

SFP: How Do YOU Use It?

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"THE TRUE MEASURE OF A MAN IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN THE MAN BUT IN THE COLORS AND TEXTURES THAT COME ALIVE IN OTHERS BECAUSE OF HIM." THESE WORDS PENNED BY ALBERT SCHWEITZER ARE WORTH REPEATING- "THE TRUE MEASURE OF A MAN IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN THE MAN BUT IN THE COLORS AND TEXTURES THAT COME ALIVE IN OTHERS BECAUSE OF HIM." THE POINT OF SCHWEITZER'S STATEMENT IS THAT NONE OF US LIVE IN A VACUUM. EVERY ACTION PRODUCES ITS REACTION AND EACH OF US HAS AN INFLUENCE ON OTHERS.

OVER A 100 YEARS AGO AN ESSAY WAS WRITTEN BY HORACE BUSHNELL WHO STATED THAT THERE ARE TWO FORCES RADIATING FROM EVERY PERSON. ONE IS THE RESULT OF CONSCIOUS EFFORT WHEN, BY DIRECT ACTION, A PERSON SETS OUT TO CHANGE A GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCE OR SITUATION. THE OTHER IS THE UNCONSCIOUS FORCE WHICH MOVES OUT FROM US. HE STATED THAT "INVOLUNTARY COMMUNICATION IS THE STRONGEST FORCE ON EARTH." SUBSEQUENTLY, OUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH ANOTHER PERSON, OF WHICH 90% IS UNSPOKEN, (Fitzpatrick, Menninger Foundation, 1980) BEGINS WITH SOME PRIOR EXPECTATIONS. IN AN INITIAL ENCOUNTER WE MAY FORM EXPECTATIONS ON THE BASIS OF A PERSONS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, THEIR DRESS, OR MANNERISMS. OBVIOUSLY, FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE IMPORTANT EVEN THOUGH THE ACCURACY OF THAT INITIAL IMPRESSION IS OF AN ELUSIVE QUALITY. NEVERTHELESS, THE IMPRESSION WE FORM OF ANOTHER PERSON IS REAL TO US, WHETHER OR NOT IT IS ACCURATE. THIS IMPRESSION IS BASED ON INFORMATION WE HAVE ASSEMBLED IN OUR MINDS AND SOME INFORMATION CARRIES GREATER WEIGHT THAN OTHERS AND CAN CORRESPONDINGLY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE INTERCHANGE WITH THE OTHER PERSON.

OUR EXPECTATIONS OF OTHERS IS CONFIRMED IN THE PROCESS OF INTERACTION. THIS CONFIRMATION IS NOT VERY SURPRISING IF OUR EXPECTATIONS ARE BASED ON A LONG HISTORY OF INTERCHANGE. THE WIFE OF TWENTY YEARS MAY KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HER HUSBAND WILL GET ANGRY WHEN SHE TELLS HIM THAT HE EATS TOO MANY SWEETS AND IS GETTING FAT OR THAT SHE CAN ALWAYS ELICIT A SMILE FROM HIM IF SHE TALKS ABOUT THEIR SON'S SUCCESS WITH HIS BUSINESS. MORE INTERESTING THAN THIS IS THAT OUR EXPECTATIONS CAN AFFECT AN INITIAL ENCOUNTER AND SHAPE THE OUTCOME OF THAT ENCOUNTER ACCORDINGLY. THIS PROCESS WHICH NEARLY ALWAYS CONTINUES, IS KNOWN AS THE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY OR SFP--- THE FACT THAT A PERSON'S BELIEFS ABOUT ANOTHER PERSON MAY ELICIT BEHAVIOR FROM THAT PERSON THAT WILL CONFIRM THE EXPECTANCY.

