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Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

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Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 48(0)

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Publication Date

2026

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Peer reviewed

Intents and Purposes

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Abstract. What are intentions, and what is the nature of practical reason? Cognitivism about intention and practical reason claim, respectively, that intentions entail predictive beliefs, and that practical reason reduces, at least partially, to theoretical reason. But cognitivism faces two distinct challenges: seemingly, we can intend the unexpected, and expect the unintended. This paper will advance a cognitivist theory of intention. To intend, I will argue, is to believe that a teleological explanation is true of one's own behavior. And as I will illustrate, given the nature of teleological belief, we can meet those aforementioned explanatory challenges. The result is a theory of intention that parsimoniously does what a sound theory of intention ought to do.