

New workshop puts fear in its place, says **Kate O'Reilly**

Taking the plunge

DO YOU put up with your life because you are afraid of change? Do you notice that you worry a lot, or feel stressed all the time? Is there a little voice inside that wants to take that first step forward, but something stops you?

If any of the above sounds familiar, says Carolyn Curtis, you may be interested in attending a new two-day workshop which she is running under licence from Susan Jeffers author of the best-selling, self-help book *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*, which has sold more than five million copies worldwide.

Carolyn is one of a few small number of trainers worldwide who have just been licensed to give workshops based on Jeffers' work.

Dubbed 'The Queen of Self-Help', The London Times included Susan Jeffers in the top 20 (she was number five) of new gurus in the world in 2004, a list that included Deepak Chopra, the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela. Known for her humour and the easy-to-understand style of her writing, Jeffers has a doctorate in psychology, but cites her life experiences as what qualifies her to write — divorce, career change, breast cancer and the faith that her first book would be published despite many rejection letters, one of which famously said: "Lady Di could be cycling nude down the street giving this book away, nobody would read it."

Carolyn Curtis, an NLP practitioner who has been working in self-help for more than a decade, is the first Irish person to give this two-day workshop. Already the interest is significant, with bookings from as far away as Italy.

"I discovered this book around the same time as I discovered Louise Hay," says Carolyn. "They both taught the reader new ways of thinking to access the best part of one's self. What I loved most about Susan's book was how it helped me to 'lighten up' to create a sense of self-belief, so that I felt that whatever happened from now on I could handle it."

According to Jeffers in *Feel the Fear And Do It Anyway*, some fear is instinctual and healthy and keeps us alert to trouble but the rest — the part that holds us back from personal growth — is destructive. All of us have fears: those that 'happen' like ageing, or require action like losing weight, changing career or ending a relationship. Some fears reflect our state of mind.

You may be afraid of rejection, failure or



SUCCESS STORY: Author Susan Jeffers's self-help book has sold more than five million copies.

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TRUTHS ABOUT FEAR

IN understanding these truths you may feel less alone and realise that if other people feel the same as you do — and do it anyway — then maybe you can too:

1. The fear will never go away as long as I continue to grow

Every time you try something new, or take risks to make your dreams a reality, you will experience fear. There is no point in saying: When I am no longer afraid... then I will try...

2. The only way to get rid of the fear of doing something is to go out... and do it

Going out and 'doing it' comes before the fear goes away. The more times you do something, the easier it gets and the more your confidence will grow.

3. The only way to feel better about myself is to go out... and do it

People often think that if they can improve their self-esteem their fears will go away and they will begin to accomplish more. Again 'doing it' comes before feeling better about yourself. Every time you go out there and accomplish something the stronger you feel in yourself and this

develops a new pattern of confidence. **4. Not only am I going to experience fear whenever I'm on unfamiliar territory, but so is everyone else**

We often believe that we are the only person feeling inadequate. We may think, for example, that celebrities are lucky because they aren't afraid to put themselves out there. But it's human to have fears. Successful people have learned to push through their fears to get what they want.

5. Pushing through fear is less frightening than living with the fear of helplessness.

This is often the hardest one for people to take on board. Remember something that you can do now that once made you afraid. As you pushed through the fear and 'did it anyway' you felt a flood of relief and your feelings of helplessness disappeared.

■ **Affirmations** — one of the best tools for learning to think positively. Think of something in your life that you are fearful about and say one of these out loud 10 times: It's all happening perfectly; I relax knowing I can handle it.

uations in your life beautifully.

"We all have a choice which part of ourselves we want to feed into. Everyone can remember times when we drew on our inner strength to handle a situation, for example coping well with a family crisis. The workshop is about learning how to stop that negative voice that can sabotage us from accessing that inner strength, what Susan calls the chatterbox, the what ifs, shoulds, can't and so on."

It's at this point that the sceptics say, we've heard it all before, the power of positive thinking, how real is that? But Jeffers believes this is because we have been taught that negative equals realistic and positive equals unrealistic. Most of us do not go after what we want in life, we accept what comes our way ... and then we gripe about it, she says.

"About 90% of what we worry about tends never to happen and I believe when we focus more on our fears, our experience of life is not good," says Carolyn. "But we can learn how to access our inner strength and move from the weakest to the strongest part of ourselves."

