

# Finding Our Way: Life with Triplets, Quadruplets and Quintuplets. A Collection of Experiences.

Suzanne Lyons (Editor)

(2001) Canada: Triplets, Quads and Quints Association. CAD\$25 plus postage. See <http://www.tqq.com>

*Finding our way* is an informative book of some 20 chapters, written by parents of “higher-order multiples”, covering every step of the way from “getting the news” about the multiple pregnancy to the children “growing up”. It offers insights by parents who have “been there” and had to deal with the multiple issues and challenges generated by having and parenting “higher order multiples” (triplets and more). The book had its beginnings in a small group of Canadian parents who were “searching for the kind of advice and support that their families, friends and parenting books were not able to provide”. It is therefore essentially practical, mostly containing segments from parents describing how they coped (or not, which will be heartening).

As well as offering sensible tested strategies, this book also contains detailed information by experts, such as Professor Geoffrey Machin, on zygosity, placentation and why it matters. Professional notes are included in various sections, and include insights from a family physician on a family’s coping, and from an obstetrics nurse specialist on warning signs and discomforts in a multiple pregnancy. One segment describes the kinds of tests that a woman expecting multiple babies is likely to undergo during the pregnancy. The profes-

sional information is clear and not unnecessarily technical. Similarly, where babies are born prematurely, the book gives a list of common medical terms and abbreviations that parents are likely to encounter in the hospital environment. Professional notes from the Perinatal Social Worker (“You are not Alone”) are included. Again, practical advice is useful and supportive.

Parents expecting higher order multiples would be well advised to spend time reading this book — it should be recommended to them at the time of diagnosis. The book can then be read as a guide at every step of the way, so parents know what to expect. Ideas about how they might cope with each issue and stage of development, and information on special needs the children might have will no doubt be very welcome and add to the armory of strategies they will need to manage their babies and growing children. The book goes further than this and even extends to managing pregnancies subsequent to the multiple births.

Of special note is the very moving Foreword “for the children” by Cecile Dionne, one of the famous (exploited) Dionne quintuplets. Her advice is for parents to treat their multiple children as individuals and love them in a strong family unit. It is heartfelt and poignant. The book’s

final chapter (entitled “a word from the experts”) contains six segments from adults who have grown up as one of a “multiple”. Headings include “my life as a quadruplet”, “breaking away”, and “a view from the outside” — the latter from a triplet dizygotic to her monozygotic sisters.

Although the book is specifically not targeted at parents of twins, much of it would provide an excellent resource for them. This highly informative and supportive book is the product of efforts by a publication team of five mothers of multiples. To have produced a book at all is clearly a huge achievement, given these women’s other commitments. Writing and collecting the number of excellent personal and professional contributions that comprise this outstanding book was prompted by profound and unmet personal needs. Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that they have produced a book of outstanding value to parents of multiples. It will serve as a well-thumbed “friend” for many years. Judging by the commendations on the Canadian [www.tqq.com](http://www.tqq.com) web site, which I have only just visited, my enthusiastic response to *Finding Our Way* is well and truly shared.

Susan Treloar

Queensland Institute  
of Medical Research