

The Impact of Suggestion

The Law of Expectations uses expectations to influence reality and create results. Individuals tend to make decisions based on how others expect them to perform. As a result, people fulfill those expectations whether positive or negative. Expectations have a powerful impact on those we trust and respect, but, interestingly, an even greater impact on perfect strangers. When we know someone expects something from us, we will try to satisfy him or her in order to gain respect and likeability.

You have probably heard the saying, “What gets measured, gets done.” The same is true for expectations. That which is expected is what actually happens. People rise to meet your expectations of them. This is a powerful force that can lead to the improvement or destruction of a person. You can express an expectation of doubt, lack of confidence, and skepticism, and you will see the results. If you believe in someone, show confidence in them, and expect them to succeed, you will see different results. John H. Spalding expressed the thought this way: “Those who believe in our ability do more than stimulate us. They create for us an atmosphere in which it becomes easier to succeed.” When you create expectations, you change people’s behavior. Whenever you label specific behaviors or characteristics, the action is expected. When those expectations are not met, you can see anger, disgust, surprise, or dissatisfaction.

We communicate our expectations in a variety of ways. It may be through our language, our voice inflections, or our body language. Think of a time when you’ve been introduced to someone. Usually, if they introduce themselves by their first name, then you do the same. If they give their first and last name, you do likewise. Whether you realize it or not, you accept cues from others regarding their expectations and you act accordingly. Similarly, we all unknowingly send out our own cues and expectations. The power is in using the Law of Expectations *consciously!*

Numerous studies have shown how the Law of Expectations dramatically influences people’s performance. For example, in one study, girls who were told they would perform poorly on a math test did. In another, assembly line workers who were told their job was complex performed less efficiently at the same task than those who were told it was simple. Another case study demonstrated that adults who were given complex mazes solved them faster when told they were based on a grade-school level.

It is clear to see that if you add the Law of Expectations to your persuasive repertoire, you can change your audience’s expectations of you as well as their future, and you will be infinitely more persuasive.

Most of us have heard about the famous Pavlov dog experiments. Ivan Pavlov, a physiologist who won a Nobel Prize, trained dogs to salivate at the sound of a buzzer. The training was so effective because the dogs had learned to *expect* food when they heard the buzzer – the Law of Expectations. The dogs behaved in a certain way because the Law of Expectations was at work. Shockingly representative of Pavlov’s

experiments, the Law of Expectations has been used in advertising to make humans salivate when viewing a commercial or thinking of a certain brand of food.

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