

Quality #2 Goals and Expectations

Fantasy

Fantasy is a creation process in which we escape into this sacred space of the mind to a time “when” we are successful. We will create vivid visual images or deep emotional feelings in an attempt to prematurely experience desired future events. When we fantasize, we leap forward to our dreams and attempt to live in and beyond them, “when” and “then.” We attempt to shortcut or avoid the steps between where we “actually are” and “when” we are finally rich, at peace, free from stress and debt. In short, fantasy occurs when we use this sacred space in our mind to vividly escape the rigors of life.

When we fantasize, we build castles in the sky. Far too many attempt to move into these castles. We call it success psychosis. It is understandable. It feels glorious even if the feelings are counterfeit versions of the real thing.

Though real to the mind, fantasies exist only in our mind. When we spend productive time in these castles we are losing the time needed to actually create these dreams in tangible reality. Henry David Thoreau wisely counsels, “If you have built castles in the sky, you need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations underneath them.”

While in fantasy we have enough money to save our friends, family, and even the world. We have enough money to get out of debt, live stress and pain free, buy exotic cars, luxury homes, travel, anything we desire. We have safe and idealistic relationships complete with the commitment, trust, and the intimacy desired.

While in fantasy we can vividly experience the things money can buy plus counterfeit relief, false freedom, physical satisfaction, and pleasure. These things exist in our mind, created in a nanosecond, instantly, effortlessly, without work, and without ever having to leave our “easy chair” or the need to engage and connect with another human being.

While in vivid fantasy we will experience feelings of euphoria as the hormone and powerful drug norepinephrine is released by our sympathetic nervous system. This drug is so powerful that if it were available in prescriptive form it would be a controlled substance.

In addition and unlike life in the tangible world, we are in total control of people and situations - the outcome. Everyone does what they are supposed to do. Everything turns out the way you want it to. Everything is instant and perfect. This is what we want – no more stress, pain, frustration, and fear, and with the time and money to do whatever we want whenever we want, and we want it instantly.

How vividly can you fantasize? If you fantasize about owning exotic cars, what are the makes and models, colors, and special appointments? Do you have an order in which the cars would be purchased?

If you fantasize about luxury homes, what is the square footage, location, number of bedrooms, bathrooms, the color scheme, style of furniture, and other décor? What is the size of the garage, number of cars and in what order are they parked? Can you describe the temperature or texture of the tile, marble, or wood floor on your bare feet? How close to the ocean or a lake is the property? Can you describe the feelings associated with walking the halls and admiring the

artwork? Can you hear the birds, the crashing waves, and smell the sweet fragrances?

If you fantasize about being free from stress, what does it feel like to have your debts paid, money in the bank, the freedom to fire your boss and quit your job, travel, or just relax? How does it feel to be bathed with peace of mind?

If you fantasize about a better relationship, what does your companion look like, act like, and how do they respond to your needs? Are they a good listener, provider, and lover? How thrilling and fulfilling are the long walks on the beach, the nights entwined by the roaring fire talking and reading. How about those passionate and intimate moments? Perhaps you have a book or two in your library that helps facilitate this mental journey.

In addition to the fantasies listed, one of the most common fantasies is about helping others financially. These dreams can be driven by altruism, a genuine desire to bless others, however, these financial aid dreams are most commonly fantasies driven by a need to feel better about ourselves, assuage feelings of unworthiness regarding wealth, and to please or gain approval from others such as skeptical and unsupportive parents, siblings, or a community. These fantasies can go something like this (Smile).

It is late. Everyone is asleep. We close our eyes and start reflecting on our parents who planned poorly for retirement. We love them dearly and it is so difficult to see

them struggle. We drift into a fantasy. It's dad's birthday and we have planned something so extraordinary that we can hardly wait.

We have gathered all of our siblings together so that all can equally participate in our generosity. Our older brother wants to pick up the new car at the dealership. He has always wanted to drive a Lexus so why not let him.

Our older sister insisted on contributing so she purchased and prepared the giant red ribbon and bow. Everyone giggles as we wrap the shinny package. Mom and dad have never had a new car. Stepping back and standing arm in arm it is all we can do to hold back our tears of joy.

The time has come. Everyone hides in the bushes while our younger sister rings the doorbell and hides. Mom answers the door. No one's there, she exits the house and looks around. Seeing the car she screams while holding her hand to her mouth, "Dad, get out here!! Quickly!!" Stunned, she stands in silence waiting. Dad exits the house.

