



Soul Matters

Living Love Through The Practice of **Imagination**



Companion Resources
May 2025



Welcome to the Practice of Imagination

Imagination's great gift is *improvement*. At least that is what we're taught. Its deep magic lies in the way it can reshape our reality. We are urged to imagine the world we dream of. A world with more justice. More peace. More love. From that, a mysterious magnetism arises, a magnetism that pulls our imperfect present into an improved future. Imagination moves us forward. It makes our world - and us - better.

Yet there's a way in which this view of imagination impoverishes us. It steals the stage and shuts out imagination's *other* precious gifts.

For instance, think of what happened when a number of us got out of bed this morning. After a shower, we didn't just pull on fresh clothes, we likely also pulled out a jewelry box and slipped on our grandmother's ring. As we slid it on our finger, she slid, not just into our memory, but into our day. Now, because of imagination, we aren't just elegant; we're *accompanied*. Or how about that invisible friend of ours when we were children? Imagination made sure we didn't travel through those early years alone. It conjured up that loyal friend so we had someone by our side. Even today, amidst the hustle and bustle of adult life, tell me you don't hear the guidance of ancestors when challenges arise. It's all one giant reminder that imagination doesn't just improve our lives, it *populates* it.

It also *illuminates* it. That's right. Imagination isn't just a force that drives us forward toward a better future, it also pulls the sacred into our impoverished present. Imagination is what transforms trees from potential firewood into wise friends. Imagination is what moves us from lording over the natural world to seeing ourselves as part of it. Or to put it another way, imagination is what gives the world a soul. And not just the natural world, but the ordinary world too. Through the lens of imagination, every day experience becomes precious, even mystical. For instance, the laughter of our children becomes the sound of angels. Sunshine on our face becomes a way that life expresses its love for us. The ocean is able to speak, telling us that we are freer and have more choices than we think. And a simple act of kindness from a stranger shimmers, and through it life says to our burdened heart, "This soon shall pass. Everything will be ok." Yes, this is what imagination does: it enables us to hear the world speak.

So friends, this month, do everything you can to soak in ***the many*** gifts and messages of imagination. It's not just shouting, "Improve the world!" It's also pleading, "Let the world come alive!"

Calendar Connections

May 2025

Click on the hyperlinked names of each event for more information or inspiration.

Interfaith

- [Beltane](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Yom HaShoah](#) - begins April 23, 2025 at sunset
- [Vesak](#) - Celebration of Buddha's Birthday (Buddhist) - May 12, 2025 (more [here](#), [here](#), & [here](#))

Unitarian Universalist

- Anniversary of [William Ellery Channing](#)'s [Baltimore Sermon](#), "Unitarian Christianity" - May 5th (1819)
- [UUA Founding Day](#) (1961) - May 12 (more [here](#))
- [Emerson's birthday](#) - May 25 (1803)
- American Unitarian Association founded May 25 (1825)

National & Cultural

- Jewish American Heritage Month
- Asian/ Pacific American Heritage Month
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- [May Day](#)/International Workers Day - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Cinco de Mayo](#) - May 5 (more [here](#))
- [Mother's Day](#) (US & Canada) - May 11, 2025, second Sunday of May
- First HIV/AIDS death in North America - May 15 (1969)
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia - May 17
- [Brown v. Board of Education](#) - May 17, 1954 (more [here](#))
- [Plessy v. Ferguson](#) - May 18, 1896 (more [here](#))
- [Agender Pride Day](#) - May 19
- Birthday of [Malcolm X](#) - May 19, 1925 (more [here](#))
- [Victoria Day](#) (Canada) May 19, 2025
- [Harvey Milk](#), gay rights activist, born - May 22, 1930
- [Pansexual and Panromantic Awareness and Visibility Day](#) - May 24
- Memorial Day (US) - May 26, 2025

For Fun and On the Fringe

- [World Press Freedom Day](#) - May 3
- [Star Wars Day](#) - May 4
- [World Laughter Day](#) - First Sunday in May
- Debut of Norman Rockwell's "[Rosie the Riveter](#)" - May 29, 1943

Your Question

This list of questions is an aid for deep reflection. How you answer them is often less important than the journey they take you on.

So, read through the list of questions 2-3 times until one question sticks out for you and captures your attention, or as some faith traditions say, until one of the questions “[shimmers](#).”

