

# My 3C's Programme 6 week Self-Care Components

## 3 INTENTION

*You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step*

**Martin Luther King, Jr**

### What is it?

In certain aspects of our lives we will have particular goals that are set for us to work towards achieving.

If you are at work, then there will be goals that you are expected or expect of yourself to achieve each day, week, month, different timescales depending on the level of the task.

If you have ever been part of a weight loss programme like Slimming World or Weight watchers, then you will have your goal weight, and this will be tied in with a timescale.

Sometimes goals can keep us on track, help us to know exactly, precisely what it is we have to do to get us from A to B. It gives us a direction and also can help with routine if we have an order of what we are doing, when we are doing it.

This is what I mean by Intention — using the word goal seems to feel more fixed, but if we use the word intention it feels less pressure. The same outcomes are achieved but we work with intention. And an **Intention Review** is simply examining and confirming the goals you have for your life or a project, or work or exercise or anything that you have in your sight as achieving.

My Open University course is full of goals — at the start of the year I know what unit I have to complete each week, I know what the assignment deadlines are and when I have to start working on them.

But is it a different question when it comes to my life intentions?

In life it can be less clear, if we ask ourselves what do we want in order to live a happier life, goals/intentions can be difficult to identify. Examples:

- I want a bigger car by the end of the year.
- I want a new sofa by March 2022.
- I want to be running 5K by 15th December

are a little clearer because then I can plan how much I run every day in order to get me there by 15th. But I want my life to feel happier by 1st January is a bit like making New Year's Resolutions. Unless I have some intentions along the way that will get me there, then it's unlikely that I will **ever** get there!

### How to do it?

The first thing needed to set life intentions is to have a specific statement of intention.

And this needs to be written down, perhaps in the back of your gratitude journal. Write it completely without any abbreviations or shortcuts. This is a simple but powerful statement related to what it is you want to create, achieve, do or become.

Once a day focus all of your conscious attention on this statement while reading it aloud or silently to yourself in your head. This can be done in a quiet space, a peaceful space so, that you can completely focus on your statement of intent.

It is vital to create a strong visual and emotional connection to the words you have written. And when you are reading it daily, bring life and feeling and imagination to the words you are reading. The words need to be felt.

5 minutes a day spend reading and feeling your specific intention. We want this statement to not be

held up by any objections that can come from the conscious brain, we want it to become set into our subconscious mind so that it becomes the new language of your mindset.

As you work with this statement, you can start to produce shorter, emotive versions that you can listen to or think about throughout the day and this then becomes more powerful. You are developing your own intention review system.

As an example ... Often we think we will be happier if we have a better work/life balance. But what does this mean, how do we achieve it?

If we take a childhood story of Alice in Wonderland ... Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire Cat in a tree. *Which road do I take* she asked. *Where do you want to go?* was the cat's reply. *I don't know* Alice answered. *Then, it doesn't matter* said the cat.

If the goal is a better work/life balance in order to be happier, then the specific intention needs to be written out with thought and feeling about what it means to us to achieve it.

In other words: **WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?**

In order to get a specific intention statement we have to look at two factors:

