

Anticipation

Dave Beckman, Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse, WI, November 24, 2021

Our Covenant: *To deepen our spiritual growth by being in a relationship with one another, by examining our core beliefs and experiences, and by learning from one another.*

Chalice Lighting & Check-in:

What I need to leave behind to be fully present today.

Opening Words:

Never forget that anticipation is an important part of life. Work's important, family's important, but without excitement, you have nothing. You're cheating yourself if you refuse to enjoy what's coming. Nicholas Sparks

Focus: *The Positive Experience of Anticipation: By Stern Handel*

On a fundamental level, anticipation can be a very valuable and positive emotion to experience. It might even be necessary to living a truly happy and satisfying life.

When we have something to look forward to, it makes it easier to get through rough, frustrating, and annoying times. But even more than that, “anticipation” can often be a stepping stone to “hope.”

As human beings, we need things in our future to be excited about and optimistic about. Imagine if you had nothing at all to look forward to in life. You'd likely be very miserable, upset, and even depressed. It's very hard to find a “will to live” if you can't imagine that there's anything positive waiting for you in the future. What would be the point?

We should always have at least one thing to look forward to.

So, take a moment and think about it: “What are you currently looking forward to in your life?” It could be anything “large” or “small,” but it's important that you find something.

Perhaps you look forward to spending free time with your children at the end of the day, or going to a bar with friends on the weekend, or checking out that new movie that's coming out soon.

It doesn't matter if it's something that is meaningful or trivial, as long as you have something to help give your mind a positive view of the future.

If you find it hard to think of something to look forward to, then why not create something to look forward to? Make plans: get tickets to a local music show, schedule to meet up with an old friend, or start a new hobby on the weekends.

Overall, we all need something to look forward to. Find something to make your future look a little brighter and happier – and relish in the anticipation of good things to come.

Common examples of rewards that create anticipation:

- Looking forward to a lunch break during the day.
- Looking forward to your favorite TV show that airs once a week.
- Making fun plans for the weekend to help you get through a tough work week.
- Treating yourself to a piece of cake after a week of dieting.
- Planning a vacation for the summer.
- Treating yourself to a new car at the end of the year.
- Planning a wedding with your fiancé/fiancée.

Both “small” and “large” rewards can be a healthy way to build anticipation and motivation in our lives. And I'd recommend that we focus on creating a mixture of both.

Quotes:

An intense anticipation itself transforms possibility into reality; our desires being often but precursors of the things which we are capable of performing. Samuel Smiles

The idea of waiting for something makes it more exciting. Andy Warhol

The reason why most people face the future with apprehension instead of anticipation is because they don't have it well designed! Jim Rohn

I live in the present. I only remember the past, and anticipate the future. Henry David Thoreau

Share: Your thoughts and experiences.

1. What role does anticipation play in shaping your wellbeing?
2. What differences do you see between anticipation, expectation and hope?
3. What activities and events do you anticipate most?

Closing Words & Extinguishing the Chalice:

The task of the mind is to produce future, as the poet Paul Valery once put it. A mind is fundamentally an anticipator, an expectation-generator. It mines the present for clues, which it refines with the help of the materials it has saved from the past, turning them into anticipations of the future. And then it acts, rationally, on the basis of those hard-won anticipations. Daniel Dennett