

23. Managing Expectations



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With Your Host

Dara Tomasson

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Are you convinced that if you try to take charge of your own life it won't work so why bother trying? Listen in on this episode where I can show you how you truly can be someone who can manage your own expectations and live to tell the tale.

I am Dara Tomasson, and this is Weight Loss for Quilters episode 23, Managing Expectations. Did you know you could lose weight and keep it off for good? After 25 years of hiding behind my quilts, I have finally cracked the code for permanent weight loss, and I've lost 50 pounds without exercise or counting calories. I'm Dara Tomasson, professional quilter turned weight and life coach, where I help quilters just like you create a life they love by losing weight and keeping it off for good. Let's jump into today's episode.

Alright, are you ready? Okay, so today I had clients and we were talking in our group about how do they know what a good day looks like? And it was very interesting. Each one of them had their own ways of knowing if their day was good or not. And so it was a very interesting conversation. And so today's episode we're going to talk about how managing expectations is going to help you become the person who you really want to be. And a lot of you think, I don't even know who I want to be, first of all.

I don't even know if I'm allowed to be who I want to be because everyone has all these different expectations of me. And so you feel really unempowered and feel really out of control. I think there's a lot of that out there. And so that word 'control' comes up a lot. So today's episode we're going to talk about how do you learn how to set expectations. How do you enforce expectations? How do you evaluate them? And how do you create healthy habits to have a life where you can feel like you're totally in charge and you're totally alright, you've got this, it feels really comfortable.

So before we go into this episode I want you just to think how do you do in managing your own expectations? Or do you feel like you're managing everyone else's expectations and that it's not even an option for you? I really want you to imagine, if there's a scale of one to ten, where do you fall in your confidence of being able to say, "Yeah, this is my life, I feel really

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good about it. I feel like I've got this. I never am really surprised. And if things come up that are last minute, I know what to do. I never feel like I'm blindsided or out of control. I feel mostly calm."

Or is it the opposite, do you feel like I never know what's happening? And we're going to talk about this concept that I came up with, the unpredictable predictable. So we're going to talk about that too. Alright, so that's what you can expect in this episode. It's going to be really helpful. It's like I'm giving you your calendar back, I'm giving you your power back, it's going to be really fun.

Okay, alright. So before we do that I just want to shout out one of my clients. I love doing this. So I have one of my clients who has struggled with codependency. So codependency I like to explain it as an addiction to people approving her, people needing you, people approving you. And she just had thanksgiving and she was able to just sit with her family. In the past she spent a lot of time following her grandkids around, following her grown kids around, making sure that they were happy.

So she was really trying to be the movie director, trying to make sure that everyone was happy all the time. And this past thanksgiving she was able to just sit and enjoy all the conversations. And one of the greatest bonuses was that she wasn't exhausted because she was well planned. She didn't add in extra things. She had a plan and she executed it because she's been planning so much and learning how to evaluate which is actually one of the skills I'm going to teach you in today's episode.

So this was a huge win for her, and I absolutely love celebrating the women in the program. And in fact most of the calls start out with a win. We are always looking for the wins, it's the way to go. Alright, are you ready? About managing expectations.

So how would you know what a good day looks like? So if you were to put me on pause for a minute, what, or if we were having a conversation sitting here in my studio, what would be a good day? So I had clients who were saying, "Well, if nothing went wrong, everything was good, I was able to tick

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off everything from my list, that would be a good day.” So my question to her was, “Well, isn’t that what happens every day? People get sick. People break their arms in the playground. They need you to come because they can’t go to work, and you have to babysit.”

Or people can’t come to the holidays because their car broke down, or there was a road closure. We just had massive road closures where whole sections of the highway got completely washed out. It’s just been really quite phenomenal. So if the thing is if your expectation of a good day is that nothing went wrong, you’re never going to have a good day. And if your expectation is that having a good day, you have everything ticked off your list, then if you don’t know how to master your list and you haven’t found the skill of balancing your schedule then now you’re at the mercy of this list.

And some people say, “Well, I know it’s a good day if I’ve lost weight. I know it’s a good day if I didn’t gain weight. I know it’s a good day if I wasn’t tempted by food.” So do you see what the theme is? They’re saying, “I know it’s a good day if something outside of me changes or something outside of me is a certain way and then I can feel good about my day.”

And then the next question I asked them and I’m going to ask you the same question is, have you ever written down what makes a good day or not? Have you ever created a parameter of good day or bad day? So today I’m going to go through some expectations, and just some examples from a mother’s perspective, a grandmother, or a wife. So for example today I was coaching a client and she really struggles because she just feels like all these things happen to her and she feels really out of control.

So she’s doing the laundry, she’s standing there in front of her washing machine and she’s sorting the whites from the darks. And the next thing she knows, her three year old has literally dumped himself into the washing machine. So his head is all wet, his shirt is all wet, and she feels like it’s just so unpredictable. She feels it’s so scary.

