



Facebook Facilitator Assembly: Intentions

Every month we host a [facilitated Facebook assembly](#) for facilitators and workshop leaders around the world to come together and share ideas around a set topic. In January Nadia Chaney facilitated an assembly around the topic of 'intention'. Here is the transcript:

Nadia Chaney: As everyone gets here from their various corners of the (round) world...here's a CHECK IN QUESTION: "If the way you are feeling today was an ALIEN PLANET what would be some of it's KEY FEATURES?"

Katie Jackson: It would be bright and sunny with some murky, mossy patches.

Nadia: Nice! Thanks Katie. I think mine has a really wild, fresh biodome...with some rebel forces trying to get in and steal food...and a big bright starry sky with a clear view of the earth. Tiny, blue and beautiful.

Ella Cooper: On my alien planet there are three mood moons One is a ball of excited light, one is green grey brooding mysterious swirl and the other is white and constant. There is very little gravity and joyous laughter can be heard everywhere. You can also see the Northern Lights at anytime of the day.

Becky Jaine: loving this, my planet would be swirly rainbow colored and feelings of love and intention and action would make the planets spin joyfully counter to earth.

Bo Pah Nah: On my planet: The moment a living being is born it will know when it will die and what to do in-between (purpose).

Shilpa Setty: It has white wide space with lots of peace on one side and colors of rainbow on the other side with different emotions.

Suchetha Bhat: In my alien planet I could decide how time moves...sometimes fast and sometimes super slow...

Khari Wendell McClelland: My planet would have strong winds of change, deep and vast core of molten intensity, a whole lotta birds singing, and bio diversity, the colour blue would be pervasive. Harmonic frequency would be the main mode of communication and energy exchange.

Robin Connolly: My alien planet would be small, warm, sunny, quiet, lots of trees and sand and water. People smiling.

Nadia: Thank you! Love your planets. We have to remember this check in Q, and use it again. Great answers, everyone!

Preeti JadooBerry: Hi Nadia! My alien planet would have peacocks watching over the nests of doves while the doves flew out and did their work. The people or species that I belong to would live behind windowed walls, finding moments of respite in thought and through images on the other side of the glass.

Nadia: So I think we're in good time to get started. Don't forget to POST YOUR CHECK-IN below. Here are the goals for today's session:

- 1) To explore the idea of INTENTION. What is it, how does it work, does it work, what are its limits...(does it have limits?)
- 2) To build an understanding of how and why to use intention when working with groups
- 3) To share activities and games that help groups to work with intention

In order to achieve the goals, here are some suggestions for agreements. We are still experimenting with this form, so be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS.

- 1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe.
- 2) Share at your level; Everyone is welcome, no matter their level of experience as a facilitator or community organizer. All questions are important
- 3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow
- 4) You can come and go as you please, take as long as you like to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format to make this work no matter whether you are just waking up, just going to bed, or on your lunch break (time zones unite!!)
- 5) refresh, refresh REFRESH your page. That will keep you aligned with responses
- 6) HAVE FUN

Nadia: THE FIRST DISCUSSION QUESTION (if you are just joining us, post your CHECK IN below or above, and read the Goals and Agreements posts): What IS intention? That is to say, how would you define it, and have you ever experienced it in your life? Can you tell a short story to explain or describe it?

Becky: Wow. This is a ginormous topic ... intention rules/ dominates/ dictates/ leads/ controls my life. Pretty much everything I do (other than going to the loo perhaps LOL) I consider my intention and do a check to make sure my actions are coming from my intention. Story to follow...

Katie: I've started integrating the notion of intention into many aspects of my work – even work which is doesn't fit within the facilitation model. For me intentions are a method of grounding my work and staying focused. For every decision I make I think back over the intentions I set, the reasons I am doing this work in the first place and check in to make sure I am on track.

Bo Pah Nah: Intention is – what I am willing to do in a given situation. When I set an intention, I am bringing more awareness into it. Consciously or unconsciously I take steps to make it happen...and it happens (more or less).

