Intentional Insights - Theory of Change, draft, November 2015

Executive Summary

This document lays out the Theory of Change (ToC) for Intentional Insights. A ToC describes our goals, our assumptions about the world, what methods we use to accomplish our goals, and how we evaluate our impact.[1]

- The goal of Intentional Insights is to create a world where all rely on research-based strategies to make wise decisions and lead to mutual flourishing.
- To achieve this goal, we believe that people need to be motivated to learn and have broadly accessible information about such research-based strategies, and also integrate these strategies into their daily lives through regular practice.
- We assume that:
  - some natural and intuitive human thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns are flawed in ways that undermine wise decisions.
  - problematic decision making undermines mutual flourishing in a number of life areas.
  - these flawed thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns can be improved through effective interventions.
  - we can motivate and teach people to improve their thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns by presenting our content in ways that combine education and entertainment.
- Our intervention is helping people improve their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior to enable them to make wise decisions and bring about mutual flourishing.
- Our outputs, what we do, come in the form of online content such as blog entries, videos, etc., on our channels and in external publications, as well as collaborations with other organizations.
- Our metrics of impact are in the form of anecdotal evidence, feedback forms from workshops, and studies we run on our content.

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[1] The ToC maps out any project through 6 stages: 1) Identifying long-term goals; 2) Backwards mapping and connecting the preconditions or requirements necessary to achieve that goal and explaining why these preconditions are necessary and sufficient; 3) Identifying your basic assumptions about the context; 4) Identifying the interventions that your initiative will perform to create your desired change; 5) Developing indicators to measure your outcomes to assess the performance of your initiative; 6) Explaining these clearly to your audience. See this link for more information.

<u>**Full Document**</u>

Long-Term Goals

- Our vision is a world where individuals, organizations, and governments rely on research-based strategies to improve their ability to better evaluate reality and make more effective decisions that enable all of us to live optimally happy, healthy, fulfilling, meaningful, altruistic, and flourishing lives.

Requirements Necessary to Achieve Long-Term Goals

- To achieve these long-term goals, we believe that people need to be motivated to learn and have broadly accessible information about, and also integrate through practice into their daily lives:
  - Research-based strategies of evaluating reality clearly and making wise decisions about what are their actual long-term goals, how to reach those long-term goals in the most effective manner, and then implement these decisions into life effectively. They also need to review and optimize continually their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior around these strategies, in order to continue to improve their decision making and goal achievement.
  - Also, evaluate reality clearly and make wise decisions in their roles as members of society and decision-makers in organizations and government agencies about what would help them and other members of their society achieve a state of health, happiness, meaningfulness, fulfillment, altruism, and flourishing, how to reach those long-term goals in the most effective manner, and then implement these decisions into life effectively. They also need to review and optimize continually their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior around these strategies, in order to continue to improve their decision making and goal achievement.
  - Also, organizations and institutions need to institute systematic processes and practices of integrating research-based strategies for how groups can best evaluate reality clearly and make wise decisions to reach their goals. They also need to review and optimize continually their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior around these strategies, in order to continue to improve their decision making and goal achievement.
- These requirements are necessary and sufficient in the sense that learning and practicing research-based strategies to make effective decisions and reach long-term goals is the optimal path to achieving the Intentional Insights vision outlined above.

Assumptions

We make the following 4 major assumptions:

1. Assumption:

    1.1. We assume that some natural and intuitive human thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns are flawed in ways that undermine our ability to make wise decisions and reach our long-term goals of leading happy, healthy, fulfilling, meaningful, altruistic, and flourishing lives

    1.2. Evidence for assumption:

    1.2.1. Much research in psychology and cognitive neuroscience has revealed that our minds suffer from thinking errors, what the scholarship calls cognitive biases. These thinking errors lead our minds in systematic ways to make poor decisions, meaning decisions that go against our actual long-term goals.[2]

    - One specific example is attentional bias, where we pay attention to what is immediately in the forefront of our thoughts when making decisions, as opposed to considering all relevant factors.[3]

    - Another specific example is confirmation bias, also known as myside bias, where we tend to overweigh the evidence that favors our current beliefs and intended decisions, and underweigh the evidence that would lead us to make a different decision even when that other decision would be better for our long-term goals.[4]

    - A third specific example is hyperbolic discounting, where we tend to overweigh short-term rewards over greater long-term benefits, thus undermining our long-term goals.[5]

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[2] Haselton, M. G., Nettle, D., & Andrews, P. W. (2005). *The evolution of cognitive bias*. In D. M. Buss (Ed.), *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*: Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc. pp. 724–746; Baron, J. (2007). *Thinking and Deciding* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press; Bless, H., Fiedler, K., & Strack, F. (2004). *Social cognition: How individuals construct social reality*. Hove and New York: Psychology Press; Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). "Judgement under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases.". *Sciences* 185 (4157): 1124–1131.

