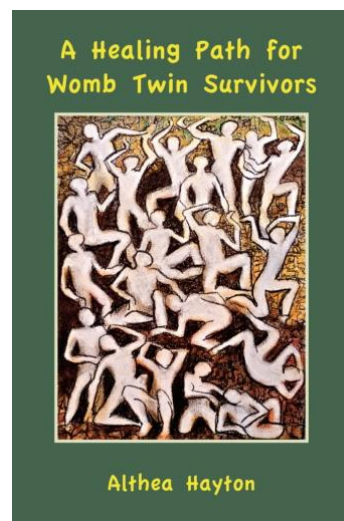
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This ebook is a summary of two paperback books by Althea Hayton:

***Womb Twin Survivors -
The lost twin in the
Dream of the Womb***



***A Healing Path for Womb
Twin Survivors***



CONTENTS

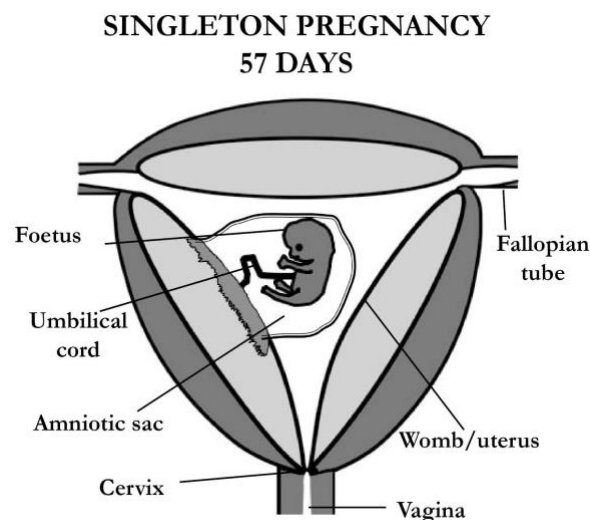
What is a womb twin survivor?	3
Was it a twin pregnancy?.....	4
The Dream of the Womb	9
A psychological profile.....	10
Healing Path - extracts.....	13

What is a womb twin survivor?

Womb twin survivors are the sole survivors of a twin or multiple conception. Their co-twin died, or failed to develop normally. A statistical study of research studies into twin pregnancies produced a definitive statistic in 1990. The study was carried out by Charles Boklage, a geneticist living in the USA. Boklage is the father of twins and has made twins and twinning a favourite area of study over many years. In the 1980s he carried out an extensive statistical survey of twin and multiple conceptions using published articles and research reports. He came to the conclusion that more than 12% of all natural conceptions are multiple. Of those multiple conceptions, 76% are lost completely before birth, about 2% are born alive in a twin pair and about 12% are born as singletons. A report of this study was published in 1995.¹

You will quickly know if you are not a womb twin survivor, because the material in this book will simply not resonate with you in a helpful way. It would be easy to make the idea of “being a womb twin survivor” into an excuse for everything that has ever been wrong with your life.

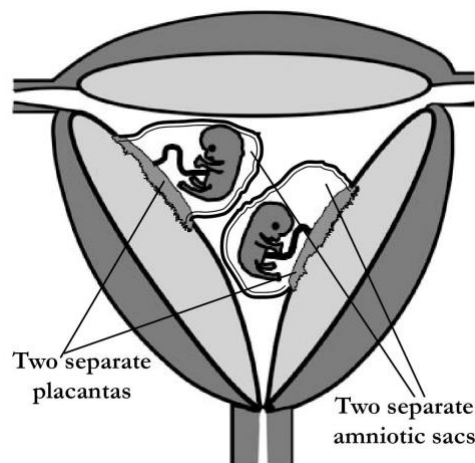
The healing path as described in this ebook will only bring about radical changes in your life if it is true for you. In short - if you are not sure, try it and see. You have little to lose and everything to gain. Here is a diagram showing a pregnancy at about eight weeks, just to help you with the terms that will be used later:



¹ Boklage, C. E. (1995). *The frequency and survival probability of natural twin conceptions*. In L. Keith, E. Papiernik, D. Keith, & B. Luke (Eds.), *Multiple Pregnancy: Epidemiology, Gestation & Perinatal Outcome* (pp. 41-50). New York: Parthenon.

Was it a twin pregnancy?

If you have not already been told about your twin, it is important to try and work out what happened, even if you have no proof. It is possible to discover an intuitive sense of what may have happened - a kind of body memory. To develop this sense will need imagination, so to help you, here is an image of a twin pregnancy at about eight weeks.



Below is a list of some of the indications of a twin or multiple pregnancy that ends with the birth of only one live baby. They may be found during the pregnancy, at the time of birth or within the body of the sole survivor.

Indications during pregnancy

Mother abnormally large around the waist in the first three months

She may be so large that some people think she is having more than one baby.

First trimester vaginal bleeding

Vaginal bleeding in the first three months of pregnancy, which may be confused with delayed menstruation.

Abnormal HGC levels in first trimester

The amount of human chorionic gonadotrophin (hCG) in the urine is higher in a twin or multiple pregnancy.

Suspected miscarriage but the pregnancy continues

Cramps and bleeding may seem to indicate that the pregnancy is over but one twin remains alive, so the pregnancy continues.

Complete miscarriage but pregnancy continues

A foetus is expelled with cramps and bleeding but another foetus remains.

Attempted abortion but pregnancy continues

During a medical or surgical intervention to terminate a pregnancy, one foetus is removed but a second foetus remains.

Doctor or nurse suspects a twin pregnancy

On examination by a medical professional, the uterus is found to be larger than expected for that stage of pregnancy, and/or the hormone levels are higher than normal.

Mother experiences blunt trauma in an accident or assault when pregnant

If a woman pregnant with twins receives a violent blow on the abdomen, one twin may die but the other may manage to survive.

Mother experiences infection during pregnancy

A severe infection, such as influenza or polio, can compromise a twin or multiple pregnancy and lead to the death of one or more fetuses.

Mother experiences severe emotional trauma during pregnancy

A sudden bereavement, environmental disaster, war, loss of home etc. can precipitate a miscarriage.

