VIDEO 1
What Derails You Most Often?

We’re going to start our journey looking at Intentions and Patterns... specifically, what tends to derail you most often. This is so important that if you get nothing else out of this whole program, becoming crystal clear about this one subject will be valuable information.

Before you try to apply any solutions, you want to become very clear about what kind of patterns are going on in your life.

Your patterns may be obvious to other people who are close to you, but aren’t as obvious to you yourself. That’s because it’s hard to see what’s happening when you’re inside of it. And with traits of ADD / ADHD, we may not be as likely to be paying attention!

That will change in this program.

What is stopping you?

The three worst words you can say – or think – when you aren’t able to follow through on what you intended are “for whatever reason...”

As long as you aren't clear on the reason you can't start, didn’t start, or didn't follow through, you won't be able to even determine what solution or strategy to apply -- much less actually apply it.
So the first step in moving forward is to gain a high degree of self-awareness by finding out exactly what has been stopping you. You’ll want to be able to identify that across a number of situations, so that you can really get to know your patterns.

This will most likely be something different for different situations. It will also be different for every individual. Although there are a number of common difficulties shared by many with ADD, the exact nature of your challenges, and what triggers your derailment, will be unique to yourself.

**THE INTENTION LOG:**

You need a way to accurately identify the ROADBLOCKS that trip you up, get in your way, or derail you from doing what you intended to do.

The Intention Log is a tool to track what stopped you when you weren’t able to fulfill an Intention.

The power of this tool to impact you is a result of:

1. you seeing it written all in one place
2. the process itself, of writing or typing what you’ve observed

It doesn’t matter what method you use for tracking. You can print out the Intention log template provided in this lesson, or download it as a Word document to type into. Or create your own way of tracking, on paper or electronically. You could even take notes in your phone if that’s easiest for you.

**CAUTION:** It may be tempting to skip recording your Intentions in writing at all, thinking you’ll remember them. That will NOT accomplish the purpose.

If you get tripped up over and over – as many people with ADD do – your mind is not automatically learning from experience. So you need to create an intervention. Writing or typing what happens sends the insight into your unconscious, in a way that gets your mind to pay attention.

The purpose of this Intention Log is to find out what is throwing you OFF. It is NOT to keep you on track!
“The Dog Ate My Homework”

Remember the excuses kids sometimes come up with, that sound pretty far-fetched? Those excuses are what we’re looking for as entries in your Intention Log!

You could consider the Intention Log as the *Diary of Lame Excuses* – there’s no excuse too silly, if it’s true. We’re trying to find out exactly what goes wrong to keep you from starting, or from moving forward.

The roadblocks you record could be things that you DO, that you DON’T DO, or that HAPPEN to you. They could be feelings, lack of motivation, or simple forgetfulness.

The important thing is to be accurate about why it happened, or what went wrong. No matter what it is, write down what threw off your Intention… even if it was completely out of your control.

If the Intention Log were a school project, you would get an “A” if you recorded a lot of failures.

Common Concerns about Intention Tracking

Here are some concerns people have about Intention Tracking:

*Must I track everything I do??!!*

No, you don’t have to do that! Even one intention a day is fine. You can track Intentions related to work, your personal life… anything at all. But since you’re looking for roadblocks, it’s most useful to pick something you think you might have difficulty fulfilling.

This is not something to do forever. If you even have 5 to 10 entries over the next week, it will provide meaningful information to help you move forward.

*I don’t have time for this!*

Hello *Impatient Iggy*!

How long are you imagining it will take you to fill out one Intention entry?

I challenge you to test that assumption. It’s doubtful it will take even 5 minutes.
I’m afraid I’ll forget to record my entries.

That’s very likely, so this is a good time to create a no-brainer reminder system.

Put a sticky note where you’re absolutely sure to see it…. like your bathroom mirror or right on your laptop screen. And make a recurring daily entry in your calendar.

If you keep the Intention Log by your bed, so you’ll see it to remind you to enter what happened with your Intention before you go to sleep.

- If you wait more than 24 hours, you most likely won’t remember exactly why you didn’t fulfill that Intention.

I can’t bear to look at my failures.

This is probably the most common reason people don’t track intentions, and it sabotages their success in the program.

