

## **Intentionality: If You Do Not Look, You Will Not Find**

Trigger Words are for remembering past stories. Next, I would like to take you on to my work with the Intentionality Journaling.

The process of Intentionality helps you remember stories as they happen to you. A number of different organizations and even some spiritual systems have developed similar concepts. For this manual, this is not a spiritual exercise unless you choose it to be so for yourself.

***Intentionality***  
What happened today?  
What did I feel?  
What did it remind me of?  
What lesson is there in this for me?  
Where did I write it down?

For our purposes, you'll need some type of place to collect your written thoughts. Perhaps a blank journal book or a Moleskine™ book or any other way to keep your written thoughts gathered in one place. You will also need to find a few moments either at the beginning or end of each day to answer this question, writing it in your journal.

### **What happened to me in the last 24 hours that stands out in my mind?**

An example from my own journal:

*Today, on my latest out-of-state trip, I was driving to the location where I would be speaking all day. I have on my cell phone a GPS mapping system that tells me where to go, navigating me through cities that are unknown to me. What did we do before these inventions? Maps?*

*My little phone navigator was leading me down a long street and I was sure that I was not actually going in the right direction. Frustrated, I told myself that I would turn my car into the next parking lot I found, turn around and go back. I was thinking what a stupid GPS phone I owned.*

*Looking ahead, I saw a parking lot coming up on my left. Just as I arrived there, I passed the sign that indicated that this parking lot...was the parking lot of the building for which I was searching. My GPS was right all along. Now my phone was thinking that it had an impatient GPS phone owner.*

Now, I will stop the process there so that you can reflect on your own past 24 hours. What happened to you, big events or small moments, that stands out in your mind? Use the space on the next page to make some notes.

Today I

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Now it is time to see which stories you are gathering that will actually be usable for your storytelling. We'll call this process "the review." Some people will do this review every day. It is also okay to set aside 30 minutes a week to do the following steps. Don't get more than a week out from the stories you have written in order to get the freshest idea from the top of your mind.

You will need to go back through the entries since your last review and ask yourself the questions in the box on the previous page.

Continuing my example:

*I felt silly. Here was a device that in more than a year of ownership had never been wrong. For some reason, in this out-of-state city, I was feeling uncertain about the ability of my GPS to do its job. Perhaps I was too tired or really hadn't done my due-diligence in looking at a map first before I trusted the phone.*

*I was reminded that I like to be in charge. That is a gentle way of saying I am a perfectionist, although I never attain perfection. I tend to feel that way in everything I do. When supervising others, I sometimes micro-manage, assuming that even my most qualified people suddenly will get it all wrong. They do not get it wrong and they do a great job. Maybe I need to trust others in my organizations and life situations more?*

It is your turn again. Choose one of the situations you wrote about at the top of the page and answer these questions. Use the space on the next page.

**What did I feel? What does this remind me of?  
What lesson is there in this for me?**

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The question, “Where did I write it down?” is answered by your diligence in completing your journal. It is possible that when you go back through your review, you will find memories that have no meaning for you. Every now and then, go way back in your journal and see if those stories have developed meaning for you as you reexamine them.

### **Putting It All Together**

*The most effective speakers are the ones who choose to collect and use stories in their presentations.* The only thing that separates you from anyone else in your same line of work is your stories. Make the right choice and capture your stories starting today.

Keep your Trigger Word exercises and your Intentionality work in the same journal. When you do that, you will be building a log of stories to use.

Every now and then, go back though your personal stories and try to pick out themes from the stories you are gathering. For my GPS story, the themes might be “trust,” “patience” or even “technology.” The themes from my IT nice-guy story might be “fear,” “human relations,” “artists,” “communication,” or “technology.”

What are the themes you can draw on from your exercise at the top of the page?

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Write these themes in big, bold colors in the margins of your journal. Then, when you need just the right story, you can scan your notes and have a story leap out and present itself.

One more time: **Powerful and effective speakers use stories to make their messages stick. Trigger Words and Intentionality are powerful tools.** Don't ignore them.