

Learn the Six Key Characteristics of an Intentional Leader

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THE LAW OF INTENTIONALITY: REACHING GOALS THROUGH INTENTIONAL EFFORT

The law of intentionality: No worthy accomplishment or goal of worth is reached by accident. It requires an intentional effort to reach your goals, have a maximum impact on your life and add value to others' lives. Intentional leaders are in the people business first, their industry second, and are there to add value to everyone they encounter.

In high school, I wasn't the smartest person in class. I had high grades in a competitive environment. I frequently made the dean's list and the honor roll, but I didn't score high enough to be at the top scholastically. I was, however, one of the most intentional students in a structured military school.

My sophomore year, I decided to run for "Funniest Man on Campus" and won by a landslide. The next year, I entered the race for school vice president, and I had to write an article about the race from an insider's view for the school paper. Once I figured out how to get students to vote for me, I won again. I graduated as the most decorated ROTC officer in our school.

I was active in church. I participated in choir, drama productions, and community activities — all with a goal attached to them: to use my intentional creative skills to add value to others — and that continues today.

Many clients and leaders say their people seem to lack the motivation to develop a productive daily routine. They know what they ought to do but allow other concerns to get in



the way. It speaks to priorities and self-discipline, but often indicates a lack of focus. Many people don't live intentionally.

Our daily routines are often interrupted by distractions. If you worked from home during the pandemic, you have likely realized what most of us who worked from home have known for years: home offices lend themselves to distractions. It is hard to be intentional when minor disturbances constantly call your attention away from accomplishing major tasks.

If you live an intentional life, you will find yourself ignoring many distractions that will eventually take care of themselves. Intentional people know that if they focus on their purpose for business (or life), everything else will fall in line behind their priorities.

Making Momentum

Intentional people are self-motivated, and momentum has become their best friend. Motivation often makes large problems smaller. Motivation makes achievers excited to accomplish each task and see it through to the finish. Motivated people generate their own momentum – and momentum takes care of many distractions.

Are you a “momentum maker?” Intentional sales leaders are momentum makers. Intentional service leaders are momentum makers.

I compare it to something you have in your house. Look at the thermometer in your work area. What is the temperature? The thermometer is influenced by the thermostat setting for that area. Many people are thermometers, allowing something else to influence their mood or environment. A thermostat influences the thermometer. It tells the thermometer what to do. Are you a thermostat or a thermometer?

Intentional leaders have a passion to be significant and contribute to the lives of others. They seek to add value to the world around them with their talents and skills. They want to make a difference.

To understand the journey of an intentional leader, consider the following are six characteristics. Today’s intentional leaders are:

1. PURPOSE-DRIVEN

They know their purpose in life and want to take steps to accomplish that purpose every day. They know who they are and what they can do to add value to others. If they are good at executing on their purpose, then they have found a way to contribute and get people to pay them for it. They don’t wait to be “good” at something to start accomplishing their purpose.

What are you good at doing? Don’t wait to start; start now to become not only good, but better. Know your purpose and start using what you have. Spend time each day or each week focused on improving upon your strengths.

Put aside your weaknesses and focus on getting better – just as an artist practices drawing simple objects or a hockey player practices taking the shots they are great at making.

2. NEVER SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO

They work outside of their comfort zones. Stretch yourself to gain new ground every day. Be so uncomfortable with yesterday’s accomplishments that you want to exceed them today. Never rest on your laurels (recognition, trophies, awards, or successes).

Consider how many championship teams fail to repeat the next season. They sit back, sign autographs, and lose their competitive edge. Repeat champions never forget what got them to the top. They stay in shape, keep their daily routines, and set a repeat as their goal.

3. FOCUSED ON SUCCESS AS JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

This speaks to your view of success. If it is a destination, you will almost always fail to reach it – or put off getting there. However, if you see success as a journey, each day holds a new step to take.

Prioritize the important tasks required to be successful daily. Jim Rohan suggests making an “I should” list. These are things you should do. It has more impact than a to-do list. Make an “I should” list and start on it today. You can look at most people’s daily to-do lists and tell if they live intentionally or bounce from one circumstance to another like a ball in a pinball machine.

4. DRIVEN DAILY BY AGENDAS ACCORDING TO PURPOSE

Show up each day ready to accomplish something, whether it is your sales goal for the day, your management goal to train others to grow in their abilities, or your service goals to help a specific number of people get better service from you. Add value to others and you will always find a sense of accomplishment and gain momentum. I guarantee that if you spend your time helping other people, you will have an improved attitude and success each day. Remember, you’re in the people business.

5. SELF-DISCIPLINED

They are strong in setting personal boundaries. Their goals stretch them and are attainable with effort. Where do you want to be next year, or in three, or five years? What steps will you take to get there before tomorrow to begin that journey?


How can you be an intentional individual in your field or on your team? How can you be so goal-oriented that even the distractions are in awe of your purposeful actions? What sacrifices need to be made to focus on what is most necessary to meet your goals?

6. PASSIONATE ABOUT BEING THE BEST

Think about how you drive over speed bumps. You slow down, take the bump slowly, and continue moving forward. Do you ever look back at it? Of course not. Intentional leaders turn roadblocks into speed bumps and move on, never looking behind.

Remember the last time you made a sale? Or the last time you achieved an award for outstanding project delivery or safety standards? Remember how great you felt with the next task? That was a choice you made based on your feelings. Intentional people know how to make the same choice every day. They do not allow their feelings to make it for them. That is self-discipline at its best. Your passion for success sets the pace for intentionality.

How can you be intentional about bidding more jobs today? How can you be intentional about being better at leading and equipping others today? How can you be intentional about giving better customer service to the next person you encounter? How can you take your work in the construction business and turn it into the people business?

Most importantly, how can you be intentional about your attitude toward work, the people you work with, the clients you meet, and the circumstances that arise today? What can you do to take control and live intentionally each moment going forward? As you live intentionally, you will continually find that your passion is what carries you and that life matters more each day. 



About the Author

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