

**MY SISTER, MY SELF: THE SURPRISING
WAYS THAT BEING AN OLDER, MIDDLE,
YOUNGER OR TWIN SHAPED YOUR LIFE
BY VIKKI STARK**



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My Sister, My Self

*The Surprising Ways that Being an Older,
Middle, Younger or Twin Shaped Your Life*



Based on Interviews with 400 Women, Teens and Girls Worldwide

VIKKI STARK

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From the Back Cover

Discover the unexpected ways that being a sister affects your life choices

Whether your sister relationship was close, conflicted, or somewhere in between, that childhood bond shaped the woman you are today. Having grown up as an older, younger, middle, or twin sister influences your choice of occupation, your circle of friends, your love life--even how you feel about your own body.

My Sister, My Self provides you with powerful tools to:

- Come to terms with a challenging sister relationship
- Make sense of your need to depend on or control others
- Recognize how your sister role influences your interactions with friends and colleagues
- Understand the sister role you've played since childhood

"Vikki Stark's study of sibling relationships will take you to new depths of understanding of yourself, your sister, and the myriad ways you shaped each others' lives. You'll find a wealth of workable suggestions for getting . . . to a healthier, happier relationship with the one woman who shares your genes and your history."

--Adele Faber, coauthor of *Siblings Without Rivalry*

About the Author

Vikki Stark, M.S.W., has twenty years' experience as a family therapist, supervisor, and educator and appears regularly as a guest expert on television. Originally from New York City, she now lives in Montreal.

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MY SISTER, MY SELF: THE SURPRISING WAYS THAT BEING AN OLDER, MIDDLE, YOUNGER OR TWIN SHAPED YOUR LIFE BY VIKKI STARK PDF

Based on the largest study ever of sister relationships, "My Sister, My Self: The Surprising Ways that Being an Older, Middle, Younger or Twin Shaped Your Life" explores the myriad ways that a woman's place in the sister hierarchy makes an indelible imprint on her identity. It affects her in everything she does although she probably isn't aware of it - from her choice of occupation, her circle of friends, her love life - even how she feels about her own body! The book also shines a light on three special sister relationships - those that are conflicted, caretaking or super-close.

Whether your sister relationship was close, conflicted, or somewhere in between, that childhood bond shaped the woman you are today. Having grown up as an older, younger, middle, or twin sister influences your choice of occupation, your circle of friends, your love life--even how you feel about your own body.

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About the Author

Vikki Stark, M.S.W., has twenty years' experience as a family therapist, supervisor, and educator and appears regularly as a guest expert on television. Originally from New York City, she now lives in Montreal.

Most helpful customer reviews

40 of 40 people found the following review helpful.

The must-read book for sisters

By Dr. Cathy Goodwin

When I review a book, I usually have a copy right next to the computer, so I can refer to key passages and even quote a few lines. But this time I don't because I gave away my review copy right after I read it. I have a friend who's very close to her two sisters and I knew she'd enjoy reading this book. And I just ordered a gift copy to give a professional associate who's very close to her own sister.

That's the kind of book *My Sister, My Self* is: destined to keep circulating and (unless you're very careful) dog-eared and pencil-marked.

The theme of this book is, Your position as a sister will influence just about every area of your life - family, career, personality. What drew me into reading and re-reading is Stark's assertion that she can guess the birth order of a woman with only a few brief clues. Accountants (if I remember correctly) tend to be middle sisters.

And what amazed me is, she got my number! I am an older sister -- the bossy kind, not the caretaker type. And I fit her description quite accurately: totally independent and enjoy being in charge. I can't help noting how many older sisters tend to seek entrepreneurial careers and never really fit in as "team players."

I suspect most readers will do what I did: fast-forward to the chapters describing themselves. But I hope therapists and coaches will also enjoy reading this book because a lot of behavior that seems dysfunctional can be attributed directly to birth order. And from what Stark tells us, these influences go deep and can be hard to change.

Stark focuses solely on families with sisters, which means someone else has to write the book about sisters with brothers and only children. But Stark has been quite comprehensive, even including a large chapter about being a twin sister -- an experience far from my own.

What puts this book in the five-star category is Stark's willingness to discuss the dark side of sisterly relationships. Presumably, as a therapist, she's heard everything.

In particular, she recognizes that some women will experience the sisterly relationship as a drain on their energy with no rewards in sight. She's carefully non-judgmental. Perhaps because her study would attract women who care about their sisters, she offers few examples of sisters who "divorced" their relationship. Rather we hear a few quotes from women who don't want to give up, although the effort seems pointless. Frankly, I think many women will recognize themselves and feel reassured to fit into a category.

Sometimes a book leaves you wanting more because there's a gap in what's presented. Here I found myself wanting more because the book raised provocative questions. For example, what's too much: when does a sister get dragged down by ties that no longer deserve to be honored? When women don't have sisters in their lives, do they tend to seek out special friends or do they always have a sense of something missing? When sisters are spaced far apart (i.e., one is eight years older than the other), do they experience birth order relationships differently?

And while I respect a study of 400 women, I would find it instructive to talk about famous and literary examples of sisters. Author Lisa Scottoline, herself a twin, has explored the twin theme in her superb murder mysteries. In one best-seller, a well-known lawyer is stunned by the appearance of a strange woman -- a low-life claiming to be her missing twin sister. And in the WNBA, twins Cheryl and Coco Miller are now playing on separate teams, after playing together in high school and in an elite college program. They're both doing well.

In summary, I recommend reading this book before making your next gift list. It's the kind of book that (I suspect) many women will want to share. It's perfect for book clubs with a psychological edge -- the kind of book that makes you want to start a conversation.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Never More Devoted Sisters

By Ricki Jones

They say mothers most affect us. Women are our caretakers. Those of us who have a sister know the power of this relationship, so instrumental is it to our development and sense of self. Vikki Stark details this relationship, its dynamics, societal expectations, and taboos, elevating it to near Oedipal dimensions.

Women are complex individuals, more so in relationships with other women. To be a woman in a sibling relationship with a sister is to know this relationship's most powerful influence. Vikki Stark details the sister relationship in all its forms offering practical measures to negotiate the relationship with the intention of strengthening the bond. Yet she does not shy away from the difficulties and the possibility that, in some cases, the relationship may fail. She is a reasoned voice who clearly articulates the struggle.

Moreover, she does not judge. She validates, supports, and comforts, quite simply, because one can so easily identify with all she writes. She is the therapist who has lived your experience. She is a psychologist whose observations are near psychic.

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

For Each and Every Sister!

By Allison Levin

This book is a must-read for anyone hoping to delve deeper into the intricate workings of the sister relationship. By speaking and engaging with numerous sets of sisters, Mrs. Vikki Starks thoroughly examines how a woman's childhood role as a sister has the remarkable power to influence and shape who she becomes later in life. As an identical twin, the topic of sisterhood has not only always fascinated me, but mystified me as well. There are so many complex emotions involved, such intense love, intimacy, and affection...and yet sometimes there is that simultaneous jealousy and resentment. This book was so

refreshing to read because it is sometimes easy to lose sight of the fact that the sister dynamic is supposed to be messy and convoluted...that's what makes it so wonderful. As you read this book, you will laugh aloud with some of the cited sisters' happy memories, cry with some of the heartaches and struggles, smile to yourself as you relate (almost uncannily) to some of the stories, and most importantly, make you realize just how lucky you are to have a sister.

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