



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

## WISDOM AT ANY AGE

*“Affliction comes to us, not to make us sad but sober; not to make us sorry but wise.” - H. G. Wells*

Older and wiser. It is a long-held misconception that getting older means becoming wiser. I’m sure many of us know or have met older men and women who seemed to have skipped the second part. There really is no correlation, unfortunately, between growing old and accumulating wisdom.

Wisdom is defined as the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. We would all like to think that we are wise, but how exactly do we become so? Experience! Through living a full and rich life, as Susan would say. She teaches us to create positive experiences out of what life hands us, finding personal meaning and growth. This is a way of seeing the world that creates value in our lives.

If we want to become wise at any age, embracing the idea of *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway* into our lives is essential. Giving into fear is the opposite of experience. If we don’t face the obstacles and hardships that come in to each of our lives, then we aren’t experiencing life and will never learn all the valuable lessons that it can teach us. As certain as the sun rises, adversity is scary, but shrinking from it does not make you a stronger or wiser person. In fact, if we don’t have any hardships or obstacles to face, then we are definitely living a life that is too confined!

The interesting thing about wisdom is that it can be gained at any age, but wisdom doesn’t come for free. It comes from facing misfortune head-on and moving on once it’s done. It’s allowing painful situations to wash over you, not letting them become you. The truth is that you are in control – in total control.

**When situations in our life are painful,  
We have a choice of saying YES to the pain or NO.**

Susan wrote, “If, generally speaking, nothing seems to go the way you want it to go, you are playing the role of victim. No wonder you feel fearful - victims are powerless!” Victims allow their hardships to define them. They aren’t facing up to their fears, but allowing their fears to dominate them. If you know you can create your own misery, it stands to reason that you can create your own joy.

In Chapter 4 of *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*, “Whether You Want It or Not ... It’s Yours,” Susan talks a lot about taking responsibility for our own lives. I’m sure a lot of us feel that we are taking on loads of responsibility - or “adulthood” to use the current slang. But taking on responsibility for your day-to-day living is different than taking responsibility for how you react to events in your life. It’s easy to react negatively. Susan calls it “the moan and groan” society – “Someone is always doing something to

take away my happiness. Expecting someone or something in my life to make me happy. Really, the only person in my life who can make me happy is ME!”

She writes, “Taking responsibility for your experience of life is an elusive concept ... Note that I have been careful not to ask you to believe that you are responsible for all your experiences in life (although there are some who would argue that you are). Rather, I ask you to believe that you are the cause of all your experiences of life, meaning that you are the cause of your reactions to everything that happens to you.” We have to own our actions and reactions. Rather than be a victim of circumstance, we can diminish our fear of whatever holds us back and say “YES” to the Universe.

That is why not everyone gets “older and wiser.” If we go through life not taking responsibility for ourselves, for our own interaction with the world, then we will always find wisdom elusive. Yet any of us can be “wise beyond our years” if we directly face life in all of its wonder and all of its adversity. Channel your resources to find constructive, healthy ways to deal with negative situations. Find value in everything that happens to you. The choice is ours - therein lies the wisdom.

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