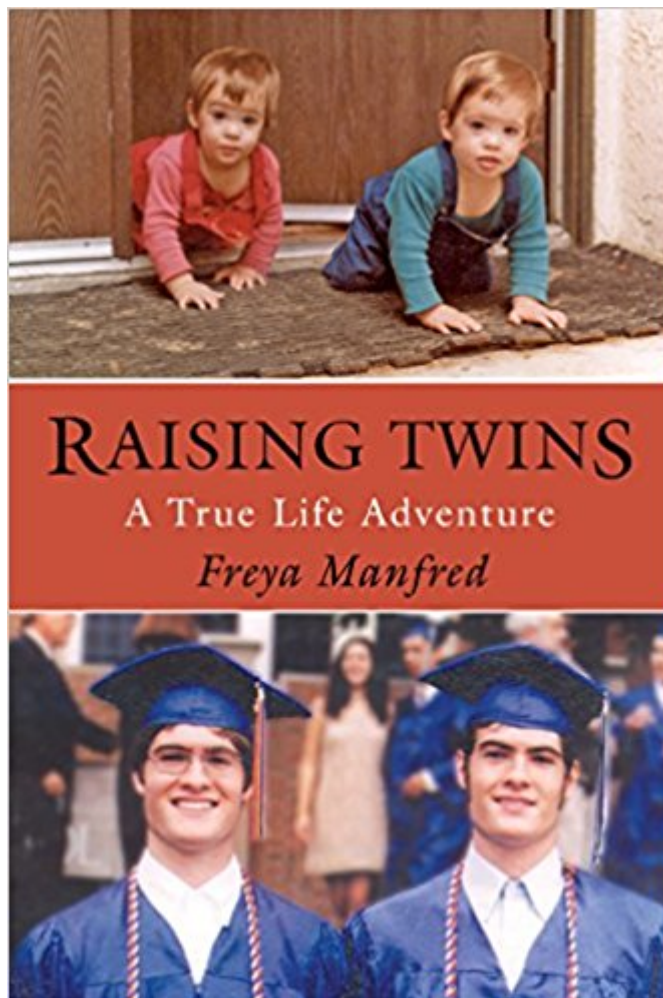


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Raising Twins: A Real Life Adventure



Synopsis

One of every thirty babies born today is a twin--close to double the percentage of twins born just a quarter-century ago. Raising two children born on the same day presents special challenges to parents, and offers unusual rewards. In *Raising Twins* poet Freya Bly offers a unique perspective on the experience, based on weekly notes she kept from the time of her pregnancy until her sons, Rowan and Bly, were in college. *Raising Twins* isn't a "how to" book, however, or a manual full of bullet points. It's a recount of twenty years of improvisation and adventure. Freya and her husband found that many theories about raising twins were cultural fairy tales inadequate to the task at hand. She describes the parenting ordeal with a poet's graphic touch--sleep deprivation, the need for superhuman energy, choosing schools, managing sibling spats honestly and diplomatically, while striving to bring out her sons latent gifts and nurture their creativity. I was far from a "tiger mother." I was more like a dolphin mother, swimming beside our sons, letting two souls who happened to be born on the same day explore the depths and heights of their surroundings. Perhaps the extra energy level of twins puts a parent in the position of being an avid follower and facilitator; it takes too much energy to steer them or control them... If you're a twin, if you know a twin, or even if you just care about parenting and the passages from infancy to adulthood, this book is for you.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Freya Manfred is the author of six collections of poetry and a memoir, *Frederick Manfred: A Daughter Remembers*, which was nominated for a Minnesota Book Award and an Iowa Historical

Society Award. Her poetry has appeared in more than 100 reviews and magazines and more than 40 anthologies. Her sixth poetry collection, *Swimming with a Hundred Year Old Snapping Turtle*, won the 2009 Midwest Bookseller's Choice Award for Poetry. Her most recent collection, *Speak Mother*, appeared in 2015. Freya lives in Stillwater, Minnesota, with the screenwriter Thomas Pope and their sons, Nicholas Bly Pope and Ethan Rowan Pope.

As I twin, I appreciated that Freya and her husband, Tom Pope, have such a refreshing view of twins as two individual people. A lot of parents of twins give their twins similar names and dress them alike. Freya called her twins "siblings who were the same age." The book is such a great tribute to her sons, Rowan and Bly. As a mother of a boy, I enjoyed the chronicle of the different developmental stages of boys. It gave me some idea of what I have to look forward to in the coming years, as my son is only 5 years old. Throughout in the book I thoroughly enjoyed the descriptions of the boys similarities and differences. It was interesting to learn of the roles other twins play with respect to each other. There is always such fierce competition between twins. It is so hard to have someone so similar to you - sharing almost the same experiences - and to have different opportunities or difficulties face you. The beginning of the book was so amusing at times I almost laughed out loud. The tone in which Freya recounts how naive she and Tom were is so perfect. As an atheist (ex-Catholic/Christian), I was encouraged by her open conversations with the boys about God. I sometimes don't know what to say to my son. Her willingness to let the boys make up their own minds was a great example for me. I also admired the open discussion of feelings in their family. And as the boys grew older it was easy to see how that benefited them. Throughout the book I was struck by how honest Freya was. Things all parents think, she actually wrote. This book is a great read for any parent, of twins or

singletons. <http://momsradius.blogspot.com/2015/06/book-review-raising-twins.html>

Raising Twins is a wonderful memoir. Freya Manfred, a skilled poet, is also adept in prose. The first thing that caught my attention in her book was the captivating dialogue. Early on, Manfred reports on an inane and hilarious nighttime conversation between her exhausted husband and herself, new parents of twin boys Rowan and Bly. Later in the book, I appreciated the "kids-say-the-darndest-things" phase of the twins' linguistic invention and the growth of the teens' brilliant word play, often in competition with one another through one-upmanship putdowns. All the way through the chronology of Rowan and Bly's lives, Freya's tales are told in chapters with

lively titles. A reader is aware of the presence of respectful and encouraging parents, parents delighted by the growth, beauty, and curiosity of these two distinct but deeply connected brothers. Manfred is a mother who looked at the individuals she was raising and listened with her heart about how to handle each new situation—whether it be the zombie-like first months of breast-feeding two ravenously hungry babes, the decision to rein in the boys only on issues of safety or kindness to others, or how to deal with the twins' social lives and inevitable movement away from their parents.

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