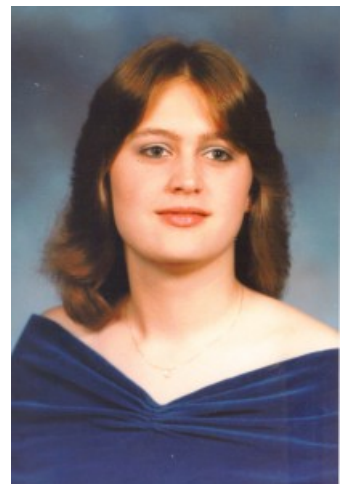


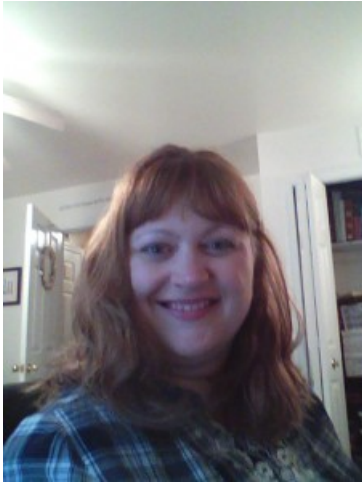
Be Happy

Everyone says "time flies" but I'm not sure I agree with that. Flying is obvious. I think time creeps. It crawls along unnoticed until one day you wake up, look in the mirror and ask yourself "Where did the last thirty years go?" I never had a particular fear of growing older, I just didn't want my life to go by too quickly. I like my life. I'm enjoying it. I'm in no hurry to reach its end. I remember when I turned thirty someone said "you're going to love your thirties" and he was right, I did. But how come no one said that when I turned 40? I remember when my oldest turned 9, I was very aware that his childhood was half over. I thought to myself "Have I taught him at least half of everything he needs to know?"

When I was 18 I thought I knew everything. Let me tell you now I knew nothing. This girl didn't want to go away to college and leave her boyfriend. She cared more about the boy than her future. She was going to marry her high school sweetheart, have a bunch of babies and live happily ever after. HA! The bunch of babies part is right. Life since then has not been easy (I'll save those stories for later) but I would not go back and change a thing about those post high school years because of them babies. Sometimes when I look in the mirror I still see this girl.



Yeah if I look real hard I can still see her, but most days I see this lady. She's fatter, she's older, she's got gray in that hair. But if I'm being honest



I think I like this chick better. Sure, I'd take the old me's body back in a heartbeat but on personality and wisdom this lady is winner hands down. In my teens it was all about boys and friends and having a good time. In my twenties I was raising babies and surviving. My thirties were about change and struggle. I guess it's too soon to say what my forties will be about. Can you say while you're still in the middle of them? If I had to guess I would say my forties will be about self discovery and growth but mostly I hope I can say my forties were about contentment. Being happy is not easy sometimes and for some people it's a real struggle. Thanks to a great therapist and some real work inside my head I have come to the realization that happiness is a choice. You can choose to be miserable and negative or you can choose to be positive and happy. I'll take the later please. It's a no brainer. Who would choose brussel sprouts over chocolate chip cookies? DUH. Nobody likes getting old but it's a part life...Lion King...Circle of Life and all that. It's a hard concept to grasp but it's true...you are as happy as you make your mind up to be.

So if you're in a funk about getting older put your big girl panties on and deal with it. Growing old is a privilege not given to all. Life is too short to spend it being a sour puss cranky pants. If you can't figure out how to be happy, get some help with that. (I'm serious.) Look at me – I'm old, fat, poor and getting gray, but I try every single day to wake up being grateful for my life and the people and things that are in it. Be happy people...at any age...we have much to be thankful for.