It’s when you can’t bear to look at – what you consider to be – your “failures.”

This is toxic SHAME – when the idea of actually writing down something that didn’t work out the way you intended feels so uncomfortable that you would avoid the very first and critical action of a program that you invested in to help you. That’s a very powerful roadblock, and is surely an enormous roadblock for you in many areas of life.

This kind of dysfunctional avoidance is really like someone hijacking your brain.

The hijacker is “Emotional Emma.” The Emma in your head probably doesn’t make an appearance in public, and is not the persona that you show to the world. She stays hidden in the shadows.

For many people with ADD or ADHD who suffer from toxic shame, Emma is their character most likely to hijack the bus and drive it over a cliff. If the Emotional Emma on your bus is exuding shame, she’s probably the most destructive of your characters.
How can you handle toxic shame?
Accept and acknowledge the feeling of shame, and the fact that it’s had a powerful influence on much of what you do. Also accept that you have a choice at every turn, to give in to it, or to do what you need to do to succeed.

In tracking Intentions, you can allow yourself to accept that you feel uncomfortable, and then gently let that thought go.

Don’t dwell on it. And don’t give the fact that you feel uncomfortable a reason to feel ashamed again! Toxic shame will use any excuse to feed if you let it.

Then, go about your business, recording at least one Intention a day. And feel proud of yourself for doing it, even though it felt bad.

- When you record your Intentions, it’s likely that SHAME will come up as a recurring pattern for why you didn’t fulfill some of them.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Keep these factors in mind to have the most successful experience in Intention Tracking:

Enter just one task at a time as your Intention.
Keep it simple to start. You can build in complexity as you go along.

For a larger project, enter just one Intention at a time.
If you have several steps in a larger project, that’s great to track them as Intentions, but do just one before entering an intended start time for the next one. With multiple steps, there could easily be a domino effect; if the first step doesn’t go well, the rest will probably have to be adjusted.

Do what it takes to be able to track an Intention.
Have the form handy, use reminders if you need to. If you don’t have the form available, take notes in your phone on what happened and transfer them later.

Create the Intention with the time to START the task, rather than a deadline.
Without a time you intended to start, you have no way to determine what may have kept it from happening.
Example: Doing Laundry

*Compare entering an Intention with the time you’ll intend to START vs entering the same Intention with the deadline time.*

**Intention with DEADLINE: “Finish the laundry by 5:00 today”**

When an Intention like this doesn’t happen, it’s often because you didn’t start it soon enough. But that information alone doesn’t really tell you anything.

- To identify the roadblock, you really need to know why you didn’t start it sooner!

**Compared to:**

**Intention with START TIME: “Start the laundry at 3:00 today.”**

It still might not happen as intended, but you would record the reason you didn’t START at 3:00.

If you couldn’t start on time because your previous task, your errands, ran much longer than expected, that tells you something about your TIME SENSE – that you didn’t estimate enough time to get the errands done.

That’s valuable information because it zeroes in on exactly the kind of solution that you need the most.

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**VIDEO 2**

How to Create a Valuable Full Intention

We just finished looking at how to get a true picture of what tends to derail your Intentions most often. Now you’ll learn how to create a valuable FULL INTENTION.

**FULL INTENTION — An Intention that includes a bit of strategy.**

Your goal here is to add a bit more sophistication to your thinking. This will allow you to not only see whether you were able to do what you intended, but also to evaluate your strategy in getting there.
The only way to become fully aware of what derails you is to have a clear intention of what you want to do in the first place. With ADD, we may not get directly to our destination, and we want to find out why.

Your complete intention will include not only what you plan to do, but also the ingredients that you believe will make you most likely to succeed in doing it.

**THOUGHT EXERCISE**

Think about something you had wanted or intended to do recently, that didn’t happen the way you intended.

Are you completely clear about what went wrong, and what you’ll do to make sure that doesn’t happen again?

Usually, when someone thinks of something they intend to do, it’s a bit vague. It may be an idea about the end result, but not a deliberate thought process of how you’re going to get there. So when it doesn’t happen, you can’t really point to WHAT went wrong.

**Example: Terry’s Tax Preparation**

We’ll look at Terry, a self-employed corporate communications writer, who needs to work on his taxes.

