

Living With Intention | January 23, 2006 Volume 3, Issue 1 | [Subscribe](#)

A Note from Deanna

Welcome to 2006, your year of *Living With Intention*! This issue packs a one-two punch for creating a wildly fulfilling and remarkably successful year. First, you'll learn about the importance of "dropping the drama," in favor of more constructive forms of thinking and action. Then, you'll learn about a new technique for goal setting that might just save your New Year's Resolutions from joining the ranks of the unachieved. In fact, I call this new goal-setting method your "New Year's Solution."

To help you get your New Year off to a great start, we are offering a great sale on *Living With Intention* - books and audio programs. During the month of January, you can **s'ave up to 35% on these items**. Click [here](#) for secure online ordering.

If you're looking for a roadmap for achieving your goals and creating a vibrantly meaningful life, give these bestselling resources a try. That's right, with your help, *Living With Intention* enjoyed a blissful run on Amazon's Health, Mind, and Body bestseller list. My sincere thanks for your support—we couldn't have done it without you!

Here's what Kate Spencer, Editor In Chief of *Imagine Magazine*, has to say about *Living With Intention*,

"Living with Intention is written with all the intelligence and insight of a seasoned professional coach and all the humor and compassion of a loving friend...Deanna provides a roadmap for anyone who is seeking to create a more focused, fulfilling and authentic life...Most refreshing is the author's crystal clear message that it is the individual—be it Mother Theresa or Tony Robbins—who defines and lives his or her own meaning of success. ***Living with Intention* is a powerful tool for self-exploration, discovery and action.**"



I'm pleased to announce the addition of a new feature to this e-zine--one I know you'll love. It's called **"Feedback and Free Stuff."**

Basically, this new feature is an opportunity to provide your feedback on a particular topic each month and, as a thank you for your input, you will be entered into a drawing for a free--and fabulous--*Living With Intention* bonus. The complimentary bonuses will change every month, but they will always be top-rate items or services that will help you live the life you were born to live. This month's bonus is a free subscription to my favorite magazine, *Imagine: Creating a Meaningful Life*. If you haven't read it, trust me...you'll want to. See the "Feedback and Free Stuff" section for how you can enter to win!

And finally, if you're looking for a few extra ideas that can help you design the life of your dreams (as well as a few random anecdotes to perk up your days!), visit my blog at http://deannadavis.typepad.com/living_with_intention/.

Best wishes for a glorious 2006!

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In this week's issue:

- [Ideas for a Wildly Fulfilling Life](#)
- [Ideas for a Remarkably Successful Life](#)
- [Resources That Will Change Your Life](#)
- [Feedback and Free Stuff](#)
- [Women Making a Difference](#)
- [Contact Info](#)

Ideas for a Wildly Fulfilling Life...

Deciding to Drop the Drama

I had spent the better part of a week in a sleep-deprived delirium brought on by a vicious little souvenir (aka respiratory infection) I had carted home with me from my recent vacation. I had tried every known natural remedy to stave it off—from homeopathic elixirs to Chinese herbal tonics and from aromatherapy immersion to mega doses of Vitamin *everything*, all to no avail.

I graduated to nightly Nyquil benders and holed up in the guest bedroom to spare my husband from my incessant hacking. That's when I moved into the psychological realm to attack the little lung invaders from the inside out. I resorted to positive psychology, then to reverse psychology, and then to what I can only describe as disturbingly *abnormal* psychology practices to convince my mind to heal my lungs.

I lay there (well, actually *sat* there propped up on about seventeen pillows in an attempt to stave off the nasty coughing fits that seized my lungs each time I tried to lay down) for four long nights practicing assorted relaxation techniques, followed by colorful guided visualization exercises. Then, I transitioned into befriending the virus, testing whether I could influence its hostility with my love and affection. Yes, in my hallucinatory state, I found myself mentally embracing my illness, loving it into submission, fully understanding that it must have been sorely abused by a cruel world to take its aggressions out on me in this way. When that didn't work, I succumbed to anger, resentment, and extreme bouts of exquisitely dramatic self-pity, none of which seemed to make a difference in my situation (go figure).

So, on my husband's sane advice, I trekked into the physician's office the next day, fatigued beyond recognition and ready for Western medicine to free me from this immune-compromised prison. But, of course, during the height of cold and flu season, everyone else had the same idea. As such, I sat in the waiting room and did what everyone does in a waiting room...waited. And coughed. And waited. And coughed. And...well, you get the picture. Then they led me to a cold, depressing exam room and I endured the same waiting and coughing routine for the better part of 45 additional minutes.

