

# Intentional Insights – Summary

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## Introduction

Help people think more rationally, including about their philanthropy, by supporting Intentional Insights!

Launched in 2014, Intentional Insights is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Columbus, Ohio.

Our mission is to empower people to refine and reach their goals by providing research-based content to help improve thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns.

Our vision is a world where individuals, organizations, and governments rely on research-based strategies, constantly improving their ability to evaluate reality clearly and make effective decisions, helping all of us live optimally happy, healthy, flourishing, and effectively altruistic lives.

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## Introduction

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Our mission is to empower people to refine and reach their goals by providing research-based content to help improve thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns.

Our vision is a world where individuals, organizations, and governments rely on research-based strategies, constantly improving their ability to evaluate reality clearly and make effective decisions, helping all of us live optimally happy, healthy, flourishing, and effectively altruistic lives.

We provide our content both through our own channels, and we have established collaborative partnerships with a number of major secular and skeptical organizations to distribute our content. Our aim is to engage with the audience of these organizations, who are already interested in reason, and take them to rational thinking and effective altruism.

## Intentional Insights and Effective Altruism

One of our goals is to educate people on how to pursue altruism in the most effective manner. We do so in two ways. First, we teach our audiences on how to think rationally about themselves and their interactions with the world, using data-driven strategies to evaluate reality and make their decisions. Second, we provide research-based content that highlights both the personal and societal benefits of altruistic behavior. Through doing so, we aim to encourage people who engage with our content to pursue philanthropy, especially through becoming Effective Altruists. Likewise, as shown by Brian Tomasik in [this essay](#), increasing rational thinking is robustly positive for a broad range of short and long term future outcomes, and thus our broader work contributes to improving people's lives overall.

## Team

Our two co-founders run the nonprofit. Gleb Tsipursky is a scholar who researches decision-making, emotions, and agency. Agnes Vishnevkin is a nonprofit professional with an MBA and has more than 10 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. They are working together with a team of core volunteers, who have backgrounds in teaching, programming, nonprofit management, counseling, community activism, marketing, graphic design, and other skills.

Gleb's passion for helping people use science to find purpose and meaning, evaluate reality rationally, and make effective decisions led him and his wife, Agnes Vishnevkin, to co-found Intentional Insights in the Spring of 2014. Since that time, Gleb has collaborated with a group of like-minded volunteer enthusiasts to translate complex academic research on rational thinking and emotional intelligence into pragmatic tools and strategies relevant to a broad public. He was always excited about studying and promoting such ideas, leading him to get a PhD in history, and to research and teach students about meaning and purpose, decision making, emotions, and agency in various historical contexts. As a historian, he is in the fortunate position of having scholarly expertise in combining research from many different fields into a cohesive

collaborative partnerships with a number of major secular and skeptical organizations to distribute our content. Our aim is to engage with the audience of these organizations, who are already interested in reason, and take them to rational thinking and effective altruism.

## **Intentional Insights and Effective Altruism**

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## **Team**

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whole, and translation of this information for a broad audience. Gleb currently holds a tenure-track professorship at The Ohio State University and is a member of the Decision Sciences Collaborative there.

Agnes loves sharing the exciting world of evidence-based tools for working around the emotions and thoughts that may keep us from reaching our goals. As she searched for a resource that offers accessible and easy-to-use strategies based on research in cognitive science and behavioral economics, she discovered that much of this incredibly helpful information was scattered across various books and websites, many of them not accessible to the average person. Agnes and her husband, Gleb Tsipursky, decided to create that resource and launched Intentional Insights in 2014. Agnes holds an MBA in Nonprofit Management from Brandeis University and has more than 10 years of experience in the nonprofit sector, including operations, fundraising, grantmaking, strategic planning, and social enterprise. Before shifting her focus to Intentional Insights, she founded and led a startup organization, Get You There Consulting, from 2012 to 2014. Agnes served as Vice President of the Humanist Community of Central Ohio from 2013 to 2014.

