

## SPARK 003

**DISTINCTION:** Problems with people come from expecting they should be different from their Box.

**NOTES:** If you stop expecting other people to change you will stop having people problems. This includes relationships with your colleagues, your superiors, your team members, your parents, your children, your spouse, and so on. Even if your expectations feel fully justified, the expectation itself puts you into a bind. You may think: *“If someone makes a mess, I expect them to clean it up!” “If someone gives me a promise, I expect him or her to keep their word!” “If someone agrees to do a job, I expect them to be responsible about it!”* These appear to be very reasonable expectations. But a Possibility Manager recognizes the self-generated trap of the mechanics of *expectation* and can no longer afford to go there.

The trap of expectation is this: anybody can make an expectation about anything. So what? Making an expectation is you assuming that a fantasy is a reality. Believing that your expectation is true disconnects you from what is actually so. By holding onto your expectation you lose your leverage point for making real things happen. People are what they are and people are not what they are not. Each of us has a Box, and the Box is the Box. Expecting that things should be otherwise is a fantasy. No matter how tempting the fantasy is, a fantasy is still a fantasy.

It is true that you are not your Box. It is also true that you start out solidly identified with your Box, just like everyone else. Shifting identity from being identified with one Box to being identified with another Box is a high level Possibility Manager skill that requires training and practice on the same level of sophistication as learning to drive a car. Expecting a person to act in some way other than as dictated by their Box is the equivalent of driving into a brick wall expecting it to be a road: possible but not very likely.

**EXPERIMENT:** Choose one relationship with which to do this experiment. Do not tell the other person what you are doing. Begin by paying close attention to your thoughts and then start thinking about that person. Notice the stories that you have created about that person in your mind as a result of that person not meeting your past expectations of them. Remember each incident. They should be easy to find because each incident will have left an emotional scar on your heart. Be vigilant and specific. Keep going until you have a complete assessment of the qualities of the relationship that you have created through holding big or small expectations towards that person.

Now consider removing all of your expectations about this person, one at a time. Imagine what it would be like to participate in this relationship without expectations. If you stop expecting something, anything, then what the other person does is what they do, and you can be present with them with who they actually are instead of with your unfulfilled expectations of what they should be or should not be.

What would the other person experience if they were in a relationship with you that was completely free of your expectations? Would they begin to experience being accepted? Would they begin to experience being respected?

Here is where this experiment becomes transformational.

Choose one well-justified expectation that you have held about this person for some time. In an appropriate moment (which may only arise if you intentionally create it) say to this person, *"I have been holding onto an expectation of you that \_\_\_\_\_,"* and fill in the blank with the specifics of your expectation.

Then say, *"I withdraw this expectation from you forever."*

Then say nothing. Calmly wait in the new space you have just created. Stay present. Stay connected. Let the feelings come up. Keep breathing.

Experience what happens inside of you, inside of the other person, and in the space in which you are connected when you withdraw this expectation.

Consider performing this same experiment with additional expectations and with additional people.

Expectationless,

Clinton