

Chapter 1

Intention in Your Life

“Our intention creates our reality.”

— Wayne Dyer

The Power of Intention

We hear the word “intention” everywhere—on social media, in therapy sessions, even at the start of a yoga class. But intention is so much more than a buzzword or a fleeting affirmation; it is, quietly, the practice that shapes the very architecture of a life aligned. Sometimes intention acts almost invisibly, as the subtle force that lets us bridge the distance between hope and action, desire and manifestation—often before we even realize we’ve begun.

Intention is what has carried me through times of uncertainty, especially in those moments when the path ahead was obscured. Whether I was setting out for Florida years ago or answering the call to México, intention was always present—an invisible current running just beneath the surface. Sometimes, I could barely sense it—a gentle nudge, a soft whisper. Other times, it was the only thing that kept me from giving up.

You might notice, as you spiral back through your own story, that intention is more than simply wanting something; it’s the energy you bring to each action, every conversation, every choice.

Neuroscience now confirms what wisdom traditions have always taught: where our intention

goes, our attention naturally follows. When you set an intention, your mind begins to tune in to possibilities that may always have been there, simply waiting for your notice. Intention becomes the lens through which reality takes shape—and with even a little practice, you become an active participant in the unfolding of your own life.

Modern brain science shows us that even brief moments of conscious intention activate neural networks linked to motivation, learning, and action. When you imagine yourself living into your intention—what researchers sometimes call “mental rehearsal”—your brain responds as if you are already taking those steps. You might find, sometimes quite naturally, that you begin noticing new opportunities, making different choices, building new habits. In this way, intention quietly offers your brain a map for change, turning even the smallest acts of focus into powerful catalysts for growth.

Sometimes intention is the anchor in a storm—a gentle course correction when you feel lost, the quiet declaration that you are willing to show up, even in uncertainty. It isn’t always loud or dramatic. Sometimes, it is as subtle as a breath, a word, or a glance at a sticky note reminding you what truly matters.

A Personal Journey: When Intention Became Real

I didn’t always understand the difference between a goal and an intention. In my earlier years, I set countless goals—“I will have this career by that age; I will live in this place.” Sometimes I achieved them, sometimes I didn’t, and often I felt oddly disconnected, even when I did. There was always something missing—a sense of deeper alignment, of co-creating with life instead of muscling my way through.

The shift happened gradually, marked by pivotal thresholds. When I began contemplating my move from New Mexico to Florida, the logistics felt overwhelming. I remember the mixture of excitement and dread, especially around rehoming my dog and two cats. At that point, my intention was simply survival: “Let this work out. Let them find the homes they deserve.” Yet something in me sensed there was more at play than luck or effort. I began to intend that everything would resolve perfectly—even if I couldn’t see how. I started to “act as if” help was on its way. The very next day, the perfect family called. And just like that, intention became reality.

There was something quietly magical about that experience, and also a humbling lesson: intention is about participation, not control. I had to trust, to let go, and to allow myself to receive support.

It’s easy to believe that if we set a strong enough intention, we can bend life to our will. But real intention invites us to meet life as a partner, not as a force to be managed. Sometimes, the doors that open—or the help that arrives—aren’t what we might have imagined or chosen for ourselves. The practice is to keep showing up, to hold our intentions lightly, and to allow life to respond in ways that may just surprise us.

Letting go of control means making space for solutions you haven’t considered, for kindness from unexpected places, for timing that is often not your own. This kind of trust can feel vulnerable, but it is also where the magic happens—where intention becomes a dance between your deepest desires and life’s mysterious generosity.

Years later, as I prepared to move to México, I returned to this practice—now with a bit more wisdom. The “thuds” were different this time: a saltwater aquarium that needed a home, the passing of Lola the cat, the uncertainty of living alone in a new country, in a new language. My intention became a quiet anchor: “May I be open. May I trust that what I need will find me. May I be ready to welcome what comes, even if it surprises me.” I set that intention again and again—sometimes daily, sometimes moment by moment. And as always, it worked—not because every detail went perfectly, but because my mindset, my actions, and my openness were in alignment. I was able to see and receive the help that was offered, to notice signs of support (dolphins, friends, a kind gesture from a stranger), to experience grace, even in the unknown.

