The Dreaded December Birthday

I'm sure you know someone with a birthday in December. Or maybe you know several someones. I honestly never felt slighted with my birthday being in December but that all started to change when I turned 40. Yes. For forty years I was perfectly ok with my birthday landing where it did and how our annual routine would carry out…but somewhere around 40, it all changed.

I suppose I should share with you my actual birthday. It's December 25th. Yes **on** Christmas Day. I clarify this because whenever I tell people my birthday is on December 25th, I inevitably get the reaction "You're birthday is ON Christmas Day?!?" as if that's impossible to believe. Yes, yes it is ON Christmas Day, I assure them. "Want to hear something even crazier?" I generally ask them. "My mother-in-law's birthday is ALSO on Christmas Day." It's true. So, apparently, I'm not an anomaly and other people are in fact born on Christmas Day, as well! Huh. Weird. And while we're at it, let's throw in my husband who is also a December baby. December 27th. It's quite a busy (and expensive!) time in our household that last week of the year, as you can imagine!!

I'll kick this off by apologizing to my Mom. Mom, I am sorry I landed you squarely in the hospital on actual Christmas Day 45 years ago!! I'm sure it's not how she wanted to spend her Christmas Day and my Dad and two older sisters weren't enthused with it, either. I also want to give my family A LOT of credit because growing up, my family certainly made a big deal out of my birthday. It was considered "Christmas" in my house until 1pm and after 1pm it was "Karin's birthday" for the rest of the day. My family always wrapped my birthday presents in birthday paper (which is important) and I always had a birthday cake (thank you to my Mom and my sister for always making that happen)! Having a Christmas birthday didn't seem bad at all!! It was great!

Here's where things start to get squirrely. It's not my family that has an issue with my birthday being on Christmas. It's everyone outside of my family. Or I guess I should say that it "feels" like everyone else has a problem with my birthday and that leads to a darkness overshadowing what *should be* my special day.

Here are some examples:

- **"It must suck having a birthday on Christmas!"** This is probably the most common thing that is said to me. Truthfully, it never sucked as a child. As mentioned above, I will give a ton of credit to my family for that. My Mom/family worked hard at always making sure I felt recognized and celebrated on my birthday. And honestly, I don't have anything else to compare it to because I have never had my birthday fall on any other day of the year so how would I know if it sucks or not?

- **"Merry Christmas/Happy Birthday. This gift is for both Christmas AND your birthday."** Ahhh, yes. A single "joint" gift because it's rather inconvenient to get 2 separate presents and wrap them separately. Yet, if my birthday were in February or May or September, I bet there would be 2 separate gifts because these are TWO COMPLETELY SEPARATE OCCASIONS. I don't ever tell people on their birthday, "Sorry I didn't get you a birthday gift, but hey, I gave you a gift last Christmas so it's all good." Do you?

- **"I couldn't think of anything else to get you so I just grabbed you XYZ."** Alright, cool. Thank you for letting me know my gift was an "obligatory something" you were needing to cross off your list and nothing more than that. This typically happens when they have already gotten me a Christmas present but then "couldn't come up with anything for my birthday." I'll give them an E for effort, I suppose, but honestly when you say that it makes me feel like I'm such a burden. I know you don't mean it that way, but…….

- **"I just went ahead and wrapped your birthday gift in Christmas paper."** Got it. That makes sense. I'll be sure to remember that when I get you your birthday gift this year and I wrap it in wedding paper. Or Enjoy Your Retirement paper. Or Happy Hanukkah paper. Or baby shower paper. What?!? That's ridiculous, right? Well, if you have a December birthday, apparently it's perceived to be perfectly acceptable to do such a ridiculous thing.

- **"Why don't you celebrate your birthday on a different day? Like in June for your half birthday? Or maybe the day after Christmas, instead?"** Oh! Great idea! Let me celebrate my birthday NOT ON MY BIRTHDAY every single year for the rest of my life!! Ummmm how about NO. Has anyone suggested that you celebrate YOUR birthday on your half birthday? "Your birthday being in early March doesn't really work for me. Could you just celebrate it in September, instead?" Has anyone ever said that to you? Likely not.