Then reflect on that question using one or all of these questions:

- *What is going on in my life right now that makes this question so pronounced for me?*
- *How might my inner voice be trying to [speak to me](#) through it?*
- *How might Life or my inner voice be trying to offer me a word of comfort or challenge through this question?*



1. What is your greatest act of imagination?
2. Has your (or someone else's) imagination ever led you astray?
3. In your early adult life, who most helped you imagine possibilities of what you could become?
4. Has age widened or narrowed your imagination?
5. Are you someone who imagines everything that can go right or everything that can go wrong? Who in your life balances you out? Have you thanked them for that lately?
6. What “imagined life” for yourself has been with you the longest? Might it be time to act on it or let parts of it go?
7. What's the most radical thing you can imagine doing before you die?
8. Are you sure it's not realistic to live that life you keep imagining?
9. What gift did your childhood imaginary friend give you?
10. Is there more to your “enemy” than what you've been imagining?
11. What did your greatest failure of imagination teach you?
12. If you could change the way a friend or family member imagines themselves or the world, who would it be and how would you change their imaginings?
13. Are you living out of [your imagination or your history](#)?
14. How close is your current life to the life you imagined for yourself in early adulthood? How would that younger self feel about the life you are living now? Surprised? Proud? Confused? Curious?
15. **What's your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to find it.

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. Nor are they intended to be analyzed in your group. Instead they are here to companion you on your personal journey this month, get you thinking and open you up to new ways of embodying the practice of joy in your life.

Wise Words

Imagination is the spirit
freed to be herself,

slipping the carbon cuffs
of convention's false arrests.

She picks the locks,
a laughing Houdini—

magician
of freedom itself.

[David Breeden](#)

There are so many boundaries in me,
so many limitations, prisons,
places where a line has been drawn...
But... sometimes the imagination
takes a line and bends it, twists it
like a clown with a balloon,
until what I thought was a boundary
becomes bird, becomes crown, becomes
flower. Or it turns the line perpendicular
so what I thought was a deadline
becomes path...

[Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer](#)

Logic will get you from A to Z; imagination will
get you everywhere.

[Albert Einstein](#)

The imagination is committed to the justice of
wholeness. It will not choose one side in an
inner conflict and repress or banish the other; it
will endeavor to initiate a profound conversation
between them in order that something original
can be born.

[John O'Donohue](#)

We suffer more in our imagination more often
than in reality.

[Seneca](#)

Live out of your imagination, not your history.

[Stephen R. Covey](#)

Despair, when not the response to absolute
physical and moral defeat, is, like war, the
failure of imagination.

[Adrienne Rich](#)

I become more and more certain, as the years
go by, that wherever friendship is destroyed, or
homes are broken, or precious ties are severed,
there is a failure of imagination. Someone is too
intent on justifying himself, or herself, never
venturing out to imagine the way things seem to
the other person. Imagination is shut off and
sympathy dies. If we know what it is that makes
other people speak or act as they do... We
might understand. Often we could heal the
wounds. But even where that is not possible -
even where fuller understanding only leaves us
rather sad and helpless, it would still give us the
power to be kind.

[A. Powell Davies](#)

Thinking that we can exponentially grow
forever, or even that this is somehow desirable,
is a catastrophic failure of imagination, and it's
putting the entire human experiment in
jeopardy.

[Dirk Philipsen](#)

the only war that matters is the war against the
imagination. all other wars are subsumed in it.
the ultimate famine is the starvation of the
imagination. it is death to be sure.

[Diane di Prima \(more\)](#)

I shudder at the emotional and psychic burden
we've laid on the young black and brown New
Yorkers — so many of them children... Isn't it,
for them, for us, a gargantuan task not to
imagine that everyone is imagining us as
criminal? A nearly impossible task? What a
waste, a corruption, of the imagination... The
imagination, rather than being cultivated for
connection or friendship or love, is employed
simply for some crude version of survival.

[Ross Gay](#)

We think we understand the rules when we become adults but what we really experience is a narrowing of the imagination.

[David Lynch](#)

It's easier for us to imagine the end of the world than the end of [capitalism](#).

Frederic Jameson

Black rage in an anti-Black world is a spiritual virtue. Rage shakes us out of our illusion that the world as it is, is what God wants.

