

INTENTION SETTING EXERCISE



*“Intention leads to behaviors
which lead to habits which lead to personality
development which leads to destiny.”*

—JACK KORNFIELD

AIDING A GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL IN SETTING intentions for what they want to bring into their lives, or possibly let go of in their lives, is a very powerful practice. Many times we can get extremely caught up in our day-to-day routines, and we forget to stop, take a step back, and look at ourselves, our businesses,

our long-term or even short-term goals with an aerial view. It gives people time to reflect: “What do I really want in my life?” “What do I want to let go of that is no longer serving me?”

This exercise gives your employees permission to take the time to do this. The tool that I like to use with intention-setting exercises is flying wish paper. If you’ve never heard of it, it is awesome! (I’ve highlighted my favorite types on the Resources page.) You can also just use journals or sheets of paper for this exercise, but I highly recommend the flying wish paper for the “WOW!” effect.

If you are able to meet with your team in person this is a great exercise to gather everyone around after a meeting or after dinner. I once rented out a bed and breakfast for my team, and we did this intention-setting exercise before everyone went to bed. It was extremely impactful. This will connect your team with each other on a higher level, build psychological safety, and bond everyone together by building empathy and respect for one another.

Hand out a piece of wish paper to every individual and ask them to write two to three intentions, wishes, or goals that they would like to bring into their life. Stress to the group that this is their own personal-growth exercise and the intentions can be either business-related or personal. Once they write their

intentions down on the wish paper, ask for volunteers to share their intentions. If it is a smaller group, then everyone should have a chance to share.

Saying these intentions out loud in front of their peers has a powerful effect and helps to bring those intentions into their lives. Be sure to keep an eye on the silent ones in the group. Call on them and ask if they would like to share. But if they opt not to share with the group, respect their space. I've discovered that by doing this you are letting people know that they are seen and can be heard if they choose to be. Make sure not to underestimate the quiet individuals in a group. Some of them are the most deeply impacted by these exercises. I've had many individuals who are more comfortable in a one-on-one setting pull me aside to let me know how inspiring this was and thanked me for the session.

Once everyone has had an opportunity to share, if you are using the wish paper, ask everyone to crinkle up their paper, roll it into a vertical tube, then set it on a little square of cardboard, and light the tip on fire. Everyone can light their wish paper on fire at once, or you can choose to go around the room and have each person share and light theirs one by one. The intentions that were shared burn to the bottom of the board, lift off of the board and fly into the air, sending your intentions off into the universe. It is a very magical thing to witness. People love the feeling of watching and being a part of this.

If you want to delve even deeper with your intention-setting exercises, you can time them with the phases of the moon. The new moon is a great time to set intentions for things that you would like to bring into your life. You can share with everyone that as the moon grows, you can watch your intentions grow. In addition, if you are near the time of a full moon, it is a great time to let go of something that is not serving you in your life.

If you don't care about the moon phases one way or another, have your team pick either something to let go of, or something they want to bring into their life and write it on the paper. Either way, the WOW! effect and impact will be there.

Be prepared to respect whatever may be shared. As a leader or coach, many people look to you as a mentor and someone to look up to. Therefore, things may be shared that are very sacred or personal. I recommend just holding space for that moment in time and then moving on afterward. For example, I performed the flying wish paper exercise with a team around the time of the full moon, and I recommended writing two to three items down that you want to let go of or release in your life. One individual shared with the group that he was going to forgive his parents. He took a deep breath, lit the paper on fire, and we all watched it burn and fly into the air. It was a beautiful moment. Others may share something humorous, such as releasing their anger that their favorite team didn't win in the NBA finals.

Either way, lead the exercise with no judgment, and let everyone share what they wish. The different personalities and the acceptance of where each individual is in their life are what make the world less boring and more fun to partake in.

You can also use this exercise in front of larger crowds, and it has a very profound impact. I once helped the CEO of a large organization let go of a really rough prior year for the company in front of all of his executive leaders. It was extremely cathartic for him to simply write the prior year's number down on wish paper in front of everyone, light the wish paper on fire, watch it burn down then fly up in the air, and, finally, let it all go and move forward to what came next. It was not only healing for himself, but for his team who watched him do it. I was honored to be a part of it.