

THE RETURN PATH

Intention Setting & Integration Guide

A preparation and integration workbook for the work ahead.

PREPARE · ENTER · DEBRIEF · SUSTAIN

The crossing matters. The return matters more.

A preparation resource for clients of Return Path.

PREPARATION

Before You Begin

An intention is not a demand, a performance goal, or a guarantee.

It is a direction of attention, a compass rather than a steering wheel. It gives the work orientation without trying to control it, and it reminds you why you are here, what you are willing to face, and the life you are working to return to.

Psychedelic work is not a magic fix. The medicine may open a door, reveal a pattern, soften a defense, or surface something long buried. What happens afterward is what decides whether any of it matters: how insight becomes action, how feeling becomes honesty, and how honesty changes the way you live.

Insight has to become sacrifice.

That does not mean punishment or self-erasure. It means letting go of the patterns, identities, and avoidances that no longer serve the life you are building.

This guide is here to help you prepare: to get oriented, name what is alive in you, choose a clear intention, and come back with something you can practice.

On Intention

A strong intention helps you say why this work is calling you now, name what you are ready to face, stay connected to meaning when things get intense, and carry the experience into integration afterward.

Hold it lightly once you are in the work. Sometimes the work goes somewhere you did not plan. Sometimes the thing you came to fix is not the thing that asks for attention. Sometimes the most important work arrives sideways.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Choose What Feels True

Move slowly. Read through and mark whatever feels charged, honest, uncomfortable, or true. Then narrow it down. By the end, choose one to three intentions.

The strongest intentions tend to be:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Simple. Easy to hold in the room. | <input type="checkbox"/> Actionable. Something you can practice. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honest. Not spiritual performance. | <input type="checkbox"/> Embodied. Tied to real life, not just ideas. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Positive. Pointed toward what you want. | |

INSTEAD OF

TRY

"I don't want to be anxious anymore."

"I'm ready to understand what my anxiety is protecting, and to learn how to meet life from steadiness."

"I want my trauma to be gone."

"I'm ready to meet the parts of me still carrying the past, and to begin coming back to safety in my body."

"I want answers."

"I'm open to receiving what I need, even if it differs from what I expected."

PART I

Orient

Start with the most direct questions. Do not answer from performance. Answer from the life you are actually living.

What is bringing me to this work at this point in my life?

Why Am I Here?

What feels unfinished, unresolved, stuck, or ready to change?

What am I hoping will be different after this work?

What am I afraid might be asked of me?

What am I willing to take responsibility for?

The Pattern I Am Ready to See

Most people arrive with a symptom: anxiety, grief, numbness, disconnection, a compulsive behavior. Underneath the symptom there is usually a pattern. Naming the pattern, not just the symptom, is where real preparation begins.

Which of these feels most charged, familiar, or uncomfortable?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding what I feel | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeking approval instead of inner authority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turning grief into hardness | <input type="checkbox"/> Numbing through work, substances, sex, scrolling, food, or anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needing control to feel safe | <input type="checkbox"/> Repeating relationship patterns I say I want to change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusing vigilance with wisdom | <input type="checkbox"/> Staying loyal to an identity that no longer fits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performing strength while feeling disconnected inside | <input type="checkbox"/> Carrying shame that was never mine to keep |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusing self-protection with isolation | <input type="checkbox"/> Living as if rest and peace have to be earned |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rescuing others while abandoning myself | |

The pattern I am most ready to see:

What has this pattern cost me?

What has it protected me from?

PART II

Prepare

Choose the statements that feel truest, then rewrite them in your own words. Treat these as a way of locating yourself, not a checklist to complete.

Mindset, Belief & Identity

- I am ready to reconnect with the parts of myself I put away.
- I am ready to see the ways I quietly sabotage myself.
- I am ready to soften the identity I built to survive.
- I am ready to be more honest with myself.
- I am ready to trust my own read without abandoning discernment.
- I am ready to stop confusing intensity with truth.
- I am ready to become the kind of person the next part of my life requires.

My own words:

Body & Steadiness

Working with the body, not around it, is part of what makes this different from talk alone. The body holds what the mind has learned to skip past.

