

MAY 2016

● ● ● enjoying the best years of your life
boom

magazine

WHY BEING 50
ROCKS

also

MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
IT'S COMPLICATED

GET GOOD
SLEEP

MORE THAN
JUST A FLOWER

SPORE
STORY

12 Reasons

WHY BEING 50 ROCKS

BY: LISA BEACH

Turning 50 gave me the wake-up call I needed, like a glass of ice-water in the face at 5 A.M. It was both unnerving ("I'm now this close to wearing Depends!") and invigorating ("Prime of my life, baby. Bring it!").

Casting aside all the "over-hill-hill" jokes and black birthday decorations, I've had a few months to come to grips with my half-century mark. And, quite frankly, I've made friends with 50.

"A seasoned woman is spicy," writes Gail Sheehy, author of the best-seller *Passages*, on her website *Seasoned Woman's Network*. "She has been marinated in life experience."

Now there's a visual. I love to think that I've been marinated, perhaps in a pot of hazelnut coffee or in my favorite bottle of red zinfandel. Steeped in my life experiences, I've been infused with humility, grace, compassion, wisdom and sense of humor that has carried me through plenty of rough patches.

All the complaints about wrinkles, gray hair and mental and physical decline aside (because, let's face it, that part does suck), turning 50 ushers in a bright side, too. This milestone birthday reminds me that I'm one of the lucky ones who gets to wake up, breathe deep and move forward in life.

So, here are 12 reasons why 50 rocks:

1. Not sweating the small stuff. Waiting to hear biopsy results is worth losing sleep over. Missing out on the season finale of *House of Cards*, not so much. Yeah, I occasionally lose my perspective, like when I can't find my way out of a labyrinth-like parking lot. (Seriously, did anyone test-drive this blueprint before painting "right-turn-only" at the end of every lane?) But (mostly) ignoring the small stuff allows me to focus on the important things, like good health, loving relationships and a really good hair day.

2. Appreciating the power of gratitude. Being grateful helps me savor the good stuff in life and acts like a balm for the bad stuff. For example, I'm SO grateful I never got a tattoo or a nose ring. Nothing shows your age quicker than a stretched-out tat drooping down your once-taut triceps.

3. Totally claiming the phrase "hot mess" when I deserve it. Sometimes, that's just where I'm at in life. I've learned to accept it, deal with it and not be a blame-shifter. Besides, I think "hot mess" just sounds cool.

4. Reliving old-school childhood memories filled with playing neighborhood games of kick-the-can and relievio, riding bikes, setting up lemonade stands, coloring with my grandmother, running through the sprinkler in the backyard, getting a Bomb Pop from the Mr. Softee ice cream truck, catching lightning bugs, reading comic books, listening to my favorite record albums, talking (not texting) on the phone with my friends, baking cakes with my mom, staying up all night at sleepovers, enjoying cookouts with my relatives, passing notes in class, hanging out on my front porch with a bunch of friends on a Friday night, smelling chestnuts roasting in the oven on Thanksgiving and banging pots and pans at midnight on New Year's Eve. No video game, "app" or website comes close to replicating these incredible experiences.



5. Not caring what others think. Whether I'm wearing a probably-out-of-style military hat or belting out my favorite Pink songs while I run errands. That's right, truck driver next to me, I just dropped the F-bomb singing the explicit version of "Perfect." Who knew? (Yep, another Pink reference – see what I did there?)

6. Owning my eccentricities. I totally embrace my quirkiness. It makes me, me. So what if I own more three-ring binders than an over-achieving high-schooler? I like to keep my paperwork really organized. And who cares if I like to make lists for everything, line my canned goods up so all the labels face out and insist everyone uses the "hotel fold" for our stack of bath towels? (Hmmm, I see an OCD theme emerging here.) Still, at 50, I embrace my inner dork.

7. Going make-up-free. Ok, this might seem like an oxymoron. The older I get the more make-up I need to look better, right? Well, yeah, that part's true. But, I'm comfortable enough in my own (aging) skin to run to Panera for coffee sans make-up at 7 A.M. because caffeine outranks compliments hands down. In fact, there's a group of guys who meet for Panera coffee every morning who probably think I never shower because they've never seen me without bed-head, puffy eyes, wrinkled T-shirts and gym shorts. And I'm OK with that.

8. Knowing what I like. Ask me about my favorite things and I can instantly rattle off a long list of smile-generators such as looking at the flowers in my garden, feeling the warmth of sunshine on my face, drinking coffee on my back porch, floating in my pool, reading anything, walking on the beach, playing games with my family, wearing flip-flops, cooking vegetarian dishes, sharing a glass of wine with my husband, scrapbooking with my mom, taking photos, discovering I'm a late-blooming foodie, watching my favorite TV show on Netflix (hello, *Friends*), learning something new, exploring my community, going out with friends and the list goes on and on. Finally, I get me.

9. Knowing what I don't like. While I'm still open to trying new things, I draw a line in the Florida sand at things I've detested for decades, such as roller coasters, tent-camping, *Star Wars* and sausage. No need to pretend, give in just to keep the peace or take one for the team. Me no like? Me no do.

10. Feeling liberated. I don't mean the burn-your-bra kind of liberated, but rather the freedom to do and say what I want (within acceptable boundaries, of course). It's still not okay to say, "You suck!" to someone I really don't want to spend time with, but it is OK to say, "Thanks, but I'll take a hard pass on that." And I don't add any "maybe-next-time" false promises or even offer any explanation why. A simple "no-can-do" works wonders.

11. Being an optimist. When someone says, "You haven't changed a bit," it could either mean "You look great" or "I see you're still rockin' those shoulder pads and stirup pants." Forever looking on the bright side, I seize the compliment.

12. Embarrassing things don't kill me. I recently walked into the men's room on a college campus, and I think the guy coming out of the stall felt worse for me than I did. Sure, my face turned red as he zipped up his pants, but I scurried right past that urinal thinking, "Yeah, that just happened." And I lived to tell about it.



So, there you have it –a dozen reasons why I think 50 just rocks. Cheers to being a mid-lifer! •••