Looking back, I see that the times I most needed intention were the very times I felt least certain, least powerful. It was precisely in those moments of vulnerability that intention became real—both a prayer and a practice, both a reaching out and a letting go. The more I acted with heartfelt intention, the more support, guidance, and even “coincidence” flowed into my life. I became a collaborator with life, not its adversary.

What Intention Is (and Isn’t)

Intention is clarity in motion—a living invitation to pause and honestly ask, “What do I truly want—not from fear, not from habit or expectation, but from my own heart?”

Intention isn’t magical thinking, nor is it a guarantee that life will unfold exactly as you wish. For me, intention is a way of returning to center, especially when anxiety threatens to take over. Even now, my intentions are often simple: “May I meet today with curiosity.” “May I remember that I am supported, even when I feel alone.” Some days, intention is simply the willingness to

stay present with whatever unfolds. For some, intention might be the resolve to survive a difficult day, or the quiet hope to reclaim a lost sense of self. Culture, family, and life experience shape what feels possible or even safe to intend. Every intention—however humble or bold—deserves respect.

Living with intention means carrying your “why” into every “what.” You might begin your day by setting a gentle intention—“May I be present in my conversations,” or “May I offer myself compassion today.” If you forget, or lose track, you can always pause and reset—even with a single breath. Sometimes, the most powerful intentions are the smallest and simplest. Unlike wishes or rigid goals, intentions are rooted in the present moment, guiding how you wish to be, rather than what you must achieve. The difference is subtle, but transformative: goals are about arriving; intention is about journeying well.

An intention might sound like, “May I approach this difficult conversation with kindness,” or “I intend to bring awareness and gentleness to my body today.” Intentions guide the quality of your presence and invite you to show up more authentically—especially when things don’t go as planned.

Setting intention isn’t about denying reality or forcing outcomes. Instead, it’s a gentle invitation to participate more fully, to return to your center, to allow life to meet you halfway. Even in disappointment or struggle, intention gives you a way to relate to the moment with agency and self-compassion.

Prompt:

I wonder, what intention might you find yourself needing most these days? And perhaps, as you

let these words settle, you'll notice some small promise to yourself—one that feels quietly supportive, maybe even before you can name it.

How Intention Helped Me Survive—and Thrive—Through Uncertainty

The real power of intention has revealed itself most clearly in the hardest times. When I moved to Florida, the path was anything but a straight line; there were moments when nothing seemed to work, when the doubts screamed louder than the vision. In those moments, my intention became a mantra—an act of self-remembering. I would write it on scraps of paper, tuck notes in my pockets, speak it aloud, especially when I wanted to give up.

When I arrived, exhausted and uncertain, I found myself standing on the dock, looking out at the water. Seeing those dolphins wasn't just a sign of arrival—it was a reflection of my intention realized, a sign of being met and welcomed by life itself. It was as if the universe was saying, “You set your intention. You trusted. Welcome home.”

That moment became a touchstone for the years ahead. When the time came for my move to México, I leaned on the same practice. I set intentions for language, for connection, for resilience. Sometimes, my intention was simply to get through the day, but the practice—small as it seemed—carried me.

Looking back on these transitions, I realize intention was the thread that held me steady. In the chaos of change, it became the ritual that grounded me—like an anchor dropped in uncertain waters, or a lantern lit in the dark. I've seen the same with my clients and students: the right intention doesn't erase pain or difficulty, but it does offer a way through. One student I worked with set the intention simply to ask one question in class, even when anxiety made participation

hard. Over time, this intention helped her find her voice, and eventually, the confidence to lead group discussions. Intention doesn't promise ease, but it does promise meaning.

During the darkest moments—illness, loss, disappointment—intention offers a way to shape your experience from within. It's as if you are telling life, "I am willing to meet you here, even now, as I am." Sometimes, intention is as simple as "May I find a single moment of peace today," or "May I trust that support will find me, even when I feel alone."

