

# Of course you should always celebrate your birthday



It's round day! No, not my stomach, I talked about that yesterday. Today is roundy day in terms of years on this earth. In other words, ladies and germs, it's mah birfday! Am I happy? You betcha! As the title says, of course you should always celebrate your birthday.

## Retribution or just bad luck?

So, if you're new to the blog, you might not realize that I've been hosting a BBQ for my family and friends on my birthday for the last 11 years.

I spend a week preparing food, cleaning the house, setting up

the party and spend all day cooking. For my birthday. D'oh.

Finally, last year, I decided it was time to call it quits on the birthday BBQ. I mean, I also do one for Halloween and the two really take a lot out of me. And, you know, it's *my* birthday, so why am I doing all the work.

Thus, I was looking forward to this year, anticipating various invites out to lunches or dinners. Nom! I mean, Of course you should always celebrate your birthday. Especially if someone else is buying!

So, yeah, not like that's gonna happen now. Kind of suspicious timing, that...

## **Social greetings for an anti-social boy**

Well, I guess it's not so much that I'm *anti*-social as I am non-social.

Really, if it wasn't for my writing those books and this blog, I doubt I would have much (if any) social presence at all. And even still, I don't do likes or emotes (emojis or whatever they are called) and stuff.

Still I did write the books and I still do the blog, so I'm "social" to a degree. Which is a long way of saying I'm very happy to receive birthday greetings over the platforms.

I make sure I respond to each one personally. If someone has three exclamation points, so does my thank you. If someone sends me more than just Happy Birthday, I try to reply in kind. It's fun and, in my mind, respectful to the person making the gesture.

Thanks, peeps!

## **You've got a friend**

For reasons that surpass me, over the course of my life, some people I've met have lingered to become friends. How they overlook my many character flaws forever puzzles me, but I am so grateful for their sticking around.

The passage of time has led to some reasonable agreements, such as not being burdened to give gifts. Even smarter in this person-to-person restricted time.

So, I got a nice handmade, handwritten card from a couple I've known for 30 years. It was funny and heartwarming.

A day later, I heard a thump at the door. That usually means a package has been delivered. Curious. As a homebody, I am quite aware of when I should be expecting something. I wasn't.

Turns out, it's a great looking Tommy Bahama shirt. I knew who it was from without even checking, the couple mentioned above. Confirmed on the packing slip. They broke the agreement! That

can only be punished by me sending them something on their birthdays. The rats!

Then, as I set out on my walk this morning, the flag was up on my mailbox. Yeah, you guessed as I did, inside was a card and a box. I saved opening it until this blog (which I had planned long before today). Gimme a sec...

Ha ha, awesome. It's from the mom of one of the above couple. A 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle. Nice!

## **You can pick your friends, but you can't pick your birthday**

Most of us have heard that old line about you can't pick your family. Here's the thing, it seems the only person in my family who knows what day my birthday is on is my sister.

I got an e-card from my cousin on Sunday. I got a call from my niece last week and Monday. On Monday, I reminded her that I told her last week that Monday was not my birthday. As I was telling her, my Dad was calling. She laughed and told me "Grandpa thinks it's your birthday today, too."

Now, my Dad had a fairly important role in my arrival on this planet. And, for six decades, my birthday has always been in the same place, a day before his Mom's (miss you, Grams!).

Still, he's been around for nine decades, so I guess he's

actually had more time to forget it. And he was close, so I could cut him some slack.

But not too much. I answered his call by saying, "No, today is not my birthday." He said shoot, we both laughed and I corrected him. Stay tuned to find out if he remembers next year!

## **Think about the alternative**

There's another old line that people say to those who complain about their birthday, "Yeah, but it's better than the alternative."

Sadly, there are far too many people whose pain and anguish overwhelms their capacity for hope and commit an act unthinkable to most of us. I would not dare to suggest an understanding of those situations nor be glib with some comment. I can only wish there were more hope in the world.

No, my thoughts are more directed at those who look at their birthday like the plague or react negatively when it is mentioned. To that I say, C'mon man!

There is absolutely at least one reason to be joyous about your birthday. I don't know what that is, it's your life. But those moments are there and they would not be if you were not here on this earth. The annual recognition of that is your birthday.

Maybe I'm just blessed, but I have so many happy moments I can recall. Fishing trips with Dad. Grandma's soup. Mom arranging flowers. Bike riding with my best friend. Driving for the first time. Seeing my first hummingbird. Publishing a book. My first kiss. Cooking stuffed cabbage.

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The fact that I get another year to remember and enjoy those moments also means I get another year to imagine more moments are yet ahead of me.

As with everything else, it's the "turn that frown upside down" part that makes a birthday something special. Be happy about a birthday. Of course you should always celebrate your birthday.

If you're reading this, then I, at least, am happy you're still around. My guess is that you are too. So don't be a grumpy birthday person. Enjoy it!