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changed her life*

WHAT'S
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"WELLNESS HAS
ALWAYS BEEN A
MOVEMENT."

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YOUR LOOK
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Resolution

REALIGNMENT

EMMA PALMER of Moksha Yoga shows us how yogic philosophy can help us achieve our new year goals.

As we move through the beginning of the year and our January fervour fades, it is easy to have become disconnected with the resolutions we've made for ourselves. Maybe you have chosen too many goals to achieve at once, or they are too difficult to achieve right now. Or perhaps you have simply become swept up again in the pace and busyness of life and your goals have fallen to the wayside. Whatever the reason, it isn't too late to reconnect and start again. In yoga, every moment is an opportunity for a new beginning, and we can learn from this.

There comes a point where we look to deepen the way in which we live, rather than living on the surface, and we no longer expect long-lasting joy to come from superficial goals. Modern science acknowledges that our original intentions contribute significantly to the successful outcome of our goals, and that a deep connection to our true desires creates the impetus that paves the way to demonstrating our goals more authentically.

Finding your true goal

Instead of moving into a space of self-criticism and disappointment if you fail to achieve a personal or professional goal, look deeper than the superficial layer of that goal. It is the process of honest self-enquiry – or *svadhyaya* – that will help you find your integrity, for within the roots of every goal there is almost always a powerful notion of intention.

Without identifying the real underpinning intention to your goal, you will not only find challenges in the manifestation of this goal in your life, but you may find that the outcome, if any, varies greatly from the original objective. Connecting to our true intention allows us to recognise a deeper sense of purpose that is beyond the ego, both in intention and outcome. This connection affirms that all the answers we seek can only ever be found within a focused mind, and when the intention comes from that place, rather than ego, it gives power and energy behind goals in an authentic and connected way.

Intention based on integrity

Integrity does not only mean upholding core principles and values, it also means living in a state of being that is whole, connected, integrated and undivided. Michael A. Singer, author of *The Untethered Soul*, says that integrity is when all aspects of our being – mind, body, spirit and emotions – are integrated as one. It is from this place of 'oneness' that we connect to our intention and it is here that we often come to realise that our goals may be established in order to please others, or simply that they are goals that we feel we 'should be doing'. But in the end these goals never materialise because the intention is not in alignment with the calling of the true self.

This isn't always a bad thing. Sometimes part of the purpose of having a misaligned goal is to guide us towards

a more aligned, authentic one. It is said that the longest journey we will ever take is from our head to our heart, and sometimes our greatest challenges arise when we feel conflicted between the two – we tend to experience confusion rather than integrating the longing of each. Goals, fundamentally, are multilayered and require a strong foundation rooted in conviction in order to sustain the journey towards reaching the desired outcome, and this is why connecting to the intention is crucial. When we integrate consciousness into the contemplation of our decisions, we can find clarity around the goals we are trying to establish.

Inner listening

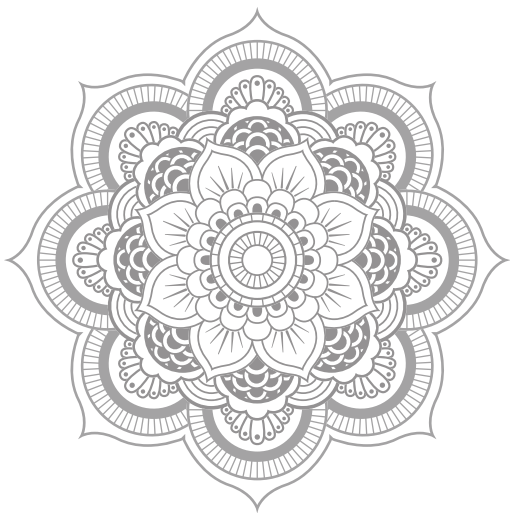
How can we connect to our true intention if the mind is in a state of chaos or distraction, subsequently blocking the intention from being heard? The stages of listening come from the ways in which the ancient traditional texts were first received, understood, processed and then actioned according to a higher truth. When applied to our own life it reflects on the ways that we can turn inwards towards the awaiting wisdom to guide us to the intention of a goal that is for the highest good of all concerned and does not just temporarily satisfy the needs of the ego.

Belief in your goals

It takes real courage and strength to make a change in our lives for the benefit not only of our own path



but for that of humanity. It takes dedication and commitment to be open and subjective enough to witness the unfolding of our day-to-day lives in order to achieve the desired change. You must trust that all will unfold in perfect timing, and make sure that your goal is in line with your authentic self. Let life guide you through the experiences and interactions with others, because our unfolding life and relationship is a mirror of ourselves reflecting back the inner work that is needed.



