



Success for One Multiple and Not the Other

Especially in the High School Years

Having been through the same kindergarten, primary and high school with my identical twin brother, I understand the difficulties that can arise when one multiple is more academically successful or successful in extra-curricular activities such as sport or music. More specifically it is inevitable that peers, family, teachers and perfect strangers will compare multiples' exam results. People have a tendency to compare multiples more or expect them to be exactly the same.

There is enough pressure for students completing their high school years, let alone the pressure that multiples face. In some extreme cases, students can develop depressive thoughts, perfectionist behaviour, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive behaviour in relation to their study techniques. In addition to

that, one multiple is often labelled as 'the clever one' and peers often ask 'who is the smarter one?'

Every student has strengths and weaknesses. It is important for multiples to learn how to focus all their energy on their own particular strengths and not just on their weaknesses or their multiple's strengths. Find subjects,

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sports or interests that you excel at or are really interested in and find ways to extend this level of interest.

It is important to realise that success in life is not solely dependent on HSC* success. There is always more than one way to reach your final goal.

It is important for students to brainstorm and investigate alternative routes into the course of their choice. Discussing this with your multiple may even make this easier as they know how to see things from your perspective.

As multiples you must learn how to feed off the other multiple(s) when it comes to motivation and encouragement, whether in academic performance or sports or music. You don't have to both be performing at the same level. It is OK to just participate with your sibling

in the same class or team. It is important for parents to make sure that their multiples don't resent each other's successes and can learn to be happy for each other.

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MANAGING RIVALRY

There is always a potential for rivalry between multiples, especially when comparing success, but it really depends on the relationship multiples have with each other. It is also dependent on how parents handle the situation with them. It is important to sit down with your multiples and discuss the various options for career choice, whether in relation to HSC exams or the ramifications of separating multiples on the basis of sporting achievement. With group sports, you can focus on the fact that they are both part of a team and that each of them needs to do his or her part to help. Explain to them that the coach is doing what he or she thinks is best for the team as a whole.

Comparisons can hurt the less-performing multiple's self-esteem and can set up the pair for unhealthy competition. Try to view each multiple's accomplishments and strengths individually. Teach them to celebrate their

differences rather than competing over them. And while it's fine to praise the more-accomplished multiple in front of his or her sibling, be cognisant of when your compliments are hurting the less-able multiple's self image and instead offer congratulations for a job well done in private. Try to take the focus off winning or succeeding and instead concentrate on effort.

Parents can encourage their struggling multiple to find an area on his or her own, in which to shine, separate from their multiple. When a child is allowed to "own" an activity separate from their multiple, the pride they feel often spills over into other areas of life. Once out from under the shadow of their multiple, they may make a turnaround improving in other areas where they once struggled.

Parents of multiples can encourage their children to compare themselves to their peers as well as their multiple if they insist on making such comparisons. Learning to provide

unconditional support to your multiple is not only an important skill for multiples to learn, but also an important lesson in life. We often place too much importance on the end results and often forget about the journey. With the HSC, some students may perform well on assignments and assessments and underachieve in examinations, while the reverse is true for others.

During high school years, students have enough to deal with including puberty issues, academic and social pressures. Being a multiple can be seen to add further pressures; however, depending on how you deal with those pressures and interact with your multiple, these will be easier or harder to handle.

* or VCE, TCE, SACE, QSC or other Year 12 Certificates