

My mother Mia Truxaw and my teacher/mentor/advisor/boss/friend John Tooby, both gone within the span of a year. Two of the most influential people in my life, whose voices I will always carry with me. By most reckonings, they were so different, and yet my mind is pulled toward all they had in common.

They were both born in July 1952 (Mia on the 1st, John on the 26th), both the youngest of 4 siblings, both growing up in Los Angeles, both teachers at California state universities (Mia at CSU Northridge, John at UC Santa Barbara), both loyal friends, loving spouses, and dedicated parents, and tragically both possessing bodies that constrained them and ultimately failed them far too soon.

They were both so warm that you felt better just being near them. Both so insightful and wise. Both incredibly funny and, in different ways, so incredibly smart. Generous, thoughtful, and often selfless. Both had a way of knowing what people needed to hear, of seeing people and things that often went unseen.

They didn't really know each other, but I will never ever forget the moment, shortly after my first child was born, when my mom was holding her for the first time, and then handed her to John. Even though her dementia was already fairly advanced, she knew he was a special person, special to us.

John always thought to ask me about my mom and to share thoughts about anything that might be able to help her.

I had gone a very long time without talking to either of them before they passed, which is a tragedy itself, but now knowing they are both gone, I can't describe how different, how much colder, the world feels.

But my mother at least would never want me to end on such a bleak note, so I shall reflect on how lucky I was to know and love them. How incredibly blessed I was to be loved by them.