- I am ready to feel safer in my body.
- I am ready to meet sensation without immediately escaping it.
- I am ready to build resilience without hardening.
- I am ready to treat my body with respect instead of punishment.
- I am ready to stop running my body like a machine and start treating it like an ally.
- I am ready to build steadier rhythms around sleep, food, movement, and rest.

My own words:

Healing, Grief & Shadow

Healing sometimes asks you to face things before it offers any relief.

- I am ready to meet the parts of me still carrying the past.
- I am ready to grieve what I never let myself grieve.
- I am ready to stop building my life around an old wound.
- I am ready to set down shame that has shaped how I see myself.
- I am ready to forgive myself where forgiveness is honest.
- I am ready to face what I have hidden or exiled in myself.
- I am ready to stop making my pain into my identity.
- I am open to healing in ways I cannot yet picture.

The wound, grief, or shadow I am ready to approach:

What does this part of me most need me to understand?

What support do I need to approach it safely?

Relationships, Family & Connection

How you show up with other people is usually where this work either lands or dissolves. Change that stays inside you is not finished yet.

- I am ready to change how I show up in my closest relationships.
- I am ready to be more honest and direct.
- I am ready to stop withdrawing when what I need is connection.
- I am ready to stop chasing connection in ways that cost me my dignity.
- I am ready to understand my part in the conflicts that repeat.
- I am ready to forgive where forgiveness is real, not forced.
- I am ready to repair what can be repaired and accept what I cannot control.
- I am ready to let go of patterns that keep me divided from myself.

A relationship or pattern I am bringing into this work:

What would integrity look like here?

What would I need to stop doing, or stop tolerating?

Purpose, Work & Contribution

This part is less about relief and more about direction: what you are here to do, and whether your life reflects it.

- I am ready to get clear on the work that is mine to do.
- I am ready to stop putting off the life that keeps calling me.
- I am ready to see what I am avoiding through busyness.
- I am ready to use my gifts without waiting until I feel perfectly ready.
- I am ready to build a life that reflects what I actually value.
- I am ready to turn what I have survived into service, without using service to disappear again.

The contribution I feel pulled toward:

What do I need to take more responsibility for to live it?

What am I using as a reason to wait?

Creativity, Expression & Aliveness

Creativity here means whatever makes you feel generative, alive, and like yourself. Not only making things, but how you move through your days.

- I am ready to recover play, imagination, and creativity.
- I am ready to stop hiding my voice.
- I am ready to create without needing the result to prove my worth.
- I am ready to follow what feels alive with discipline and devotion.
- I am ready to move from consuming back into making.

Where do I feel most alive?

Where have I stopped creating, expressing, or risking?

What would I make or do if I stopped waiting for permission?

PART III

Enter

Set the Conditions

Before the session, settle the practical conditions that shape it. Treat this as preparation, not superstition.

Body

Have you eaten lightly? Stayed off alcohol for at least 24 hours? Slept reasonably? Your physical state is part of the work.

Space

Is the setting safe, clean, and familiar? Do you have what you need nearby: water, a blanket, something to write with afterward?

Support

Who knows you are doing this? If you are working with a facilitator, have you been fully honest with them?

Timing

Have you left yourself enough open time on the other side? Stacking obligations right after is poor planning.

What I need to handle before I enter:

Before You Enter: An Invocation

Use it as written, change it, or write your own.

May I receive what I need, not only what I expect.

May I have the courage to see clearly.

May I be protected, and guided toward truth.

May I meet what arises with honesty and steadiness.

May what is revealed become part of how I live.

My own prayer or invocation:

When It Gets Hard

Difficulty in a session is not a sign that something has gone wrong. Resistance, fear, grief, and confusion are often exactly where the useful work is. The question is not how to avoid difficulty. It is how to stay oriented inside it.

Surrender is not the same as giving up.

Trying to control the experience usually makes it stronger. When something hard comes up, moving toward it with your breath and attention tends to work better than bracing against it.

The body is an anchor.

When the mind is overwhelmed, sensation is reliable. Where are your feet? What does the floor feel like? What is happening in your chest?

