

## Intentions

By Jeanne Loehnis

Another new year has begun and once again my life coach, Maripat Abbott of [www.ManifestingPossibilities.com](http://www.ManifestingPossibilities.com), is encouraging her clients to review the year that is coming to a close and to set intentions for the year ahead. Her guidance for looking backwards includes the concept of “acknowledging and celebrating the happenings of 2008”. As opposed to the old “New Year’s Resolution” phrase from my upbringing, her guidance around goals for the new year is that they are “intentions” which translate into positive statements of what “will be” in my life! Never a fan of resolutions, I find the annual acknowledging, celebrating, and intention stating a gift that is at times exciting -- once I commit to the process.

I’d like to share with you my process as I move through it this year in the hope that it may inspire you to do some of your own reviewing, celebrating, releasing, and intention setting now. Here is the recommended process for which you will need need three pieces of paper:

1. On one piece of paper, write down all of your disappointments, breakdowns or considered failures for 2008.
2. On a second sheet of paper, record your successes, learnings, breakthroughs, accomplishments, joys, and even miracles for 2008.
3. On a third piece of paper, write down how you will apply what you’ve learned about yourself this year in 2008.
4. Now imagine it's a year from now. What successes, wins and breakthroughs have happened? Write these down on the same third sheet, as though they have already happened.
5. Commit to a visualizing action that will enhance your specific goal.
6. Name the coming year like it was the title of a movie or song, really have fun with this!

To give you an idea how this works, I’ll walk through my process for 2009, which begins, of course, with a look back at my theme, visualizations, and intentions from January 2008 and how they have impacted this year. One year ago, in January of 2008, I reviewed 2007, the year my theme (step 6) was “I Stand In My Strength.” One of the first things Maripat had asked me to do in January 2007 was to create a three-dimensional object that represented my theme (step 5, visualizing action). Well, as a singer/songwriter, I found it easiest and most effective for me to turn my theme into a *theme song* which could live within me every moment of the year. So, *I Stand In My Strength* really did come to be and supported me throughout 2007. This past January, I selected my new theme, *I Tend To My Inner Flame*, because I couldn’t get another song out of my head! That song is *I’m Gonna Honor This Need* and has a second verse that begins:

I’m gonna tend to this flame within my soul.  
I’m gonna feed it with love that it will grow.  
I’m gonna share this bright light and you will know  
I have tended my inner flame and my story goes...

Again, I had a message that I could “visualize” any moment of any day which represented my focus for the year.

Now, an exciting part of this process is looking at the previous year’s step 4:

*Now imagine it's a year from now. What successes, wins and breakthroughs have happened? Write these down on the same third sheet, as though they have already happened.*

My January 2008 list had 9 points and would you believe that 7 of the 9 have been fulfilled in one form or another? I'm not talking small things either! Here are some examples:

<i><b>Projected success, win, or breakthrough</b></i>	<i><b>Actual result</b></i>
I know a deep, ever present self love and I am free of judgment of self and others.	Less tangible than some things on my list, I definitely have made progress in this area.
I have been to Dallas and Santa Fe to meet and collaborate with Jeanie Brosius.	Not Dallas or Santa Fe, but the retreat that Jeanie invited me and my guitar to attend was near San Antonio – and I was there!
I have continued to vision my next “right and perfect job” (wow, I have hesitation around saying this) and real, vital, and creative opportunities have surfaced as has a clear path from my full time job.	Notice the parenthetical phrase that was real a year ago... Despite my fear, I continued to vision and work through the fears. In October 2008, I requested a change from full-time to ¾ time at my current job ... and, beginning January 1, 2009, I will be working part-time!!!
I have taught the Artist’s Way as an adult course at Unity.	Okay, I didn’t teach the course at Unity Church, but I taught it in my home <b>and</b> in Oshkosh and I will be teaching it at Unity <b>and</b> in Oshkosh beginning in January 2009!
I have offered my workshop, Courting Your Inner Creator, either through Unity, UU, or the Congregational Church.	Though I didn’t offer this particular workshop anywhere, I offered another one at the Texas retreat and to the women of Harbor House in Appleton.
I have continued to publish in the free magazines.	I had 15 articles published!
Give a message at Unity Church of Christianity.	Okay, didn’t quite give that message at church ... but it is scheduled for January 18, 2009!

How’s that for someone who never liked New Year’s resolutions and never really set goals. Trust me, I complain about this year end process with Maripat because I find it scary. But, when I look at the magic that happened this past year – I am amazed! And I find the willingness to begin again and work through this process for 2009 and this time, with you! Are you ready? Do you have your three sheets of paper so you can do your personal work along with me?

***Step 1:*** *On one piece of paper, write down all of your disappointments, breakdowns or considered failures for 2008.*

For me, 2008 held very few disappointments or failures. There were many scary moments, though, and my theme of “tending my inner flame” was often a God-send. At my full-time job, my boss as of January 1, 2008, had already supported my desire to go to part-time whenever the time became right for me. Well, I was nearing that time! Then, before 2008 was over, I had a total of three, yes 3, other supervisors and was at one point convinced that part-time in this job would never be an option and that I needed to seek employment elsewhere. Throughout the year, I continued to “tend to my inner flame” and take the steps which nourished my personal intentions while continuing to vision the right and perfect employment situation. By November, many of those intentions were fulfilled – including the plan for part-time employment!