And then the next day they were going to go somewhere, and she was waiting for her husband and other son to come. And so she let the three

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year old, the same, one play on the playground which is just beside their house, and he got stuck at the top of the playground. And started panicking and screaming, saying, "I need help. I need help." And she had her baby in a car seat and feeling like, oh dear, what do I do next? And just feeling this unpredictable danger of her life. And so now she's building a story. She's like a police officer who's collecting evidence.

And she was saying, "I just feel like my life is just so unpredictable." And what this concept is, I call it the predictable unpredictable. We know there's going to be unpredictable things in life. So if we can predict there's just going to be unpredictables, how awesome is that? You're like, yeah. So it's like me having teenagers who drive my car. I know that they're going to get in accidents. They're going to scrape things. They're going to burst tires, or run the curb, or something. So I just put money aside every month and I say, "This is my predictable unpredictable money fund."

Because I know that people who are learning to drive, they get into accidents. And so I don't know exactly what the accident's going to be. I don't know exactly what's going to happen. But I just know that. And I mean the same thing with owning a car, predictable unpredictable. We know that cars wear out. And we know that we need to do oil changes and filter changes. We don't know exactly how much it's going to cost. We don't know exactly what's going to happen next. But this is always happening in life.

So when we say, "It just feels so scary, and life is so hard. And it's just so random and difficult." Life is going to be a balance of 50/50. And yes, we don't know what kinds of kids we're going to have. We don't know if a flood's going to come and wash out major parts of the highway, or if the ferry is going to get closed. I live on an island so of course that would be a factor. But there's always, that's part of being a human, there is always going to be the unpredictable. And I'd like to say that that is actually, that's kind of fun, that we can have this adventure.

So we can decide what we want to think about that. So there is that one concept that I want you just to sit on that and kind of mull that over.

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Because so many women are like, they just get so focused on trying to control everything and they become a control enthusiast. Some people call them control freaks. And what I'm wanting to show you is that you can just allow the human experience. And like we talk about with self-confidence, we go back to the hope road and worry road. It's like I can solve any problem, everything is figure out-able.

Alright, so that is what I mean. So with the mom, the coaching that I gave her was, "What would it be like for you to just write down a list of all the things that your kids do that you feel like you're crazy and it's unpredictable, and it's just wild. What would it be like if you just wrote that down in a book and then that book eventually became your family's stories? And a week from now, three weeks from now, a year from now, five years from now, ten years from now, you're going to laugh about that.

You're going to say, "Remember the time when you were helping with laundry and then you just went headfirst into the washing machine?" You're going to laugh about it. So it's like who do you want to be in that moment? And so one of this managing expectations is, and these are ones that we can play with. As a mom it's like, okay, if you're yelling at your kids 10 times a day, maybe you could say, "You know what? I want to cut that back to seven." And then talking to them about their rooms.

At one point I just got a bag and I just put everything in that bag, and I was just like, "Yeah, that bag, all those things that you left on the floor and as I asked you three times, those things are gone now from you." One time when my daughter was younger and I asked her nicely, asked her nicely to clean her room. She never did. And I said, "Okay, that's fine." And it was three times I asked her, and I said, "Okay, well, tonight you're not going to be in your room. We're just going to put your mattress here on the floor in the hallway and you just don't get your room."

I have a friend who, her son just kept leaving wet towels on the floor and she got so sick of it. And I said, "Well, what about if he just doesn't get a towel that day? If you have to pick up his towel he just doesn't get a towel. That would be kind of uncomfortable to get out of the shower and have no

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towel.” And so I’m giving you these ideas because we always have control of how we want to think, we always do. And so why not give ourselves this time to really learn to manage our thinking because that’s where we get the control?

And when you make these expectations it’s always in your control. So let’s go to the grandma one. So my mother-in-law is wonderful. And she loves to cook. And I never realized that it stressed her out if we just popped by at eleven. She would be really worried about lunch and feeling like she had to invite me. And I never even thought of it. So then she anticipated that I would think that she should make me lunch. And so then she made a big deal of making lunch and I just thought that was just her way of loving me and loving the kids.

And eventually she said to me, “You know, it really stresses me out when you come by beforehand, an hour or so before lunch because I feel like I need to feed you. And I hadn’t planned it. And so it just stresses me out. So if you want to eat at my house we need to do 24 hours in advance.” And I was like, “Oh, no problem.” And for me I had no idea that that stressed her out. I thought it was a joy and a pleasure because the only experience that we have with people is the experience that you give them.

So if she’s like, “Oh, that’s so lovely you’re here and you can stay for lunch. And it’s so wonderful. And I have this lovely meat and I’ll make you some sandwiches. And this is just so nice not to eat by myself.” Then that is the experience that I have of, she loves it when I come for lunch. But meanwhile she hadn’t really expressed to me how stressful that was for her. So when she was able to manage the expectation of, “Hey, if you want to eat here you just need to let me know 24 hours in advance and then I will say if that’s going to work or not.”

