- Conduct of life

8 ways to shift to intentional living

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OPERATING on autopilot–moving about your day driven by conditioned habits, regular routines, and automatic reactions–may lead to reduced self-awareness, increased burnout, and less enjoyment in life.

This could include consumption of an entire meal while you finish a series or film–only to realize that you have not tasted the food. It may even be unconsciously doomscrolling through social media for several hours.

By becoming more intentional in your day-to-day behavior, you can design a life around your core beliefs–one driven by goals and filled with clarity and personal happiness. Ultimately, intentional living not only enhances mindfulness and presence, and increases feelings of control. It also encourages healthy habits, supports better decision-making, and strengthens relationships.

Margarita Tartakovsky, MS, the author of the mental health journal Vibe Check: Be Your Best You, advises, "Take action and make decisions that are important to you."

"The key is to identify what that personally means for you–and make small but significant shifts and conscious choices to build it," she added.

The expert clarified making some changes can be difficult, especially if your current intentions do not line up with what you've learned in your early life.

"Remind yourself that it is totally natural to feel a range of emotions while on an intentional living path," she advised. "After all, you're a human being doing the best you can."

For guidance, the experts from the Benilde Well-being Center (BWC) of the De La Salle-college of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) shared Tartakovsky's tips. This includes insights from Shelley Meche'tte, certified life purpose and confidence coach; Genevieve Piturro, coach and speaker; and Jackie Tassielo and Lisa Olivera, who are both therapists.

The article was first published on Psych Central, a Healthline-owned website which provides evidence-based mental health information. It was medically reviewed by Joslyn Jelinek, a licensed social worker who specializes in perinatal mental health and chronic pain.

Here are some key points:

1. TUNE OUT THE NOISE. Pause. Identify the biggest distractions in your life. Limit or let them go altogether. Do not allow social media, other people, or anything else dictate your goals.
2. IDENTIFY YOUR VALUES. Ask yourself: What does an ideal day look like? What inspires you? What activities bring meaning and contentment?
3. SET A MORNING INTENTION. It can be a few words, a sentence, a meditation practice, or giving thanks. This will remind you of the choices you make.
4. REFOCUS. Infuse intentionality into your activities. When cooking, use your five senses to notice the sensations. During chores, identify its purpose, whether it is to create a more peaceful home or to care for yourself.
5. CREATE SMALL SHIFTS. When you know what is important to you, you can make the best choices for yourself. Start a slow morning ritual to reconnect with yourself. Avoid social media at night if it keeps you up past bedtime. Have a weekly call with a friend to grow relationships.
6. CREATE A VISION BOARD. Transform your dreams into words and pictures. Emotionally connect with your goals. Manifest them into life. Contents may include your family, career, love life, hobbies, and empowering phrases.
7. RECOUNT YOUR INTENTIONS. Replay the ways you contributed to living with purpose per day. Simply recite these in your mind. Perhaps jot them down in your journal.
8. GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK. Use kind self-talk which validates your emotional experience. Listen to meditations which remind you of self-kindness. Be like a good friend to yourself.