

You sit down to take a test in school. What do you expect the next ten minutes to be like? Satisfying or Crash & Burn? You meet a friend to talk about a disagreement you had with each other over lunch. What do you expect from the conversation? Resolution or more hostility? You step up to the plate in a baseball game with a runner on third. What do you expect will happen? An RBI or an out? Some people are in the habit of expecting good things and some people always expect the worse. Which one are you?

Research shows that what you expect has a lot to do with what happens next. Scientists put volunteers in two groups and told them to throw darts at a target, and recorded the results. Next, they gave them a personality test. Afterwards the researchers told half the people that the test showed that they're the kind of people who perform well under pressure. The other half were just told they passed the test. Then both groups were challenged to improve their dart throwing accuracy by 15% and that those who did would be given cash prizes. 90% of those who were told they'd likely do well under pressure hit the accuracy goal, compared to only 27% of the other group. Expecting positive things from yourself improves your chances for success.

The first step in improving your expectations is to begin listening to that little voice in your head. Become aware that there is an inner voice. The voice is not you, it's just your brain spitting out thoughts at lightning fast speed - about 60,000 of them a day. Notice whether they are encouraging thoughts with positive expectations, or negative thoughts predicting doom and gloom. Spend a couple of days just observing what your brain is kicking out and keep a record of your thought tendencies. But remember, you are not your brain.

What  
Do You  
Expect?



### DISCUSSION:

The brain is made up of billions of connections (synapses) and the thoughts we have are by-product of patterns of connections. These patterns are uniquely formed for each of us over time as a result of our experiences. Our positive experiences of fun, joy, peacefulness, comfort, acceptance, forgiveness, and love create thought patterns that affect what we expect. Our negative experiences of boredom, anxiety, hurt, isolation, blame, and rejection also create patterns that affect what we expect.

**Step 1:** Become aware of your thought patterns. Observe your thoughts like a witness to an event. Notice the triggers that send your brain into thought production.

**Step 2:** Keep a record of the kind of thoughts you're having in the various environments you encounter each day. Categorize your thoughts as being either positive or negative in nature. (See page two.)

**Step 3:** Ask yourself whether your current thoughts are helpful or harmful to your progress. A future lesson will teach you how to change your thoughts!

## What Do You Expect?

Keep a record of your frequent thoughts below; then decide which ones are most helpful to your progress.

1

Positive Thoughts: Any thought that encourages me or takes me closer to being my ideal self.

At School

With Friends

At Home

2

Negative Thoughts: Any thought that discourages me or takes me farther from being my ideal self.

At School

With Friends

At Home