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# Opinion

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## Amy Morgan: We can't all be roller derby queens

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I turn 50 this month. And I attended my first roller derby game at Rainbow Rink in Tonawanda the other night. I sat three rows back and watched the Suicidal Saucies roll it out against the Nickel City Knockouts. Not being particularly athletic or having more than a basic level of coordination, I was amazed at the display of agility and strength skating around the rink. These women had guts, and you could tell they were also enjoying themselves to the hilt.

And for just a moment, I allowed myself to dream of what it would be like to be a roller derby queen. Really, just for a moment. There's a reason I was in my seat watching while they were on the rink battling it out to put points on the board and skate to victory. The reason is - that's just not me.

I don't do contact sports. In fact, I don't generally attempt anything that demands more coordination than getting across the front lawn in my sneakers without tripping. And although I've been daring enough upon occasion to wear a pair of fishnet stockings, it has not been with a pair of short shorts and a helmet!

We can't all be roller derby queens. And that's OK. It's a role that fits for them among the other roles in their lives. In the year approaching this birthday, I've thought a lot about who I am, what I've done and what I still want to accomplish.

Watching the roller derby queens helped bring into focus that I've filled a lot of roles in my life. Some chosen, some not. I've been a daughter, a sister, a student, a co-worker, a friend, a wife and a mother, to name a few. Each came with boundaries, duties and responsibilities that molded me into who I am today with my own set of standards, abilities and dreams.

Turning 50 is not a problem for me; it's just another day. But it is an opportunity to make a very purposeful choice. I've loved my life, and the roles I've had, but it's time to shake things up a bit. Some of my roles don't exist for me anymore and some have changed in ways that free me from the boundaries and responsibilities they carry. As the attention they demand lessens, I'm finding other roles, more central to myself, to fill and the time to do so. I'm not redefining who I am, just paying more attention to those roles that waited for me to have the time to give them – one in particular.

So I'm not a roller derby queen, but I am a writer. Writing is a joy and a passion and hard work. It doesn't come easy but has always been a part of my life, a constant form of self-expression and a release. It's the role I will concentrate on in my 50th year. It's time I lace up my "writing skates," put on my protective pads and helmet and head out onto the rink to work on and show off my writing agility and strength.

I don't expect it to be easy. There will be training and a lot of practice. Finished pieces and submission of those pieces will be my games, and I'll win some and lose some. I'm sure there will be quite a few times I'll get knocked down and a little bruised. But not one of those roller derby queens stayed down on the rink. All of them got right back up and moved on. They'd trained and they were ready. They had the individual strength to do it and knew their team depended on them.

So here I go, with all my roles – the rest of my team. I'm committed. We're ready. Game on.

Amy Morgan lives and writes on Grand Island.

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