



Sound Financial Bites 011 - Cory Shepherd

Episode Transcription

“It’s not the absence to be committed to a goal; it is the absence of memory to accomplish it.”

Hello, this is Cory Shepherd, vice president of Sound Financial group and I'm excited to welcome you to Sound Financial Bites, where we bring you bite-sized pieces of financial knowledge to help you design and build a good life.

Hello, and welcome to Sound Financial Bites. I'm Paul Adams, your host and president and CEO of Sound Financial Group. We're glad to have you with us today. A couple quick things I just want to share with you. We're starting the year off. We've got a wonderful guest today, Cory Shepherd, who's vice president of Sound Financial Group, and Cory is a key component of our firm in working with advisors and helping coach them to higher levels of performance and he does this both inside our organization and he even will work with people who are in other industries helping coach them to help them make better decisions, stay focused on what's important to them, then help them achieve their outcomes. What he's going to do today is share with us a little bit about a technique that he uses to help people focus on what's really important to them. So, welcome to the show, Cory.

Hey, Paul, I'm glad I could make the journey from across the hall to be here. I'm excited.

So, Cory, you've talked about this. You taught this in a session with our advisors earlier this year and I loved it. It was this idea of going through a set of questions and then being able to take those questions and lay them into something that someone can use every single day. So, I think, maybe, just hand it to you here first and maybe you just talk a little bit about what an intention statement is, what you've noticed it doing for people, and what you hope it would do for the people who are listening today.

Sure. So, I've been using an intention statement in my daily practice for a little over the last year and that came from work with my business coach Steve D'Annunzio. Now, he coaches folks in the financial industry but he also has the Sole Purpose Institute, which is everyone outside the financial industry as well and the idea is that it's not the absence of being committed to our goals that's really keeping us from what we're able to achieve, it's absence of the memory of that commitment and the presence to what we committed to ourselves. So the idea is, every morning and every night - so the very first thing I read in the morning and the very last thing I read at night is my intention statement.

Now, it's important for a few reasons. One, we're starting the day off with those thoughts of where we want to go so that, right from the beginning, our day is oriented to those things we want to achieve and then every night we're reading it so that, as we go to sleep, our subconscious and that amazing computer of our brain can go to work on all of those things.

So, there's something you said there that I thought was really awesome I don't want to gloss over is that what keeps us from achieving our goals is not that we don't want to get there or our futures or intentions, it's that we forget them, and one of the things I think that happens that I've seen me do in the past is it's not that I forget -- it's not that I don't want to still eat healthy, but I can forget just long enough to order pizza.



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*““Repetition,
Repetition,
Repetition will
help establish
your goals in
your mind.”*

But, really, you only have to forget a little bit and you can now have yourself in a commitment that it takes you totally off track from your intention. People do that with work where, let's say, they've got a business owner, which I think you'd ask me. I'm going to pretend to be just a business owner that owns some sort of distribution or manufacturing company in our call today but if I have a company and I'm supposed to be doing certain things in the business but I get excited about some project and then I make - in a minute, I forget long enough to make some large commitment to a project that it takes me away from my original intention or business plan for the year, then that one slip might have me off-track for weeks in being ineffective.

So, I think that's really key is that you can forget for a minute or forget for ten minutes your intention and yet, then, accidentally in that period of time, make a commitment that keeps you off-track for 10 weeks.

Right, and what's even more powerful about this is someone in a business owner situation operating a large company, it may be that they have the opportunity to make one decision at one point that creates that huge change, but them and everyone else in the world also have the opportunity very slowly and all at once, in those little moments throughout the day, to continually make those small decisions that either push them towards where they want to go or slowly push them away, and doing this as a daily practice multiple times a day gets that deeper and deeper ingrained into our minds.

Yes, and the other thing you showed up for me is I was just kind of picturing that as you said it is that the getting off, staying on intention, and making those little moves, or being off intention and making those little moves that take you further away from what you ultimately wanted, say, for 2016, is that the bigger the organization you have or the more people who trust you for leadership, the further amplified your focus or distraction becomes and how key that can be is that you could have everybody on the wrong task for 10 weeks because of a 10-minute lapse in remembering the intention for the years.

