

Expectations

When asked what Taoism is, I often respond: Having no expectations.

Stop here and pause: for a few seconds, think about the following:
What are *your* expectations in life? What do **you** expect from reading this?

Ok... I will doodle to the side, while you ponder the questions ~* ^-^ { @ } :^)

In this doodle time, as the author I begin to wonder: What are *my* expectations right now... and fuck! ¿What am I thinking... my expectations about writing on expectations? This is just an imprisoning feedback loop of pondering expectations... it's ludicrous. I am typing this, at this very very moment and I am also looking out the door seeing a rain, a rain of cherry petals, mixing out of the open doorway, in the front yard, spinning in the air as snow, in pinkish leaves, down, down to the grass, mixing to dark green grass... an ocean of wind, whisking floating waves as clouds adding their persistence as wind rolling against the earth, a cool nipping, mixing to the raining of softest petals.

Part of me now is still thinking as an engineer: my thoughts
{*build a map, determine past and future expectations, list the changes, chart patterns of unfulfilled expectations...*}

The same moment, the poet side of my nature slaps me to the curb telling me
just to stop

Don't do anything, stop for a moment
Feel the breath, touching fingers, feeling soft lips pushing a deep breath,
Break free not in thinking, but in action
Eyes close down... - - , and then, I walked away from this



...

{To outside of here }

Right **now I am** typing, **now** 10 minutes ago I was just under a cherry tree, witnessing flower petals dancing upon the wind.

Right now you are reading this in my distant future....

These moments are connected
All these **nows**, tied together as the very same moment, all the same, we are together, because there are **no** expectations, **Right now** we aren't boxing ourselves into manmade boundaries. Instead we are flowing to a larger world, pushing us up and out of chairs, mixing in with spring's scent of lilac highlighted to the sound of the wind hopping between trees.

Right now, I am stopping every expectation of writing, to instead skip into a flow, inviting you now, by merely sharing this page, to experience spring with me.

Discovery isn't forced thru narrow expectations. Instead join in with this barefooted walking away from trying to define limits. Feel an Olympian touch of spring as a collection of fallen petals just collected are now drying upon this very keyboard I am typing upon, becoming part of living in the here and now.



If people live in a culture where personal value is based upon expectation, what happens when discovering life exceeds any bounds of expectation.

Is your nature enough to fulfill yourself?
Or
Will you limit your nature upon expectation?

===== Thoughts =====

An expectation isn't reality. It's a hope of things to be, a useful tool in a fortune telling sort of way, charting a course of action.

Expectations: a package deal, bundled down with an emotional ribbon of attachment. It's the attachment which forms the core problem of expectation. The advantage of attachment is that a person gains additional strength by personalizing a process. However, the counterbalancing issue: life constantly changes, or we encounter other people with attachments to plans opposite of our own intention¹.

I have personally discovered that very rarely do I meet my expectations. For this reason I personally ignore expectations most of the time. It takes too much energy to attach and then un-attach myself constantly, trying to fit to the whimsy of the world. I have chucked the expectation routine out the door. Much like the intro to this section, discovering the world presents constant opportunities: to change, try alternative paths, find smoother answers to your goals. It makes life less stressful, when living openly in this manner.

I have also discovered that with enough will and enough determination many impossible things become real, yet in this path the world will push back, cracking our soul, aging us till we fit properly within a newer balance. Force always reacts back with an equal force.

So in this, I have found it to be a truer path by flowing actions with the world. Let the world itself assist you in the endeavor of your plans. This way, when the world uses force against you, then ironically that force can be redirected back to empower your actions.

In the end, I still *plan* all the time, but the trick is not getting overly attached to those plans. This permits a flowing process of change from plan to plan or from plan to happenstance, or happenstance to plan: life and I just shift along. At times I still get attached to a few plans, but I have learned to pick and choose those times carefully to match the needs of my spirit.

1) Often times, since we misunderstand our own intentions, we ourselves end up in direct opposition of our own expectations. Our own conflicting expectations often cancel out, causing personal failures in overly forced actions.

While living to your expectations doesn't go against the Tao per se, it is as opposite to the Tao as I can define. Expectations are a methodology to force the world to fit to your mold, compared to the typical Taoist response of accepting / flowing along with the world as it happens. Yet each Personal Tao is unique, meaning for some, it's in their nature to hammer the world into an expectation. Typically I have noticed these individuals tend to be the most amazingly fantastic builders/creators equally counter-balanced with discontentment over the products of their life. These are the individuals constantly on the move to hammer down yet another outstanding flaw or problem, never to discover completion, as their contentment comes from the chase of perfection itself. This, in turn, ends up being their Personal Tao.

Living to expectation limits the nature of the Tao, to self imagination. Imagination is powerful, but we have definite limits. As much as I can imagine, or as much as a single person could express, an infinitely larger realm exists outside of how we each define life. Living to expectations, limits a person to a very small slice of what is available to live. Even worse, people lead ever diminishing lives when basing personal self worth upon their expectations. Is "*self worth*" a unit of production? ¹ If expectations are rarely met, how does it reflect within our personal self value or upon our relationships based purely upon expectation? Living to expectation ends up leaving quite a few people unfulfilled, leading very limited lives.

- 1) The consumer society has an interesting twist to this expectation puzzle. The consumer society manages expectations by teaching people that contentment is something purchased at wholesale. The majority of the United States' economy is based on a pyramid scheme of expectations within an "*American dream*" to be materially well off and comfortable.

===== Paths =====

I am often asked how can one live free of expectations.

The answer is to dream a thousand dreams. I reveal these dreams to myself and over time to others. This confuses people as they mistake these dreams as statements of action, as something I will do. I suppose the dreams are presented to others in a matter of fact form, a proto plan, like placing a seed into the soil to grow. Dreams and seeds are very similar. Dreams require a mixture of your own essence and outside reality to germinate. In this sense, your soul is the soil, and speaking the dream aloud is to blow a spark of life that others help fertilize. These are the conditions to germinate a strong dream. Many dreams will not grow, but some will reach for the sky, and those end up as the bean stalks upon which legends are fed.

Some would say this is setting intention, but closer to the mark, this is placing your spirit truthfully into the dream. As many dreams strangely become a reality for myself, people seemingly expect this is who I am, that the dream was my path, my expected destination. Not the case! As dreams shift, no dream can be a whole statement; in fact they almost always shift in time, randomly, meaning I end up doing something other than the original idea or dream itself. I haven't changed, nothing has changed; I merely unfolded with the plan, with the dream as it happened. Yet the expectations that others had of my life were broken, since it didn't follow a pre-determined course of action. How could it? It started as dream, which got bounced around by others, layering additional dimensions. The world buffets it around, then suddenly everything is placed in a position where another dream is a closer fit, and the whole process starts again taking everyone wonderfully along for the ride.

Most of the time, as the world knows of my dreams, the world and my friends help some of these dreams become true. More often the case, dreams remain a dream and it passes quickly by as a pleasant daydream. Other times old dreams reawaken and become reality, simply because everything takes a while to align. Having had the dreams, having told others, allows a long lever of time, of the years, to work in my favor; it permits me to notice when everything is right. Then when it all feels right, to then leap the dream into reality.

This is a question of style. Some of us are built out of brick and mortar; solid engineered perfection. Others of us float to our dreams; ever shifting to the whims, the currents, the clouds. The challenge is to avoid getting trapped by expectations while permitting plans and dreams to flow freely to your needs.