

# Jean Bailey



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## Live NOW!

How often do we find ourselves just going through the motions day after day only to find that a month has passed, a year has passed, a decade has passed without us really living? Today I encourage you to live now, live in this moment.

Often it takes a wake-up call to persuade us to live. It may be a financial disaster, a divorce, the death of a loved one. It may be a terminal diagnosis. Sometimes these, and other, circumstances propel us to really live, to [pursue our dreams](#), to realize them.

Why wait? Today is a good day to begin living, really living. The Bible says, 'This is the day the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.' It's easy to really live when you're rejoicing or celebrating.

Celebrate life! See each day as what it is, a gift! Begin the day by breathing in the fresh air, watching the sun rise, listening to birds sing. Savor that first cup of coffee, using that time to reflect, to be thankful, to plan your day. Be purposeful in your thoughts, in your intentions. Dream big and dream often. The glass isn't just half full, it's overflowing!

Each of us only lives once. Let's make this day, now, the best day it can be. Really live it. Live NOW!

Living life,

Jean

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## Coincidence?

What are coincidences, really? They are simply the 'stuff' that connects the events of our lives. Many times they are an 'ah-ha!' moment. Other times we think of a coincidence as a twist of fate, a fluke, an accident. I like to think of them as a Divine plan to boost my faith in Something (or Someone) greater than me.

According to [Deepak Chopra](#), when you live your life with an appreciation of coincidences and their meanings, you connect with the underlying field of infinite possibilities. When some circumstance comes into our lives, we should express our gratitude and explore the meaning of it. Then, we should dig deeper and connect with, not what it means, but what it could mean if we allow the possibility of the impossible.

When I choose to be grateful for the coincidences in my life, I find that they are less disruptive. I have a peace about them and about my life's direction. I don't let coincidences lead me, but I allow them to open up another choice, maybe something that I haven't seen or realized was there.

That 'stuff' that connects the events of my life are the same kinds of experiences that happen in yours. The delay to leave home in the morning only to realize if you'd been 'on time' you would have ended up in an auto accident. The 'close call' when you cross the street and saw a car speeding through the crosswalk 'just in time.' That event you choose to attend at the last minute, only to meet a life-long friend there.

I challenge you to express gratitude next time a coincidence comes your way. You may find you're part of a Divine plan, something greater than you could imagine!

Coincidentally yours,

Jean

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## Out-of-Nowhere Blessings

Blessings come in all shapes and sizes and ways. And some of the best blessings are the unexpected ones, the ones that come out of nowhere. Today I was unexpectedly blessed. I happened to be walking to a local Subway for lunch and passed an older gentleman on the street. His expression indicated he recognized me. I quickly scanned my memory but could not place him. Just as I was about to pass, he asked me if I attended a certain church in the area, which I do. As some churchgoers do, I regularly sit in the same section Sunday after Sunday. He does the same, just a few rows behind me.

On this day, he became a blessing to me. We chatted as we both walked to Subway, through the line, and—although I protested—he picked up the tab. I had planned to take my meal back to the office but somehow I found myself asking if he'd like to lunch with me. His face brightened up and we chose a nearby table.

Throughout the course of lunch, we talked about church, families, and blessings. He indicated how he had lived most of his life on a self-destructive course, but had now changed direction and found peace. He told of how some family relationships had been healed, of how he could now be a blessing to others.

As we went our separate ways, he mentioned how much he had enjoyed our impromptu lunch and that I had been a blessing to him. Today, this gentleman was an unexpected blessing to me. His act of kindness reminded me, that I too, can be an unexpected, out-of-nowhere blessing to others.

Be blessed!

Jean

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## A Little Me-Time is a Good Thing

How often do you find yourself doing so much for others that you seldom have time for yourself? Life often demands that we're stretched beyond [our limits](#) ; however, if we schedule in a little me-time, we do ourselves and those around us a big favor. After all, who enjoys being stressed out or being around stressed out people?