Compare these two statements:

**Vague intention:** "I should do my taxes on Saturday." (Unlikely to happen!)

**Full Intention:**

"I will do a major part of my tax preparation on Saturday at Micki’s Café.

I will pack what I need in my bag the night before: my bank statements, a fresh pad of paper and a calculator. I will not bring my laptop.

On Saturday morning, I’m going to have breakfast, get dressed, and will arrive at Micki’s Café by 10:00."
I'll go through each month’s statement and highlight all the tax deductible expenses. Then I'll record each one in the appropriate category on paper, and check them off on the statement as I record them. I expect this process will take me about 3 hours.

I'll take brief breaks as I need to. If I get hungry before I finish, I'll have lunch at Micki's, and then continue until I've gotten through the year's statements.

My goal is to leave by 2:00 with that whole credit card step done."

The ingredients that make Terry's Full Intention useful as a tool for self-awareness are the parameters that he set up for success.

- **The Realistic Goal** - To be done going through the bank statements for the year by 2:00 on Saturday. Terry did not have a goal of "doing my taxes," which would be too much to do all at once. Instead, the focus of this Intention is on completing a particular step of the tax process.

- **What to do** - Terry was clear on the exact manner in which to go about recording the expenses.

- **Where** - Micki’s Cafe, which is a more stimulating environment for Terry to work. It's just the right amount of stimulation to keep Terry's mind from wandering.

- **What time** - By giving a deadline of when to get to the cafe, Terry won't linger too long at home.

- **What was needed** - Terry identified the materials to include, and -- very important -- made a deliberate decision not to bring the laptop, which would easily lead to distraction.

- **Pre-step** - The Intention included the step of packing the materials the night before, to avoid wasting time looking for things on Saturday.

Other factors that can figure into an Intention are: who you might meet to do something with; having a timer to keep on track; or setting up background stimulation such as music or a podcast to listen to.
The Full Intention is critical to understanding what's stopping you because you can determine exactly what's breaking down and why.

**Terry’s Results**

He only got through three months of bank statements, instead of a whole year.

**What happened to throw him off?**

He didn't get to Micki’s Cafe until 12:15. By that time, there was a crowd in line for lunch and it took 20 minutes to get food and get a table. By the time he finally felt settled, it was almost 1:00.

**Why did he get there so late?**

He got involved in an argument and project at home. Terry's wife Alison was angry because she didn't know Terry had planned to be gone much of the day. She had expected him to help with a landscaping project. This led to an argument, after which Terry stayed home an extra hour to do the part of the project.

**Lesson Learned:** Manage the expectations of others.

In the future, Terry will check in with his wife before making plans for Saturday.

**Benefit of setting the full Intention:**

Despite this setback, Terry was able to get started on the project, and to determine that the factors in his Intention did lead to success.

*If he had not set this full Intention, he surely would not have gotten any of his taxes done at all that Saturday.*

**SUCCESS FACTORS**

There are two success factors for a Full Intention:

1. Set the Intention, deliberately including all the elements that will make it likely to work for you.
2. Note and record where your process or intention broke down, and why.

So how do you get the answer to the WHY part?
Often what appears to be the obvious problem is actually a symptom of a deeper problem below the surface. And that deeper problem – once you identify it and apply the right solution – will end up improving things in many areas.

That’s where we use the Technique of the 5 WHY’s to determine exactly where it fell apart.

**VIDEO 3**  
**Uncover the Root Cause of Your Roadblocks**

Now that you’ve discerned patterns of roadblocks that come up most often for you, you want to get clear on what the root cause of the problem might be. That’s important because if you just apply a band aid solution to what SEEMS to be the problem, it doesn’t ever really get fixed.

**The Technique of the “5 WHY’s”**

When you look at a problem and ask yourself WHY it occurred, don’t stop at the first answer! Keep on digging and ask WHY 5 times. This will help you not only uncover roadblocks, but actually point the way to your best solutions.

