

COINCIDENCE OR FATE

Marilyn's 37-year-old son Randy and 16-year-old granddaughter Sara died in a car accident in 2006

BY MARILYN ROLLINS, adapted from the book,
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On a return trip from the south, we were on I-65 in Alabama when my husband suddenly exited and said, "We need gas."

I noticed that there were no gas stations right off the interstate and said to him, "Well, we'd better go on to the next exit."

He crossed over I-65 but continued on the back roads. Since this is not what he would do normally, I questioned him again, if we were that low on gas we should go to the next exit and not roam a strange back road. He continued, and in a few minutes we did find a gas station.

He began pumping gas as I dug for money to get a bottle of soda. As I walked into the store, Bob was talking to a man about our "tiny travel trailer," which has a very retro look to it. We paid for everything, then pulled forward. Bob had told the man and his lady friend he would show them the inside of the trailer. The lady stepped in first and fell in love with it. She commented, "Oh, we have talked so much about doing something like this, but I lost my only daughter a couple years ago, and I just haven't wanted to do anything."

I was stunned. I showed her Randy and Sara's pictures and told her how we had lost them in an accident five years ago. We hugged for a few

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seconds. She had never heard of The Compassionate Friends. We sat down and I told her all about TCF and how I have come full circle and am now a chapter leader for the group.

When we got back on the road, I looked at my husband and said, "That was supposed to happen, wasn't it?"

He just smiled back at me and said, "And you didn't think I knew where I was going."

I had just finished reading a book, *An Invisible Thread*, by Laura Schroff, based on the premise that we are all connected to the people that we are supposed to meet by an invisible thread.

What led us up that road?

After finding a campground for the night, we settled in. The next morning, Bob topped off the gas tank again as we began the last leg of our journey home. He went into the gas station and on the way in he bent over and picked up something. I knew that he had found "a penny from heaven."

As he walked back to the truck, he bent down again and smiled as he picked up a second one. We so often find them two at a time. One from Randy and one from Sara.