Mother experiences starvation through illness, anorexia, famine or hyperemesis

If the mother is unable to eat for any reason, then there may not be enough nutrition in the mother's blood to maintain a twin pregnancy and only one baby will survive.

Mother is taking hyper-ovulation drug (eg. Clomid)

When such drugs are taken, the ovary produces more than one ovum (egg) in a month and this increases the likelihood of a twin conception.

More than one embryo is transplanted after IVF (*in vitro fertilisation*)

During in vitro fertilisation eggs and sperm are mixed and more than one embryo is created. In many clinics it is common practice to replace more than one embryo to increase the chances of a live birth.

The pregnancy is sub-optimal (including toxemia and pre-eclampsia)

A problem pregnancy and a traumatic delivery is common in a twin pregnancy, even after one twin has died in the womb.

Ultrasound evidence of a second sac

A second gestation sac can be seen on an early ultrasound scan. The extra sac disappears from view after a few weeks - the so-called "Vanishing Twin" pregnancy.

Indications at the time of birth

Twin stillborn or died close to birth

A common cause of stillbirth among monozygotic twins² is the tangling of the two umbilical cords, so that the blood supply to one twin is interrupted. Among dizygotic twins³ the second twin to be born is often at a disadvantage, particularly if no one realises that a second twin is present.

Small for gestational age (intra-uterine growth restriction)

This is associated with “vanishing twin” pregnancies. ⁴

Placenta unusually large (including extra lobes)

When twin placentas fuse together and one twin dies, the placenta is extra large.

Additional sac or cord found on placenta after birth

Where there is one placenta (or twin placentas have fused) and one twin has died, all that is left is the cord or the empty sac.

Foetus papyraceous attached to placenta

A dead twin may not disintegrate, but remain as a tiny dead body. Includes after multifoetal pregnancy reduction.

Marks or lesions on the placenta (including a mosaic placenta)

The placenta may seem normal until it is closely examined. It may be made up of two placentas with different DNA - the only sign that a twin was ever there.⁵

Indications within your body

Dermoid cyst (or mature cystic teratoma)

A cyst, found in various parts of the body, containing an undifferentiated mass of tissues derived from the outer layer of the body, such as skin, hair, teeth, bone and fat.

² Twins formed from a single zygote - “identical twins”

³ Twins formed from two separate zygotes - “fraternal twins”

⁴ Pinborg, A. Ø.Lidegaard et al. (2007) Vanishing twins: a predictor of small-for-gestational age in IVF singletons, *Human Reproduction* Vol.22, No.10, pp. 2707-2714

⁵ Callen, D. F., H. Fernandez, et al. (1991). A normal 46,XX infant with a 46,XX/69,XXY placenta: a major contribution to the placenta is from a resorbed twin. *Prenatal Diagnosis* Vol. 11 No.7: pp. 437-42.

Teratoma

A mass of cells enclosed with a membrane, found in various parts of the body, including externally at the base of the spine, containing recognisable tissues derived from all three layers of cells in the body and including some complete body parts, such as hands.

Foetus in foetu

The imperfectly-formed body of a monozygotic twin, enclosed within the body of the co-twin and connected to the blood supply. Without a brain, it survives only as a parasite.

Parasitic twin

Complete body parts of a monozygotic twin, attached to the body of the survivor.

[**Note:** the three above can be viewed as a spectrum of various stages of embryogenesis.⁶]

Secondary sexual characteristics of opposite sex (including body shape, body hair etc.)

This includes hermaphrodite (transgender) individuals, transvestites, women with high levels of testosterone and men with high levels of oestrogen.⁷

Cerebral palsy

The incidence of cerebral palsy among womb twin survivors is much higher than that reported for the general twin population.⁸

Birth defects in survivor

Includes skin defects, midline defects such as harelip, club foot. Eg. Aplasia cutis congenita is often found associated with a foetus papyraceous.⁹

Split or double organs

A double uterus, in fact doubling of any organ, such as additional fingers or toes, including additional bones in the spine, are all signs of intrauterine twinning.

⁶ Higgins, K. R. & B. D. Coley, (2006) Foetus in foetu and fetiform teratoma in two neonates: an embryologic spectrum? *Journal of Ultrasound Medicine* Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 259-63

⁷ Kley, H.K., H. G. Solbach, et al. (1979) Testosterone decrease and oestrogen increase in male patients with obesity. *Acta Endocrinologica* No. 91, pp. 553-563

⁸ Pharaoh, P.O.D., (2000) Consequences of in-utero death in a twin pregnancy. *The Lancet*, Vol. 355, No. 9215, pp.1597-1602

⁹ Mannino, FL, K. L. Jones, K. Benirschke (1977) Congenital skin defects and foetus papyraceous. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, Vol. 91, No. 4, pp. 559-564

Situs inversus

The organs of the body are reversed so that, for example, the heart is on the right side. This seems to be related to “mirror” twinning between monozygotic twins.¹⁰

Congenital abnormality

This term refers to limbs or organs that do not develop normally. Monozygotic-monochorionic twinning (where twins share a single amniotic sac) are at a high risk of anomalies in the foetal development of a wide variety of organs.

Left-handedness

It is thought that left-handedness may be related to mirror twinning, where a zygote splits into two “mirror image” twins. In left-handed womb twin survivors, the righthanded twin has died.

Chimerism

Very early in development, some cells from one twin become embedded in the body of the other, in a process that is little understood. The result is that the surviving twin has two sets of DNA in their blood (blood chimera) or some specific tissues (genetic mosaic). This can cause problems when trying to establish the DNA profile of an individual.

Some of the items on this list may not be familiar to you. They are fully described in [Womb Twin Survivors - the lost twin in the Dream of the Womb](#). You may show several signs or indications at once, such as double organs and left-handedness, or if your mother had first trimester bleeding and there were extra sacs attached to the placenta at your birth. Your twin may have been the same gender as you or the opposite gender; developing normally or developing abnormally. There may have been more than one embryo or foetus developing nearby when you were in your mother’s womb.

