

Insights from *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway* by Susan Jeffers

Fear has far too much control over our lives. It causes us to stay in jobs that drain us, put off starting a business we know could work, or avoid the difficult conversations that we need to have. But fear of what? **What are we really afraid of?**

There's one subconscious thought fueling all these fears: **"I won't be able to handle it."**

On the other side of what you're hesitating to do, like making a big decision to work for yourself or change jobs, is a wide array of possible outcomes. There is at least one possible outcome you don't think you can handle. But there's a massive difference between not liking an outcome and not being able to handle it. You might not like getting rejected. **But you can handle it.** You might not like failing publicly. **But you can handle it.** You might not like the discomfort of change. **But you can handle it.**

When you routinely feel fear, trust your ability to handle it, and move toward it, the fear stops dictating your life. The question is: **How do you build that level of self-trust?**

Three Ways to Build Your "I Can Handle Anything" Mindset

Mental Habit #1: Nod and Say "Yes" to Whatever Shows Up

Look for whatever is causing you tension right now, then nod your head and say Yes.

- Feeling overwhelmed? **Yes, now I get to learn a new way to manage my stress.**
- Still disappointed after a terrible work presentation? **Yes, now I'm hungry to learn some high-pressure performance techniques.**

Most of us do the opposite—we say "No" to uncomfortable experiences. "No! I don't want to feel this way!" or "No! This isn't what I wanted..." **But resisting reality and wishing things were different tells your mind you can't handle what's happened, which gives fear permission to worry about everything else you'll hate in the future.**

Improving your life requires taking fear's power away. You do that by accepting whatever you're experiencing and relentlessly moving forward.

Mental Habit #2: Take Full Responsibility for How You Feel

If someone runs a red light and hits you with their car, you're not at fault. **But being angry, hopeless, and miserable afterward is entirely your fault.**

Replay someone else's stupidity on loop or obsess over what you've lost, and you'll stay miserable. But focus on one tiny thing you can do to improve your situation, and you suddenly feel better.

When you take full responsibility for your emotional state, you feel like you can handle any situation. Because no matter what happens, you won't feel bad for long. Over the last decade, I've returned to two habits that help me take full responsibility for how I feel in any situation. These habits form the acronym O.G.:

- **O: Opportunity searching:** In *The Happiness Advantage* by Shawn Achor, I learn that if I see at least four opportunities for every threat, happiness follows. Even if I'm lying in a hospital bed after a car accident, I can discover at least four opportunities in front of me: *I have more time to work on my book, practice mindfulness to manage my pain, spend more time talking to my kids, and prove to them they can remain optimistic no matter what happens.*
- **G: Gratitude stacking:** Whatever happens, it could always be much worse. I could have a flesh-eating disease, but I don't. I could have died a few years ago, but I didn't. And when I do lose something, there's always something valuable I still have—my family, friends, and hard-earned skills. The number of things that had to go right for me to have those things is absolutely remarkable.

Mental Habit #3: Take the Long View (Adopt Extreme Patience)

Author Susan Jeffers says, **"Impatience is simply a way of punishing yourself."**

We imagine a crisis hitting—a failed project, a brutal rejection, a personal heartbreak—and we judge our ability to handle it by how we'd feel in that moment. It feels unbearable. We're zoomed in so close that the problem is all we can see. But pull back to 10 weeks or 10 months, and we get the wide-angle shot. That same problem becomes one chapter in a much longer story. Our capacity to handle it grows because we've given ourselves enough time to take a small series of positive actions that show results.

The next time you face a fear, make yourself one promise: **"I will give myself enough time to deal with whatever happens."** Judge your fears not by what might happen immediately, but by what you couldn't recover from in three years. Watch how many fears fall away.

"If you knew you could handle anything that came your way, what would you possibly have to fear?" – Susan Jeffers