In time, you may discover that your intention, too, becomes a lantern—helping you see just far enough to take the next step, and lighting the way, one gentle return at a time.

Intention in the 5-Point Process: Why It's the Bedrock

You can't skip intention if you want a life aligned. It is the living heartbeat of transformation—the quiet pulse that keeps you moving, even when you can't see the path ahead. Vision gives you direction, but intention is the daily invitation to move toward it, one imperfect, human step at a time. If vision is the "what," intention is the "how"—the energy, mindset, and quiet faith that carry you when the journey feels long, the anchor that steadies you when tides of doubt or distraction try to pull you off course.

Intention is the current running through the entire 5-Point Process—the tuning fork that brings you back into resonance with your truest self. You may have the clearest vision, the deepest longing, the most detailed plans, but without intention, your efforts lack the spark that brings them to life. Intention is what transforms abstract dreams into lived reality. It is the fuel that ignites action, the inner compass that keeps you oriented when circumstances shift or challenges arise.

Think of intention as the connective tissue—the thread that weaves every other step together. It turns your commitments into devotion, your awareness into presence, your actions into something meaningful. In times of uncertainty, intention becomes your lifeline—helping you find purpose even in setbacks, resilience in disappointment, hope when the way forward isn't clear. Every time you pause to remember your intention, you reconnect with the deeper “why” that makes your journey worthwhile.

Intention is not about never wavering or getting it perfect. It is about returning—again and again—to what matters most. Each time you drift or forget, intention gently invites you home, reminding you that every moment is a new chance to realign, to begin again, to infuse your life with meaning and purpose.

The Relationship Between Intention and Vision

Vision answers, “What do I desire?”

Intention answers, “How will I move toward it, today?”

I've learned this the hard way. Sometimes my vision felt crystal clear, but I stalled because I hadn't truly set an intention. At other times, I set intentions but lacked the courage to see or trust my vision. When the two are paired, transformation flows—like two hands joined at the threshold, pulling you forward and keeping you grounded at the same time.

Vision and intention are partners in creation. Vision inspires; intention grounds. Vision calls you forward, into the vastness of what could be; intention walks you there, step by step, breath by breath, especially when the next step feels uncertain. If your vision is to feel more connected, your intention might be to listen with presence, or to reach out to someone with vulnerability

today. If your vision is to write a book, your intention could be as humble as, “I intend to touch the page, no matter what words come.”

In the marriage of these two—vision for the horizon, intention for the next step—real, sustainable change takes root. You may notice, in your own spiral journey, that when you feel stalled or uncertain, it’s worth pausing to ask: Am I missing vision, or am I missing intention? Both are needed. Vision keeps you moving toward what matters most; intention brings your energy, presence, and willingness into this moment, right here, right now.

Vision is what stirs your longing, your “why.” Intention is what brings your “why” into the world, giving it shape and direction, again and again, each time you return.

How Intention is Nurtured and Protected

Community

Intention grows stronger when spoken, witnessed, and supported. Even sharing your intention with one trusted friend, as I did before moving to México, can bring it out of the realm of fantasy and into the world of possibility. There’s a quiet magic in letting your intentions be seen, whether in a circle of friends, a supportive community, or even a single, trusted companion. When your intention is witnessed, it gains substance and strength. The spiral of transformation becomes wider—now including others who can hold you accountable, remind you of your “why,” and celebrate your returns.

Spirit & Ritual

Rituals matter. They turn intention from idea into embodied experience. I light a candle, write intentions on notecards, use meditation as a container for my intention. Sometimes the most

profound intentions are the quietest: “May I be open to the magic of today.” A ritual, however simple, marks a threshold—a moment of pause where you declare, “This matters.” Your ritual can be as unique as you are: a walk at sunrise, a favorite piece of music, or three slow breaths before you begin. Let each ritual be a gentle return—a way of coming home to yourself and your intention, again and again.

