

Growing Old

By RL

Growing old is hard. Your body and mind make it hard for you not to notice that you are old! Each passing day, I feel like I reach the point of no return. I surely miss my youth when I felt like I was able to do anything with the energy that I had. In addition, I have no obligation to anybody and free of doing anything without affecting anybody. Because by the age of thirty, you probably starting a family and a career. And by that time, sure enough you will learn how everything turns into responsibility and mindless routines. And sometimes when you look back, you feel either you wished you can do things differently or you are satisfied with what you are right now.

But human nature is never to be satisfied or happy for what they have. They always want something more and maybe that is the drive to keep them going or feel alive. Because when you are tired of your routines and responsibilities, you need something else to keep you going; a life purpose or a goal to go somewhere or to achieve something. Sometimes people want to have more of something that it is already abundant, but never realized that they already have fulfilled life and they just need to enjoy it.

In my case, I always thankful for what I have today because I might not have it again tomorrow. Since I believe life on earth can be taken away anytime, no matter how you plan things to be right and be prepared for your life. The point is that you just never know. You can die tomorrow then you don't have anything anymore. If you can not start to enjoy your life today, then you will never able to enjoy anything in your life. Period.

You might think that the person who wrote this is probably a very old person. Surprisingly, I am not that old yet. I am forty two years old woman. And I never felt like this before when I was in my thirties. I was full of energy and enthusiasm twelve years ago. Where all of that goes? And it is not just me. Everybody I knew who is around my age gets hit by depression at some point without knowing the reason why. They felt it emotionally and physically. Maybe this is what we called mid-life crisis. They cannot deal with their physical deterioration of becoming tired easily, and getting sick easily. We feel like we are out of control, not only to our body but also our mind.

But there is a difference between men and women on how they deal with physical as well as emotional changes. Since I am a woman, I felt women endure more physical challenges since they were as young as twelve years old. They have to go through menstruation, then they give birth, and finally they will have menopause. This is physically draining for women's energy because every month they have to lose so much blood. Accompanying this menstruation is the unbalanced chemical on the brain

that causes women to have "PMS" episode. Then when women go to labor, they have to experience excruciating labor process with the joy of having a child to love at the end of the journey. How amazing it is that women still want to give birth! And at last, women can take a break from losing so much blood every month when they go through menopause. But this journey is not less painful than child birth because your body becomes unpredictable. Sometimes you will get regular period but sometimes you miss it or even worse you get two periods in one month. And you wonder what is going on constantly. And mentally, you are going to depression because everything you do, you take it hard. People say "Take it easy." At first, I don't know that it does mean a great deal.

Men don't go through menstruation. But I notice every month, men do get "PMS" episode almost the same as women. The feeling of wanting to get mad at somebody, and looking for a reason to be mad so they can release this negative energy. For men, the pressure is always being the provider for the family, the money maker. What leads man to mid-life crisis is that he realized that he only has 10 to 20 years to either start his own company, has big investment or make something big for the future.

For women, it is not easy either to deal with today's society. Those who work and have children always feel guilty for not being there for their kids. Those who are able to stay home with the kids, lose their self-confidence and sense of independence. My friends who work tend to feel more free and have a "down time" not to worry, or thinking about household responsibilities, because they have their works to think of. Women seem to think there is no "down time" when they are a stay home mom. I love doing house

chores and stay home with my daughter, but sometimes it gets so bored and lonely that you don't know what else to do. Once you work and have a career, it is hard to lose it all. Sometimes, you feel you lost the sense of purpose. Your mind shuts down. You are not using your brain. Your life becomes meaningless. But more torturing than that is the feeling of isolation.

It is not that you don't have any friends, but they are busy with their own families and everyday life. You still feel lonely even though you are surrounded by people. It is a part of life as I understand it. Also with everything else that not going well in your life, you just have to accept it.

Acceptance is big part of coping with life.

Because unconsciously, we start to have limitation to accept anything that gets thrown in our way or to accept somebody the way they are. When we turn 40, our patience and tolerance are diminishing slowly. Our ego is getting stronger as we grow old. We feel overwhelmed and running out of time because our physical bodies cannot keep up with our daily life expectations. And we cannot help it. For someone who is still single at 40, it is very hard to find a compatible spouse without being ridiculously picky. Nothing is good enough and the standard of acceptance is impossible to achieve. For marriage life, it is becoming so hard to compromise with your spouse. It is very challenging to balance work and family without sacrificing your own sanity.

Moreover, women tend to have constant worries once they have kid. This worry-feeling can trigger someone to become irrational or to have unexplainable obsessive behavior. For example, obsessive behavior toward what is considered clean and unclean. Women tend to show extreme measures when it comes to cleanliness because it's their motherly instinct to protect their children from getting sick. But this behavior becomes abnormal in the eyes of their spouse.

So how to get through this mid-life crisis? I wish someone could tell me. But I guess being able to recognize that you are in this stage of life does help. Also sharing your experience with friends who go through the same thing in life is a big help. That way you don't feel so terrible yourself because everybody goes through the same thing. Sharing your feelings, your troubles and your worries is good. Your feelings don't get bottled up inside you. Recently, I found my ex-roommate to share my troubles with her. She goes through the same thing and not knowing what is happening to her. Why suddenly life is unbearable? And we both come up with the answer that we are in the forties and we are entering the stage when our body is going toward menopause. It comes gradually, not a sudden shock so your body can adapt to it. This is just a stage of life that we just have to get through. And it does make sense.