

# Twins are not necessarily clones

By Lisa Neumaier

I was probably around three or four years old when I realized that I had a sister who talked like me, acted like me, but most odd, looked almost exactly like me. I had come to realize that I had a twin sister and that I was different from most other kids in the United States.

What's it like to be a twin? I get asked that question a lot, and my answer is always the same. I wish I weren't a twin. People wonder why. It's simple. It gets to the point where I worry that my closest friends or my parents may get us mixed up just because I may wear my hair in the same style as my sister. I have to avoid coming into visual contact with some people if I'm afraid they may call me Beth.

Although I go through precautions in order to avoid being called Beth, it still happens quite often. On the average of about once every two weeks, someone blows the 50/50 gamble and loses. I am so used to it though, that all I do when someone says, "Hi Beth" is say "Hi" back; maybe not as friendly as I would normally, but it's the best I can do after hearing those words. I could tell them that they've made a mistake and that I am Lisa, not Beth, but why put them through the embarrassment and put me through the trouble?

Some people think that because we are twins, we must think exactly the same and act the same. We are, in their eyes, one person. Even my father says things sometimes that suggest that he thinks our intelligence is exactly the same. "If Beth got an A why can't you?" He laughs; not funny.

In some ways we are very much alike. For instance when describing something to someone, we both think of the same words to use, no matter how bizarre these words are to others. For example, once when we were playing a game where one of us was using synonyms to the other to describe a flamingo, in one short, unusual sentence containing words like "a bird with a long neck, usually found in water," the

other one guessed it right. We can relate messages to one another so easily because we think on the same level for so many things. People are amazed; I am amazed at times.

There is a lot of competition between us, especially for friends. It is not as bad as it used to be, but it is still there and hard to get rid of. We grew up constantly worrying about who our friends liked better. But then our friends didn't help the matter any. I always heard one friend asking another, "Who do you like better, Beth or Lisa?"

When I look at Beth the words "Oh my God, she looks just like me" don't come to mind. I think there is a definite difference in our appearance, and I think anyone could see that if they just looked.

But I had an experience once when even I got mixed up. I was walking into a store, and about a foot in front of me was a mirror. I didn't realize it was a mirror, and when I looked and saw myself, my first reaction was that I was seeing Beth and I wondered what she was doing there. I actually thought I was seeing her in person, when it was really my reflection from a mirror. I got a good laugh out of that.

When friends of the family come over to our house and look at old pictures of us, they always try to figure out which one is Beth and which one is Lisa. They make a big game out of it. They feel so proud if they happen to guess right; which they should, because even I can't tell in most of our baby pictures. The most recent picture in which I got mixed up was one my dad took the day Beth and I dressed up the same for Twin Day during Spirit Week. I had to look twice before I knew who was who.

Being a twin does have its advantages. I have someone my age to talk to, and I am seldom lonely.



WHICH ONE IS WHICH? Can you tell the difference?

(photo by Todd Lopez)

(Beth is on the left, Lisa is on the right)

The only real setback is the fact that even on a special day like a birthday, I know that it is also her birthday, not mine alone. Regardless, my birthday is still my favorite day of the year.