(Deaux-Wrightman, 1984)

THE IDEA THAT ONE PERSON'S EXPECTATIONS CAN INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOR OF ANOTHER IS FOUND IN THE MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURE, PYGMALION, PRINCE OF GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY. HIS GOAL WAS THE CREATION OF A STATUE OF THE IDEAL WOMAN, A DREAM MANY OF US HAVE. NEVERTHELESS, HE PROCEEDED AND SUCCEEDED ONLY TOO WELL. PYGMALION FELL IN LOVE WITH HIS MASTERFUL PIECE OF WORK AS THOUGH IT WERE A REAL WOMAN. BELIEF IN HIMSELF AND HIS LOVE BROUGHT VENUS TO THE RESCUE BRINGING THE STATUE TO LIFE AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER. (McGraw Hill, The Pygmalion Effect, 1974)

THE SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY IS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT INITIALLY, ONE PERSON WHOM WE REFER TO AS THE PERCEIVER HAS SOME EXPECTANCY ABOUT ANOTHER PERSON. IN COMMUNICATING WITH A PERSON, THE PERCEIVER MAY ACT ACCORDING TO HIS EXPECTANCY. FOR EXAMPLE,

IF THE TARGET PERSON IS THOUGHT TO BE A NICE PERSON, THE PERCEIVER WILL ACT FRIENDLY OR WILL ACT AGGRESSIVELY IF THE PERSON IS BELIEVED TO BE HOSTILE. IN TURN, THE PERSON MAY RESPOND IN A MANNER THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PERCEIVER'S BELIEFS---AND MAY EVEN BECOME TO BELIEVE THAT THOSE BEHAVIORS ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SELF. IN OTHER WORDS, IF PEOPLE TREAT ME AS COMPETENT AND I ACT COMPETENTLY IN RESPONSE, I MAY BEGIN TO SEE MYSELF AS A COMPETENT PERSON. THUS SELF-CONCEPTION OF COMPETENCE MAY CAUSE ME TO ACT MORE CONFIDENTLY IN THE FUTURE. (Deaux-Wrightman, 1984)

SELF-CONCEPT IS HOW WE VIEW OURSELVES WHICH INFLUENCES HOW WE BEHAVE AND REACT. MUCH OF OUR BEHAVIOR IS INFLUENCED BY HOW WE SEE OURSELVES. THAT IS WHY I FREQUENTLY WISH FOR THE OLD ADAGE WHICH STATES "GIVE US THE GIFT TO SEE OURSELVES AS OTHER PEOPLE DO." SELF-ESTEEM ON THE OTHER HAND IS MORE SPECIFIC. IT INVOLVES HOW WE THINK OF OURSELVES WHICH IS EITHER POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY.

IT IS USEFUL TO THINK ABOUT THE NOTIONS OF IDEAL AND ACTUAL SELF-CONCEPT. IDEAL DESCRIBES THE WAY WE WOULD LIKE TO BE---THE WISHED FOR SELF. ACTUAL REFERS TO THE WAY WE BELIEVE WE ARE. OUR INDIVIDUAL SELF-CONCEPT IS DEVELOPED THROUGH INTERACTION WITH OTHER PEOPLE. A CHILD IS NOT BORN WITH A SELF-CONCEPT. CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO LEARN TO DEFINE THEMSELVES ON THE BASIS OF HOW OTHERS TREAT THEM WHICH INCLUDES THEIR PARENTS, PEERS, AND TEACHERS. AS ADULTS, OUR SUPERVISORS, OUR BOSS, OUR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS ALL PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN HOW WE THINK OF OURSELVES.

OUR EVERYDAY LIVES GIVE US A GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION ABOUT OURSELVES ONLY IF WE TAKE THE TIME TO REFLECT UPON IT. EMPLOYEES MAY PRAISE OR CRITICIZE OUR ACTIONS. FRIENDS MAY ACT INTERESTED OR DISINTERESTED IN WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY. STRANGERS MAY REACT WITH WARMTH OR COLDNESS WHEN WE TRY TO GET TO KNOW THEM. ALL OF THIS INFORMATION MUST BE PROCESSED AND FILTERED SO THAT IT SEEMS TO FIT TOGETHER. PUT ANOTHER WAY, ALL OF US HAVE AN URGENT AND PERSISTENT NEED FOR CONSISTENCY. SELF-CONCEPT, OR THE WAY WE VIEW OURSELVES, WILL INFLUENCE THE MANNER IN WHICH WE PROCESS THAT INFORMATION AND HOW WE RESPOND OR ACT TOWARD OTHERS. WE TEND TO ACCEPT FEEDBACK THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR SELF-CONCEPT. PEOPLE TEND TO DISTORT INFORMATION IN ORDER TO MAKE IT CONSISTENT WITH THEIR EXISTING SELF-CONCEPT. FOR EXAMPLE, IF GEORGE TELLS HIS SECRETARY THAT SHE IS DOING AN UNBELIEVABLY GREAT JOB, AND HER SELF-CONCEPT IS IN AGREEMENT WITH THIS, SHE WILL PROBABLY FEEL THAT THE PRAISE IS WELL DESERVED. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SAME PERSON IS TOLD THAT HER WORK NEEDS IMPROVEMENT, SHE MIGHT THINK GEORGE IS JUST HAVING A BAD DAY. (McGraw Hill, The Pygmalion Effect, 1974)