Lately, I've been stretched to the limit. Life has demanded a lot of time and energy, meeting deadlines and dealing with a

family member's illness. Today, I realized that I needed a little me-time to rejuvenate. If you're a busy person, you're probably due for a little me-time yourself.

What is 'me-time'? It can be a variety of things. Maybe it's taking time to walk through the park, alone or with a good friend. Maybe it's sitting in a local restaurant (as I'm doing right now), writing, putting your thoughts down. Maybe it's being alone in the house, playing piano. Maybe it's taking time for a nice massage, mani or pedi. Or, your preferred me-time could be taking the time to read a favorite book.

Just now, why not jot down a few ideas of what your me-time of choice might be? (Go ahead; I'll wait).

Now, pick one and, if necessary, put it on your calendar for next week. Treat that appointment as if it were as important as any other activity you've scheduled. And, most importantly, follow through.

A word of advice: Don't let anyone, even your own little voice, accuse you of being selfish. This is your time to revive, to rejuvenate, to better yourself so that you may serve others (and yourself) more productively.

A little me-time....it's a good thing.

Refreshingly yours,  
Jean

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## Blessings in Disguise

I remember as I was growing up my mom used to use the phrase, 'blessing in disguise'. She was referring to those circumstances that we often find ourselves in that, at first, feel like a negative situation, but end up as a positive. Have you ever had a blessing in disguise?

Just this week, I had my very first ear infection. Let me just say, for those of you who have never experienced this, it certainly didn't feel like a blessing. However, it prompted me to slow down, take care of myself a bit, and pull away from the rat race for a short time. A blessing of self-care in disguise.

Another instance happened a few years ago. My son could no longer afford the private university he was attending unless he became very deep in debt. He weighed his options and began looking for alternatives. He wisely chose to enroll in a state-sponsored school. Two years later, at college, he met the woman he'll marry next year, with a lot less college load debt

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than he would have had. Their love for each other proves to me that this was another blessing in disguise.

This prompts me to question those (seemingly) bad things that come into my life. If I'm late going out the door and, on my way, see that there's been an accident on the highway, I often wonder...if I had been on time, would I have been involved in that accident? I've had instances where I did not get a position I applied for and years later the company has closed its doors. For me, that may have been a blessing in disguise.

As life goes on, I intend for positive circumstances. I embrace changes and look closely for the good that can come from those less-than-perfect circumstances I do find myself in. How do you see your circumstances? Could they simply be blessings in disguise?

Many blessings,  
Jean

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## A Nod, A Smile

Doesn't it feel good when you lock eyes with someone on the street and they offer you a smile? For no reason at all, they smile, giving you an unearned gift, a gift without strings attached. Think about that the next time you meet someone's gaze. Just smile. A simple smile from you might evoke a smile from them. Either way, it'll make you feel good because who can feel poorly while smiling? No one.

A slight nod of the head can evoke a warm feeling also. While not as inviting as a smile, a nod is an acknowledgement, a softer greeting, a communication between we humans as we journey through this life.

What are some other things, unexpected things, that make your step a little lighter and your smile a little brighter? How about a hug? No amount of money can buy anything as satisfying as the hug of a close friend. There's something so genuine, so giving when one human being wraps her arms snugly around a close friend and draws her in. What about the first time you hear the words 'I love you' from that special someone? Such an experience can make the heart speed up.

These are several ways that we can get warm fuzzy feelings from others. Just as important is finding ways to provide warm fuzzies for others and ourselves. Taking care of ourselves enables us to take better care of others. I have a friend who is very careful with what types of media and news she exposes

herself to. She fills her mind with joyful, positive images and in doing so, affects a positive attitude.

What can you do today to enjoy or provoke that positive attitude or warm fuzzy?

