

How the Expectation Effect Can Haunt Your Halloween



Crystallise

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As **Halloween** approaches, we brace ourselves for frights — but could **our own expectations** be what really give us chills?



The ‘**expectation effect**’, a concept explored by David Robson in his book, *The Expectation Effect*, shows how our **beliefs** shape our **reality**.



Especially on Halloween, this effect can turn even the most harmless settings into haunted experiences!

What is the Expectation Effect?

The **expectation effect** is our brain’s ability to **shape experiences** based on what we **believe** will happen

On Halloween, when we **anticipate scares** in haunted houses, ghost stories, and eerie sights, this effect becomes particularly **potent**

Our minds **interpret** shadows and creaks as sinister, driven by the expectation that something frightening lurks around every corner

How Does This Effect Manifest in Real Life?

A powerful example of the expectation effect in action is found in the experiences of the **Hmong community**, where cultural beliefs have even impacted health. Some Hmong people have experienced

“**sudden unexplained nocturnal death syndrome**”

- a phenomenon linked to fears of spiritual attacks during sleep

This demonstrates the extent to which our **minds** (and the expectations they create) can **influence physical realities**. Similarly, on Halloween, our anticipations can turn **ordinary sights and sounds** into **ghostly encounters**.



So, **how can you use the expectation effect** to amplify your Halloween experience?



If you’re up for a thrill, let your expectations set the stage by **filling your surroundings** with spooky decor and eerie music, **amplifying** every small scare

Using the Expectation effect to enhance your halloween

But if Halloween frights aren’t your thing, remember Robson’s insights: by **reframing your expectations**, you can embrace the fun of Halloween without the fear, knowing that much of it is simply **your mind playing tricks**

As you wander through the eerie darkness this Halloween, remember —

The real scare might not be in the shadows around you but in the **expectations** within your own mind



Happy Halloween!