

## **Inner Solstice: Is It Time for a Turning Point?**

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Solstice literally means “sun stands still.” A solstice is the time when the overhead sun is furthest from the equator and appears to stand still before returning towards the equator. Solstices occur twice a year, in June and in December; they are celestial turning points.

The Winter Solstice in particular offers an apt metaphor for personal transitions and transformation. 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 but to the light of dawn.

A Chinese proverb says, “*You can only go halfway into the darkest forest; then you are coming out the other side.*” I think back to challenges in my life -- uncertainty, disappointments, grief -- and I would have given anything to know when I was about to come out the other side. I remember aching for the turning point -- that momentous day when the hardest struggles would be behind me and I could look forward to increasingly more light.

Unlike the Winter or Summer Solstices, there's no date on the calendar to accurately forecast our *Inner Solstice* – that moment of transformation when we experience the grace of healing and can begin to look up and ahead with optimism. Waiting without knowing is a spiritual skill. Sitting in the unknown is part of all healing journeys, and it's not something most of us are comfortable doing. It runs counter to our “need to know” culture. 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.

**Is it possible to summon an Inner Solstice?** 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 overwhelmed or heavy, put them at the end of the stack. First do the ones that most excite you and that would require the least amount of energy. And, remember that you don't have to do it alone. Think of people who can help with your next steps and be supportive partners for your journey.

**Sometimes, 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 when the time comes. Valuable resources are acquired during the most challenging times in our lives. When we try to skip over the hard parts, we're depriving ourselves of valuable inner strength, insight, and solutions.

When it's clear that you must simply wait, 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.

### **Inner Solstice Dialogue**

If you're in a dark winter of your own right now, take a moment and try this exercise. Imagine your Inner Solstice. What does 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?

*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. Trust that this is part of the healing. Over time as you look back you'll see signs that indicate a shift has taken place. Hope returns, your energy increases, and the fuzzy-headedness clears. You'll know that your Inner Solstice has arrived.*