Confused at first, he slowly and cautiously walks over to the car, passing mom who is still frozen in her tracks. Dad sees and then reaches for the greeting card that has been carefully placed under the windshield wiper. He opens it and begins to read. As he does, tears begin to stream down his cheeks. He turns to mom, lip quivering, "It's for us, sweetie!

It's for us!" Mom rushes to dad and they give each other a warm embrace while keeping their eyes on the car. "It's from our kids!"

Everyone jumps out of the bushes and yells, "Surprise!!" Hugs, tears and unspeakable joy carry this touching scene. It is at this moment that we approach dad and mom, look them in the eye and say, "There is one more thing." We pull from our pocket an envelope, "This is for you, dad, for all those years of hard work supporting us and for you, mom, for all those years of taking care of us." Dad opens the envelope. It is the mortgage to their home and it is clearly marked, "Paid in full."

Dad collapses to his knees. We join him. He puts his arms around us, pulls us tight, and hugs us like we have never been hugged before. We finally hear the words we have waited for years to hear, "I love you. I love you so much. A parent could not have been blessed with a better and more generous child."

We open our eyes. Tears are streaming down our cheeks and staining our pillow. The feeling is euphoric. Everything we have longed to feel. For a moment the void in our heart is filled. We peacefully close our eyes and drift off to sleep.

The next morning the euphoric feelings that accompanied our

escape and avoid fantasies are quickly replaced by frustration, overwhelm, discouragement, emptiness and even anger as we face a very different reality.

Driven by a hunger for success, a thirst for happiness and peace of mind, punctuated by a desire to be free from frustration, stress, debt, and discouragement associated with such tangible reminders, we may use this powerful gift to again fantasize about being rich so that we can escape and avoid these life challenges. If we do, we commence a very dangerous journey that often and cruelly turns very quickly from euphoria to a ghoulish nightmare.

Regardless of why we fantasize, if we choose to fantasize we will inescapably face at least seven Herculean tasks:

1. **We turn our dreams into expectations – concrete conditions for happiness.**

Regardless of our current tangible reality – our current circumstances – we can be transported to another world and transcend any current pain, stress, and frustration. If our systemic thoughts are over-focused, and 97% of the time they are, we do this with such vividness that the same brain chemistry and circuitry occurs that would occur if we were experiencing the event in the tangible world.

This sacred space in our mind cannot distinguish the difference between fantasy and tangible reality. We have experienced it so vividly in our minds – it is real. Our dreams

have been converted into what scientists call mental constructs. We have constructed a new reality in the systemic mind and this sacred space of the mind now believes it is so. Our dreams have been transformed into expectations. Expectations are very literally to the systemic mind “concrete conditions for happiness.” Expectation can create a sense of entitlement. When life shows up differently we are frustrated or angry because it is supposed to be different.

Nowhere is this more apparent than with our youth. We have indoctrinated them in the new age millionaire magic doctrine via television, music videos, movies, video games, and our debt supported lifestyles which are increasing difficult to replicate. When I ask young people what they want to be when they grow up, an overwhelming majority respond, “Rich.” It is no wonder that students graduating from college have unrealistic expectations about salaries and promotions. It is no wonder that so many of our youth turn to drugs and alcohol to anesthetize the disappointments of tangible reality.

How frustrating is it when life shows up differently than your expectations? Ever feel frustrated, overwhelmed, or even angry? Do you ever become impatient when success seems to take too long or requires too much effort? Does it ever feel like you are losing out, surrendering, or giving up or giving in when asked to get real about the comparison between your dreams and your tangible reality? Have you ever been tempted to blame a

company, product, manager, mentor, customer, parent, or companion when life shows up differently than your expectations?

2. Expectations exist only in our mind and cannot be magically or mystically changed into tangible reality.

A new coaching client shared an experience that emphasizes the pain associated with overcoming this Herculean task. Every Sunday for several months she and her husband had driven over to see their “dream home,” a newly constructed residence that had been vacant for nearly six months. They had taken pictures of the home and put them on their refrigerator. They spent hours fantasizing together and individually about what it was like to live in the home. They drew landscape plans and decorated the home – in their mind. Mentally they had moved in to their castle.

Because of their collective over-focused systemic thought processes they had created an expectation, a concrete condition for happiness. The vivid visualizations did not ignite passion that would drive discipline, focus, effort, and action. Instead the fantasy was creating ever-increasing levels of dissatisfaction and frustration with their current living conditions. Every time tangible reality showed up differently, anger followed.

