

Birthday Bummer No More

As long as I can remember, my birthdays have been painful and disappointing. I turn 50 this year, and my best friend keeps asking me what I want to do. Having a party and being acknowledged as important and appreciated would be nice, but I don't want to set myself up for another big letdown. Even if people showed up (which I highly doubt), I'm not sure I'd handle it well. I want this to change, but I feel nothing but dread. Any ideas? — Alice (not in Wonderland)

Dear Alice,

This sounds like the perfect time to slip down the rabbit hole into a new reality. Start by releasing your attachment to the memories of past “bummer birthdays.” Then stop trying to shield yourself from future pain by shutting down. Those behaviors are keeping this painful system in place.

If you decide to *let go* for your big 5-0, that accumulated self-abusive garbage can wash away. You might not believe you can do this after all the years of trying, but you can! Get help. Find a prayer partner. Ask your best friend to know a higher truth for you.

Mary Oliver asks, “Listen. Are you breathing just a little and calling it a life?” Well, are you? Take a deep breath and see this repetitive pattern for what it is: a story made up of false beliefs about your self-worth. Mary O'Malley says, “The more you bring the light of your compassionate attention to the stories you have been caught in most of your life, the more they thin, like clouds touched by the warmth of the Sun.”

You have been on the planet 50 years, and despite your doubts and difficulties, you are exactly where you need to be. Begin a new story and use the key to freedom you've had all along. “Remember, life is set up to bring up what has been bound up, so it can open up to be freed up, and you can show up for life.” (O'Malley)

There is no better time to show up for your life, Alice. Receive the gifts that others have been trying to give you — love, appreciation and acknowledgment. Give them to yourself! Now *that* is how to have a truly happy birthday. ☸



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