Nadia: Bo Pah Nah, I'm interested in how you connect INTENTION to WILL, or willingness. Does your intention define the limits of your will, then? And if yes, how does that affect your facilitation?

Bo Pah Nah: Hmm...with the word 'willingness' I was just trying to mean 'intend' without having to use that word!

Becky: When our responses or actions are aligned with our intention we have greater clarity in our selves and others can see it (and contribute or respond) too, because we are clearer than doing things in total response mode. The universe responds to our intentions and sends mysterious magical support to help us create.

Cue walking in the woods with deer music... story: 3 years ago I was yearning to be part of a women's circle so much and it felt sooo missing from my life, I decided to set the intention and co-create one with women I'd never met before. In the process I met a woman in Chicago (I'm in Raleigh NC) who was starting the same kind of circle and we helped each other figure out what we were doing. We drew each other to us, and as a result co-created amazing experiences for ourselves and our new friends in the circles. It turned out my Chicago friend and I had read the same book that led us to this powerful intention work, Lynne McTaggart's book The Intention Experiment (Great book btw).

Nadia: Yes, I saw that book in my research for this chat, Becky Jaine. That's a very interesting story. Do you think it works in all cases, that what we INTEND draws things towards us? Are there any limits to this?

Becky: This is a great topic everyone. Enjoying everyone's ideas. Nadia yes I think it works in all cases. When intention doesn't align is when something else bursts into our lives and distracts us from it i.e. an opinion contrary to our achieving it that we choose to believe instead of the intention, a "life crisis" that takes our attention away from the actions (work) that is needed to carry thru on the intention, or a bigger intention comes to us that makes us shift our energy and focus to something else.

Shilpa: Intention helps me give myself fully to what I do and be more present. It helps me believe in myself without doubt.

Suchetha: Intentions for me come before we set any goals...the way two people go about achieving the goal of say "have fun" could be very different based on the intention.

Khari Wendell McClelland: Conscious foundations for our work and relationships. When the core/foundations don't hold integrity the structure built on top has a strong likelihood of being shaky and shoddy, and eventually collapsing, possibly resulting in a phase of ego death. No worries, we can be reborn, by setting new intentions informed by our experiences. The limitations seem to be the ignorance we carry into making them, our blind spots.

Nadia: So, Khari Wendell McClelland I love what you're saying. That we can learn and set new intentions based on the blind spots that we uncover (is that right?) When you are doing your (fabulous) work with youth, how do you help them to understand this process for themselves?

Khari: I think from the beginning of a camp, we attempt to get young people in touch with the idea that they can tap into their highest self to form intentions for themselves and the community, they also become quickly aware that these intentions are sometimes met fully and sometimes we stumble in meeting them. Creating space to make mistakes and re create our intentions and goals for who we want to be and how we want to walk in spaces together and life generally is an empowering experience for everyone.

Ella: I keep on thinking of my personal intentions as a human being...how I set my intentions affects everyone around me. So yes, I believe that the intentions we create in a group setting start with us. When we get caught up with life, our emotions, daily challenges, we can sometimes forget our intentions in the heat of the moment, but if I've set up simple intentions for myself (ones that I can live by), then I always have something to come back to which in turn allows me to better hold the intentions and/or group container when in facilitator mode.

Katie: Wow Ella Cooper – I love the concept of having clear intentions for yourself as a human being. I am totally going to sit down tonight and map out some intentions for myself as a whole and for 2014. Love that!

Nadia: That's intriguing Ella Cooper. You are considering a relationship with the intention itself...connects to what Khari Wendell McClelland's saying, too.

Eli: I got a question, if I may, (sorry you all are distractingly brilliant) what is the difference between intentions and values. Ella Cooper what you're saying resonates with what I think of as values.

Nadia: That is a fantastic question, Eli Steffen. And, I also want to know...if groups of people have different VALUES, how does that affect the group's INTENTION or ability to connect with that intention? Is there a kind of dominance that might accidentally happen with intention? It connects to what Suchetha Bhat was saying earlier, I think.

