

Inner Solstice: Is It Time for a Turning Point?

by Debbie Lacy

The Winter Solstice reminds me of a Chinese proverb: *You can only go halfway into the darkest forest; then you are coming out the other side.* From the day of the Winter Solstice, and for the six months following, each day will be lighter. It may be several weeks before we notice that the days have gotten longer. The change is gradual and slow, but one day we awaken, not to darkness (as we've become reluctantly accustomed), but to the light of dawn.

I think back to challenges in my life -- uncertainty, disappointments, grief -- and I would have given anything to know when the turning point would come -- that momentous day when the hardest struggles were behind me and I could look forward to increasingly more light. These turning points do eventually come, but unlike the Solstice, there's no date on the calendar to look forward to.

We do so much better with certainty. We can endure a great deal when our difficulties are finite. It's the not knowing that wears us down. To be without a compass or an ending date during these dark times is a true test of the soul.

Bring to mind a current challenge. What would it be like to know that from this day forward, it's going to be better? Is it possible to summon an Inner Solstice at will? Can our intention and deep desires manifest a turning point? I believe that with some challenges this is possible. We can literally decide to create a turning point. One strategy is to set a date a few months from now and do everything in your power to shift to a new place between now and then. Use that deadline as a motivator. On separate index cards, one for each idea, write down concrete, small next steps that can move you to where you want to be. Don't think too hard about it. When you've exhausted all your ideas, sort through your stack of cards. Prioritize them in whatever way makes sense to you. If any of them make you feel stressed out, you may want to put them at the end of the stack. Try doing the ones that most excite you and that would require the least amount of energy first. And remember: this needn't be a solo journey. Is there anyone who can help with your next steps?

Sometimes, however, with the darkest struggles, no amount of willpower can create the desired Solstice. It's living with the seemingly infinite darkness that gives us the tools and strength we need to emerge from that forest when the time comes. But, the time *does* come. Trust that your Inner Solstice is operating with great wisdom and even has a calendar of sorts; you may not be privy to it in your day-to-day life, but it's there. The timeline has been set and you're being guided toward your turning point at this very moment.

If you're stuck in a forest of your own right now, take a moment and try this exercise: Imagine your Inner Solstice. What might it look like? Focus in on its energy. It may appear as a being or a light, or you may only sense its presence. Dialogue with this part of you that's waiting for the right time to be born. What do you want to say or ask? What would it like you to know? What guidance and support can it offer during this time in your life?

It may take quite a while to realize that the turning point has come, especially if the forest has been particularly dark and vast. In personal journeys, the path upward from that turning point is not linear and progressive; there are days when you may seem to slip back into the darkness. But as you look back, you can see how much better you're doing than before. Hope returns, your energy increases, and the fuzzy-headedness clears. Your Inner Solstice has arrived.