This is another way to look at this is creating healthy boundaries. So then you think about even let’s take the example of a wife, managing expectations. So what would it be like – I mean I’m just going to give a simple example of Mother’s Day. So I had expectations of now that I’m a mother, people should make me dinner and do the dishes. Well, that wasn’t

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what other people thought. And so I was able to start understanding what my expectations were and then I set the parameters for that.

So if I wanted a nice dinner on Mother's Day and no one wanted to make that for me, then I would make it myself. And I wouldn't make a big deal. I would offer that, "Hey, do you want to do this? No, okay, that's fine. I'll make it." So it's my decision. My birthday, I always plan my birthday, always. I am just very proactive that way because I always want to enjoy my birthday and I don't want to give my power into other people's hands. So it's another way of thinking about it.

So those are some examples. Now, we talked about predictable unpredictable. We talked about different ways of setting boundaries. And I'm going to give more podcast episodes more specifically on boundaries and manuals later. But when we talk about managing expectations, I want you to start really deciding, what does a good day look like? Does it mean I didn't lose my cool three out of five times? Does it mean that I was a good human, I listened to my intuition? Does a day involve doing one act of service?

To have a good day does it mean I need to do some creativity? I have a friend who does, every morning she does something creative. For me a good day would be I did some journaling. I spent some time in the scriptures. I spent time praying. Another thing I do is I spend time by myself in a hot tub and I spend time with nature. That's really important to me, just to have that time. Another expectation I have for a good day is to connect with my kids and to connect with my husband. But there's so many of us who haven't set parameters.

And if you haven't set parameters then it's like you're a leaf on the end of a branch just going with the wind. You're not grounded, and you don't have anything to evaluate yourself with. So one of the things that I do on a regular basis, and this is something I'm learning. I'm really good of course with the weight loss because I have figured that all out. So I am now doing that with my calendar. And there's lots of things on my calendar, like

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recording podcasts, and writing emails, and doing popup groups, and coaching my ladies, and making sure that I am ahead of the game.

We're having the new program and so just all of the things that are now requiring my time and attention. So what I'm doing every day is I'm writing out my calendar very detailed and then I'm evaluating it. So now I know an email takes me this length of time. A launch takes me this length of time. This takes me this. And then if I go off, if I go off track then I can evaluate, I went on Instagram. I got a phone call. So I need to plan in my schedule to have a little bit of flex time so that if there's some urgency.

It's kind of like when I was a substitute teacher. I had a substitute teacher manual so if I actually was very sick and I wasn't in my proper mind, I would always have a backup plan. I had a whole week planned of different things that a substitute teacher could do with my students at the drop of a beat. It's there, it's in a binder, it's ready to go. So I am learning now. And I didn't do that when I first started teaching. I didn't even think to do that but as you get more experience you learn. So now I'm learning to master my calendar.

And I'm really learning what it takes to be the CEO of my business and how much time it takes, how much effort. And so now I'm just evaluating. So this is what I do. I evaluate and I say, "What went well? What didn't go so well? And what can I do better next time?" And so every day at the end of the day I evaluate my calendar and so now I've got a lot of data and I'm just getting better and better at being able to know what's realistic and what's not realistic.

So having said that, I had to cancel a few things that I was going to do but I said, "No, I can't do that, it's just pushing me to the edge, and I work till four. And I'm not willing to do that anymore." So that's an example of that. Now, remember, 95% of our thoughts are unconscious. So when we are evaluating we are bringing all of those thoughts to our consciousness. And we're able to see what's working and what's not working, and so we can stop the bad habits and we can create new habits. So that's also really important.

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So that is what I wanted to leave you with today, ladies and gents if there's any gents out there. I really want to help you feel encouraged and inspired to create whatever kind of life you want. And in order to do that you need to set proper parameters. You need to have actual expectations written down so you can evaluate it, just like my example with my calendar. I literally say, "I think this is going to take me 20 minutes." And I have my time going and I'm just constantly, "Okay, too much time, too little time, definitely needed more time on that. Didn't need as much time on that. Need to plan in time."

So now I'm not so scared of my calendar. It's just like with the food, ladies. I say, "Okay, when I eat nacho chips this is what happens. When I eat this kind of food this is what happens. When I don't eat for a certain amount of time and I really get the Leptin and the Ghrelin kick in, this is what happens." It was the same thing.

Alright, okay everyone, you have an amazing day. So if you're listening to this on December 22nd, it's so exciting, Christmas is fun. And remember, you get to make Christmas whatever you decide. So have the merriest of Christmas and I can't wait to see you in the next episode where we're going to talk about gratitude. Alright, take care everyone. Bye bye.

Thanks for listening to *Weight Loss for Quilters*. If you want more info, please visit daratomasson.com. See you next week.