OUR NEED FOR CONSISTENCY ALSO CAUSES US TO INTERPRET THE BEHAVIORS OF OTHERS AS IF THEY THOUGHT AS WE DO. IF SOMEONE TENDS TO BE QUIET AND RESERVED AND SEES A PERSON AT A PARTY SITTING ALONE, THE ASSUMPTION MADE MIGHT BE THAT THIS PERSON IS ALSO QUIET AND RESERVED. A SECOND PERSON WHO IS OUTGOING MIGHT ASSUME THAT THE PERSON SITTING ALONE IS NOT FEELING WELL OR IS IN A BAD MOOD. BOTH PEOPLE INTERPRET SEEING A PERSON ALONE AT A PARTY IN RELATION TO HIS OR HER OWN REACTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS.

ALL OF US HAVE A TENDENCY TO ASSUME THAT PEOPLE BEHAVE IN CERTAIN WAYS FOR THE SAME REASONS WE BEHAVE IN THOSE WAYS. THIS TENDENCY CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS. A COUPLE IN MARITAL COUNSELING RECENTLY WERE HAVING A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE MADE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE OTHER'S BEHAVIOR THAT TURNED OUT TO BE INCORRECT. EACH PERSON'S BEHAVIOR CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF HIS OR HER OWN VIEW OF THE SITUATION WHICH IS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE "INTERNAL FRAME OF REFERENCE." FURTHERMORE, IF WE DEVELOP A GOOD SELF-CONCEPT SO THAT OUR PERSONAL ATTITUDES ARE POSITIVE, THINK OF HOW WE WILL IMPACT OR INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOR OF OTHERS.

HOW WE TREAT OUR EMPLOYEES AND OTHERS BEGINS WITH A BELIEF IN OUR OWN ABILITIES. IF WE PERSIST IN OUR EXPECTATIONS OF OTHERS, THEIR LIVES WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN. THE POWER OF EXPECTATION ALONE CAN SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOR OF OTHERS. TO VERIFY THIS STATEMENT THERE HAS BEEN SEVERAL HUNDRED STUDIES PERFORMED. FOR EXAMPLE, ROBERT ROSENTHAL, A HARVARD PROFESSOR, CONDUCTED STUDIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS WHERE THE TEACHERS WERE TOLD AT THE BEGINNING OF A SCHOOL YEAR THAT A SPECIAL TEST HAD DESIGNATED ONE OF TWO OF THEIR CLASSES AS INTELLECTUAL BLOOMERS. THE TEACHERS WERE TOLD THAT OF THESE TWO ONE WOULD SHOW REMARKABLE GAINS IN INTELLIGENCE BY THE END OF THE YEAR. THE CHILDREN IN ACTUALITY HAD BEEN CHOSEN COMPLETELY AT RANDOM. AT THAT POINT THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO CLASSES WAS IN THE MIND OF THE TEACHER. AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR A TEST REVEALED THAT THE SO CALLED "BLOOMERS" HAD ACTUALLY "BLOOMED", GAINING MORE THAN FOUR (4) POINTS IN TOTAL IQ THAN THE