They heard me speak on this topic and went home determined to face reality and create a different outcome. They decided to “let go of the house.” They later shared the emotional

moment when this decision was made. “There was crying and even screaming. It was painful, like someone was cutting the dream out of our heart with a dull knife.”

When they engaged me as a coach, we explored a few questions. I discovered that the house was priced at \$850,000. Even more revealing was the discovery that they had less than \$5,000 in their bank account and could not qualify for or service the loan needed to consummate the deal. I suggested that they keep the dream as a worthy target instead of making a daily destination. It was time to create the steps between where they actually were and the home. “Now you know what you want,” I said. “Now let’s go to work and create it. Focus on embracing the business opportunity before you. Decide to engage in life. Connect with your prospects and customers. Create value for them. Contribute to the world. Do this and the natural outcome will be the means to purchase your dream house.”

In the end, they discovered that they did not actually give up anything except an expectation and the expectation was tainting their life and impeding their ability to create a different outcome in tangible reality.

We live in a tangible world. The things we dream about usually exist or are experienced in a tangible world. No matter how much we want it to be otherwise our expectations exist only in our systemic mind - a totally different realm of reality than this tangible world.

We will never be able to mystically or magically exchange fantasy dollars for tangible dollars. That is what the alchemists from the “dark ages” tried in vain to accomplish – magically change coal into gold. Alchemy does not work, however, perturbation does. When coal is put under enough pressure the carbon atoms are transformed into a diamond. The same is true for each of us if we stop resisting the pressure and stop trying to escape and avoid the very things that will turn us into a diamond.

Have you ever screamed aloud, “I can almost taste it! I can almost touch it! It seems so real. Why can’t I have it?” Now you know that you can have it but not via escape and avoid fantasies.

3. **If we want to create our expectations in reality, we will have to do the very things we are attempting to avoid through fantasy.**

Have you ever been so excited about a business opportunity, position, idea, or a relationship only to crash into a thick brick wall – all the stress, pain, frustration, focus, and boring, mundane, repetitious “work” required to create it? Ever get frustrated when faced with your fears about connecting with others? Do you ever avoid these barriers by spending productive time thinking about what it will be like when you are rich? While in fantasy we skip past all of our fears and the work required to actually create our dreams. We attempt to prematurely experience the outcome. The mind can become very confused each time tangible reality shows up differently. It thinks we

already have it. Why then must we do all of this work? Yuck!

Here is the dilemma. Mathematically, a systemic thought processes dualistically – win/lose, right/wrong, life/death. There is no spectrum or gradation. It is all or nothing, polar opposites. When we fantasize with vividness the brain chemistry and circuitry locks the mind into one end of the spectrum. We are right. We are alive. We win. We have it all. That is the mind's reality. It is absolute, an expectation, a concrete condition for happiness. There are no compromises, no acquiescing. What is the absolute? We are free from stress, pain, work, free to do as we please.

When reality challenges this absolute, and it always will, the only options are the polar opposite: being wrong, worthless, nothing, dead which translated is frustration, overwhelm, depression and anger. Fantasize about freedom and you have sentenced yourself to financial prison.

4. **All too often our expectations cannot be created on this planet. This is especially true of “ease.”**

It is my experience that abundant people have mastered the ability to manage higher levels of stress. It was not easy even for them. Their decision to seek abundance included the intentional and conscious decision to “become” abundant. In so doing, they chose to pay the price to “become” capable of handling ever-increasing levels of stress. The more stress they can handle, the more abundant they become.

It is a good thing that we do not know the full extent of the effort required when we commence this journey. We are not prepared to comprehend it, let alone handle it. If placed on our current shoulders it would crush many of us much like lottery winnings usually crush the winners.

In time we will have the strength to carry all of it if we focus on “becoming” that person. For now, please understand that if we are seeking abundance believing we will live in a world free of stress, we are seeking to create something that does not exist on this planet. Have you been suffering from the “ease disease?”

5. **Our body will create potentially dangerous chemical reactions when our expectations are threatened.**

While in fantasy, the same chemistry and circuitry occurs in the brain that would occur if we were actually there. To support this experience, the sympathetic nervous system releases the hormone and powerful drug norepinephrine leaving us feeling euphoric.

We have managed to create an expectation - a concrete condition for happiness. Our happiness is contingent on having that which we have created in our mind. This expectation is VERY real to the systemic mind. It is so real that our body autonomically – more than automatically - attempts to protect the expectation when threatened.

