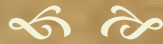




AS A MAN
EXPECTETH
SO IS HE



An excerpt from
Prosperity:
How To Attract It
by Orison Swett Marden

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Prosperity: How To Attract It
by Orison Swett Marden (1850-1924)



- *We never can get more out of ourselves than we expect. If we expect large things, if we hold the large mental attitude toward our work, toward our life, we shall get much greater results than if we depreciate ourselves, and only look for little things.*
- *The habit of expecting great things of ourselves calls out the best that is in us.*
 - *No one can become prosperous while he really expects, or half expects, to remain poor. We tend to get what we expect, and to expect little is to get little.*
- *We ask little things, we expect little things, and thus we limit our supply.*
- *There is a tremendous power in the habit of anticipating good things, of believing that we shall realize our ambition; that OUT dreams will come true. Multitudes queer their success at the very outset by anticipating bad things, expecting that they are going to fail, that their dreams will never be realized.*

WHEN I was graduated from a New Hampshire academy my greatest stimulus to further endeavor was my favorite teacher's belief in me. Taking me by the hand at parting, as he bade me good-bye, he said: "My boy, I expect to hear from you, — that the world will hear from you, — in the future. Don't disappoint me. I believe in you, and can see something in you that you do not see in yourself."

There is only one thing more stimulating, more helpful, in the struggle for success, than the knowledge that others — our teachers, our parents, our friends and relatives believe in us and expect great things of us; that is, to expect great things of ourselves. The difference between what two people get out of life, what they accomplish, and what they represent to others, depends upon the difference in what they expect of themselves.

A general who goes into a battle expecting to be beaten will be beaten. His expectation of defeat communicates itself to his army, demoralizes it at the start, and makes it impossible for the men to do their best. It is the same in the battle of life. To enter it with the expectation of defeat, is to be defeated before you begin. If you desire to succeed you must show your confident expectancy of success in your very presence. You must also live day by day in the very soul of expectancy of splendid things which are coming to you.

Working for one thing and expecting the opposite can bring only one result — failure. Every time you say you don't expect ever to be anything, or to get anything, or to accomplish anything worth while, you are neutralizing the efforts you are making to be or to get or to do

what you want. Our expectations must correspond with our endeavor. If we are convinced that we are never going to be really happy, that we are destined to plod along in discontent and wretchedness, to suffer all our lives, we shall tend to get what we expect. To be ambitious for happiness and yet always expect to be miserable, to continually doubt our ability to get what we long for, whatever it may be, is like getting on a train which is headed east when we wish to go west. We must expect to go in the direction of our desire, of our longing and effort. If you would succeed in what you are trying to do or to be, you must turn your back upon failure, blot out of your mind every thought, every picture, every suggestion of failure, and head toward success.

When, through a series of reverses and disappointments, a man has lost his grip upon himself, and feels convinced that he cannot possibly get on his feet; when he expects nothing but failure, there is only one thing you can do for him, — try to arouse his hope; to restore his lost faith; to show him that, being divine, there is something in him which can never fail; that he and his Maker are one, and that, working together, they are a majority in any situation.

I have just received some manuscripts accompanied by a letter, in which the writer says: "I know the enclosed are nothing like your articles, for I couldn't write like you no matter how hard I might try. I don't expect you will want to publish these, but thought I would send them along because of the possibility that you might."

Now, at the very outset, this writer prejudiced me against his articles by his self-expressed inferiority and the suggestion that they were not worth publishing, and would probably be returned. It was as though a young man should start out in a disheartened mood to look for a job, discouragement in his face and in his every action, and should say to a prospective employer: "I don't think you will hire me; I didn't expect any luck when I came in, but thought I would try. I haven't much confidence in myself, and don't know that I can do work along this line. I doubt very much if I should suit you. Still I will try my best if you want to give me a chance, though I don't believe you will, for I never have any luck in hunting jobs."

This may sound ridiculous, but it expresses the mental attitude which multitudes of people hold toward the thing they long for and are striving to attain. They never expect to succeed in anything they undertake; never expect to be comfortable, to say nothing of having the luxuries and refinements of life. They expect only failure and poverty, and do not understand that this very expectancy increases the power of their mental magnet to attract these things, even though they are trying to get away from them.

I was recently talking with a man who is a good illustration of what this mental attitude does for us. He told me that for many years he had been working very hard, with no vacations, no let up in his efforts; that he worked holidays and most of his Sundays, and yet had never gotten anywhere and never expected to; that, in fact, things seemed to be in a conspiracy to disappoint and defeat him. "Of course you haven't succeeded, my friend, because you never expected to," I said to myself. "Moreover, you never gave yourself a chance. Holding your nose to the grindstone all this time, fearing and expecting poverty, failure, disappointment, limitation, defeat in everything, has made you a magnet for these things and drawn you into a failure rut."

We don't necessarily get what we work for; it is what we expect that comes to us. What you fear, as well as what you long for, is headed your way. All your fears, all your doubts, all your failure thoughts are taking shape in your life, molding conditions to their likeness; and no matter how hard you work for the thing you want, if you hold constantly in mind negative,

discouraged thoughts; if you expect failure instead of success, evil instead of good, it is what you expect that will come to you. In other words, your thought is the creative force that molds and determines the conditions of your life.