OTHER CLASS. THE TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF THE "BLOOMERS" WERE SUCH THAT THE STUDENTS GAINED MORE IN IQ THAN THE EXPERIMENTAL "CONTROL" GROUP. THE TEACHERS FAVORED THE "BLOOMERS" BECAUSE OF THEIR EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR EXPECTED PERFORMANCE TO EXCEL AND SUBSEQUENTLY RATED THEM HIGHER. THE CONTROL GROUP, WHERE NO SPECIAL GAINS IN IQ WERE EXPECTED, WERE LESS FAVORABLY VIEWED BY THE TEACHERS. TEACHERS SEEM TO PREFER THAT STUDENTS BEHAVE AS THEY ARE EXPECTED. (McGraw Hill, The Pygmalion Effect, 1974)

THE APPLICATION OF THE SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY TO MANAGEMENT, CLASSROOMS, AND OFFICES HAS SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES TO EVERYDAY BEHAVIOR OF THOSE PEOPLE INVOLVED. IT IS A TWO WAY PROCESS IN THAT EMPLOYEES FOR EXAMPLE HAVE CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS THAT ARE IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING WHAT THE MANAGERS EXPECTATIONS WILL BE. YOUNG WORKERS OR STUDENTS ARE PERHAPS THE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY IN THAT THEY ARE THE MOST ANXIOUS TO LIVE UP TO THE MANAGERS GOALS AND HAVE LESS PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT THEMSELVES OR THEIR JOBS. NOT ONLY THE AGE, BUT THE SEX, RACE AND EXPERIENCE OR STATUS OF A PERSON CAN RESULT IN A SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY TO THE GOOD OR THE BAD. PEOPLE ONCE BELIEVED THAT WOMEN WERE ONLY CAPABLE OF CERTAIN MENIAL TASKS AND THEY ADAPTED VERY WELL AND BECAME INCAPABLE OF MORE RESPONSIBLE WORK SINCE THEY HAD BEEN CONDITIONED TO BELIEVING THAT THEY COULD NOT COMPETE WITH MEN. SO IN RECENT YEARS WHEN THE PUSH TO HIRE WOMEN BECAME PREVALENT MANY WOMEN WHO WERE HIRED DID NOT KNOW IF THEY GOT THE JOB BECAUSE THEY COULD DO THE JOB BASED ON THEIR INTELLECT AND ABILITIES OR BECAUSE THEY WERE A WOMAN. THUS THERE IS ALWAYS THE

HAUNTING PRESENCE OF THE QUESTION TO PEOPLE--- "WHO AM I AND WHY AM I BEING TREATED THIS WAY ?" (McGraw-Hill, The Pygmalion Effect, 1974)

THEREFORE, IF NEGATIVE EXPECTATIONS CAN LEAD TO POOR PERFORMANCE IS IT POSSIBLE THAT POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS MAY HAVE THE OPPOSITE RESULTS? WHAT IF WE WERE TO TREAT EVERYONE AS THOUGH THEY HAD THE ABILITY AND CAPACITY TO BE AS COMPETENT AND EFFECTIVE AS THE NEXT PERSON? TO GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF THIS POINT AN EXPERIMENT WAS CONDUCTED AT A VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER WITH A WELDING CLASS WHERE THE INSTRUCTOR WAS TOLD THAT FIVE OUT OF THE TWELVE TRAINEES HAD A VERY HIGH APTITUDE IN WELDING AND WOULD LEARN THE WELDING SKILLS IN AN EXCEPTIONAL MANNER. IN REALITY THE FIVE WERE CHOSEN AT RANDOM. AT THE END OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM THE FIVE SO CALLED SUPER STARS HAD BEEN ABSENT FEWER TIMES THAN THE OTHERS, THEY LEARNED THE FUNDAMENTALS OF WELDING IN HALF THE TIME AND SCORED AT LEAST TEN POINTS HIGHER THAN THEIR CLASSMATES IN THE COMPREHENSIVE WELDING EXAM. THE CLASS WAS ALSO ASKED TO RATE THEMSELVES, AND WITHOUT EXCEPTION THE FIVE "SUPER STARS" WERE RATED BY THE OTHER CLASS MEMBERS AS THOSE THEY WOULD MOST PREFER TO WORK AND BE ASSOCIATED.

