



HEALTH Plus WEALTH

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What did you expect?

We will all have expectations in life. When you invest in a portfolio, financial planners will help manage expectations about investment returns and the period of time in which this might be achieved.

When we make a financial investment that targets a 3% return, we set our expectations accordingly. However, when circumstances outside our control mean we only end up realising a 1% return, the plans we had in mind might not materialise. Instead of having our expectations met, we might feel disappointed, resentful and let down. It might even tempt us to cut our losses and pull out of our investment if we fear we might lose our original investment.

This is no different with our relationships, both personal and professional. When we invest in people around us, with our time, friendships and love, we do so based on trust. We trust they want the best for us and a mutual relationship establishes expectations about how our friendship will operate. However, when our experiences don't meet our expectations, we can feel hurt.

In that hurt, it's easy to pull away from people, exactly like we might in a financial investment. We can increasingly see people in society doing this when more friendships, marriages and families break down.

There is nothing wrong with having expectations, but it might be healthy to recognise that our expectations can be met, or unmet.

When our expectations are met, we might feel happy, elated or may just take them for granted.

When our expectations are unmet, we can become disappointed, frustrated and even feel let down. This can lead to bitterness and resentment. Not good for our health and wellbeing, or that of those around us. However, we don't always share our expectations in a way that others can recognise them and we rarely check to make sure we have understood someone else's expectations.

Here are three things to be thinking, about expectations, that might help your wellbeing:

1. Clearly communicate your expectations

And at the same time, seek to understand that you have also fully understood the expectations of others:

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

(George Bernard Shaw)

2. Consider what you really want

In order for you to communicate your own expectations clearly, first of all you need to be clear about what those are!

Remember, "It's not just what you say, it's how you say it that matters!"

Your tone and delivery will reflect any underlying motive, so become clear on that yourself before you enter into a conversation. You might also find a friendly, curious, and open tone helpful.

3. Think the best in the gap

When there is a gap between what you expected and what you experienced, rather than villainising or blaming others for the gap, ask: "Why would a reasonable, rational, or decent person do this?"

Might he or she honestly have just made a mistake? Or could someone, or something else have an impact? What would thinking the best look like in this situation?

To help set your expectations, you may find being intentional about these strategies a little challenging at first, but keep going! I expect an unexpected sense of wellbeing might pleasantly surprise you when you learn to manage your own expectations well.

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