



Season 3, Episode 29 - Transcript

I hate my birthday

Nicole:

Hey, friend. So today, I know I always start off by saying I'm so so excited to chat. And I am. But this particular chat I wanted to come in and kind of do real time. So sometimes I do these and they are like a week or two right before before the time they actually go live to you. But this chat I wanted to do kind of real time. Now, just this past week, I have the joy of celebrating my 28th birthday. Now, I know that so many of you are like what, Nicole? That's crazy. Oh my gosh, I can't believe you're 28. You look 25, and just playing with ya'll. I am a woman of a certain age. However, I am grateful for the many years of life that God has given me. And this past week, I had the opportunity to celebrate my 38th birthday. And it was a really good one. And I wanted to talk about some of the emotions that went along with it and what it's like to celebrate a birthday when your life has changed, because I think that holidays, often mark whenever you've experienced a lot of change. So it's why whenever a holiday is coming, we argue with our family, you know, like, well, there's so and so coming or are they bringing the girlfriend or you know, whose house are we having it at?

You know, a lot of the reason why we start having those types of triggered conversations is because holidays symbolize tradition, they symbolize formulas and the formulaic and the norm. And the thing that we often struggle to realize is that life on the other 364 days of the year is far from it. So it's why come this time of year, you start having those arguments about who's doing what, who's bringing what, what does this look like, where are we doing it? And it's because we all are basing it off of information from a year ago about how we used to do it. But what has happened between that year and now.

So we've been having a lot of chats here. And you know that in just the past year, so much has happened. I mean, I am in Los Angeles, which means that this is going to be my first very Christmasy Christmas because for me Christmas is pine trees and snow and all the Hallmark movie stuff and I'm dealing with palm trees, you know, and beaches and all the things that don't quite associate Christmas to me, but, you know, it's still Christmas, right? Because it's not just

about what the holiday looks like. It's about a little baby Jesus, you know, so knowing that it's just kind of a recalibration in my mind around that change. But the tougher part of it, is that having the holidays, you know, in this situation means that I'm thinking about what's going to happen with the kids. Right? I have all my babies and I'm their mama and that's great and we're whenever we're together we're good, right? But just thinking about this is going to be my first holiday without my partner you know without my ex you know, my was-band and that is weird. It's weird, friend. And that's what I wanted to talk about today is what it's like having to experience things that have always been mile markers of holidays and fun and family and festivity. And do it without a certain family member because we, you know, lost them because they passed or lost them because of time and change, or lost them by choice, because we knew that it just wasn't time for them to continue into the next chapter with us and what that's like.

So I can't think of a better way to explain it. Because obviously, you know, this time of year, we're going into Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, we've got these sort of pointed, consistent holidays that we're all celebrating, including, you know, Hanukkah, Diwali, like all these Kwanzaa like all these different things. But for me, I also have a birthday. And I don't know if other people tend to experience this but for me, birthdays are not what you see on social media. They are not "Hey, girl, it's me season" or and the kids, they don't even say season anymore. They say sZn. They've abbreviated it, the hip, Nicole the tick Dockers. So you know it's me season or people are like, Oh, it's my birthday month. You know, I just, I've never been that person as much as I have a big personality. And I love having fun. And you know, I'm excited and energetic when my birthday comes around y'all who the blues, it's almost like maybe 48 hours before I start dreading it. And I can even feel my belly flipping talking about it. Now I start feeling it. And I don't know if some of you guys relate to this. I know a lot of people don't but you know, this is it's just real for us weird ones out there, you know, that are feeling it. My belly starts to flip I start getting nervous and anxious about it. I start wondering, oh, gosh, are people gonna like know, how do I keep it quiet, I started dreading all the things that come with birthdays for me. So I'm not excited about how my phone's going to ring off the hook, I'm gonna get tons of text messages, I start feeling awkward about oh, gosh, someone's gonna find out, they're gonna say happy birthday. And then I'm gonna have to respond and be like, Thank you, you know, I start dreading the attention, the awkwardness, and all the things that go along with birthdays.

And I know that sounds crazy, because you know, a birthday is supposed to be a celebration of you, it's supposed to be a celebration of your life and the accomplishment and maybe even another mile marker. And so it's not fun to talk about. Because on this day, we're supposed to say we're grateful for another year of life, and I am, you know, I am. And, you know, we're supposed to be all it's my day, it's me, but you know, I'm a mama. So it's rarely my day, at least 100%. You know, and or we're supposed to be sprinkling wisdom all over and talking about, you know, all the things we've learned. And I have to tell you, I've tried all those things. But the truth is, I get birthday blues. And the reason I get them is it's one of the many survival tools that I've hardwired into myself. I haven't celebrated a birthday or had one celebrated with or for me, since I was about 10 years old. And some of that is from poverty. It's because my parents just

financially didn't have the funds to really make a big to do have a birthday. And when you're younger, you kind of understand that you don't understand it completely. And you recognize and see your peers, you know, still having parties and gifts and things of that sort. And you kind of wonder why you don't have them, even though you know that the means aren't there, but you kind of just don't quite understand why it doesn't come together. And what happens is you start tempering your hope, you start minimizing your expectation.

So while everyone else is tossing confetti and throwing around well wishes, you just kind of start to want to hide under the covers until the day of disappointment has passed. Because it's you know, there's a tension and there's awkwardness and there's anxiousness. And there's all these things that are happening that are the opposite of what you feel. And frankly, you may feel even a little embarrassed that you're feeling them and you know, birthdays and holidays are historically just not about you. And this continued into adulthood for me. I can easily say for the past 10 years of my life, 10, 12, 15 years, I haven't had a birthday celebrated with me or for me. I haven't had Mother's days or Christmases or you know the way the holidays went for me were essentially... I'm a big gift giver. So I've always been the gift giver. I was the celebrator. I'm the one who watches everyone open their gifts really eagerly and with excitement and I'm always the one who tries to remember even the tiniest mention if you just sneeze a little thought that you like something. I will register it and I'm like, I'm gonna I'm gonna swing back around and make sure they get that and I always want to take these tiny wishes and make them big realities. But I also learned with that, that I shouldn't get my hopes up that somebody would do that for me. Because you know, if my own parents didn't do it, I know y'all right now, especially my therapists who are listening are like, Ooh, girl, girl, I've worked through it, we're about to get to the good part.

