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Marie Osmond
Her Private Struggle to Find Joy

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Marie Dancing

A best-selling author and feisty mom of eight, the singer has survived divorce, depression and more than four decades in the Hollywood spotlight

Marie Osmond is a little bit country, and *Dancing With the Stars* is a little bit rock and roll, a little bit tango, a little bit salsa. But for the 48-year-old entertainer — who made her first TV appearance at age 3 alongside five of her eight older brothers, the '70s singing group The Osmonds; kicked off her own career at 13 with

the country hit "Paper Roses"; and became a household name at 16, starring with brother Donny on *Donny and Marie* — the ABC dance competition, which just wrapped its fifth season, was a perfect fit. Sure, there were a few setbacks, like on the show's Oct. 22 episode, when Marie fainted in front of the judges following a strenuous samba. ("Oh crap!" the devout Mormon reportedly exclaimed as she woke up on the floor.) Fortunately, though, setbacks are one thing Marie knows how to handle.

Coming fast on the heels of her mother's death in 2004 was a fire that destroyed the Provo, Utah, home she shared with her then-husband, record



Marie and big bro Donny in their '70s heyday. "She's still smiling," he says now. "She's still standing."

Newly single Marie jokes that any guy who'd be interested in a woman with eight kids scares her!

Osmond: Out of the Dark



Marie dedicated this dance to her parents; her dad died on Nov. 6.

producer Brian Blosil, 54. Then, in 2006, she was hospitalized for an adverse reaction to medication, which many press outlets reported as a suicide attempt. And during a mid-November appearance on *Larry King Live*, it was revealed that her 17-year-old son Michael was being treated for substance abuse.

Yet rather than being done in by all that has befallen her, Marie is a plucky survivor whose strong faith and even stronger family ties have practically made her the living embodiment of the notion that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

The Blue Period

The most public struggle in Marie's life has been the one with postpartum depression (PPD), which she discussed candidly in her best-selling 2004 book, *Behind the Smile*. Shortly after delivering her seventh child, Matthew, says Marie, "I became immobilized. I literally shut down. I could not get through a day. The idea of making a phone call or keeping an appointment seemed impossible."

And though it was mostly Marie's faith that pulled her out of the darkness — "You just take it one day at a time, and you spend a lot of time on your knees, and you say a lot of prayers," the singer has said — she has also noted that she relied on conventional medication and humor. In 2005, after Tom Cruise lashed out at Brooke Shields for treating PPD with antidepressants, Marie quipped to *People*, "When Tom becomes a woman, and has a baby and has postpartum, then he can become an expert."

Things Fall Apart

The depression put a huge strain on Marie's marriage. With her first

husband of three years, actor/musician Steve Craig, now 51, Marie produced her first child, Stephen, in 1983. But with Brian, she thought she had finally found the right match. The couple adopted five kids (Jessica, now 21, Michael, 17, Brandon, 12, Brianna, 11, and Abigail, 6) and bore two of their own (Rachel, 19, and Matthew, 9) during their 20 years together. They even survived a separation in 1998, but ultimately divorced this past spring. "This was not a spontaneous decision. This was 20 years," Marie told Larry King earlier this year.

Though Marie has been reticent about life after her divorce, she has noted that her famous brothers have proved a strong support system. "I said, 'It must be hard being married to me,'" she said recently. "And they said, 'Marie, maybe *the* Marie Osmond.' But my little brother said, 'Marie, being married to *you* is a piece of cake.'"

Future Perfect?

Marie also draws strength through sticking close to her kids, going so far as to have son Matthew join her on one of the tracks of her just-released CD, *The Magic of Christmas*. And the strides she continues to make as an entrepreneur surely buoy her spirits as well. In addition to having her own clothing and sewing machine lines, her company, Marie Osmond Fine Porcelain Collection Dolls, is worth roughly \$80 million. And the singer is also heavily involved with the Children's Miracle Network, a charity she co-founded in 1983 with actor John Schneider, which has raised billions. "When you feel you can't handle your life anymore, you give back," she says, "and it gives you oxygen."

Because of the concentration required to take her talents to a new level, even Marie's appearance on *Dancing With the Stars* has helped to put some distance between her and the past. "On *Donny and Marie*, we did dance," she explained to *Entertainment Tonight*. "But that was the point of having 14 people behind you — it distracted from your inability!"

Indeed, as Marie glittered across the *Stars* stage, it was as though she was shedding her old and troubled skin before our very eyes. "I'm happier than I've been in a long time," she says. "And my children see it."

A Few More Marie-isms

The philosophical star knows who she is, and where she's going

On Faith: "I believe in the power of prayer. I was led to the people I found. I think when we stop and feel and live, we will be led."

On Growing Up: "I had an incredible mother who really taught values: a hard work ethic, self-esteem, inner strength and self-worth that didn't depend on your next gig."

On Her pre-Dancing With the Stars Weight: "I'm not at my fighting weight — I should be 20 lbs. thinner. But come on... who cares?!"

On Marriage: "I'm kind of done. I'm wearing my mother's ring. And I'm married to my kids. I've decided I'll wait until the next life and let God get it right for me."