

Mind Sets - Developing A Success Mind Set

The Joys and Evils of Expectations

Expectations can work for us, or against us. Expecting the best in every situation keeps us feeling motivated and passionate about our goals. Conversely, expecting immediate results from our efforts can make us feel frustrated and disappointed when it doesn't happen.

The tricky thing about expectations is that we may not always be aware of them on a conscious level. At some point during the pursuit of our goals we suddenly we find ourselves feeling angry, resentful or weary without a clear reason why. With a little introspection, we realize we've been holding unrealistic expectations about our progress, or fearfully expecting the worst in every situation.

Getting clear about your expectations – and consciously balancing them – can make your journey to success simple and painless.

How do you consciously balance an expectation? By NOT letting your emotions get attached to any one outcome.

“But wait a minute,” you are probably thinking, “How can we not get attached to an outcome? Isn't that the whole point of having goals?”

When I say, “not getting attached to a specific outcome” I am not necessarily referring to your ultimate goal, but all the smaller milestones between here and there.

For example, one stumbling block our expectations can cause is related to timing. We crave success so badly that we pin our hopes on making it happen within 6 months (or one day!). If that doesn't happen, we get angry and feel like a failure.

If we didn't harbor unrealistic expectations about the timing of our success, we'd still be happily working on our goals. Instead, we sabotage ourselves by expecting too much, too soon.

See the difference? By consciously not getting attached to specific outcomes, you will be able to work consistently and steadily toward a goal, and make the journey much smoother!

This state of detachment can also be beneficial to your ultimate goal. Though you may have an idea of where you want to end up, would you be devastated if you ended up with a different (but equally good - or better) result? Chances are you would still feel an immense amount of satisfaction about your accomplishments.

It takes practice to feel comfortable balancing your expectations, but it gets easier as you go along. Eventually it will be second nature for you to remain optimistic yet realistic – which keeps you focused and motivated!

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Here's how to start: with every goal you set, with every action step you take, every challenge you face, ask yourself, "What are my expectations for the outcome of this situation?"

If your expectations seem extreme in either direction (too optimistic or too pessimistic) – or too rigid altogether - adjust them accordingly. Only you can say for sure what is considered optimistic or pessimistic for YOU. It depends on your experience, determination, focus, and the magnitude of your goals. Something that would be extremely difficult for me might be a piece of cake for you. Consider your own abilities, set reasonable goals, and strive to challenge yourself – but not to the point where it seems like an exercise in futility and frustration!

Building Your Success Muscles with Discipline

If you are like most people, one of the biggest reasons you haven't yet achieved the success you desire is because you are not disciplined. In this age of instant gratification, we are accustomed to getting what we want right NOW. The thought of working diligently on a goal for weeks, months, or even years is a little depressing.

But without discipline, we are at the mercy of our circumstances and we will continue to be at their mercy. Once you get into a rut, you need tremendous discipline to pull yourself out of it.

One great example of this is being overweight and out of shape. If you've ever carried some extra pounds on your body, you know how exhausting and debilitating it can be. You feel sluggish, groggy, unmotivated – and the sofa seems like your best friend.

You know HOW to lose weight and get in shape: eat healthful food and exercise every day. But you don't do it. You make excuses about why you are overweight and sink further into lethargy because it seems too challenging to turn it around.

Then one day you decide you just can't stand feeling so rotten anymore, so you begin a diet and exercise plan. It's grueling hard work at the beginning. You need to give yourself constant pep talks to put on your workout clothes and get moving, and you need to ignore that little sweets monster that makes cookies seem so alluring.

The ONLY thing that determines your success in a scenario like this is your level of discipline. Will you keep doing what you know you need to do to lose weight? Will you push yourself to exercise? Will you continue to eat a balanced diet, or give in to your cravings for junk food?

This all sounds so unappealing, doesn't it? Being disciplined is hard work.