Dizygotic, “Two-egg” twins

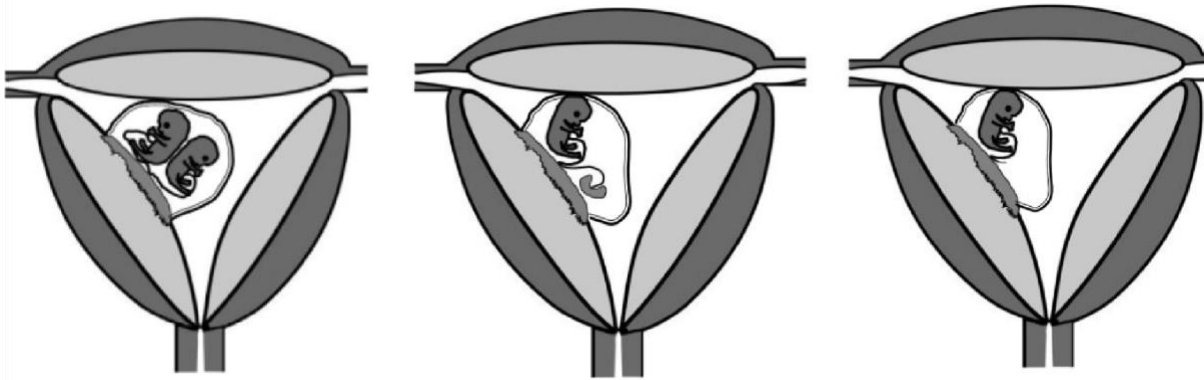
1. Each with a separate chorion, placenta and amniotic sac
2. As above, but the placentas have fused into one

Monozygotic, “One-egg” twins

1. In separate sacs, each with a chorion and a placenta (*dichorionic*)
2. One chorion and placenta but two amniotic sacs (*monochorionic-diamniotic*)
3. One chorion, one placenta, one sac (*monochorionic-monoamniotic*)

¹⁰ Pharaoh, P. O. and Y. Dunder (2009). Monozygotic twinning, cerebral palsy and congenital anomalies. Human Reproduction Update Vol. 15, No. 6, pp. 639-48

THE DEATH OF A MONOCHORIONIC-MONOAMNIOTIC TWIN



The Dream of the Womb

It is possible that we remember life in the womb?

Psychologists have theorised for a long time that our earliest experiences are hardwired into our brains, and some open-minded psychotherapists are already witnesses to that truth. Piece by piece, a complex puzzle is being assembled from a wide range of disciplines. Scientists, psychologists, parents and thinking adults the world over are gradually coming to one inescapable conclusion: we all carry within us an imprint of our lives in the womb. For womb twin survivors, their prenatal imprint is an extraordinary story of life, love and death that is distinct for each individual. This wide variety of prenatal experience has been a major problem for psychologists working with womb twin survivors. The spread of symptoms among them is baffling, until one begins to reflect on the possible variety of womb experiences.

Every person in the world has a Dream of the Womb, which is being constantly re-enacted throughout life. Nothing in the world is more important than that. The Dream drives our choices, fuels our desires and controls our fears. It is a strange place. It seems to be at the very back of your mind, as deep and primitive as can be, yet at the same time it is just behind your eyes and creates a kind of prism through which you see the world and everything in it.

It is a memory of long ago, yet it seems to be happening right now. It is a story about loss and being terribly alone deep inside, yet it is also a tale of love and intense happiness, once known but now lost. This impression of Someone Else There, and also of Someone

Else Gone Away, is a terrible muddle. All you were capable of was a generalised vague awareness of your own sensations and things happening, without any clear idea of what was going on. For some the memory feels being in a bubble, closed off from the world.

However the Dream is a real memory of real events. It is a true story. Your Dream has in it certain general vague characteristics that reflect the original general vagueness of the impressions you were gathering. It is formless, timeless and beyond words. It was built as your brain was built. The whole experience is "hard-wired" into the neurones of your brain. It is integral to your personality, written into your mind and seemingly inescapable. Your whole life so far has consisted of keeping your Dream alive.

In your Dream of the Womb is your lost twin. How you have responded to that experience in your born life depends on the exact nature of your womb story - was your twin your identical half or a fraternal (non-identical) twin, separate from you? Were there more embryos developing along with you? If so, how many? All this information is there, hard-wired into the neural network that makes up your brain. It consists of a multitude of vague impressions and physical signs. Your Dream of the Womb is like a giant jigsaw puzzle with only a vague image of the completed picture.

A psychological profile

Here are some of the commonest psychological characteristics of womb twin survivors.

Hypersensitive

Womb twin survivors are often extremely sensitive to their environment, especially certain chemicals, foods or stimulant drugs such as caffeine. They have acute hearing and general awareness and are easily distressed by too much activity, stress or stimulation going on around them. It seems as if their characteristic preference for privacy arises out of the need to recover from over-stimulation. Womb twin survivors tend to be psychologically sensitive. They are acutely aware of other people and very sensitive to their moods, particularly where this involves sadness or hurt. They react strongly to the atmosphere generated within a group of people. They use their acute sensitivity to others to cool down a tense situation. They can appear to be "difficult" because they are oversensitive, over-anxious and even neurotic.

Highly intuitive and empathetic

An outworking of hypersensitivity is strong intuition and empathy. One cannot exist without the other. Intuition is the ability to scan other people in such minute detail that an enormous quantity of data is being gathered every second. As a result of this stream of available data, womb twin survivors can make an instant assessment of whether anyone is to be trusted or if they are in any personal difficulty.

Empathy, on the other hand, is the desire to reach out to another person and make some kind of connection with them by entering into and sharing their psychic space. Empathy is a complex skill, consisting largely of the desire to make a continual series of intuitive guesses about the other person's experience of being themselves. As the relationship deepens, empathy is informed by more and more data, gathered by means of intuitive awareness. Womb twin survivors have an uncanny ability to "read" a room or a person, which can be unnerving for those present. In a group, they can often predict trouble before it starts and make a pre-emptive move to avoid it.