WHEN THE INSTRUCTOR WAS TOLD OF THE EXPERIMENT HE WAS "SHOCKED". HE HAD GENUINELY BELIEVED THAT HE HAD ACTED THE SAME TO ALL THE TRAINEES AND NOT SHOWN ANY PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT. ONCE AGAIN, AS WITH THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, THE INSTRUCTOR'S EXPECTATIONS WAS THE ONLY INDEPENDENT VARIABLE IN THE EXPERIMENT. HIS BELIEF AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE FIVE SUPER STARS HAD INFLUENCED THEIR PERFORMANCE THROUGH A SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY. (McGraw-Hill, The Pygmalion Effect, 1974)

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT ACCURATE PREDICTIONS ARE PRIZED BY MOST OF US. WE DON'T LIKE SURPRISES OR THE UNKNOWN. PEOPLE DON'T LIKE TO BE WRONG OR UNABLE TO PREDICT OUTCOMES AS IT MAKES THEM INSECURE. PERHAPS THIS IS WHAT HAS LED TO THE SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY.

ROBERT ROSENTHAL, WHOM I HAVE REFERRED TO EARLIER, HAS DEVELOPED A FOUR (4) FACTOR THEORY OF HOW THE POWER OF EXPECTATIONS MAY BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR. FACTOR 1---THE CLIMATE---WHICH IS COMPRISED OF ALL THE NON-VERBAL MESSAGES SUCH AS TONE OF VOICE, BODY POSTURE, DRESS, MANNERISMS SUCH AS EYE CONTACT, AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS. THE CLIMATE CAN CONVEY POSITIVE AS WELL AS NEGATIVE EXPECTATIONS. THE SECOND FACTOR IS FEEDBACK. DEPENDING ON WHAT A MANAGER OR TEACHER EXPECTS OF HIS SUBORDINATES OR STUDENTS WILL GIVE HIM MORE OR LESS RESPONSE. LET'S LOOK AT PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS. IF WE FAIL TO TELL AN EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT WHAT THEIR STRENGTHS OR WEAKNESSES ARE, HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY EXPECT THEM TO PERFORM BETTER OR IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE. EVERYONE NEEDS FEEDBACK SO THAT THEY CAN SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AND KNOW WHERE THEY ARE GOING. AS IT WAS ONCE SAID--- YOU CAN'T GET LOST IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING OR PUT ANOTHER WAY---IF YOU ARE LOST THEN MAYBE YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHERE YOU WERE GOING TO BEGIN WITH. THE THIRD FACTOR DEALS WITH INPUT OR AMOUNT OF INFORMATION A MANAGER OR TEACHER GIVES OUT. EACH OF US MUST CONVEY ENOUGH INFORMATION SO THAT PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED AND HOW TO CARRY OUT VARIOUS ASSIGNMENTS. OTHERWISE, THE WORK MAY NOT HAVE THE RESULTS WE EXPECTED. THE FOURTH AND FINAL FACTOR IS THE AMOUNT OF OUTPUT

THE MANAGER OR TEACHER ENCOURAGES FROM AN EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT WHICH IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT. IN OTHER WORDS, IF WE CONTINUALLY CHALLENGE OTHERS TO TAKE ON MORE IMPORTANT TASKS AND INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY, IT FOSTERS A HIGHER SELF-CONCEPT AS WELL AS INCREASED MOTIVATION TO PERFORM WHICH OBVIOUSLY IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY. (McGraw-Hill, The Pygmalion Effect, 1974)

