



## Wishing a happy birthday to me

What do people do on their birthday? Count their blessings. Blow out candles. Splurge on something. Get up and go to work as usual. Open cards. Open gifts. Get flowers.

LBL is celebrating a birthday today. She has been asked by many people how she will celebrate. Her answers have mostly been versions of; "Have a pandemic kind of day." Now the actual day is here. LBL is lucky. Every single person she knows, either family or friend, is healthy. She doesn't wonder where her next mortgage payment will come from.

She is quarantined with a man who is her best friend. She has toilet paper and coffee and food. She loves being in her house. The pandemic has not stopped her from reading or writing, the two non-people-associated pastimes that give the most meaning to her life.

Her children's jobs are intact. they have the luxury of being able to continue working remotely. They have supportive, loving partners. LBL has watched them make magic

with their own children during this time, take their gifts and pass them on. They teach their children to cook. They create works of art. They continue to maintain their sometimes frazzled cool when school and preschool and daycare are no longer options.

What she has given up must wait. Her annual mammogram. Cataract surgery. Several small scheduled trips. Her high school reunion. Feeling the small bodies of her grandchildren in her arms. What she might soon give up looms ahead: Her annual trip to Turkey. Her annual trip to Maine.

The worst she goes through is a belief that no, we have not learned anything from this. We have not learned anything from sights of natural repair and renewal from the absence of people going about their business. We ooh and aah over wildlife appearing on city streets, smog lifting, visible skies and mountains, the sound of birds. We simply mark time until we can once again carry on the relent-

less assault of this fragile earth.

We are humans. We are neither inherently good nor inherently bad. We are simply endless possibility, capable of the best and capable of the worst. We choose leaders who either speak to the best of what we can be or to the worst. The most disturbing thought LBL has now is that we (Americans) have chosen a leader who speaks to the worst of who we can be. And this is someone who has been tasked with taking us through the unthinkable.

On this birthday, LBL is thinking about the lives lost, the lives now struggling, the lives at risk, the long-term financial and emotional fallout that so many people will endure. She is beyond grateful for what she has. She is concerned and/or grieving for so many others. She is in awe of those who have stepped up to heal us, to serve us, to get us through this.

There is a toast Jews make at the annual Passover Seder, "Next year in Jerusalem!". This year, she will make a special toast. "Next year

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in Normal." And she will not be thinking of the big, momentous highs of life or the vacations or the celebrations. She will be thinking of the countless ordinary moments that are ahead, moments that will keep reminding us that given a choice, we can set aside fear or distrust or anger and choose, instead, to be courageous or trusting or understanding.

The circumstances of life, whatever they may be, will continue. It is the choice of how we respond to those circumstances that is so precious. It is the choice that will get us through.

*Find more musings of a former hula hoop champion at [lifeintheboomerlane.com](http://lifeintheboomerlane.com)*

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