

Intention Over Action

Bridge intention to consistent action

Printable worksheet · 10 parts

Name _____ Date _____

Bridging the Gap Between What We Plan and What We Do

An Interactive Self-Assessment & Recovery Worksheet

Overall Progress 0% Complete

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"Intention Over Action" Worksheet by Sheamus Moran

www.TheRecoveryFiles.com

Embrace, Empower & Evolve

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PART 1 OF 10

Introduction

The Space Between Intention and Action

In recovery, we often have beautiful intentions. We intend to stay sober. We intend to repair our relationships. We intend to follow our aftercare plan. We intend to fix the chaos in our lives. But intention, no matter how sincere, is not the same as action.

Intention

noun. an act or instance of determining mentally upon some action or result; the end or object intended; purpose

Intention lives in the mind. It's about what we want, plan, or mean to do. It feels meaningful—and it is—but it exists only in potential.

Action

noun. the state or process of doing something or being active; something done, such as an act or deed; movement during physical activity

Action lives in the world. It's about what we actually do. It creates real change, real consequences, real recovery.

"The road to relapse is paved with good intentions."

We can have the best intentions in the world and still find ourselves right back where we started—because intentions without actions are just wishes.

This worksheet will help you honestly examine the gap between what you intend to do in your recovery and what you actually do. This isn't about self-criticism—it's about self-awareness. Only by seeing the gap clearly can we begin to close it.

The Journey from Intention to Action

Intention

I want to...

Decision

I will...

Plan

I will do X by Y...

Action

I am doing...

Result

I have done...

Most intentions get stuck before they become actions. This worksheet helps identify where and why.

☐ Begin the Worksheet

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PART 2 OF 10

Understanding the Gap

Understanding the Intention-Action Gap

The gap between intention and action is universal—everyone experiences it. But in recovery, this gap can be dangerous. Understanding why the gap exists is the first step to closing it.

Intention Feels Like Action

The brain rewards us for planning almost as much as doing. Deciding to do something feels productive even when nothing changes.

Fear of Failure

As long as we only intend, we can't fail. Action brings the risk of falling short, so we stay in the safety of "planning."

Overwhelm

The gap between where we are and where we want to be feels too large. We intend but feel paralyzed about where to start.

Comfort in the Familiar

Actions create change, and change—even positive change—is uncomfortable. Intentions allow us to stay comfortable.

Lack of Accountability

No one checks if our intentions became actions. Without accountability, it's easy to let intentions stay intentions.

All-or-Nothing Thinking

We intend perfection and then do nothing because perfect action seems impossible.

Initial Self-Reflection

Think of a time when you had a strong intention in recovery but didn't follow through with action. What happened?

Describe a specific example...

What got in the way of your intention becoming action?

What barriers or obstacles prevented action?

Looking back, what would have helped convert that intention into action?

What could have made the difference?

Key Insight

Good intentions are necessary but not sufficient for recovery. They're the spark, but action is the fire. In the following sections, you'll honestly assess the gap between your intentions and actions across key areas of recovery—and develop concrete plans to close that gap.

☐ Begin Assessment →

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PART 3 OF 10

Sobriety

Staying Clean and Sober

Intentions related to maintaining abstinence and protecting your recovery

My Intentions(What I planned/wanted to do)

Rate how strongly you intended each of the following:

I intend to stay completely abstinent from all mood-altering substances

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to avoid people, places, and things associated with my use

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to call someone when I have urges or cravings

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to attend meetings or support groups regularly

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to work with a sponsor or mentor

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to be honest about my struggles

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to prioritize my recovery above other things

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to develop healthy coping strategies

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Intention Score:0 / 32

My Actions(What I actually did)

Rate how consistently you actually followed through with action:

I have stayed completely abstinent from all mood-altering substances

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have actually avoided triggering people, places, and things

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have called someone when I had urges or cravings

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have attended meetings or support groups regularly

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have actively worked with a sponsor or mentor

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have been honest about my struggles when they arise

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have prioritized my recovery when it conflicted with other things

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have used healthy coping strategies instead of old behaviors

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Action Score: 0 / 32

Intention-Action Gap Analysis

Intentions

Actions

Gap

Intention to Action Alignment Strong Alignment

0. Intention (light) vs Action (solid) 32

Your actions closely match your intentions. You're walking the walk, not just talking the talk.

Reflection on Staying Clean and Sober

What specific intentions in this area haven't become actions? Why?

What one action will you take THIS WEEK to close the gap?

