Module 6 Exercise
Step Four: Intention Setting

An excerpt from the book, *Conscious Creation*

Intention setting is different from goal setting or making resolutions. With goal setting, we say, "I'm going to lose twenty pounds by June," "I'm going to ask for a raise," or "I'm going to stop smoking," and then we try to figure out how to make them happen. Often when we set goals we put ourselves in the driver's seat: "I'm going to make this happen." There's definitely a place for this type of goal setting—it helps move us beyond Martyr Consciousness, from "The world happens *to* me," to Magical Thinking, "I *make* things happen (refer to the introduction for a recap of these). This type of goal setting is fine, but it is not part of Step 4 because it often comes from the needs of the ego and is led by the intellect. When our goals are grounded in ego, our goals are acts of will. We are "making things happen." The intellect is vital, but it doesn't lead us to our true nature.

Releasing Statement

I release the need to control outcomes.

Affirming Statement

I am the powerful creator of my life.

Simple Meditation Practice

This module's meditation is a nature walk. This meditation is quite simple. Find a nature trail, beach, or other quiet place where you can spend 30 minutes walking. Please do this practice alone and in silence. Simply notice what emerges as you spend time walking in nature. What are you aware of? What are you thinking? Feeling? As always, once you have finished the walk, write about the experience.

What is Intention Setting? Exercise: *"The longer and more deeply you sit with your vision, the clearer it will become, and out of this profound knowing will come pure intentions. Intentions can appear suddenly, or they can require time to gestate. And, it is important that you clarify and create intentions that 'point' to the visions you are receiving in the silence. Clarifying these intentions takes them from the ethereal realm of potential—'This would be great' or 'If only this could happen'—and brings them into the solid realm of reality."* (Conscious Creation, page 105)

- What does this excerpt mean to you?

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- What do you think we mean by "pure intentions" in this excerpt?

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- What do you think we mean by "ethereal realm of potential" in this excerpt?

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"The first part of Step 4 is really the 'last' part of Step 3, patient listening. Staying in the visioning process. As you continue to sit with your vision, pay attention to what comes to you; look at it not with analysis or judgment, but with openness and curiosity: 'Oh, look at that. Isn't that interesting?' Take the time to be with what comes day after day, meditation after meditation, asking again and again 'What is the highest vision for my life?' This will allow you to nurture the oneness with your essential self and clarify the inner messages that make up your vision." (Conscious Creation, page 106)

For this exercise, we invite you to set aside dedicated time to the visioning process.

- What did you notice about this process?

Key 1: Creating Your Intentions: *"Something powerful happens we state what we want, and when we want it. Make a list of your intentions. It's important that these intentions are congruent with what you received in the visioning process, and after you have allowed yourself to sit with the images and messages you received. The intentions should not come from your mind, your judgment, or your previously held assumptions, but only from deep inside."* (Conscious Creation, page 109)

Important: These intentions need to specific, measurable, realistic, but also a stretch.

"For example, when I made my first list, it included how much money I wanted to make per month. It was a specific and measurable amount, and it was realistic, even a bit of a stretch. But it didn't really push me or move me out of my comfort zone. When I sat further with this intention, I realized that what I really wanted was a lifestyle that was not congruent with the amount I listed. So, I had to stretch my intention quite a bit beyond what I initially thought realistic.

Also make sure your objectives have a specific target date for completion. Often, I'll do this for the whole year, but at the beginning I recommend that you start off with six months. For example, you may choose to make a list of five to ten intentions to be completed within six months. Some people start with three months. Another important piece is that you write your intentions as if they have already manifested. In other words, you write them as if it is at the end of your designated time and you are looking back. Here is an example: Rather than writing, 'My business will grow by 30% in the next six months,' you write, 'My business has grown by over 30% in the past six months.' I always like to add something like: 'I am serving people in profound ways, and I'm happier and more energized than I've ever been in my entire life.'" (Conscious Creation, page 110)

It is vital that they spring from your visioning process.

Include specific target dates for completion.

Remember, to make them specific, measurable, realistic, but also a stretch.

