

Your  
best

ANDREW  
FULLER

life at  
any age

A white sailboat with a single sail is shown from a side-on perspective, sailing on a dark blue sea. A small figure of a person is visible inside the boat. The boat is positioned to the right of the word 'at' in the title.

HOW TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PAST,  
REVIVE YOUR PRESENT  
& REALISE YOUR FUTURE



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Adolescence is a time of grief.
- The best time to create and carry out a plan is when you are 29.
- We all really become adults at age 36.
- Most people first go to therapy when they are 49.
- A lot of people wage an internal battle with themselves in the late 50s.
- The 70s are the best time to make friends ... especially with yourself.



Have you ever wondered if you are living up to your potential? What if you knew in advance the common pitfalls and traps you might fall into when you hit a certain age? Imagine how you could improve your life if you knew exactly what might be looming on the horizon?

In *Your Best Life at Any Age*, leading Australian psychologist Andrew Fuller has interviewed over 500 000 people to trace the most common identifiable stages of life. Understanding what stage you are in will lead to making changes that can improve your relationships, create better health and develop a more resilient mindset. Knowing the characteristics of your stage of life is vital, as the things that make a difference in your 20s, change in your 30s, alter again in your 50s and are completely different in your 60s and 70s.

Drawing upon his years of practical experience and the combined wisdom of thousands of life patterns studied, Andrew Fuller has created a blueprint for life that helps you make the most of your life ... at any age.

Andrew Fuller is a Fellow of the Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Learning and Educational Development at the University of Melbourne. He works with many communities and schools in Australia and overseas, and is the author of numerous books, including *Tricky Teens* and *Unlocking Your Child's Genius*.

Self-Help/Motivation/Life Stages


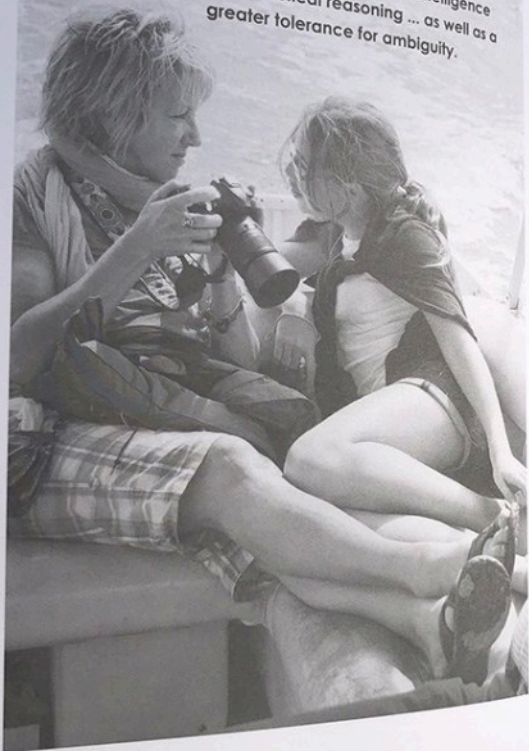
ISBN 978-0648226796



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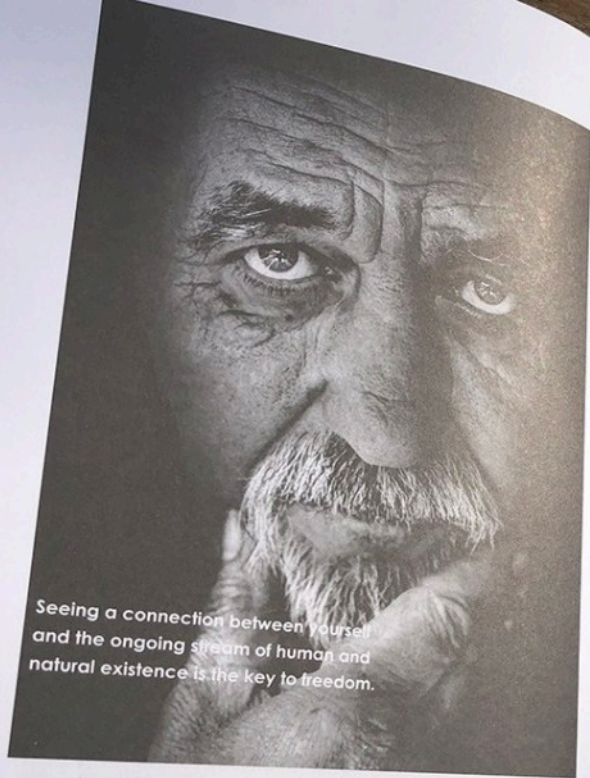
Overall, it is older people who have advantages in emotional intelligence and practical reasoning ... as well as a greater tolerance for ambiguity.



