

# Realizing Intention

## Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



### PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

Intention is the force directing an act of will for good or evil reasons. Actions stimulated by negative intentions--whether greed, envy, delusion, or hatred--tend toward bad results.

By being aware of our real intentions, we can improve the world for ourselves and for others. It allows us to take real responsibility for the consequences of our actions. Then we can endeavor to always act with truly good intentions, to ensure positive results for all.

### METHOD:

#### Summary

Find your purpose, discover what intentions will help you to realize this, thoroughly examine them, and then use them to act with your purpose in mind.

#### Long Version

1. Sit in a relaxed but alert posture, with the back straight but without straining the body. Meditate quietly on the breath and gently center yourself in the body.

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The posture meditation technique here walks you through a simple but effective technique that will help prepare you for contemplation of intention. Allow yourself to reach a state of gentle disinterest in the everyday goings-on of your world.

2. As you come to this point, come psychologically to the end of your life, not in a frightening or threatening way but in a contemplative way, as if you have just finished an autobiography and are considering the message or moral at the end of that story. Consider your values and your successes.

Now, with understanding and forgiveness for your own humanity, consider how you could have better lived those values, how you could have done better for yourself and for others from this future place. Use this gentle consideration from that future to discover what the future you would say to the present you: what is your meaning in life? What is your true purpose? And how could you better fulfill that purpose?

3. Now, coming out of this contemplative state with as much compassion for yourself as possible, write down your life's purpose on a sheet of paper. Then, underneath this, make a list of core values that reflect this; for example, if your purpose is to improve the lives of the less fortunate, you might write "compassion," "generosity," "unselfishness," etc. Next, use these values as intentions.

Create a list underneath the first one with concrete actions that realize these good intentions. With our previous example, these behaviors might be working with a charitable organization, donating time and money. Your purpose and values don't necessarily have to be this "saintly," your purpose could just be to be the best life partner and parent you could be.

4. Next, affirm these core values. As shown here, expressing deeply held values allow us to feel empowered. In a mirror or with a friend, explain what you have on your paper: what your purpose is, what your values are, and how you will put those values into action. This friend doesn't need to respond to your affirmation; he or she just needs to listen.

5. Finally, in a standing position, come into full awareness of your physical body and your mental strength. When you have established yourself as an empowered being, bring into mind one of your intentions, perhaps the one that is easiest to realize.

Next, bring to mind the opposite side of this intention: what may stand in the way. Considering this obstacle, bring to mind the decision to act in spite of it.

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Become fully and entirely aware of the strengths of your present self and of how much it would benefit yourself and others if your intention were realized. Next, become fully and entirely aware of the other side, trying to completely understand its opposite position and how you can appease its needs reasonably without denying your intention.

Finally, open yourself to the universe, considering the ramifications of your intention and examining it to see if it truly increases the good of all. Fully examine your intentionality. When you are sure that your intentions are sound, make the decision on what the first step you take will be.

### HISTORY:

Wise Intention is the second part of the Buddhist Eightfold Path to the relief of suffering; the Buddha said that speaking and acting with a pure mind leads to happiness and that speaking and acting with an impure mind leads to suffering.

Later psychologists pointed to discovering intention behind action as a way in which to find meaning in a universe that often seems devoid of it. Philosophers from Aristotle to Kant discussed how intention links actions and results and allows us to comprehend our world and “make sense of it all.”

### NOTES:

The oft-repeated phrase “the road to hell is paved with good intentions” reminds us that intentions not fully examined often lead to bad ends. Use this phrase to remind yourself to look at the root of an intention, not just its superficial appearance.