



*(Adapted for SusanJeffers.com monthly newsletter.
Based on the writings of Susan Jeffers, Ph.D.)*

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**BEING HAPPY IS ONLY ONE PART OF LIVING A WHOLE LIFE
Adapted from the works of Susan Jeffers, Ph.D.**

So many of us are constantly seeking out happiness. It's as if happiness was the magical end of our dreams and that once we found, it we would always have it. We are told from an early age that we must do x, y, and z to be happy, and to be happy is what makes life worth living. Succeeding in our career, having lots of money, losing all that weight, or being married are ways that we will be happy. Or so we are told.

But life doesn't work that way, and happiness, just like any emotion, is fleeting. Feeling happy, while it certainly is a good feeling, is the result of a whole host of positive human experiences. What feels good and inspires a feeling of happiness are the positive actions we take, feelings of self-worth and confidence, as well as the personal relationships we have created. Basing your happiness solely on what you want to achieve, or what you want to make happen, is a recipe for disappointment.

And how boring would it be if we all found our happy place and stayed there permanently! We would miss out on so much life. If we were constantly happy, if we faced no struggles, we would miss out on the gratification of overcoming obstacles, the gratification of the strength you get from believing in yourself, and the gratification of knowing fear but never letting it stop you from moving forward.

This other type of happy...a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment...leads us towards living whole, to living with our Higher Self. This is a form of true happiness, one that results from facing life's obstacles head on and choosing to make the best of everything, come what may. It is a far less fleeting form of happiness, as there are many rewards to be found within the deepest of life's problems and challenges.

We all know quite well that obstacles and struggles are a major part of life. So how can we find happiness even when we feel like we are being ground down from all that we must face on a daily basis? It is a choice. We can always choose to see the good within the difficulty, we can always feel gratitude even when most dejected.

And we all are dejected, sad, depressed, or disappointed at some point in our lives. Even when we are doing our best and trying our hardest, the Universe may have other plans for us. Working towards a big promotion only to be passed up? You tried your best and still didn't get what you wanted, but does that mean that you have failed? Does that mean you can never be happy? Of course it doesn't. It means that there is a lesson for you to learn and perhaps the Universe has something else in mind for you. As long as you remember that, "It's all happening perfectly," then you will come out ahead - promotion or not.

Susan had a wonderful way of describing life's challenges in her book *End the Struggle and Dance With Life*. She wrote about letting go of controlling everything that happens to you. By becoming less resistant to the flow of your life, you will better be able to enjoy the journey of it. She made the analogy of life as a river, and a little boat with no oars is carrying you down its currents. You can panic and struggle, and try to paddle with your hands, but the end result is the same. Would you rather enjoy the ride or not? As Susan says in the book,

Just feel the freedom as the boat carries you forward. You know you will hit bumpy times and you know you will hit times of great calm. They are all part of the Journey. You know you will enjoy the mystery of wherever your sturdy boat is taking you. And you know that when the Journey is over, you will be glad to have tasted it all.

But by letting the boat carry us down the river, it does not mean that we get to simply sit still waiting for life to happen. We have the ability to take some action. Think of it as leaning to one side of the boat to give it a nudge in a certain direction. This is not fighting the current, but being pro-active in steering the boat.

One action that you can certainly take immediately is to decide to be happy. Simply make this decision as you face a new challenge. Often when we are struggling against the current of fearful of something in life, we forget to look around us and see all the wonderful things that surround us every day. If instead you notice how much there is to be grateful for, it will make the struggling seem more insignificant. Let's revisit the example of losing out on a big promotion. Sure you can stew about it and cry "life's unfair," but that gets you nowhere. Instead ask yourself, "What if this were all right?" If it were all right, then you would have a completely different place to start from - maybe to examine reasons why you didn't get the promotion and start working on strengthening those issues, or maybe to realize that the company missed a fantastic opportunity and you start looking for a job with a company that appreciates your skills and hard work. Maybe you'll even find a new and better job!

Susan created an exercise to help deal with things we struggle against:

First write down all of the situations in your life that are causing you to struggle and ask yourself the same question about each situation..."What if this were all alright?" Each time you ask this question, take a deep breath and relax. You will experience a momentary feeling of peace. Do this over and over again until just the asking of the question is associated with a deep breath and a feeling of relaxation. And as you go through each day, notice where you are trying to control everything around you. Add it to your list and keep asking yourself the question, "What if this were all alright?"

Being able to see that hard times and obstacles are not the opposite of being happy, and one can remain happy in spite of our challenges, we all will be able to enjoy life more and be better able to connect with our Higher Self. For really, that is the true purpose - living on the spiritual end of the spectrum and being able to enjoy life no matter what is thrown at us. That is when we are truly living. And that is true happiness

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