I sat there, my rationality noticeably absent due to extreme sleep deprivation and the unfortunate dislodging of major organs as I hacked, completely overcome by frustration. I imagined the assertive manner (read: menacing and aggressive) ways I could share my disdain with the physician who had kept me waiting while my very life hung in the balance. I scripted a compelling and colorful response to the long wait, certain that he would nod in agreement, pound his fist on the exam table and shout with conviction, "*Things have got to change around here so we can heal the sick and comfort the downtrodden...and quickly!*"

What actually happened when the door opened was that I lost every nuance of my thoughtfully planned "waiting room efficiency" speech and simply lapsed into uncontrollable sobs interspersed with incoherent babble such as "So tired...haven't slept in a week...broke

all of the capillaries in my face...think I'm going to have an aneurysm." The doctor looked at me with compassion for my utterly overwhelmed state and obvious discomfort and said, "well, actually, if you already *had* an aneurysm, maybe you would have *burst* it."

His comment stopped me in my tracks. I was flabbergasted. I mean, here I am, looking like hell, blithering like a lunatic, and somehow it's important to him to correct my description of my self-diagnosed potentially-fatal maladies? Who cares if I said I would HAVE an aneurysm or BURST an aneurysm? Isn't it all just related to the fact that I have a rip-roaring headache and need help? Then he looked at me and smiled, and we both descended into laughing fits, mine understandably interspersed with unpleasant wheezing and uncontrollable coughing. "Now," he said, "let's talk about what the problem is and see if we can fix it."

What I later realized is that this is exactly what I *needed* him to do—diffuse my frustration and help me step out of my drama long enough to take some practical steps that could make a significant difference in my situation. What a novel concept! With an unexpected comment and a gentle dose of humor, that physician re-programmed our entire experience and, fortunately, saved himself an earful of caustic remarks that bordered on both literary genius and verbal abuse. Lucky man. Even more importantly, though, he adeptly directed our mutual efforts to the *outcome* I wanted to achieve—quite simply, to get healthier and feel better. I left his office armed with the medication and the renewed attitude I needed to do that.

As with most incidents like this, it got me to thinking that the simple act of diffusing the drama is a strategy we can and should be practicing on a regular basis, whether with ourselves, our partners, our children, or our clients, customers, and co-workers. When we do this, everyone wins. Consider these suggestions...

- 1) ***With yourself.*** When you find yourself spinning out of control with negative thinking, imagine hitting a reset button, having a cold bucket of water poured over your head, or anything else that will stop your negative tapes from taking over. Then ask yourself, "what is *really* happening here?" (instead of relying on your drama to lead you on an irrational and unproductive thought carnival) and "what can I do to *influence* this situation, either in thoughts or in actions?" Both of these questions will help you divert your attention away from the drama and toward constructive action.
- 2) ***With your partner.*** The foremost researchers in marital success, John and Julie Gottman, have found that one of the most important things you can do when you are in conflict with your partner is to avoid escalating it, even though your first instinct might be to become defensive or go on the attack. One of the most effective ways to diffuse conflict and come to rational decisions or mutual understanding is to very simply *choose* not to engage in the escalation. You can do this by taking a deep breath, committing yourself to simply listen and not respond for a period of time, or by agreeing to take a break and come back to the conversation when you have both calmed down. By boycotting escalation, you will escape the drama long enough to focus on potential solutions.
- 3) ***With your children.*** Anyone who has lived with a toddler or a teenager (sometimes they feel like the same developmental stage), knows how hard it can be to drop the drama when you're dealing with kids. Jane Nelsen, the author of *Positive Discipline*, suggests that at times you can divert your mutual focus on the drama by letting your children know that you want to listen to them and help them feel better. Take a break from the push-pull cycle long enough to offer a hug, a moment of quiet reflection together, or an opportunity to listen to their emotions for a few moments in order to reduce tension. Then, get back to working *with* them to come up with mutual solutions to whatever issue is at hand. As you empower them to express themselves and to be a part of resolving a concern, you effectively remove one element of the drama (the desire for control) that can readily undermine your best intentions.

Like my unfortunate run-in with a life-threatening virus...ok...there's the drama again. Let me re-phrase, here. Like my unfortunate run-in with what *felt* like a life-threatening virus, once you diffuse the drama you can get to work on crafting the outcome you're seeking, whether it's health, emotional well being, marital connection, or parenting opportunities. Try some of these strategies to see how dropping the drama might benefit you!

