

EXPECTATIONS

There are certain expectations you put on your partner, and while that's not a bad thing, it can become detrimental to a relationship if expectations are unrealistic or even worse, uncommunicated.

If you expect something from your partner that is completely outside of their ability or if you don't tell them what your expectation is – how can your partner come even close to meeting it?

**This scenario is
unfortunate because
your level of happiness
or disappointment
in life depends on
how often your
expectations are met.**

Unfulfilled expectations often become the source of conflict because preconceived notion distorts the actual experience.

Acknowledging expectations is the first step to managing them effectively in your relationship.

Once you and your partner both know each other's expectations,

adjustments can be made based on the how realistic they are. In doing this, it's important to remember not to compromise the integrity of your original expectations. Instead restate them to better set you and your partner up for success.

DISCUSSION

// Which of your partner's expectations is most important for you to fulfill? When you are not able to meet one of your partner's expectations, how does that affect to your relationship? Additional conflict? Resentment? Disappointment? A new level of compassion? Understanding?

// Do expectations always have a definitive completion point? Are some expectations clearly met at a specific time interval while others are on-going? What happens if you believe you met an expectation and your partner disagrees? What is your definition of fulfilled and what is your partner's?

// Which is harder for you – not meeting your partner's expectations or not having your expectations met? Why?

// How does fulfilling expectations bring you and your partner closer? What happens when you meet each other's expectations?

// Consider effort – How do expectations require different levels of effort? Are some expectations more worthy of being met? Which type of expectation is most important to meet for the sake of your relationship health? Which expectations are the easiest (or hardest) to fulfill?

CHECK IN WITH CHECKUP

Check in with your Couple Checkup results

by reviewing the *Communication* and *Conflict Resolution* sections of your report.

How do your communication and conflict resolution patterns contribute to expectations in your relationship?

TAKEAWAY

Expectations can negatively impact your relationship if they are unrealistic or uncommunicated to your partner.

APPLICATION

The next time you or your partner feel disappointed because of an unmet expectation, talk about it. Try to identify why the expectation was not met. Was it too high to achieve? Was it not communicated? Did the expectation change over time without one partner knowing? Gaining some understanding and resolution out of the experience can help both of you meet future expectations.

NEXT STEPS

Identify your expectation filter and begin to understand its impact on your relationship. Take a few moments at the end of the day to reflect on expectations you had for your partner and evaluate your partner's expectations that you met. Journal this reflection each night for a period of time to notice patterns – your expectation filter will become clearer. If you and your partner do this individually, you can discuss what you discover together to better understand how expectations impact your relationship.

SECTION SUGGESTION

Consider exploring **Roles** or **Parenting** next.