**Step 2:** *On a second sheet of paper, record your successes, learnings, breakthroughs, accomplishments, joys, and even miracles for 2008.*

Those fulfilled intentions listed above are truly the miracles, joys and successes for the year. As for learnings and breakthroughs, my list is long but includes:

- Support for the process is vital! Staying focused on the next step forward amidst the confusion of the work chaos required my connections with Maripat and others familiar with this way of living. I don't need to do it alone!
- Planning and visioning are great tools! When the reality of flying to Texas came with a wave of fear and insecurity in my abilities, Maripat asked me to vision the experience. How did I want it to go? How did I see it unfolding? When I took the time to address these questions during personal quiet time, I found the idea within me that I would "show up in Texas as a capable, confident professional – as me, not someone else I might compare myself to." I drew from my 2007 theme as well knowing that I did have gifts to share and that I would "Stand In My Strength."
- Another miracle in the year that couldn't have come to pass without tending my inner flame happened at a special, family wedding. Only once before had I appeared before my family of origin with an original piece of music to sing – and that was in 2003. This past summer, while nourishing the inner flame, my fire grew and created another original song which I was able to deliver at the reception to surprise the bride and groom. The gift for me was the confidence with which I sang, the belief in myself, and in the gift that I was delivering to my niece and her husband.

**Step 3:** *On a third piece of paper, write down how you will apply what you've learned about yourself this year in 2008.*

"Tending my inner flame" means that I must daily recommit to living the "full life", the creative life, the life of my dreams and intentions. There is no room for hanging out in that place of low self-esteem, smallness, unworthiness. I believe that every person has something to offer and I am no exception! The only way, however, that I know to live this belief with my actions is to pause daily and recommit to it, review my intentions, visualize my future.

Another thing I learned in 2008 was that I need to say "yes" to life! Saying yes to opportunities even when I don't know how I can possibly fulfill them is vital. Somehow, the "how to do it" appears and that "yes" has turned into yet another success.

**Step 4:** *Now imagine it's a year from now. What successes, wins and breakthroughs have happened? Write these down on the same third sheet, as though they have already happened.*

Okay, here's where I get scared. You'd think that that look back at 2008 and seeing intentions turn into action steps and successes would make this process easier! Old tapes, those old ways of thinking, still try to get in my way. Here are a few of those messages:

- Who are you to think that you can do that?
- What if your creativity dries up and there are no more articles or songs or poems written?
- What if life gets too full, ¾ time at work gets stressful, and you need to cut back on the creative side of life?

- ...

To these I say “Stop!” I don’t need those recordings playing in my head during this step. Now is the time to embrace the daydreaming of childhood. So:

- I have submitted more songs to Unity which were published.
- I have offered my talents to more retreat centers and have done several more retreats.
- I have worked with women in Oshkosh to develop and offer our own retreat.
- I have continued to network and pursue professional connections as they present themselves and said “yes” to “as yet unknown” opportunities.
- I have taught *The Artist’s Way* to at least 4 more groups.

And I defend my right to add to this list in the weeks ahead!

*Step 5: Commit to a visualizing action that will enhance your specific goal.*

Sometime during 2008, Maripat suggested a way of working with this new idea: write from the perspective of “Jeanne 5 years down the road -- what would Jeanne at 54 be telling Jeanne at 49?” I have been working with an expanded version of this idea and find it *very* helpful. I intend to continue my daily visualizing of “Jeanne in 5 years” because it gives me the desire to “take today’s next step.” I have a *lot* of living to do! Now is not the time to rest on my laurels. My expanded version of this process includes two other visions:

- Looking ahead from the perspective of “Jeanne as a child” – That Jeanne was forever daydreaming. She was confident, joyful, and creative. She didn’t know the thought “I’m not good enough. I can’t.”
- Looking back from the perspective of “Jeanne at 93” – This Jeanne knows that, in the long run, the details don’t matter! Whether I teach a class or write a song or network with this person or that person ... none of it matters ... and yet ALL of it matters! What matters is that Jeanne takes the next step, does the next action, keeps on keeping on.

To support this year’s visualizing, I recently completed a new theme song:

### ***True Advice***

*Whenever I'm in a quandary  
about the day ahead of me,  
I seek advice from the ones I trust.  
I look inside of me.*

*Sometimes I check with my childhood self:  
one unencumbered and free.  
Forever smiling. Direct with her words.  
Reminding me to be me!*

*Whenever I'm in a quandary  
about the day ahead of me,  
I seek advice from the ones I trust.  
I look inside of me.*

*I see myself five years down the road.  
I see a woman fulfilled.  
I hear her tell me, "Step out in faith:  
There's no more waiting until!"*

*Whenever I'm in a quandary  
about the day ahead of me,  
I seek advice from the ones I trust.  
I look inside of me.*

*I see a woman at ninety-three,  
recalling sweetness and pain,  
The facts are hazy. The details are gone.  
But feelings rich still remain.*

*Whenever I'm in a quandary  
about the day ahead of me,  
I seek advice from the ones I trust.  
I look inside of,  
I look inside of,  
I look inside of me!*

**Step 6:** Name the coming year like it was the title of a movie or song, really have fun with this!

I'll admit I struggle with this step also. But, here are a few of the ideas that are coming to me. I'll give them some time to settle in before picking or creating "the" one for 2009!

2009: The Year My Inner Fire Is All I Need  
2009: Warming The World With My Inner Fire  
2009: Living From the Warmth Of My Inner Flame  
2009: Lighting The World With My Inner Flame  
2009: The Year My Inner Flame Ignites The World Around Me

How are **you** doing? What 2008 happenings are you celebrating? What thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors have you acknowledged and become ready to release? Where are your intentions going to take you in 2009?

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