

"Everyday life as a koan" immediately reminds me of Dogen's 'Genjokoan' fascicle in the Shobogenzo.

"*Genjokoan* is the koan, the paradox, of the manifestation, as it is, of each and every thing, completely and totally. That's what the title, *Genjokoan*, means. "

"To me this is so beautiful. This is why I so much love Dogen's practice, because it's really saying practice is not about overcoming human problems. It's not about becoming serene and transcendent. It's about embracing our lives as they really are, and understanding at every point how deep and profound and gorgeous everything is - even the suffering, even the difficulty. So we forgive ourselves for our limitations, and we forgive this world for its pain. We don't say, "That's not pain." It is pain. You don't say, "It's not difficult." It is difficult. But when we embrace the difficulty and break through *Genjokoan*, we see this is exactly the difficulty we need, and this difficulty is the most beautiful and poignant thing in this world."  
Norman Fischer

My biggest practice problem is a feeling of discontent with how things go in my life. I have spent a lot of my life trying to 'fix' things to be the way I wanted them to be by self-improvement or manipulating others. And can I say truthfully that I am free from that desire for control? Not really - but it is my aim to settle and be at home in the 'icy couch' of my life (not all suffering, but any is often caused by myself). How do I achieve this? Renunciation seems a good start: (from Ken McLeod's article on this)

**'THE FIRST KEY** is to stop seeking security.

**THE SECOND KEY** is to let go of expectations for emotional fulfillment.

**THE THIRD KEY** is to know the groundlessness of experience itself'

I wonder how useful it is to continuously remind myself of these instructions. Zen practice often seems to encourage us to 'just sit' and deal with whatever comes up in direct experience. But I have so much worldly conditioning already that I find so hard to shake off. It automatically cuts in when I react to circumstances instead of more wholesome actions. Teaching pointers are beneficial- we take refuge in Buddha, *Dharma* and Sangha.

Happily, letting go of expectations doesn't preclude being able to enjoy fully whatever good experiences do come up in life, but I also have to learn to let go of attachments, especially to people, when a relationship is no longer enriching to both. Dogen says '

*'and yet we're sad when flowers fall, and don't like that weeds continue to grow...'*

A little old lady in my mindfulness meditation group in RL often says 'it is all about acceptance really' and isn't she right?