Positively,

Jean

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## Rome Wasn't Built in a Day

This French proverb from the late 1100's admonishes us to be patient. Some things simply take time, such as our journey toward a better life than the one we're living today. Just like the building of the great city of Rome, it may take time, patience and effort to reach our goals.

What are your goals? One of mine—and, yes, there are many—is to be content with who I am. In order to do this, I need to first decide what kind of person I want to be, then assess how far away I am from that person. Next, just like in building a great city, I need to make plans, to take steps toward my goal. For me, that means assessing every area of my life: my physical self and my spiritual being. Then, once I've decided what areas are lacking, making a game plan and going from there.

What about you? How can you make a difference in your life? Do you want to be a better student, teacher, parent, businessperson? Or do you want to be a better 'you'?

I challenge you to make your game plan today. An building foreman never instructed his builders to work from a plan in his head; he studied an architect's drawing first and then formulated a game plan to make it happen. Whatever you want yourself to be, you can make it happen. Rome wasn't built in a day. Your goals may not be reached in a day. But with patience and careful planning, you can make a positive difference in your life.

Jean

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## What's In Your Wallet?

That question from a familiar tv commercial indicates the importance of what kind of credit card we choose to carry. But, more important, is what kind of things we allow to influence us.

I was reminded this week of how we're influenced by the books we read, the television we watch and the people we hang out with. This week I've been reading A Hole In Our Gospel. It's a book by Richard Stearns, the president of World Vision. As I wrote my book review today, I realized how my views, my sensitivities to world hunger and poverty had changed a bit, just in the reading of a few words on several pages. In looking back over the past week I realized how little I had watched television, particularly the news. And I had carefully chosen who I shared my lunch hours with. Could these be the reasons that, in looking back, I feel I've had a very good week?

What's influencing you today? Are you reading material that will have a positive or a negative impact on you? What are you watching on television? Do you need to turn off the news in order to feel better inside each day? Who are you spending your time with? Do your friends encourage you or discourage you?

This morning I read an email from a friend who is having some difficulties: health problems of her own, taking care of an elderly parent with dementia. Plus she works outside the home full time, leaving little time for herself. Interestingly, in her email, she concluded with how much she appreciates enduring friendships. My friend has found that, although she has valid reasons for allowing negativity to creep in, she can focus on the positive aspects of her life.

Granted, while we can switch to a different credit card, we can't eliminate every negative influence in our lives. We may have to work with negative co-workers, perform less-than-joyfilled tasks. However, by taking stock of our lives in this area: Influences, we can see what the positive and negative impacts are and make small but life-transforming changes.

Much joy,

Jean

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## Hard Times Won't Last Forever

What a comfort in realizing the hard times won't last forever! Whatever you may be experiencing, whatever you may be going through, know that this, too, shall pass. Several weeks ago I had surgery. It wasn't that difficult for me. After all, the doctor did all the work and I was asleep during the process. The 'hard part' for me was the few weeks afterward, the recuperation. However, I'm now almost 6 weeks out from surgery, and the pain and discomfort pale in comparison to what I'm experiencing today, this beautiful day. Today I choose to live in this moment to the fullest: to enjoy the sun as it beams down, warm, upon my face; to savor the taste of the evening meal I'll prepare later; to cherish the attention my little dog, Maxie, gives and the feel of her soft fur as she naps beside me. Today, I've come to appreciate that the hard times--for me and for you--don't (and won't) last forever.

Carpe diem!

Jean

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## Never Too Old to Learn

It amazes me how easy technology comes to the youngest of us. For instance, in the United States, there is a television commercial that features a four-year-old girl who is expertly using a computer program to make a picture of her fish Dorkie 'better' and email it to her family. Plus, I know of teenagers who send text messages from phones in their pockets, without ever looking at the keyboard. Then there are the wiz kids who spend hours writing computer programs.

Today, my challenge is to put this blog on some RSS directories in order to create more exposure. Simple? Let's just say, maybe I should have called the wiz kids to help! Still, I did have a couple of responses on my Facebook page when I posed the question about RSS feeds. (Thanks, guys!)