So, with that, I know you were generous in building a version of this that's going to land on our website for our listeners. So they can go to sfgwa.com, go to the podcast and blog section, scroll down, and what you're going to find is the worksheet that we're going to reference here a few times. But, Cory's also built it in a way that if you're driving to work right now in your car, it's going to be fine to do this exercise without the worksheet. During this, what I want to do is just kind of put myself in your shoes, as a listener to the show today in saying, "Here I am. I'm a business owner with 100 employees making good income, but having to focus this year to help the company produce certain outcomes." So, with that, Cory, why don't I just hand it over to you?

Yeah, so this is the exercise that I did with our organization, Paul, and you got to sit in on part of it where, for most of us, it's just like the second that someone asks you a question, like if you've ever had a teacher in school ask you a specific question and you remembered having the answer but, being in the moment, it's right at the tip of your tongue, you can't come up with it. It's kind of what happens to us when we're on the spot trying to come up with some



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“Start and end your day reading your Intention Statement.”

big statement for our year. So, it's an exercise to just walk through a few different questions about yourself and write down a few different things then we can tie it all together into a great intention statement.

What I love about the way you did it with everybody is you didn't tell them.

Right. It was a surprise as to what this was. They didn't know where we were leading as we were writing down this list.

Which, incidentally, I think for the sake of our podcast, it's a little more difficult to do it that way, though what I would encourage you to do is don't skip ahead, don't download that sheet yet if you're listening to this at your desk. Just follow along and we're going to write down, number 1, write this down, number 2, write this down. Later on, you're going to take that and fit it into the worksheet that we've got on our website.

So, item number 1 on this list of six items is: write down your unique ability.

And unique ability, for those of you that aren't familiar, is the idea that there's something that you do that you're great at and not only are you great at it but you like getting better at it. Important side note, it's important that more than you think you're great at it, okay?

And it doesn't have to just be your job. Now, it could very much be related to your job and you're one of the luckiest people in the world if it is. Although, that doesn't have to be the case.

Exactly, so you like it, other people recognize that you're great at it, you enjoy getting better at it, and if you did it, your unique ability - and some people, you have a unique ability set of certain things that they're good at - if you did that all day long, you actually have - while you might be physically tired, you would actually have more mental energy at day's end than at the beginning.

So, for the sake of our kind of testing this out just being a business owner that has a manufacturing company, I'm going to put down that my unique ability is building new relationships, solving complex client problems, and, yeah, solving complex business problems and building relationships.

Great. So, I am a builder of new relationships might be a great way to have it fit well into the sentence and that's an important thing for people to know is the way that you write this down, when we start reading this exercise, it may not fit perfectly the first time. Don't worry about grammar and perfect English. You can change the tenses and all those right after it.

I did. Why I use this exercise even -- I went through it and it actually wrote my intention statement, which is now laminated and hanging in my shower so that I see it every day and I guess that could sound funny but I'll tell you what, I spend at least like 5 to 10 minutes in the shower every day, I might as well look at it.



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Step 2 is: write down your most specific goal for 2016, or your most important goal and be as specific as you can. So that might be financial, that might be personal, but what's important is that it's measurable and timely, meaning when we get to the end of 2016, can you know, definitively, yes or no, like in a court of law that you could be proven guilty for having or having not done that?

So, mine's going to be growing sales to 20 million dollars.

Perfect. Number 3: write down how you will feel when the goal is accomplished and we want to be simple and elegant here. You know, it could be one or two words: fulfillment, immense gratification, satisfaction, something along those lines.

Triumphant is one word. I can't help it. It's in my head, although this is not the one we're going to put in the intention statement: I haven't seen Charlie Sheen yell, "Winning!" anywhere in years and I miss it so, "Triumphant and winning."

Yeah, I think that works great.

Yeah, it may work great. I'll see if another one comes to me. We'll stick with "triumphant" for now. I'll put it on my list here.

So, now, number 4 is: write the number 1 action step needed to create favorable conditions for that goal to be achieved.

Write the number 1 action step... So, for our business owner to grow the business to 20 million dollars, what's the most important action step? So, when I put myself in those shoes, I'm thinking to building a competent and confident sales team. That's what they would - a business that's going to get that large is likely going to have to do that.

Now, this is a fun one and could be one of the hardest ones for most people is: write the number 2 action step, one that you're struggling with the discipline to do.

Struggling with the discipline to do? So, this first one gets the company to 20 million dollars, they know that they need to build a sales team.

