

Roadmap to Intentional Living

Without even realizing it, you may have stopped living with intent. Life is hectic. Those values and desires you have for your life may have slipped down the priority list or disappeared altogether. And that takes a toll when trying to achieve a life balance.

What exactly is Intentional Living? And how do you know if you need to pay more attention?

Intention begins in the present; don't set it aside for a "more convenient time." Ask yourself right now: Am I feeling stressed? Am I eating well? Am I lethargic, with no energy to do the

things I enjoy? Am I too tired to be with the people I love? If you answer yes, that's the catalyst for change. The next step is to examine the shifts you need to bring wellness, balance and purpose to your daily life.

Living with intention helps you create the life you always envisioned and be the person you want to be. Our values are challenged every day, but if you define them, it's easier to embrace them. And live them.



How to Start

Creating intention involves purposeful living, choosing where your thoughts and energies will go based on values that are uniquely yours. Think of the times when you felt good about a decision or action; that's a good example of value-based living. You're integrating body, mind and spirit, and living a more balanced life. The trick is to do it more often than not.



To begin, be in constant communication with yourself. Remind yourself of the thoughts, dreams and desires that center you, and make small shifts each day. Set goals from your mind, says author and speaker Mallika Chopra. Living with intent comes from within and represents our deepest desires. Naturally, these desires are different for everyone and can't be compared. They are not right or wrong. They are what you need for wellness and wholeness in your life.

Practically speaking, you may find it easier to start with the routines in your life you want to let go of or change. That makes room for what you would like to receive. For example, to improve nutrition, make your lunch the night before. This will give you more time to choose healthy, satisfying foods to sustain you through the day rather than catching something from a vending machine or fast food restaurant. Emotionally, you may find yourself less harried in the morning, discover you've saved money over time, and are feeling more energized from a better diet. You've made a choice to live with intent.

Building New Habits

Read through the Seven Dimensions of Wellness to give yourself a jump start. They will help you examine and define what's most important to you and who you aspire to be as an individual, family member, and member of society. Choose one that strongly resonates with your desire to live with intention.

Seven Dimensions of Wellness

1. How well are you able to make time for positive relationships with family, friends and co-workers?
2. Are you able to understand, share and cope with emotions such as anger, fear, stress, joy, happiness, and love in a healthy, productive manner?
3. Do you have peace and harmony in your life, connecting you to a greater good and satisfying you spiritually?
4. Is there time for you to recognize your role in creating "environmental wellness," that is, a lifestyle that is respectful of your surroundings? Are you comfortable with this role both at home and in the wider community?
5. Do you experience personal fulfillment in your job and career and still maintain balance in your life?
6. Are you able to open your mind to new ideas and experiences that can be integrated into personal decisions?
7. Are you able to maintain a healthy quality of life with preventative medical care and healthy habits, avoiding destructive habits such as smoking, excessive drinking or drugs?

Begin slowly, consciously making small, repeated choices that support your intention. Remember that it takes 21 days to establish a new habit. Work toward the overall change you want, one step at a time. As you succeed in connecting this intention to your life, move on to the next. Remain faithful to the process. In a surprisingly short time, you will find your life better reflects your values and desires, providing life balance and all the benefits that brings.

Sources:

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