[Danté Stewart](#)

We are in an imagination battle. Trayvon Martin and Mike Brown and Renisha McBride and so many others are dead because, in some white imagination, they were dangerous... Imagination has people thinking they can go from being poor to a millionaire as part of a shared American dream. Imagination turns Brown bombers into terrorists and white bombers into mentally ill victims. Imagination gives us borders, gives us superiority, gives us race as an indicator of ability. I often feel I am trapped inside someone else's capability. I often feel I am trapped inside someone else's imagination, and I must engage my own imagination in order to break free.

[adrienne maree brown](#)

You can either think that the world is getting better or that the future will be much better than it is now, or you can think that the world is getting worse. But that continuum isn't as important to me as this idea of, do you think you have agency in this world?

[Angela Ogunjala](#)

The goal of oppressors is to limit your imagination about what is possible without them, so you never imagine more for yourself and the world you live in.

[Ashley C. Ford](#)

History is birthed out of the imagination. It literally was conjured up. Imagination is so powerful that it could set forth 400, 500 years of something wrong, which means that it very well could set forth 400, 500 years of something right. That's sort of the beauty of humanity.

[Jason Reynolds](#)

The imagination plants the inconceivable in our minds and makes our hearts long for it to be true.

[Hannah Mitchell](#)

Fairy Tales are more than true; not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us dragons can be beaten.

G. K. Chesterton

They are ill discoverers that think there is no land when they see nothing but sea.

Francis Bacon

Our culture is competent to implement almost anything and to imagine almost nothing... because imagination is a danger. Thus every totalitarian regime is frightened of the artist. It is the vocation of the prophet to keep alive the ministry of imagination, to keep on conjuring and proposing alternative futures to the single one the king wants to urge as the only thinkable one.

[Walter Brueggemann](#)

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge. That myth is more potent than history. That dreams are more powerful than facts. That hope always triumphs over experience.

Robert Fulghum

Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying,' she said. 'One can't believe impossible things.'

'I daresay you haven't had much practice,' said the Queen. 'When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast!'

Lewis Carroll

Articles

- [In Defense of Daydreaming](#)
- [We Suffer More in Imagination than in Reality](#)
- [Empathy is an act of imagination](#)
- [Imagining the Top 10 Future Threats](#)
- More [here](#)

Books

- [Imagination: A Manifesto](#)
- [The Ministry for the Future](#)
- [A Psalm for the Wild-Built](#)
- [Parable of the Sower](#)

Videos & Podcasts

We Can't be Healthy Without Imagination
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCt9SIDJ1s4>

The Untold Story of How Delight Teamed Up With Imagination to Invent Our World
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLtkC-G5dY>

Why You Should Make [Useless Things...](#)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0bsKc4tiuY>

On Reimagining Where Creativity Comes From
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86x-u-tz0MA>

Secret Friends, God & The Line Between the Real and the Imaginary
<https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/secret-friends/>

One Family; Two Imagined Realities
<https://www.npr.org/2026/01/01/1254713697/alternate-realities-conspiracy-theories-bet>

On The Lopsidedness Of Our Cultural Imagination
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCtRx7Cv7c>

How Silicon Valley Monopolized Our Imagination
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fnyx_08pDI&t=2317s

Imagining a Post-Capitalist World
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD5DLixuNWk>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyLr1Jeo0c>

Imagine The Angels Of The Bread, [Martin Espada](#)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qInwMatl0a0>
This is the year that squatters evict landlords...

V'ahavta, Aurora [Levins Morales](#)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJDx-OKCoZ8>
Say these words...Another world is possible...

Art and Artists

- Blair Somerville is a [magical \(and joyful\) tinkerer!](#)
- [Janet Echelman](#) lost her paints and found [her imagination](#).
- This artist took his imagination and [transformed a dilapidated hunting lodge](#) into a [house of dreams](#).
- [Tim Klein](#) might be the most imaginative [puzzle master](#) alive!
- This [group of young adults and their choir master](#) used their imaginations to transform trash into [a full orchestra](#), or as they call it a "Recycled Orchestra"
- These Atlanta photographers are [re-imagining Disney's princesses](#), and igniting new imaginings in the process.