1. A single question: Without obstacles, objections or explicit outcomes what do I want? A personal story that I can share, is that over 6 years ago, I was teaching for approximately 28 hours a week ... that's a lot of teaching and it was making me quite ill. I was stressed, my voice was wearing out, I was never at home, as I was either travelling between venues or at the studio working. It was making me unhappy. My question was — *what do I want?* In answering the question, I wanted to spend more time at home, because I wanted to be able to spend more time with Keith and my family and friends. I wanted to spend less time travelling between venues, less time teaching, and also less time teaching in the unsocial hours, so that if I chose I could go out for a meal with friends or family in the evening. I wanted more free time that would allow me to do other things that I loved to do, like go away for a weekend break, or go to the theatre. I wanted to feel less stressed and not tired when I woke up in the morning. My statement of intention based on my answer to the question: I can make some changes to my working patterns, I can start to reduce the hours of teaching that I perform, but without disappointing my clients. I can make sure I have quality teachers to take over those classes, which means no-one loses out. I can start to spend more time at home, less time travelling, and start to enjoy other things in my life and share that with Keith, my family and friends. By getting this time back I will be able to invest in my own health and wellbeing which will have a ripple effect on everyone around me. I will be able to reclaim some of my evenings so that I am not having to go out in the dark to teach.
2. A guiding principle: I can't always predict or control circumstances and situations, but I can adjust and change in order to move in the right direction. Applying the guiding principle these are the things I started to do in order to make changes and achieve my intentions: In order to move in the right direction I knew I wanted to continue to deliver Pilates to the people I was teaching, so the first step was to engage other teachers so that I could hand over classes to them. The second step was to train people to teach, this would then allow me to hand over classes to people I trusted and who would deliver high quality classes. My time would then start to free up, and then I would have more time to invest in achieving the other parts of my intention.

Did it happen smoothly? — NO, of course it didn't: some people didn't react well to me handing over classes to others. Did problems arise? — YES, some clients left, classes lost numbers so some classes had to be closed. Did all the teachers want to pick up the classes I wanted to hand over? — NO, because they also didn't want to teach unsocial hours ...

But I kept my statement of intention, I would look at it every day, reminding myself of what I was working towards, and I was moving in the right direction. My work/life balance was improving, I was able to start spending time doing other things than teaching Pilates. Definitely my health and wellbeing has benefited, physically and emotionally.

A specific intention is not about absolutes, exact, precise, in fact thinking like this can lead to inaction, and prevent us from taking the first step. Applying this to weight loss programmes, setting a very precise goal weight, by a specific time can have the opposite effect. And if we make one slip off target, it can lead us to a dead end, and we feel we have failed so therefore its not worth carrying on.

But if the intention is about eating a healthier diet, increasing our exercise, drinking more water because we want to feel we have more energy, we want to feel our clothes fit us better, and we want to feel good in mind and body then this is about creating an intention, we don't need to know the precise nature of the outcome like how much we weigh. We can decide what we want, write it down and create our own specific intention and take steps towards getting there.

### **Why do it ?**

Every day we get times of disappointment, struggles, successes, and flops — and although we hear motivational speakers tell us every situation is a learning situation, it is still a challenge. The constant swing from highs to lows can affect our energy levels and leave us feeling flat. If we are trying to work on our mindset and keep us in our growth mindset it isn't about pretending that the ups and downs don't happen, it's just about maintaining a course of direction no matter what is happening.

It's like having a compass on board a ship keeping the specificity of intention of where you want to head to and where you want to be, but along the way weather, winds, rains, storms means a change of direction, not a change of destination just a different way of getting there. Keeping your intention at the forefront of your mind and practising this routinely will make you feel more assured of what it is you want.

It's about building belief, and keeping the stories in your favour in your subconscious mind, keeping your mindset in a growth state rather than a fixed state.

### **When to do it?**

Doing an Intention Review at the end of the day, before going to bed, is a great time to do it. It allows you time to focus on your intention, the direction you are heading in, and also to assess if you have taken any steps towards achieving your intention or whether you need to review your direction, change the sails on your ship and set a different course.

### **YOUR TASKS THIS WEEK:**

1. Ask yourself this question: What do you really want? If there were no obstacles or barriers in your way.
2. Follow the guiding principle: I can't always predict or control circumstances and situations, but I can adjust and change in order to move in the right direction.
3. Write down in full your statement of intention .... This could be small, big, personal, work related, relationships .... Give it as much detail as possible, and for 5 minutes every day read it, out loud to yourself, or silently to yourself and start to keep it in the forefront of your mind. Starting to make plans about the course of direction you are going to take to achieve your intentions.
4. At the end of each day review your intention and assess if you have done anything towards moving in the right direction or whether you need to change your sails to cope with the changing weather conditions.