

Making Room for Joy in Your 40s

A guide to rediscovering what feels good to you.

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A birthday gift for you

Storytime

Joy isn't reserved for your 40s. It just happens to be where I am right now. One of the most meaningful things I can give you is honesty about my lived experience. There's something about watching someone live imperfectly before your eyes and realizing that perhaps you're not alone in this AND if you're younger than 40, I'm glad you're taking a peek too. I needed this in my 20s and 30s. I needed to know that everything was going to be okay. That the messy parts of everyday living were also the parts that would make the joy shine a little brighter. I've been a project manager in tech for 15 years, so I know a thing or two about planning AND in my 30s, I planned more for other people than I did for myself. It's how I thought I would be kept around. If I was useful, you know? With enough healing work, I began to understand that my value didn't lie in what I could do for other people. That being myself, without constantly striving to be some higher version of me, was in fact enough. I stopped reaching out as much. I became very still and in that stillness, I began to notice things. Relationships naturally ended, things that left me feeling drained became apparent and the people in my life who genuinely enjoyed my company without expecting me to over function to be in a relationship with them came to the front.

When I first started thinking about planning for joy, I had to ask myself some questions that I thought were simple. What do I actually like? What brings me joy? What makes me feel good? And you know what? I didn't really know. The first thing my intuition told me was that I wanted ease. Not another hobby or thing to put on the to-do list. Not another commitment that I wanted to opt out of. Not another thing to squeeze into an already full calendar. I wanted E-A-S-E.

For me, that meant a calendar with more breathing room. Space to move between tasks a little slower. Time to exist without rushing to the next thing. Once my system got used to that, something interesting happened. I started hearing myself more clearly. I wanted to dance. Be near the water. Go for walks. Cook with friends. Learn new things. Paint. The list kept growing. Since beginning that exploration, I've been painting, going on

really long walks that end by the water, having fireside chats with friends, laughing so hard I've cried at comedy shows, crying for crying's sake, and deepening so many relationships.

I want women over 40, with or without children, in or out of partnership, to see that joy is possible now. Not when the children are older. Not when life is less complicated or smooth. Not when everything finally falls into place. Now! If you're in your 30s or younger, I want you to know that there's still sweetness in life ahead of you. You get to practice making room for it now, too. I'm still learning, figuring things out and living imperfectly. We all are. One thing I'm becoming more certain of is this**: I get to feel good. I get to experience joy. And so do you.** The journal prompts that follow are an invitation to pause and consider what joy might look like for you. There's no right way to answer them.

Thank you for spending a little of your time with me and engaging with this gift.

Hey, you dropped this 👑

01 | Making room for ease

Where in my week do I feel most rushed or stretched? What might a little more breathing room look like?

What is one expectation, commitment or habit I could reconsider to give myself more room?

02 | Noticing what nourishes me

Which activities or relationships leave me feeling nourished? Which ones tend to leave me depleted?

When do I feel most like myself, without needing to be useful or impressive?

03 | Remembering what feels good

What did I love doing before I began measuring my time by how productive I was?

What am I curious about trying, revisiting or learning simply because I want to?

04 | Inviting joy in

What is one small, accessible moment of joy I could make room for in the coming week?

How might I respond kindly to myself if that moment changes, gets interrupted or does not happen?

I get to feel good.
I get to experience joy.