

Ten Things I Celebrate

For many years I found myself waiting to celebrate. Waiting to ‘arrive’ at some culturally predetermined milestone that would be worthy of fanfare. The first one I reached (graduation) felt anti-climactic, but I couldn’t quite put my finger on why. Maybe it was because many of my friends had been in the grade ahead of me, so I felt lonely. Or perhaps it was because I’d moved out of my home early to be closer to the studio where I taught piano, so I’d stolen some of that momentum early.

It wasn’t until I graduated from university that I finally discovered my answer. School wasn’t hard for me. It didn’t require much because organization and upholding expectations is built into the fiber of who I am. I didn’t feel like celebrating because subconsciously *I knew there wasn’t anything for me to celebrate*, regardless of how the world around me viewed these endpoints.

That was the moment where my idea of milestones worthy of celebration shifted. In *that* moment, I decided I would never celebrate the same way again. Cultural expectations about moments worthy of celebration were—for me—put to rest. I started looking for my personal celebratory moments, and once I opened my eyes? They were everywhere. They were in the throwing my legs over the side of the bed moments when I wished I could stay asleep. The asking for help moments when I really wished I had all the answers. The ‘doing it anyway’ moments when I desperately wanted to give up and take the more comfortable path. The apology moments when I was embarrassed or felt like I’d been the one wronged in the first place.

Since you asked for specifics, I thought I’d share ten things I’ve celebrated in the last week.

- A monarch caterpillar FINALLY finding its way to my milkweed plants
- A moment when I listened to my fifteen year old instead of telling him he was wrong (he was, by the way. Ha!)
- Putting my phone away and talking to my husband instead of reading that article I was interested in
- Coming to a conference where I knew nobody!
- Entering my book into the CIPPA EVVY awards
- Ignoring the mess in the kitchen to finish my chapter
- Forgiving a friend for a hurtful comment
- Driving without texting
- Signing up for the pitch meetings even though I worry whether my work is good enough
- Remembering to pack my toothbrush

How do I celebrate these things? With a smile, I kind thought to myself, a hug, a deep breath, and yes, sometimes a large piece of dark chocolate! These days, I celebrate something every single day, and when the world clamors loudly that ‘It’s your fifteenth anniversary! It’s time to celebrate!’ I smile, take a large piece of cake, and think ‘I already have.’