

What do you Expect ?

Your expectations are a path to deeply understanding who you are

We all have wishes and needs to be understood and appreciated by others in our life and to have those others enhance our sense of our own self. All emotional struggles come from one of three areas: trauma, attachment failures, or relational dynamics. Relational dynamics comes down to what we expect from others in *relation* to our needs. At first, you might think that you ask for exactly what you want. With greater reflection, you may remember experiences where you didn't ask for what you really wanted, but asked instead for something so much less and subsequently, got much less. With dismissive responses to our wishes, sadness and longing develop over time, and options to getting our needs met become limited to being submissive, or, resorting to demanding what we want. Neither of these options results in us being our best self. What you ask for has been previously decided by countless interactions with others. Once the pattern is pointed out, you have a model for change.

All the aspects of our self; self-definition (who we are), self-agency (our ability to act on our own behalf), and our self-esteem (how we feel about our self) develop dependently on what we are taught. The teaching takes place early in life via other's responses. Positive responses from others develop and enhance our self by allowing us to experience "wish satisfaction" thus gaining a sense of mastery in getting our wish met.

If our wish is met with a positive response, our own response is that we form a healthy self. We then feel appreciated, understood, and develop a sense of agency- being able to get our needs met. Negative responses from others leave us feeling frustrated, unappreciated and unimportant and make us withdraw and give up or get demanding.

Whether the response is positive or negative determines whether we experience emotional growth or symptoms of depression or anxiety. Left feeling anxious or depressed, we often turn to expressing our needs indirectly. The most common way to try to get our needs met is to be extra nice or to "do" more for others. Our new (unconscious) wish becomes being so nice that we'll be seen as a wonderful and loveable person doing whatever others want of us, and then magically, others will meet our wishes. The other equally unviable option is to give up and feel hopeless. Your unique version of these choices of behavior becomes known as your relational pattern. This relational pattern takes automatic control (unconscious and therefore out of your full awareness) of your life and most, if not all, of the interactions that take place are subject to this internal mental filter. A wish arises and its expression is either allowed or disallowed based on past experience, determining whether it is safe to express our wish. If we're fearful, we don't express our wishes which lead to resentment and relationship difficulties. We cannot imagine relationships being different nor can we see our contribution to repeating the same relationship dynamics over and over.

How to find your relational patterns:

- Imagine what are you looking for or hoping to find in a relationship
- See what you are finding instead (of what you want)
- Learn how to express your needs and wishes without acting on your fears.

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