

## Intentions Relieve Stress

One very good way to reduce stress in your life is to focus on eliminating expectations of other people and circumstances. Expectations create mental blocks and contribute to fear. The remedy for this is to change expectations into intentions. This article will focus on how to do this.

First we need to distinguish expectations from intentions. When we have an expectation it is often about a circumstance or another person. Expectations cause us to look outside of ourselves to the external world for our happiness. Expectations make us wait on others to behave as we think they should, rather than the way they are. They create resistance and promote the illusion of control over people and events. This leads to disappointment and self blame when things don't turn out the way we anticipate. Disappointment in life can usually be traced to an expectation unfulfilled.

One component to having misguided expectations is called a silent contract. What is a silent contract? Well, it is a contract I made with you, but I forgot to tell you about it. Basically, when we have an expectation of someone, we are setting that person up in our own mind. We wait for them to act or behave a certain way, yet the other person has no idea of what it is we expect. This can lead to frustration, resentment and disappointment in our relationships.

In my own experience, I can illustrate a silent contract that I once had with my wife. Years ago when our son was three, I felt it was time he be potty trained. I silently waited and expected my wife to do this. After all, I was the husband; shouldn't I be watching football or playing golf while my wife potty trains our son? You see I had an expectation and a silent contract that since my wife is the mother then she should handle this parental task. Well, I waited, and I waited, and my expectation delivered frustration and disappointment. Finally, I realized since it was important to me, maybe I should do it. So I bought a book on how to potty train and few days later, my son was potty trained. What a relief this was. I learned not to expect my wife to do what I think she should do. If you want to improve your marriage, resolve your expectations.

The solution to the disappointment of an unfulfilled expectation is to have an intention. Intentions differ from expectations. An intention means you have the resolve for something to happen without forcing it to happen. When you set an intention, you are open to all of the available possibilities. An intention is not bound by time or outcome. Intention is independent of outside circumstances or the behaviors of others.

I can illustrate again in my own life. My wife and I struggled with infertility for many years. We wanted to have a child desperately. In the beginning, I expected my wife to get pregnant. We tried everything, including invitro fertilization. The whole time I expected the treatments to work, but they didn't. Boy was I disappointed. Finally, I realized I was trying to force life to be a certain way. I then said to myself, "I intend to have a family." This attitude was completely different from the expectation that the infertility treatments

had to work. I let go of how I would become a dad, and instead gave an intention that someday, somehow, I would be a father.

The result of this process was the birth of our miracle son, Luke. The birth of Luke taught me the lesson it is less stressful and healthier to have an intention instead of an expectation. My suggestion to you is to examine your life for any expectations and reframe them into intentions. Start first by being honest with yourself about any silent contracts you may have with others. Let go of those expectations. Next look for any circumstances you may be trying to force and let go demanding life to be a certain way. Lastly, set an intention that relieves the pressure of time and the insistence of a certain outcome. Set an intention that is open to any and all possibilities. Write out your intention and let the universe handle the details of the outcome. Trust in the process and see what happens. You won't be disappointed.

Matthew McQuaid, DPM is a board certified foot surgeon practicing in Lakeport. He is an award winning author who has a particular interest in Mind/Body medicine and its positive impact on health. Please share this article with a friend! For more information please call 707-263-3727.