

I celebrated my 42nd birthday and decided to make it a day I would remember.

My 12-year relationship that had ended 18 months earlier did not allow me to enjoy such delights.

I invited my six dearest, oldest, most-treasured friends to my home for lunch.

The table was prepared with gran's hand-embroidered table cloth, mum's good, silver cutlery and my lovely, fine bone china. Fresh roses from the garden, essential oils burning and a lovingly-prepared lunch. I requested that they bring no gifts, just themselves. Of course that fell on deaf ears!

I presented each with gifts and thanked them for the true gems they had been to me, especially in the past 18 months when I had been so personally challenged. It was a joyful day that we still talk about. A day of giving; a day of gratitude. Beautiful souls around my kitchen table. How fortunate I am!

The conversation was open and true. Some special thoughts and sentiments around children, food, family, lost friends and memories. It was real and so genuine.

My 16-year-old daughter rose from bed early to prepare a special dish for us girls. So thoughtful – she was on a mission. On returning from school, she was keen to hear of the day. This would never have been possible for me during my marriage. It would not have been tolerated or the thought entertained. He would have found a way to sabotage it.

My friend of 30 years had her 18-month-old daughter with her, so it was a meeting of lovely ladies all with very different personalities and very strong, intelligent minds! Some of them met for the first time. Stories of how 'you met Helen' evolved around the table.

I went to bed that night feeling a very deep sense of peace indeed.

Such a lovely day that I can now accept I am worthy of. I would not have been able to say that 12 months ago!

Life is good. Glad I clicked onto that site. Thanks for putting it up.

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