*Contentment  
and bitterness  
(Ages 78 and beyond)*

*I have reigned more than fifty years in victory and peace. During this time I have been beloved by my people, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honours, power and pleasure, have all been at my beck and call, nor has any earthly pleasure been missing to complete my sense of perfect bliss. In this situation I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness that have fallen to my lot. They number fourteen.*

*- Abd-ar-Raham III*



Seeing a connection between yourself  
and the ongoing stream of human and  
natural existence is the key to freedom.



## If I had my life to live over

*It's such a little thing to weep,  
So short a thing to sigh;  
And yet by trades the size of these  
We men and women die!*

Emily Dickinson (1830-86)

Early in the winter of 1832, a twenty-year-old man was about to die. Challenged to a duel the next morning he worked through his last night. Writing at breakneck speed, he paused agitatedly to note in the columns of his treatise, 'I have not time. I have not time.' By morning he had written as much as he could and early on 30 May 1832, went out to duel with pistols at twenty-five paces.



Children who are unlucky enough to experience abuse may withdraw into a world of their own. The interior world is, for them, a place of retreat and shadow and children begin to repress material that will haunt them later in their lives. Many of them, still believing that are the masters or mistresses of the universe, may believe they caused the abuse to occur and will be plagued by guilt and shame. Others develop the 'adrenaline brain' that is focused on vigilance and survival rather than learning and happiness. The dreadful experiences they have can spoil them and set them up for a life where compliments and joy fly straight past them.

Just as a small cut on a seedling becomes a major scar in the bark as it grows to be a tree, our early experiences often magnify and echo throughout our lives. Much of our early years is not clearly remembered but obviously that does not mean those years are unimportant. In this time we learn to talk, love, walk, converse, understand how the world works and set ourselves up for the rest of our lives. Even the most shockingly deplorable experiences can be overcome if you are lucky to find someone to care and love you patiently and to help you learn how to play. It takes time to re-build a broken child but no time is better spent. Anyone who has watched a child learn to walk knows you can't learn to walk if you can't learn to fall. You can't learn to love if you can't withstand some rejection. You can't learn to succeed in life unless you can tolerate some setbacks and failures.

To gain a glimpse back into the issues that preoccupied your child mind, see if you can remember the story that you either asked to be read over and over again to you, or that you read to yourself. That you asked for this story to be told repeatedly was not a coincidence. The themes of the story often mirror the issues that perplexed you as a child.

Q&amp;A

Learning to deal with setbacks without shrinking away from them is important. If your parents protect you too much you may learn to avoid the challenges of life. What is avoided in life persists and these challenges plague you for the rest of your life. So children need to be encouraged to face and conquer challenges and to build a life that is broad and rich enough to live in. This is beautifully expressed in one of the teaching parables in Nury Vittachi's *Feng Shui Detective*:

*It is a hot day. You sit under a very small tree. This is good. There is shade. You can see all around you. Nowhere can hide the interloper.*

*But there is shade. For one person only. You have no visitors. You become lonely.*

*You move to a bigger tree. It has room for two-three guests to share the shade,*

*This is very nice. But the trunk is a bit wide. There is a space behind you. You cannot see who is there. Some of us as we grow older, we move to much larger trees. You find a tree so large that a village can*


### At 6 years of age:

- ↳ Cole Porter starts music lessons.
- ↳ Nadia Comaneci is selected to start gymnastics training.
- ↳ Mozart begins touring Europe.
- ↳ Shirley Temple sings, 'On the Good Ship Lollipop'.
- ↳ Ray Charles becomes blind.
- ↳ Between 6 and 10, you were eligible to become a vestal virgin – an assistant in the temple of Vesta, Rome.

### At 7

- ↳ Henry VIII has his coronation ceremony.
- ↳ In pre-Victorian times you would begin your apprenticeship at 7-12.
- ↳ Frederick Chopin publishes his first composition.
- ↳ Buster Keaton is already a skilled acrobat.
- ↳ The Spartan boy was consigned to the state officer for educating and training.

We need to use times of sadness to highlight the joys of life.



## Clinging to the wreckage (Age 36-42)

**A**nnouncing a new diagnostic category - ADULT! The age of 36-42 is frequently a powerful time for people. As Oscar Wilde said, 'From here on down, it's uphill all the way.' From twenty-nine to thirty-five we try ourselves out in various adult roles. But from the age of thirty-six adulthood is the real deal. No longer can we dive under the sheets and claim inexperience or innocence as a defence.

This is a time of immense willpower. Around the age of thirty-six in particular there is often a burst of energy leading to expansion, intellectual growth and optimism. People often take on new ventures, promotions, businesses and endeavours at this time.