



Intention



Always start with intention.



HOLSTEE

WELCOME TO

Intention

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 3 <i>Introduction</i> | 10 <i>Outcome & Process Goals</i> |
| 4 <i>Intention in Poetry</i> | 11 <i>Setting Goals</i> |
| 5 <i>Warm-Up</i> | 12 <i>Setting an Intention</i> |
| 6 <i>Intentions & Goals</i> | 13 <i>Building Habits</i> |
| 7 <i>Goals</i> | 15 <i>Reflect & Discuss</i> |
| 9 <i>Avoidance & Approach Goals</i> | |

CLICK TO JUMP
TO A SECTION!



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Decide how you want to live
and who you want to become.

Intentional thoughts lead to action.
Your actions create your experiences.
Your experiences define your character.

In each moment,
you define who you'll become.
Start with intention.



Intention *noun*

in·ten·tion | in-'ten(t)-shən

1. A determination to act in a certain way, resolve.
2. What one intends to do or bring about.
3. A concept considered as the product of attention directed to an object of knowledge.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary © 2022

In this guide, we explore intentions, goals, and the difference between the two.

A **goal** describes what you want to achieve. An **intention** is the deeper purpose behind your actions. While goals are important, they are always focused on the future. When you reflect on your intention, it brings you into the present moment.

For example, a goal of yours might be to *run 10 miles per week* while the intention behind it might be to *prioritize wellness*.

Setting an intention encourages you to focus on your personal values and remember what's important.

In the following pages you will be guided through setting your intention, creating goals, and tips on how to execute those goals.

Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley

Warm-Up

In order to prepare for this new year, let's quickly revisit the last one. Take a few moments to set your intention.

Grab a pen and paper and list or draw any new activities, hobbies, habits, or routines you started last year (good or bad). Place a ☆ next to the ones you want to continue in the next twelve months.

“ *How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing.*

ANNIE DILLARD

RECORD YOUR RESPONSES!

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Intentions & Goals

What's the difference between a goal and an intention?

A **goal** focuses on **future, external** accomplishments while an **intention** links you to the **present** moment and is **internally** focused. Both are important and work best when we remember the connection between them.

GOAL

Focuses on future, external accomplishments.

- ☐ Has a specific outcome
- ☐ Describes what you want to do
- ☐ Is future-focused

Example: See the sunrise, run a marathon, or go to Hawaii.

INTENTION

Focuses on a present, internal state of being.

- ☐ Describes how you want to be or feel in the moment

Example: To be happy, healthy, or at peace.

Unlike with a goal, accomplishing an intention can be done immediately. As long as you decide to *be joyful* or *at peace* at this moment, you're practicing your intention — you can literally start the moment your mind decides to do so.

Goals can lose their meaning and the actions designed to attain them feel robotic when the intention behind them is lost. When you reconnect your to-do list to your intention, even the most mundane task can feel purposeful. For this reason, **combining intentions with goals allows you to enjoy the journey as much as the destination.**

Goals

When setting goals, go the extra mile to make sure they are SMART.

In 1981, **George T. Doran** coined this mnemonic acronym as a reminder for how to set effective goals. SMART goals are:



SPECIFIC

Know your goal's five W's: who, what, where, when, and why?



MEASURABLE

How will you know when it is accomplished?



ACHIEVABLE

Is it realistic given the time frame and resources available?



RELEVANT

Does it align with where you want to go in the bigger picture?



TIME-BOUND

What are the milestones and time frame for this goal?

“Decide whether or not the goal is worth the risks involved. If it is, stop worrying.”

AMELIA EARHART

“ *At the end of the day, the questions we ask of ourselves determine the type of people that we will become.*

LEO BABAUTA

Nearly two decades after SMART goals were first mentioned, the core tenants still hold. [Leo Babauta](#), a writer and the creator of *Zen Habits*, adds a ‘yes and’ to the SMART goals framework with these tips:

LOOK AHEAD

When setting annual goals, it’s important to make sure they align with your larger goals. If you have five-year or ten-year goals, be sure to keep them in mind. And if you don’t, right now might be a great time to start thinking about them!

REVIEW REGULARLY

Take a look at your goals each week and month, review how you did on them, and make any necessary adjustments. Reviewing helps you not lose track when obstacles arise.

GET SPECIFIC

Break your goals down into smaller individual action steps. Consider narrowing them into monthly, weekly, and daily goals if applicable.

STAY FOCUSED

Babauta recommends doing one task related to your goal each day, first thing in the morning if possible. He writes, “Once you complete it, you have done something awesome for that day — you’ve taken a small step toward making your dreams come true!” What better way to start the day?

Avoidance & Approach Goals

How are you framing your goals?

