

## 30 Going on 31

I am of the generation who was an impressionable adolescent (10 y.o.) when the hit film *13 Going on 30*, starring Jennifer Garner, premiered. I remember enjoying the film, but never really related to the character Jenna's yearn to be older, specifically the age of thirty. Last December (2024) was when I myself left the decade of my twenties and turned the big "three oh," and now that I have spent over 10 months navigating the world at this age, I thought it appropriate to share my own take and opinions about my experience.

As most people do when freshly turning a new age, I found myself still documenting my age as 29, however, this time, there was more gravity in correcting myself by listing 30. Although it was just a year's difference, everytime I saw that 3 at the beginning of the number, it served as another reminder of a decade having ended and a new one beginning. This can be both a good and bad thing to be confronted with. As humans, our lives are finite, so ending a decade is like making it to a mile marker. Once there, you tend to start contemplating: What have I achieved up until this point?; How does my progress compare to that of my peers?; Are there society-based milestones I should have reached by now? In short, a mirror is held up in front of you, forcing you to face the reality of your own progress in life. For 30, that progress (according to American society) includes: Working a stable job with benefits; Owning a home; Having a significant other (ideally married); Planning to have a child (that biological clock is ticking); Maintaining a good friend group; Having as little debt as possible, etc. If you haven't caught on already, this is the daunting part about turning 30. Not to mention, if you are one of the older members of your friend group (like myself), you will constantly be reminded that you are 30 and everyone else is in their twenties still.

The above is a sweeping generalization of turning 30 though. Do I think about those things? Yes. But that doesn't mean it's the same for everyone. It also doesn't have to be a totally bad thing either. When I compare myself against those society-based bench marks, I give myself some grace given factors such as: where did you start out and how far have you come, what kind of socio-political world are we currently living in, even the specific city/state you reside in can have an impact on your ability to prove your stability as an adult. Meaning, if you are on the precipice of turning 30, or any age for that matter, make sure to consider all the factors in your life-- give yourself praise for what you have overcome and achieved so far, but also make

yourself accountable for goals you want to reach as you continue your journey. I can say that a positive about turning a new decade comes from taking a moment to look back and thank yourself for how far you've come (we are lucky to grace this Earth for another year) because life isn't a walk in the park. Turning a new decade also allows us a fresh start in a sense, to make note of our future goals and ambitions. We are all on our own journeys, and yes, there are bench-marks for a reason, but happiness and progress are largely individualistic.

So for each revolution around the globe, blow out that candle, make a wish, and celebrate your existence. It is up to each and every one of us to forge our own path, to pivot when needed, to make mistakes and learn from them, to set goals and reach them and to do what makes you happy, despite what society, or anybody else, has to say about it.