

Entreat God to Help You Become a People Blossomer

“Life is a self-fulfilling prophecy. You get what you expect, in the long run. That which you fear (or expect) most will likely come to pass. The body manifests what the mind harbors”¹

Is it possible that we could be hypocritical with our own selves? We may say and profess one thing publicly, but deep inside we may be struggling with deep negative thoughts, even sin. James calls this “...a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). Are our daily decisions consistent with God’s Word? *Yeshua* said: “For from the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34b, Luke 6:45b) quoting from Proverbs: “For as he thinks within himself, so is he...” (Proverbs 23:7) Negative attitudes (tumors so to speak) on the inside grow also!

Is it possible to “²Not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2)? We would all say yes, since God’s Word says so. Don’t we buy the worldly attitude that we are *too set in our ways* and *too old to change*? I believe we have bought the LIE and totally ignored that Scripture told us that we are a *brand new creation* (2 Corinthians 5:17). I can hear it now: “*Rabbi, I know I became a new creation when I got saved years ago, but this is now...*” Is it possible that we who were made anew when we were born-again not also have available the grace (desire and the power) be renewed in our brain and experience the metamorphosis that Romans talks about?

I believe we can. In fact, I know we can because I have experienced it on special occasions such as when I first heard the Seven Laws of the Learner in 1982, attended my first Basic and Advanced Seminars in 1990, and when I was ordained as a Messianic Rabbi in 1996. Can I experience such a renewal today, this week, this month, this year? I have great news for you, WE CAN! But do not take my word for it, check it out yourselves. Dr. Caroline Leaf’s (a world renowned Neurologist) message at Shores David Messianic Synagogue in Tampa a few years ago gave testimony about scientific research breakthroughs that establish that not only can we renew our mind exactly like Romans 12 claims, but also that we can do that no matter what age we are! Further, she stated unequivocally that God’s Word is the sure agent for change and renewal and the catalyst for a totally healthy you. Thus, we can become a *People Blossomer* and we start with our own self.

The most readily identifiable quality of a total winner (whether in sports, politics, medicine, aerospace, history, science, mathematics, etc.) is an overall attitude of personal optimism and enthusiasm – an attitude of *positive self-expectancy*¹. It is the single most-discernable quality in individuals who are super achievers and admired by all alike. A winner understands (consciously or unconsciously) the psychosomatic (psyche and soma; mind and body) that the human body expresses what the mind is concerned with. They know that life ultimately is a self-fulfilling prophecy; that a person usually gets what he or she actively expects. They understand that fear and worries turn into anxiety, which is distressful, resulting in the changing of hormone levels and anti-body production lowering resistance levels and increasing vulnerability to diseases and accidents. Conversely, since one’s mind and body are trying to comply one’s instructions and achieve a condition of *homeostasis* or balance, if one’s mental expectancy is healthy and creative, one’s body seeks to display this general feeling with better health, energy and a condition of well-being. By expecting the best as a way of life, one is preparing oneself physically as well as mentally for the demands of success. Leadership (the ability to attract the support and cooperation of other people) is a natural by-product of *positive self-expectancy*.

I imagine that most of us could tell the story about someone believing in us and how that belief not only impacted us but it changed our destiny. Those people are so few and they are so rare! Who was it for you? What did they do? How did they do it? And why? I bet any of us could readily name and expound details on those people. But more importantly, can you and I do the same thing for someone else or for our own selves? How can we become the “*people-blossomers*” who influence others to be better than they are? What does it take to influence the people we love to be more than they dare to dream or imagine?

¹ *The Psychology of Winning*, by Dennis Waitley, PhD, 1983, Chicago

This is an important question, because love is primarily about what we do to serve others. Love serves others by telling them the truth when it is appropriate and necessary, helping them see the *gap* between where they are compared to where they want to be. Love serves others by giving them grace in spite of the fact the *gap* often injures us. Paul said: *love is patient and kind, and doesn't take into account the wrongs that it has suffered.*

The Power of Expectations

You do get what you expect. Managers understand that this is a very powerful reality, which you can harness to work for you, or you can let it control performance in a negative way. It is our job to set and use expectations in a manner that supports and enhances our lives. The theory that expectations affect performance is known as the *Pygmalion Principle*. Its name is derived from a Greek myth in which a sculptor named Pygmalion sculpted a statue of a woman, and fell in love with it. His love was so strong, that it transformed the statue into a real woman. It is this transformative effect resulting from expectations, which is the basis of the *Pygmalion Principle*. This story was popularized by British playwright George Bernard Shaw and later in the American musical, *My Fair Lady*, in which Professor Higgins changed an uneducated street girl and flower peddler into a proper lady who spoke and acted like a socialite. In the movie, Eliza Doolittle tells Professor Higgins: “*The real issue is not how I act, but what your expectations of me are...*” (*My Fair Lady*, 1964)

In a nutshell, the Pygmalion Principle states that: *my expectations, whether stated or not, directly impact aptitude, character, and the intelligence and performance of other people.* A stunning example of this principle at work is demonstrated in the research of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1971) who randomly labeled two groups of elementary students as *potential achievers* and *non-achievers* then shared that information with their teachers without telling the students. As a consequence, the teachers acted toward the *achievers* differently, e.g., such as spending more time with them, being more encouraging and supportive with a *you can do it* attitude, etc. From these students the teachers expected *dramatic intellectual growth*. And they got it! When they returned a few months later and re-tested the children, they found that the students labeled as having potential improved their IQ scores significantly, whereas the *non-achievers* had not.

