



The mid-life crisis conversation is one of the most interesting topics of the decade. Not everyone would experience the concept in its entirety but one way or another it has a way of sneaking in, even if it's just a little phase of doubt you go through.

So, what is this Mid-life crisis?

Simply put, it's a stage where you question everything about your life. By everything, we mean your younger, youthful days and your older future self - neither is safe from scrutiny. A mid-life crisis is a period of emotional turmoil; marked by overwhelming feelings, a strong desire for change, and more often than not, unhealthy coping mechanisms.

It starts for most people when they clock the big 40, but generally occurs between ages 35 to 65. Many people consider it a myth and there are certain false stereotypes surrounding the concept. Some believe it happens more to males than females, and think that both genders respond to it differently. Others believe that while males may venture into divorce proceedings and get fast cars to experience a sense of freedom; females may explore their personal preferences, and sexual fantasies to experience a sense of self-discovery. However, there is one truth: Mid-life crisis is real, but the stereotypes are not. If you're still in doubt, here are some signs that you or someone you know might just be experiencing mid-life crisis:

1. You feel Apathetic:



A mid-life crisis comes with a gradual decline of happiness. You might find yourself feeling bored, discontent and unspirited about everything in your life. From your relationships, to your career, ambitions and interests - nothing would be left untainted by this emotion that shares close proximity with depression. Generally, you might just feel indifferent or blank about life. This applies to everyone, and usually, no amount of success might fill this brooding void in your guts. Nothing would seem to satisfy or even slightly intrigue you.

2. You have angst:



During this puzzling stage of your life, you might feel ridden with an intense feeling of self doubt and anxiety. You may begin to doubt and regret your earlier choices in life, and feel the need to be overly cautious about your future decisions. In addition to this crippling fright about the past and the unknown, you might feel less motivated to involve yourself in anything, be too uncertain to take any step forward and lose interest in almost everything. Anxiety, negative cautiousness and a loss of purpose might become the order of the day.

3. You feel exasperated:



In addition to the constant anxiety, you might feel extremely frustrated. The littlest things might upset you, and thoughts about your personal responsibilities, life roles and daily routines might make you agitated. You might also become more attentive and irritable to extraneous things. People cancelling plans, lonely places, the chatter of younger people and the sight of the elderly might take a toll on your thoughts, or bring you discomfort.

4. Strange line of thoughts:



You might find your thoughts drifting to various existential concepts like death, life, hope, and 'the true meaning of purpose'. You might start to question your passion, what truly brings you satisfaction and other deep concepts that normally would not be heard in your conversations. It feels like a soul searching phase that leads you to a pit of confusion and leaves you more distorted than before. You might also find yourself paying more attention than you normally would to high sounding philosophies, psychological facts and intense health worries.

5. Quick mood changes:



Some days may begin to feel saner than the rest, and your emotions would seem like a rollercoaster ride. Your existence might mutate from happy days, to anxiety ridden moments and depressive episodes. Coupled with irritability, you might feel a dark cloud over you that makes it hard to think rationally, or feel clearly. Your mental space might seem so foggy, and this would constantly put you in a state of disarray and intense tiredness.

6. Indecisive and Impulsive



A mid-life crisis is a stage where you question everything, so do not be surprised when you find yourself being excessively indecisive about a lot of things. You might find yourself stuck when it comes to making choices, and may even make a choice but not act on it. In contrast to this indecision, you may also find yourself acting more abruptly than usual. You may make impulsive and major plans with your life without thinking it through. You may also consider abruptly changing your career, ambition or making major shifts in your life because of the crisis you're currently experiencing.

7. Nostalgia



One of the emotions you would experience during a midlife crisis is being overwhelmed, and ruminating over the past. A major thought that shapes a mid-life crisis is regret about your past or younger days. You may find yourself ruminating and brooding over 'better days', and how good things 'once were'. You may also find yourself overwhelmed with the concept of time, thinking you have either wasted time, don't have enough left or a bit of both. It's like being suspended in time, not particularly desiring to take a step forward because you're too scared, and being unable to go back because the hands of time cannot be reversed.

8. Jealousy



When questioning the value and progress of life, you might use other people as a measure of success. So, when you find yourself blurring out your own achievements and focusing on the progress of those around you, it might be a sign of an impending mid-life crisis. During this period, you may ignore the fact that no one's life is completely rosy and pay more attention to the significant or trivial details in the life of others. Whether it's their spouse, jobs, children, achievements or even personality - your mind stops paying attention to you and places others at the centre.

Mid-life crises often occur in three stages: the trigger, the crisis period and then the resolution. The trigger stage is what introduces a mid-life crisis and births different thoughts in your mind. It can be caused by anything including physical changes, altering family dynamics, financial situations or even a

disagreement with your spouse. This trigger stage is what leads to the crisis period itself. During this crisis period, you would usually feel out of character, question your sense of fulfilment and not quite fit into your skin. After the mid-life crisis, the third stage is the resolution. More often than not, it always ends with you accepting your fate, and embracing the time you have left with gratitude.

The point between being in a mid-life crisis and coming to the resolution stage is never an easy one. Here are some tips to make this period more bearable:

- Acknowledge rather than discard your feelings.
- Prioritise your mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Always remember and repeat that your life is expanding not shrinking.

A mid-life crisis, ironically, must not always be a bad thing. You can also use this period to reminisce on yourself, introspect and fulfil long forgotten dreams to give yourself a sense of fulfilment. Remember, we all respond to mid-life crises differently, and while it's good to speak and open up to other people about it, be the person people can speak to about it.

Till next time guys.