

Expectations – A Critical Emotionally Healthy Skill

The Third Option, adapted by Geri and Pete Scazzero
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Expectations

A. Marks of Invalid Expectations

- A. Un-Conscious**
- B. Un-Realistic**
- C. Un-Spoken**
- D. Un-Agreed upon**

B. Marks of Valid Expectations

- A. Conscious**
- B. Spoken**
- C. Realistic**
- D. Agreed**

In order for an Expectation to be valid it must be mutually agreed upon.

C. Exercise Questions:

1. Think of a recent, simple expectation that went unmet and made you angry or disappointed.

(e.g. Church: staff, volunteers, board, worship, events, ministries, building, service, meetings....)

Other: children, parenting, holidays, vacations, money, extended family, neighbors, work, friends, household chores/responsibilities)

For example:

- I expected the volunteers to show up early to the event
- I expected my husband to plan something special for my birthday.
- I expected to socialize with members of my small group outside the meeting times.
- I expected my teenager to put their dirty dishes in the dishwasher.
- I expected the Board to give me at least a 5% cost of living raise last year.

OR

You may also choose one that you believe is unclear.

- I expect there to be special music in the Mother's Day Service.
- I expect leaders of the church to come consistently to church.
- I expect my family to put their dishes in the dishwasher not the sink.

2. Write yours down.

3. Compare them with the inventory questions below:

- Conscious: Were you conscious (aware) you had this expectation?
- Realistic: Is the expectation realistic regarding the other person?
- Spoken: Have you clearly spoken the expectation or do you just think "they should know"?
- Agreed upon: Has the other person agreed to the expectation?

Remember this principle: *Expectations are only valid when they have been mutually agreed upon.*

4. Get in groups of two or three and share:

- What did you discover about your expectations?
- What step(s) can you take to make the expectation conscious, spoken, realistic, and agreed upon?

5. Do the exercise a second time around a different area.

You may also want to think of an expectation you think someone has of you.

- I would like to clarify an expectation I think you have about me....
- Can I check out an assumption I think you have of me?....

*e.g. I think you are expecting me to spend Mother's Day after church with your family.
Is that true?*