



Written by [Lenore Skenazy](#) on April 14, 2023

Commencement for the Rest of Us

Thank you for that warm welcome. Or is it me? In any event, I'm very honored to be here today, welcoming those of you in your late 30s, mid-40s, and even your "young" 50s, to commencement. The commencement of middle age.

Though we don't wear a cap nor gown (unless we are going in for what everyone now calls a "procedure" instead of its rightful name: BEING SLICED OPEN), we, too, are entering a new stage, sure as any college graduate.

Only THEY get a summer off before jumping in. Us, we jumped in long ago and now our fingers are all wrinkly and we want to come out, but fear that all that awaits us is the beach towel that is death. And so —

Ahem. I seem to have lost where I was.

Ah, yes. As I stand before you today — you get to sit. Must be nice! Me, I just keep standing, despite the fact my big toe is beginning to bulge like the handle on my "Deteriorating Nicely" mug. And I know that for you, too, this is a time of new beginnings.

Someone once said, "A rich man is he who is content with what he has." Unless what he has is acid reflux. Then all of a sudden, he needs Prilosec. Who doesn't? People are stealing it now. Ask your pharmacist!

After all, my dear mid-life-ians, that is precisely what you will spend the rest of your lives doing anyhow. Why just last week I asked my pharmacist, "Who was that guy in the movie about the day that keeps happening over and over?"

And she replied: "Sylvester Stallone. Is that a box of Prilosec under your coat?"

In truth, it matters little whether it was or wasn't. And so what if it was? As we look forward to a brighter tomorrow, what really matters is that middle age is far, far more than a collection of medical indignities. It is a collection of social indignities, too.

Sheesh! You casually mention an activity you enjoyed as a child — riding a bike without a helmet or taking pictures you had to wait to see — and conversation among your youthful colleagues screeches to a halt. Emergency anthropologists are rushed in to record your rustic tales before they are lost forever.

These young people will save your stories by remastering your voice and uploading a cartoon avatar that looks like you (crossed with Sylvester Stallone) that they allow you to interact with in the metaverse, after paying a small sum in Ethereum.

At which point you excuse yourself and go get a cold one. Ginger ale, that is. Or you nod off to Nirvana, which still seems incredibly hip.

And speaking of hips...



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No! I won't go there! (Like, literally, I won't go there. It's too far and the sidewalks are uneven.) I will simply conclude with my conclusion, which is: Fear not! There are great days ahead. Days filled with Joy! Adventure! Friendship — and not just the cottage cheese kind.

As you enter this exciting lull between group sex and Grape-Nuts, remember how lucky you are to be here.

Which is a lot easier than remembering where you parked the car.

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