[3] (Bar-Haim, Y., Lamy, D., Pergamin, L., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M.J., & van IJzendoorn, M.H. (2007). Threat-related attentional bias in anxious and non-anxious individuals: A meta-analytic study. *Psychological Bulletin*.

[4] Nickerson, Raymond S. (June 1998). "Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises". *Review of General Psychology* 2 (2): 175–220.

[5] Laibson, David (1997). "Golden Eggs and Hyperbolic Discounting". *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112 (2): 443–477

- A fourth example is planning fallacy, where we tend to undercount the actual resources of time and effort that it will take to complete a task, and thus undermine our long-term goals.[6]

- This list can go on and on.

2. Assumption:

2.1. We assume that suboptimal human decision making undermines our ability to lead happy, healthy, fulfilling, meaningful, altruistic, and flourishing lives by impacting a number of life areas. These include our social and romantic relationships; professional and financial decision making; mental and physical health and well-being; finding life meaning and purpose; political engagement; civic engagement and charitable giving; and institutional and organizational decision making.

2.2. Evidence for assumption:

2.2.1. For social and romantic relationships, a wide variety of literature has shown the existence of problematic thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns, and how to address them, in romantic relationships,[7] in parenting,[8] in sexuality,[9] in friendships,[10] and in social settings overall.[11]

2.2.2. For professional and financial decision making, the field of behavioral economics, which combines psychology and economics, has in the last few decades revealed the many types of irrational human professional and

[6] Pezzo, Mark V.; Litman, Jordan A.; Pezzo, Stephanie P. (2006). "On the distinction between yuppies and hippies: Individual differences in prediction biases for planning future tasks". *Personality and Individual Differences* 41 (7): 1359–1371

[7] Hyde, J. S., DeLamater, J. D., & Byers, E. S. (2012). *Understanding Human Sexuality*, 5th ed. McGraw-Hill Ryerson; John Gottman, Ph.D., Nan Silver, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert*. Potter/TenSpeed/Harmony, 2015;

[8] John Mordechai Gottman, Joan DeClaire, *The Heart of Parenting: How to Raise an Emotionally Intelligent Child* Simon & Schuster, 1997; Shure, M.B. & Spivack, G. (1982). Interpersonal problem-solving in young children: A cognitive approach to prevention. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 10,* 341-356

[9] Maier, Thomas (2009). *Masters of sex : the life and times of William Masters and Virginia Johnson, the couple who taught America how to love*. New York: Basic Books; Masters, W. H., & Johnson, V. E. (1979). Homosexuality in perspective. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

[10] Rath, Tom. *Vital Friends: The People You Can't Afford to Live Without*. Gallup Press: September 2006; Vernon, Mark. *The Philosophy of Friendship*. Palgrave Macmillan: November 2006

[11] Daniel Goleman, *The Brain and Emotional Intelligence: New Insights* (Northampton: More Than Sound, 2011); Daniel Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (New York: Bantam Dell, 2006); Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life* (New York: Touchstone, 1996).

economic behavior that does not align with the traditional perception of humans as rational economic agents.[12]

2.2.3. Research shows the role of irrational decision-making in undermining our mental and physical health and well-being, which harm both individuals and society as a whole.[13]

2.2.4. Research shows the important role of finding life meaning and purpose for human flourishing and the challenges with finding meaning and purpose using traditional methods, such as relying on traditional cultural norms and religion.[14]

2.2.5. Evidence from the field of political psychology and neuroscience has shown how our political decision making is led astray by cognitive biases[15]

[12] Colin F. Camerer George Loewenstein Matthew Rabin, *Advances in Behavioral Economics*, 2011, Princeton University Press; Sendhil Mullainathan, Richard H. Thaler, Behavioral Economics, *NBER Working Paper* No. 7948 (October 2000); Vernon L. Smith, Behavioral economics research and the foundations of economics, *The Journal of Socio-Economics* Volume 34, Issue 2, March 2005, Pages 135–150.

