

SETTING AN INTENTION

FOR A PSYCHEDELIC JOURNEY



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INTRODUCTION

A clear and well-crafted intention acts like a compass, guiding you toward the most meaningful and fruitful psychedelic journey. This resource offers ideas, prompts, and inspiration to help you shape an intention that is simple, memorable, and feels authentic for you.

We've included more material than you may need—take only what resonates. Set aside at least 45 minutes for this process, and return to your intention afterward to refine it as needed. The most important thing is that it feels deeply aligned for you. Let it serve as your guiding light, helping you move through the experience with clarity and purpose.

Remember, you are giving yourself a profound gift. Psychedelic work can be a beautiful and profound process when you lean in with openness and allow yourself to enjoy this journey of self-discovery.



BACKGROUND

What is an intention?



An intention is a short phrase that speaks to your goals for working with the medicine. Having a clear aim or purpose can greatly improve the utility and outcomes of working with a psychedelic medicine.

An intention is how we collaborate with the psyche and ask for assistance with whatever feels most pressing to us in our daily lives. It is a focused and purposeful statement or mental directive set before embarking on a psychedelic journey.

Why is an intention important?

- Creating an effective intention for a psychedelic journey is crucial to guide your experience and maximize its potential benefits. The minute you state your intention is the beginning of the healing work.
- An intention serves as an inner compass for the experience, helping you navigate your thoughts, emotions, and perceptions before and during an altered state of consciousness. It can serve as a point of reference to ground oneself if the experience becomes challenging or overwhelming.
- A well-designed intention also guides and sets the tone for follow-through afterwards in integration.





KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE INTENTION

01

Clarity

It should be a clear and well-defined statement that highlights the specific aspect of yourself or your life that you want to explore, heal, or gain insight into right now. You can continue molding the intention up until your journey day.

02

Positivity

An effective intention typically emphasizes positive outcomes, personal growth, healing, or self-discovery rather than what you want to avoid or escape or let go of. This guides you towards something and focuses on your goal.

03

Relevance

The intention should be relevant to the individual's current life circumstances, challenges, or personal goals. It doesn't have to cover every issue in your life, but touch on themes that permeate across the fabric of most of your problems.

04

Conciseness

It is often best to keep the intention action-oriented, concise, and focused on one or two primary themes to maintain clarity and simplicity. Crafting a more fluid and concise statement that touches on this theme has the potential to elicit more seismic change.

05

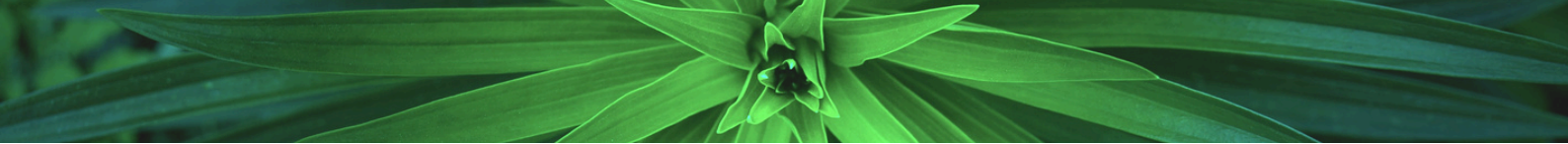
Flexibility

While the intention provides a guiding framework, it should also allow room for unexpected insights and experiences that may arise during the journey. We get a clear intention, but hold it loosely and keep ourselves open to broader insights. It does not have to be perfect.

06

Alignment

The intention should align with the individual's values and beliefs, promoting an authentic and meaningful exploration. Intentions can evolve over time, so don't hesitate to adjust them as your life unfolds and new insights emerge.



THE PROCESS

Wherever you are in the process, it's worth trying some or all of these suggestions to see what might come up for you. The real importance lies in simply spending time with it, letting impressions and sparks of thought bounce around within you, and inviting your subconscious to participate with purpose.

Be patient with yourself during this process. After periods of prolonged emotional numbness, it can be difficult to assess what's at the core of our dissatisfaction. This is particularly true if it's been a while since we've exercised the muscle of deep self-reflection.

01

Sit (or lay) quietly and breathe undistracted in a private setting and allow your mind to explore your intention for the session. Start with the simple question, "What is inspiring me to do this journey?" The simple act of taking a moment to answer this will reveal basic motivations. Try not to pass any judgment on the answer that comes up. All is valid.