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PART 4 OF 10

Relationships

Repairing Relationships

Intentions related to healing damaged relationships and building healthy connections

My Intentions(What I planned/wanted to do)

Rate how strongly you intended each of the following:

I intend to make amends to people I've hurt

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to be more present and available to loved ones

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to rebuild trust through consistent actions

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to communicate more openly and honestly

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to listen better without becoming defensive

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to show up for important events and commitments

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to express appreciation and gratitude regularly

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to set and respect healthy boundaries

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Intention Score:0 / 32

My Actions(What I actually did)

Rate how consistently you actually followed through with action:

I have made direct amends to people I've hurt

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have been present and available to loved ones

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have been consistent in my actions to rebuild trust

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have communicated openly and honestly

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have listened without becoming defensive

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have shown up for important events and commitments

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have expressed appreciation and gratitude

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have set and respected healthy boundaries

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Action Score: 0 / 32

Intention-Action Gap Analysis

Intentions

Actions

Gap

Intention to Action Alignment Strong Alignment

0. Intention (light) vs Action (solid) 32

Your actions closely match your intentions. You're walking the walk, not just talking the talk.

Reflection on Repairing Relationships

What specific intentions in this area haven't become actions? Why?

What one action will you take THIS WEEK to close the gap?

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Aftercare

Engaging in Aftercare

Intentions related to following through with your recovery plan

My Intentions(What I planned/wanted to do)

Rate how strongly you intended each of the following:

I intend to follow my aftercare plan completely

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to attend all scheduled therapy or counseling appointments

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to take any prescribed medications as directed

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to participate in recommended support groups

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to continue working the steps or program

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to practice daily recovery activities

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to maintain accountability with my support team

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to engage in recommended lifestyle changes

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Intention Score:0 / 32

My Actions(What I actually did)

Rate how consistently you actually followed through with action:

I have followed my aftercare plan consistently

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have attended all scheduled therapy or counseling appointments

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have taken prescribed medications as directed

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have participated in recommended support groups

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have continued working the steps or program

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have practiced daily recovery activities

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have maintained accountability with my support team

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have made recommended lifestyle changes

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Action Score:0 / 32

Intention-Action Gap Analysis

Intentions

Actions

Gap

Intention to Action AlignmentStrong Alignment

0. Intention (light) vs Action (solid)32

Your actions closely match your intentions. You're walking the walk, not just talking the talk.

Reflection on Engaging in Aftercare

What specific intentions in this area haven't become actions? Why?

What one action will you take THIS WEEK to close the gap?

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PART 6 OF 10

Unmanageability

Addressing Unmanageability

Intentions related to creating order and stability in your life

My Intentions(What I planned/wanted to do)

Rate how strongly you intended each of the following:

I intend to get my finances under control

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to address legal issues or obligations

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to improve my physical health

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to create structure and routine in my life

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to address neglected responsibilities

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to improve my living situation

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to resolve conflicts I've been avoiding

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to take care of practical matters I've neglected

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Intention Score:0 / 32

My Actions(What I actually did)

Rate how consistently you actually followed through with action:

I have taken concrete steps to manage my finances

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have addressed legal issues or met obligations

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have taken action to improve my physical health

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have established structure and routine in my life

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have addressed responsibilities I had neglected

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have taken steps to improve my living situation

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have addressed conflicts I had been avoiding

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have taken care of practical matters I'd neglected

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Action Score: 0 / 32

Intention-Action Gap Analysis

Intentions

Actions

Gap

Intention to Action Alignment Strong Alignment

0. Intention (light) vs Action (solid) 32

Your actions closely match your intentions. You're walking the walk, not just talking the talk.

Reflection on Addressing Unmanageability

What specific intentions in this area haven't become actions? Why?

What one action will you take THIS WEEK to close the gap?

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Growth

Personal Growth and Development

Intentions related to becoming the person you want to be

My Intentions(What I planned/wanted to do)

Rate how strongly you intended each of the following:

I intend to develop new interests and hobbies

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to improve my education or skills

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to work on my character defects

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to develop emotional intelligence

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to practice self-care regularly

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to cultivate gratitude and positive thinking

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to be of service to others

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I intend to pursue meaningful goals and purpose

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Intention Score:0 / 32

My Actions(What I actually did)

Rate how consistently you actually followed through with action:

I have developed new interests and engaged in hobbies

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have taken steps to improve my education or skills

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have actively worked on my character defects

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have practiced emotional regulation and awareness

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have engaged in regular self-care activities

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have practiced gratitude and positive thinking

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have been of service to others

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

I have pursued meaningful goals and purpose

☐ Not at All ☐ Slightly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Mostly

Action Score: 0 / 32

Intention-Action Gap Analysis

Intentions

Actions

Gap

Intention to Action Alignment Strong Alignment

0. Intention (light) vs Action (solid) 32

Your actions closely match your intentions. You're walking the walk, not just talking the talk.

Reflection on Personal Growth and Development

What specific intentions in this area haven't become actions? Why?

What one action will you take THIS WEEK to close the gap?

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PART 8 OF 10

Surrender as Action

Surrender Is Applied Action

In recovery, we learn that surrender is not passive—it is the most powerful action we can take. We surrender our old way of thinking, our opinions and judgments about ourselves, others, and the world. We surrender to the fact that we can't outthink this disease.

