**The Wheel of the Year: Autumn**

Where does a year start?
Where does a life start?
Where does a day start?

It's a wheel. There is no beginning. No end. No start. No finish.

All we have is an earth, on a tilt, fixed around a sun.

And we, in the northern hemisphere, are tilting away from the sun.

The hours of daylight are waning. The hours of darkness are waxing.

Plant growth is slowing. Temperatures are dropping.

We are in Autumn. We are in the time of the year when life gives all it has left.

The season's vegetables are coming to an end.

The trees are beginning to turn and drop their leaves.

The needles of the Tamarack are hinting at their magic.

This is the time of giving, of letting go, of returning to earth.

This is the Autumn.

If you were to overlay the life of a human overtop of the wheel of the year, where would you place birth?

Where would you put the early childhood years?

And how about adolescence on its way to adulthood?

And where would you put adulthood?

And what about becoming an elder?

Where would you put death?

And what about that inky in-between of death into life again?

And where would you put conception?

I was taught the wheel by Neill Bovaird, a teacher and friend and student of old ways. And he taught me birth is placed on the Vernal Equinox. A moment of balance between light and dark on our way towards summer. This is the bursting up and out of the soil. This is the crowning head. This is birth.

The years from birth to right before adolescence, take us from Spring to around Beltane, Early May.

Adolescence is around Beltane, May 1st, to the Summer Solstice and just past that.

The weeks from August up to the Autumnal Equinox, are our years past adolescence while we prepare for Adulthood.

The Autumn starts to turn colder and darker yet on its way to the Winter Solstice, the time of the Elder.

Between the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox, Late December and Late March, the mystery comes in.

We die.

The Elder will die.

And yet, the Wheel of the Year does not end here.

There is an inky in-between. Where bodies die and spirits transform. And then. Bodies are born again.

We'll touch more on this Mystery during the Winter Cycle.

But today, the Autumn, early Autumn, right where we are, is our focus.

The Autumnal Equinox, Adulthood, this is our time of contribution. Just as the leaves are dropping, the fruit is falling, our lives are centrally focused around giving, contributing, offering.

The obsession with experiencing (adolescence and early adulthood) is over and now we are in the fullness of the responsibilities of our lives.

And, the magic of this time is aligning our service, our contribution, with our innate essence, our, you guessed it, gifts!

We want to give of ourselves in the way that flowers give of their fragrance.  Without effort. Without management.  With pure, unselfconscious delight.

This can be hard to do in today's culture.

This is why we chose to be born into this time.

We like a challenge. Apparently.

We are up for adventure.  Apparently.

We don't like to walk by a sink full of dishes too many times.  Apparently.

Bcause.  We have jumped in!

This is a critical time in human culture.

And you chose this time to incarnate.

You must like a little challenge.

You, apparently, desire to make things a little easier, a little more beautiful, a little richer for those to come.

So, here we are.  In the Autumn of our year.  And for most of us, the Autumn of our lives.

Where are you getting to be yourself, unselfconsciously?
Where are you allowing the flower-sweet aroma of you to fill the room?
And where is it being appreciated, received, and celebrated?

For a lot of us, not enough.

If you've joined Soul School, you likely feel the dissonance around all that you contain and the frustration of not knowing how to, or where to, give all that wants to move through you.

The circumstances of today are such that we've had to make many sacrifices in order to keep a roof over our heads, clothing on our children's backs, and food on our tables.

Just as we've *made* sacrifices, we can begin to *make* new choices.

Choices that bring us back into alignment with who we are meant to be.

Everyday we have choices.

Everyday we choose what we put our focus on.

Some of us feel very trapped by all of the responsibilities we have.

But what if all of these responsibilities, their burdens, their beauty, were perfect? Were exactly right? Exactly right, for right now? For the right now of our lives? For the development of something essential for us on our path of soul-alignment?

What if our life, as it's currently unfolding, was actually designed by your soul in order to bring you into this awareness?

What if the parts that chaffed and chided and drained us of energy were perfect? Perfect for showing us what we actually want? What we really desire? What we think would be truly delightful to be or do or offer?

What if my discontent, my frustration, my dissatisfaction, were powerful signposts for me? Not obstacles. Not hurdles. Not deviations from the course. Not issues to overcome. But perfect bumpers to bring me into visceral connection with what I truly long for?

So, as I experience them, I receive them gratefully. I welcome them fully. Like we did to start our call on Thursday. What if I saw them as helpful indications to aligning me evermore with my path?

“You! You’re back! You’re here to get me back on track! Thank you!”

And here is a framework you can use when encountering this powerful signposts.

**The Wheel of Experience**:

- Recognize and honor the signpost (frustration, exhaustion, fear, etc)
- Use this as the opportunity to articulate what you do want (freedom, authenticity, expansion, intimacy, etc)
- Find real, specific, and recent examples in your life of where that thing that you want (even just the tiniest, tenderest, green little shoot of it) is already here, is already happening, is already arrived.
- Feel feel feel what it feels like to have what you are wanting already happening in your life. And stay in that feeling.
- And everyday, train your nose to find the scent of what you want and how it's already here and only becoming brighter, louder, more fragrant
- And when you experience the powerful signposts, begin the process again
- Use the signposts as opportunity to articulate what you do want

- Find real, specific, and recent examples in your life of where that thing that you want is already here, is already happening, is already arrived.
- Feel what it feels like to desire something and to know and see and feel it happening, around in you, in you, in your life right now!
- And everyday, train your nose to find the scent of what you want and how it's already here and only becoming brighter, louder, more fragrant
- And once you start noticing more and more how what you are wanting and desiring is happening, already, and all around you, stay in those moments. Feel all the accompanying feelings. Stay in those moments for as long as you can. Stretch it out. Make it last. Last the whole cup of coffee. The whole drive to the store. The whole dinner prep process. The whole shower. The whole slow walk along the lake. Stretch it out. And to receive your blue belt, stretch it out into the places of your life where those old familiar signposts are firmly planted. That might be in jobs, careers, certain relationships, health circumstances, and more. See if you can stretch it out across the ocean of old signposts to the near shore of another experience of noticing that the very thing you long for is, is actively happening, actively growing, actively becoming more and more the focus of your life. And feel it. Feel it. Feel it. Feel it.

So, how does this all relate to the Autumn? To our gifts?

Our gifts are longing to be focused on.

Our gifts are longing to fall from the trees and land on the fertile earth and become something much bigger than itself.

Your focus, your mind, is what allows these gifts to find receptive soil.

Make room for them.

And watch them grow, transform, become and enter into the mystery of Winter. The time of dormancy, of stillness, of wisdom, of receiving the gifts of vision.

Make room now for your gifts to have time and space and stillness for them to enter your dreams and help shape the vision you know is possible for this earth and all the beings on it.

The life you want, wants you as badly.

The gifts you long to know, long to be taken up by you.

Enjoy the process of letting them emerge to you.

Enjoy seeing and feeling and believing that the life you want is actually right right right here. So close. Just one strong blow from the archeologist's lungs to push the dust away and reveal the ancient image. Of you. Your true shape. True form. True life.

Is right here.

Waiting for you.

Waiting for your breath.