

Winter's Journey...*Spinning Inward*

We are all feeling the results of the harsh, cold and unyielding temperatures on our patience. The already difficult season of winter becomes even more unbearable when we are besieged by extremes of temperature, as well as multiple and frequent ice or snow storms!

Is there a way to make peace with this season? Is there a means to find not just respite, but maybe even an appreciation of this quieter, less active, time of the year?

Of course there are many approaches that help us tolerate and get through this time: winter sports, vacations, new hobbies and interests. As seen in the accompanying article "Winter Blues", Feng Shui also offers us some creative alternatives. These are all worthwhile and useful alternatives to enable us to withstand the long, cold, and dark season.

There are also choices in how we view this time of year that can help reduce some of the stress and frustration. We can look at winter as a teacher. We can open ourselves to learn something from this season that we are used to just enduring. Years ago I would have laughed at such an approach! Finally it occurred to me that my attitude was not working! So I thought a trial run of a different point of view couldn't hurt! I found that it not only didn't hurt, it in fact helped...a lot!

The natural world has much to teach us about how to flow with cycles and changes...how to be patient rather than fight what *is*. If we allow it, winter's journey can be a kind of spinning inward, a letting go of resistance to all that we find harsh, cold and unyielding. It can be a time of quiet reflection, a time to learn how to turn our attention inward. Then the possibility opens to learning how to become friends with a slower, quieter, less active pace. We can welcome the respite from the over-activity of the holidays, and warmer seasons.

However, there are some challenges to implementing these ideas! We seem to resist slowing down. We are used to such a high level of activity, and have such high expectations for every area of our lives, that it is hard to slow down. We have all cooperated in the creation of lives so full of action that is hard to change. In spite of warnings regarding health, our own unrest and feelings of distress with the pace, we continue onward as if it is impossible to change.

We are, whether we choose to believe it or not, the change agents and meaning makers of our lives. So if we are to have something new enter our existence, it will have to be us who puts it there. We can begin with just the willingness to entertain some new ideas!

Nature's wisdom follows predictable, repeatable cycles of change and growth. Winter's time of 'darkness' is a resting time, a space where there is a deep process of renewal and rejuvenation happening before the grand explosion of life in Springtime.

Winter can provide us with a similar experience. With a somewhat slower pace of life we can take the opportunity to give ourselves some time each day for quiet reflection. We can learn to enter into this state that nature models so gracefully.

How do we do this? One way would be by practicing some form of meditation, deep relaxation or contemplation as a daily routine. This may be difficult at first for many reasons. It may feel as though nothing is happening that we are not being productive, responsible or worthwhile. As we become more familiar with spending time in this type of activity, we will gradually become aware of how profoundly it can impact our lives in ways that support those values we cherish.

There is deep within us the need for quiet; for the kind of rest that replenishes and nourishes our minds and spirits. There is a place inside that understands and knows how to BE. However, we need to access it, it will not force its way into our lives. When we provide the means to travel there our lives are greatly enriched for the brief investment of time that we make.

What are the benefits of learning to spend this kind of time?

We may find a kind of rest we did not think was possible

We can discover that silence can teach us things we did not know.

We could develop new perspectives, new views that help us in practical ways.

We might realize the difference between knowledge and understanding.

We may find we are more than a constant process of doing.

We can develop a reliable source of renewal, guidance, support and problem solving!

Any relationship needs attention, time and space to grow. Winter provides the possibility for a new kind of relationship—with ourselves. This relationship is grown and nurtured internally. It is deceptively quiet and subtle, but like winter, it can be powerful in the gifts it brings: expansion, growth, warmth, beauty...our own personal Spring!