Womb twin survivors get tangled up in other people's lives because of their ability to "pick up" on the feelings of another person. They slip easily into co-dependent relationships. They can end up as unwitting vehicles for the unexpressed, unacknowledged feelings of other people, unless they stay alert to their own propensity to take other people's feelings upon themselves. Without a considerable degree of self knowledge, they are easily scapegoated and become very vulnerable to abuses of power.

Preoccupied with death and dying

Womb twin survivors are very concerned with death. This is not at all surprising if we consider that their first formative experience was being in a very intense, intimate relationship with Someone Else in the womb who died. In later life, womb twin survivors will inevitably be confronted with death or loss once more. At that point, the hidden memory of loss is triggered.

The most traumatic bereavement for a womb twin survivor is the death of a person with whom they have had a very close bond and an intimate relationship. Faced with too many deaths at once, some of them find it hard to cope without some emotional support. They grieve deeply and often for a very long time. It may not be death that does it: divorce, disability and redundancy are all losses that can trigger deep distress, despair and depression.

Fascinated by “two-ness”

Womb twin survivors love to be one of a pair. As children they may show a preoccupation with twins, or frequently point out “two things the same.” They may seek out opposite extremes to complete their lives. In partnership they may prefer to work with someone who is the opposite of themselves, or be deeply attracted to someone born on the same day. They seem to have a split personality, and may joke about it. The two-ness they need is expressed inwardly in the way they live and behave. For example, they may be very different at home and among their family from how they are at work. This can be confusing for them: they seem to have two very contrasting sides to their personality and cannot be sure which is “me” and which is “not me”.

Feeling different from other people

It doesn't take womb twin survivors many years to realise that they see the world differently from other people. Other people may notice this too, and many womb twin survivors are seen as “strange”, “the odd one out” or even “weird”. If they want to fit in, they may pretend to be the same as everyone else, but they do often wonder why other people do not see the world the way they do.

A problem with letting go

Letting go is a major womb twin survivor concern. Some womb twin survivors have certain beloved possessions that they could not live without. As parents, womb twin survivors find it hard to let go of their need to feel close to their own children. They seem to suffer more from any lack of emotional contact with them than the average parent might. They can survive if necessary on minimal emotional contact with loved ones, but a complete absence of contact causes extreme emotional pain: this is just too much of a reminder of the loved one who was lost forever.

Avoiding intimacy

Womb Twin survivors crave closeness and intimacy, but they never allow themselves to have it. They lack trust and tend to withdraw from close personal contact. After all, if your first-ever relationship in the womb ended in abandonment, then surely you would avoid intimacy.

Deep distress

Womb Twin survivors live a life of deeply-felt distress that they cannot understand. They may express their sense of being different by means of antisocial or eccentric behaviour. Their strange behaviour makes sure that they are not liked and have no friends. To be the sole survivor is to be alone. In early adolescence womb twin survivors develop an abnormal obsession with the shortness of life, their own death and the sensation of dying. They tend to be suicidal, not because they are sick, but because their womb twin died and they naturally want to be dead too. Their pain and distress is not always evident, for they may find ways to anaesthetise it or conceal it. They may manage to fool themselves and others that they are really enjoying life to the full. They probably have to work very hard at being happy, for life itself is a real burden. Their little lost womb twin - perhaps even more than one - is now gone, leaving a lonely and wounded suffering survivor to go on living alone.

Healing Path - extracts

Here is a brief overview of some of the stages in the healing path as set out in [A Healing Path for Womb Twin Survivors](#).

Your Dream of the Womb

The brief lives of womb twins in the early stages of pregnancy and the extraordinary experiences of womb twin survivors have been sadly neglected and overlooked by the many writers who have theorised on the outworking of prenatal experience in born life. Moreover, the notion that some people have been affected by the loss of a twin before or around birth remains unrecognised at this time by the many people in the world who are not womb twin survivors themselves. Even when the lost twin is known about, possibly as a tiny empty sac on an early image, the fact that there was once a twin is often deliberately concealed from the parents by medical professionals, in order to save the parents from distress.

Little thought is given to the psychological effects on the sole survivor, for it is generally assumed that such an early experience could not possibly leave any impression. We now know that the sole survivor carries an indelible imprint of his or her early experience throughout life. In many cases this causes distress - although not always, as we shall see, but for those who do suffer, it is a needless burden that would have been greatly eased by this knowledge.

A matter of life and death

We now know that you have spent your life so far constantly re-enacting the life and death of your womb twin. The second step on your healing path is to recognise how existential issues - “matters of life and death”- have been worked out in the tiny choices you make every day. These choices have created your way of life, because your present existential position in born life accurately and directly reflects the life and death of your womb twin.

Your Dream of the Womb is made up of millions of tiny details, hard-wired into your embryonic neural network. This part of your brain is the most primitive, but it orchestrates every other part. This is how your attitudes, feelings and choices have constantly repeated the original womb twin story that is the foundation of your Dream of the Womb. As you begin to explore the real nature of your womb twin and consider his or her brief life and untimely death, you will see with increasing clarity how the deep imprint of your prenatal experience has been a major guiding force in your life.

How crazy are you?

The first thing to understand as you take this third step is that you are not crazy. You are a womb twin survivor and that is why you feel as you do. You are an unusual person because you had such an unusual, very early experience. You can now relax in the knowledge that, possibly after years of struggle, your feelings are fully understood. Until the people who set out to diagnose mental illness take into account the possibility of a lost womb twin, they will have missed an opportunity to discover the sanity that truly does lie behind some forms of seemingly insane behaviour. At various points in your life you may have been given a diagnosis about your own psychological state. Diagnosis will not help you to heal: only a full explanation will do that.

Self-sabotaging behaviour

Womb twin survivors have a strong tendency to self-sabotage and that probably includes you. This step will help you to see self-sabotage at work in your life and prepare you to make changes. The first step is to find out what your favourite forms of self-sabotage may be. Self-sabotage can damage your life in three main ways: through your eating habits, how you use money and your attitude to your general wellbeing. Your self-sabotaging behaviour also has a negative effect on other people - even complete strangers.

