

# THE STRONGEST PERSON I KNOW

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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As I sat scrolling through my Facebook page on Thanksgiving, I ran across a comment that was made on a post I had written, about my son, Randy, who died, along with his 16 year-old daughter on September 22, 2006.

"You are the strongest person I know," this person commented.

I have heard this comment from friends before, and it always kind of shocks me. I want to say back to them, "I wasn't given a choice!"

God knows if I had been, my choice would have been NOT to have my son and granddaughter die on that September day so long ago.

What this person doesn't know is that at some point every day, for the last ten years, I struggle to breathe. My legs sometimes feel as if they are made of lead, difficult to lift, difficult to move, one in front of the other.

My eyes burn almost daily with more tears than some people shed in a lifetime. My stomach and chest hurt often, as something reminds me of that awful September day.

A song, a smell, a sound can bring me to my knees.

Sometimes I just sit staring blankly, not seeing, not hearing, not caring, what is going on around me. I watch children play and it makes my heart yearn for those simple, carefree days.

The holidays are especially difficult, and I sometimes feel paralyzed as I attempt to get ready for them.

Sometimes my mind wanders all the way back to my holidays as a child, and I wish for that childlike innocence, under my parent's protection. Then I cry again, because they too, are gone.

*Strong . . . no. I am just like thousands, no, millions, of other parents trying to survive, trying to get through each day with as little pain as possible after the deaths of my son and granddaughter.*