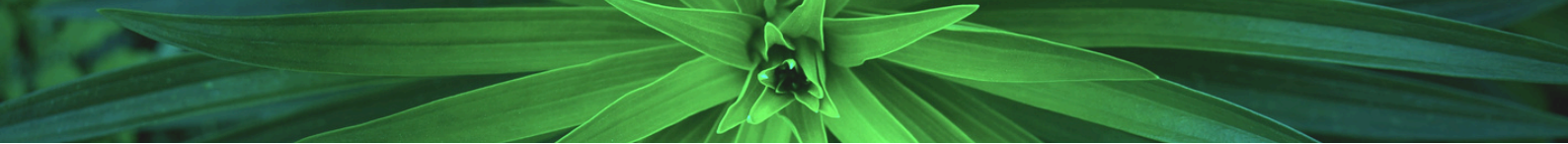
If the answer that comes up seems shallow, overly specific, or otherwise inappropriate, this is the opportunity to change course or reframe. This might be a process of refining the motivation, or just looking at it from a different angle. Other useful questions to help formulate an intention are:

- What am I looking for?
- What is working in my life? What isn't? What would I like to change?
- What am I curious about?
- What would I like to learn about?
- What would I like to understand more?
- What am I inviting into my life right now?
- Where do I have room to grow and/or heal?

02

You could also meditate, using a simple mantra such as, "what do I want?" if it's helpful for your mind to have a focus. See what arises from within when you open yourself up to these insights.

- Give this process at least 20 minutes (30 is more ideal).
- Don't be discouraged if your mind wanders to unrelated things (ex. to-do lists) - that is normal, especially for a mind not yet disciplined in quiet reflection or meditation.
- If sitting quietly doesn't work for you, you can also try taking a 30-minute walk in nature without music or distractions and see what comes up. The key here is to invite stillness to hear your intuition to speak to you.
- If nothing comes up for you, then try the steps described in 3.).



03

Examine the emotions that you live in most often, and in what places or around what people you feel those emotions the most. If those emotions feel heavy in a certain environment, alone or around certain people, ask yourself what about those situations makes you the most uncomfortable. The more willing you are to explore the discomfort in this exercise, the clearer the feedback will likely be on where exactly you may need support or insights.

04

Write down whatever comes up after reflection on 1-3 above. Take a personal inventory of the issues that are most pressing to you in your daily life. Journal or do some free writing about some possible intentions. If you don't like to write, you can also audio or video record yourself talking through some ideas to yourself out loud. (You can delete them immediately.)

05

If you are working with a therapist, you can bring some ideas and flesh them out together. Most therapists likely won't be well versed in crafting intentions specific to psychedelic work, but they can assist in helping you draw out themes and focus your attention on specific areas you may need support on.

06

Ultimately, we suggest first and foremost trusting what your gut tells you about the area that needs attention right now. You won't be able to work on everything all at once. This work is typically a gradual process that will unfold at the pace that is right for your psyche and current level of resilience. It cannot be rushed.

There are three main ways to think about the end goal of an intention:

1. The best intentions are simple, authentic, and memorable. Not perfect.
2. Choose the single goal of highest impact *right now.*
3. Find the underlying thread at the root of your highest priority goals.

Remember - While an intention is necessary going into a psychedelic journey, we don't have to have all the answers about where to guide our own healing. We are generally guided by the process of the journey and the material that emerges from the subconscious. What needs to come up will come up on its own.

Our inner healing wisdom (or Inner Healer), will focus our attention on where the work lies. We have seen this happen time and time again, and we deeply trust this process. Leaning into and learning to fully trust the Inner Healer is an important part of all psychedelic work (and all healing work in general).



DEEPER INSPIRATION

If you feel like you would like some more structured inquiry or inspiration during this process of reflection, you can also choose to use one or more of the following prompts (for journaling or a discussion with us in a preparatory session or with your mental health provider) that resonate with you.