Nadia: SECOND DISCUSSION QUESTION: Becky Jaine and Katie Jackson you make me want to ask: WHERE do your intentions come from? Wayne Dyer makes this statement: "A caterpillar, a tiny acorn, an apple blossom all have intention built into them. That caterpillar becomes a butterfly, the acorn a giant oak tree, the apple blossom an apple. Intention doesn't err. The acorn never turns into a pumpkin! Every aspect of nature has intention built in." —is intention CREATED or IN-BUILT, do you think? And in either case, how do we help the groups we work with to find it?

Katie: Great question. For some reason I find that hard to answer. I guess for me the intention is the starting point for any project. It's so so easy to start a project backwards eg for me when a client asks me to produce some great content for them I could easily decide to create an infographic because they are on trend at the moment and then decide what to represent in that infographic. Stopping to think about intention makes me reverse the process – so I think about what the intention of creating the content is and what I am trying to achieve and then I think about the medium or form that best suits that intention.

Shilpa: To state an experience, me and my co-lead Pavithra KL did our intention before doing a teacher development programme and I consciously let myself say everything that I felt like saying (be it in sharing story or in debriefs) and I could feel there was a difference both in me and the participants. They also were more open.

Nadia: OH that's awesome Katie! reminds me of this quote that we posted earlier in the week: "physicist Eric Jantsch is quoted as having said: Mental anticipation now pulls the future into the present and reverses the direction of causality."

Preeti: I think it's created but based on what's innate and known already. Created intentions are based on and limited by what we already know and believe. I think helping groups locate it requires conscious time and space to examine, dig and find intention individually as well as together. To some extent, we need to know the people in the group or seek to know them/be curious about them; we need to inquire about said intentions – why they are there, where they came from, how they developed. This can be done on a personal level so that it isn't intrusive and also on a group level once folks have a good vibe.

Bo Pah Nah: I think the larger intent is innate. We create the smaller intents to meet the larger one.

Becky: Me thinks intention is created AND can be in-built. I think we all operate whether we know it or not– on intention. i.e. I LOVE the way cookies taste and I like feeling yumminess so I'm going to eat this whole box! The intention is to feel good, so we indulge even though it may end up being bad for us.

Personally my intentions stem from my belief that I am here to help people light up to their own joy and express their own gifts/talents. I LOOOOOOOOOVE people. It makes ME feel good to see people care for and honor themselves. My intention most of the time is to create opportunities that help people get out of their patterns to awaken and elevate the joy that's in them.

Ella: Reading this makes me think that intention means different things to different people. I often think of intention as something that has a 'deeper' meaning that goes beyond 'I intend to have a nap today.' My personal intention might look more like. "I intend to practice kindness and patience towards myself and others today."

Shilpa: When I read this only thing that comes in my mind is that "Capable and Able" and about how each one of us have a purpose in this life

Eli: I got a question, if I may, what is the difference between intentions and values? Ella Cooper what you're saying resonates with what I think of as values, which I would define as deep criteria by which I live my life. So I'm living rightly if I'm practicing kindness and patience to use your example.

Suchetha: I think intentions can be built in...but can't be controlled...a corn never turns into a pumpkin, but there's no way to tell if a corn will in fact become a corn...

Ella: Eli in response: when I think of setting an intention for myself which might be kindness and patience, while this might be linked to my values, it is different. There is action behind intention, even if it is a collective internal one or an outward obvious type of intention.

Becky: Ella and Eli you are right. different things to different people. To me conscious intention is especially powerful when intention happens before the action. Perhaps we set our intentions based upon our values.

Preeti: I think finding intention requires investigation of our story first – be it in the near or distant past (ie: today, last year, the last 20 years, etc.). Sometimes we are asked to find and locate intention without a lead in activity, a way to settle into the idea (this is often

done in one minute in a yoga class or a few minutes at the beginning of a workshop). For me, setting an intention requires me to first reflect deeply on what needs change or what needs more attention in my life and community. What do I want at the center of my thinking and way of being for either a particular duration of time or always? Intention requires practice, meditation and focus. Values are similar but I find they are somewhat more stable, already integrated into my life. In this way, I don't think intentions and values are dichotomous. For me, they are fluid: I may set an intention today and in a few months or years it becomes a value, a part of who and what I am – how I live my life. So when I make an intention, it is often with the hope of it becoming a value.

