



Expectations Become Reality

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When I am asked to present an inspirational keynote for an audience, one common thread I share is that “our choices define who we are and who we become.” Most of us make choices after thinking about the situation a bit, potentially considering the pros and cons of each option, before arriving at our final decision. It is the thoughts in our minds that really hold the power and influence on who we are and ultimately, who we become. Because everything you think about impacts the person you become.

For example, I am currently in the “fun” stage of growing my hair out in order to change my style. I am wearing my hair much straighter than I have in the past, without as much “poofiness.” It has been and still is a difficult transition. I used to equate straight hair for me, as hair that wasn’t styled and didn’t take pampering to have it look good. Wow, was I mistaken! Today my hair looks like I recently crawled out of bed and left the house without even a glance in the mirror. It couldn’t be farther from the truth. Instead, its bend here, straighten there, curl here, swish there, blow under here, flip up there, tease here, flatten there. Need I go on? Anyway, my point is that I have fallen into a routine where I finish styling my hair in the morning and I say either aloud or to myself, “My hair looks like crap today.” It doesn’t take long before I truly believe this and others think that way too based on how I act or talk about it. Although, I do have to say that I did start repeating this destructive self-talk shortly after returning from the salon and hearing one of my teenagers say, “What happened to you? Your hair looks like a football helmet!”

How do you expect you will look and feel after getting ready for the day? Because *how you expect things to be greatly influences how they become*. Your thoughts have a funny way of coming true. What do you think about your job, your spouse, your supervisor, your vehicle, your debt, the food you eat, etc. If you think you can, you will. If you think you can’t, you won’t. Because what you think about, becomes your reality. If you think negative thoughts about several aspects of your job every day, before you know it, more aspects of your job will become less fulfilling and more frustrating. You will be complaining more, focusing on those things you dislike more than on those you like, and will now be attracting predominately negative attitudes, people, and things your way.

I have since altered my self-talk about my transitional hairdo...now I look in the mirror, whistle at myself, and proudly declare, “My hair looks simply fabulous today!” Okay, I don’t really whistle, but the positive and highly complementary statements...I do optimistically utter. It helps. It is also very interesting how others will compliment you more when you carry yourself in a positive, confident and upbeat manner. Additionally, more people will want to be near you because of the positive energy that is radiating from you. They want to package up some of that optimism they feel from you and take it with them.

If you want to test this theory, do a little research on your own. For one week, say hello to everyone you know, followed by the question, “How are you?” Keep track of every response you hear. More than likely, you will hear comments like:

“Fine.”

“Okay.”

“So-so.”

“All right.”

“Pretty good.”

Do they really feel that way? Whether they really do or don't feel that way doesn't much matter. Because their day will likely remain simply “fine” if they continue to express that.

Moreover, when I hear a much more positive response infused with energy, that feeling is contagious. When I hear, “Faaaaaaaantastic!” or “Excellent!” or “Couldn't be better,” I feel energized and want to respond similarly. I also won't walk the other way when I see this person again; rather, I will walk toward this individual in anticipation of his/her uplifting response. Nobody wants to be around Negative Nelly or Debbie Downer. Life is tough enough. I'd much rather hang out with a ray of sunshine over a bolt of lightning any day. Wouldn't you?