

When Things Fall Apart

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April 9th was my sister Nita’s birthday. This year, the first that she is not with us, I planned to write a little tribute to her. Instead, on that day, I wrote about dealing with my old, ailing dog.

I usually write a happy birthday message to my grandchildren – at least the younger ones – on their birthdays. Before the day arrives, I have generally sent a card with a note, and money for them to choose their own gift. This year, Tommy’s birthday was here before I realized it. I had put my back out while working in the garden. Finding that I did not have my usual prescription for muscle relaxers, I called my daughter to see if I could take the pain medicine prescribed for my old dog Clover. She got out her book to look it up, while noisy chatter reigned in the background. “Excuse the chaos,” she said, “we have all the kids here for Tommy’s party.”

Oh, no!

“Oh, no!” I said, “I forgot! I’m so sorry…”

At that moment, I heard Tommy’s voice urging his mother to hurry, and she (my sweet daughter!) said, “Just a minute, Tommy, Grandma Cindy just called to wish you Happy Birthday…” I had a nice chat with him. Later, I took one-half of one of the dog’s pills. That, combined with ice packs and ibuprofen, relieved the spasm and got me back on my feet.

Last Sunday, Clover died. As I sat with her outside, three trucks drove past filled with revelers on a jaunt around the island. One friend noticed me, and shouted “Happy Mother’s Day!” The others followed suit. As I sat in the grass, tears running down my face, with my hands in Clover’s fur as she breathed her last breaths, two dozen voices shouted good wishes to me from the road.

Later that day, I received the good news that my niece and her husband had just welcomed a new baby girl.

I had planned to be on the road today, on the way down-state for a visit with my family. After a long stretch of working without a day off – while juggling many other jobs and obligations – I was ready to get away. A call this morning changed my plans. I suddenly had to make other arrangements for my little dog while I’m away, rearrange my flight, delay my travel and shorten my trip.

Things fall apart.

Habits; routines; expectations.

The best laid plans.

Once I resigned myself to the unexpected changes, I decided to enjoy this bonus day at home.

When things fall apart, it’s best to just roll with it.