

Expectation management

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According to Cambridge dictionary expectations mean “the feeling or belief that something will or should happen”. We as individuals experience that people surrounding us have lot of expectations from us and we also expect a lot from people surroundings us. The secret to a happy life is said to have no expectations or low expectation but at the same time we experience that our success or failures in all the fields of life are decided by the fact that whether we have been able to meet the expectations set for us or not. We all have expectations from each other. Boss and Sub-ordinate, Husband and Wife, Parent and Children. Relations sour when we don't handle the expectations properly.

So let us understand the psychology of expectations. Its wisdom can be derived by acknowledging two psychological facts: The first fact is that if we expect something to happen in a certain way that does not guarantees that it will happen in that way. The second fact is human beings presumes that fulfilling of expectations will bring happiness. Most of us at some point in life have believed that expecting others to behave in certain way will actually make them behave that way. What if, the other person is not interested in living up to what one expects? In that situation one feels morally outraged, annoyed and insulted. Expectations are premeditated resentments.

Research on moral psychology articulates that one's expectations of others are often grounded on social contract. That is the reason why human beings set expectations from others without discussing it with them. It is hard to live up to the expectations of people in our life when one is not aware of what is expected out of them. Communicating openly about mutual expectations may increase the chances of gratification. Simultaneously, it is impractical to assume that merely communicating about the expectations will make people behave the way one wishes them to. Not all relations in life are based on authority where you can assume that communicating the expectation will ensure the behavior to match the expectations.

Focusing on expectations and expectation management in professional life, a manager or a leader should focus on making the expectations two way. The first way is to communicate what the leader expects the followers or subordinates to do. Writing down

what is expected in terms of goals, objectives, timelines as well as communicating how they are supposed to realize the objectives for example team work, behaviors, and reporting etc. is the key to communication of expectations. The leader should meet the individual to convey the expectations verbally and clarify that the message reaches to the individual as expected by leader. The second way is to ask subordinates what they expect from the leader. Leaders should make sure that subordinates understand that leader does not guarantees that all the expectations will be fulfilled, but the leader will try his/her best to fulfill them and if not, the leader will explain why the expectations can't be met. The leader should try to find ways to reach a concession on the most difficult ones. Leaders should try to get their feedback regularly to make sure that leaders are also showing progress. This way the leader can safeguard that subordinates also try hard to meet the expectations set for them.

In the professional setting one needs to understand that expecting something from another person is going to be fruitful only when the other person also feels like they are valued. If the organization expects high performance from its employees, it has to realize that those employees also look for some conditions to be taken care of. More often than not employees expect more than mere good compensation. So when these priorities meet, the growth of employees generally takes place.

Managing expectations both ways is probably the only way we can make relationships between employers and employees work.

The quote by *Stephen R. Covey* explains very well the power of expectation management:

“Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.”

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