

## What I've Left Behind at Forty

I will turn 40 in a few weeks. It seems to be bothering me. I remember when my parents each turned 40 and it seemed like such a benchmark age, they seemed so...old. As my childhood friends all cross the 40 threshold it doesn't seem possible; just yesterday we were walking to school together, talking about girls, getting into and out of trouble together, figuring out life. How did we get so....old?

The people that are older than me keep telling me how young I still am. I can't see it yet because I am not where they are. Someday I will be and maybe I'll look back at forty in the rearview mirror but right now its right in front of me staring me down. I need to get past it.

At forty I know who I am and I know how I got here. I left a lot behind to get here. I was going to be an actor you see. I was going to get a degree in theater I was going to move to New York or maybe L.A. and be the next big thing. Then life happened. I met my wife and fell in love and suddenly becoming an actor didn't seem practical anymore. I left it behind.

I always wanted a sports car; I had posters of Lanbordinis and Porches in my bed room when I was a teenager. I wanted to drive fast and get attention. At forty I know that a car is how you get from point A to point B. It's how you bring the groceries home. Its how you drop the kids off at baseball practice. Its what you use to get to work. You have to buy gas for it, change the oil, rotate the tires. Cars aren't "fun" they are just sort of there. I've left my sports car dreams behind.

I've left people behind. People come and go from your life. Some can't keep up with you, some die, some move away, some are toxic and try to bring you down with them. But for a few good ones that I've taken along with me I've left many behind. The ones I've kept, the ones that came along? I can tell them anything, call them anytime, ask them for any favor. There they are, I've taken them with me.

I've taken other things as well. I've always had my sense of humor. It's gotten me through the darkest of days. Its cheered up those around me on their dark days as well. I have also held on to my determination- If I decide to do something, REALLY decide to do something, get out of my way! I've taken my brains with me. I think I'm smart, not Einstein smart or Steven Hawking smart, but I know I'm not dumb (do dumb people know that they are dumb?) I can work through a problem, I can think through a task, I can read a book or watch a deep movie and discuss it. I'm a thinker, a reflector. I have taken this with me. I've left behind worry. I've left behind jealousy, I've left behind regret. There is no room in my bags for those things. I'm traveling light from here on out.

Maybe 40 is like hump-day. The week is half over, you still have a lot of work ahead but a weekend to look forward to as well. I have so much I still want to do, so much I need to do, so much I *have* to do. At 50, and 60, and 70 and hopefully beyond perhaps I won't even remember that stuff I've left behind, it's not important, I didn't need it, it was too heavy to continue to carry.

I will turn 40 in a few weeks, and there is so much left in front of me.