I decided to try my hand at it...with just one directory to start with. The only requirement to claim the blog I'd submitted was to paste this in a post to my blog: Technorati Profile  
Now, if I get this right, I should have myself listed at [www.technorati.com](http://www.technorati.com). Time will tell.

Have you ever tried something for the first time and wondered, how in the world the younger generation found it so much easier? Still, I think as we grow older (and wiser!) we should never pass by those opportunities to learn, to grow, to expand our knowledge and skills.

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What can you try today that you've never tried before? It may be something technical or not. What about learning to grow a better garden? Or learning how to knit a scarf? What about learning how to use MS Access? Or how to hang glide?

Many times we find that trying new things is exhilarating. At the least, we'll definitely have a sense of accomplishment.

I challenge you, today, to try something new, to spread your wings. After all, you're never too old to learn.

Jean

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## A Promise of Hope

I bought wildflower seeds today for a dollar.

I was in the store, shopping for only a few items, toiletries. Flower seeds were not on my list. However, when I saw them in a box on the shelf, I felt compelled to buy them. To me, they weren't just dry seeds, but a promise of hope.

Several days ago, in my doctor's office, I found that I would need to have surgery in the near future. It wasn't totally unexpected as I'd been having some symptoms and knew something would have to be done. Still, thinking of it, gave me an opportunity to pause, consider the loose ends in my life, and figure out how much time I might have to put things in order since I'll probably be out of commission for awhile.

The next few days I found myself working at a frenzied pace, trying to get ahead both at work and at home, preparing. Today, a small thing, a box of flower seeds, helped me to slow down a bit. I realized that, although I was accomplishing much, I wasn't doing much to prepare my body, soul and spirit for what lay ahead.

Do you have something coming up in your life that you need to prepare for? Are there stressors headed your way? Take time today to plan for taking care of you, inside and out. When we have rest and relaxation and peace of mind, we can face challenges so much better.

In the store, when I picked up the box, I noticed the picture showed a myriad of flowers in luminous colors. I already know in which part of the yard I plan to plant them in a few weeks when the weather turns warm. I visualize their radiance gracing the lawn, their unique scents filling the air as I walk through them marveling at their brilliance. The walk, good for

the body. The scene, good for the soul. The serenity, good for the spirit.

What I do know is that the promise the wildflowers bring is a promise of hope.

I bought wildflower seeds today for a dollar. To me, they were priceless.

Jean

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## The Best Laid Plans

What is it they say about the "best laid plans of mice and men"? And just who are 'they' anyway? This past week I found myself in the North Carolina mountains. Even before Spring fully arrives, the scenery is still beautiful to this city girl's eyes. However, this wasn't a planned trip nor was it a spur-of-the-moment vacation. I found myself there because my son had been admitted to one of the local hospitals. Yes, the "best laid plans of mice and men often go awry".

As I drove the 4+ hours to get there, several cliches came to mind: 'When life gives you lemons, make lemonade', and 'Every cloud has a silver lining'. So, in addition to the concern I felt for my son, I knew he was getting the best of care, therefore, during my stay, I took a few moments to make some lemonade and search for silver linings.

My efforts paid off. Not the first day I arrived, but later in the week as I felt more confident in my son's recovery, I began to notice a nearby wonderful creation, the Blue Ridge. If you've never seen this range of mountains, they're aptly named as they really do give the impression of being various shades of blue against the sky when you view them from a distance. Driving up the Blue Ridge Parkway to get a closer look, I took a few short walks to find some peace among gurgling brooks, daffodils, and a view that would take your breath away. I breathed in the crisp morning air, refreshing both my body and soul. The moments that I took to rejuvenate myself that day were not only a gift to me but a gift to those around me. I could be a better person, a better friend, a better mom when I allowed myself to embrace the peace of nature's offering.

