

## Expectations -vs- Goals

Kurt Soderberg

June 16, 2017

We often hear people talk about the importance of setting goals in all areas of their lives and that is certainly a valuable practice. However, one of the most overlooked aspects of a high functioning team, school, family, or individual is the concept of clear and positive expectations.

In an organization, setting clear expectations around behavior and performance is a cornerstone for achieving at a consistently high level. The expectations provide the operational parameters for everyone within an organization and immediately creates a level of interdependency and accountability. Once established, it is the responsibility of each individual in the organization to maintain the culture by adhering to the expectations.

On an individual level, one of the greatest skills we can teach our children is how to set their own behavioral and performance expectations. When we work with our children to define their expectations for themselves a few very powerful things happen.

1. They recognize that a couple simple expectations can apply to every area of their lives and result in a sense of satisfaction, accomplishment, and stability.
2. Because they are determining their expectations they become empowered to take ownership. We tend to take ownership of the things we create. Let them create.
3. They are able to avoid situations that don't align with their self-determined expectations. This is particularly important when the adults aren't there to guide their decision making process.

For example, if a child sets a personal expectation to "always give my best effort" it will drive whatever goal they set in any area of their life. Without that simple expectation the goal is less meaningful and less likely to be accomplished because the child hasn't defined that as a standard for their life. Goals without expectations can create frustration and a lack of purpose resulting in failure.

As adults we need to model clear and positive expectations for our children starting at home. Setting those expectations will make it easier for our children to understand the concept of expectations and eventually set expectations for themselves.

If we want our children to achieve their very best we must teach them how to set personal expectations and tie those expectations to meaningful goals.