[13] Willard G. Manning, Emmett B. Keeler, Joseph P. Newhouse, Elizabeth M. Sloss, Jeffrey Wasserman, *The Costs of Poor Health Habits*, Harvard University Press, Rand Report, 1991; Kenneth A. Dodge and Cynthia L. Frame, Social Cognitive Biases and Deficits in Aggressive Boys, *Child Development*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Jun., 1982), pp. 620-635; Dohr, Kevin B.; Rush, A. John; Bernstein, Ira H., *Cognitive biases and depression*, Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Vol 98(3), Aug 1989, 263-267; McCusker, Christopher G., Cognitive biases and addiction: an evolution in theory and method, *Addiction*, Volume 96, Number 1, 1 January 2001, pp. 47-56; Annie Y.S. Lau, Enrico W. Coiera, Can Cognitive Biases during Consumer Health Information Searches Be Reduced to Improve Decision Making?, *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, January 2009, 54-65; Edmund Keogh, Mary Cochrane, Anxiety sensitivity, cognitive biases, and the experience of pain, *The Journal of Pain*, Volume 3, Issue 4, August 2002, Pages 320–329.

[14] Baumeister, R. F., et al. "Some Key Differences Between a Happy Life and a Meaningful Life." *Journal of Positive Psychology* 8.6 (2013): 505-516; Boyle, P. A., et al. "Effect of a Purpose in Life on Risk of Incident Alzheimer Disease and Mild Cognitive Impairment in Community-Dwelling Older Persons." *Archives of General Psychiatry*. 67.3 (2010): 304-310; Brassai, L., B. F. Piko, and M. F. Steger. "Meaning in Life: Is it a Protective Factor for Adolescents' Psychological Health?" *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 18.1 (2011): 44-51; Kim, E., et al. "Purpose in Life and Reduced Risk of Myocardial Infarction Among Older U.S. Adults with Coronary Heart Disease: A Two-Year Follow-Up." *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 36.2 (2013): 124-133. Steger, M. F., B. J. Dik, and R. D. Duffy. "Measuring Meaningful Work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI)." *Journal of Career Assessment* 20.3 (2012): 322-337. Steger, M. F., M. Bundick, and D. Yeager. "Understanding and Promoting Meaning in Life During Adolescence." *Encyclopedia of Adolescence*. Ed. R. J. Levesque. New York: Springer, 2012. 1666-1677.

[15] Jost, J.T., Kay, A.C., & Thorisdottir, H. (Eds.) (2009). *Social and psychological bases of ideology and system justification*.New York : Oxford University Press; Jost, J.T., & Sidanius, J. (Eds.) (2004). *Political psychology: Key readings*. New York: Psychology Press/Taylor & Francis; J. Vigil; et al. (2010). "Political leanings vary with facial expression processing and psychosocial functioning." *Group Processes Intergroup Relations* 13: 547–558; Arceneaux, Kevin (2012). Cognitive Biases and the Strength of Political Arguments, *American Journal of Political Science* 56(2): 271–285; Martin McKee, David Stuckler, How cognitive biases affect our interpretation of political messages, *The British Medical Journal*, 2010

2.2.6. The impact of cognitive biases on charitable giving and community engagement has been well documented[16]

2.2.7. Institutional and organizational decision-making is deeply impacted by the individual cognitive biases held by participants, but also by the way these biases interact within group and institutional settings.[17]

2.2.8. Research suggests there would be broadly beneficial outcomes of improving human thinking overall.[18]

3. We assume that these natural and intuitive flawed thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns can be improved through effective interventions that enables people to improve their evaluation of reality and decision-making through research-based strategies. As a consequence, they will therefore be more happy, healthy and empowered to attain personal, political, philanthropic and professional goals, and to make positive societal changes that are meaningful and altruistic.