- **As an adult, I have rarely had a birthday cake.** When you are busy with Christmas for your own kids and running to other Christmas celebrations, it just doesn't happen. I didn't realize that this even bothered me until my 40th birthday when my husband and 2 kids came up the stairs with a birthday cake that had a "40" candle that was lit, singing "happy birthday" to me. I immediately burst into tears at the realization that I couldn't remember the last time I had a birthday cake of my own for my birthday. Something as simple as a birthday cake, which most everyone else receives on their birthdays, is frequently overlooked for December birthday babies….especially those of us born on Christmas Day.

- **I don't get to go out to eat and celebrate my birthday ON my birthday.** So, this one may be a little unique to my birthday, being as though it's actually on the holiday vs. other December birthdays, but I have never EVER dined out on my actual birthday until last year, when I turned 44. That's right. I was 44 when I first ate out ON MY BIRTHDAY. Why? Well, first of all, most places are closed on Christmas Day. And second, we always have somewhere to be on Christmas so there is no time to go out to celebrate.

- **My birthday gets forgotten and completely overlooked all the time and by the majority of people.** I know this is most certainly not intentional by anyone, yet, with so much going on at this time of year, it happens regularly. If I had a quarter for every time someone said "Oh, I forgot it was your birthday!" I would be a rich lady. However, thanks to the power of Facebook, I do get a lot of shout-outs, so thank you for that!

- **The day is not my own. Ever.** For many people, they might plan some of their favorite activities on their birthday. Not me. For starters, it's a holiday so most places are closed. Where am I going to go?! Second, we have kids, so obviously I want to be home in the morning and watch my family open presents. But then I also happen to be the "technical" person in my house, which means that any of the new gadgets that were received as presents will need to be set up...…by Yours Truly.…otherwise they can't be played with or enjoyed. And then let's not forget that it's also my mother-in-law's birthday (whom I adore —she's terrific!) so clearly we are going to go see her and wish her a happy birthday. The "wishing her a happy birthday" always coincides with a scheduled family Christmas gathering at her house, so let's just say this added to everything else already mentioned means we spend the entire day with other obligations besides my birthday. I don't get to sleep in, or get a massage, or sit in my pajamas all day drinking coffee watching movies. There is always somewhere.else.to.be.on.my.birthday.

This is probably coming off a little more "complain-y" than I actually mean for it to. I love my birthday! I love being a Christmas baby! I'm simply pointing out some of the dreaded quirks of having a December birthday.

I turned 45 this year and for the last 5 years, I've come to realize these things that have happened to me for literally my whole entire life are only bothering me NOW because they are deeply rooted in how others feel about my birthday. How my birthday actually inconveniences THEM in some manner. My intention in writing this is to enlighten folks on some of the typical quirks of having a December birthday. And although my birthday happens to fall on Christmas Day I can assure you that these same things happen to almost anyone that has a birthday that falls ANYWHERE in December, not just on Christmas Day.

So, now that you have been educated on this topic, please take a minute to think about anyone you

know that is a December birthday. Make a mental note to NOT say these things to them. If you give them a gift, please be sure it's wrapped in birthday paper….I promise you, they WILL notice and appreciate it even if they don't say so.. In general, I think December babies simply want to be recognized as "normal birthday people" and not have their birthdays get mixed in with the hustle and bustle of the holiday time. You can be guaranteed to quite easily make their day by remembering to send them a text on their actual birthday. Or by unexpectedly showing up on their front porch with cupcakes on their 42nd birthday (thank you, Cathy)! Or by always wrapping their birthday gifts in birthday paper (thank you Family). Honestly, we just want to have all the "normal" things that other people have for their birthdays. I don't think any of us expect special treatment of any kind. Generally speaking, December babies simply want their birthdays remembered and recognized just as you would treat any other birthday at any other time of year. That's it.

Are you a December birthday? Speak up! What things have I missed that frequently happen to you as a December baby?

~Pickles and Punch

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