Maybe they know that not only build a team but they need to go out and find some new relationships themselves and that's threatening. That can be hard to do in amidst of the busy, busy world so they've got to be out there making some calls, making some handshakes too.

Yeah, I think that could be a great one because there are many business owners who built a great business and aren't as great in the business development. There's the other one for the business owners that are great at business development, the other one that I could see happening is that they may need to have hard conversations with people that are on their team and get those people off.



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Yeah, I love it.

So, I'm going to go with the second one. So, ask me the question again so I can word it the best way possible.

The number 2 action step, and it's one that you're struggling with the discipline to do. It's the harder one to accomplish.

So, I'm going to say it too long, I think, but, "To hold my team to performance metrics".

Or hold members of the team accountable to those metrics and your business owner's going to know what that means.

"To only keep those team members who perform".

So the first part is to hold --

"To retain only those team members that perform", I think is how I'd want to say it because then it's not necessarily negative like a "don't do this". I am doing something. I'm retaining those who perform as opposed to getting rid of people. I don't like the idea of an intention statement having a negative thing in it. Like, I am "don't going to do this". Like, what's the positive thing side of it? So, it would be to retain.

Now I remember that your business owner just said also the hard conversations around that.

Oo, to always practice hard/easy when it comes to team members. So, the same coach that Cory spoke about that gave him this exercise talks about the concept of hard/easy and the idea that people go through life, often time, practicing easy/hard. They do the easy thing right now like kind of tiptoe over the performance over, particularly, team member and they don't hold them accountable to perform better but the hard thing is, later, that person ends up on the team and not doing a good job and dragging the company down and later, they're very, very shocked and feel mistreated from having been fired because nobody told them they weren't performing.

But, the idea of practicing hard/easy is having the very hard conversations as quickly as possible so that things are much easier later. So, always practicing hard/easy. That's going to be mine. The number 2 action step is going to be to always practice hard/easy with team members.

Yeah, and then 6: simply state your mission for your clients or your customers, and for a business owner here, that's a really easy one, who their clients or customers are and for anyone who's not in that business owner position, you just think about the people in your life that you're out to have satisfied with your relationship with them. Maybe it's a spouse, maybe it's your kids, maybe it's someone at work that you're a direct report.



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Oh, for that matter, maybe you're really entrenched in Amazon or Microsoft and the firm's mission might fit very, very well with your mission statement. So, don't hesitate, just adopt your firm's mission. It's not like you couldn't just say --

Well, in my intention statement, I used "empower clients to design and build a good life" but it fits with what I wanted to do.

And it just happens to be Sound Financial Group. So, yeah, that's a perfect example of it. So, for this person, I'm on a mission to, like "solving client problems --" so, "solving client problems with our proprietary products".

So, now that you've got those all typed out, I'll give you -- you've got the full list in front of you now - all those words. So you're going to read, for everyone, what you came up with?

Yeah, so let's just go over what I said for each one really quickly since we just went through it. So, if you happen to be handwriting and you don't have the entire thing, it will give you the opportunity, at least, you could go back to the end part of this podcast, replay the end, and get the entire exercise if you needed it.

So, number 1: write your unique ability.

And what we wrote down was "a builder of new relationships".

Number 2: write your most important specific goal for 2016.

"Sales growth to 20 million dollars".

Number 3: write down how you will feel when the goal is accomplished.

"Triumphant and confident in the future" is where I settled.

And winning. Number 4: write the number 1 action step needed to create favorable conditions for the goal to actualize.

"Building a confident and competent sales team".

Number 5: write the number 2 action step that you're struggling with the discipline to do.

"Always practice hard/easy with team members".

Number 6: simply state your mission for clients.

"Solve client problems with proprietary products".



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Awesome. I'm excited to hear what it sounds like.

I am too.

Even though you're pretending to be this person, I'm getting excited.

I hope our listeners feel exactly the same. So, what you're going to see is there's a worksheet where you're going to drop these in. It's like Paint by Number. So it's not going to be difficult. You write down your six up top and then, at the bottom, you just fill it right in.