What can you do today to find peace for your soul? You may not need to travel to the mountains or the beach. You may want to simply step out into your own backyard, close your eyes, listen to the singing of the birds, feel the warmth of the sun, breathe in the clean air. Whatever is happening in your life, now is the time to take a moment for you.

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If you look close enough, you just might find that your cloud has a silver lining.

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## What A Difference A Day Makes!

Beautiful. Just beautiful. Today I woke up to a glorious site: our neighborhood had been blanketed in 5 inches of snow. Living in the piedmont region of North Carolina, I don't have the privilege of enjoying sites like this every day, every month, or even every year. I can't tell you how many times I've felt a measure of disappointment when snow has been predicted and we've gotten only rain instead.

Although I knew it was supposed to be this way (I had heard the weather reports and I had even seen the snow falling before going to bed last night), it was magical. As I walked out into it, breathing in the crisp clean air and laughing as my dog gingerly stepped from the porch into a snowbank, my heart filled with the same joy and wonderment I'd felt as a child. Of course then my joy was two-fold: 1)Yippee, it snowed! 2) Yippee, no school!

My dog, Maxie, is a bit of a mutt. My mother refuses to think of her that way as she feels 'mutt' is a derogatory term; instead she calls her a 'designer dog'. (See a picture of Maxie on my website: [www.jeanbaileyrobor.com](http://www.jeanbaileyrobor.com) ). Whatever Maxie is, we do know that she has some terrier and Cocker Spaniel in her. But the best part of all is that she's so loveable! My daughter bought Maxie a coat, complete with a hood, with fur around the edges. When the snow began falling, we realized the dog was more prepared for it than we were. None of us in the house had boots....we had not needed them in years; and I can't remember the last time I'd worn a heavy coat with a hood. Despite that, nothing could keep me from donning my heaviest jacket, strapping on my tennis shoes and walking through that myriad of beautiful glorious snowflakes.

What makes a positive difference in your day? Or rather, what do you allow to make a positive difference in your day? The snow outside gave me an opportunity to be glad or to be sad. I could have commiserated about the cold temperatures, the difficulty in driving, etc. Instead, I chose to be glad, to enjoy it, to admire the crystalline scenery.

As I sit at my desk, preparing for work, I'm grateful for these moments when my world is transformed into a wonderland

and my heart is lifted in joy. By living 'in the moment', I've found pleasure and peace in something as simple as a change in the weather. While my joy may no longer be two-fold, I still feel that 'Yippee, it snowed!' excitement each time I look out the window.

Beautiful. Just beautiful. I think I'll make a snow angel when I get home.

Jean

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## By Way of Introduction...

As a North Carolina poet and writer, I'm honored to have the privilege of writing for you, the readers of this blog. I hope we have a long and prosperous journey together as we make a difference in our own lives and the lives of others. Before we get started, let me introduce myself. In the fall of 2005, I published my first book of poetry, The Love Poems, Volume 1. As an avid reader, my writing has been influenced by the works of Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost and Walt Whitman. But my love of writing started way before 2005; it actually began when I was about 12 years old and began writing lyrical poetry. I can still remember parts of my first 'real' poem. It spoke of a young girl who was enjoying a vacation at the beach. Pretty simple, and yet I've never lost my love for the serenity of the ocean and how close I feel to God and nature when I'm near it. The sights, scents and sounds make a positive difference inside me.

Is there something you can think of, a place where you've found peace? It may be the same as mine, off the North Carolina shore. Or it may be the top of a mountain, the feel of frosty air as you crunch snow beneath your boots. No matter where they are, we all have places we cherish, that we hold dear, places we find solace and safety from the cares of this world.

Jean

As we begin this journey together, I hope you'll find reasons to smile, feel a deep peace and even laugh out loud. Come with me now and let us go forth together to find a life of happiness, peace, joy and love. A life that makes a difference.

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." -Leo Buscaglia, 1924-98

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