

Cultivating Intention to Notice

intend *vb* 1 : a : to purpose, have in mind : CONSTRUE, INTERPRET b : to refer to SIGNIFY, MEAN 2 : a : to direct the mind or attention b : to design for a purpose
intent *n* 1 a : the act or fact of intending : PURPOSE b : the state of mind with which an act is done : VOLITION
intention *n* 1 : a : determination to act in a certain way : RESOLVE b : what one has in mind to do or bring about

As you can see from the above dictionary definitions, intention means having a certain purpose in mind and willing it to happen. All awareness practice begins with intention. We intend to notice our breath or the rising and falling of our abdomen or the sensations and feelings in our body or the thoughts racing through our heads or other obstacles to the practice of awareness that occur from time to time. **We set the intent to notice.**

Exercise 2: Setting the Intent

Procedure

- 1. Relax.** (See previous exercise.)
- 2. Place your body in a posture of intention.** Think back to a past experience in which you knew what your purpose was, what you wanted to do. Recall, as clearly as you can, how you held your body. Were you sitting or standing? Right now, in this moment, place your body in that posture as best you can.
- 2. Fill your body with the emotions of intention.** Continuing with your recollection of a time when your purpose was clear, bring back to memory the emotions you felt at that time. Now, in the present moment, bring those emotions back into your body.
- 3. Write down your intention.** In a simple declarative sentence, write down what you intend to do. For example: *"I intend to notice my breath from this moment forward."* Make notes here or use your learning journal so all your work is in one place.

4. Release your intention. Having recalled the posture and feeling of intention from the past and having written down what you intend to do in the future, release all concern for your success or any outcome. *Simply let go.*

You can use this exercise for both positive actions you'd like to complete and actions with negative consequences that you'd like to stop.

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