

# Intentions

## **Intention Setting**

Most of us are used to the idea of goal setting. Goals are about specific, measurable, and quantifiable outcomes. And goal setting is important, I'm not saying give that up. But...in day to day life there are many things that are out of our control that can affect our goal attainment (Covid-19 in 2020, anyone?)

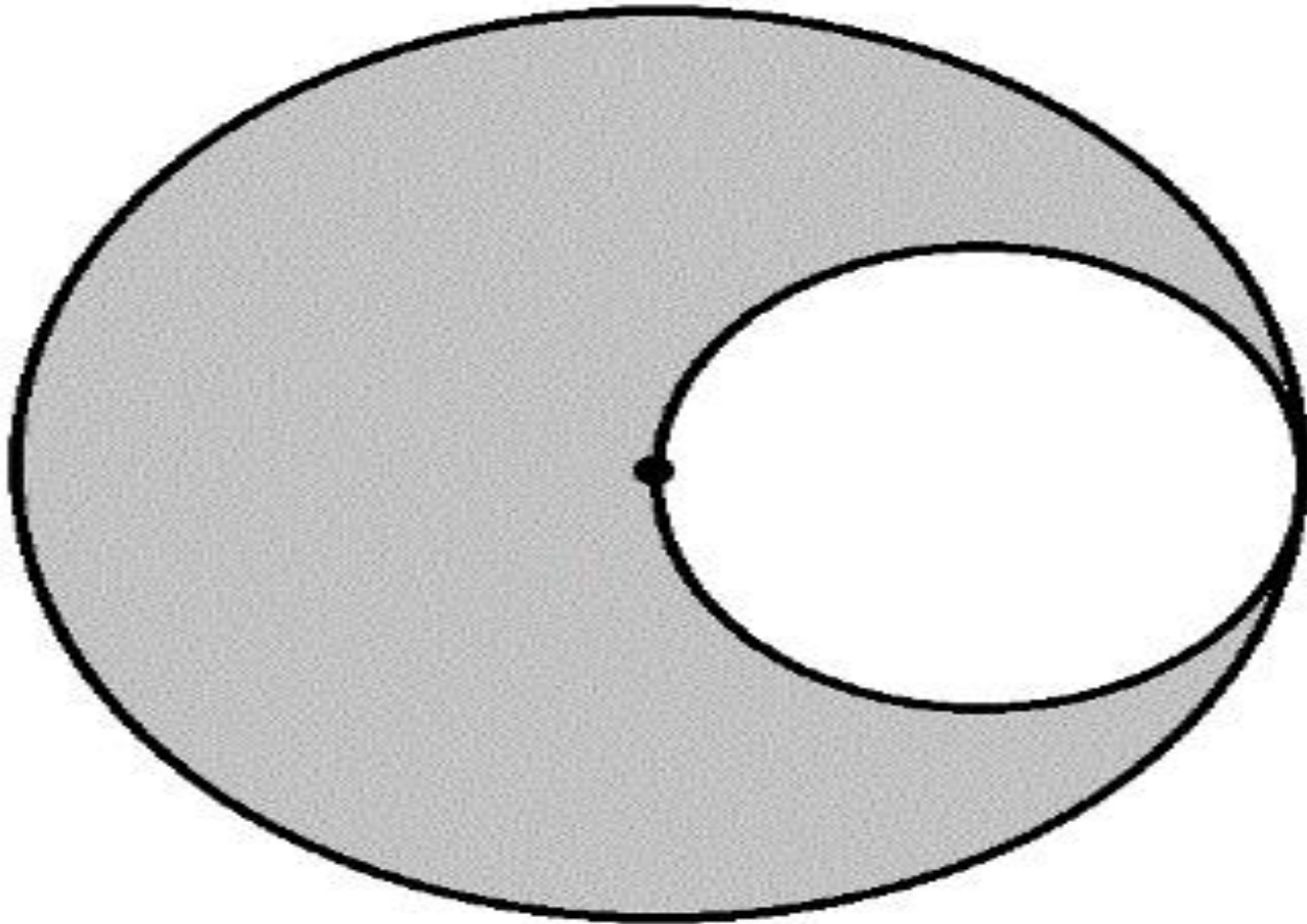
Intention setting is about how we focus our energy on a day to day basis. It's about what we set our minds to notice. If you are looking to purchase a new bike, you are going to notice the bikes around you in a completely different way, right?

Intention setting can be in service of our goals, but it is also about how what we pay attention to and how we interact in the world. In my book *Unf#ck Your Boundaries* (Microcosm Publishing, 2020), I wrote about how we take in 11 million bits of information every second of the day but can only consciously attend to about 50 bits. Intention setting helps us pay attention to the 50 bits that best serve us, by setting an instruction for your brain to refocus your conscious processes. In the case of the bike shopping, we may have set that intention consciously, but it generally happens just because the background operational system of our brain is thinking "new bike!" Intention setting makes that process overt and systematic.

This is especially important when we realize that the background operational system of the brain is watching for threats to our safety and survival more than anything else. It's not that we want to turn that off, but it does mean we are wired for the negative in most of our interactions.

Intentions are about how we want to interact in the world, what we want to notice, and who we want to be. This will end up supporting with our goal attainment (because you may be paying attention to opportunities to advance your goals for example) but is about the successful humaning that stands apart (and above) our goal achievement.

So let's start with our locus of control.



In the larger, shaded part of the circle, write in the things you do not have control over.  
In the inner circle, write in the things you *\*do\** have control over.

In some way shape or form, your answers centered the fact that you do not have control over the behaviors of others, but you do have control over yourself right? This is important for intention setting, because whatever you set needs to be grounded in your own locus of control. While “I don’t want to argue with anyone” is a nice goal to have, you don’t have control over their argumentative nature of someone else. An intention of “I will presume the best intent of those around me” will go a long way to prevent you from starting an argument AND will go a long way in helping you manage an argument that you get invited to participate in by someone else, right?

Intention Examples May Include:

- 1) I intend to be accountable for my actions
- 2) I intend to not take the behaviors of others personally
- 3) I intend to pause before reacting in all circumstances
- 4) I intend to be hopeful about the future
- 5) I intend to speak as kindly to myself as I would to anyone else I love





## **My Weekly Intention Review**

My Overall Wins: In which ways was I successful with my intention?

My Overall Growth Opportunities: Where did I most struggle?

Is this an intention that is of benefit to me? Do I want to carry it forward or make any adjustments?