

## Fall Message Series: God Laughs

**Challenge:** Find a place in your life where unmet expectations are getting in the way. See if you can begin to let go of them. (The meditation practice below might be a good place to start.)

**Spiritual practice:** The practice of mindfulness invites us to see things as they really are, not as we wish them to be. Grasping towards what we *wish* to be, rather than being with what *is*, causes suffering. Use the meditation guidelines on the final page of this guide to begin letting go of the things that “bind our spirit”.

**Discussion questions:** What does the saying “We plan, God laughs” mean to you? Are there areas in your life where you have seen this played out recently? How do we determine what is within our control and what is not? How might we begin to stop holding on to the desire to change things that are not in our control? What might we turn *towards* instead?

### Journal/reflection/art prompt:

Meditation on *Letting Go* by Carol Allman-Morton

Many of us carry a burden of worry.

Anxiety over the state of the world;  
Worries about money  
About our environment,  
Our families  
About peace and justice.

May we trust that nothing will get worse for us putting that burden down for a moment.

May we let go of what weighs us down.

May we find that we can set down worry for longer and longer periods of time.

In our experience of letting go, may we be open to the possibility that we need not pick our worries back up.  
May we find passion and strength to work for change where we have the power to do so, and to let go where we do not.

If not forever, let us put down any worries or anxiety, for our time of quiet.

May we be in quiet together.

### Family Resources from Miss Carol:

UUA Tapestry of Faith story that portrays the covenants to kids:

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session2/118157.shtml>

Another UUA story that portrays the lesson of covenants to adults, who watched kids who figured out on their own how to come into covenant with one another:

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveconnects/session16/162186.shtml>

A little video, from another UU church, Horizon, that gives some nice visuals for explaining covenant in a very simple easy way:

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

## Readings, etc. from the Revs:

### Articles

["Too Much for Hearts to Hold"](#) by Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

["In Malibu, A Large Hole is Being Dug to Contain Your Grief"](#) from Hyperallergic

["Pining for the Intimacy of Pandemic Pods"](#) from the NY Times

["A Covenant Invites Relationship"](#) by Lisa Ward

["I Choose You, I am Here"](#) by Emma Merchant

### Books

["More Together than Alone"](#) by Mark Nepo

["Soul Repair"](#) by Rita Nakashima Brock & Gabriella Lettini

["Moral Distress & Injury in Human Services"](#) by Frederic Reamer

["The Moral Injury Workbook"](#) by Evans et. al.

### Videos

[Unitarian Universalist Covenant: What Do We Promise One Another?](#) from the UUA

[Covenant Triangle](#) from the UU Church of Nashua

### Podcasts

["The Healing is in the Return"](#) with Sharon Salzberg, from *OnBeing*

### Poetry

["The Promise"](#) by Jane Hirshfield

["Mama's Promise"](#) by Marilyn Nelson

["Vows"](#) by Jim Harrison

["Us"](#) by Rev. Kim Wildszewski

### Music

["Dried Up River"](#) by The Lone Bellow

["Let Go of Your Plans"](#) by Lukas Nelson

["People Get Old"](#) by Lori McKenna

["Holy Water"](#) by We The Kingdom

Questions? Suggestions? Feedback? Please feel free to contact one of the members of the Spiritual Development Ministry:

Majid Alsayegh [malsayegh@altamgmt.com](mailto:malsayegh@altamgmt.com)

Deb Soderland [deb.soderland@gmail.com](mailto:deb.soderland@gmail.com)

# Meditation on Letting Go

by Jack Kornfield

Letting go does not mean losing the knowledge we have gained from the past. The knowledge of the past stays with us. To let go is simply to release any images and emotions, grudges and fears, clingings and disappointments that bind our spirit. Like emptying a cup, letting go leaves us free to receive, refreshed, sensitive, and awake.

To practice letting go, let yourself sit comfortably and quietly. Bring a kind attention to your body and breath. Relax into the ground of the present for several minutes.

Now bring into awareness any story, situation, feelings, and reactions that it is time to let go of. Name them gently (betrayal, sadness, anxiety, etc.) and allow them the space to be, to float without resistance, held in a heart of compassion. Continue to breathe. Feel the unhappiness that comes from holding on. Ask yourself, "Do I have to continue to replay this story? Do I have to hold on to these losses, these feelings? Is it time to let this go?" The heart will know. Ask yourself if it is indeed wise to release this holding. Feel the benefit, the ease that will come from this letting go.

Now begin to say to yourself, "Let go, let go," gently, over and over. Soften the body and heart and let any feelings that arise drain out of you like water draining out of a tub. Let the images go, the beliefs, the self-righteousness, the unworthiness. Let it all go. Feel the space that comes as you let go, how the heart releases and the body opens.

Now direct the mind to envision the future where this circumstance has been released. Sense the freedom, the innocence, the ease that this letting go can bring. Say to yourself "Let go" several more times. Sit quietly and notice if the feelings return. Each time they return, breathe softly as if to bow to them, and say kindly, "I've let you go."

The images and feelings may come back many times, yet as you continue to practice, they will eventually fade. Gradually the mind will come to trust the space of letting go. Gradually the heart will be easy and you will be free.