

Increasing Our Inner Peace

from Susan J. Ackerman

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February is the short month that tests our patience and our faith. How often have you heard people say, “Will it ever end?” “How much more of this freezing weather will there be?” Even though the days are getting longer, we are still subject to longer hours of darkness than daylight. This is the exact moment to practice knowing It Will Always Get Better. There is a reason for all things. When the sun shines, it is cause for celebration. If we didn’t have winter, we might not appreciate summer, spring, and fall as much as we do. And there is so much to love about winter.

I took this photo of the river buried under the snow. It reminded me that even when everything seems as if it’s standing still, there is always movement that we can’t see. Life is always changing, bringing us to more growth and happiness if we are open to the change.

It is no accident that February is the month of Valentine's Day. It is a time of looking at our true heart and finding our ability to love. We are often so good at loving others. But in fact, we can only truly love another if we love our Self first. You may find that thought strange, but it is a major Truth. If we think our only gift is to love others, we'll never accept what anyone tells us is good about ourselves. We must come to know our own worth. Each of us has many wonderful qualities. This is a perfect moment to explore and appreciate them. Yes, send Valentines to those you love, but also give your Self the gift of focusing on what you love about You and what are your special gifts. Peace and Happiness grow from a base of loving the Self.

As you meditate in this month of the heart, set your intention on finding all that is beautiful and lovable in your Self. As Yvonne Youst said in her book, *The White Horse*, "One gives to others by the filling of the Self to brim. The Self spills over of its own accord." Selfishness only happens when we don't give to ourselves. If we truly replenish our Self with Love, we will automatically share that with others.

In this month of February, look, too, for all that makes you feel grateful about winter. Soon it will turn into spring. Ask yourself what winter brings to sustain and nurture us. This morning as I looked out the window at sunrise, I saw a beautiful purple-colored heart in the clouds. "Yes," I told myself, "This is clearly the month of the heart."

With Love From Your Teacher and Friend,
Susan

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