

# TIP OF THE MONTH

## Intentionally Stepping into 2024

Faculty & Employee  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM

The start of a new year is a great time to set intentions for what we would like to invite into our lives in the days ahead. 2024 is here, and this article will teach you about why we should set healthy intentions and give examples to help you get started.

### Why Set Intentions

Setting intentions is a powerful practice because it directs our attention toward what truly matters to us, and whatever we pay attention to grows. When we set intentions, we deliberately focus our energy on positive calls to action; by envisioning what we want and immersing ourselves in the emotional experience of achieving those goals, we create a magnetic force that draws us toward the reality we seek.

This intentional focus steers us away from actions driven by obligation and align our choices with a deep sense of purpose. In essence, setting intentions is not just about what we want to accomplish; it is about defining how we want to be and the life we want to live, fostering a mindful and purposeful approach to our journey.

### Consultant Spotlight



Mary Sherman

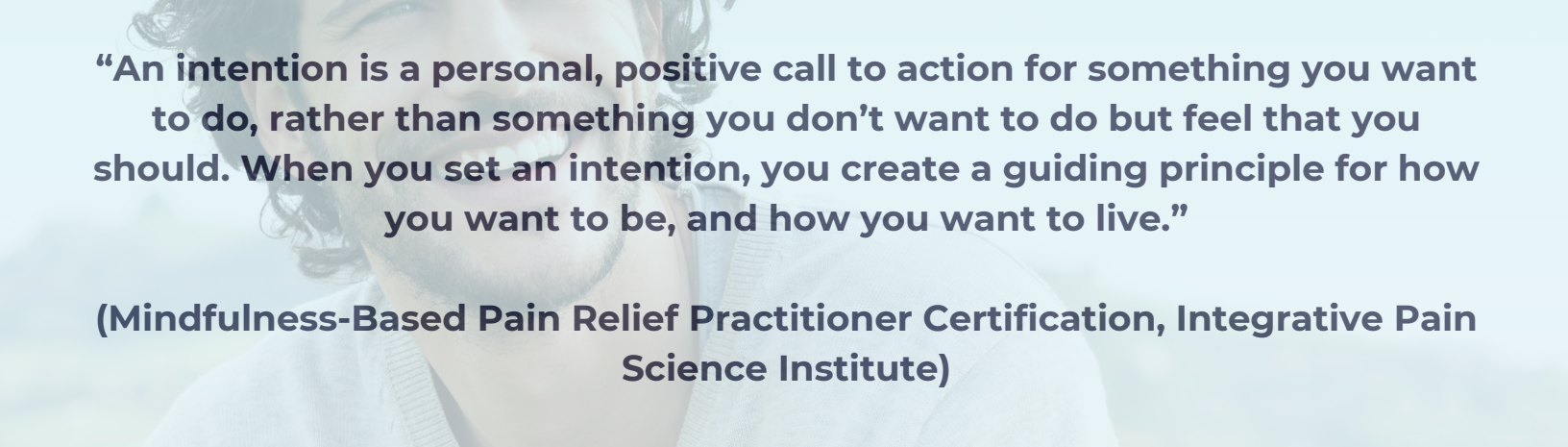
LCSW, CEAP

A member of the FEAP team since 1996, Mary Sherman is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Employee Assistance Professional in Virginia.

Mary offers expertise in coaching, stress management, and more, helping individuals navigate diverse personal and workplace challenges.

[Click to Learn More About Mary](#)

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**“An intention is a personal, positive call to action for something you want to do, rather than something you don’t want to do but feel that you should. When you set an intention, you create a guiding principle for how you want to be, and how you want to live.”**

**(Mindfulness-Based Pain Relief Practitioner Certification, Integrative Pain Science Institute)**

## **The Difference Between Intentions and Goals**

Goals set your destination, while intentions are the pathway to reaching your goal. Leading with intentions help to avoid the trap of expectations that come with goals that have specific desired outcomes. Let’s say you have a movement goal to walk 30 minutes 4 times/week, but you have a bad weather week or a busy week and do not make that target. This can lead to a sense of failure and could take you off track. Can you think of what an intention would be that could help one become more physically active?

