

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LIVING WITH INTENTION

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What motivates and inspires you? What does it mean to live with intention? Author Richie Norton stated "Intentional living is the art of making our own choices before others' choices make us." We have the opportunity every day to make conscious, deliberate decisions, identify priorities that are in line with our values, set goals, and let go of things that don't fit in our lives anymore. Intentional living is the opposite of being distracted and operating on auto-pilot, which many of us do when we're feeling overwhelmed.

Research from the "Blue Zones," which are long-lived communities around the world, shows that people who have purpose and meaning in their lives tend to be happier and healthier. Having a purpose in life is guided by your personal values. Some people find purpose and meaning by raising their family, having a rewarding career, practicing their religious faith, volunteering for a cause they believe in, or engaging in a hobby they love. No matter your age, having purpose and meaning in your life is beneficial for your mental, emotional, and physical health.

Here are some ways to live more intentionally:

- **Make time for self-reflection.** Where do you want to spend your time and energy? Who and what do you want in your life? What matters to you, and what are you grateful for? Answering these questions can guide you to make more thoughtful decisions. Some people engage in self-reflection through meditation, prayer, writing in a journal, practicing yoga, or taking a walk in nature. Self-reflection can help you reach deep insights about who you are and what you really want in life.
- **Unplug from electronics and pay attention to your surroundings.** Phones, tablets, and computers provide endless distractions and can isolate us from other people. Give your mind a break. Be present with others and really listen to what they have to say.
- **Be kind.** Smile and be gracious. Compliment someone. Show your appreciation to others. You never know what difficulties people may be going through.
- **Envision achieving what you wish for, and set goals for yourself.** Using your skills and talents to accomplish your goals can give you a sense of mastery and satisfaction.