3.1. Evidence for assumption:

3.1.1. The evidence shows that dealing with human thinking errors is not as intuitively easy as it might seem. Research on debiasing has illustrated that informing people about thinking errors does not have a significant impact on

340 (April 2010); Jonathan Baron, Cognitive biases in moral judgments that affect political behavior, *Synthese*, January 2010, Volume 172, Issue 1, pp 7-35

[16] John W. Mayo, , Catherine H. Tinsley, Warm glow and charitable giving: Why the wealthy do not give more to charity? *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Volume 30, Issue 3, June 2009, Pages 490–499; C.-K Cheung, C.-M Chan, Social-cognitive factors of donating money to charity, with special attention to an international relief organization, *Evaluation and Program Planning*, Volume 23, Issue 2, 1 May 2000, Pages 241–253; Richard Martina, John Randalb, How is donation behaviour affected by the donations of others? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, Volume 67, Issue 1, July 2008, Pages 228–238; Oppenheimer, D.M. ; Olivola, C.Y., *The science of giving : experimental approaches to the study of charity*, New York: Psychology Press, 2011.

[17] Surowiecki, James, *The Wisdom of Crowds* (2004); Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Philip E. Tetlock, Cognitive Biases and Organizational Correctives: Do Both Disease and Cure Depend on the Politics of the Beholder?, *Administrative Science Quarterly* June 2000 vol. 45 no. 2 293-326; Lowell W. Busenitz, Jay B. Barney, Differences between entrepreneurs and managers in large organizations: Biases and heuristics in strategic decision-making, *Journal of Business Venturing*, Volume 12, Issue 1, January 1997, Pages 9–30; George A. Akerlof and Rachel E. Kranton, The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Identity and the Economics of Organizations, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter, 2005), pp. 9-32; T.K. Das and Bing-Sheng Teng, Cognitive Biases and Strategic Decision Processes: An Integrative Perspective, *Journal of Management Studies*, Volume 36, Issue 6, pages 757–778, November 1999.

[18] Luke Muehlhauser and Anna Salamon, "Intelligence Explosion:Evidence and Import," in *Singularity Hypotheses: A Scientific and Philosophical Assessment*, Eds. Eden, A.H., Moor, J.H., Soraker, J.H., Steinhart, E. (2013); Brian Tomasik, "Differential Intellectual Progress as a Positive-Sum Project," *Foundational Research Institute Paper*, February 2013.

their personal ability to avoid thinking errors.[19] Early efforts at interventions aimed at debiasing did not have lasting impact, leading many to question whether debiasing in the long term is possible at all.[20]

3.1.2. However, more recent research has suggested that there are clear and effective methods of helping people deal with cognitive biases.[21] For example, when people are encouraged to consider multiple alternative explanations rather than their intuitive one, they make substantially better decisions for their long-term goals, overcoming confirmation and attention bias.[22] Helping focus people on self-control significantly improved short-term orientation, addressing hyperbolic discounting.[23] A single intervention where people were given quick feedback on their decision-making helped overcome confirmation bias and other related biases, and the effect persisted for at least two months.[24] Having people set clear and specific goals, writing out specific steps, ascribing time to each, and other techniques known as implementation intentions substantially improved the problems associated with planning fallacy and related biases.[25]

3.1.3. There has also been significant research conducted on how to reduce the impact of systematic biases in organizations and institutions, as well as public policy. Instituting systems such as checklists and reminders resulted in a substantial improvement in decisions and outcomes, for example in health care organizations and individual medical practitioner decision

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[19] Emily Pronin (2002). "The Bias Blind Spot: Perceptions of Bias in Self Versus Others". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28 (3): 369-381

[20] Fischhoff, B. 1982. "Debiasing." In D. Kahneman, P. Slovic, and A. Tversky (eds.), Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases (pp. 422–44); Debiasing by Richard P. Larrick. 2004. ch. 16 in Blackwell Handbook of Judgment and Decision Making. Edited by Derek J. Koehler and Nigel Harvey

[21] Simmons, Joseph P.; LeBoeuf, Robyn A.; Nelson, Leif D. "The effect of accuracy motivation on anchoring and adjustment: Do people adjust from provided anchors?". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 99 (6): 917–932; Arkes, H. R. 1991. Costs and benefits of judgment errors: Implications for debiasing. *Psychological Bulletin*. 110, 486–98; Klein, Gary. 1998. *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. MIT Press; Stanovich, Keith. 2010. *Rationality and the Reflective Mind*. Oxford University Press, USA;

[22] "Multiple explanation: A consider-an-alternative strategy for debiasing judgments." *APA PsycNET*. Retrieved 2015-10-23.

