



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

**MISSING OUT WHILE MAKING PLANS**  
**Adapted from the works of**  
**Susan Jeffers, Ph.D.**

As the old saying goes, "Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans." Is that ever the truth! How many times have we found ourselves working hard towards a goal when suddenly the goal has changed? Or the times when we are so sure of how things will turn out, only for those expectations to be turned on their head at the last minute? How many times were we disappointed or frustrated or sad when our plans didn't work out?

It doesn't have to be that way. What if, no matter the outcome of any of our plans and aspirations, we still feel fulfilled? Susan wrote about it many times over the years - "letting go of the outcome and enjoying the process." In fact, it was one of the major steps in the No-Lose thinking model featured in *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*. She suggested that if you aren't attached to the outcome in any decision, then you will find that any outcome is the right one. She went on to explain in *End the Struggle and Dance With Life* how focusing only on the end product reduces our ability to live in the present.

**When we are totally focused on the attainment of goals we have set for ourselves, we miss the expansiveness and richness of life NOW. We are not simply machines trying to reach a destination. As we learn that we are more than our goals, we become bigger than we thought we were, more than our outcomes. We are hearts and souls vibrantly connected to everyone and everything around us each moment of every day!**

The ability to focus on the process instead of the outcome breaks down into two parts. First, we need to understand that the world is never under our control. We can work and strive, we can worry and stress, but we can never guarantee that things will happen the way we want them to. If our dreams come true, that's fantastic, but how often does life really meet our expectations? Understanding that an outcome is out of our control can be a truly freeing lesson.

The second part is to view the process of advancing towards our goals as the greater part of the journey. Since the Universe is not at our beck-and-call, we run the risk of near constant disappointment no matter how hard we try. But what if we look at it in a new way? What if we think of goals and aspirations as part of the journey, not the end in itself? What if we learn to enjoy our lives as events unfold?

**Outcomes are possible happenings in the future and have nothing to do with NOW. If we fill our lives only with distant goals, our lives, by definition, feel empty NOW.**

Looking forward to the weekend, or our next vacation, or what we'll buy when we get that raise, or what we'll do when the kids are older are things that help us keep going. But by concentrating on the uncertain future, we miss the bigger picture. It's like we are focusing our gaze through a spyglass at something far away, seeing only a tiny circle of the world when we could be looking at the entire amazing world surrounding us. Why choose to see only happiness in a potential outcome when there is so much beauty and life surrounding you to bring you happiness every moment? When we open up our focus from far away we can see so much more!

So-called ordinary everyday experiences become exquisite moments. They are the substance of life. In contrast, goals are not about substance... they are about shadow.

It's not that that goals, dreams, desires and aspirations need to be eliminated, they add another layer of richness to life. Yet, we would be foolish to depend on them for our fulfillment. Why put off living a rich life until our goals are reached? Why not embrace the totality of life now? Then, if we achieve some of our goals, it's the icing on top of a cupcake, not the substance of our life, not the be-all-and-end-all. Just as importantly, even if our aspirations are not met, we still haven't missed anything. We will have had a wonderful time the whole way!

So let life happen, even while making plans, knowing that you will be able to enjoy every second of it. You may find that as you let go of meeting your goals, you will still be able to reach them - just with less effort and worry. Our lives are made up of a collection of exquisite moments that bring us happiness and satisfaction. For this reason, Susan reminds us - **to enjoy the present now!**

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Adapted from Susan's writing in *End the Struggle and Dance with Life*.