We have a great team of volunteer core participants besides the two co-founders. The quality of our team testifies to our ability to persuade and excite others to provide resources to this project. Our team members include:

- Liron Shapira, a member of the Intentional Insights Advisory Board and Co-Founder and Chief Science Officer of Quixey, the worldwide leader in mobile search. He brings a great deal of expertise in managing startups, promotion and outreach, a wide network of entrepreneurs, and content expertise in rational thinking.
- August Brunsman IV, a member of the Intentional Insights Advisory Board and Executive Director of the Secular Student Alliance from 2001. He brings a great deal of expertise in managing nonprofits and startups, a wide network in the secular movement, and expertise in fundraising.
- Hal R. Arkes, a member of the Intentional Insights Advisory Board and Emeritus Professor of Psychology at The Ohio State University. As one of the most prominent experts on debiasing research in the world, he brings a great deal of content expertise, a wide network in academic circles, and ability to evaluate the impact of Intentional Insights interventions.
- Joe Guada, a candidate member of the Intentional Insights Advisory Board and Professor of Social Work at The Ohio State University. He brings much expertise in designing and evaluating interventions developed by Intentional Insights, substantial content expertise, and a wide network in academic circles.
- John Maxwell, Co-Founder at MealSquares and prominent Effective Altruist. He provides strategic insights on promotion and marketing, and managing startups.
- Max Harms, the Intentional Insights Treasurer, programmer, writer, and founder of Ohio Rationality Dojo. He contributes work on the website and apps, writing

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- Max Harms, the Intentional Insights Treasurer, programmer, writer, and founder of Ohio Rationality Dojo. He contributes work on the website and apps, writing

and editing blogs, and expertise in the area of modern rationality, as well as other areas.

- Cerina Gillilan, a member of the Intentional Insights Board of Directors and graphic designer. She designs the large majority of Intentional Insights meme-style images and does a variety of other work.
- Ben Thomas, a core volunteer and programmer. He is the technical director of Intentional Insights, overseeing the majority of the work needed on programming the website and apps.
- Jamie Nichols, a core volunteer, video manager, and programmer, as well as Vice-President of the Humanist Community of Central Ohio. He provides the large majority of work on Intentional Insights videos and does some programming, and has a wide network of contacts in the secular movement.
- Elissa Fleming, a medical student, writer, prominent Effective Altruist and Social Media Manager at Giving What We Can. She provides content expertise from the field of medicine, editing and writing of blogs, and also a contact network with Effective Altruists.
- Jeff Dubin, a social worker and President of the Humanist Community of Central Ohio. He provides content expertise from the field of social work, and has a wide network of contacts in the secular movement.
- Sam Jackson, a former staff member at the Secular Student Alliance who produced their newsletter. He has a wide network of contacts in the secular movement, and has great writing skills for blogs and other content.
- Russel Harms, a graphic designer and programmer. He provides programming and graphic design help for Intentional Insights.
- Yuliy Fuschin, a programmer and organizer of the Moscow Less Wrong meetup. He is providing help with promoting Intentional Insights content in Russia, including both the English-language version and translating our content to Russian.
- Jithin Mohandas, an Indian rationalist activist and blogger. He is providing help with promoting Intentional Insights content in India, including both the English-language version and translating our content to Hindi.
- April Bever, a social media and online marketing expert, and founder of Old Time Book. She provides expertise on social media and online marketing, and on startup management.
- There are plenty of others who are not core volunteers, but provide occasional help in a wide variety of areas.

## Strategy

We have a three-pronged strategy for advancing our mission:

1. Creating science-based self-improvement content targeted at a broad audience.

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## **Strategy**

We have a three-pronged strategy for advancing our mission:

1. Creating science-based self-improvement content targeted at a broad audience.

- 1.1. We transform research on rational thinking from a variety of disciplines into easy-to-use, scientifically based self-improvement strategies that people can use to improve their lives
2. Transforming this content into a mix of media and products.
  - 2.1. We create blogs, meme-style images, and short videos that aim to engage audiences, and attract them to our more in-depth educational content, such as longer videos, in-person presentations, books, classes, web and mobile apps, etc.
3. Distributing these media and products through a wide variety of channels, both our own and those of other organizations
  - 3.1. *Our channels:*
    - 3.1.1. Our blog is hosted on our website, [www.intentionalinsights.org](http://www.intentionalinsights.org).
    - 3.1.2. Our videos can be found on our [Youtube](#) channel.
    - 3.1.3. Social media includes [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Delicious](#).
  - 3.2. *Other Organization's Channels:*
    - 3.2.1. Our strategy for bringing our content to a broad audience is to reach out to and to look for opportunities to partner with leaders and organizations that are influential with specific audiences that are most likely to be interested in our content.