1. Would you describe yourself as an independent person? How does your independence reflect onto the way you value yourself and your relationships?
2. How do you cope with conflict? Do your coping mechanisms consistently elicit regret, shame, or further conflict?
3. When something bothers you, how long does it take for you to address it? If you usually address it immediately, what would you gain from taking some more time to reflect? If you address it after a long time, where do you feel your resistance to act comes from and how does it affect you?
4. Do you feel misunderstood? If so, what misconceptions do people have of you? Do multiple people have the same misconceptions? What might be prompting their beliefs?
5. Can you be fully authentic and vulnerable with at least one other person in your life? If not, what are some causes of this resistance? Can you be fully authentic and vulnerable with yourself when you're alone? If not, why?
6. Is there an emotion or emotions that you tend to avoid? If so, is there any memory that stands out to you where you or someone you know displayed that emotion and it had a severe impact on your life or the lives of others?
7. Do you generally forgive yourself when you've made a mistake? If not, how does this impact you? Do you generally forgive others when they've hurt you or made a mistake? If not, why? How does your level of openness to forgiving impact you and your relationships?
8. If you have a mental health diagnosis, what is your relationship with this diagnosis? What change do you wish to see in regards to this diagnosis? What would you like to experience instead?
9. Having a diagnosis can be incredibly freeing and meaningful for validating the circumstances of our lives, but they can also be limiting to a certain degree. Often, a mental health diagnosis can become a crutch that we rely on to justify our unhealthy behaviors. If our aim is to heal the symptoms of a disorder, we have to understand our personal role in propagating these behaviors. A healing journey involves taking personal accountability over the routines and patterns that perpetuate our unhealthy coping mechanisms. Is there something in your routines and patterns that you wish to take more accountability over?



GET CLEAR AND SPECIFIC

Once you've identified the single goal or focus with the greatest impact, write it down in sentence or paragraph form—framing it around what you do want, rather than what you don't. Then, refine it into a clear, actionable statement: short, memorable, and open. This process may take time, so release the need for perfection; what matters is creating a simple, authentic focus for your journey. For more potency try writing it in the present tense, as if it already exists, rather than as something you're still reaching for.

Examples

1. Instead of: I don't want to be depressed and anxious anymore and have poor self-confidence in my work and relationships. Try: Show me how to invite lightness and confidence into my life.
2. Instead of: I want to quit smoking tobacco once and for all and let go of the shame associated with this addiction. Try: I am clear, healthy, and free. OR - I am safe to feel my emotions.
3. Instead of: Help me stop being anxious about my relationships and let go of the trauma in my past that keeps me stuck here. Try: I embody a profound self-understanding, inner peace, and a renewed sense of wholeness.

Tips

- It can be helpful to frame our intention as an affirmation. An affirming intention wouldn't likely begin with phrases like "I want" or "I need". Rather, they should confirm your current and ongoing efforts to heal. You can do this by opening your intention with "I'm in the process of", "I am working on", "I am developing", or "I am (creating, connecting, rekindling, etc.)".
- You don't always have to address the root of the problem. You can choose to address the biggest block you're currently experiencing, which may not be about the root at all.
- What needs to come up will come up. Leaning into that trust with the Inner Healer is an important part of psychedelic work.
- Share your intention with a trusted and experienced trip sitter or guide to provide support and accountability during the experience.
- Remember that the problems we have with other people are direct reflections of the problems we experience within ourselves. Focus on your contribution or part of the relationship equation. After all, it's the only thing you can really change.
- Sometimes the biggest burden in our lives truly does come from an unchangeable external factor. Perhaps taking care of your ill parent or relative has taken a very heavy toll on your mind and body, or your ability to provide financial support for yourself has been limited by a physical disability. In circumstances like these, an intention can involve finding acceptance, purpose, transmuting your relationship to, or coming to a more healthy way of perceiving the situation. Keep the focus on your empowered response to the circumstance.



HOW TO USE YOUR INTENTION

Consider posting your intention somewhere in your house where you can read it on the days leading up to your journey.

Meditate on your intention before diving into your journey to help solidify your focus and commitment to the journey.

Throughout the journey - as you are able - periodically revisit your intention to anchor yourself and stay aligned with your original purpose, allowing it to guide your exploration and growth.

The value of the deep therapeutic work is in part dependent on our ability to metabolize and work with the material we are being offered. Don't try to do integration alone - work with someone specialized and experienced in traversing non ordinary states of consciousness.

HOLD IT LOOSELY

Even after doing the work of getting clear on your intention, it's important to hold it loosely going into the journey. Sit with it. Pray over it. Allow it to shift and mold as needed. Trust your Inner Healer and trust the process, and cultivate the courage to lean in. You are about to give yourself a beautiful gift and receive something special, and you don't have to control the process.

INTENTIONS FOR INTEGRATION

Intentions can also be useful during the integration stage. After having your psychedelic experience and reflecting on the experience and identifying key themes, it can be worthwhile to set an intention for the next phase of life. This might be for the following days, weeks, or even months.

These types of integration intentions help give us direction in our lives. Their looseness means they can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways and require us to use our intuition. They can be used as a compass for action in all kinds of situations throughout the days, weeks and months that make up our lives.

S I M P L E - M E M O R A B L E - A U T H E N T I C

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