For example, you may have already discovered how adopting a healthy diet and taking exercise can increase your available energy and reduce your medical problems. Nonetheless, after every attempt, you return to your old, unhealthy habits and you probably wonder why you always do that to yourself. As a womb twin survivor, you have a secret agenda: you must remain unhealthy in order to keep your Dream alive. In your Dream there is something about just managing to survive despite a poor food supply. This is probably a lost memory of your twin, who for some reason was not getting enough good nutrition to grow strong and healthy. He or she gradually weakened and eventually died. To follow a persistently unhealthy diet is a perfect mirror to that womb story. At first sight, stubbornly ignoring eating advice may look like self-sabotage, but it could also be interpreted as a loving act of self-sacrifice on behalf of your twin.

A matter of choice?

Self-sabotaging behaviour can become excessive. Then we may call it an “addiction” or a “compulsion.” As you continue on your healing journey, it is time to consider what addictions or compulsions might be at work in your life. We have been told for too long that addiction is a “disease”¹¹ and that compulsions are due to some kind of “mental illness.” We are about to discover that, for womb twin survivors at least, both are matters of choice, for they keep the Dream alive.

The debate should be not about whether addicts choose or don’t choose to become addicted, but exactly why they would choose to harm themselves. Clearly, you selected your own particular addiction or compulsion according to your psychological and spiritual needs. No one forced you into it or made you carry on with it once you started. In other words, that “prison” of addiction or compulsion, in which you probably feel you must spend your life, is locked on the inside. The key is still in your hand. The womb twin work will show you how you could open the door to your healing - or not, as you wish.

Self-isolation

This step will focus on self-isolation as a manifestation of your Dream. It is important to remember that things are not what they may seem: the Dream is not happening now, but is a memory of past events. The difficult feelings you may be experiencing are being generated within you, moment by moment, to keep the Dream alive.

Your attempts to live out your Dream of the Womb are based entirely on a set of foetal assumptions, which developed in your mind at a very early stage of your existence.

¹¹ Goodman, A. (1990.) Addiction: definition and implications. *British Journal of Addiction*, No. 85: pp.1403–1408

This healing step will take a closer look at the foetal assumption we might express as: *I am alone*.

Here is a checklist of various ways to feel alone. See how many apply to you.

- Isolation
- I find it hard to maintain a relationship for very long
- I sabotage my close relationships
- I feel invisible, unseen
- I feel different from other people
- Other people are not interested in knowing me
- I am very shy
- I don't go home to my birth family very often
- I fear rejection
- I don't want to be married
- I don't want to have children
- I have lots of friends but still feel alone
- I hate being alone
- I am a very private person
- I prefer to work in a partnership, not on my own
- I feel abandoned
- For me, loneliness and grief go together
- I always feel on the edge of every group
- I feel a sense of painful loneliness all the time
- I don't allow other people to get close to me
- I make a great effort to protect my privacy
- I put on a show and don't let other people see the real me
- I left home a long time ago and have never returned

Healing would mean allowing relationships to begin, continue and deepen as time passes. It would mean changing your core beliefs, by awakening from the Dream and becoming aware that the world is full of other people who also need friends.

Duality

The painful sense of isolation we discussed in the previous section will only be healed when your original sense of two-ness is restored. In your life as a womb twin survivor, two-ness underpins everything. As we have seen, the search for your “other half” is driven by a sense of painful aloneness, which can only be healed by the presence of your shadowy lost twin. Your awareness of “being part of a pair” lies too deep for memory and can only be acted out in vague generalisations, but if we know where to look, we can find duality everywhere.

Womb twin survivors are full of contradictions. The inner inconsistency that is so much a part of their character can be a puzzle to parents or partners. Inner contradiction is treated as a kind of alternative reality, which feels more authentic than any other way of being. In trying to live out that contradiction, womb twin survivors can feel that they have lost their identity. To find out who they are, they seek out a way to be true to themselves, and it seems that the way to live out their own version of reality is to be two people at once.

Your route to healing will require you to resolve the paradox and discover your distinct individuality. Your healing will be to find those individual characteristics that belong to you and give them full expression in your life. At the same time, you will gradually discern some qualities that are not yours. You have adopted them as your own, in imitation of your twin. You are not two people; you are an individual.

Your unrealised potential

Your womb twin will always remain in your mind as an unfinished, incomplete little person who never got a chance at life as you did. You have identified yourself with your womb twin and that lies behind your dual nature. That Beta part of you feels like the Real You, but your Beta twin was never able to develop his or her potential as a person. So to keep your Dream alive, your Alpha qualities remain invisible, carefully hidden from view. You are afraid of your talents and courage and need constant vigilance and self-discipline to restrain them.

Concealing yourself under a cloak and withdrawing from human company feels like a very sensible thing to do if you are to continue to be like your Beta twin. You are determined not to let your full human potential be seen and realised, so all your gifts are kept hidden. Among those are your natural sociability and your ability to make intimate, equal relationships with other people.

For you to be healed, the cloak has to go. No more concealment, no more pretending to be something you are not. Whoever you may be, you are not your cloak. To cast it off, you will have to recognise your own development, own up to your self-limiting ideas and distinguish yourself from your womb twin.

Something missing

A lifelong sense of something lacking is a common characteristic of womb twin survivors. It is reasonable to miss someone who had been there beside you all your life but the idea that a womb twin survivor may miss a twin who only existed briefly in the womb may seem unreasonable to some. For womb twin survivors, however, it is a real feeling. Here are some statements to check through. See if any of these describes how you feel:

- I feel incomplete but I don't know why
- I feel unsatisfied but nothing helps
- I have been searching for Something or Someone all my life
- I feel empty inside
- There is something missing in my life
- I feel a deep sense of loss
- I am longing for my twin
- I feel as if I have lost part of me
- I am filled with a nameless yearning

Much of your life until now has been driven by a nameless desire for Someone who you believe will restore you to wholeness and make everything right. The brief time in the womb with your twin has created your sensation of incompleteness. This is because there once was a real sense of wholeness, that existed when your twin was alive and both of you were together.