You do not have to understand it while it is happening.

Meaning usually arrives later: in the debrief, in the days that follow, in conversation with someone you trust.

You can ask for help.

If you are working with a facilitator, say what is happening. If you are alone, you can speak aloud, move, or simply wait.

Possible anchors: This is temporary. / I can breathe and soften. / I can let the body lead. / I am safe enough to feel this. / Show me what I am ready to see. / Let this move through me.

My anchor phrase:

PART IV

Debrief

Immediately After

Give yourself time before you try to make sense of anything. Drink water. Lie down if you need to. Let it settle before you reach for meaning. When you are ready, write down what you remember. Not what it meant, just what happened.

What do I remember? Which images, moments, emotions, or sensations were most vivid?

What surprised me?

What felt unresolved or incomplete?

Reviewing Your Intention

What did I learn about the intention I brought in?

Did the work answer a different question than the one I asked? What was it?

What was I shown that I did not expect?

What did I feel in my body that I do not have words for yet?

Finding Meaning Without Forcing It

Not every session arrives with obvious meaning. Some are clear and direct. Others are symbolic, fragmented, physical, or just strange. Resist the urge to over-interpret right away. The pressure to land on a clean story can flatten something that was actually complex.

What is one thing this may be asking me to notice?

What is one thing it may be asking me to stop doing?

What is one thing it may be asking me to practice?

What feels true right now, even if I cannot explain it?

Who Should I Talk To?

Integration rarely happens alone. Think about who in your life can hold this conversation honestly. Not to validate the experience, but to help you think clearly about what it means and what it asks of you.

That might be a therapist, a coach, a facilitator, a trusted friend who understands this kind of work, or a community that shares it. Choose someone who will ask good questions, not just agree with you.

Who can I talk to about this within the next week?

Sustain

Turning Intention Into Action

This is where the return becomes real. Insight without action is just a story you tell about yourself. The question is not what you experienced. It is what you do differently on Tuesday.

Choose one to three right-sized actions tied directly to your intention. Right-sized means small enough to actually do, and specific enough to know whether you did it.

Examples:

- Take a daily ten-minute walk without your phone
- Begin a simple movement, breath, or body practice
- Apologize for, or repair, one specific conversation
- Spend protected, undistracted time with someone who matters
- Schedule the therapy, coaching, or medical follow-up
- Make one decision you have been avoiding
- Clean one neglected space in your home
- Set one boundary and hold it without over-explaining
- Return to prayer, meditation, or silence once a week
- Write one honest letter you may or may not send
- Drop one numbing behavior for seven days and watch what surfaces
- Do one act of service that does not become self-erasure

Right-Sized Actions

My intention:

The pattern it asks me to release:

The practice it asks me to begin:

The conversation it asks me to have:

The support I need:

The first right-sized action I will take within 72 hours:

On Relapse and Resistance

Integration is not a straight line. The pull back toward old patterns is not failure. It is a sign you are dealing with something real. Patterns that took years to build do not dissolve in one session.

When you notice the old behavior returning, name it without judgment and come back to your intention. The work is not to have one permanent breakthrough. It is to catch yourself sooner, and choose differently more often.

The medicine can deepen avoidance as easily as it interrupts it. Watch whether this is becoming a practice, or just another story you tell about yourself.

Where am I most likely to slip back?

What will I do when I notice it happening?

Field Notes

Use these in the days and weeks after the session.

What is returning in dreams, memories, emotions, or sensations?

What old pattern is trying to come back online?

What new capacity or clarity is starting to show?

Where am I tempted to turn this into a story instead of a practice?

What does ordinary life now ask of me?

What does the path require next?

FINAL STEP

Final Intention Statement

Choose one to three intentions. Write them clearly and simply. Words you could say out loud in the room.

Intention One

I am ready to:

This matters because:

The life I am returning to requires:

Intention Two

I am ready to:

This matters because:

The life I am returning to requires:

Intention Three

I am ready to:

This matters because:

The life I am returning to requires:

Closing

Come with humility and with courage. Come with respect for the medicine, for your body, for the unknown, and for the life waiting on the other side.

The crossing matters.

The return matters more.

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