**Example: Jennifer – 10 minutes late for work**

Here is an easy example illustrate this technique:

> *Every morning Jennifer is about 10 minutes late for work. Her Intention for Monday morning is to leave her house 10 minutes earlier than usual. That means she must be out the door by 8:15 a.m.*

> *What happened? Jennifer was all ready to leave at 8:15, but realized she didn’t have her keys. Searching for them took an extra 10 minutes, so she ended up arriving at work 10 minutes late again.*

Using the 5 Why’s Technique, we start with the obvious WHY:
**WHY #1:** Why was Jennifer 10 minutes late leaving the house?
She realized as she was leaving that she didn’t have her keys.

**WHY #2:** Why couldn’t Jennifer find her keys?
She didn’t have a regular place that she put her keys, so she had to search the several rooms and bags she’d used over the weekend.

**WHY #3:** Why didn’t she put them the same place every time?
Because she’d never developed a habit of doing so.

**WHY #4:** Why hadn’t Jennifer tried to develop a habit that would seem so obvious?
Because she’d never really thought about it. Jennifer didn’t pay attention to how much time she actually wasted each week searching for her keys, her phone or her wallet.

Although Jennifer’s friends were accustomed to her constantly searching for things and could predict it, but Jennifer herself never really noticed it. This is very common with ADD / ADHD people.

**WHY #5:** (You turn it into a WHAT.) What would be a good solution for Jennifer to solve this problem?
To develop a habit of putting her keys in her bag every night, Jennifer will have to give herself reminders at first. And writing it as an Intention every night for a week would certainly help.

- Habits are formed with RITUALS, which we’ll talk about in detail coming up in a few lessons. A “ritual” simply means being very deliberate about doing something the same way every time.

**What kind of roadblock comes up for you again and again? Those are your PATTERNS.**

Some of your roadblocks may be identified as characters on the Derailment Express bus.

- Jennifer showed a typical example of someone with a dominant “Disorganized Derek” taking the wheel. If Jennifer tracked a number of Intentions for a week or so, we would most likely see Derek popping up in a lot of different areas.

If you relate to Jennifer’s problem of searching for keys, phone, papers, you may be living with Disorganized Derek. Disorganization is one of the most common
roadblocks for people with ADD traits. We’ll be talking more about organization in this Stage of Pathfinder.

Let’s look at how the technique of the 5 Why’s can uncover patterns of life challenges that aren’t only related to typical ADD traits.

We can apply this to the example of Terry’s Intention of working on his taxes.

**The 5 WHY’s for Terry’s Tax Preparation:**

**WHY #1: Why didn’t Terry get through all of his bank statements by 2:00?**
He arrived at the café late, got stuck waiting in line for a table during the lunchtime rush.

**WHY #2: Why was Terry so late getting to the café?**
His wife Alison had expected him to help with a project at home and argued with him about leaving. He stayed to work on the project.

*Now let’s go a little deeper with those WHYS....*

**WHY #3: Why didn’t Terry know that Alison expected his help at home; and why didn’t Alison know that Terry would be gone much of Saturday?**
They didn’t communicate this to each other. *(Which might make one wonder if this was a common occurrence!)*

**WHY #4: Why didn’t they communicate expectations and plans to each other?**
They weren’t in the habit of setting aside time in their busy schedules to talk about weekend plans.

**WHY #5: What would be a good solution for communicating expectations?**
They could make a point of taking time to discuss weekend plans on Friday nights, and deliberately try to bring out any assumptions.

We’ll be getting deep into solutions as we move through the Pathfinder program. But the most important thing you can do now is become very clear on exactly what the nature of your problems are – that pattern of roadblocks that you encounter.
Of course, to realize any real benefits from this program, you need to actually put these tools and concepts into use. And this assignment, like all of the practice assignments, are designed to be incorporated into your real life – not to just be a theoretical exercise.

This week, your practice assignment is...

**PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT**

Log some Intentions in some version of the Intention Log.

Start with simple Intentions, and make your way up to Full Intentions that include some strategy.

- **Try for at least 10 entries.** The more Intentions you track, the faster you’ll learn your patterns of roadblocks.

- **Record a variety of different Intentions.** They can be related to work, home, commuting, errands, anything!

- **Use the “5 WHY’s”** to uncover the root cause of the roadblocks.

*This is one time in your life to proudly display those lame excuses and epic fails!*

Please comment in the Community Forum on what you find and what you learned... or post any questions you have.