## Target Audience

1. Our early target audience are youth and young adults who are interested in learning about evidence-based ways to achieve their goals and increase their wellbeing.
  - 1.1. Our first outreach efforts are toward the secular community, whose members are already oriented toward science and reason and are most likely to be open to adopting research-based thinking strategies. Moreover, we have a great network for reaching to the secular community, since several of our core volunteers are active in the secular movement.
  - 1.2. The ideal target individuals are youth and young adults who came from a religious background but have become disenchanted with it and now yearn for a science-based approach to understanding themselves and people around them.
2. We are also beginning early outreach to additional target audiences, including people into self-improvement, wellness and wellbeing, mindfulness, and spirituality, as well as collaborating with higher education venues.

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## Current Accomplishments

### 1. Content:

- 1.1. Our prototype offering is a science-based approach to finding purpose and meaning in life. We have decided to pursue this offering because it is particularly well targeted to appeal to the secular community, which we have identified as very promising early adopters of our content.
- 1.2. We are also developing content that would provide practical, evidence-based strategies in a variety of other areas, among them:
  - 1.2.1. Effective decision-making
  - 1.2.2. Rational political and community engagement and citizenship
  - 1.2.3. Evaluating and managing emotions rationally
  - 1.2.4. Evaluating reality accurately
  - 1.2.5. Rational political engagement and citizenship

### 2. Media and Products

- 2.1. *Blogs*: We have already published blog posts related to [finding life meaning](#), including [promoting civic engagement and highlighting Effective Altruism](#). We also published some blogs on [evaluating reality](#), [dealing with cognitive biases](#), and [reaching long-term goals](#).
  - 2.2. *Videos*: We have conducted several videotaped workshops, on [finding meaning and purpose](#), [evaluating reality](#), and [making effective decisions](#).
  - 2.3. *Workbook*: we have written and are in the final stages of editing a [workbook](#) that offers research-based strategies for figuring out a personal sense of life's meaning and purpose. Its features include:
    - 2.3.1. [Meaning and Purpose Questionnaire \(MPQ\)](#), a tool developed by Intentional Insights President and Co-Founder Gleb Tsipursky, that enables people to evaluate and increase their sense of meaning and purpose.
    - 2.3.2. [Starter package](#) for a "Rationality" group, designed to help spread rational thinking-oriented community groups broadly.
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# Current Accomplishments

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## 2. Media and Products

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2.2. Videos: We have conducted several videotaped workshops, on finding meaning and purpose, evaluating reality, and making effective decisions.

2.3. Workbook: we have written and are in the final stages of editing a workbook that offers research-based strategies for figuring out a personal sense of life's meaning and purpose. Its features include:

2.3.1. Meaning and Purpose Questionnaire (MPQ), a tool developed by Intentional Insights President and Co-Founder Gleb Tsipursky, that enables people to evaluate and increase their sense of meaning and purpose.

2.3.2. Starter package for a "Rationality" group, designed to help spread rational thinking-oriented community groups broadly.

2.3.3. [Starter package](#) for a “Values and Meanings” group, designed to help spread community groups aiming to help people figure out their values and meanings in life broadly.

2.4. *Online classes*: here is an [online class](#) on meaning and purpose

2.5. *Apps*:

2.5.1. Under development is a web and mobile app on meaning and purpose, which enables people to take the MPQ and track their progress over time.

2.5.2. Under development is a web and mobile app on dealing with planning fallacy, which asks people a number of questions to prompt them to take steps to deal with planning fallacy and track their progress over time.

### 3. Distribution

3.1. *Secular*: Our first outreach to the secular community has been a success. We have established collaborations with the [Secular Student Alliance](#), the [American Humanist Association](#), the [American Ethical Union](#), the [Sunday Assembly](#), the [Richard Dawkins Foundation](#), [American Atheists](#), the [United Coalition of Reason](#), the [Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association](#), and the [Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations](#) to host our content.

3.1.1. [American Humanist Association](#): teach online classes at [the Humanist Institute](#), do podcasts on their [Humanist Hour](#), do presentations as part of their [Humanist Teacher Corps](#), provide [curricula for their recommended readings](#) for local chapters, and other areas of collaboration.