The nameless yearning in your life can now have a name - it is the name of your missing twin. It always helps to put a name to things, so even if you have no idea if your twin was male or female, try to find a name for him or her. Most womb twin survivors know their twin's name already or pick one almost instantly when they think about it. If nothing springs to mind at this moment, don't worry. One day you will know.

Your emotional life

At this stage, it is important that you begin to understand how your emotional life has been affected by the loss of your twin. You have probably spent a great deal of time and energy trying to work out where your most painful feelings have come from. If you are lucky and have already received appropriate help, you may have found the root cause – the death of your twin. As you read on, you will see with increasing clarity how your emotional life was formed.

For example, the sole survivor of a miscarriage is left feeling forsaken and the victim of a catastrophic event. It is different for womb twin survivors whose twin died a little later and remained in the womb somewhere alongside, as a dead, unresponsive presence. In this

situation the body of the twin gradually disintegrates until it is quite gone, eventually leaving nothing to show that it had ever been there. An expectation of an instant response, created during the brief life of your womb twin, would now be disappointed. You were left with an empty space inside where that beloved Someone ought to be. Your dreams were thwarted. You lost something very valuable which cannot be restored. Only resentment remains.

Making friends with your Black Hole

Within the Dream of the Womb are various illogical and irrational feelings that seem to have nowhere to rest. Among them are sorrow, searching, yearning, bewilderment and nameless fears, in a pool of personal pain that lies deep within your soul. They arise out of a vague memory of your first trauma, which was the loss of your twin. You keep your pool of pain topped up. Every time you engage in negative thoughts and self-defeating behaviour, this pool gets deeper. This is how the pool is filled with the kind of emotional pain that can last a lifetime, despite your great efforts to heal it. It could be that you, too, have experienced many years of such unexplained pain, but never fully understood it until now.

Bridging the Alpha-Beta gap

As the Alpha Survivor, you are trying to live the life of your own Beta twin as well as your own. In order to untangle the Alpha from the Beta we need to examine the different qualities of each and bridge that gap.

When observing the behaviour of twins in the womb by means of ultrasound scans, it was noticed that there was always one twin who was dominant - the Alpha. It seems that these characteristics tend to persist into childhood and even into adulthood.¹²

The typical qualities of an Alpha twin

Initiative: Evident in the womb, as the Alpha is almost always the first to make a move. In born life the ability to get things going, make things happen or trigger a reaction in others.

Strength: In the womb, the Alpha swims around strongly and may attack or grab anything that comes within range. In born life a tendency to respond to restriction or outward control with resistance and frustration.

¹² Piontelli, A., L. Bocconi, et al. (1997). Patterns of evoked behaviour in twin pregnancies during the first 22 weeks of gestation. *Early Human Development* Vol. 50 No.1 pp.39-45.

Activity: The Alpha shows high levels of vitality and energetic activity in the womb and after birth.

Tolerance: The Alpha is well able to adapt to extremes of temperature, hunger or exhaustion. Able to digest any kind of food without ill effects. A strong immune system. Ability to recover rapidly and completely from disease. High tolerance to pain.

Dominance: The ready expression of the will in expectation that it will be carried out. The degree of its expression varies, according to the nature of local competition and other factors that affect the Alpha's desire to dominate.

The typical qualities of a Beta twin

Stillness: In the womb, the Beta has a tendency to spend long periods resting or inactive. In born life a tendency to sleep a lot. A love of peaceful, slow places and activities.

Obedience: In the womb, a tendency to react slowly and only when provoked. In born life a ready responder, but only if provoked. Prefers to be a follower, not a leader.

Intolerance: Low coping threshold. Reduced ability to withstand extremes of temperature, may become exhausted by too much activity and feel ill if there is insufficient rest overall. Slow to recover from disease or injury. Low tolerance to pain.

Gentleness: In the womb an evident feebleness of movement. In born life patient, not often angry; accepting of dominant others.

Submission: Tolerance of dominance, in the knowledge that there is insufficient personal strength to fight and overcome. The ability to let go of one's own will to allow the will of another to be carried out.

Are you living the life of a False Beta or a False Alpha in order to keep your twin alive in your Dream of the Womb? Which one is the Real You? It is time to decide. You are trying to be both at once and that is very hard work.

Maintaining your personal boundary

To have fulfilling relationships and maintain some kind of control over yourself and your life, your personal boundary must remain firm and strong at all times.

- It is the limit of your personal field of operation.
- It marks the limit of your capacity to influence others and be influenced by them.
- It is the arena within which all your energy, motivation to act and capacity to reach out to others can have some effect.

Like the borders of any country, if your boundary is left weakened or loose you will be at risk of invasion or exploitation.

If you have a weak sense of who you are as a separate individual, then your personal boundary will be loose:

Over-giving: Putting others before yourself to the extent that you almost “disappear” as a person in your own right. You expend energy on others without making sure you have enough resources to continue. That will eventually leave you exhausted and burnt out.

Dependency: Taking more from other people than you give back. If you feel unable to cope with the demands of others, it may seem entirely logical to ask for support from individuals who appear stronger than you. However, if you depend on others for help and support, your personal boundary will not be firm enough to keep you feeling confident and strong.

Boundaries and pregnancy membranes: Your intimate relationships in born life seem to reflect the way the pregnancy membranes were arranged. It may sound far-fetched, but it does explain some aspects of human behaviour. For example, John (a monochorionic, monoamniotic one-egg womb twin survivor) has a sense of shared intimate space, and thus feels entitled to “invade” the personal space of other people. Mary, (a dizygotic two-egg womb twin survivor) has a sense of needing a private space in all her close relationships. If she is not careful to maintain her personal boundary Mary’s private space is at risk of “invasion” by John. Meanwhile John will tend to overstretch his boundary and become controlling and manipulative. In this situation, bullying and abuse may occur.

As a womb twin survivor yourself, you may encourage neediness, or be needy; you may want to be rescued, or be the rescuer. You may choose to play the victim or the bully. It all depends on how you are living out your Dream of the Womb.