Avoidance goals describe negative outcomes you want to avoid: *I will avoid junk food so I don't get sick.* As a result these types of goals can be harder to manage and are often less enjoyable. In contrast, approach goals describe a positive outcome you want to work toward: *I will eat more seasonal vegetables because it's good for my health.*

AVOIDANCE GOALS

INSTEAD OF:

- ❌ Spend less time on a screen
- ❌ Reduce my stress
- ❌ Eat less processed food

APPROACH GOALS

TRY:

- ✅ Spend more time with friends & family
- ✅ Journal daily
- ✅ Eat more whole foods

Health psychologist and TED speaker **Kelly McGonigal** says:

“ Any sort of avoidance is going to trigger inhibition systems, whereas positive goals are going to trigger approach and reward motivation.

Try to word your goal positively, as something to strive toward rather than avoid. For example, consider rephrasing *I want to reduce my screen time* to *I want to spend quality time with a friend each week.*

Outcome & Process Goals

Set an outcome goal to describe where you want to be, but show up for your process goals to make sure you get there.

OUTCOME GOAL

- ☐ Success is defined by the **outcome**
- ☐ Focuses on a **future state**
- ☐ Relies on external factors, often **not in your control**

Example: I want to read 20 books in 2022.

PROCESS GOAL

- ☐ Success is defined by **action and progress**
- ☐ Focuses on what you can do **right now**
- ☐ Relies on factors that are **within your control**

Example: I will read for 20 minutes every night for the rest of this year.

It's common to be drawn toward creating outcome goals because that end state can be incredibly alluring. The catch here is outcome goals tend to not be 100% within your control and they often don't shed light on your incremental progress.

“ *There are always limits, and there are always opportunities. The ones we rehearse and focus on are the ones that shape our attitude and our actions.*

SETH GODIN

Setting Goals

Let's take all this information and apply it to some goals for the year.



What are three goals you hope to achieve this year?

For each goal, aim to answer *Yes* to the following three questions:

- **Is this goal aligned with my longer-term goals?**
- **Is this a goal that I can reasonably achieve this year?**
- **Can I break it down into smaller action steps?**

If you answered *No* to any of the questions above, take time to revise that goal into one that is effective and achievable.

TIP: GO DEEP.

Ask tough questions and examine your motives. You should have a clear sense of why you set each goal so that when an obstacle comes up, you will not question whether or not to keep moving forward.

Now, imagine for a moment that you hit all of your milestones and soar past your goals. Really get into it. Meditate on it. Close your eyes and be present with all your senses in this future moment.



Write down three to five things that got you to this moment.

Setting an Intention

Now, let's use the meditation on hitting your goals to set an intention.



Imagine you have just achieved your goal. Describe your state of being or how you feel. (i.e., joyful, connected, at peace, enough)

- **Select a word or description that speaks most to you.**

Recognize it as your intention for the year by filling in this blank:

- **This year, my intention is to be/feel**

BONUS: JUMP IN!

Start right now by reframing that quality as an affirmation.

I am

Nicely done! 🙌 Your intention is meant to be as dynamic as you. It may change as you learn and grow throughout the year. Don't hesitate to return to this guide and work through the exercises again when you feel like you need to refocus.



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Building Habits

Let's see how we can create a system that will lead to results.

In his book *Atomic Habits*, [James Clear](#) reminds us that profound changes rarely come from a single massive action, rather from small changes that we consistently practice. Below are three tips from his book to help us create our own system.

To start, think of one habit you want to implement. Do you want to meditate, call a friend, or read more on a daily basis? The more specific you get, the more useful this exercise will be.

1 TWO MINUTE RULE

While big goals are great, when it comes to creating lasting change, it helps to start small. When you start a new habit, consider making it as easy and simple as possible, and grow from there.

- ***I will habit for just two minutes.***

EXAMPLE:

I will sit quietly and focus on my breath for just two minutes.

2 HABIT STACKING

One of the best ways to build a new habit is to identify a current habit you have and “stack it” with your newly desired habit.

- ***After current habit, I will new habit.***

EXAMPLE:

After I brush my teeth, I will meditate.

3 IMPLEMENTATION INTENTION

The two most common cues that trigger a habit are time and location. By deciding on your when and where, you'll make the decision-making process easier and lower your chances of getting distracted.

EXAMPLE:

I will meditate at 8:00 am in the chair next to my bed.

- **I will behavior at time in location.**

To review, once you've chosen a habit you'd like to focus on:

- 1 Start **small**.
- 2 Brainstorm habits you already have in place and decide which one(s) makes the most sense to **stack**.
- 3 Decide **when and where** would be best to implement the habit.

“ *Goals are good for setting a direction, but systems are best for making progress.* ”

JAMES CLEAR



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Reflect & Discuss

Use these questions for self-reflection or to spark meaningful conversations.

ICEBREAKERS

What are your best habits or routines?

What are your worst habits or routines?

If you could only accomplish one goal this year, what would it be?

DEEPER QUESTIONS

What do you want to change most about your life this year?

What's one thing you could do today to encourage that change?

What habits do you want to focus on this year?

If you could magically change one habit in your life, what would it be and why?

“ *Vision without action
is merely a dream.*

*Action without vision
just passes the time.*

*Vision with action can
change the world.*

JOEL A. BARKER

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For further reading and curated resources visit: holstee.com/intention