



MAY 2010

*“Expectations are resentments waiting to happen.”
-Recovery Quote often heard at Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings*

Happy May terrific women around the globe! It never stops amazing me that as I continually do the work I do there are often times when a theme seems to apply to so many that the same questions are raised over & over again regarding that specific topic. Well, at the moment the theme on the minds of many of my clients is that of expectations. How do you handle them? What do you do when you have them? Is it okay to have them? So I thought, in the continual spirit of living in the solution, this month I would discuss the reality of expectations & then offer some solutions for dealing with them.

A good place to start is to understand that having expectations is part of being human. We can't stop having them & we shouldn't want to. Expectations, when we're aware of them, clue us in to what we desire or what we feel deserving of. This is a good thing...initially! So, if it isn't simply having expectations that's the problem, then what is? Well, it's not being aware of our expectations & then once we are, not knowing how to deal with them.

The first step for us all is learning the life skill of 'managing' our expectations. So, how does one learn to 'manage' their expectations? Here are three steps to help get you started:

1. *Learn to be aware of your expectations.* Most people, quite

simply, are not even remotely aware of their own personal expectations. Through the years I have known many clients who get engaged, married, pregnant, buy a new home or take a new job, not fully aware of what it is they themselves are 'expecting' from the situation, experience or arrangement they're about to enter into. So first you must be aware of your own expectations! This is part of our job as human beings; to know what we expect before we say yes to or set out to do something. If we ourselves don't know what we're expecting from a relationship, friendship, business partnership, etc. it's going to be very difficult to get our needs met because we can't know what we need to ask for! The other parties involved then can't know what we're hoping for in regards to what we're about to sign on for & verify that they can indeed, come through. So, before you commit to anything major, sit down & ask yourself, "What am I expecting from this person, situation or experience? Make a list so you can see it right in front of you. Then, you're crystal clear about what you want or need going into anything... giving yourself the ability to be truly happy!

2. Release certain expectations. Once you're clear what your own personal expectations are around anything you're about to embark on, next ask yourself, "Are my expectations realistic for this person or scenario?" Assess the reality of your expectations to the best of your ability. So, if you have a very old, dear friend who you adore but has historically flaked on you for every major event you've ever had...& you're still expecting her to be the most amazing 'Maid of Honor' that you're currently fantasizing about having...maybe you need to release that expectation because you know from every past experience she won't live up to it. By releasing your expectation you can then appreciate her for *what she does do* & not feel chronically disappointed by her every move (or lack of one!) Similarly, if you're starting your own business & are now aware that you have the expectation you'll immediately make the same salary you made at the job you just left (but were doing for ten years!) maybe again, you need to release your expectation so you're not resentful if it doesn't happen. Then guess what? If it somehow does, it's icing on the

cake!

3. **Communicate your expectations.** This is probably the most key point to follow... especially when you can't release an expectation you have or you feel your expectation is a worthy one. You then must communicate what you're expecting from the other person(s) involved before you can successfully move further ahead. Remember, other people cannot read your mind & know what exactly your envisioning... so spell it out! Simply say, "Look I'd really love to take this job, still before I do I need to make sure it's in alignment with how I see myself contributing to your department. Can I share with you what I see for myself to make sure this is the right fit? Or "Listen, I'm so excited that we're talking about getting engaged still I want to make sure before we do, we both have the same goals for our future. Can I share with you what I see for us?" Or even, "Listen, I'm having my son's christening & since we go back a ways I have all these hopes that you'll be a big part of the day. I would like you to be x, y or z. Can you take on that commitment with all you've got going on in your own life right now? If you can, it would mean so much to me!"

In closing, the most important thing to remember is that we'll always have expectations. We just need to stay aware of what our expectations are from relationship to relationship & situation to situation. This way we can see clearly what unrealistic expectations we need to release & which ones we need to communicate to the other parties involved. Yes, there will still be times that people & situations will disappointment us...welcome to life! However, if you learn to follow these few steps the majority of the time, you'll see how much more often things will work out in your favor. May you all have a spectacular month ahead, learning how to better manage your current expectations!