AS EACH OF US KNOW WE INFLUENCE OTHERS EITHER POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY. HIGH EXPECTATIONS LEAD TO HIGH PERFORMANCE WHEREAS LOW EXPECTATIONS LEAD TO LOW PERFORMANCE. THE PLAGUING QUESTION FOR MANY OF US IS WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE PEOPLE FOR WHOM WE HAVE LOW EXPECTATIONS? THE TYPICAL RESPONSE IS THAT THEY WILL EITHER GO NOWHERE OR WILL BE DISMISSED. WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT OUR EXPECTATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THESE PEOPLES PERFORMANCE? IT SAYS WE HAVEN'T GIVEN UP ON THESE PEOPLE, BUT WE HAVE PUT THEM IN THE LOWER END OF THE SCALE AS COMPARED TO THE OTHERS WHICH BECOMES A SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY FOR THEM DUE TO OUR LOW EXPECTATIONS OF THEM. SUBSEQUENTLY, WE HAVE A SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY---- THESE PEOPLE HAVE THE DESIRE, THEY'RE WILLING TO DO IT, WE KNOW THEY ARE GOING TO MAKE IT AND THEY MAKE IT! THE OTHER PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE THE DESIRE, AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO MAKE IT, DON'T. THIS MIND SET BECOMES SELF FULFILLING. THIS MAY RELATE TO WHAT IS KNOWN AS "MANAGEMENT BY EXCEPTION" WHERE THE MANAGER FOCUSES HIS ATTENTION ON THOSE THINGS THAT ARE NOT GOING WELL. SO EVERY TIME HE GREETES A SUBORDINATE HE TENDS TO BE NEGATIVE BECAUSE THE SUBORDINATE IS NOT LIVING UP TO HIS EXPECTATIONS. THE NET EFFECT IS THAT THE NEGATIVE EXPECTATIONS ARE CONTINUALLY REINFORCED AND THE POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS ARE

IGNORED. A SUBORDINATE IN THIS SITUATION WILL MORE THAN LIKELY DEVELOP A NEGATIVE SELF-CONCEPT, AND LOOSE CONFIDENCE. THE SAME SITUATION CAN BE APPLIED TO THE CLASSROOM OR AT HOME WHEN IT COMES TO RAISING CHILDREN. WE CAN ENHANCE THE PERFORMANCE OF OTHERS OR WE CAN SUPPRESS OR DEPRESS THEM. OUR EXPECTATIONS INFLUENCES THE WAY WE TREAT PEOPLE AND THE WAY WE TREAT PEOPLE INFLUENCES THE WAY THEY REACT OR PERFORM. (McGraw-Hill, The Pygmalion Effect, 1974)

ANOTHER INTERESTING EXPERIMENT TO VERIFY THE IMPACT OF EXPECTATIONS WAS DONE WITH MALE COLLEGE STUDENTS. THESE STUDENTS ENGAGED IN A TEN MINUTE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH A FEMALE STUDENT WHOM THEY BELIEVED TO BE EITHER PHYSICALLY ATTRACTIVE OR UNATTRACTIVE. ANALYSIS OF THE CONVERSATIONS REVEALED THAT MALES WHO BELIEVED THEY WERE INTERACTING WITH AN ATTRACTIVE FEMALE WERE FRIENDLIER, MORE OUTGOING AND GENERALLY MORE SOCIABLE. THE BELIEFS OF THE PERCEIVER WERE ENACTED IN THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS. AS THE SFP SUGGEST, THE WOMEN DID NOT DIFFER IN PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS AND DID NOT KNOW THE IMPRESSIONS THE MEN HAD BEEN GIVEN. NEVERTHELESS, WOMEN WHO CONVERSED WITH THE MEN WHO HAD BELIEVED THEY WERE VERY ATTRACTIVE, WERE RATED MORE SOCIABLE, POISED AND HUMOROUS BY OBJECTIVE OBSERVATIONS. ONCE AGAIN OUR BELIEFS ABOUT PEOPLE NOT ONLY AFFECT THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE WITH THEM BUT ALSO AFFECT THE WAY THEY INTERACT WITH US. (DEAUX-WRIGHTSMAN 1984) THESE RESULTS ARE NOT SURPRISING IN THAT FOR US TO SURVIVE WE MUST EXTRACT SOME MEANING FROM OUR PAST EXPERIENCE SO THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND, ANTICIPATE AND EXERCISE CONTROL OVER LIFE. (Jones, 1977) AS I STATED EARLIER, WE HAVE THIS URGENT