“You must have birds in your heart, Madam, before you can find them in the bushes,” said John Burroughs, the great naturalist, to a woman who complained that no birds ever came to her orchard, while he counted a score or more there, even while she uttered her plaint. It is what you hold in your heart, what you believe will manifest itself to you, that comes into your life. No one can accomplish anything great in this world who is confident that he was made to do little things, and is satisfied with an inferior position, hopeless of being anything but an underling all his life. On the other hand, a man who expects great things of himself is constantly trying to open a little wider the doors of his narrow life, to extend his limited knowledge, to reach a little higher, to get a little farther on than those around him. He has enough of the divine disposition to spur him on to nobler endeavors; he has a quenchless ambition to make the most of himself.

No matter what the conditions of your birth, it is you who shape your career, fashion your life for happiness or unhappiness, success or failure. It is true of all men and women that—“They themselves are makers of themselves.” If you want to live the larger life, the happy, useful life, you must think the larger life; you must enlarge your model of yourself and of your possibilities; you must expect to realize your ideal of yourself and of the thing you long to do; for, as a man expecteth, so will his happiness, so will his life be.

It doesn't matter what we are trying to do, it is the hope and expectancy of success that nerves us to put forth our greatest effort; arms us with the assurance that compels success. The greatest difference, for instance, between the AI salesman and the mediocre one is the difference in their mental attitude.

“Beaten before he began”; “Didn't believe he was going to get the order,” is written all over some salesmen. In trying to get orders they lack the hope, the expectation of success, the assurance and self-confidence that presage victory. They don't know the psychology of salesmanship; that it consists in holding the conviction of success always in mind, and so they fall down before the slightest opposition.

There are thousands of second-rate salesmen who have enough ability to make cracker-jacks, but who fail to get results because of their doubts and fears. At every little objection made by a prospect, they keep thinking and saying to themselves: “There, I am going to lose that man; I just feel it in my bones. I wish I could get an order from him, but it's no use; he's not going to sign.” They do not realize that they are communicating their own doubts and fears to their prospect. It doesn't take a very sensitively organized person to feel the negative, failure atmosphere, and when he first lays his eyes upon one of those timid, doubting salesmen, the prospect knows that he is not a winner. Instead of victory, he sees defeat in his face; and if defeat is in a man's face he can't win no matter how much ability he has. His failure atmosphere repels everyone he contacts with.

Negative minds never make great salesmen or great anything else, because they don't build; they tear down. They are not creative, but destructive. They go through life closing the very doors ahead of them which they long to open; pulling with one hand, so to speak, on the door-knob, while at the same time holding a foot of doubt against that very door which they are trying to open. If they affirm their belief that there are good things for them, almost before they leave their lips they neutralize their affirmations by their secret doubts. They say one thing, but

expect the opposite, just like the woman who prayed to the Lord to remove the sand heap from her yard, and when she got through praying looked out and said, "There it is, just as I expected! Of course the Lord didn't remove it!" That is the trouble with most of us. We pray and we work hard for things, and when we don't get them it is, "just as we expected." We couldn't get what we wanted and longed for because there was no faith, no belief, back of our efforts and our prayers. You know what St. James says of the man who doubts and fears and has no faith: "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

Some people cannot understand how it is that bad men, cruel, brutal, conscienceless men, often succeed so well in their business. They succeed by the exercise of the mental law that like thoughts produce like results. This law works as unerringly as any physical law. It is neither ethical nor unethical. It is scientific. It is an inexorable principle, a changeless fact, that what we hold persistently in the mind is ultimately objectified in the body, in the life, whether it relates to our health, to our success or to our happiness. Ignorance of the law does not save us from the consequences of its violation, just as ignorance of our State or Federal laws does not condone an offense against them.


This is why it is so important that children should be trained in right thinking from the start. Every child should be reared to expect big things of himself: to understand that the Creator sent him here on an important mission, and that he must prepare himself for a life of achievement. Being a child of Omnipotence, of the All-Supply, man is the heir of all that is; health, success and happiness are his divine birthright, and every child should grow up with the conviction that good things instead of evil are waiting for him; that the longings of his heart, the yearnings of his soul, are prophecies of what he may become if he does his part in making a thorough preparation for his life work.

Do you realize that your environment today, your achievement, and your poverty or prosperity are really made up of your expectations of the past; what you expected of yourself years ago, when you started out in life? If you have been true to your vision of a successful future, and have backed up your faith, your ability, with hard work and intelligent endeavor, you have worked in harmony with the law and are reaping the harvest of your thought and endeavor. If, on the other hand, you find yourself poverty-stricken and wretched, you have violated the law, and your only hope of bettering your condition is to turn about face and go the other way. Work with the law, not against it. Work for what you want, but work with confidence, with the hope, the belief, that you will get it.

Expecting to be happy; expecting to be successful; expecting to win out in our undertakings; expecting health instead of disease; expecting good luck instead of illluck; expecting harmony instead of discord and trouble; expecting to make friends wherever we go; expecting to be thought well of, to stand for something in our community,—this is to establish relations with the things we want and are working for; it is to attract them to us: for as a man expecteth so is he; so has he.



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