

65 Years

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Given all the ways in which I tempted death in my younger years, it's a miracle I'm still here. But look at me now. How can that be?

Once, I participated in a research study that asked me to name the chapters of my life. If I did it now, I'd name them:

- Chapter I: Birth to 14 – Fear and Suffering
- Chapter II: 15 to 29 – Flailing and Floundering
- Chapter III: 30 to 49 – Recovery and Healing
- Chapter IV: 50 to 60 – Blossoming and Flourishing
- Chapter V: 61 to present – Success and Purposing

If you've followed me a bit, you'll already know that Chapter I was a childhood full of sexual abuse and other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The next chapter was my sad efforts to cope with all that trauma, using drugs and alcohol to ease my pain, and acting out in a variety of ways in my relationships.

Finally, in Chapter III, came therapy, sobriety, and other healing supports. Yet, after curating all the right resources for healing from my Big Deal to deal with, I found I was not yet as whole as I needed for success in my life. So, in my next chapter, I found opportunities to express my recovery and emerging wholeness in supportive communities, including a new career position that blossomed the personal and professional networks to support my final act.

During that Chapter IV of Blossoming and Flourishing, I first created the framework originally named the *7 Childhood Treasures*, which is breaking new ground in 2021 as the **Self-Aware Success Strategies—your SASS!** My professional life working with our littlest littles had intersected with my personal healing process to generate this secret sauce. In fact, you could say I selfishly created and implemented the **Development Do-Overs** to help secure this birthright of wholeness in myself. From the children in front of me every day, I learned healthier ways to trust and healthier boundaries to protect myself and those I love. I also found Faith in my life purpose, my Big Dream worth pursuing with all my heart and soul.

Reflecting on the gifts of these past four chapters, comprising the two-thirds of my life that is now the past, one truth I already know is those chapters have sculpted me into *this woman* who is, now, successfully questing with a glorious purpose. These lived chapters of life created a woman who is ready to open her heart fully to share all that she is with the world.

I am a woman who soars into success. Without reservation. Without hesitation. Without need for reciprocity. Without fear that what I offer will not be enough. Without fear of harm. Without concern over nay-sayers, haters, and mockers. Their limited sight is not my business. My business is to be my best **Self-governed, Ego-aware, Leading and Free S.E.L.F.** and to share what I know about how to do that with the rest of you. Period.

I wrote this essay when I was just a few hours shy of 65 years on the planet. But I could have written it on many birthdays past or, I suspect, many in the future.

