It’s My BIRTHDAY — #THISIS41

December 13, 2017 By Lisa Vento Nielsen

Today, I did something I have not done for a long time. It is my birthday, so it’s been 365 days since my last one so I guess I do not do that too often … But I went out and had lunch, by myself.

This is something I used to do all of the time, back in the day. I have lived alone in foreign countries, taken 27 hour flights to far flung destinations for work but something I stopped doing abruptly over the last ah 13-15 years is doing things by myself for ME and with ME. It seems weird because I was always a very solitary person who just went off to do my own thing quite often.

Somewhere in becoming “coupled” up for good and having children, I lost this ability to be alone. I was always alone but alone at home and busy or alone at work and busy but now, I am just enjoying my own company and having a good old time spending money I do not have to get some splurge items for this birthday, this birthday that I never doubted I would seemaybe because I am just stupid but I just did not doubt that I would see this birthday in the books and that I will see many, many moreat least past 70, right?

But, the truth is I do not know and as much as I am rah rah and cheerful and positive there are these little nags that sit on my soul—this tiny little doubts that flourish up at the most inopportune times and remind me—remind me that my days might be numbered to an extreme, that there are cells that might remain in me trying to wreck havok and/or cause issues all I can say to that is I AM DOING EVERYTHING I CAN POSSIBLY DO TO NOT HAVE THAT HAPPEN and also, HEY I DO NOT HAVE CONTROL OVER THAT BECAUSE IF I DID, I WOULD NEVER HAVE GOTTEN CANCER IN THE FIRST DAMN PLACE!

Excuse my yelling. Sometimes, there are things that try to take your joy. In the “old” days, I had many, many things that took my joy. Now there is only 1—it is just the underlying fear of having been sick and the WHAT IF it happens again. So every day, especially on this day, my 41st birthday, I do what I can to exhume it, to get it out and to live my life because it is what it is and it could always be worse.

I got stuff to do, though, and it should be enough to keep me busy and focused. Finding a job, filing for my charitable company The Time Between Is, Inc (done today, for my birthday gift to me—I also got myself tons of earrings, an echo dot, a new bag, new dress and a belt, oh and a pair of jeans—today was a treat yoself day!) and just living life. Tomorrow is birthday breakfast with my best friend forever and of course tonight is all about family. We will meet at a restaurant and have a big dinner and a bigger cake. It is time to go big or go home for me—it has been a long time

since I had cake / sugar and stuff so Bring, It. On.

How do you celebrate your birthday after breast cancer? What do you do to make sure nothing steals your joy? How do you quiet your fears?

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