

A woman is seen from behind, standing on a wooden deck or pier. She is wearing a dark, wide-brimmed hat and a long, flowing dress with a complex, colorful pattern. Her arms are extended horizontally to the sides. The background is a dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise, with soft, golden light filtering through scattered clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

Today's
DARING WOMAN

March 2019

Your Past is
Part of Your
Present

Learning to
Start Over

WHAT IS
Sevy?



Raising Expectations & Planning For **GREATNESS!**

by Berta Medina

I've heard people say, "If you don't have high expectations, you'll never be disappointed." BS. Sad, sad BS.

If there's one thing I've learned over the course of my life, it's that having high expectations is the most important ingredient to happiness.

In the very first chapter of *The Go Giver* (By Bob Burg and David Mann), Pindar tells Joe, "You don't always get what you want but you always get what you expect."

Let's assume that this is an axiom — that life sets you up for the things you expect — how

would you change your expectations? How would you change your view of them?

The Chain and Stake

Have you ever seen an elephant tied to a rope attached to a stake in the ground? It's a pretty common way to keep elephants "leashed" so they don't go running off. How can a rope on a stake hold a creature that can stomp a car like a tin can?

When those elephants were calves, they were tied using the very same method. They try and try, but they can't come loose on account of

their yet undeveloped strength. They fight and try to break loose until they're exhausted.

Then they try again.

Day after day they struggle.

Eventually, they stop trying.

I'm not defending this method for captivity — I love elephants. But you'll see here in a second that we're not so different from our majestic fellow earthlings.

If Memory Serves

Elephants have famously robust memories, so they grow up remembering that stake and the futility of fighting it. Even if they did realize their strength grows as they do, they don't think, "I'm better and stronger now, so I can break this thing with ease." They're conditioned.

Eventually, you don't even need the stake. Just a rope tied around their neck is enough to remind them of the "futility" of fighting. They don't expect to be able to free themselves. And if elephants are smart and humans are smarter, you can BET our brains can come up with even better ways of tricking us into thinking things are futile.

Our experiences work the same way as the stake in the ground. Our expectations condition us. But we've got a much more clever blend of emotion and rationality fighting against us. Even ONE failure can lead us to expect the worst and give up prematurely.

So if we take the story of the elephants to heart and piece together past experiences, there's no denying that we will DEFINITELY BE DISAPPOINTED if we don't have high expectations. Where we *MIGHT* be disappointed if we do and fail (which just means we can grow from it and try again).

How to Make Your Expectations Work For You

It may not be the case for you, but I'd argue

that a lot of us out there are pretty pessimistic. I don't mean in a doom-and-gloom sense, but when it comes to ourselves, we're a lot less supportive or enthusiastic than we are for our friends and family. So the very *first* piece of the high expectations puzzle is by far the hardest to implement.

You have to believe in yourself.

Sorry. That's tough, I know. If you're used to assuming you're powerless or limited in your potential, that's the biggest problem you're having in the first place!

And what's worse, there's no great secret to get you there, no matter what book sellers are telling you on their covers. I can't offer you "10 things you can do now to believe in yourself" because there's nothing the external world can do for you. This comes from inside and from the things *you* do for the world around you.

You can bring a horse to water, but you can't tell the horse he can write a great book and have him set to work with absolute enthusiasm. I think that's how it goes.

The key to life, it seems, is *action*. It's going to be hard to believe in yourself if you're sitting around *not* believing in yourself. Whatever your project is — get to work on it. Even if you put in five minutes a day, you'll start building *proof* of your abilities if you actually set out to do something.

Plan for the best, expect the best.

If you want to achieve something, you've got to have a goal in sight. Then, once you have that goal in sight, you've got to draw out your path to get there.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that you'll have to be realistic and optimistic at the same time. Keep your chin up but eyes ahead. Know your limitations when setting deadlines, but believe that you can do it, no matter where you set your time limits.

If you can't think of a particular goal you want to achieve, maybe it's better to rearrange and consider your WHY.

I'm not saying you have to spend hours calculating every single detail of your journey. In the era of to-do lists, we're more passionate about spending hours on a plan than executing the first tiny step. But it helps to give yourself *measurable* goals.

When you achieve measurable goals, it builds your "expectation" muscles, which fuel your self-confidence and future projects.

If you do have a goal but it feels foggy and unattainable, I recommend using the SMART goal-setting method. This method was first spotted in the November 1981 issue of *Management Review*. It's attributed to George T. Doran and also influenced by Peter Drucker's "management objectives" model. You don't need to use a particular app or organizational system. It's all-encompassing and you can knock the whole thing out in a run-on sentence.

SMART is an acronym that helps you make goals that stick by giving you a timeline and details that make it impossible to be nebulous. Here's the quick run-down:

- **Specific** - Detail what it is you're doing without mincing words or beating around the bush
- **Measurable** - Give yourself some kind of numeric metric so that you know when you've achieved it
- **Achievable** - Play to your strengths and make sure it falls in line with your personal goals
- **Results** - Don't think about the process first, think about the effect the process will have
- **Time-Bound** - Give yourself a hard deadline so you can measure where you went right or wrong

So let's get meta with the goal, writing this

very article, and put it into the SMART goals method.

By May 15, 2018, (time-bound) create a 1,000+ word article about expectations (specific, measurable) for my own website detailing my knowledge about setting expectations (achievable) so that readers can benefit by re-evaluating their expectations and goals (results).

Dedication, Perseverance and the Hard Stuff

This is another tough one. If you've got a goal or result that you're overwhelmed by, chances are it's because of the hard work it's going to take to get there. That's right. Things worth doing are often harder than watching YouTube videos.

Discipline is the key. That's a scary word for some people — I get it. It's not easy to hunker down and do something important when it's easier to have fun. But that's why SMART goals and results-oriented thinking will get you far. It's not about the actions you have to take — it's what you're going to get in the end. You've got to be dedicated to the results you want for yourself while being realistic and compassionate (SO EASY, RIGHT?!)

We mess up. That's how humans work. But most of the time when we mess up, it rearranges our expectations. What we don't often realize when we're in the middle of things is that our messing up is actually a great lesson. We can then use the "science of failure" to rearrange our plan and avoid those pitfalls in the future.

When you reach an obstacle, don't paralyze yourself. Take *action*. Fight procrastination, re-evaluate the result, and believe in your ability to get past it. 