

Her thoughts at 45: Clothes she finally jettisons; she wears 1 belt

By Rachel Sloan
Special to The Chronicle

Something interesting has been happening to me slowly over the last 15-20 years. I haven't publicly acknowledged it until I was having dinner with some women friends the other day. (This may sound kind of weird but stay with me.)

"I have four belts and I really love them a lot."

I'm one of those people that when you get a good belt, it seems to go with everything. The first two belts are from my twenties. The third belt is from my thirties and the fourth belt I got last year in my forties.

Then came the real acknowledgement and announcement: "It seems the first three belts don't really fit me anymore."

It has taken me a long time to accept this change and say it out loud. The fourth belt, which is green, has plenty of room and should last a long time (hopefully).

The thing is this: I have been holding onto these belts for a lot of years. They have been with me a long time, through several relationships and through many moves. They are a part of me. They are me. Yet they do not fit me.

I have always believed that I will fit into those first three belts again. So I'm not sure why it suddenly hit me, I will NEVER be fitting into those three belts again. And I need to be OK with that.

Maybe that's why I have decided with the change of the seasons, I will remove one-half of my wardrobe in my closet. Why? Because one-half of my wardrobe I never wear and I have finally accepted I will never fit into those clothes again.

Breathe. Let it go. Breathe.

Rachel Sloan on coming to grips with aging & change.



Rachel Sloan last wrote for **The Chronicle** a series of articles on learning to ride a motorcycle and her subsequent cross-country ride. She operates Sloan Advisory Group on East Washington Street in Glens Falls.

I did bring my clothes to Bloomingdeals, a consignment shop in South Glens Falls. Kerry, the owner, called me the next day to say all my suits were purchased by one of her customers. The timing and the suits were a perfect fit.

And what about those belts you might ask? I still have them. I couldn't seem to let them go, yet.

As we age, our bodies change. Mine is definitely changing faster than I like.

I'm told that the sooner we accept this the sooner we can move on to other important things.

This is where the love part comes in. Our

society really doesn't embrace aging — well, at least the media doesn't embrace it. We are constantly challenged with younger and thinner images of women (and men) in the ads, on TV, in the magazines and in the movies. We need to look past all of this and hold some love out for ourselves and others. Yes, sometimes easier said than done.

Did I mention the grey in my hair is starting to pop, too? Enough that it has been catching my eye more than not these days.

It's hard to change...I know it. I never wanted to change from reading books to a Kindle. I resisted for a long time until I went away on vacation last year. I wanted to read a few books and I didn't have the room to take them with me. I bought a Kindle for the trip. And this too is hard to publicly admit, I never even touched it.

I love reading and have found that I mostly read newspapers, magazines and the Internet. It always seems hard to find a block of time to read a book (or one could say make the time).

Then earlier this year the timing was right and I picked up the Kindle and read *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. I was hooked on the book and the Kindle. It was so easy. So light.

What I couldn't grasp with a Kindle was the fact that with a physical book, I can see exactly where I am and how much further I have to go. When my friend Spencer showed me how to see the same thing on the Kindle, it was a game changer for me.

I'm on my second Kindle book *The Alchemist*. It is simply beautiful. One of my favorite quotes from the book, "When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too."

Sometimes we think our choices or what's in front of us is forever. It stops us from taking action. What if we thought of things as just momentary? Afford ourselves the ability to be fluid, to move back and forth. Give ourselves some slack.



Here's where that love part comes in again. Letting go of my clothes was definitely letting go of so much — a part of my life and a part of who I was.

Sometimes we need to let go of what was to embrace what is about to be. And if I truly had wisdom in my twenties or thirties, I would have bought a much larger belt back then. I am exactly where I need to be, with my green belt and lots of room for expansion and the experiences that are yet to come.

We love the things we know and we hold onto them. Is it true that the magic starts to happen when we let go? I am waiting for one of my friends to say, "Rachel, what's up with that green belt and why do you wear it so often?" When that happens I will say, "I'm glad you asked. It's a really special belt that came into my life recently. It's all about expansion and wisdom."

I could also just say, it's the only belt that fits me.

I love simple. For those of you that followed my motorcycle trip across the country, one of the things I loved most was the simplicity of travel on the motorcycle. You simply cannot have a lot of things with you. In other words, leave your baggage home.

Having just a few outfits to wear was actually enlightening and uplifting. My mom has a great motto, she says, "when you find a good outfit, keep it going." Right on, mom.

What the motorcycle trip also taught me, there is life and movement in stillness. Even though you are one with movement on the motorcycle, you are also one with stillness — you have to stop a lot. You have to stretch, move around and hydrate.

In today's world of never ending connectivity, we are constantly on the move...so much so that we forget about just being. To be is an art. Practice it, embrace it and perfect it. Others will look to you for your stillness.

Sounds kind of crazy — but in this world of constant movement, aren't we all searching for a bit of stillness? And aren't we all looking for that one belt that goes with everything? I found mine. I hope you find yours.

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