So, here is the mission statement for our fictional, but everyday business owner client: "I greet this day with love in my heart. Thank you for the constant reminder of the phenomenal difference I make in the lives of others. I am a builder of new relationships, who is committed to manifesting my goal of experiencing sales growth to 20 million dollars in my life right now. As I imagine having already accomplished this goal, I feel tremendous feelings of triumph and confidence in the future. I'm practicing non-attachment by focusing only on controlling the controllables while no longer allowing people and events beyond my control to cause me pain. To make this goal happen, I am totally committed to building a confident and competent sales team. I am motivated by self-respect to always practicing hard/easy with team members. I am on a mission to solve client problems with proprietary products. This, or something better, now manifests for the highest good."

Yeah, that's great.

Now, this, if we're in that every day then those key components all year long are on our radar and I've even heard you talk about, Cory, that you can modify this through the year. Like if you knock something out or something's no longer on your radar as a problem or you want to focus on a different unique ability, you can do that, modify your mission statement, and put that thing - your intention statement - and put it right in the dash of the car, in the rear-view mirror, read it while the car's warming up. I've also heard of doing it three times a day so you keep it somewhere on your desk where you can read it at lunchtime.

I mean, it really starts to ingrain maybe like not that much different than -- I've heard it as thoughts are like a creek running. It's always going to cut deeper, whatever thought you have. So, this becomes something we're intentionally letting water run a certain way and making sure it cuts a deep path in the area of our mind where we want it to go because, Lord knows, we will think of all kinds of things that will work against us.

Yeah, so practical tips for implementing this for folks. You talked about putting it up in the shower, which I've got a few things up there myself. I haven't put the intention statement; I got to do that.

We got to warn our listeners: be sure to have it laminated.

Laminating is important.



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Because you think to yourself, "I just put it high enough in the shower, it doesn't get wet."

It'd be steamy in there.

It gets wet. Yeah, it gets steamy, it gets all crinkly, your spouse starts asking weird questions about why there's printer ink running down this page of paper in the shower --

You can buy the laminating sheets that you do by hand at like Office Depot or whatever. You don't have to have a whole laminating machine. I have mine. I have an iPhone. The Notes app in my iPhone, just have that typed in there so it's really easy. It's the first thing I pick up when an alarm goes off every morning, so it's already in my hands. I just hit the button, read it.

You want to do something funny or you could also do this: "Siri, remind me to read my intention statement twice a day". Oh, I've got her on silent for the podcast but --

It's probably a good idea.

Yeah, right there, she says, "Read my intention statement twice a day." Thank you, Siri. So, that easily, you could implement this. Now, for me, personally, many of you who have gotten to know me over time will get to know that I'm of deep faith and what I do is I work it in. There's a couple of great places that if you have a lean toward that, you can make it work in here --

Like a, "Thank you, God," here or there, and an amen at the end, right?

That's it. That's all it takes. So, what is the biggest thing? So, if people get this done, they get theirs written down. They've got it on the index card, laminated or not, they got it in a couple places, they're reading it. What do you most hope that our listeners are able to do now that they have this and they implement it?

You know, what's amazing is that it has -- I've noticed an impact in different areas of my life that I'm not specifically mentioning in the intention statement because that amazing focus, I can't help but dribble over into other areas. So, when I'm really intentional about doing this thing for work or a big income goal that's there, it's amazing how I'm more intentional about being present with my wife when I'm at home. It bleeds over into a lot of different areas. So, that would be my biggest hope is that whatever shows up here on your statement actually isn't the only area that you have growth in or achieve something different. You'd become more present in all kinds of different areas.

That's really great. Well, thanks for being here today, Cory, and once again, as always, we're glad that you all could tune into the show. If you hadn't had the chance to do so, I'd really encourage you, reach out to our office. You can get us at info@sfgwa.com. If you haven't spent 30 minutes with one of our advisors, I'd encourage you to do so. We don't know if our process is right for you at this time but we do know that if you spend 30 minutes with one of our



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advisors, it's going to merit the time that you invested in it. You can also go to our website, see some of our other videos, podcasts, white papers. You can download the first three chapters of my book or feel free to go to Amazon and download. You can have it done almost before our outro music is complete. I hope you have a great day and glad that you could join us.

Hey, this is Cory again. I just wanted to say it's been great to have you here listening to this episode. You can find out more information about us on our website, www.sfgwa.com or you can find us on Facebook under Sound Financial Group. We'd love to hear any questions or comments from you there. Who knows? You may hear one on a future episode. For our full disclosure, you can go to description of our podcast series, this episode's description, or our website.

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