Ah, but then something miraculous happens! If you keep at it for long enough, you begin to feel an inner shift. Suddenly you begin to realize that you are enjoying your workouts. You are beginning to look forward to your fruit smoothie each morning. Your

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clothes are getting baggy and your energy level is rising more each day. You are sleeping soundly at night and feeling better when you wake in the morning.

Amazingly, you don't need such a large amount of discipline to keep up with your health plan because it doesn't seem so difficult anymore. Your muscles are developing, your fat is melting away, and you are feeding your body a better quality of fuel, all of which make you feel so good that you want more. Cookies don't seem so powerful anymore. Even more importantly, you have become **accustomed** to your new habits! As long as you don't start backsliding, the rest of the journey to health and fitness is a rewarding joy ride.

This process is NO DIFFERENT for your goals, whatever they may be. It takes tremendous discipline at the beginning of the journey because you are not used to taking action on your goals. You will need to push yourself to do the things that need to be done.

Many of us give up at this stage because it seems too hard, and we believe it will ALWAYS be this hard. We forget that we humans are incredibly adaptive creatures. We can get used to almost anything. Remember, we simply GOT USED to not trying. We settled into a state of acceptance about living a mediocre life, about abandoning our dreams, about believing the people who told us we'd never be successful.

If we can get used to THAT, we can get used to challenging ourselves, stretching our comfort zones, and believing in our own capabilities. It's just a matter of having the discipline and patience to see it through.

Make a solemn vow to yourself right now. Promise that you will keep taking action, keep working on improving yourself as a person, and keep striving for more happiness and success in whatever you do. Promise yourself that you will do what needs to be done on a daily basis – even if you don't feel like it.

If you can keep those promises, you will be astounded by the changes that take place in your life. (Remember, it's not an instant shift, so keep reminding yourself that it won't always be so difficult!)

Sacrifices: Making Room for What You Want

Sacrifice (like discipline) is one of those concepts that seems unappealing at first. We don't like to "give up" anything – especially not for the fleeting hope that it might be replaced with something better at an undetermined time in the future. Where's the fun in that?

Most of us yearn for the familiar and comfortable, even if it's dissatisfying. It seems less scary to stay safely ensconced in our routines. We avoid taking the actions we

I've been polite and I've always shown up. Somebody asked me if I had any advice for young people entering the business. I said, "Yeah, show up."

- Tom T. Hall

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know we must take to be successful, because it seems easier not to. We sit in a vegetative state in front of the television so we don't have to think about how unhappy we are. And with each year that passes, we sink further into resignation.

I'm not going to ask you to give up the activities you love, such as watching television.

What I am going to do is ask you to consider what you would rather sacrifice. Either way, you are sacrificing SOMETHING. You are sacrificing your dreams as you hide your head in the sand, or you are sacrificing a portion of leisure time for a bigger goal.

Our perception of sacrifice is usually what makes it seem so unappealing. What can make it easier is a neat little trick I learned years ago: focus on what you are GAINING, not on what you are LOSING. It's all about your perception!

If you think you have to be miserable now in order to be successful later, that's exactly how you'll end up feeling. If, on the other hand, you make a decision to feel happy about the changes you are making in your life, you will focus naturally on the benefits rather than the inconveniences.

The "inconveniences" DON'T have to be massive, by the way. Let's use the television example again. You don't have to sacrifice all of your television-watching in order to achieve your goals. If you have a few favorite shows, by all means watch them! Recharging your mental and physical batteries with some downtime is just as important as working efficiently on your goals.

Again, the important thing is **balance**. Be willing to sacrifice what you don't need for something you really want. Rather than focusing on what you're giving up, focus on what you are gaining in the long run.

See success as something you need to incorporate into your life. If your life is already crammed full of unproductive activities and unsuccessful outcomes, you need to do a little housecleaning before success can effectively squeeze through your door.

(Note: cleaning up your physical surroundings can also be effective in helping you let go of unproductive activities! Clutter (mental or physical) is a horrible drain on your energy. Get rid of what no longer serves you and you'll be amazed at how much lighter and motivated you feel.)

**Wishing you a smooth transition to the success you deserve,
Mind Sets Team**