Intention	Target Date

Key 2: Identifying Obstacles: "*The next key is to identify perceived obstacles to your intentions. Look at each intention on your list and write down any perceived obstacles to that intention. These might be outer obstacles, like opposition from somewhere or lack of funds. Look also for inner obstacles, like any core beliefs that can still be activated, such as 'I am unworthy' or 'I am too much of a loser to succeed in this.' Add all these imagined obstacles to your list.*" (Conscious Creation, page 110)

- What does this excerpt mean to you?

- Make a list of any perceived (both inner and outer) obstacles:

Key 3: Discovering Strategies: Once you've identified intentions and their obstacles, then write out your strategies for working through the perceived obstacles.

Here is an example of how this portion of the process works, based on a character in the book, Conscious Creation (page 111).

Travis found it important to have some specific, tangible strategies for his three perceived obstacles, so he wrote them out.

What if I don't have the required education? For this one, he simply created action items to assist him in getting a clear answer. He found two different agencies that worked with foster kids and scheduled informational interviews.

What if I can't connect with the kids, what if they don't like me? He recognized this was an issue related to his sense of self-worth. His strategy was simply continuing with counseling and maintaining his affirmation and mindfulness practices.

What if I find myself immobilized by fear and my core false beliefs? The strategy for this fear was quite simple—spend time in the silence and recognize the power of presence. In other words, he agreed to not get lost in future thinking."

- Now, write out your strategies for working through the perceived obstacles:

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Key 4: Listing Action Items: *"After you write down the strategies, come up with five to ten action items that will help you fulfill your intention. These are actions to carry out* ***this week.*** *This is the step that has been life-changing for me. If you skip it, you will be left with wonderful intentions, but no follow through. And we all know the old saying, 'The road to hell is paved with good intentions.' And, as a reminder, make sure your actions directly relate to your vision and intentions."* (Conscious Creation, page 112)

Intention	Date Completed

Key 5: Connecting with an Accountability Partner: *"Another imperative part of this process is to have an accountability partner. This can be a trusted friend, a coach, a counselor—someone you check in with at least each week about your action items. The idea is simple: having an accountability partner keeps you focused and on track. I've been doing this for more than a decade, and believe me, it works. Every Monday, I email my accountability partner to describe and review the action items I set for the past week. Maybe I did seven out of ten items. The seven items get checked off my list, and the three remaining get rolled over to the new week, and then I add seven new items. Just knowing that my accountability partner expects to receive that email from me every Monday encourages me to accomplish them. It moves my thought pattern from 'I know I should do this' to 'I will do this' and then 'I have done this.' Even if you do it at the last minute, it still counts. Especially in the beginning, I would often find myself on Monday morning looking at the items I still needed to accomplish and then doing at least some of them at that very moment so that I could count them as finished in my Monday accountability email. This brings up an important point: breaking down your intentions into the smallest action items makes it more likely that you will accomplish them."* (Conscious Creation, page 112)

"Again, your action steps are specific to an intention that was created out of your larger vision, which came after you did the clearing work of Steps 1 and 2. The action steps get you incrementally closer to fulfilling your intention and thus closer to bringing your vision to life. It's important that this whole process remain an uplifting practice. Steer your process away from any judgment about what has or has not been accomplished or how well you believe you've done. The person I work with always responds to me with language like "Great job on accomplishing those seven items." It's never "Why didn't you complete the other three?" To avoid moving into guilt or shame about the practice, it's vitally important to have people in your life who are supporting you in the highest and best way." (Conscious Creation, page 113)

Make a list of people who could be your accountability partner. Go into a meditative space and ask, "Who of these people would create the most for me and my vision and be most supportive of that?" Once you've chosen that person, set up your structure for when you will be checking and how. We recommend the same time and day of the week, e.g., Every Monday at 10 am, I email my list.

Questions for journaling and further reflection:

1. How do you know the difference between intentions coming from your ego/intellect or your deeper, intuitive knowing/spirit?
2. What are some words or phrases that do not support your creation process, or that cause separation from your essential self (e.g., *should, must, good, bad, right, wrong*)?
3. How do you use these words?
4. Under what circumstances do you find yourself saying or thinking them?
5. What happens when you use them?
6. What thoughts arise?
7. What happens to your energy?
8. What more affirming, non-judging words could you add to your vocabulary instead?
9. If you are getting stuck with any of these keys, to whom could you reach out for support?
10. How else could you support and nurture yourself through this process?