



10 years ago, at the age of 38, I was diagnosed with Stage 2 Breast Cancer. After surgery, radiation and years of medication - 10 years later, by the grace of God (and the help of some very competent doctors), I am cancer free.

I tell this story, because that diagnosis changed my attitude on birthdays. Completely. I used to look at birthdays with trepidation. When I turned 30, I was in a dead end job, and had a very muddy future. Add a recently ended bad relationship, and it was a recipe for disaster. I look back on my 30 year old self now (as I am approaching 50!), and realize how silly it all was. You tend to look at life in a vacuum when you are a certain age.

Just a few years after my diagnosis, a very good friend passed away from ovarian cancer just after her 40th birthday. She was an amazing woman. She approached the end of her life with gusto and grace. She would go out to Disney World with her family and ride roller coasters (while holding on to her wig, and holding down her ostomy bag) like a little kid. Her kids were very young when she did finally succumb to her illness, but they are now thriving teenagers, living with their father who is a Missionary in Budapest. When I attended her funeral, I was staying with my sister in Charlotte. I went to check my messages, and found an old (but never heard) message from my friend when she had called me to wish me a Happy Birthday on my 40th. It was like she was reaching out to me to tell me that she was alright. She was no longer in pain. She was finally at peace. I kept that message for many years – it was such a comfort (even it still makes me tear up a bit to think of her.) She was an amazing woman! (Yes, I already said that, but it was worth repeating twice!)

So now, I celebrate each birthday as a sign of a future. Birthdays are a reminder that we have made it another year, and that we look forward to the year to come. Birthdays are one of the few positives with social media, I just love all of the birthday messages!

So on your next birthday, don't think of it as you are getting old, but think of it in terms of what is to come!