Becky: Preeti oh yes love your question “What do I want at the center of my thinking and way of being for either a particular duration of time or always”. I agree intentions and values are dichotomous, to me I feel they are so much more powerful when they are examined and set consciously. Many people live where values and intentions are NOT synchronized and perhaps that's why many people are unhappy. What do you think? I wonder if human beings are the only species that CHOOSES our intentions, other animals don't have that option?

Khari: The very notion of intention seems to be based on the concept of willfully directing one's attention towards something, in this case setting a goal or mode for our conduct and actions. This seems a contradiction to what Wayne might be saying, almost a question of whether free will exists. That being said.... every once in a while a free radical adapts a new variation, acorn squash, purple potato, farmers have used these as a means to create better yielding and tasting foods... There is that central kernel of who we are and also the possibility for evolution and adaptation as well. I try to leave a wide open space for the youth to investigate and explore what these things mean for themselves. By attempting to not make too many assumptions about who they are and where they come from or their possibilities, but to allow them the safety and space to try new things and to explore what feels closest to their true nature or INTENTION.

Bo Pah Nah: “leave a wide open space for the youth to investigate and explore what these things mean for themselves” – loved that Khari.

Nadia: THIRD DISCUSSION QUESTION: WHAT ACTIVITIES do you use when working with INTENTION in groups?

Bo Pah Nah: I have used just the intention tree at camps...or intention clothes-line would be more appropriate (for want of trees at a camp site). Seed and stone is another activity that I have used.

Katie: We have an activity in our PYE digital toolkit called '[The Dream Tree](http://www.pyeglobal.org/2013/08/05/youth-work-activities-dream-tree/)' for anyone who is looking for new activities in this area: <http://www.pyeglobal.org/2013/08/05/youth-work-activities-dream-tree/>

Bo Pah Nah: Oh yes! Forgot about Dream Tree. Thank you Katie

Becky: Start by determining the group intention and restating it often. When we seem stuck, restate the intention and see if our approach is in spirit of the intent. Back up the bus, if needed and revise/add to intention. Bo Pah Nah what is the intention tree?

Ella: Standing or seated one hand at heart the other on belly, following the breath, focusing on the out breath...from this space I can guide myself or others to a specific intention or simply come back into the moment, regaining a sense of connection and grounding...it's simple but really effective.

Bo Pah Nah: Becky that reminds me – Goals & Agreements are also intentions!

The intention tree has all the participants writing their intention for the next few days (of the camp) on a piece of paper, individually reading it in front of others and asking “will you all support me” and the group responds “Yes ____ (name) we will support you”. The piece of paper is then hung on a tree.

Bo Pah Nah: ..so you have many notes of paper (with intentions on it) hanging from the tree.

Nadia: We are at the end of our precious hour together. This has been WONDERFUL. Thank you all so much for your wisdom, intelligence and generosity. NEXT MONTH'S topic is: "Change-making (activism) and the Creative Community Model." We'd love to see you back again, and please invite your friends and colleagues. THANKS AGAIN, all!! You are amazing.

Bo Pah Nah: Lovely time with you Nadia Chaney and the rest beautiful people. Thank you!

Shilpa: Great discussions, every time this assembly happens, it feels like a down pour of powerful intentions Thank you!

Becky: Thank you for this sparkling convo. I was sucked into the vacuum of everyone's planets and time concept COMPLETELY vanished. Can't believe that was an hour! Blessings and gratitude to you (((ALL))) for sharing and thinking and inspiring!

Khari: Thanks to everyone!!!

Robin: Thank you! cant wait to read through it all!

*The next Facebook assembly will take place on February 20th at 4pm GMT (6pm Cape Town, 2pm Rio de Janeiro, 11am Toronto, 9.30pm Bangalore, 8am Seattle/Vancouver). Just join the [Facebook group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/491719184185338/) to take part:
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