Other research in the field of education has supported the Pygmalion theory by demonstrating that students whom the teacher believed were smarter than the rest of the group (when they were actually randomly chosen) performed substantially better than those believed to be *average*. In these experiments, the only difference between the students who performed best and the rest of the group was only the teacher's expectations. Similar results have been demonstrated in other fields. In both civilian and military settings, when leaders acted toward their subordinates in ways that suggested high expectations of productivity, higher productivity resulted.

Another example of this principle in operation is my often-told story of Dr. Bruce Wilkinson's (Founder and President of *Walk-Thru-The-Bible* Ministries) first experience as a teacher at Multnomah Bible College and Biblical Seminary. He was assigned three sections of a freshman course in Bible Studies and a fellow faculty member told him that *Section 2* had all the outstanding, excited about learning, crème of the crop students, when in fact, the class was no different from the other two sections. The faculty friend told him (in jest, of course) that he could not figure out why the “rookie teacher” got the assignment. Bruce bought the whole thing! He erroneously was led to assume that he had an *honors class* and thus his expectations were radically different for that section than from the other two sections of the same class that he had been assigned to teach. Midway thru the semester, he found out that all the sections were the same in terms of students and there was no such thing as an honors *Section 2*. But to his amazement he himself could show proof that his *Section 2* had performed 25-45% better than the other sections he was teaching. But given that the students were the same, in the same course, with same teacher, on the same day, using the same lesson plan, and with the same course structure the only factor that could explain his *Section 2*'s performance was the teacher's expectations! In fact, he got exactly what he expected! (So let God's Word be true and everything/everyone else be a liar).

So then how did those students pick up Bruce's expectations? He did not tell them but the results show they knew somehow. Perhaps there is something going on in people that only God knows and sees but that you and I do not perceive and understand; yet Dr. Leaf discovered part of it. Expectations are perceived even in the unaware sender or the receiver. In medicine, this is called the "placebo" effect. If enough confidence is instilled in a patient, even a *sugar pill* may cause healing. The fact is that people (our very own children) will try, consciously or not, to live up to our expectations.

The principle works whether our expectations are positive or negative. What do you think happens to a child when we say: *you will never be good in math* or *you are the most foolish and disobedient child in the world*. Do you know? They will try and often succeed to live up to our expressed negative expectations. Are there really any surprises here? What happens when your self-talk is: *I am the stupidest person* or *I am the slowest at...* You guessed it! We become what we say, and fulfill the essence of those very words, even to our own detriment. Elvis Presley's story tells that he died at the very same age of his own mother just as he feared...

Let us Become a People Blossomer

It is clear in Scripture that we are to believe and encourage the best of all people in all circumstances. This is an unconditional expression of love (1 Cor. 13). Further, we are instructed to receive our expectations from God Himself (Psalm 62:5). What is our responsibility before the Almighty when it comes to expectations? The answer is to control and adjust them. Before every semester, every class, and every service I am to adjust my expectations and if you will, submit them to God in exchange for His Expectations for my semester, class and service (isn't it His service?) I want His Expectations for you, my family, my students and myself. I want the non-verbal and non-visual signals you receive from me to be submitted to God and His Messiah, who is the real Rabbi of *Kol Simcha* in advance. What does *Yeshua* want for you? He wants the very best (like Hallmark). So...

Always use opportunities to transmit Biblical and positive expectations. We have thousands of opportunities to do so on a daily basis. Make it a priority to become a *People Blossomer*. Instead of showing disappointment on anyone's performance, consider the following: *I don't think I have seen the best from you yet; it's hiding somewhere*.

Be careful to monitor and control your expectations. Is there ever a time you do not have expectations? No! Who is in control of your expectations? God ought to be! The point is to control them.

Consider that one's behavior always reveals our expectations. Non-verbal body language (there are over 100 non-verbal gestures that have been identified by researchers, while there are only 26 letters in the alphabet for written/oral communication. This is at least a 4 to 1 ratio!) In fact, non-verbal body language is read and heard LOUDER than words. Gestures communicate a clear message! We must control our body language, our tone, our intensity, etc. Why is it that a baby becomes tense when the mother becomes anxious, tense or afraid even though the child does not understand spoken language? This communication link cannot be manipulated and is related to a character quality we call integrity.

Don't ever express negative expectations. Rephrase the words so as to not set failure as a goal for your own children or those you lead. It is the same principle we must use in separating the sin from the sinner – God loves the sinner while hating the sin. *Yeshua* did not make a single negative expectation in His tenure on the earth. He made negative statements and gave us prophecy, none of it pleasant, yet always blossomed his audience.

Entreat God to make you a *People Blossomer*. Our Father in heaven has the greatest expectations for us. He wants the very best for us. We can become excellent at blossoming people, without hypocrisy and with complete confidence because He has empowered us to do so. The same *Messiah* who blossomed Peter, Phillip, Paul and John is not a respecter of persons and is ready to help you become like Him. All you have to do is ask.