NEED FOR CONSISTENCY IN LIFE AND WE DO THIS BY INTERPRETING EVENTS, BASING OUR ACTIONS ON HOW WE BELIEVE THINGS REALLY ARE, AND OUR BELIEF ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE ARE LIKE. WE EVEN BASE OUR ACTIONS OR REACTIONS ON OUR DEFINITION OF WORDS. TO ILLUSTRATE THIS POINT A NOTED RESEARCHER IN PSYCHOLOGY CARRIED OUT A SERIES OF STUDIES. IN ONE EXPERIMENT, TWO GROUPS OF SUBJECTS HEARD A LIST OF CHARACTERISTICS WHICH WERE ALLEGEDLY DESCRIPTIVE OF A REAL PERSON. THE CHARACTERISTICS READ TO THE TWO GROUPS WERE IDENTICAL EXCEPT FOR ONE TERM. ONE GROUP WAS READ: INTELLIGENT, SKILLFUL, INDUSTRIOUS, WARM, DETERMINED, PRACTICAL, CAUTIOUS. THE SECOND GROUP HEARD: INTELLIGENT, SKILLFUL, INDUSTRIOUS, COLD, DETERMINED, PRACTICAL, CAUTIOUS. THUS THE TWO DIFFERENT WORDS WERE WARM AND COLD. BOTH GROUPS WERE THEN ASKED TO WRITE A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE PERSON DESCRIBED AND TO CHECK ON A FORM THOSE ADDITIONAL QUALITIES OR CHARACTERISTICS THAT THE DESCRIBED PERSON WOULD LIKELY HAVE. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS WAS DRAMATIC. THE GROUP FOR WHOM WARM HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE LIST WERE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO DESCRIBE THE PERSON AS GENEROUS, WISE, HAPPY, GOOD, NATURAL, HUMOROUS, SOCIABLE, POPULAR, ALTRUISTIC AND IMAGINATIVE. THE OTHER GROUP DESCRIBED THE PERSON AS IMPERSONAL, SERIOUS, STRUCTURED, FORMAL AND CALCULATING. (Jones, 1977) TO VERIFY THIS THE SAME RESEARCHER TOLD TWO OF HIS CLASSES THEY WOULD BE HAVING A VISITING LECTURER FOR THEIR NEXT CLASS. HE TOLD ONE CLASS THAT THE VISITING LECTURER WAS A VERY WARM AND LIKABLE PERSON. TO THE OTHER CLASS HE TOLD THEM HE WAS COLD AND SOMEWHAT IMPERSONAL. FOLLOWING THE CLASSES LED BY THE VISITING LECTURER THE RESEARCHER ASKED EACH CLASS TO RATE HIM.

THE CLASS GIVEN THE WARM PRE-CONFORMATION CONSISTENTLY RATED THE INSTRUCTOR MORE FAVORABLY. IN REALITY, THE VISITING LECTURER HAD GIVEN THE SAME LECTURE AND HAD ACTED THE SAME TO BOTH CLASSES. THUS EACH OF US HAVE "BUILT IN" EXPECTANCIES WHICH IS BASED ON OUR INTERPRETATIONS AND DEFINITION OF WORDS AND BELIEFS. (Jones, 1977)

WE LIVE IN A HIGHLY COMPLEX WORK-ORIENTED SOCIETY WHERE CONSIDERABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATED IS NECESSARY TO EMOTIONALLY SURVIVE. SOCIETY EMPHASIZES ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS. THE FACT IS THAT WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO MAKE CHOICES ABOUT HOW WE RESPOND TO EVENTS AROUND US. THEREFORE, IF WE DON'T CONVINCED PEOPLE THAT THEY CAN DO THINGS ON THEIR OWN THEY WON'T SHOW ANY INITIATIVE, WHEREAS IF WE CONVINCED PEOPLE THEY CAN DO A JOB AND WE HAVE A STRONG BELIEF IN THEM THEY WILL WORK HARD TO MEET OUR EXPECTATIONS.

LIFE IS A PROCESS OF ACCOMMODATION AND ADJUSTMENT FOR MOST OF US. EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT AND INDIVIDUALITY IS A VERY KEY CONCEPT AS IT RELATES TO ABILITY, MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE. AS IT WAS ONCE SAID, PEOPLE ARE RESOURCES THAT HAVE THE ABILITY TO APPRECIATE IN VALUE BUT THEY CAN ALSO DEPRECIATE LIKE OTHER RESOURCES. IT IS INCUMBENT FOR US TO INSURE THAT WE STRIVE TO ACHIEVE A POSITIVE RETURN ON OUR INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE. TO DO THIS WE MUST TRY NOT TO MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT OTHERS BASED ON OUR OWN BEHAVIOR OR OUR PERCEPTIONS. I REALIZE IT IS DIFFICULT NOT TO MAKE ASSUMPTIONS SINCE THEY PROVIDE US WITH SECURITY. HOWEVER, THE KEY IS TO BE OPEN, HONEST AND CANDID WITH PEOPLE. TO MOTIVATE OTHERS WE NEED TO TREAT THEM AS WE WISH TO BE TREATED. I HAVE

