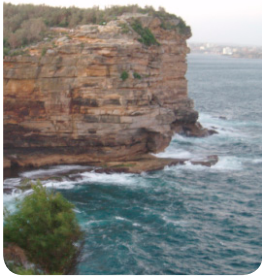




# The Weight of Expectations



## Unrealistic Expectations

A sure fire way to increase your level of anxiety is to develop unrealistic expectations. Developing an expectation that becomes exceedingly difficult to achieve will 9/10 result in an increase in anxiety. For instance, if you wake up with the intention of arriving at work early to attend a meeting and something delays your ability to leave on time, your anxiety levels will undoubtedly increase. However, it's not the situation itself that has caused you to feel anxious, but rather your perceptions about the situation.

In the above example, each minute that delays your departure brings with it negative thoughts such as:

- *What's wrong with me?*
- *I can't believe this has happened to me AGAIN*
- *This is a disaster*
- *I'm going to be fired for running late*
- *I hate my life*
- *I'm so disorganized*
- *I hate my job – I feel trapped*

AND SO ON....

It's important to remember when you're in a situation you can't alter, that the best thing to do is accept it and move into 'damage control'. Once the situation is over, then it's time to rethink the previous situation and to come up with possible solutions for ensuring it does not happen again. For instance, when running late for an important meeting, always phone and let your colleagues know, then attempt to calm down and arrive in a composed manner. If you arrive flustered and with a million excuses, you will appear unprofessional. However if you arrive in a composed manner and simply join in the meeting, you will gain much more respect and admiration from your peers.

If running late for meetings or work in general is a constant pattern for you, stop and have a think about where you're going wrong.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- *Do I leave the house at the very last minute?*
- *Do I wake up later than I should?*
- *Do I try to achieve too much in the mornings before work?*
- *Do I take a long time to get ready for work (e.g. long showers, reading with breakfast)?*
- *Do I take a slow mode of transport to work?*

This is not to say you shouldn't expect good things to happen. It simply means it's important to have contingency plans if things don't always go to plan. Plan to do your best, rather than expecting nothing less than the best out of life, because life isn't always easy. By being kinder to ourselves and accepting that things may go wrong from time to time, we give ourselves permission to not have to be perfect.

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