

Doomsday – A Week Away?

One week from today, I will be hitting a milestone – the big 3-0. To say I am dreading it would be a huge understatement. It's not that I feel old – at times I do, but mostly I enjoy being older because in some ways, my early 20's really sucked. After working out the growing pains of my early 20's and figuring out how and where to settle our family for the rest of our lives, my late 20's went really well. But there are a few things about turning 30 that have me feeling a little depressed lately...

This first thing is really not a big deal, just food for thought, really – I read an article about a year ago about fashion etiquette, and apparently etiquette says I can no longer wear my hair in pigtails. They say 30 is too old for this. I haven't worn my hair in pigtails since I was about 6 years old, but it's the principle of it now being inappropriate because I'm too old. What if I wake up one day wanting to wear my hair in pigtails all of a sudden? Not really a catastrophe, but again, it's just the principle – something I CAN'T do... Maybe I should wear my hair in pigtails ON my 30th birthday...

My biggest qualm about turning 30 is that I feel too old for a career. Over the past year and especially in the last few weeks, I've been thinking about all the things I'll never be nor do because it's too late... So I guess this is it – I am officially locked into the Mommy career path, sigh. Not that there is anything wrong with that, some people thrive on it. I'm just not one of them. While I truly appreciate being able to stay home and watch my kids grow without having to take some low-paying horrible job, I will also greedily admit that sometimes it's not enough. Sometimes, I think about maybe taking a minimum wage job, just to be able to contribute, just to be able to have a logical conversation with adults during the day. Most of my daily conversations now revolve around

poop, Barney, Hannah Montana or what was stuffed into the toilet. When a person is in their 20's, I always figured that was the time for establishing one's career path, but my 20's are gone, so I guess this is it. Some days, I'm ok with it. Some days I don't even have time to really think about it. But other days, I think about how I want to do something much more productive and lucrative, make a mark on the world while having fun and feeling like a contributing citizen... I know, there are lots of people (especially stay-at-home-moms!) who say that raising happy, healthy, successful children IS the most productive and rewarding job out there... But that's easier said than done. First, I don't yet know if my efforts will be fruitful – what if the kids don't turn out so well? And second, and I hate to say this, but I will anyway – some days it just doesn't seem like enough... I want to be creating something, doing something, making money – I lack that immediate sense of accomplishment in my life, and I am a person who thrives on immediate payoff for effort. Third, there's always the thought in the back of my head – what am I going to do with myself when the kids are grown and in school? I will be in my mid-thirties at the youngest, and since I didn't use my 20's to develop career skills for myself, where will that leave me when my days are no longer filled with changing diapers, preparing meals, cleaning up spills and mishaps, and chasing after kids? Lately I've been dwelling on all the careers I've let it get too late to pursue, but there's also the terrifying thought – suppose I actually had some free time for myself... WHAT ON EARTH WOULD I WANT TO DO WITH IT? I never have any free time, so I don't even know what I would do if I got some, and that for some reason, is terrifying!

I'm sure the pregnancy is adding to some of the anxiety I'm feeling about hitting the big 3-0. After all, I'm due, well, actually, scheduled to give birth only 5 days after I turn 30. And like I said, most days I can look at my 4 beautiful children and think, wow, creating them is a lot to accomplish

by the age of 30... But what about the dark days when all 4 are acting up at the same time, and I just can't feel pleasure nor reward in the career path I've chosen? And most of all, what career is just going to suddenly pop out of the woodwork for me once the kids have grown and aren't so needy?

Can't I just turn 29 again?