

## **Living the Intentional Life: *There is no Expiration Date on Dreams***

To live the intentional life is to live with purpose, to pursue your dreams and to experience growth during your journey. It requires that you take the time to listen to your heart and take action to realize your dreams.

Do you believe in your ability to transform those yearning and needs into reality? When you do, it means the difference between surviving and thriving, between being a victim of circumstance or the master of your own destiny. It is never too late, because there is no expiration date on dreams.

*“If you develop a sense of your own power to change your life, you will have a gift that can never be taken away from you. You will always have hope for a better outcome, and you will never remain stuck in being a victim of circumstance.”* **Greg Barrett**

In this article we show you how to align your heart, head and hands in order to live an *Intentional Life*. You *can* achieve your heart’s desire. However, merely deciding to make a change in your habits, attitudes or behaviors will not bring about the transformation you want.

*Creating a life that you love takes dreams, commitment and your hard work; it starts by making a personal choice.*

**Step 1: Create Reflective Space.** For many people, making a change in their life’s path, means making space to think about what’s important – life and death important. However, the pace of life and competing demands often get in the way. You may be so busy meeting your obligations that you fail to take care of yourself first. Learn to listen to your heart and become familiar with your needs and hopes – know exactly what you want and desire. Slow down and examine your thoughts and feelings that have been put on hold. Sometimes permanent hold, because there has always been “one more thing to do” before you can take the time to sit in reflection on what is important to you.

Putting yourself at the top of the list ensures that you can tap into your intuition, which is the source of your personal wisdom, because when you take the time to reflect about what is important to you, you will usually find that you already know the answer. Intuition tends to lie dormant in many of us, because our rational world says you can only trust what you see. However, your intuition is a powerful tool that often makes significant connections just below the conscious level – if only you take the time to listen.

When you listen to your intuition – your heart and mind – you often find the answers were there all along. Here are a few questions to get you started, and don’t be concerned if at first you can’t answer them, this is about reflection and that takes time:

- At this time in your life, what’s truly important to you (family, meaningful work, feeling passionate, health, learning, relationships, creativity, spiritual work, etc.)?
- What is draining you?
- Where would you like to spend more of your time?
- What’s been sitting on the backburner that is important to you?
- What gives you energy and makes you passionate?

- In what areas of your life would you like to give more attention?
- What do you want to let go of?

When you can answer these questions from your heart and hear your intuitive voice, you will be able to articulate your dreams. In fact, creating the reflective space to sit and think deeply about your needs is your first step on the journey to living an intentional life. For instance, when you start to schedule reflective time, you are establishing boundaries on what you will and won't do, and you make conscious decisions that take you in the direction you desire. This small but powerful step, gives you the energy and motivation to try something different, while continually expanding your horizons and your life.

**Step 2: Give Voice to Your Dreams.** What you think about is what you lean towards – your thoughts direct your actions – so focus on what you want. Articulating your hopes and needs brings them into the light of day and the realm of possibility. Turning them into goals establishes your purpose, it gives you focus and helps maintain your commitment.

To implement this step, think the important area of your life and select one area (think about your answers to the reflective questions) and follow the instructions below for each area:

- **Identify Current Situation** – Write a statement that describes your situation as it looks now, using as few words as possible.
- **Imagine Your Future** – What would your life look if there were no obstacles to obtaining what you want? Visualize what you want – not just what's possible – what you really want. Write it down. Be specific.
- **Consequences of Doing Nothing** – How will you feel and what will it cost you if you fail to change your circumstances? Write it down. Be specific.
- **Identify Your Payoff** – How will you feel to know that you have achieved something that is vital and necessary to your purpose and well being? Write it down. Be specific.
- **Write Your Goal** – Visualize what it feels and looks like to have achieved your goal. The more you can hear, feel, taste, smell and touch your future, the more real it will seem. Use powerful words, written in the present tense as if your goal was accomplished. Write it down. Be specific.

By seeing the future as if it is already achieved, you establish *Dissonance*. It creates tension and dissatisfaction with the present, and provides you with the motivation for moving towards a different tomorrow.

**Step 3: Take Action.** Act or be acted upon. This statement sounds harsh, but that is the reality. Each day, continue to create a space for your reflective time, and start to use it for planning and implementing the changes that are necessary to live your intentional life. You possess the ability to achieve whatever you set your mind to, and here are three guidelines to make that possible:

- Attitude – Remain positive and committed. Your *attitude* is the control center of your life. An attitude of positive expectations helps you overcome the obstacles you encounter. While your attitude can be influenced by the people and the events surrounding you, ultimately it is yours; it belongs to you. The foundation for a positive attitude is the power of self-talk. When you see yourself as the positive master of your life, you recognize opportunities and find solutions to roadblocks, because in your heart of hearts – you believe you can.

- Focus – People who are intent upon achieving the life they desire, think about it constantly. Here are two tools to maintain a strong *focus*: 1) Visualization – Your mind has the ability to form powerful mental images. Like a compass pointing North, your rich visualization keeps you pointed on the path towards achieving your goals – regardless of the obstacles. 2) Anchoring – Through your five senses, bring your goal to life by assimilating it into your subconscious; anchoring it with the vividness of your emotions and five senses as having accomplished your goal.
- Inquiry – Possess a childlike sense of *curiosity* about the object of your focus. Your curiosity creates an irrepressible energy that helps you overcome the daily obstacles you face. Inquiry leads to new insights and knowledge that re-energize your commitment. A curious mind-set lends itself to the art of possibility.

There is no expiration date on dreams! Live the intentional life. As Maya Angelou wrote:

*“Lift up your eyes upon this day breaking for you, give birth again to the dream.  
The horizon leans forward offering you space to place new steps of change.”*

Contact us to receive a **FREE** Goal Writing Worksheet.  
This tool helps you craft your goals into actionable plans. We will also include a list of  
power-words to give your goals emotional traction.