

Cold dark winter, bright silver linings

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Many of us dread the winter months and this year, there are the added difficulties of a worldwide pandemic, but there are silver linings throughout this time if we only search for them.

Honouring our ageing

In ancient times, this season was the domain of the wise old Crone or Cailleach in Gaelic. She was the one who taught people to respect those older than the rest of the tribe who had much life experience to share. Indeed, wisdom does come with age, but nowadays, so many people have forgotten how to revere their elders and their own process of growing old.

Although you may still be a young woman or at middle age, it is a sensible move to have a good hard look at ageing now so that you may prepare wisely for the time to come. When we reach menopause, there is an invitation to take stock of our lives and make plans for our future. Are there people or things in your life that do not bring you joy? Are you enjoying the freedom and serenity that life experience should bring? Can you accept yourself fully and truly believe in your innate abilities?

We all probably know older women who carry the weight of the world on their shoulders, every past mistake, hurt and grievance. You may also know older women who are thoroughly enjoying life, 'light' in themselves, travelling and constantly trying out new things. It is said that there is a fork in the road of a woman's life at menopause where she may choose the road of lightness or the road of heaviness. Which one are you going to choose?

A happy hibernation

This year, we celebrate the festive season in a very different way and that brings the gift of hibernation, something most of us miss out on but dearly wish for during this busy month. Perhaps last year or when you were younger, you partied hard and went to every 'bunfight' going, thinking that was the best way to celebrate the winter's festivities. Then the season in full swing often brought many challenges – how many events do I need to attend? Is it polite and acceptable to decline?

This year, in quiet isolation, that may change to 'How much do I eat and drink? Will I have enough money for presents?' Perhaps then and now, there is a yearning for something more meaningful during the festive season.

This year, there is an opportunity in the quiet isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic we must face. We can go back to the origins of this season – the essence of winter solstice and Christmas or whatever festival you and your loved ones celebrate. Under the long night moon at midwinter, there is an opportunity to go within and surrender to hibernation. Let us choose wisely how we celebrate and with whom, while gifting ourselves plenty of rest, sleep and cosy evenings by the fire with loved ones who live nearby, 'Zooming' those farther afield.

Dreaming in new healthy ways of being

As January is the start of the calendar year, this is traditionally the time to begin healthy habits, especially after the overindulgence of the holidays.

A very wise way to start new beginnings is to tap into what you yearn for at soul level. In the Celtic tradition, your heart and soul were inextricably linked. Drawing on this tradition, we can align any fresh starts with what feels right to our heart as an easy way of checking the wisdom of our choices. Then we are more likely to make the new habits we dream of a reality. Take some quiet time under the old moon to ponder if there is anything you need to release to make space for your new beginnings.

Remember, if you have eased from busy work schedules and social commitments to festive season stupor and cosy fireside hibernation, take your time to let your dreams unfold. Even though you might feel like you will never bounce back again trust that, once this month progresses, you will once more sense spring is in the air. Then naturally and in your own time, you will want to emerge slowly, gently easing yourself back into your pre-holiday routine.



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