

# Story Block: *Intention*

*Exploring the art and  
science of Intention*



*in partnership with*

**H O L S T E E**

# Story Block: Intention



When it was time to write a new slogan for High Point Financial Design, we talked through at least a dozen concepts until we wrote one that felt just right: “Intentional Planning. Abundant Living.” Our desire is to help clients use money as a tool to pursue their version of an abundant life. We know this doesn’t happen on accident. It requires a vision, focus and commitment.

We believe we can shape our future self by changing our identity today. This naturally begs the question, what is the identity you are telling yourself? Once we have clarity about the person we want to be, we must begin to act “as if” we were already that person.

More specifically, I have found that intention in my life comes down to 4 components: Discipline, Wisdom, Love and Surrender. Discipline to build a life around empowering habit. Wisdom earned through the classroom that is everyday life. Love to open my heart to listen and learn from people around me. Surrender to accept the parts of life that are out of my control.

It is with intention that we can create the lives we envision. Here’s to cultivating more intention in your life, today.

*BW*

# Intention

Our thoughts lead to action.  
Our actions create our experiences.  
Our experiences define our character.

In each moment we decide  
who we'll become — start this  
one with intention.

HOLSTEE

## Intention *noun*

in·ten·tion | in-'ten(t)-shən

1. A determination to act in a certain way, resolve.
2. What one intends to do or bring about.
2. A concept considered as the product of attention directed to an object of knowledge.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary © 2019

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In this guide, we explore intention and goal-setting — and the difference between the two.

A **goal** describes what you want to achieve, while an intention is the deeper purpose behind your actions. While goals are important, they are always focused on the future. When you reflect on your **intention**, it brings you into the present moment.

**For example:** A goal might be “run 10 miles per week” while an intention would be to “prioritize wellness.”

Setting an intention encourages you to focus on your personal values and remember what’s important.

In the following pages you will be guided through setting your intention, creating goals, and we will share tips on how to execute those goals.





“How we spend our days is, of course,  
how we spend our lives. What we do  
with this hour, and that one, is what  
we are doing.”

A N N I E D I L L A R D



# Intentions and Goals

A common question on this theme is, ‘*what’s the difference between a goal and an intention?*’

A **goal** has a specific outcome, describes what you want to do, is future-focused, and based on external accomplishment..

## GOALS

- Do stand-up comedy
- Run a marathon
- Go to Hawaii

An **intention** is about your relationship with yourself. It links us back to the present moment and is internally focused. It often describes how you want to be or feel.

## INTENTIONS

- Be joyful
- Be healthy
- Feel at peace

Unlike a goal, you don’t have to wait to accomplish an intention. As long as you decide to ‘be joyful’ or ‘at peace’ in this moment you’re practicing your intention – you can literally start the moment your mind decides to do so.

Goals only lose their meaning and feel robotic when the intention behind them is lost. But when you reconnect your to-do list back to your intention, even the most mundane task can feel purposeful again. For this reason, combining intentions with goals allows us to enjoy the journey as much as the destination.

# Intention

## Part 1: Intention

To set an intention, consider what you would like to be at the root of all your actions for the next 12 months. This could be an actionable phrase or a word you want to center your year around.

**Example:** Your intention could be “live with grace,” or simply “clarity.”

*My intention is:*

A large grid of dots for writing an intention.

**Nicely done!** 🙌 Your intention is meant to be as dynamic as you. It may change as you learn and grow throughout the year. Don’t hesitate to return to this guide and work through the exercises again when you feel like you need to refocus.



# Setting Goals

Leo Babauta, writer and creator of *Zen Habits*, shares this advice for breaking down goals, creating good habits, and sticking with them:

## Look ahead

When setting annual goals, it's important to make sure they align with your larger goals. If you have 5-year, 10-year, or longer goals, be sure to keep them in mind. And if you don't, right now might be a great time to start thinking about them!

## Review regularly

Take a look at your goals each month and week, review how you did, and make any necessary adjustments. Reviewing helps us not lose track when obstacles arise.

## Get specific

Break your goals down into smaller individual action steps. Consider narrowing them into monthly, weekly, and daily goals if applicable.