[23] Schwartz, J.; Riis, J.; Elbel, B.; Ariely, D. (8 February 2012). "Inviting Consumers To Downsize Fast-Food Portions Significantly Reduces Calorie Consumption". *Health Affairs* 31 (2): 399–407

[24] Morewedge, C. K.; Yoon, H.; Scopelliti, I.; Symborski, C. W.; Korris, J. H.; Kassam, K. S. (13 August 2015). "Debiasing Decisions: Improved Decision Making With a Single Training Intervention". *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 2 (1): 129–140

[25] Koole, S., & Spijker, M. (2000). Overcoming the planning fallacy-through willpower: Effects of implementation intentions on actual and predicted task-completion times. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30, 873-888; Kruger, J., & Evans, M. (2004). If you don't want to be late, enumerate: Unpacking reduces the planning fallacy. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 40, 586-598.

making.[26] Organizations that address common thinking errors through interventions such as predicting what can go wrong in advance of launching a project can make more optimal decisions.[27] Wise organizational and government policies can also address people's individual biases, helping push them in the right direction toward making optimal decisions.[28] Barack Obama even signed an Executive Order on September 15, 2015 to integrate behavioral science research into all aspects of US governance.[29]

3.1.4. Separately from research on dealing with thinking errors, there has been significant research in how to help people accomplish their goals. For example, figuring out appropriate incentives is an important component of accomplishing goals.[30] Linking our everyday life activities and tasks to our broader life motivations is vital to motivating us to pursue our goals, and helps us be ready to seize new opportunities to succeed.[31] Research has also shown how to help discover one's broad motivations through exploring and cultivating one's personal sense of meaning and purpose.[32]

3.1.5. Integrating into everyday life the mental and behavioral patterns that lead to wise decision making and goal achievement is not easy, but certainly doable, especially through drawing on research in psychology and social work on habit development.[33]

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[26] Ely, John W. MD; Graber, Mark L. MD; Croskerry, Pat MD, PhD, Checklists to Reduce Diagnostic Errors, *Academic Medicine*, March 2011 - Volume 86 - Issue 3 - pp 307-313; Carol Cheney, M.D., Joe W. Ramsdell, M.D, Effect of medical records' checklists on implementation of periodic health measures, *The American Journal of Medicine*, Volume 83, Issue 1, July 1987, Pages 129–136; Brigette Hales, Marius Terblanche, Robert Fowler, William Sibbald, Development of medical checklists for improved quality of patient care, The International Journal for Quality in Health Care (December 2007), 22-30;

[27] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), Chapter 24.

[28] Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008)

[29] Executive Order -- Using Behavioral Science Insights to Better Serve the American People, September 15, 2015 [https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/15/executive-order-using-behavioral-science-insights-better-serve-american]

[30] Ayres, I. *Carrots and Sticks: Unlock the Power of Incentives to Get Things Done*. New York: Bantam, 2010.

[31] Halvorson, H. G. *Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals*. New York: Hudson Street Press, 2011. Print.

[32] Gleb Tsipursky. Find Your Purpose Using Science (Westerville, OH. Intentional Insights, 2015).

[33] James Clairborn and Cherry Pedrick, *The Habit Change Workbook: How to Break Bad Habits and Form Good Ones* (Oakland: New Harbinger Publications, 2001); Tobias, Robert, Changing behavior by memory aids: A social psychological model of prospective memory and habit development tested with dynamic field data. *Psychological Review*, Vol 116(2), Apr 2009, 408-438; Phillippa Lallya, Jane Wardlea & Benjamin Gardnera, Experiences of habit formation: A qualitative study, *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, Volume 16, Issue 4, 2011, 484-489; Phillippa Lally, Cornelia H. M. van Jaarsveld, Henry W. W. Potts and

3.1.6. In the field of charitable giving and civic engagement in particular, there has recently appeared a growing movement, Effective Altruism, which strives specifically to address human thinking errors in philanthropy.[34]

4. We assume that we can motivate people to improve their thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns by presenting our content in ways that combine education and entertainment, by combining techniques from recent educational psychology and modern marketing.

