

I. “Expectations” – are “ASSUMPTIONS” about what someone “SHOULD” do.

- A) We all have certain **ASSUMPTIONS** – but we seldom stop to think about **WHY** we have them.
- B) “**SHOULD**”: We tend to see “Expectations” as **Obligations, or Duties**; thus there is a “Should” or “Must” connected with them.

II. **Where Expectations Come From**

- |                     |                   |                 |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| • Parents           | Church / Religion | Family          |
| • School            | Culture           | Media           |
| • TV                | Movies            | Music           |
| • Fairy Tales       | Bible             | Fictional Books |
| • Non-Fiction Works |                   |                 |

III. **Examples of Expectations** – Over a lifetime, we pick up thousands of expectations from these sources.

And we simply absorb most of them by “osmosis” – without **conscious** effort or even **realization**.

What are some specific examples of Expectations that we have received from some of the above?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Knight in Shining Armor                   | “A Wife Just Like Mom”                      |
| • “A Husband Just Like Dad”                 | “Marriage Will Make Me Happy”               |
| • “We should not have to “work” at Marriage | “Romance” – conception of / Will Never End  |
| • “A Husband Should....”                    | “A Wife Should....”                         |
| • “We will buy a house (when...)...”        | Number of children & Timing                 |
| • “Both of us will work”                    | “Wife will stay home....”                   |
| • “A Clean House is Paramount...”           | “Neatness is not as important as Happiness” |

IV. **How Expectations can become PROBLEMS in a Marriage:**

A) Not all Expectations are **REALISTIC**

- “My Spouse will meet **ALL** my needs”
- “We marry and then live **HAPPILY EVER AFTER** – without having to **WORK** on it.
- We may not **AGREE** – that is we may not have the **SAME** Expectations(!)

B) The problem with Expectations can be summarized this way: They are

- **UNCONSCIOUS** : We may not be aware of our Expectations, or their source.
- **UNREALISTIC**: Many are “myths” for either ourselves or our spouse.
- **UNSPOKEN**: We may never reveal our Expectations – yet are **DISAPPOINTED**, or even **ANGRY**, when our Expectations are unmet. (We **ASSUME** our spouse Knows, Should Know, or Should Figure It Out – “Mind Read”)
- **UNSETTLED**: Even IF Expressed, we may not **AGREE** about our Expectations – role of husband / wife / parent, what marriage should be like, how children should be raised....

V. **The Three Stages of Marriage - All Marriages go through 3 stages:**

1. **ROMANTIC: DATING / FIRST MARRIED**

- **HIGH** Expectations
- Best Behavior
- Believe all type of **MYTHS** about Love & Marriage
- We also tend to **ASSUME** that our spouse has the same Expectations we have

2. **DISILLUSIONMENT: REALITY** sets in & we begin to think that we should not have married...

- We feel **REJECTED** because our partner does not respond as we think they **SHOULD**
- We feel **CHEATED** and **ANGRY** that they are not living up to **OUR** Expectations (For Marriage)
- **POWER STRUGGLES** and **FIGHTS** ensue, as we try to
  1. **FORCE** our spouse to be the person we think they **SHOULD** be, and
  2. Try to make our marriage LOOK like **WE THINK** it should “LOOK.”
- But Power Struggles and Fighting don’t work, and we only end up feeling more **DISILLUSIONED**.
- Many couples Divorce during this stage: They **ASSUME** that since things did not work out as expected – and they are angry, hurt, & feel rejected – they must therefore not love each other any more, and/or simply married “The Wrong Person” ....

**UNMET EXPECTATIONS FEEL LIKE REJECTION – BUT THEY ARE NOT!**

3. **MATURE LOVE - IF we stick it out and work things through...**

VI. **Steps to achieving Mature Love (“Solutions”): What can we do when in the “Disillusionment Stage”?**

1. **UNconscious** → **Conscious**
2. **UNrealistic** → **Realistic**
3. **UNspoken** → **Spoken**
4. **UNsettled** → **Settled**

EXPECTATIONS ARE ONLY VALID WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN **MUTUALLY AGREED UPON**

Getting to Mature Love requires **TURNING EXPECTATIONS INTO “HOPES”**

Expectations are Out Of Balance when precedence is given to either **HIS** or **HERS**

The Healthy Balance – The Third Option – is when we have **MUTUALLY AGREED UPON** OUR Expectations.