## Stay focused

Leo Babauta recommends doing one task related to your goal each day, first thing in the morning if possible. He writes, "Once you complete it, you have done something awesome for that day — you've taken a small step towards making your dreams come true!" What better way to start the day?!

*At the end of the day, the questions we ask of ourselves determine the type of people that we will become.*

LEO BABAUTA

**TIP:** Here are two suggestions to help you get started:

**BE POSITIVE.** Health psychologist and TED speaker Kelly McGonigal says, "Any sort of avoidance is going to trigger inhibition systems, whereas positive goals are going to trigger approach and reward motivation." So try and articulate your goal positively, or as something to strive towards rather than avoid. Instead of "spend less time on Facebook" try "spend time with one friend each week."

**GO DEEP.** Ask tough questions and examine your motives. You should have a clear sense of why you set your goal so when obstacles inevitably come up, there will be no question of whether or not to keep moving forward.

## What are 5 goals you hope to achieve this year?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Are these goals aligned with your longer-term goals?** Y / N

**Can they be broken down into smaller action steps?** Y / N

**Are they goals you can reasonably achieve this year?** Y / N

\* If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above, take a moment to revise your goals and make sure they are effective and achievable.



“Your hand opens and closes, opens and closes. If it were always a fist or always stretched open, you would be paralyzed. Your deepest presence is in every small contracting and expanding, the two as beautifully balanced and coordinated as birds’ wings.”

R U M I , S U F I P O E T



# Building Habits

Now, let's see how we can create a system that will lead to results.

In his book *Atomic Habits*, James Clear reminds us that profound changes rarely come from a single massive action, rather from “atomic” size changes that we consistently practice.

Below are three tips from his book to help us create our own systems.

**To start, think of one habit you want to implement.** Whether you want to meditate daily, call a friend, or read more books, the more specific you get, the more useful this exercise is.

## Two Minute Rule

While big goals are great, when it comes to creating lasting change, it helps to **start small**. When you start a new habit, consider making it as easy and simple as possible, and grow from there.

I will **habit** for just two minutes.

Example: I will **sit quietly and focus on my breath** for just two minutes.

Goals are good for setting a direction,  
but systems are best for making progress.

JAMES CLEAR

## Habit Stacking

One of the best ways to build a new habit is to identify a current habit you have and “stack it” with your newly desired habit.

After **current habit**, I will **new habit**.

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Example: After I **brush my teeth**, I will **meditate**.

## Implementation Intention

The two most common cues that trigger a habit are: time and location. By deciding on your when and where, you'll make the decision making process easier and lower your chance of getting distracted.

I will **behavior** at **time** in **location**.

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Example: I will **meditate** at **8:00am** in **the chair next to my bed**.

## Putting It All Together

To review, once you've chosen a habit you'd like to focus on:

- Start small.
- Brainstorm habits you already have in place and decide which one(s) makes the most sense to stack.
- Decide when and where would be best to implement the habit.



# Jumping Ahead

Imagine for a moment that you hit all of your milestones and soared past your goal. Really get into it. Meditate on it. Close your eyes and get present with all your senses in the future moment of having attained it.

**Write down three to five things that got you to this moment:**

Grid of dots for writing.

What is the impact of having achieved this goal? **Describe what you are feeling and seeing in this future state.** Specifically, what has changed? What can you do now that you couldn't do before?

Grid of dots for writing.

Large grid of dots for writing.

**Woohoo!** 🙌 This is a great start. Sending high-fives and good vibes for your upcoming year from the whole Holstee crew. We're rooting for you.



# Reflect & Discuss

Use these questions for self-reflection or to spark meaningful conversations.

## ICEBREAKERS

What are your best habits or routines?

What are your worst habits or routines?

If you could only accomplish one goal this year, what would it be?

## DEEPER QUESTIONS

What do you want to change most about your life this year?

What habits do you want to focus on this year?

What's one thing you could do today to encourage that change?

If you could magically change one habit in your life, what would it be and why?



“*Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time.*”

*Vision with action can change the world.*

JOEL A. BARKER