Healing shame

This healing step will examine the shame in your life as a womb twin survivor. Here are some shameful assumptions commonly made by womb twin survivors:

- I took all the nourishment and my twin starved
- I was responsible for my twin’s death
- I failed because I could not keep my twin with me
- I blame myself for my twin’s death

Healing the shame you feel will mean emerging from behind the false self you have created. You may secretly feel bad about not being your true self and failing to fulfil your potential as a human being. It follows that healing this shame will be the start to becoming your authentic self.

Healing shame is easy: just add truth. Putting truth into shame means not being afraid to reveal the soft underbelly of your personality. Once you are no longer afraid to admit the truth of your faults and inadequacies, you will feel your personal power and strength increase. With this new power you will be able to make amends, put things right and develop new resolutions. You will not have to go on constantly breaking rules of your own construction in order to give yourself something to be ashamed of.

Resistance to healing

Despite all the excellent work you may have done so far, your resistance to healing is probably still there. You may still find it hard to let go of the Dream, but take heart: Doing the womb twin work is like crossing a great chasm on a flimsy rope bridge. The first stage is relatively easy, as you are on a downhill path, but once you reach the centre, the bridge is at its most unstable. It tends to swing wildly from side to side whenever you try to move. Things feel very uncertain, but you will have to hang on, stay calm and move forward inch by inch. What remains is an uphill climb, but the way will become firmer and stronger as we proceed.

You may like to take stock of your progress so far - or the lack of it. You may be reading casually through these steps for the first time, with a view to following the path - one day. Are you ready now to continue with the work, or do you want to rush to the end, let it all be over quickly and thus avoid the pain of actually doing it?

We will now consider how you may have delayed your personal development. How far are you developing these?

- Better employment prospects
- More qualifications
- Improved living environment
- More money
- Increased knowledge
- Extensive reading
- The widest possible range of interests
- Travel to as many places as possible
- More personal challenges
- Seizing every opportunity
- Having a wide range of experiences

- Meeting as many people as possible

Your answers will reveal the extraordinary strength of your resistance to healing.

Building a healing bond

It is time to replace the lost twin connection from your Dream with a healing bond made with a real, living person in today's world. Only another womb twin survivor has sufficient empathy to enable a new healing bond to develop. Reaching out to other womb twin survivors will help you to heal your painful sense of isolation.

A soulmate: An instant “meeting of minds and hearts” experienced by both sides of a new friendship is a sure sign that here is a reflection of a relationship that once existed in the Dream of the Womb. But there is a danger that you will drift into re-enacting the whole womb story between you, for example feeling “abandoned” every time the other person doesn't answer the phone or reply to an email. To maintain the relationship, recognise that your new friend has a separate life from you. The lack of response may have nothing to do with you.

Uneasiness: Your new friend may make you feel slightly uneasy. It's probably your intuition, picking up on something negative. However charming your new friend may be on the surface, this could be an attempt to drag you into his or her Black Hole. Make sure that the other person is aware of this, and you will be able to keep the relationship alive, to the benefit of both of you.

Equal sharing: This new connection will be one of equal sharing. Everything will be split 50:50. Another womb twin survivor in search of a healing bond could help you to create a relationship of shared power, for he or she will need that 50:50 balance as much as you do. The struggle to maintain this delicate balance will benefit you both.

Twin myths as an aid to healing

Three Greek myths reflect the typical characteristics of the three main groups of womb twin survivors. These myths will help you to see these same characteristics in your own personality.

Two-egg womb twin survivors: The myth of Gemini tells the story of warrior twins, Castor and Pollux. They were two-egg twins from two different fathers, one mortal and the other immortal. They were inseparable and loved each other dearly. One day Castor (the mortal twin) was killed in battle, leaving Pollux (the immortal twin) as the sole survivor. Pollux was so stricken with grief that he asked Zeus to let him sacrifice his own immortality and join his brother in death. Zeus, impressed by the deep love the two brothers shared, lifted Pollux to heaven to be beside his twin forever. The Gemini myth describes the story of a lost twin from a two-egg (dizygotic) twin pair. Within the myth are the three special

characteristics of two-egg womb twin survivors - the pain of abandonment, duality in difference and self-sacrifice.

One-egg womb twin survivors: The Greek myth of Narcissus is about a beautiful youth. Many of the water nymphs in the country loved him, but he heartlessly rejected them all. As a punishment, the gods put a spell on him, to make him fall in love with the very next person he saw. Unfortunately that person was himself, in the form of his own reflection in a clear pool. Narcissus pined away and died for love of his own reflection. The Narcissus myth seems to be based on the story of the lost twin from a one-egg twin pair. Within it are the three special characteristics of the one-egg womb twin survivor - the Bubble of Oblivion, inwardly-focused energy and contradiction.

Multiples: The Greek myth of Chiron is about a centaur - half man and half horse. He was immortal and one of the wisest beings on earth. His mother was so ashamed that she abandoned him to grow up alone in a dark cave. He was wounded with an arrow smeared with venom so poisonous that it could never heal. He sought out ways to ease the continuous pain and became a famous healer himself. Only death could take away his own pain but he was immortal. Prometheus, the god of fire, wished to be immortal. The gods allowed Chiron to cede his immortality to Prometheus, so he could die and be free of pain. There are many womb twin survivors who are deeply wounded and who find healing for themselves by offering it to others. It seems that these are the multiple womb twin survivors, the sole survivors of a multiple conception. The three characteristics of Chiron that are found among multiple womb twin survivors are related to creating communities, promoting healing and building relationships.

From grief to growth

You were born grieving, but perhaps it has taken you this long to recognise it. The way to heal grief and allow new growth is to enter into a period of mourning. There are five stages to the mourning process. Make sure that you carefully take each step in turn. Don't rush it, for healing cannot be forced, only allowed.

- **Speak** openly about your loss.
- **Seek out** the company of other womb twin survivors.
- **Allow** yourself to grieve openly.
- **Find a way** to say goodbye to your twin. Be thankful, not guilty, that you survived.
- **Let go of the past** and the person you used to be, and embrace your complete personality.

