

Autumnal Equinox Reflection

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Once again we celebrate the changing seasons as our orbit around the sun aligns us with the Autumnal Equinox. While some of us may experience a bit of melancholy at sweet summer's end and harbor a sense of foreboding at the chill dark days to come, we gather at the equinox to hail the new season for all its splendor and delights.

But in welcoming autumn we also mark the passage of time. This recurring cycle of the seasons provides a template in which to think about time—those days and months that slip away from us like grains of sand through our fingers. Six months ago, as we celebrated the spring equinox, our attention was directed to the possibility of starting over—recalibrating our time-lines. At the summer solstice, we were reminded to savor those long precious days and live fully in the moment. Now, at the fall equinox, we have the occasion to think about the *layers of time* our lives represent—how we ourselves embody the past, the present *and the future--simultaneously*.

While autumn is so often associated with endings and death, it actually is the time when our ancestors planned and prepared for the future in very concrete ways. Survival depended upon their keen ability to preserve the harvest and slaughter, to store up seeds for another year's planting, and shelter themselves and the remaining livestock for the harsh winter and lean spring to follow. Almost everything they did was an embodiment of the future.

In the twenty-first century we—especially us urban dwellers-- are not driven by the dictates of an agrarian time-frame. But the autumnal equinox does still present us with an apt occasion to own the tasks and contemplate the lifestyle required of us to ensure our future survival and that of our progeny.