

## **Expectancy vs. Expectations**

By Lisa Schilling

What keeps people from finding REAL solutions to overcome their past failures? Often it is deeply held perceptions and old ways of thinking. This “old thinking” can hold you in bondage to dread and feelings of inadequacy. Successful change requires learning a moderation principle and an acceptance of “less than perfect”. You must also *renew your thinking* about what it takes to live healthy.

Using *purposeful thought shifting* can create expectancy about exercise and healthy living activities. This involves purposefully changing how you think about something. It allows you to look forward to completing a once dreaded task —why, because when you choose to **focus on your outcome** you can reshape your attitude toward it. You also can unload your “guilt-baggage” about not completing a desired task. *Purposeful thought shifting* reduces the idea of exercise and better food choices as an expectation you must fulfill. An unfulfilled expectation leads to dread. Dread only serves to negatively influence your *internal dialogue*.

**Knowing what you should do is not enough.** Nor is starting off big and then only occasionally doing it. The trick is being willing to do it on a *regular* basis, *especially* when it is not convenient to do so. That is the struggle most people have. **It is all about the doing.** Any plan is only as good as the willingness of someone to actually do it. You must find a way that will work for you. That is the ultimate challenge. Make your goal to adopt a life-long way of thinking, not a quick fix plan. Being healthy is something you will always have to work at, it requires something of you. Think— No investment, no return! This investment will empower you to ENJOY your crazy, busy and unique life. No more dieting and restricting, no more failure, and no more guilt. **Guilt serves as a self-imposed prison** that a person, with a

good heart, checks themselves into. This is done when, forgetting they are human, they fail to meet the standards they have *set for themselves*. Well-meaning people hold themselves back when they check into the prison of guilt. Guilt sends people back to the *coping behaviors* that got them where they are in the first place. This leads to the dread that hinders any long-term progress.

Successful people do not suffer from the catch-22 of guilt leading to lack of progress. They don't let what they *should have done* hold them back. To succeed you must learn to accept that you are human. You WILL make choices that, in hind sight, you may wish you could change. When you begin to accept that you are OK— no better than OK, just as you are, you will empower yourself to succeed at making *any* changes that you choose. Personal acceptance is the **key** to unlock your potential and it allows you the freedom to explore who you were meant to be, to find your passionate purpose. You hold this key. Choose to turn it and set yourself free from the guilt-dread-inaction cycle. Remember that how and what you think about (your internal dialogue) will impact your success in all things.

The bottom line is that, in the real world, life can be crazy. But cheer up —YOU have some control over what happens to YOU. Take what is available to you and use it to *create* the life you have been hoping for. Now it is time to create **expectancy** about your new healthier choices. Don't allow it to become just another **expectation** you must fulfill. Changing your reaction to your circumstances will alter your outcomes. Take a chance and try something new. Down the road you will be glad you did.