



## **Book Recommendation**

Dear Me – *A Letter to My Sixteen-Year-Old Self* edited by Joseph Galliano.

The best recommendation I can make for this book, is that it inspired me to write a letter to my sixteen-year-old self!

Here are some standout quotes for me in the book ...

- “I realise that you need to just plough straight ahead and make all the big mistakes, because out of them will come your greatest blessings”, J.K.Rowling (author).
- “I wish you knew how much strength lies in simply saying that your feelings are hurt. Revealing your sensitivities is actually a very powerful thing”, Rose McGowan (singer/actor)
- “Everything you don’t get, everything that you suffer through - all your mistakes and triumphs get you exactly where you need to be”, Seth Green (actor, comedian, voice artist and producer).

Not only did this book inspire me to write a letter to myself, but it also grew to become two letters. I share them below for your interest and hope that it inspires you to read this beautiful book or participate in this meaningful task of writing to your sixteen-year-old self. Best wishes!

### **Dear Sue,**

At 16, you are a mystery to yourself, slave to little understood emotions and yearnings. This manifests itself in what appears to be your aloof, standoffish behaviour or loud arrogant opinions, or the converse in retreat: needy, wounded solitude. You haven’t learnt yet how to represent yourself, to communicate your needs and hurts in a way that others can respond generously to.

The work that you need to do to grow into yourself will take you much of your life, and if I could dry your tears or cushion the blows to your feelings along the way, I would. I now know however, that you need to go through all that life serves up, for you to become who you are today. Nothing of lasting value is easily won.

You well and truly bought all that romantic mythology about love and relationships, absorbed through such authoritative texts as True Romance comics! (sorry, Dad; threatening to burn them if you saw them was your way of trying to protect me!) Instead of binning them yourself, you compare your tall, skinny, red-headed, freckled-faced self to the glamorous heroine and find



yourself wanting. You never quite fit the mould. Sadly, your inner critic which thrives on these comparisons will be a constant companion for you, especially until you learn to temper it with self-compassion.

Whilst I have so much more to say to you, young Sue, I think that is enough for you to absorb at once. I promise I will continue in a second letter soon...

Love,  
Sue (your considerably older self).

**Dear Sue,**

As I promised, this is my second letter to you,

So much of your time will be spent in the existential search for meaning. It will be a long time of living, reading, and consulting wise counsel before you are able to tap into the sage within you, the one who now knows:

- You are responsible for making yourself happy. No-one else, no matter how close you are to them, has this task. Drop your expectations of others; embrace you!
- You are not able to control so much of what life serves up. Do not exhaust yourself, nor shame yourself for what happens beyond your control. You will learn acceptance of the 'givens' of life, so succinctly listed by David Richo PhD: Everything changes and ends; things do not always go according to plan; life is not always fair; pain is part of life; people are not loving and loyal all the time.
- Your work is to become aware of your values and live within them. You cannot live justly and authentically if you do not know what you stand for. If you do not make decisions within the framework of these known values, you will bring onto yourself, mental anguish.
- We are *all* afraid. Do not let fear govern you. Remember the wisdom you will first encounter in Gerald Jampolsky's book, *Love is Letting Go of Fear*: love and fear cannot coexist. Choose love and let go of fear.
- Meaning is what *you* construct; there is no absolute, nor one size fits all. Create your own meaning.
- Intensity and earnestness does not need to be ferocious. Go lightly; be playful; laugh, even if it is only at the absurdity of it all!
- Service is a profoundly mutually beneficial practice.



Young Sue, I had the privilege of seeing the return arc of my mother - our mother's life - and of being with her at its end. I was released...

Hold yourself close.

Do your best.

Live now.

Love,

Sue @ 70 years of age