The yogic philosophy of intention

Sankalpa – establishing intention

A *sankalpa*, translated as resolve or vow, is an intention that has a deeper meaning and purpose and is commonly set at the beginning of every yoga class or part of a yoga nidra practice. It is designed to allow us as students to connect to a deeper resolve rather than wishing only to experience physical benefits through the practice of asana.

Sankalpa can also be used as a vow you commit to that may require consistent conscious awareness, such as being patient, less judgmental of self and others or even to focus on the positive aspect of life and experience versus the negative. It is the acknowledgement that all experiences, all interactions, come in perfect timing as our greatest teachings. The true essence of *sankalpa* is to align all aspects of self so that our true purpose has the space to come into being.

The yogic philosophy states that we observe intention in our daily life by adopting conscious and consistent awareness of our thoughts, behaviours and interactions with self and others. Establishing a *sankalpa* reminds us that we already have all we need

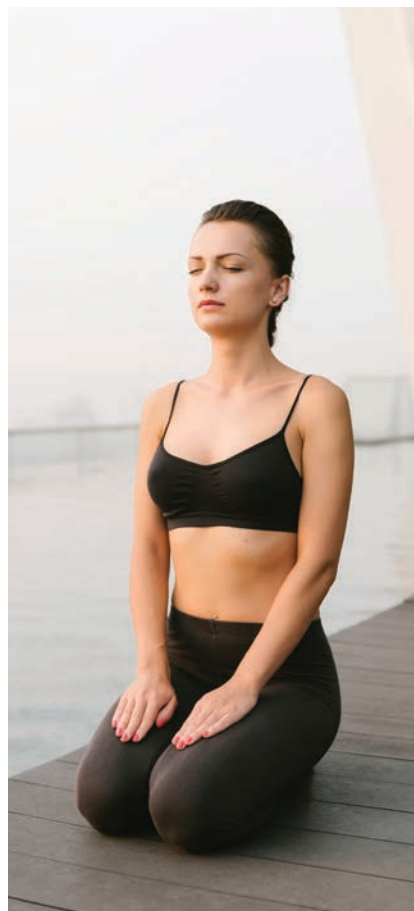
within ourselves, and when the mind is focused we have the capacity to fulfil whatever our heart calls us to do the most. The other component to *sankalpa* is to recognise that we are not alone on this path of life and that we are co-creating our lives with the support of the divine will.

Sravana – to hear, take notice of, to listen

This is the first stage of inner listening. It is about being open and willing to connect to our inner wisdom and waiting conscious to know the true yearning of the soul. We often feel a deep yearning for something greater yet struggle to find exactly what that is. For those who don't feel that strong, passionate urge yet desire change, the answer is quite simply to just follow whatever makes you curious and the answer will make itself known in perfect timing.

Manana – reflection

This is the second stage of listening and refers to the act of reflecting and being open to considering the inner calling that has arisen through the practice of *Sravana*. *Manana* is achieved only through the practice of



10 Ways To Find Your Intention

1. Ask yourself what your true purpose is. What is your deepest calling? And keep asking until the answer makes itself known and be aware that it will show itself in ways you least expect.
2. If you don't feel the fire in your belly for a particular goal, simply start by following what you're curious about and the clarity will come.
3. Allow yourself time to make quiet your mind through meditation; this will help to turn inwards and connect to a deeper place of truth and wisdom.
4. Rather than asking yourself, "What's in it for me?", ask how humanity can benefit from your goal in order for your intention to come from an authentic space without ego.
5. Allow mindfulness to generate a practice of being conscious of your day-to-day actions, reactions, interactions and desires.
6. Others will be able to reflect back to you the areas within yourself that are inspiring and make you feel most alive, so ask those who you trust for their ideas and inspiration.
7. Persevere with your process of self-inquiry and don't give up. Rome wasn't built in a day.
8. Once you have connected to an intention that motivates the goal, visualise your goal coming into fruition; as you visualise, you materialise!
9. Recognise that the fact you are here, right now and at this time, matters! Honour your authentic path, and follow your calling to fulfil your purpose.

Dharana, translated as concentration. Only through a deep state of focus and concentration can we truly reflect on the calling of the soul.

Nididhyasana – contemplation followed by action

The final stage of listening is the ability to identify what is false and only of the ego, and the identification of selfish or extrinsic motivations. In addition *nididhyasana* means to constantly commit to striving to connect with and then action the inner desire that is for the highest good and benefit of all concerned without selfish means. *Nididhyasana* requires a strong sense of courage and perseverance to bring into fruition the true calling. Awareness of the calling in itself will only take you so far; actioning that calling will guide you the rest of the way. **NH**