

# LIFE'S RULES

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

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## Self care articles for the bereaved

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I know there is a book out there somewhere with the title, "All I Ever Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." I have recently thought a lot about that, and it really is true. We are taught at a very young age the very rules we need to get through life.

Say please and thank you.

Respect your parents.

Never tell secrets. Pinky swear if you have to.

Don't run in the house, and never ever run with a sucker in your mouth.

Don't screw your face up, it might stay that way.

Don't lie, and never steal.

Don't slam the door or kick the dog.

Always wear clean underwear. You might get sick or have an accident and have to go to the hospital.

Shut the front door! Your father isn't paying to heat the outdoors.

Never wear a hat in the house.

Don't talk to strangers.

Eat everything on your plate, there are hungry children in the world.

Say your prayers every day, and don't forget to "God bless" everyone you know.

Obey the 10 Commandments.

I've always thought that these rules were pretty much what I needed to get through life, and I'm sure that most of you have too. But then something happens, something big, or as Dr. Phil says, "a life-changing event." Someone you love dies. They leave suddenly without a goodbye, without a last "I love you." Nothing is normal anymore, and you know it will never be normal again. It will get easier, but is never the same.

Randy taught me what it means to live. He was such a beautiful, loving child, and always had a smile on his face. From the time he learned to talk, he did. He only quit when he slept, and sometimes even sleep didn't stop him.

I can still picture him in his kindergarten Christmas play, when he, as Big Bird, threw up on the little Toy Soldier in front of him. I can still hear that Toy Soldier yelling, "Oh, God Randy!"

Sara was also a child to be proud of, and thanks to her grandfather, she teased me unrelentingly. From telling me that the dogs ate all the holiday pies as they cooled on the back porch, and laughed as I ran to save the pies when we

didn't even have a dog and the back porch was screened in, to trying to talk me into giving her my PT Cruiser. She was a tease, and Sara, if I could have you back, Honey, I would hand you the keys.

They both taught our family many life lessons, and many were missed until they were gone, but I get it now. It is so clear.

Don't sweat the small stuff.

Play with your children, the housework will still be there when you are ready to do it.

Help others, so their day may go easier. Work together to solve problems.

Remember, we are all mortal and we all make mistakes. Forgive and move on. The victim of your anger is you, and it robs you of so much time. Time that is so precious. As our Savior hung on the cross, He spoke to His Father, saying, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." If He could do that, we should be able to move mountains.

Don't worry about what other people think, it is your life, live it like you want. And do live it, don't just exist in it.

Don't argue with people about petty things, again, you just waste precious time.

Randy and Sara left quite a legacy in the way that they lived, and in the family they left behind.

I know that we all have things we would have said or done differently, if we could have known what that September 22nd would bring, but we can't, and we didn't, and we can't change that. What we can do now is move forward toward a new normal. For each one of us, this has changed us from the people we were one year ago. We will never be that person again. Let us learn to love

this new person that each one of us has become. Let all of us try our hardest to live like a true Christian should, like Randy and Sara did.

Let's make them proud.

**AUTHOR NOTE:**

On the first anniversary of Randy and Sara's deaths, there was a memorial service at his church and I was asked to speak. This is the speech that I gave.