

A D.O.S.E. of EXPECTATIONS

expectations

An expectation is the act or state of looking forward to, or anticipating, a certain outcome. Everyone has them, has met some of their expectations and has had some fall short of missing their mark. There are two sides to expectations: what we expect from ourselves and what we expect from others. No matter which

type of expectation you have, it can be one of the following three types:

Low Expectations - these may be easily attainable but offers no challenge and no opportunity to grow. You may feel good about meeting your expectation but what exactly have you gained?

Unreasonably High Expectations - setting the bar so high that the expectation cannot possibly be met. This produces frustration, disappointment, and undermines your self-esteem and faith in others.

Realistic Expectations - these are expectations that conceivably can be met with effort on your part, but present challenges. This makes you feel accomplished and empowered.

No matter what your expectation (or goal) and its outcome something else is going on behind the scenes. Every emotional response to met and unmet expectations prompts a chemical response in the human body. These chemicals all revolve around human beings' self-preservation.

Let's explore these chemicals:

Dopamine. When you're positively approaching a probable completion of the expectation dopamine is released into the body. Dopamine is one of the "feel-good" chemicals and releases extra energy into the body to continue your "hunt". It motivates you to seek after and to persist in meeting the expectation.

Oxytocin. When your expectations involves you and another or others and those expectations are met the bond between the parties involved are strengthened. This is

partially accomplished by the release of oxytocin. Every step towards success increases trust between parties and also trust in yourself. Oxytocin flow into the body cements these social bonds and promotes "good feelings".

Serotonin. When serotonin is released as we accomplish meeting expectations once again we experience "feeling good". This is a result of you gaining self-respect and eliciting respect from others. You are believing in your own self-worth and meeting expectation proves it to you.

Endorphins. Endorphins were made to release into the body during emergencies. Athletes push past their limits to meet their performance expectations, producing endorphin release in response to beginning levels of felt pain. But extreme laughter initiates muscle movements that come close to mimicking muscle actions while experiencing pain. Laughter can trick the brain into releasing endorphins so you can experience an "endorphin high" and may be able to push through difficulties to meet your expectation (or goal).

These four chemicals all have positive impact upon your body when working towards and meeting expectations. But what if your expectations can't be met? We feel disappointed and said which doesn't release the "feel-good" chemicals. Here our brain interprets unmet expectations (you don't get the lion) as messages of danger and a threat to your life (the lion will get you). Enter:

Cortisol - In cases of the true need for survival we respond with "fight or flight" action and the level of cortisol is used up. The same thing happens when someone has a "perceived fear" or is confronted by stress triggered by a thought, a situation, or a person. (The amount of cortisol, having no outlet, is continuously compounded). Some of the body's response to the release of cortisol shows up as: perceiving everything as a threat, bypass the rational mind and present "attack mode" focusing on short term survival, decrease pain perception, quicken impulses, exaggerating the idea of fear causing fear to be mistakenly perceived.

Excepting both the rise and fall of D.O.S.E. and cortisol surges while learning to set attainable yet challenging expectations for yourself will keep these body chemicals within manageable levels.

With Gratitude, Kai