Music

Click [here](#) for our Spotify playlist.
Click [here](#) for the YouTube playlist.

Additional Online Music

- "[Bright Morning Star](#)," ([Vimeo](#)) led by [Mark David Buckles](#)
- "[To See a World](#)" ([GoogleDrive](#)) (#398 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)
- "[Morning Has Come](#) ([YouTube](#))" (#1000 in *Singing the Journey*)
- "[We Are](#)" by Dr. Ysaÿe Barnwell ([Vimeo](#))
- "[The Evening Star](#)" ([YouTube](#)) by Felix Medelsohn, performed by Ruben Piirainen

Contemporary Music

- "Imagine" by John Lennon
- "A Whole New World" from Aladdin
- "A Million Dreams" from The Greatest Showman
- "Fast Car" by Tracy Chapman
- "If I Had a Hammer" by Peter, Paul, and Mary

Movies

- [Cinema Paradiso](#)
- [Nickel Boys](#)
- [Tick...Tick...BOOM!](#)
- [Jim Henson Idea Man](#)
- [The Remarkable Life of Ibelin](#)
- [Flow](#)
- [The Big Flower Fight](#)

Meditations & Prayers

A Prayer for Imagination

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

There are so many boundaries in me,
so many limitations, prisons,
places where a line has been drawn...
But... sometimes the imagination
takes a line and bends it, twists it
like a clown with a balloon,
until what I thought was a boundary
becomes bird, becomes crown, becomes
flower. Or it turns the line perpendicular
so what I thought was a deadline
becomes path...

Full piece at:

<https://ahundredfallingveils.com/2021/12/30/a-prayer-for-imagination/>

We Imagine a Path *

Rev. D. Scott Cooper

We bow our heads in order to imagine not one
path, but many. We imagine a path forward for
those who cannot imagine any path forward...
We struggle to imagine a path forward for those
who are forced to leave a homeland against
their will... We come together to imagine a path
forward for those of us despairing...
We imagine a path forward for those who feel
lonely...

Full piece at:

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/we-imagine-path>

Life is Always Unfinished Business*

Rev. Richard S. Gilbert

Consider that our lives are always unfinished
business;
Imagine that the picture of our being is never
complete...

Full piece at:

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/ife-always-unfinished-business>

Imagine *

Rev. Terri Dennehy

Imagine we have arrived.

Imagine

the lush river

cannot swallow us

or drown out

the voices

of our hearts.

We have come

to these eagle-nested shores

to celebrate with the drums

of dancing feet.

We have come,

a gathering of wings,

arising

out of the hard shells

of loneliness

and into the streets.

Out of the violence and the rush

of the trains and the drives between,

out of the pain

in the waiting rooms

and the classrooms,

the boardrooms and the bedrooms,

we are birthing into light.

We are holding our palms to the sky—

awake and amazed

that we can trust the hush, the hum,
the hands

we fall into like waves.

We are listening to the sighs,

to the aches of our histories,

to the silences pinched beneath skins—

and we are learning

how to speak our own names:

soft and slow now,

turned over and over

in our mouths,

until they shine

on our tongues like silver pearls,

until something

inside us is a sail,

is gratitude

billowing and free.

Soul Lifts *

Rev. Tess Baumberger

Wouldn't it be great if you could take a picture
of your soul?

Then when your mother wanted to brag about
you

she could show people the picture and say,
"That's my daughter, doesn't she have a
beautiful soul, all sparkly and many-colored and
flowing all around her?"

Wouldn't it be great if we walked around
surrounded by our souls,
so that they were the first things people saw
instead of the last things?

Then people would judge us by who we really
are

instead of how we look.

Imagine no more racism, ageism, sexism,
fatism, shortism, homophobia.

Imagine falling in love with who a person is,
just by looking at them.

It would be a kind of cloaking device,
hiding physical faults defects or even
perfections.

I'd want it to be mandatory.

Then people would work at making their souls
more attractive
instead of their bodies and faces.

Imagine people knowing by your soul that you
really need a hug.

Imagine people helping each other and their
souls changing colors
or growing.

Imagine soul gyms
with exercises to get your sagging soul in
shape.

Imagine the long lines forming for soul-lifts
at churches, temples, mosques, synagogues
or nature's grand cathedrals.

