

MEDITATION

December Contemplation Passages

Winter Solstice - Reframing Winter

‘The winter solstice time is no longer celebrated as it once was, with the understanding that this is a period of descent and rest, of going within our homes, within ourselves and taking in all that we have been through, all that has passed in this full year which is coming to a close... like nature and the animal kingdom around us, this time of hibernation is so necessary for our tired limbs, our burdened minds.

Our modern culture teaches avoidance at a max at this time; alcohol, lights, shopping, overworking, over spending, comfort food and consumerism.

And yet the natural tug to go inwards as nearly all creatures are doing is strong and the weather so bitter that people are left feeling that winter is hard, because for those of us without burning fires and big festive families, it can be lonely and isolating. Whereas in actual fact winter is kind, she points us in her quiet soft way towards our inner self, towards this annual time of peace and reflection, embracing the darkness and forgiving, accepting and loving embracing goodbye the past year.

"Winter takes away the distractions, the buzz, and presents us with the perfect time to rest and withdraw into a womb like love, bringing fire & light to our hearth".

.. and then, just around the corner the new year will begin again, and like a seed planted deep in the earth, we will all rise with renewed energy once again to dance in the sunlight’

- Dee Laliberte

Laliberte, Dee. Folklore, Customs, Legends and Mythology Group. Facebook. November 28 2021, 17:36. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/281886105961506/permalink/1077640496386059/>

Embracing Emotions – How to love our Emotions.

"A yogi, a practitioner, is an artist who knows how to handle their fear and other kinds of painful feeling or emotion. They do not feel they are a victim because they know there is something they can do.

You listen to the suffering in you and you get in touch with it. Breathe in and out deeply to see, “Why am I suffering? Where has it come from?” Your suffering, your fear, may reflect the suffering of your parents, your ancestors, and the planet. It also contains the suffering of your time, your community, your society, your nation. It’s very important not to cover it up with music, movies, or computer games. To have the courage to go home to yourself, to recognize and hold the suffering inside and look deeply into it, may be the most important thing for you to do as a meditator.

The meditator breathes in and says, "Hello, my fear, my anger, my despair. I will take good care of you." The moment you recognize the feeling and smile to it with love and care, embracing the fear with mindfulness, it will begin to change. That is the miracle of mindfulness. It's like morning sunlight shining on a lotus flower. The bud has not opened yet, but as the sunlight pours down, the photons penetrate into the bud, and after one or two hours of being penetrated by the light, the flower opens itself.

We have the energy of mindfulness generated by mindful walking, sitting or breathing. With that energy we embrace our fear gently as the light embracing the flower. When the two kinds of energy encounter each other, there will be a change, a transformation. The energy of tenderness penetrates the fear, anger or despair. You hold it as dearly as you might hold a wounded child."

Reference: Thich Nhat Hanh (2021). *Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet*. HarperOne.

The full book is available here: <https://smarturl.it/zenartofsavingplanet>

Meaning of Christmas

'Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.'

Calvin Coolidge

Reflection on the Past Year

"It is always important to know when something has reached its end. Closing circles, shutting doors, finishing chapters, it doesn't matter what we call it; what matters is to leave in the past those moments in life that are over."

Paulo Coelho, 2019

<https://twitter.com/paulocoelho/status/1132652385497755649?s=20>

"As the year comes to a close, it is a time for reflection – a time to release old thoughts and beliefs and forgive old hurts. Whatever has happened in the past year, the New Year brings fresh beginnings. Exciting new experiences and relationships await. Let us be thankful for the blessings of the past and the promise of the future."

Peggy Toney Horton