ALWAYS AGREED WITH THE STATEMENT THAT PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ABSTRACT PRINCIPLES. IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR EACH OF US TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE SELF-CONCEPT AS WELL AS SELF ESTEEM OF OTHERS.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT MOST PEOPLE TEND TO ENGAGE IN SELF-PRESENTATION STRATEGIES SO AS TO INFLUENCE THE IMPRESSION THEY MAKE ON OTHER PEOPLE. THUS KNOWING WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE LIKE AND WHY THEY BEHAVE THE WAY THEY DO IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO PREDICT AND UNDERSTAND SITUATIONS. (Deaux-Wrightman, 1984)

PERHAPS THAT IS WHY MARGARET MEAD ONCE SAID THAT "WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT BENEATH THE SUPERFICIAL CLASSIFICATIONS OF SEX AND RACE THE SAME POTENTIALITIES EXIST." I BELIEVE THAT WE MUST ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS AND KNOW THE FACTS AS BEST WE CAN BEFORE WE JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS WHEN DEALING WITH PEOPLE AND THEIR BEHAVIORS. THOSE OF US IN EITHER HIGH LEVEL OR RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS MUST KEEP THIS IN MIND BECAUSE ONCE YOU REACH THE TOP OF THE LADDER THE ONLY THING THAT SHOWS IS YOUR BUTTOCKS! THEREFORE WE, IN PARTICULAR, MUST SHOW COMPASSION, UNDERSTANDING, AND LOVE TO THOSE WITH WHOM WE WORK, LIVE AND SOCIALIZE. AS JUDITH VIORST IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "LOVE IS MUCH NICER TO BE IN THAN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT, A TIGHT GIRDLE, A HIGH TAX BRACKET, OR A HOLDING PATTERN OVER PHILADELPHIA." SERIOUSLY, PEOPLE MUST CONTINUOUSLY RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT THEY HAVE ON EACH OTHER.

THE SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY IS A POWERFUL CONCEPT AND WHEN PEOPLE ACT ON FALSE BELIEFS THEY TEND TO PRODUCE A SITUATION THAT SEEMS TO BE TRUE. PUT ANOTHER WAY, FALSE BELIEFS OFTEN PRODUCE TRUE REALITY. THE PERSON WHO IS AFRAID OF DOGS WILL EXPECT EVEN

THE SMALLEST OF DOGS TO BE CAPABLE OF BITING OFF A LEG. OR THE PSYCHOSOMATIC PERSON WHO IS PRESCRIBED PLACEBO PILLS WILL AUTOMATICALLY FEEL BETTER BECAUSE OF THE EXPECTATION OF THE PILL'S RESULTS. THE CHILD WHO IS EXPECTED TO TURN OUT BAD MOST LIKELY WILL IF HIS PARENTS CONTINUALLY REINFORCE AND EMPHASIZE THE THINGS THE CHILD DOES WRONG. PERHAPS THE ULTIMATE SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY MAY BE THE NATIONS WHO CONTINUOUSLY PREPARE FOR WAR. (McGraw Hill, The Pygmalion Effect, 1974) WHETHER IT BE PEOPLE, AN ORGANIZATION OR A NATION THE POWER OF EXPECTATION SHOULD NEVER BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. AS HENRY WARD BEECHER SAID, "THE HUMBLEST INDIVIDUAL EXERTS SOME INFLUENCE, EITHER FOR GOOD OR EVIL, UPON OTHERS." THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN LIFE AND THOSE WITH WHOM YOU COME INTO CONTACT. HOW HAVE YOU TOUCHED OR AFFECTED THEIR LIVES ? IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO FOLLOW UP THAT QUESTION WITH THE WISH ASKED FOR EARLIER IN THIS PAPER, "GIVE US THE GIFT TO SEE OURSELVES AS OTHERS TRULY SEE US."

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