

The Power of Intention

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I have a dry erase checklist on the inside of my front door that I look at every morning before I leave my apartment. Like most morning checklists, it helps me remember to put my phone in my pocket and unplug the coffee pot. However, the most important part of my list is at the bottom. It says, after everything else has been checked off, "Have you set your intention for the day?" This, to me, is how I set my mood for the day. My intention is my secret goal, a promise to myself. Setting an intention is my way of holding myself accountable for something I chose to do. Some days it could be more concrete, such as "today I will speak my mind during the weekly staff meeting". Other days, it's more fluid, such as "today I will be gentler with myself".

Intentions are promises we make to ourselves. They are secret plans. Personal. Many of us set intentions when we do our spiritual work. When we draw cards from a tarot deck and ask a question, we are setting the intention to follow guidance given to us from our spread. When we light a candle and ask for creativity or protection, we are setting our intention to be receptive to what is given to us through this action. Spell work or prayer wouldn't be the same without setting an intention first, so why not apply this method to our daily activities? We can set intentions through everything we do, a dance can be performed with intention, songs can be sung, stories can be written, all of these can be done with a plan in mind.

Intentions don't have to be spiritual, but I feel they are necessary for a healthy life. Without making plans and goals for ourselves it's easy to wander through life just letting things happen to us and then feeling lost or out of control.

Unfortunately, sometimes that is how life goes, but with intentions in place we can handle these events better. For instance, if my daily intention is to be more mindful of my emotions and I'm overloaded with projects as soon as I walk into work, I've already set the groundwork to handle this event more evenly. I can look at the stack of paperwork and say to myself, "this is a lot of work to do, I am already feeling anxious, but I am mindful of this and can work through that emotion". I can then think through my feelings rather than be overwhelmed.

Intentions can be big or small, you could set one to write a book in six months, but that might seem daunting and hard to accomplish. However, setting an intention to write for thirty minutes every night might be a better start. These small plans lead to bigger accomplishments and give us things that make us feel wonderful when they've been accomplished.

Start small. Set an intention tomorrow when you wake up. Set it with your best life in mind. Set a small goal for yourself and hold yourself to it. Then, when you lay down to rest that night, reflect on the small goal you had set and rest easy knowing you accomplished something that day. Something special and something just for you.