

CHAPTER 10: INTENTIONAL

Making Every Action Count

Unhappy with the textbooks she used in the classroom, Pleasant T. Rowland, a former teacher, founded the Pleasant Company in 1986 to develop her own educational materials. The American Girls Collection, an innovative assortment of books, dolls, accessories, and magazines designed to teach American girls about history, was soon born. Ms. Rowland's company was hugely successful and was eventually bought out by Mattel in 1998 in a deal where she became Mattel's vice chairman. The success of her company was undoubtedly due to her ability to be intentional in her daily actions that lead the accomplishment of her goals.

Being intentional simply means working with a purpose in mind and making every action count. We must keep our long-term goals in mind while working in small, purposeful steps each day to accomplish our vision over time.

Key steps to being intentional:

1) *Have a Purpose Worth Living For*

You must have a strong sense of what you want to build or accomplish. You cannot be intentional without having a strong sense of purpose.

2) *Know Your Strengths & Weaknesses*

Examine yourself and know what you do well. If you love what you do, you will find the energy and drive needed to be intentional each day.

3) *Prioritize Your Responsibilities*

Know your priorities and work accordingly.

4) *Learn To Say No*

Chemist John A. Widtsoe said "Let every man sing his own song in life. You cannot try to do every good thing that comes your way or you will not excel at what you were made to do."

5) *Commit Yourself to Long-Term Achievement*

Most of life's accomplishments are achieved over time through steady, hard work. Be willing to dedicate yourself to the process of long-term achievement rather than seeking immediate rewards.

Questions to reflect upon:

- 1) How intentional are you?
- 2) As you proceed through your day, do you have a plan and a purpose for everything you do?
- 3) Do you know where you're going and why you're doing what you're doing?
- 4) Are you simply drifting down the stream of life?

To improve your intentionality:

- 1) Explore your strengths & weaknesses
- 2) Specialize in your specialty
- 3) Plan your calendar with purpose

Being intentional is something that I strive to do each day at work. I am the queen of "to do" lists. However, while trying to prioritize the usual work and deal with the "fires" that pop up each day, it is easy to lose sight of the big picture. When feeling overwhelmed, I am going to remember that Rome wasn't built in a day and just try to accomplish one thing at a time.

In summary, if we choose to spend our time wisely, with intention and purpose, we can make the most of our days/programs/lives.

Katrina Cavaness, Project Director, Monticello School District, Monticello, AR