



Day 30: Tuesday

## Improvising Hope

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Romans 8:25

### Prepare

Hope is a strange thing. It names something outside of ourselves—a future we anticipate that’s out of our control—and at the same time is something we “have,” a way of being that depends on us. The latter seems just as important as the former: We’re as preoccupied with having hope as we are with the specifics of what we hope for. Maybe with good reason, given the state of the world today.

How, then, do we “have” hope? It’s a question that might sound familiar if you’ve ever lived with depression. The radical loss of hope calls the very act of hoping, the part that depends on us, into doubt. It’s no longer a matter of just finding something new to hope for. We need to relearn how to hope.

In a strange way, it’s not unlike musical improvisation. I remember the first time I was asked to improvise: Without the assurance of a score to play off of, I felt like the ground beneath me had given way to an abyss. For a time, I thought I needed to wait for some kind of divine inspiration to navigate that terrifying emptiness. With a lack of direction, I no longer knew how to play.

Eventually, though, I started to find my way. By immersing myself in a repertoire, I began to understand what went into the music I so loved and wanted to create. It was like learning a language—becoming familiar enough with phrases, cues, and unspoken rules to use them on my own

terms. In time, that terrifying lack of direction even began to reveal something else: the infinite potentiality of what could be created within it. It was still terrifying, but losing the assurances I “had” was precisely what allowed something new to come into being.

## Ponder

When have you lived without the assurance of a “score?”

What structures of hope have you lost, or let go of? In that loss of direction, have you found something different or new?

How might you improvise hope in a new way? What role does your faith play in the search for something new?

## Pray

Read Hebrews 11:1–3 several times. What is the Spirit saying to you through these words?

## Play

Search online for:

- John Coltrane, “A Love Supreme”
- Doreen Ketchens, “Just a Closer Walk with Thee”

*Ren Ito*