



Embracing Growth This December

As we move through life, it's easy to settle into what I like to call our “old limbs” — the familiar rhythms, habits, and ways of being that feel comfortable and safe. Yet, just as a gardener prunes a tree to remove old branches and make way for new growth, we too are called to release what no longer serves us. Unlike the tree, whose seasonal change is predictable and visible, our pruning is gradual, often fragmented, and sometimes goes unnoticed. Still, the message is the same: growth is happening, and with it comes the invitation to step fully into our next chapter.



December reminds us of this truth. In the Northern Hemisphere, the Winter Solstice marks the darkest point of the year—a time when night seems longest, and yet, from this depth, the light begins its return. Across cultures, this season is celebrated in myriad ways: Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Bokhi Day, and other sacred observances. Whether through family gatherings, lights, music, or ritual, we are reminded that even in darkness, life continues, inviting reflection, release, and renewal.

This month, I invite you to consider the process of pruning. What in your life feels constricting, like branches crowded with old growth? Perhaps it's a belief, a habit, a fear, or a relationship. As Ernest Holmes teaches, “Releasing the weight of past limiting beliefs and judgments frees us to rise up in faith” (*The Science of Mind*, p. 283). By allowing the gardener within to prune thoughtfully, we make space for fresh growth, new opportunities, and our authentic self to emerge.

Pruning can feel vulnerable, like the bare tree standing exposed in winter winds. And yet, this vulnerability signals transformation—the roots are strengthening underground, preparing for the buds and blossoms that will come with spring. Similarly, when we consciously release what no longer fits, we create room for new insights, creativity, and spiritual growth to flourish.

We are not alone in this process. December offers a chance to connect with community, creating sacred circles where we share, release, and heal together. As Mark Nepo reminds us, “How many thresholds that seem blocked or barred only seem so from their initial viewing?” (*The Book of Awakening*, p. 48). Through shared presence, compassion, and encouragement, we can rise together, stronger, more whole, and filled with hope.

This month, let yourself be your own gardener. Prune the old limbs, release what no longer serves you, and step into the returning light after the Solstice. Embrace the wisdom of your experiences and celebrate the possibility of becoming your most authentic self. Everything we release makes room for new life, new joy, and the unfolding of our unique journey.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson, quoted by Eric Butterworth, beautifully reminds us, “You are an inlet and may become an outlet to all there is in God... Let your Allness be revealed. Release your inner beauty, unleash your imprisoned splendor” (*The Creative Life*, p. 59).

This December, let's celebrate the pruning, the transformation, and the promise of new growth—spring waiting quietly beneath the winter soil, ready to emerge in its perfect season.

Living in gratitude,

~ Rachael

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