3.1.2. [Secular Student Alliance](#): do presentations on InIn content as part of their [Speaker's Bureau](#), provide [resources for student groups to do activities](#) informed by InIn content, do presentations at the [SSA annual conference](#), and other areas of collaboration.

3.1.3. [American Ethical Union](#): provide materials with InIn content as [resources](#) for their local groups to use, and other areas of collaboration.

3.1.4. [Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association](#): publish materials with InIn content in [their publications](#) for local groups to use, publish in their [blog](#), and other areas of collaboration.

3.1.5. [Richard Dawkins Foundation](#): post our [videos](#) and our [articles](#) on the RDF website, and other areas of collaboration (the most recent article got nearly 500 re-shares and over 2000 likes on their Facebook page, and over 100 comments on their website).

3.1.6. [American Atheists](#): air our videos on their [Atheist TV](#) station, publish articles in the [American Atheist Magazine](#), and other areas of collaboration

spread community groups aiming to help people figure out their values and meanings in life broadly.

2.4. Online classes: here is an online class on meaning and purpose

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- 3.1.7. United Coalition of Reason: [provide resources](#) for local Coalition of Reason affiliates, and other areas of collaboration.
- 3.1.8. Sunday Assembly: present at [Sunday Assembly](#) venues (so far invitations from the SA groups in New York City, Bloomington, Silicon Valley, Chapel Hill, Cleveland, and Columbus), share our content with Sunday Assembly meetup and Facebook groups, and other areas of collaboration. For example, the Los Angeles Sunday Assembly group plans to collaborate with us to offer our free online class to their members and have InIn participants.
- 3.1.9. Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations: host our content on their [website](#).
- 3.1.10. Bloggers: We have written guest blogs for two prominent secular bloggers, [JT Eberhard](#) and [Miri Mogilevsky](#), the latter of whom is also involved in the rationality movement.
- 3.1.11. We are currently exploring opportunities for hosting our content with other secular organizations, including the Foundation Beyond Belief, Center for Inquiry, Institute for Humanist Studies, The Institute for Science and Human Values, and others.

### 3.2. *Other Audiences*

- 3.2.1. We have begun early outreach to other audiences besides the secular ones as well.
- 3.2.2. Higher Education:
  - 3.2.2.1. We have collaborated with Ohio State to present [workshops to students and staff](#), and received very positive responses ([1](#), [2](#)).
  - 3.2.2.2. We have [published](#) in prominent media oriented toward higher education.
- 3.2.3. Wellness and Wellbeing:
  - 3.2.3.1. We have [published an article](#) with a prominent venue for wellness and wellbeing, the International Network on Personal Meaning.
- 3.2.4. Policy:
  - 3.2.4.1. We have joined the Behavioral Sciences and Policy Association to advance our goal of encouraging government agencies to evaluate reality clearly and make effective decisions.

Reason affiliates, and other areas of collaboration. 3.1.8. Sunday Assembly: present at Sunday Assembly venues (so far invitations

from the SA groups in New York City, Bloomington, Silicon Valley, Chapel Hill, Cleveland, and Columbus), share our content with Sunday Assembly meetup and Facebook groups, and other areas of collaboration. For example, the Los Angeles Sunday Assembly group plans to collaborate with us to offer our free online class to their members and have InIn participants. 3.1.9. Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations: host our content on

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3.2.4.1. We have joined the Behavioral Sciences and Policy Association to advance our goal of encouraging government agencies to evaluate reality clearly and make effective decisions.

## Metrics and Evidence of Success

### 1. Metrics of Success

1.1. Our desired outcome is for people who engage with our content to have more rational thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns that help them refine and reach their goals, cause them to be more rational in their political, civic, and philanthropic engagement, and encourage organizations and government agencies in which they are decision makers to evaluate reality clearly and make effective decisions.

1.2. To measure these outcomes, we use several types of evidence. These include:

1.2.1. The extent to which people are engaging with InIn content, as measured by hits on our website, Facebook page likes, etc., and as measures by our collaboration with other organizations.

