



Seasons of Change

When Life Turns Upside Down

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- ✓ You've lost your job.
- ✓ You're going through a divorce.
- ✓ You've been diagnosed with cancer.
- ✓ A loved one has died.
- ✓ You've lost your home in a disaster.

If you've experienced even one of these losses, you know firsthand the confusion, the emotions, and the fear that descend as the events of loss unfold.

Unfortunately, no one teaches us how to find our way through the darkness of change. No one shows us the actions we can take to smooth out our journey.

And yet, right outside our window is a wise teacher, a wonderful role model. Nature. Everywhere you look you see nature changing each and every day in response to the seasons. By tapping into this natural cycle of change, you can adopt the same strategies to navigate the different phases of your transition.

Fall—As soon as you realize your life has changed, prepare for what's to come by searching for information, finding support, creating a safe place, and looking at your options.

Early Winter—As the confusion descends, turn inward. Because everything is in flux, you may not know how it will all turn out, but you can clear your mind to reflect on what you want and need in the face of this change. To the degree it's possible, avoid the temptation to lurch into action to fill the void. You will make more solid decisions if you wait until you have a clearer sense of your situation before you act.

Winter Solstice—When you feel you've lost all hope, surrender to not knowing the right path and stay open to insights about your situation. These insights are what open the door to new ideas, solutions, and directions. Unfortunately, these life-changing shifts can't be forced or demanded--they arrive when you are open and receptive to seeing a new picture. The longer you hold onto the 'old story' about your loss, the longer it takes you to see glimmers of the future Spring.

Late Winter—With new insights coming to mind, follow up on your hunches, ideas, and intuition. In most cases, your first insights are clues to an even bigger vision. As the full picture comes into focus, put a plan together for your future. You'll know you've arrived in Late Winter when you are not only ready to clear out the old, but anxious to get it done. One day your clarity about the future will make it completely obvious what's no longer relevant to your future. Releasing outdated responsibilities, friendships, possessions, and clutter opens up space for what you want to bring into your life.

Spring—Implementing your plans means stepping into new roles, new situations, and new responsibilities. Expect to feel some anxiety as your newly-arrived self steps back into the world at large. Be gentle. Trust yourself to know the timing and pacing that's best for you. Just like a toddler learning to walk, you may wobble a bit. You may even fall. Just pick yourself up, steady yourself, and keep moving toward your vision.

Summer—As you mature into your new life, you'll feel a new level of confidence and clarity. You've come a long way. You deserve to celebrate all you've accomplished. Allow your success to sink in. Savor every moment!

Returning to Fall—At some point it's likely another shift will occur in your life. Your values may change; your life situation may change. When this happens you'll step into Fall once again. This time, however, you'll know just how to support yourself through each season.

For more information about the Seasons of Change:

Visit the www.SeasonsofChange.com site for an overview of the Seasons of Change Model (<http://www.seasonsofchange.com/seasons-of-change/>)

Check out the Seasons of Change book (<http://www.seasonsofchange.com/books/>)