New Year's Solutions—A Different Take on Goal Setting

Ok...it's mid-January. That means that, in general, 90% of New Year's Resolutions have probably already gone by the wayside. Rest assured that this phenomenon is not because people don't really *want* to change. In fact, I think that the fresh start of the year always gives people some added incentive—and motivation—to move in new directions in their lives. So, what makes the difference between a goal people tend to *reach* and one they *don't*?

Basically, there are five key components that help ensure people will reach their goals, whether these goals are physical, professional, relational, or others. I'll review those characteristics for you first and then I'll introduce you to a brand new, very simple strategy I've been using to help clients and audiences outline their goals. It's been turning goal-phobics in to goal-lovers.

Five Key Components of Effective Goals

To put it simply, effective goals are: Personal, Precise, Specific, Vivid, and Supported.

Personal: An effective goal is *personal*—yes, my friends, it's all about YOU this time. A good goal is attached to your values (such as physical health, emotional well being, financial security, family connection, contribution, or integrity). It's also grounded in the clear *benefits* you will gain when you achieve your goal (such as more energy, looking better, feeling good about yourself, financial independence, or experiencing better work or relationship outcomes). The personal component of the goal is your **why**—*why do you want to do this and how will it improve your life?*

Precise: A well-crafted goal is also *precise*—it states very clearly *exactly* what you are going to achieve. This is the key distinction between a New Year's Resolution (NYR) and a goal. A NYR says, "I'm going to lose weight," whereas a goal says, "I will weigh 140 pounds by June 30, 2006 ." A NYR says, "I'm going to improve my financial situation," whereas a goal says "I will pay off all of my revolving debt by December 1, 2006 ." Do you see the difference?

Specific: A results-producing goal is *specific*—it tells you in no uncertain terms *when* you will do what you need to do to achieve your goal. This is a critical, often overlooked component of making sure you will achieve your goals. People who say *when* they are going to work out, balance their checkbooks, spend time with their partners, or write out their business plans, are up to *three times more likely* than those who don't specify a time, to not only *do what they set out to do*, but also to *do it in a timely fashion*.

Vivid: A good goal is also *vivid*—it gives you an unmistakable picture in your mind of the outcome you are seeking. It creates a crystal-clear image of the *benefits* you will achieve and how you will *feel* as a result of having attained it. This is the **affirmation** part of a goal. An affirmation is defined as "a statement asserting the truth or existence of something." It states in present tense the vivid outcome and benefits you want to achieve, as though you already achieved it. So, in our weight loss goal above, its corresponding affirmation might be "I am elated and both feel and look great as I step off the scale weighing 140 pounds on June 30th." For our financial goal, the corresponding affirmation might be, "I feel exquisitely light and free as I drop the final payment in the mail that clears every dollar of revolving debt from my life on December 1."

Supported: An outcome-oriented goal rallies *support*—it rationally outlines *who* and *what* can lend you support as you travel your journey toward success. Support comes in more forms than just a cheerleader saying "you can do it," (although there's no denying this can help!). It also includes practical, informational, emotional, accountability, and other types of support, from people to processes (journaling and scheduling) to items (pictures, logbooks, calendars, motivational sayings). And remember, human support can be found beyond your typical inner circle of friends and family—look to professionals, support groups, colleagues, online communities, and fellow members of your spiritual practice, among other resources to help you succeed. Research shows that goal-seekers with support are dramatically more likely to achieve their desired outcomes than their "go-it-alone" counterparts.

A Simple Strategy for Writing Effective Goals

I've found that people often get stumped when they try to figure out how to outline their goals using these five components. So, based on a fabulous example from my friend David Margolis, I developed a simple, vivid way to help people craft their goals by writing the

framework for a news story about your goal. All you do is imagine that you have achieved your goal and that your local paper (or the national one—why not think big?) has just published a story about the outcome.

If you think about it, powerful news articles include three key components: *A headline* (which speaks to the personal and precise side of your goal), *facts and figures* describing what led up to it (this is basically your action plan—the precise and specific things you are committing to do to reach your goal), and the human interest aspect—*quotes or stories* from the people involved about why this happened, how they feel, and who or what influenced the situation (the things that address how your goal is personal, vivid, and has support).

My friend David created a similar piece on behalf of my book launch, and it was one of the most effective (and vivid) goal statements I have ever used. To see the example, click [here](#).