When we have a proclivity to fantasize, we will unavoidably

encounter life showing up differently than expected. Each time this happens the body reacts much like it would if we were being attacked by a grizzly bear. To protect us, the sympathetic nervous system releases a large dose of cortisol, which kicks the norepinephrine off of its cell receptor. Cortisol then connects to its unique receptor on the cell and then communicates at a cellular level a message that leaves us feeling anxious, fearful, overwhelmed, and even angry. These are not made up feelings. They are driven by this chemical release, which was caused by a threat to our expectation.

Have you ever experienced that tightening of the gut – that emotional lightning bolt of emotion? To further complicate this moment, the amygdala, the fight and flight center of the brain, releases fear dendrites that go up into our pre-frontal cortex – the area that controls our higher levels of consciousness. These dendrites rob the metabolic energy needed to maintain empathy and practical judgment – our people skills and common sense. In many ways we are emotionally paralyzed. We have been prepared for a war and the enemy is not a mean grizzly bear, it is simply tangible reality showing up differently than our expectations.

As emotionally painful as this process may seem, it is only a chemical reaction to a threatened expectation. One of our concrete conditions for happiness, something that exists only in our mind but is very real to the mind, has been challenged by tangible reality, a simple yet painful experience that can be

avoided.

Have you ever experienced this rollercoaster of emotions – emotionally high even euphoric feelings shortly followed by emotional lows and even emotional paralysis? Have you ever been so excited about an idea and vividly experienced it in your mind only to be in the dumps the next day? Have you ever been so discouraged that you wanted to stay curled up in bed all day and hide from the world?

To be aware in this moment is truly a Herculean task. Best to learn how to avoid it than struggle to find the strength to overcome it.

6. **Our mind will obsessively attempt to solve these unsolvable challenges.**

Expectations are no longer a good idea or something that would be nice, they have become “concrete,” uncompromising, immovable conditions for happiness.

Mathematically, we know that systemic thoughts function dualistically. Because of the mathematics, our mind will obsessively try and try and try and try, in ad nauseam, to resolve this unsolvable riddle of actually creating the unrealistic expectation in tangible reality. Something is missing. Something doesn't fit. Something is wrong and the systemic mind has to make it right – it has no other mathematical option. If our expectations cannot be “created” in this tangible world, we have set ourselves up for what Harvey Schoff, the co-developer of our

assessment called, “An unrelenting, unyielding pursuit of the unachievable.”

Do you ever feel overwhelmed? Are you where you thought you would be at this point in your life? What is the level of your frustration? Is the computer of your mind obsessively trying to get the launch codes for your life, unwilling to find joy in the journey until this task is completed and your success is launched?

7. **Fantasy is premeditated anger.**

We can carelessly measure the value of what we have and do using these expectations as the measuring rod. Reality rarely measures up to fantasy. Our life and everything about it can become a grand disappointment, a burden or barrier, the thief who steals our hopes and dreams. As a result we can miss the sweet joy of gratitude and substitute fear, anxiety, stress, frustration, impatience, jealousy, emotional paralysis, and even anger because we have been unable to create these expectations in the tangible world.

When we stubbornly cling to these expectations we will resist “what is” – tangible reality. “It is supposed to be different!” Resistance to “what is” quickly becomes resentment. Resentment is anger waiting in the wings and anger all too often takes center stage. Fantasy is premeditated anger!

How do you feel about your relationships, children, car, house or apartment, furniture, bank account, job, body type, weight, hair or lack thereof and general health? Do you ever find

yourself frustrated because you do not have something better or have more? Does it ever feel like you will have to give up, give in, or surrender to accept “what is” or to be grateful for what you have? Do you ever find yourself erupting in anger over that which in reality is not that important – at least retrospectively?

We believe that the chronic release of cortisol that occurs every time tangible reality shows up differently than our expectations might in fact be a major contributor to anger. A coaching client once described the home she grew up in as an angry place. She thought anger was the natural response to every life situation that wasn't perfect. I smiled when she quipped, “It was a veritable cortisol factory.” Unmet unrealistic expectations – concrete conditions for happiness – breed anger, the antithesis of peace of mind.

In addition to these seven Herculean challenges, fantasy reveals our heart, our true desires – our true intention. Is there any risk that we have been duplicitous – double minded? Do we say one thing publically and privately fantasize about another? Do we act like we care about others yet secretly fantasize about a life of leisure free from nagging people yet funded by their financial contributions to our life? How congruent are we with the power that governs abundance? Are our expectations in conflict with being an active partner?

Again, we will want to vigilantly guard the thoughts we create in this sacred space of our mind. The vision created will either ignite passion that will drive discipline, focus, effort, and action in the tangible world or it will simply drive us crazy.