1.2.2. The extent to which individuals, leaders of organizations, and academics are providing positive feedback on the impact of InIn content

1.2.3. The extent to which people's measurable behavior actually changes due to engaging with InIn content, gained from follow-up questionnaires, research studies, and apps

### 2. Evidence: Engagement with InIn Content

2.1. Our website is regularly getting over 100 hits a day and our Facebook page has over 500 likes.

2.2. We have established collaborations with many major secular organizations, and are starting to establish collaborations with non-secular organizations. The most recent article we contributed to the Richard Dawkins Foundation got nearly 500 re-shares and over 2000 likes on their Facebook page, and over 100 comments on their website.

### 3. Evidence: Feedback from leaders in the secular movement

3.1. These individuals work extensively with our early target audience, and they are in the best position of determining what content our target audience would find beneficial. Moreover, they are in the best position of bringing InIn content to our audience. [Click here](#) for their feedback.

### 4. Evidence: Feedback from academics

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# Metrics and Evidence of Success

## 1. Metrics of Success

1.1. Our desired outcome is for people who engage with our content to have more rational thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns that help them refine and reach their goals, cause them to be more rational in their political, civic, and philanthropic engagement, and encourage organizations and government agencies in which they are decision makers to evaluate reality clearly and make effective decisions.

1.2. To measure these outcomes, we use several types of evidence. These include:

1.2.1. The extent to which people are engaging with InIn content, as measured by hits on our website, Facebook page likes, etc., and as measures by our collaboration with other organizations.

1.2.2. The extent to which individuals, leaders of organizations, and academics are providing positive feedback on the impact of InIn content

1.2.3. The extent to which people's measurable behavior actually changes due to engaging with InIn content, gained from follow-up questionnaires, research studies, and apps

## 2. Evidence: Engagement with InIn Content

2.1. Our website is regularly getting over 100 hits a day and our Facebook page has over 500 likes.

2.2. We have established collaborations with many major secular organizations, and are starting to establish collaborations with non-secular organizations. The most recent article we contributed to the Richard Dawkins Foundation got nearly 500 re-shares and over 2000 likes on their Facebook page, and over 100 comments on their website.

## 3. Evidence: Feedback from leaders in the secular movement

3.1. These individuals work extensively with our early target audience, and they are in the best position of determining what content our target audience would find beneficial. Moreover, they are in the best position of bringing InIn content to our audience. [Click here for their feedback.](#)

## 4. Evidence: Feedback from academics

- 4.1. Our Meaning and Purpose offering was developed by Gleb Tsipursky, an academic and the President and Co-Founder of Intentional Insights, who researches meaning and purpose in diverse historical contexts. We ran this content by other academics who study meaning and purpose from the perspective of psychology and cognitive neuroscience. They have all published research studies on meaning and purpose, and they reviewed our meaning and purpose contents. [Click here](#) for their feedback.
- 4.2. We have plans to develop content and products on advancing **rational political engagement** through debiasing training. When discussing this opportunity with academics in the field psychology and politics they have supported our intuition that this is a high-yield area that is ripe for strategies of better-thinking. [Click here](#) for their feedback.
5. Evidence: Testimonials on our content from our target audience
  - 5.1. We have evidence based on feedback gathered after workshops that our content benefits the audience. Here are videotaped post-workshop interviews: [Ryan Mulholand](#); [Brenda Penn](#); [Karen Thimmes](#), and [Jake Calaway](#). [Here are](#) quotes from post-workshop feedback forms.
  - 5.2. We got 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.
  - 5.3. 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](#).
6. Evidence: Research Studies
  - 6.1. *Research Study on Planning Fallacy*: As part of our broader efforts to promote effective decision making, we are creating a training program and app to combat the planning fallacy. [Hal Arkes](#), one of the most prominent debiasing researchers in the world and a member of the InIn [Advisory Board](#), is collaborating with the InIn President, Gleb Tsipursky, to develop a research study to test our training program and app. For more about this study, see the following [grant proposal](#).
  - 6.2. *Research Study on Meaning and Purpose*: We are in the early stages of a research study to evaluate the effectiveness of our intervention in the sphere of meaning and purpose. [Joe Guada](#), a Professor of Social Work who is in the process of becoming a member of the InIn Advisory Board, is collaborating with our President, Gleb Tsipursky, to develop a research study to test our intervention.

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