Now that you've seen one example, let's outline another potential "news story" goal for a person wishing to lose weight:

Newspaper Date: June 30, 2006 (The *specific* date she set to achieve her goal)

Headline: Jane Doe Weighs 140 lbs! (A *personal, precise* statement that shows the outcome of her goal)

Facts, Figures: (The *precise, specific, and supported* steps she will take to achieve this goal)

- Jane regularly walked for 45 minutes on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings (precise, specific).
- Jane visited a nutritionist on January 20th and followed her recommended eating plan consistently for 6 months (precise, specific, support).
- Jane enlisted the support of Jill, a colleague at work (for walks) and both her family members and the nutritionist (for the eating plan) to help her stay motivated and accountable (precise, specific, support).

Jane was quoted as saying: (The affirmation, the human interest, the “why” of your goal, your support)

“I feel elated and both feel and look great, having just stepped off the scale weighing 140 pounds.” (Personal, Vivid. This is also your **affirmation** for the goal.)

“I made a commitment to myself to exercise and eat healthy in very specific ways, and it really paid off.” (Personal, Vivid)

“I’m so grateful for the support of my friend Jill, my nutritionist, and my wonderful family for helping make this exciting day possible.” (Personal, Vivid, Support)

If you use this method, it brings together all of the elements of a results-oriented goal with everything you need to ensure success. I highly recommend reading your goal (the headline) and your affirmation (the first quote) daily, and the entire goal outline weekly to continue grounding yourself in the possibility and promise of reaching your goal. And, this strategy is even more effective if, like my friend David did, you create your own mock front-page describing all aspects of your goal to help you keep it vivid and interesting.

Give it a try with one of your goals and see how this process can make a difference in your life. It doesn't matter how big or how small your goal is. In fact, I recommend *starting small*, because *small wins* create *huge progress* over time. So, get to writing your news story now and reap the goal-attaining benefits long term.

Resources That Will Change Your Life

This month, all *Living With Intention* products—books and audio

programs—are on sale up to 35% off. Don't miss out on this fantastic way to get 2006 off to a great start. Click [here](#) for secure online shopping.

Mark your Calendars for The Pause and Play Getaway: A Weekend of Fun and Friendship, March 31-April 2, 2006 at the Coeur d'Alene Resort in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Be a part of the most exciting women's event to hit the Inland Northwest. The Pause and Play Getaway allows women like YOU to bid farewell to their everyday responsibilities and spend an unforgettable weekend of fun and friendship in a gorgeous resort setting. Join us for the exquisite Chocolate and Champagne reception, playshops of all kinds (we'd call them workshops, but they're way too fun!), goodie giveaways (including NEW for 2006: life-makeovers!), a one-of-a-kind women's marketplace, and our FABULOUS Pampering Pajama Party (the hallmark event in 2005), sponsored by Jaazz Salon and Skin Care Center. Spokane Magazine Group and Imagine magazine are our media partners. Visit the website www.pauseandplaygetaway.com for more information and to register. And, when you register by February 15th, take advantage of our convenient two-payment installment option. Space is very limited and the event is filling quickly, so register today!

Feedback and Free Stuff

Respond to this question and be entered to win a free subscription to *Imagine Magazine*.

This month's feedback question is based on the theme of "one thing." Here goes:

"What one thing would you recommend that people (anyone!) could do to tremendously enhance their physical, emotional, or spiritual well being?"

Send us your best ideas, along with any notes you want us to know about your recommendation (Have you successfully done it? Do you know someone who has? Where did you hear about it? Is there any research about it? Or, is it just a great idea you think has merit?).

Just send your ideas to feedback@appliedinsight.net. Remember to include your first and last name and email address for the drawing. We'll announce the winner in next month's issue, along with a new topic for you to consider. What do you have to lose? Nothing! What do you have to gain? A forum for your ideas and a free subscription to *Imagine Magazine* (check out www.imagemagazine.net for more details). We look forward to hearing from you.

Women Making a Difference... Ideas to Help You Thrive

For my Pacific Northwest readers, I thought I'd let you know about a wonderful event called "Your Total Business Makeover," which will be held February 4th and 5th at the Women's University Club in Seattle. Among other things, the event offers resources to:

- Learn how to increase your cash flow and profitability
- Write a winning Business plan
- Enter to win a \$10,000 marketing and branding "business makeover"

Your Total Business & Financial Makeover is a two-day intensive transformation featuring nationally recognized business experts, marketing gurus and lenders who will instruct, guide and prepare owners for funding and growing their businesses. Topics include:

- Under Earning and Price Setting
- Hit the Bulls Eye -Your Target Market
- Fund Your Business - Show Me the Money
- Plan to Succeed - Write A Winning Business Plan!

Call Bettina Carey at 206-349-4297

or register today at

<http://womeninsmallbiz.com/registrationform>



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