4.1. Expansion: While a number of other organizations offer training and education for people who are already enthusiastic about improving their decision making and goal achievement using research-based strategies, Intentional Insights pursues a different mission. Our aim is to reach out to people who are not or only peripherally aware of the thinking errors that our mind makes, and the consequent poor decisions that they make which hinder their ability to meet their goals. We want to inform them about these problems in such a way as to make them enthusiastic and motivated to pursue solutions. We then want to offer them easy-to-use strategies relevant to daily life that they can use to pursue these solutions immediately. Over time, as these people improve their ability to make effective decisions and achieve their goals, we assume that they will engage with more complex educational content, offered by Intentional Insights and other organizations alike.

4.2. To get people engaged with our content, we use methods such as framing our content in the widely popular language of self-improvement;[35] using educational psychology to integrate educational materials into our content;[36] using modern

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Jane Wardle, How are habits formed: Modelling habit formation in the real world, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Volume 40, Issue 6, pages 998–1009, October 2010.

[34] Peter Singer (2009). *The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty*; William MacAskill (2015). *Doing Good Better - Effective Altruism And a Radical Way to Make a Difference* . Guardian Faber,

[35] Julia Morgenstein, *Time Management from the Inside Out*, Second Edition (New York, Owl Books, 2004); David Allen, *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity* (New York: Viking, 2001); Stephen R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989);

[36] Thomas, Angelo A., *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 1993); Erickson, Bette LaSere, Calvin B Peters and Diane Welther Strommer, *Teaching First-Year College Students*, Revised and Expanded Edition of *Teaching College Freshmen* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2006; Filene, Peter, *The Joy of Teaching: A Practical Guide for New College Instructors*, foreword by Ken Bain (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Barkley, Elizabeth F., K. Patricia Cross and Claire Howell Major, *Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2005).

methods of content marketing, advertising, and emotional engagement to reach out to audiences effectively.[37]

Interventions

- Intentional Insights helps people optimize their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior in all salient life areas to enable them to make wise decisions and achieve their goals through:
    - Using outreach efforts that put our content in front of people
    - Inviting people to engage with our more fun and entertaining content
    - Getting people to progress to our more complex and educational content, helping them to effectively optimize their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior in all salient life areas

Outputs
- <u>Content Output</u>
    - *<u>Broad strategy</u>*: we create content on a spectrum from more light, engaging, entertaining, and minimally educational content to more in-depth and educational while still engaging content. Our aim is to get people to start engaging with our more light and entertaining content, and then have a significant proportion of them proceed up the spectrum of complexity to more in-depth and educational content.
    - InIn content on InIn channels (listed from more entertaining to more educational)
        - Social media updates
        - Images (Memes, graphics, etc)
        - Short videos
        - Blogs
        - Apps
        - Long Videos
        - Workshops
        - Online classes
        - Books
    - InIn content on external media channels
        - Articles/Blogs/Op-Eds
        - Interviews

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[37] Kase, Larina, *Clients, Clients, and More Clients: Create an Endless Stream of New Business with the Power of Psychology* (2012); Freedman, Brooke, and Taylo Corrado, *Transform Your Nonprofit with Inbound Marketing: How To Turn Strangers into Inspired Advocates* (2013); Miller, Kivi L., *Content Marketing for Nonprofits: A Communications Map for Engaging Your Community, Becoming a Favority Cause, and Raising More Money* (2013); David M. Scott, *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* (2013); Hill, Dan *Emotionomics: Leveraging Emotions for Business Success* (2009); Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (New York: HarperCollins, 1984); Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (New York: Random House, 2007).

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- Output: Outreach
    - *Broad Strategy:* our outreach is aimed at getting people to learn about our more light content and start engaging with us, and then proceed up the spectrum of complexity to more educational and impactful content
    - Social media channels
        - Facebook
        - Twitter
        - Pinterest
        - LinkedIn
        - Delicious
        - StumbleUpon
        - Reddit
    - Newsletters
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- Output: Collaboration with other organizations
    - *Broad Strategy:* our collaboration with other organizations is meant to help both organizations achieve their goals, and most often involves Intentional Insights providing content that other organizations find valuable
    - Collaborations include:
        - Events
        - Articles/Blogs/Op-Eds
        - Resource packets
        - Consulting
        - And many other forms

