The BIG 4-2 — Every Day Is a Gift

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I know it sounds crazy, but I have always loved getting older, and then post-cancer, it took on even more of an emphasis.

When I was younger, I remember my grandma was afraid she would die young — and in a way she did, as 75 was way too young to say goodbye to such an amazing human — but I digress. She lost her mom* when she was a young child — her mom was only 40 when she died.

At that point, my grandma and her sister were sent to the USA from Italy to live with family as orphans. My grandmother was only 6 when she traveled from the only home she knew to live with relatives she did not know. That loss of course impacted her life in ways I will never be able to fathom, though when I "lost" my mom as a young teen, she understood that being with a mom was a tragedy.

I remembered during my 39th year that I was so excited to turn 40 (I had been for years). One of my Golden Girls, my Roe, often said, "Why are you in such a rush to turn 40? Why do you want to get old?" It did not change my wish to turn older but at times during the early parts of my 39th year, I wondered and worried about my great-grandmother's story and IF I would get to turn 40 (nothing like an undiagnosed anxiety disorder, FTW).

When I was diagnosed two weeks before my 4-0, it did not seem that far-fetched, if I am being honest with myself. It was still terrifying and shocking but I guess I had been waiting for a shoe to fall for a decade and change… Not that it was a prophecy but it was, I guess, where the wind was blowing. I had been under tremendous stress and often pictured myself as a puppeteer controlling the strings and the lives of all those around me — yeah, I do not think that anymore. It was like being in a plane and believing your being awake would make the plane fly straight and have no turbulence — impossibilities.

Experiencing breast cancer as a "young" patient and being the only person I knew with this type of disease and being a mom and a wife and working was so very hard — I continue to share and write because I am sure that my words help others (via emails and social media connections all the time based on the shared story of cancer … oh and also seeing the amount of visitors to this blog and my others also shows, I guess, readership who are helped — or haters, or family, who knows … lol).

I will never thank cancer for anything — I instead focus on enjoying my life in all of its ups and downs and recognizing the hard lesson that NO ONE controls their lives — we are all on a ride and might as well find something to smile about each day, if we can. What made you smile today?

*My great-grandma did not die of cancer.

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