## **Examples of Setting Intentions**

### **Daily Intentions**

First, we set our intention. ***Today, I will invite in joy—what you look for you will find.*** During the day, look for the intention. ***I noticed a great conversation with a colleague which gave me a sense of joy.*** For a daily intention, check-in towards the end of the day to reflect on that intention and where it showed up in your life.

### **Long-Term Intentions**

First, we set our intention. ***This year, I will invite more movement into my life. I will look for ways to move more.*** You could park further away; get outside for a lunch time or morning walk; walk and talk during meetings, etc. You might also want to find ways to track your progress.

This more mindful way of taking positive steps in our way is in many ways preferable to goal setting because we are better able to stay connected to our intention and evaluate it less judgmentally. Setting intentions rather than goals can make it easier to stay on track.





# HOW TO PRACTICE INTENTIONS

## **Speak Positive Commitments**

Today, I commit myself to...

- Example: Today, I commit myself to practicing gratitude and kindness.

Today, I will...

- Example: Today, I will prioritize self-care and engage in activities that bring me joy.

## **Avoid Negative Commitments**

Don't set negative commitments such as  
Today I will not...

## **Rephrase a Bucket List Item**

Choose one thing from your 2024 bucket list and phrase it as an intention.

- Example: If travel is on the bucket list, the intention could be "I will explore new places and travel more in 2024."

## **Have a Morning Ritual**

Start the day with a positive intention.

- Example: Begin your day by setting the intention to approach challenges with a positive mindset.

# HOW TO PRACTICE INTENTIONS

## Visualize

Take a moment to imagine what your intention looks and feels like in your life.

- Example: Visualize the joy and fulfillment that comes with achieving your intention.

## Be Aware of Limiting Beliefs

Be mindful of limiting beliefs and reframe them with a growth mindset.

- Example: If faced with "I am not good at this," reframe it as "I am someone who is becoming skilled at this."

## Avoid All-or-Nothing Thinking

Embrace a flexible mindset by adding "yet" to your statements.

- Example: Instead of "I can't do this," say "I can't do this yet," allowing room for growth and progress.



## READY TO TRY IT OUT?

Here is a [short TED talk by Matt Cutts](#) to help spur your motivation and creativity for a reoccurring 30 day challenge to set new intentions each month.

Also, the popular [Reboot Your Well-being class](#) starting in February is a great way to work on your intentions for 2024 where you receive individual coaching, a group class, and smaller supportive pods to help you be successful.

# REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

Navigating life's challenges and setting positive intentions can be a transformative journey, and it's okay to seek support along the way. The Faculty and Employee Assistance Program (FEAP) is here to provide quality, professional, and personalized services to meet your individual needs. Whether you're facing personal concerns, seeking guidance on intention setting, or looking for support in your overall well-being,

## FEAP IS HERE FOR YOU

**Short-Term, Confidential Services  
for Both Personal and Professional Concerns**

Counseling, Assessments, Referrals, & Resources

1300 Jefferson Park Avenue, Charlottesville, VA 22908  
call: **434.243.2643** visit: [uvafeap.com](https://uvafeap.com)

## EXPLORE

# SUPPORT RESOURCES

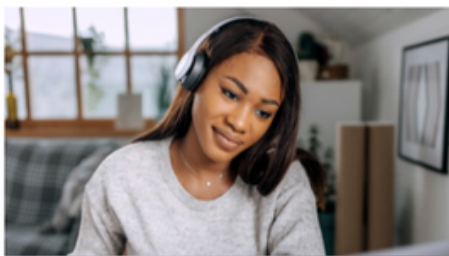
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\*THESE RESOURCES REQUIRE YOU TO LOG-IN THROUGH NETBADGE\*