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# EXPECTATION

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December 2020 Monthly Theme

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Sometimes we UU's become so focused on taking hold of life that we lose the spiritual skill of allowing life to hold us. And there's a lot at stake in being able to do both. We human beings weren't just made to manifest our power; we were born to learn we are part of a greater whole.

Shaping reality and trusting reality are two very different things. Can we learn to let go when life plays with our expectations and find joy in the completely unexpected?

*One key to knowing  
joy is being easily  
pleased.*

*Mark Nepo,  
The Book of Awakening*

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## Questions for Reflection

- ◆ Take a few minutes to think about a typical day. How often do you expect something to happen, and how do you feel when it doesn't?
- ◆ When your expectations get turned on their head, do you see that as a threat or are you willing to lean in? How is this reflected in your thoughts and behavior?
- ◆ Who taught you the most about defying expectations? How did their courageous living spill over into your own?

## *Clarity, See Out*

It is so difficult to see this  
flower\*  
because the countless others  
we've seen before  
cloud the view,  
along with how we expect it to  
look  
and how it might be improved.

Even the faces of the ones we  
love deeply  
hide like buried treasure  
behind histories of expression.

In order to see  
what is right in front of our  
eyes,  
we first have to recognize  
we have gradually  
become blind,  
and then begin  
the slow work of forgetting.

- Daron Larson

\*Substitute with any noun:  
beach, stone, grandmother,  
house, beef stew, dog, onion,  
towel, teacher, report card,  
cloud, tv show, etc.

## Videos to Watch

- 2018 UU General Assembly Ware Lecture:  
Spirit of Expectancy by Brittany Packnett

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkV2fNuNtC4>

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- The Power of Expectations - Invisibilia,  
NPR

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=110&v=hbhwRRW\\_30](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=110&v=hbhwRRW_30)

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- TED talk by Brittany Barron

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDzj9vRw5yM>

On America as “an expert at expecting certain things from a woman who looks like Beyoncé.” A powerful engagement of Maya Angelou’s admonishment, “First, recognize that I am a black woman. And then, forget that I am a black woman.”

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*Excerpt from Philip Gulley's "Porch Talk: Stories of Decency, Common Sense, and Other Endangered Species"*

'My greatest blessing,' my mother-in-law, Ruby Apple, tells me, 'is that I have always been content.'

She tells me this often, so I know it must be true. She never says, 'My greatest blessing is that I have enjoyed good health,' or 'My greatest blessing is that I married well.' Though she appreciates her good health and marriage, she is most grateful for contentment, knowing it's a rarer bird.

I suspect Ruby's 'secret' is low expectations. She grew up in hardship, assumed most of her life would follow that pattern, and so was surprised and grateful when good came her way. Too many of us approach life in the opposite manner. We believe the world owes us a great deal, are disappointed when it fails to deliver, and think ourselves deprived. If life were mashed potatoes, we'd see the lumps and Ruby would see the gravy.

Perhaps our headlong pursuit of happiness is the enemy. Since Ruby never believed the world owed her happiness, she's found it in small ways, in the slightest things, cultivating the wise habit of seeing the silver lining and not the cloud.

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**It's funny how many of our problems result from our entirely unrealistic expectations of what life is supposed to be like. I don't see inscribed anywhere on my birth certificate a promise that life was going to be easy or simple - and yet a part of me deeply resents the fact that it isn't easy or simple, as though I had a right to that.**

**~ Molly Wolf, A Place Like No Other**