

“DEA and CIA” (Being Intentional)

Intro myself: Family Counselor and Relationships Class Instructor, Council on Crime and Justice. I will be teaching another class here soon. Look for it.

Before becoming a therapist, was a lawyer for 13 years. Not a criminal defense lawyer, but still think like a lawyer, and now a therapist, and now a teacher.

Today, I'll be talking about the DEA and CIA: You might be thinking I plan to talk about the Drug Enforcement Agency and Central Intelligence Agency. I do not. I mean something else.

DEA: Decide Every Action

CIA: Consequence, Intent, Act

The main point of what I want to talk about is this: if you plan what you do in your life, with decisions based on your intent, your life will take the direction you want it to take, not the direction others, like friends, girlfriends, associates, cops and judges make for you.

Be intentional. Decide Every Action. Before you do anything, ask yourself this, does what I am thinking about doing fit into my life plan. Obviously, to do this, **you need a life plan.** A life plan can include employment goals. Educational goals, family goals, other goals. Have goals. Know you can reach them, and know that in order to reach them, you have to make good decisions, decisions which help you along the way toward your goals.

Example: **Decide, before you slide.**

my own drug history, dropped out, did things I shouldn't have done to support my habit. No plan. Went through treatment. Had a plan. Finish school. Go to college. Go to law school. Do hard and good work as a lawyer. Made mistakes along the way. Got a girl pregnant. Glad to have a kid, but not with the person I would have chosen. I did not decide, but I did slide, into a relationship that I did not want, and took years to get out of.

I kept to my plan, though, didn't allow mistake to veer the path I had chosen for myself, just made it harder for a while, a long while.

So, DEA, Decide Every Action. Is what I am about to do consistent with my plan.

How do you do that?

CIA, Consequences, Intent, Act.

When you are trying to decide to do something in your life, anything, if you think about these three things, you will make better decisions for yourself.

If you have a life plan, a set of goals for yourself, then when it comes to your daily life, you can ask yourself these three questions to decide whether what you want to do is what you should do.

Question 1: Does this thing I want to do have **consequences** that will take me away from the direction of my goals, or get me further toward my goals?

Question 2: Is this thing I want to do something I really want to do, am I thinking about it really, what is my reason for wanting to do it, what is my **intent**?

Question 3: When in doubt, does the thing I want to do **feel like the right thing** to do, or the wrong thing to do?

Example from my life: After drug treatment, I lived in a group home which had a separate house for the guys. The guy running the house was never around. There was no curfew, we could do whatever we wanted. This guy didn't care. Problem: one of the group home brothers was a drug dealer. So, I had to decide, live free of authority, and risk my sobriety, or move, giving up my freedom. My sobriety was part of my life plan, now. I decided to move. Ended up in a place with rules again, but no drug dealing. Consequences: stay sober, with rules. Intent: stay sober so I could finish school. Act: get away from drug dealing, which was part of my past. Decision was good on all three counts.

Example from one of your lives (maybe): Your out of here. Your life plan is to go back to school, get a college degree, a good office job. On your way to convenience store for smokes and milk. Run into a couple of old friends. Good guys, but you know one of them used to deal drugs. Maybe still does. They want you to hang out and talk with them. You have to decide: stick around, hang out, maybe get high. No big deal. Decide. Consequence: cops pull up, tag you for use, or

worse. Get high, start using again, downward spiral. Intent: you didn't intend this at all. You were here to get smokes and milk, that's all. Act: if you stick around, your back to old patterns. Doesn't feel right. You say thanks, gotta go, get your smokes and milk, had back to your house.

Conclusion

Sounds simple. Its not. I am not pretending it is. You may make mistakes on the way. I certainly have. I will make more mistakes. I am sure of it. But, if you follow these simple ideas: DEA and CIA, Decide Every Act, and Consequences, Intent, Action, your life will take the direction you want it to, not the direction others make for you (like associates down at the convenience store). If you make a mistake, hang out with those guys at the convenience store, get high. Later, think about it. Think about the possible consequences, the intent, the act. Don't make that mistake again. Learn from your mistakes, review your decisions after you've made them, and maybe next time, you'll find a different store to get smokes and milk from, maybe like me, you'll decide its time to move somewhere else, where it will be easier to make better decisions for yourself.

If you're still here when I teach the next Relationship Class, sign up. Ask the guys who took it last time—I think they'll tell you it was worth it, it was different, might be pretty cool. Take care, and thanks for having me.