But I just want to let you guys know that in case you're unpacking some of this, I really, I know, some of you right now are nodding your head like yes, like, my expectation, especially as a mom, our expectations gets so low, that someone's going to care for us. Our expectations get so low. If you are the child of immigrants, if you are a minority, if you are a woman, we don't even realize sometimes how low our expectations are and how we have learned to manage our hope around somebody taking care of us or showing us kindness or acknowledging us. And that is simply because it hasn't happened enough, we've learned to convince ourselves that we don't need it, because we aren't expecting it and/or hasn't been given even when it's due. And so you basically stop getting our hopes up. So you don't have to deal with a broken heart. But you don't realize that you're breaking your own heart first. And all this while, I know that I've grown to say that I'm satisfied with it. I'm okay being empty handed. And I'm okay being forgotten, right. Because what's truly Christian-like and motherly, and a proud child of an immigrant who's grateful and thankful is to look at everyone else and all the gifts that they're opening and everything and just smile down on them saying their joy is my gift.

And I want to let you know that that's true. It really is like, I am so happy to serve people and to love up on them but that's only partly true. And it's only partly true for me. And it's only partly true for you, friend. I want and I deserve my own joy. You hear me? You do too, friend. You

deserve your own joy. You deserve to celebrate yourself, right? That's important, we should celebrate, we should clap for our own dang selves. That is an important thing we should do. But you deserve to be celebrated too. It's not okay to sit there and watch everyone open a gift and nobody remembered you. It's not okay for Mother's Day to come and go and no one even said thank you. It's not okay that people forgot your birthday, you matter and you deserve to not be forgotten. And it's not just in the gifting. Frankly, it's not even in how many people texted you or how many comments or likes you received. It's not about the actual little quantifiable, countable actions. It's about knowing that you deserve them one way or another.

The concern here is not so much that we live our lives, expecting gifts or wanting gifts and feeling like we're lacking because we didn't get them y'all nothing is missing. What matters is that you know that whether or not those gifts come, you deserve them. And the concern is convincing ourselves that we deserve to live without. I want you to know that this year, I woke up with the blues. Because I have less than before. But I also have more than I could ever imagine. Materialistically I mean, I'm still blessed, I have homes, I have items, you know, I have all those things. But man, divorce is hard. I don't know what's going to be here tomorrow. I don't know what I'm going to have to work to get back. I don't know what messages or emails are gonna pop up on any given day or you know, if my own heart is going to be broken, or if my kids hearts are going to be broken. I do not know what tomorrow will bring. But I do know that I still have a peace that surpasses all understanding. I do know that without fail, love is going to be there beside me. I do know that my babies are happy, healthy and whole. And I can tell you that the joy that I have is overwhelming. And the love abounds.

I have my three sweet girls and my dear Misterfella, right. And all my birthday my family and friends were buzzing my phone endlessly. And all of you showed up to in my DMs and in the comments saying happy birthday. And instead of me thinking for the very first time like this is awkward and I don't know what to do with all this. And you know, it's so nice to have all these internet friends you know, an internet Auntie showing this love. But what about the people closest to me? Well, the people closest to me showed me love too and I realized that with all the changes that had happened the holiday was better than before. God is so good y'all. And I want to let you know that for all of you who are coming into this holiday season, maybe dreading the auntie or the uncle that won't be at the table or even more dreading the auntie or uncle that will be at the table, you know, or wondering if you can handle hosting this year or if you'll be able to, you know, keep it together. While you remember the dish that doesn't quite taste quite the same as when mom was here to make it.

And I want you to know that this year for my birthday, my new guy, Alex, he took me out. And it was a surprise and y'all I hate surprises. I hate surprises, because the awkwardness of it all like, what if I hate it? What if it's no good. And you know, it's the control freak in me. And he surprised me. And he took me out and there was dinner and a show and just activities and fun. And you know, he took me some place fancy and I was like, This is too fancy. And then he took me to pizza. And I mean it when I think about what it's like walking down a Los Angeles City street eating a slice of pizza, and holding hands and thinking to myself a year ago, three years ago, I

was sitting on a couch alone with a glass of wine, wondering if this is what the next 50 years would bring.

As much as everything is so deeply wrong. It's wrong. From the picture of what I thought it's not the table that I thought I'd have this Thanksgiving. And it's not the home or roof that I thought I'd have over my head. And it's not the hand that I thought I'd be holding. But you know, everything is so right. It's so deeply right. It's so aligned. It's so exactly who I need to be today, in this moment, to get me to tomorrow, I'm learning what I need to learn to be the person that I need to be. And the same thing applies for you. If the only thing you learn in these difficult moments is that you can get through them and that you can come out on the other side better, and that joy doesn't disappear and that grief and gratitude can coexist, well friend you're doing and learning everything you need to know.

Everything may be wrong, but everything is also right. And most importantly friend, nothing is missing. The holidays are coming. I have so much faith in all the goodness that is going to be in the moments even with the hard stuff. So I'm excited to enjoy them with you. Keep me posted and send me pics in the DMs. I love to see what's happening with you and my little internet nephews and nieces. So friend, let's keep after it. We're doing it together. And I'll see you next week.