From helplessness to hope

If you experience a paradoxical sense of helplessness, even though you are perfectly capable of helping yourself, it is probably because your womb twin never developed a fully-functioning brain. You are stuck in your Black Hole as a False Beta, rendered helpless by Beta energy. Despite the fact that you have normal intelligence, you will often act in a “brainless” kind of a way. That effect lies behind self-sabotage and destructive, self-defeating behaviour.

When you have realised exactly why you often feel so helpless, when in fact you are a perfectly capable, intelligent person, you will be able to recognise the Dream when it overwhelms you. Then it will be time to awaken from the Dream and look forward to a brighter future.

From stress to serenity

Are you always stressed? Do you find it hard to cope with life? Is that stress from your Dream?

Insufficient blood supply: In the womb, your twin was unable to survive because there was not enough food or oxygen. Despite your frequent efforts to develop a healthier life, you constantly relapse. The right kind of nourishment and plenty of fresh air are not for you, for in your Dream your twin had neither.

Sickness: If your womb twin died of an infectious disease, then you would associate illness with death. Closely identified with your twin, you would naturally assume there is something wrong with you that is potentially fatal.

Exhaustion: Do you drive yourself too hard and find it hard to rest? If so, you are pushing your Alpha quality of strength and tolerance to the limit.

The fastest way from stress to serenity is acceptance. You have no power to change the true nature of how things are. Imagine that you are like a weather vane, which swings easily into the wind. It sits on a loose connection that enables it to change direction. If the seating becomes rusted and locks tight it will be unable to turn. The next strong gale will blow it off the roof and destroy it. The capacity to surrender to the course of events is a wonderful way to save energy and find serenity.

From captivity to courage

This step on the healing path will set you free from your imprisoning cycle of constant, nameless terrors by the simple process of naming them. You continue to live in a state of self-induced anxiety which can end by naming your fears.

Death: You may believe that, like your twin, you will also die prematurely. That is a rational assumption but not a prophecy.

Being alone: Being alone, particularly in the dark, is probably a little bit too close to your Dream of the Womb.

Aging: losing your faculties and becoming helpless would be uncomfortably close to becoming your own Beta twin.

Pain. Being a womb twin survivor is painful. If you fear being hurt in any way, you may go to great lengths to avoid all sensations of pain, whether physical or emotional.

Your principle fear will vary, according to what lies in your Dream.

- The greatest fear for **two-egg womb twin survivors** is abandonment
- For **one-egg womb twin survivors** it is personal annihilation
- **Multiple womb twin survivors** carry their own fears but also take on the anxieties of other people, so they make themselves responsible for calming everyone down.

From poverty to privilege

You are both poor and rich: you are much less than you could have been if your twin or other womb mates had survived but you are the fortunate sole survivor. You have probably been working very hard to find external ways to heal your inner sense of lack, while being bowed down under a heavy load of guilt and resentment. In such a life, there is little space for any sense of gratitude or privilege. However, you can transform poverty into privilege through an exercise of being gradually stripped bare of these burdens.

Status: No matter how hard you try to be a well-respected person, you still feel worthless. You would feel richer if you stopped trying to be someone better and settled for who you are.

Money: No matter how much or how little money you have, the sense of poverty remains. There are many wonderful things in life that are available absolutely free of charge, like friendship.

Food: If you can recognise that the hunger you feel inside is in your heart and not your stomach, you would be able to eat the food your body needs in sufficient quantity for optimum health.

Sexuality: If you can freely express your sexuality in terms of your genetically imprinted gender energy, you will recognise sexuality for what it is and not a means to fill your inner emptiness.

Work: If you can acknowledge that extra effort does not add anything to your personal worth, you will be able to slow down, recover from your exhaustion and live more effectively.

Possessions: If you can realise that having a great many possessions cannot replace your lost twin, you could begin to make good use of them, which will enrich your life and the lives of others.

Resentment: This is a kind of childish petulance, like winning second prize in a competition, feeling indignant that you did not come first, refusing to collect your prize and insulting the organiser. It is easily cured by a tiny dose of thankfulness.

Survivor guilt: The death of your twin was not your fault. It was no one's fault but a perfectly natural process. Your twin was too weak to survive in any case and was doomed to die. It was not your choice. Survivor guilt is quite different from any other kind of guilt or shame, however hard you may try to confuse the two. Survivor guilt has impoverished you but that is exactly how you want it to be, in order to keep your Dream alive. The answer to survivor guilt is to forgive yourself for what you think of as, "the sin of being alive." There were reasons why your twin died that have absolutely nothing whatever to do with you.

From victim to victor

You are only a fraction of the person you could be. For much of your life you have focused on your Beta twin and the limitations you have been imposing on yourself to keep alive your Dream of the Womb.

This healing step will explore your potential Alpha power - what you can do. The following list shows the route from victim to victor in four stages, which together spell out the phrase, "I can!"

I Intelligent thinking

Truth - not illusion

Awake - not dreaming

Facts - not assumptions

Alpha intelligence - not Beta brainlessness

C Calm in spirit

Courage - not timidity

Acceptance - not control

Forgiveness - not resentment

A Alpha energy

Use your innate vivacity, which helps you to survive. You are a natural survivor.

Harness action to your ideas. They could be useful and may make a difference.

Reveal the power of your Alpha energy. No one will ever exploit you again.

Admit the truth of your un-lived life. That will contribute to your growth.

Notice your ordinariness - you are not special.

Release your Alpha energy. Simply acknowledge it is there and allow it to work.

N New life

The changes that will take place will be immense yet subtle.

Inside, you will feel completely different, but you will seem just the same.

You will be more like yourself - the person you were born to be.

If you are still not sure exactly who you are, try giving yourself a new name, a new look or a new hairstyle, to symbolise the new you.

You have let go of your twin. You have stripped yourself of illusions and false assumptions. You have cast off all the fragments of your Beta twin and any other womb mates.

All that is left now is you, the sole survivor.

For more books and information about womb twin survivors, visit the Womb Twin website.



www.wombtwin.com