Metrics
- We measure our ability to have outreach efforts that put our content in front of people through:
    - Clicks on website
    - Engagement on social media
    - Articles in other venues we publish
    - Articles other venues publish about us
    - Collaboration with other organizations
    - Etc.
- We measure our ability to get people to pay attention to our content through:
    - Followers on social media
    - Newsletter subscribers
    - Number of supporters
    - Etc.
- We measure our **outcomes**, namely our ability to help people effectively optimize their patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior in all salient life areas by:
    - Anecdotal evidence of individuals engaging with us
        - Description of typical episode from a workshop:

- David Krohn, a dancer in his late 50s, decided to check out an Intentional Insights workshop on setting and achieving goals. He didn't think he'd get that much new strategies or skills: after all, he had a fine life and didn't have problems making decisions. He was in for a surprise! We talked about the research-based strategy of avoiding throwing good money after bad, known in the research as the sunken costs fallacy. Well, it turned out David had an old car that kept breaking down, and he kept repairing it. He had the thought pattern that he should own the car until it dies. We suggested he use the consider-the-alternative research-based strategy by thinking about whether he would be better off getting rid of his current car and getting a different one. We asked him how much money he already poured into his old car, and how much money he anticipated putting into it in the next couple of years. We then asked him to compare that money to how much a much better used car would cost. He quickly realized that he would be much better off getting rid of that old junker and getting a used car. He came away from that workshop shaking his head, and learning some effective research-based goal achievement skills.

- Stephanie McCain, a college student in her early twenties, went to an Intentional Insights workshop on making effective decisions on her college campus. She wasn't expecting anything in particular, and went mainly as she was curious to learn about the topic, and got extra credit for attending. The workshop discussed how to think clearly about decision making and what are common thinking errors that people make that prevent wise decisions. One of the most problematic thinking errors is going for short-term gains at the expense of much higher long-term rewards, called hyperbolic discounting. We shared the research-based strategy of taking a long-term perspective on all of our life goals, including our health. We talked through imagining our future and what it would look like with a different decision. In the Q&A, Megan stood up and shared a realization she made during the talk. She had a hip problem, and could only be fixed by a major surgery that would put her out of commission for a year. She could have the surgery whenever she wanted, but the problem would only get worse over time. Previously, she kept putting off the surgery. During the workshop, she realized how much better the rest of her life would be if she had the surgery now, as opposed to later.

She decided there and then to have the surgery in the summer after she finished her school year!

- Direct feedback from workshop participants after the workshop

  - Here are videotaped post-workshop interviews: [Ryan Mulholand](#); [Brenda Penn](#); [Karen Thimmes](#), and [Jake Calaway](#).

  - [Here are](#) quotes from post-workshop feedback forms. For actual feedback forms, see these examples ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)).

  - We got in in touch with some of these workshop participants a few weeks after the workshop, to see whether it influenced them in the long term, and [here](#) is what one of them said.

- Direct feedback on our articles published in external channels:

  - [This article](#) used an exciting narrative and emotional appeal to encourage people to give effectively, using reason to inform their giving. It was shared on social media over 1K times. A general rule of thumb is that for every person who shares an article on social media, about 100 people read it thoroughly, and many more skim it. This article is impactful for shifting people's giving toward effective charities. As you'll see from [this Facebook comment on my personal page](#), it helped convince someone to decide to donate to effective charities. Furthermore, this comment is someone who is the leader of a large secular group in Houston, and he thus has an impact on a number of other people. Since people rarely make actual comments, and far from all are fans of my Facebook page, we can estimate that many more made similar decisions but did not comment about it.

- Direct feedback on the book *Find Your Purpose Using Science*:

  - For how the workbook affected some early readers, click [this link](#) and [this one](#). One reader specifically described how the workbook exercises turned him toward living an [altruistic-oriented life.](#)

- Apps with psychometric tests
  - We have [an app](#) that has a psychometric test to measure people's level of meaning and purpose prior to engaging with our content, and then after they engage with our content, including continuing follow-up going forward. The continuing follow-up is meant to address the issue of attention bias and Hawthorne effect, namely to

test whether people just got an immediate boost or if there a long-term benefit to people engaging with our content.
- We are developing similar apps for other types of content, such as an app for planning fallacy.
- Running our own studies on our impact
  - We are currently working on a study of the impact of the Intentional Insights meaning and purpose content, which is meant to help people achieve their long-term goals. The study is [detailed here](#).
  - We are currently working on a study of the impact of Intentional Insights content on dealing with thinking errors. The study is [detailed here](#).