For Mother's Day

Prayer for All Who Mother *

Rev. Victoria Weinstein

We reflect in thanksgiving this day for all those
whose lives have nurtured ours...

We are grateful for all those who have
mothered us

Who have held us gently in times of sorrow

Who celebrated with us our triumphs -- no
matter how small

Who noticed when we changed and grew...

Full piece at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/5827.shtml>

Mother's Day Meditation *

Rev. Rod Richards

On this Mother's Day, we recognize the vast
spectrum of experience and the often-
complicated feelings that surround such a
celebration.

We honor those mothers and mother figures in
our lives that have loved, supported,
encouraged and instructed us and we seek to
share these gifts with others.

We mourn with those who mourn the loss of a
mother and mothers who mourn the loss of a
child, whether separated by death or
estrangement.

We welcome and celebrate the mothers in our
midst, recognizing all the strength and wisdom
and stamina and love that motherhood requires;
we tenderly hold and share the grief of those
who want children but cannot have them; we
recognize and support those women who
choose not to have children, as we are aware
that all too often motherhood is implicitly—if
erroneously—held up as the fulfillment of
womanhood.

And we seek to honor wherever we find
ourselves today across this vast spectrum of
experience and to feel the compassion that
embraces us within this silence, that we now
enter into and share together..

Mother's Day Prayer *

Rev. Tess Baumberger

Whether or not we are mothers, we all have
mothers, mothers whose bodies nurtured our
bodies as they emerged in the darkness,
mothers whose thoughts and feelings
swirled through the currents of the womb,
mothers whose oxygen breathed into us

helped root our souls into this world.
However they nurtured us after,
we all had that deep body connection
with our biological mothers, before birth.

Motherhood runs deeply through our lives
as do our feelings about mothering.
The mothers of some gathered here
have died in the past few years.
As we breathe together, let us breathe comfort
into the hearts of those children who mourn
their mothers.

There are mothers here whose have children
who have died, or children lost behind the walls
of estrangement which life sometimes places
between mothers and children.
As we breathe together, let us breathe comfort
into the hearts of those mothers who mourn
their children.

There are women here who have always
wanted to be mothers, but whose lives never
presented them that opportunity.
As we breathe together, let us breathe
reassurance
into the hearts of mothers whose children take
different forms -
accomplishments, acts of creativity and love,
workings of the spirit.

There are those among us who have troubled
pasts with their mothers, and those who have
troubled presents or futures with their mothers.
As we breathe together, let us breathe strength
and hope into the hearts of those whose
connections to their mothers have twists that
sometimes cause pain, sometimes distress.

And, there are those among us who celebrate
this day with mothers who are strong, loving,
guiding forces - Mothers who taught them to
laugh, to sing, to cry, to think, to feel, to work, to
play, to love, and to live.

As we breathe together, let us the breathe the
gladness and joy of motherhood at its best,
motherhood that nurtures in ways that often
can't be seen - motherhood whose deep
connections continue to feed our souls with the
breath, the blood, the loving currents of life.

For Memorial Day

Memorial Day Prayer *

Rev. Barbara J Pescan

Spirit of Life...

Send peace for the soldiers who did not make
the wars but whose lives were consumed by
them...

For the wounded ones, and those who received
them back, let there be someone ready when
the memories come...

Full piece at

[https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/
memorial-day-prayer](https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/memorial-day-prayer)

Poems As Meditations

Camas Lilies, Lynn Unger

[https://www.guideforconscioushealing.com/wild-
words-poetry-blog/camas-lilies](https://www.guideforconscioushealing.com/wild-words-poetry-blog/camas-lilies)

Things To Think, Robert Bly

[https://thevalueofsparrows.wordpress.com/2018
/10/12/poetry-things-to-think-by-robert-bly/](https://thevalueofsparrows.wordpress.com/2018/10/12/poetry-things-to-think-by-robert-bly/)

Wild Geese, Mary Oliver

[https://readalittlepoetry.com/2010/04/28/wild-
geese-by-mary-oliver/](https://readalittlepoetry.com/2010/04/28/wild-geese-by-mary-oliver/)

A Blessing of Angels, John O'Donohue

[https://awabisabilife.ca/2021/07/02/a-blessing-
of-angels/](https://awabisabilife.ca/2021/07/02/a-blessing-of-angels/)



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