

# Why You Should Set Monthly Intentions

MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS SAY  
THE BENEFITS ARE REAL.

**Can setting intentions such as get more sleep, listen to your body, and say “yes” even when it scares you actually help you reach your self-care goals?**

Yes, according to experts. “Setting intentions and goals is an extremely useful practice,” says Andrea Gottlieb, Ph.D., a psychologist at Sheppard Pratt Health System. “Many people probably do this in their head all the time, but sitting down to write this out makes you more likely to follow through. Intention setting can help people be more present—more mindful—in their day-to-day lives. Waking up and thinking about your intention can be like a compass guiding your day, your week, your month.”

Not sure where to start? Here are a few tips from mental health experts to start you on the path to creating meaningful monthly intentions.

## Write them down.

Colorful illustrations are just a bonus, but you definitely want to write down your intentions. “The act of getting our thoughts out on paper helps you be less judgmental and more compassionate to yourself. Writing it down can also help you hold yourself accountable,” says Gottlieb.

## Start small.

Keep your intentions achievable, especially in the beginning, recommends Kelley Kitley, a licensed psychotherapist. For example, set intentions to be more present in conversations, practice saying no, or take a 30-minute walk each day. “When we are successful with small intentions, it helps build confidence to achieve bigger intentions,” says Kitley.



## Consistency is key.

“Keeping a daily, weekly and monthly journal that you can write down your intentions and how you want to feel each morning can be an extremely useful practice,” says Sarah Thacker, a licensed therapist and yoga teacher. “Reflecting on your intentions at the end of the day allows for the accountability to check in with yourself and actions while creating a space for self-awareness and growth. Reflecting at the end of the week and month offer the same, while also encouraging movement in the direction of healthy change and self-development.”

## Don't be afraid to share them.

“Writing intentions down serves as a visual reminder of the commitment you are making to yourself, whether it is in the form of personal development, self-care or professional achievement,” notes Michael Genovese, M.D., J.D., a psychiatrist and chief medical officer of Acadia Healthcare. “I also recommend sharing these intentions, if that's something you're comfortable doing, so you're leveraging the known benefits of a solid support network. By letting others in on what you're setting out to achieve, you may find an accountability partner, motivator, or cheerleader within your circle of influence—all hugely important support roles you'll need on your journey to success.”