In recognizing that we have this disease that affects our mind, body, and spirit, we determine that the power to not use does not lie within us. When we smash the ego and see that the power is not within us, it must be outside of us!

We must consider: "My best thinking got me here. Am I willing to listen to the guidance of others who have found a way out? Am I willing to try?"

What Is the Principle of Surrender?

To surrender in spirituality and recovery means that a person completely gives up their own will and subjects their thoughts, ideas, and deeds to the will and teachings of those who have come before them—and to a power other than self.

Surrender is willful acceptance and yielding to a dominating force and their will. It is not defeat—it is the strategic decision to stop fighting a battle you cannot win alone and to accept help.

Surrender Self-Assessment

How do my actions look after the act of surrender? What's different about how I operate?

Describe how surrender has changed (or would change) your actions...

Are my actions purpose-driven? Are my actions following the suggestions of others, or am I following my own gameplan?

What does it mean to you to "yield the dominating force" of your thinking, opinion, and judgment?

What does yielding look like in practice for you?

What parts of your thinking, opinions, or judgments are hardest to surrender?

Identify what you hold onto most tightly...

How has "your best thinking" gotten you into trouble? Give specific examples.

When has your own thinking led you astray?

Surrender: The Bridge from Intention to Action

Surrender connects intention to action because it removes the ego that blocks us. When we surrender:

- We stop thinking we know better and actually listen
- We stop waiting for the "perfect" plan and take imperfect action
- We stop protecting our comfort and embrace necessary discomfort
- We stop isolating and accept support and accountability
- We stop relying on our own power and draw on something greater

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PART 9 OF 10

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap: From Intention to Action

Now that you've assessed your intention-action gaps across key areas, it's time to build the bridge. These practical strategies can help convert your intentions into consistent action.

Make It Specific

Vague intentions stay intentions. "I intend to work on my recovery" becomes "I will attend a meeting every Tuesday and Thursday at 7pm."

Convert one vague intention into a specific action with time, place, and details:

Make It Small

Overwhelming intentions paralyze us. Break big intentions into tiny first steps. The smallest action beats the grandest intention.

Take your biggest intention and break it into the smallest possible first step:

Make It Accountable

Tell someone your intention and ask them to check on your action. What we share becomes harder to abandon.

Who will you tell about your intentions, and how will they hold you accountable?

Make It Immediate

"Someday" and "tomorrow" are where intentions go to die. What can you do TODAY, even if imperfectly?

What one action will you take TODAY (not tomorrow) toward your recovery intentions?

Make It Connected to Values

When actions connect to what we truly value, they become easier to take. Why does this action matter?

Why do your recovery intentions matter? What values drive them?

Make It Surrendered

Stop trying to figure it out alone. Ask for guidance, follow suggestions, let go of needing to control the outcome.

Whose guidance will you follow? What suggestions are you willing to try?

Daily Practice: Intention to Action Check-In

Each day, ask yourself these questions to close the intention-action gap:

Morning: "What is my intention for today?"

Name specific recovery intentions for the day ahead.

Midday: "What action have I taken so far?"

Check in—have intentions become actions?

Evening: "Where did intention and action align today? Where didn't they?"

Honest review without harsh judgment.

[○ Summary & Action Plan →](#)

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PART 10 OF 10

Summary & Plan

Your Intention-Action Gap Summary

Strong Alignment

0/32

0/32

Strong Alignment

0/32

0/32

Strong Alignment

0/32

0/32

Strong Alignment

0/32

0/32

Strong Alignment

0/32

0/32

Overall Pattern Analysis

Which area has the largest gap? What does that tell you?

Identify your biggest gap area and what it means...

Which area shows the best alignment? What's working there?

Identify your strongest area and why...

My Intention-to-Action Plan

Priority Actions: What 3 actions will I commit to taking THIS WEEK to close my biggest gaps?

1. / 2. / 3.

Accountability: Who will I share these commitments with, and how will they hold me accountable?

Name specific people and your accountability plan...

Surrender Practice: What guidance or suggestions will I follow instead of my own thinking?

Whose suggestions will you follow? What will you let go of?

Daily Check-In: How will I check my intention-action alignment each day?

Describe your daily practice...

My Commitment: Action Over Intention

Write your personal commitment to converting intentions into actions in your recovery:

I commit to moving from intention to action by...

Signature (Type Your Name)

Your name

Date

The Transformation

"I plan to..."

"I mean to..."

→

"I will do today..."

Remember

"Recovery isn't found in what we intend to do—it's found in what we actually do. Every day, in small actions, we choose recovery or we choose relapse. Surrender is applied action. Action is applied intention. And intention without action is just a wish."

Close the gap. Take the action. Your recovery depends not on the perfection of your intentions, but on the consistency of your actions—however imperfect they may be.