

Recently I've experienced a few things that might be insignificant to most. First, I've been battling with my sight, specifically in my right eye and especially at night. My first thought was cataracts, since an eye doctor told me years ago that this would be a probability for me. It could be a case of having severely dry eyes, due to the hours I spend on my computer for work, and even outside of work. I'll find out at my next eye appointment in about two weeks.

Something else I've noticed lately is how I'm beginning to lack judgement on how close I am to curbs when turning corners in parking lots, often going over the curb by mistake. Honestly, where I used to have complete confidence in my driving has now become a situation where I am beginning to choose not to go places, again, especially at night. I simply don't trust my driving skills of late. I have come to understand why the elderly drive so slowly, and why they choose not to drive at night. What used to be so natural for me is now causing me to have an internal debate, contemplating if what I need can't wait until the next day.

I also understand how frustrating it is to have the same thoughts and ideals from when I was eighteen years old, but my shell of a body is visibly and physically failing me. When others look at me, all they see is an aging woman. The young and vibrant eighteen-year-old girl with her new ideas is lost forever. This might be the hardest part of growing older.

I still continue to struggle with living alone, but I'm getting better with it. I'm filling my time as best as I can, but I noticed that it's in the evening when I struggle the most. It's while I'm snuggling up with a blanket and watching TV that I truly long for the companionship that is missing. I love watching romantic comedies, which of course only makes me feel more lonely.

Then I had my epiphany. I may be wrong, but one thing that occurred to me is that loneliness is probably the main reason older people go to bed so early. It's easier to say, "I just get so tired," or "I'm a morning person," than to admit to others that they are flat out lonely. Sleep is a much more reasonable alternative to wallowing in self-pity.

Last night I didn't feel like wallowing either, so I went to bed. I laid in my bed praying to God, asking him to remove my sad feelings and fill me with his peace. He did, and eventually I drifted off. The mornings are much easier. I look forward to that first cup of coffee and quiet time with Lucky curled up on my lap. I love the quietness of the house, and as I mentally plan for the full day ahead of me, all seems well. Nighttime doesn't feel as easy.

I have a greater respect for the elderly when it comes to the realities of aging, and of course, driving. Unfortunately, I'm joining their ranks more quickly than I would like to admit. Soon I will be the one driving fifteen miles per hour less than the posted speed limit, while the younger drivers zoom past me honking their horns and flipping me the bird. One thing about this age is we really do not care what other people think about us, so it's all good.

We don't want to be a burden to our children or to others, so we smile for the blessings that life affords, and are so grateful for those rare moments when they want us to be a part of their lives, if even just for a day. But I do get it... And I understand now why bedtime can be a place of refuge. Anything is possible in our dreams, so I cherish them now more than ever. Meeting those dreams earlier in the day seems a fair price to pay to avoid a few extra hours of potential heartbreak from the loneliness we might feel if we choose to stay up later. Maybe I'm the only one who feels this way.

I've learned that for every solitary older person, there are incredible stories of strength. As a divorced woman, I have to stand alone while watching my grown children live their lives without me. We are supposed to raise our kids to want to leave us, and sometimes that means facing it by ourselves. Whether a person is alone through divorce like me, or if they've lost their mate to death, it can be very difficult to watch life continue on as it should without a

partner to shoulder that inevitable weight with you. The truth is, we all have amazing stories from before we had kids, or before we grew older. Our lives are our legacy, and we should be proud to share our stories.

There are scary aspects of growing older, I admit. But in the great big picture of life, I embrace this time, almost as much as I fear it. I don't fear death because I know where my eternal home is. But I do fear the physical and emotional pain that may come with aging. Even in saying I fear pain, I don't worry about it. Jesus was clear on how we should not worry, and I trust Him completely. Factually, we all think about it though, don't we?

I'm in the third quarter, the fall season of life. I'm closer to death now, than when I was born, assuming I die from natural causes. Life can be hard, right? I know mine has been. But I've also been very blessed, beyond what I deserve. Thank you for visiting and honoring me as you spend part of your valuable time reading my thoughts.

I guess this is a good time to close, and to praise my God for all he has done in my life. I pray his richest blessings over you and your loved ones.

May God bless you all this Thanksgiving,

Lisa Jo

The Ward Kids: Lisa, the youngest, then Mike, Susie, then Jimmy, the oldest.



1966-1967?



1969



About 1964