

Intentionality . . . "I might derive benefits in my day-to-day living, but without intentions, without planning, without actions, my life appears privileged by chance rather than prompted by choice." *HBM*

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The Leader Within

Beavers build dams. Bees form perfect honeycomb patterns. Migratory birds depart and return with directional precision. The behaviours of such creatures are a wonder with all that results from their activity—activity that appears both determined and deliberate. We could call it "intentionality" but let's hold that term for awhile. How does the activity of a human being differ? Consider a case—someone shaped a wheel—and then a cart—a carriage—a car. You see, human intentionality looks for improvements.

There are some things animals do "naturally" that man cannot do naturally. (We're pretty capable but let's give them proper recognition. Look what they can do without engineering degrees or courses in navigation and all the equipment and instrumentation). It is with intention that we humans do something and, when the way is not easy or efficient, we look (often, but not always) for a better way. It is common to link our human intentionality with "progressions" and, hence, progress.

Intentionality can be a topic of philosophical discussions but how might it look, in practical terms, at the workplace? The most basic, day-to-day activities—work systems, quality control, ordering, sales calls, planning meetings, even the agenda for a meeting—have an element of intentionality. They all say, "We intend to do this" or "I intend to do this." Yet, if you even consider just that short list, some activities are continuations of existing processes and others are initial steps in achieving some future state.

Intentionality brought to the workplace each day contributes to maintenance of processes and doing well what we did well yesterday. Is that where the competitive edge and advantage lies for a company? Intentionality increases in value when it expresses a vision, a dream, a plan for some improvement. So the advantage is to take our intentionality and develop a plan leading to activity.

Can activity be regressive or ineffective? You bet! Often, it is the case that the way towards improvement is sustained through accountability (that's an important aspect of coaching). People checking on actual progress.

Nature's creatures are actively sustaining existing patterns. Perhaps intentionality is something for which we, as humans, are uniquely responsible. Perhaps, with its anticipation of a future, it is to be considered something of a privilege.

Bret Maukonen

The Coach Within

The visit not made, the vacation not taken, the project not started—all of these represent intentions not acted upon. By the way, the white, blank space above is the article not written—thoughts not expressed. The white space represents something like intentions. It represents potential. What you have just read represents intentions made real. Your intentions are part of the potential for your future. Enough said? I will have a full-length article next month. :-)

Lynne Maukonen

To Ponder . . . Are there some things in your life that are still in the "good intentions" stage? What effect would it have on your outlook to take a first step in turning an intention into something that you will begin to experience? Celebrate the things that you are doing today. They are your intentions realized. What are your intentions for tomorrow?