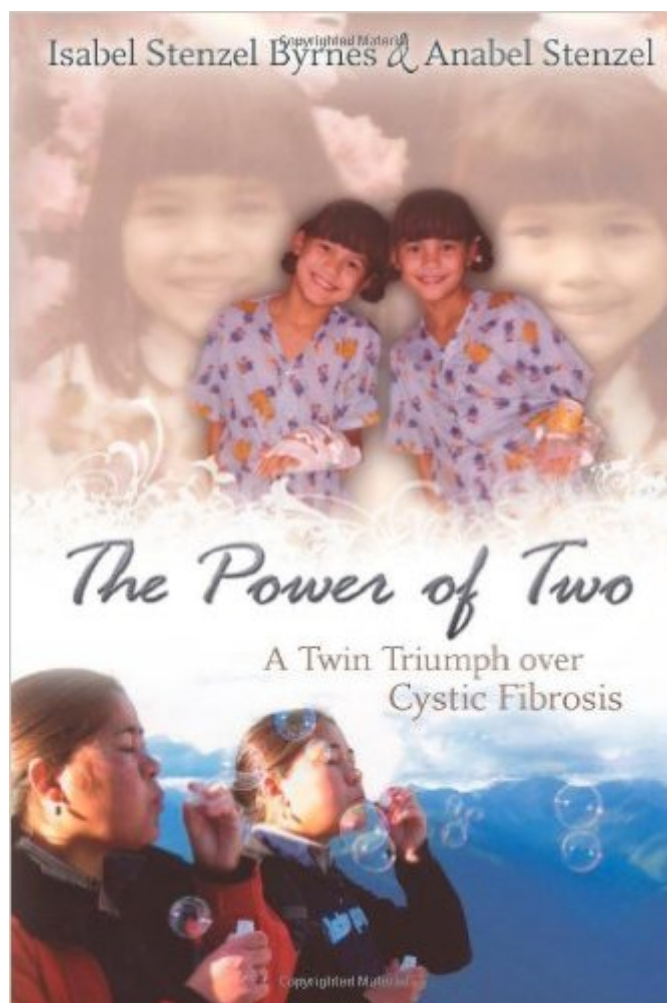


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The Power Of Two: A Twin Triumph Over Cystic Fibrosis



Synopsis

For most people, a diagnosis of cystic fibrosis means the certainty of a life ended too soon. But for twin girls with the disease, what began as a family's stubborn determination grew into a miracle. The tragedy of CF has been touchingly recounted in such books as Frank Deford's *Alex: The Life of a Child*, but *The Power of Two* is the first book to portray the symbiotic relationship between twins who share this life-threatening disease through adulthood. Isabel Stenzel Byrnes and Anabel Stenzel tell of their lifelong struggle to pursue normal lives with cystic fibrosis while grappling with the realization that they will die young. Their story reflects the physical and emotional challenges of a particularly aggressive form of CF and tells how the twins' bicultural heritage—Japanese and German—influenced the way they coped with these challenges. Born in 1972, seventeen years before scientists discovered the genetic mutation that causes CF, Isabel and Anabel endured the daily regimen of chest percussion, frequent doctor visits, and lengthy hospitalizations. But they tell how, in the face of innumerable setbacks, their deep-seated dependence on each other allowed them to survive long enough to reap the benefits of the miraculous lung transplants that marked a crossroads in their lives: "We have an old life—one of growing up with chronic illness—and a new life—one of opportunities and gifts we have never imagined before." In this memoir, they pay tribute to the people who shaped their experience. *The Power of Two* is an honest and gripping portrayal of day-to-day health care, the impact of chronic illness on marriage and family, and the importance of a support network to continuing survival. It conveys an important message to both popular and professional readers as it addresses key psychosocial issues in chronic illness throughout the sufferer's lifespan and illuminates the human side of advances in biotechnology. Even as gene therapy and stem cell research increase the chances for eradicating CF, this stirring account portrays its effects on one family that refused to give up. These two remarkable sisters have much to teach about the power of perseverance—and about the ultimate power of hope.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a person with cystic fibrosis, I have always shied away from CF memoirs. My attitude has been "I have CF, why do I need to read about your CF?" I can not tell you how thankful I am that I did not shy away from this extraordinary story of struggle, strength and love. Ana and Isa are twins of Asian descent who both have cystic fibrosis. Statistically, the chances of this genetic combination is 1 in 1.8 billion. The uniqueness of these two women does not stop with their genetics. Ana and Isa immerse the reader in the world of their mother's Japanese culture mixed with that of their German father. This alone makes the story fascinating. Add to it the bond between twins and the brother who sometimes stood on the outside looking in, and you have all the makings of a complex family drama. But the story is so much more than this reader could ever put into a few sentences. Throughout their childhood, across the seas in Japan and Germany, on into their time studying at Stanford and into adulthood, there is another character that is a constant: cystic fibrosis. I, too, have struggled with CF but after reading this book, I feel as though my "fight" pales in comparison. Never have I been witness to such an intense will to live and to thrive. There are many authors who might try to convince a reader to believe "life is precious" or to "seize the day." For these twins, no such statements were necessary. I was inspired to live harder and better only by their example. These strong individuals rarely felt self-pity and I never felt their tales to be histrionic. I so appreciated the clean, simple and honest way they allowed this breathtaking story to unfold. In addition to feeling humbled by these women, I also felt a little bit jealous.

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