

The health lessons I've learnt...

Sarah Ferguson

The Duchess of York reveals how she's befriended adversity, the joys of a glass of wine and the surprising source of her famous red locks

I have to be very careful with what I eat, especially now I've reached 60 and been through menopause. I don't have a fixed regime, but I do follow a ketogenic diet when I want to lose weight. I've also kept to the Weight Watchers principle of counting points.

Food is a source of comfort for me, so losing weight has always been a challenge. It's always difficult – especially after you've had kids – to get your figure back. I find it's about positive mental energy.

A glass of red wine gives me an instant mood lift. But my go-to healthy snack is a mandarin. I love them! Maybe that's why I've got red hair!

My daily stairclimbs help me feel healthier and happier. I do an hour every day – whether outside or on the staircase.

Adversity can be your friend. Everyone will face challenges in their lifetime and what I've learnt is that once you gather the courage to make a first tentative step towards your goal, the next ones come easier. If you have a knock, pick yourself up and dust yourself off. Learn to survive your critics; have belief, trust and conviction.

I have more energy now than I did at 40. As I look back at my life, my overwhelming sense is how fortunate I've been and how excited I am for the next chapter. I'm thankful for the love and support of my family, which has given me so much happiness

and strength. I want to continue to be a good mother, a sound businesswoman and immerse myself in my love of writing and designing – and to use whatever platform I have to advance causes close to my heart, particularly children's charities.

The children I've met through my work have been my greatest teachers. They've taught me courage, forgiveness, love, gentleness and kindness, and I try to share all of these through my children's books.

"Learn to survive your critics; have belief, trust and conviction"

The best thing about motherhood is that you have to put someone else first. You have to forget your own thoughts and worries. Putting someone else first is also the hardest thing.

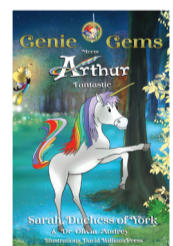
Tapping into that sense of childlike joy in my days, makes writing and being descriptive easy for me. I don't know if I always wanted to be an author. My father told me I was always reading and loved making up stories. I had an incredibly active imagination and took inspiration from animals and the natural world.

I want to bring magic into people's lives. My book Arthur

Fantastic is about a very colourful unicorn, who's teased by the brown horses he shares a field with for being different. The story follows Arthur as he goes in search of Happy, where he discovers it's more than one thing. When Arthur returns to the field of horses, he uses the lessons he learnt on his journey to transform their lives, too.

There needs to be more kindness in the world. Why should someone be mocked because they have ginger hair, a mole on their chin or a cleft palate, for example? I want children to see that it's OK to be different. The world would be a boring place if we all ate the same food, wore the same clothes, followed the same routine in our lives. Diversity colours our world for the better.

It's important to keep fighting for what you believe in – and my mission is to fight for a world where it's unacceptable for a child not to be in education. I founded Children in Crisis more than 25 years ago to help vulnerable children in some of the most inaccessible and dangerous places in the world, with particular focus on education. I'm immensely proud that through its work we have educated 1.4 million children.



The Duchess' new books, including Arthur Fantastic, are available for pre-order through Serenity Press.

MY THREE TOP HEALTH TIPS

- 1** EAT A WELL-BALANCED, ALKALINE DIET.
- 2** AVOID DIETS WHERE YOU CAN ONLY EAT CERTAIN FOODS.
- 3** HAVE THE ODD LITTLE TREAT TO KEEP YOURSELF SANE.



With her daughters, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie



Reading kids' books on her YouTube channel, Storytime with Fergie and Friends