Compassion for Self

No one practices intention perfectly. There are days I forget, days I fall into old fears, days I want to give up. That’s when I remember: intention isn’t about perfection; it’s about returning, again and again, to what matters most. If you lose sight of your intention, that’s not failure—it’s simply part of the rhythm, the spiral of learning and becoming. Each time you remember, you strengthen your ability to begin again. Treat every return as a quiet victory, a gentle act of self-forgiveness.

Nurturing intention is both art and practice. For some, this means anchoring intention with ritual or journaling. For others, it means sharing intentions with a trusted circle or accountability partner. You might create a morning ritual of speaking your intention aloud, lighting a candle, or even just taking three conscious breaths as you set the tone for your day.

Intention is also protected by self-forgiveness. When you drift or forget—as you surely will—it’s essential to return to intention without blame or shame. Each day, each moment, is an invitation to begin again. The beauty of intention is that it meets you exactly where you are, no matter how far you feel you’ve strayed. The spiral welcomes every return.

Client Snapshot: The Intention Shift

One of my clients, Sarah (she/her), came to me exhausted by failed “goals.” Her lists and resolutions led only to guilt and a sense of never being enough. Together, we shifted from goal-setting to intention-setting. Instead of “I must lose 20 pounds,” her intention became, “I intend to honor my body and move in ways that feel nourishing.” Over time, she discovered more joy in movement, more compassion for herself, and began making choices from love rather than fear. Intention created space for self-kindness and true, sustainable change.

Sarah’s story is just one of many. I’ve witnessed similar transformations when people shift from “fixing” themselves to “caring for” themselves—from a spiral of self-criticism to a gentle spiral of return. Intention allows the energy of change to move from pressure and perfectionism to curiosity and kindness. It opens the door to lasting transformation by making every step, every attempt, a win.

Others have experienced this shift, too:

- A student who let go of “I must be perfect” and instead chose, “I intend to meet each assignment with honesty and effort.”
- A parent who transformed “I need to control my child” into “I intend to be present and loving, even in conflict.”

When intention is the anchor, the journey becomes gentler—and the outcomes, more meaningful. Each step on the spiral is honored, not as proof of perfection, but as evidence of willingness and growth. Every return to intention is a quiet act of courage—a reminder that change, at its heart, is a process of coming home.

Common Pitfalls and How to Navigate Them

Mistaking intention for control:

Remember, intention is about alignment, not manipulation. You cannot force outcomes, but you can show up with clarity, commitment, and a willingness to participate in what unfolds. When you notice yourself slipping into the urge to control, pause and remember that intention is an invitation to partner with life, not command it.

Getting stuck in the “how”:

If you catch yourself obsessing over logistics or micromanaging every detail, gently return to your core intention. Trust that the details will often sort themselves out—sometimes in ways you couldn’t have planned, as they did for me with both pets and new beginnings. Let intention hold the vision and let life surprise you with its timing.

Forgetting to revisit your intention:

Let intention be a living, breathing practice. Revisit and revise it often, allowing it to grow as you do. When you lose touch with your intention, that isn’t failure—it’s a gentle nudge to return, to begin again.

It’s also easy to overcomplicate intention or to let it slip into self-criticism. Notice when your intention starts to feel like a “should” or an obligation—if so, pause and return to your heart. Ask yourself, “What truly matters to me right now?” Keep your intentions simple, alive, and responsive to your current needs.

If you find yourself abandoning your intention when you stumble, remember: each detour is simply another invitation to recommit. The spiral of growth is not about perfection—it’s about presence. Every return is meaningful.

Once a week, pause to check in with yourself:

- Does my intention still feel inspiring?
- Is there a new quality or energy calling for my attention?
- How can I refresh my practice, so it feels nourishing, not forced?

Let these questions be gentle thresholds, inviting you to deepen your alignment as you continue forward.

Exercise: Your Daily Intention Practice

Begin each day with a quiet moment—perhaps before you get out of bed, or as you prepare for a meeting, a call, or any important event. Ask yourself: *What energy, quality, or experience do I wish to bring to this day?* It might be courage, curiosity, openness, compassion, or simply presence.

