



# Twins, not conversation pieces

**M**y 16-year-old twin sons got their driver's licenses two weeks ago. Already, this is making my life easier. You see, for the past 16 years, my boys have crawled, toddled, scampered or been driven in different directions.

But upon hearing the good news from my son Aaron, as he backed

While adults of singletons seem particularly attracted to twins, they often relate to them in an impersonal, objectifying manner, as if twins were something strange, alien or other-than-human conversation pieces. Speaking in third person in front of any child, especially teenagers, strikes me as rude

wrote on the couch with a crayon, the other didn't insist on sharing in his punishment. And on those all-too-rare occasions when I've brought only one of my sons along with me on an errand or, more rarely, an outing, the other didn't howl at the sundering.

## Real life

True, my twin sons have always been close, very close. Since crib days, they've played together for hours at a time and thought each other outrageously funny—letting go shrieks of hilarity at the other's antics. But they also get on each other's nerves, fight, quarrel and deliberately get away from each other.

True, when they were little and one awoke from a nap, the first words out of his mouth were either, "Where's David?" or "Where's Aaron?" Yes, they prefer each other's company to anyone else's so far (pre-steady girlfriend). But none of their behavior is uncanny, strange or inexplicable.

On the contrary. It's quite easily explained. We all prefer to be with those who know us best and whose timing, gestures, sense of humor and humility we can count on. Such company is comfortable and easy and elicits easy laughter and ebullient exuberance. I recall my best friend from high school who became my roommate for two years



out of our driveway, a neighbor turned to me, exclaiming, "Wow! Talk about double-trouble!"

What? Double-trouble? Aren't we way past the double-trouble jokes? Especially now that the boys were teenagers, it seemed absurd that otherwise sensible adults would actually talk about David or Aaron right in front of them rather than directly to them.

at worst and strange at best. It's not that twins are strange. It's that adults regard them strangely.

## Special but not strange

Perhaps to the disappointment of seekers of the exotic, weird and mysterious, twins are very much like other children. When one of my sons falls off his bicycle, the other doesn't cry out in pain. When one

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