

## **It's Not Fair The Expectation**

Assumptions underlie a whole lot of our thinking. They also effect, if not outright dictate how we respond to any number of situations. Our assumptions then generate expectations. Things should go a certain way. Circumstances should pan out in a given direction. Good should beget nothing but good. Bad should beget bad, except of course when there's repentance or true remorse. Investments should result in returns; the more lavish the better. A good deed is deserving of some sort of gratitude, despite how miniscule it might be. Harm should not befall us unless of course we have first caused harm. Right should be the norm. Wrong should be the stuff of accidents, not something intentional. Everybody should seek the good of everybody else. And of course the maxim of all time, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

The place within which all of this stuff played out all of the time wouldn't be a perfect world, but it'd be a whole lot better than the one we face every day. It's what we long for . . . desperately. We can visualize it and we can articulate it. Somewhere in the folds of our souls we know this was a large part of the way this was all somehow supposed to be. In hoping for it, we're grieving what got lost somewhere before we got here. We yearn for a sense of fair play arising from the amalgamation of ingredients like justice, honesty and a compelling sense of truth that remains the same even when everything around it changes.

If you think about it, the word fairness itself is byproduct of the existence of unfairness. Why would we need to debate the concept of fairness if that's all there was? It would be an assumed standard with nothing to hold up against it. But it's not assumed. In fact, it's questioned, debated and at times entirely absent. And when it's absent we're likely going to get hurt; somehow, someday. When fairness in any degree is absent, we will get wounded and possibly scarred. Fairness is hoped for, and rightly so. But it's not guaranteed.

### **The Reality . . . Life is Not Fair**

Yeah, we've all heard it before. Knowing it doesn't make it right. Knowing it doesn't even make it real. We know it, but we struggle to accept it. It's a reality, but it's wrong and that creates an ever present tension wherein we scream "it should not be." In this life, many things should not be, but they are anyway.

Fairness is not a privilege afforded us. It is right that we have to fight for. Even in the battle, it may not be forthcoming. We will walk away from many situations having fought with exhausting tenacity and having sacrificed profoundly, yet being denied anything remotely resembling even the thinnest thread of fairness. It's all unfair because life is not fair. It is a sad and devastating reality that at times pummels us, shreds us and leaves us strewn somewhere where we should not be. Life is not fair, which is in itself unfair . . . but it's fact. In order to fight it, you must first embrace that reality.

### **Because Life's Unfair, I Will Get Hurt**

Accept it. You don't have to like it, but you have to accept it. That doesn't mean you don't fight it or fight for it; not at all. But it does mean that there's a harsh reality out there that will at times and in certain instances leave us crushed and

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broken. Life will steamroll you sooner or later. You're going to get mowed. Sometimes it will be a situation of your own making. Other times you may have nothing to do with it. Life sometimes just shows up, whacks us around a bunch and moves on with some sort of impunity; something like a sudden tornado or earthquake that races in and races out leaving carnage strewn in its wake. We will get hurt, and it may be nothing of our own doing. It may have everything to do with our doing. Whatever the case, it can happen and sooner or later it does. But life is unfair, so expect it.

### **Pleading for Fairness Verses Fighting for It**

Pleading for something verses fighting for it are two very different things. Certainly, we can plead for fairness as it is something that should be accorded us. However, more often than not it's about fighting for it because it's often unlikely that it's just going to be handed serendipitously to us.

In fighting for it, we need to be clear that what we're fighting for is in reality fairness. A lot of other things can look like fairness and really having nothing to do with it. Our own self-serving agendas, efforts to avoid our own culpability, manufacturing some sort of victim stance, revenge, intolerance, and attempts to advance oneself . . . all of this can shrewdly disguise itself as fairness. Fairness means that we not only want to be treated fairly, but that we engage in the pursuit of it with the same fairness that we want to be accorded.

### **Doing Unto Others . . .**

The guiding tenant in the administration of fairness may very well be the golden rule. If I presume to want for others what I want for myself, I am likely to maintain a truer course. Fairness then means according others what I would like for myself even when that's not reciprocated. The compass that determines our heading in any situation might be determined by asking "how would I want to be treated in this situation?" With that determined, I set out to achieve this standard even if the same grace is not extended to me. That's a tough stance to take, but it's a fair one. And fairness demands that I recognize that life is unfair. Because of that reality, the outcome might be pleasant or it might be terribly unpleasant. I might be get bit. I may be denied the very courtesy that I am extending to others. But being fair is not contingent upon being treated fairly because life is unfair.

How are you going view fairness? Is the absence of it going to cause you to be bitter? Is the presence of it going to leave you with a sense of entitlement that will eventually ruin you and everyone around you? It's really not about life being fair. Rather, it's about you and I choosing to be fair even when everything around us it not. Life is not fair. How will you respond to that?