Record your intention in your journal. The act of writing it down gives it form and power. You might even leave space to return and notice how living with this intention gently shifts the course of your day.

At the end of the day, return to your journal and reflect: *How did my intention shape my experience? Where did I feel most aligned? Where did I drift? What might I intend tomorrow?* Write freely—this is your space to notice patterns, celebrate progress, and gently spiral back to what matters most.

Try this for a week:

- Each morning, write your intention for the day.
- Carry it in your heart or place a reminder somewhere you'll see it—a sticky note, a phone alert, a stone in your pocket.
- Each evening, check in. Did your intention show up for you? Where did it support you? Where did you forget?
- Refine your intention as needed. There's no right or wrong—only honest learning and gentle return.

You may be surprised at how such a small, consistent practice creates real shifts—in your day, your mood, your relationships, and your sense of what is possible.

Reflection: Intention and the Aligned Life

How do your current intentions reflect your deepest values and desires?

Where might you set intention instead of a rigid goal?

When in your life have you felt the magic of intention “meeting you halfway”?

Allow yourself to sit with these questions—not needing to answer perfectly, but letting your responses spiral and evolve over time. Revisit your journal often. Sometimes, the true power of intention is revealed only in hindsight, as you pause to notice just how far you've come.

Other questions for your reflection:

- What does living with intention feel like—in your body, your mind, your spirit?
- Where in your life could a gentle intention soften the edges or invite more possibility?

- When have you experienced a “happy accident” or synchronicity after setting an intention? What did you notice?

Return to your intention any time you feel off-course. It is always available—a threshold you can cross, again and again, no matter where you are on your spiral.

The 5-Point Process for Whole Life Alignment: Your Roadmap

As you move forward in this book, you’ll journey through my 5-Point Process for Whole Life Alignment—an approach that has evolved through my own lived experience, my work with clients, and the quiet magic that happens when we align with intention. Here’s what you can expect as you spiral through each step:

- **Vision:** What do you truly want? This is where the process begins—with the courage to imagine, sense, or claim a life or outcome that truly pings for you, even if you don’t yet know all the details.
- **Commitment:** How willing are you to dedicate yourself to your vision? This step is about making the conscious choice to show up, again and again, for your dream—even when it’s hard, inconvenient, or uncertain.
- **Awareness:** How do you relate to what’s unfolding? Here, you practice presence. You notice signs, challenges, synchronicities, and the subtle ways you might resist or support your own transformation.
- **Living Into Your Intention:** How do you bring your intention into action? This is where intention and action meet. You “act as if” what you want is possible, taking small, aligned steps, adjusting course, and learning along the way.

- **Integration (formerly Living a Life Aligned):** How does it feel to live in alignment?

This is the ongoing experience of living from your authentic self—reaping rewards, learning from setbacks, and knowing you can return to the process any time you drift from your center.

Throughout it all, intention is the current that runs through every step—a living thread weaving everything together. Setting clear intentions helps you clarify your vision, commit more fully, heighten your awareness, and take actions that truly reflect who you are becoming.

As you continue, let intention be your companion in each phase. Let it remind you that growth is a spiral, not a straight line. Let it offer you grace on the days when things are messy, and amplify your joy when things flow. Trust that your intention, even when quiet, is always heard—by yourself, by life, by the field of possibility that surrounds us all.

Preview for the Reader

As you continue this journey, we'll explore the foundations that make a life aligned not just possible, but inevitable. You'll discover how intention weaves quietly through every area of your life, how to create the space for change, and how each step—no matter how small—prepares you for transformation in your own unique way. For now, let your intention be simple: *I am open to discovering what is possible for me.*

Before you turn the page, perhaps pause for a breath. Place a hand on your heart and gently repeat: *I am open to discovering what is possible for me*. Notice any shift—a spark, a question, or simply a moment of presence. That is intention at work.

The journey continues—one step, one breath, one intention at a time. The spiral awaits.