

Awakening to Renewal: The Promise of Ostara
(Ostara/ Transformation)
March 10, 2024

Earth awakens from her slumber, bursting forth with life. Change is the very essence of existence!

- The Gateway of March (Dad's birthday)
 - gentle embrace of the spring sun
 - biting cold and snow
 - back to sunshine
- Ostara Story
 - Setting - spring is late, winter is still raging
 - Eostre finds a small bird with frozen wings
 - takes pity upon the suffering bird, petting it gently and blowing upon its frozen feathers
 - Since it can no longer fly, she transforms the bird into a magical hare
 - asks the hare to help her by carrying baskets filled with brightly colored eggs to the people of the village
 - People overjoyed by gifts, and associate hare with Eostre's springtime festival
- This is the spirit of Ostara!
 - The wheel of the year turns once more
 - Ostara is
 - time of rebirth, growth, and the promise of new beginnings
 - time of transition and transformation
 - time between
 - awakening, renewal, rebirth/Spring
 - departure of the old/Winter
 - feel the stirring of life all around us, even through the snow
- Existence as a tapestry
 - each individual story a thread in the fabric
 - we are part of a sacred web that binds us to the Earth and to each other
 - Ostara
 - paints the world with vibrant colors
 - weaves together threads of rebirth and growth
 - invites us to shed the old and embrace the new

- Ostara teaches nature of transformation
 - As Earth awakens from slumber, bursting with life, we are reminded that change is the very essence of existence
 - every bud that blossoms
 - every creature that stirs from hibernation
 - reminder: transformation is not a solitary journey but a collective unfolding
 - our lives intertwine, shaping and reshaping the tapestry
- Ostara
 - whispers of the potential for growth and renewal within each of us
 - compare:
 - seeds that lie dormant in the earth, awaiting the gentle caress of spring
 - souls yearning for awakening, for the light of understanding
 - each of us carries within us the spark of divinity, the seed of transformation waiting to blossom
 - In the fertile soil of possibility, we planted the seeds of our dreams
 - Ostara reminds us to nourish them
 - waters of intention, warmth of our hearts
 - In the sacred dance of the seasons, we are reminded of the ever-present opportunity for reinvention, for shedding the old and embracing the new
- Ostara is time of balance
 - return of light and life to the land
 - light and darkness harmonize in perfect equilibrium
 - embrace our darkness
 - our vulnerabilities
 - our imperfections
 - find the courage to embark on a journey of transformation
 - honor the sacred interplay of opposites,
 - through embracing the full spectrum of our experiences, we attain wholeness and fulfillment
- Ostara
 - calls us to embrace the transformative power that resides within and around us
 - teaches us that change is not merely inevitable but essential for growth and renewal
 - Earth sheds its winter cloak to adorn itself in the garments of spring
 - we shed layers of the past

- release what no longer serves us
 - embrace the promise of new beginnings
- Like the cycles of nature, our lives ebb and flow, moving through seasons of growth, decay, and renewal
- As the caterpillar transforms into the butterfly
 - we are called to shed the limitations of the past
 - to spread our wings in flight
 - through the process of shedding our old skins, we discover the true essence of our being
 - the radiant light that shines within us all
- In the embrace of spring, we find the courage to confront our fears, to challenge our limitations, *and to embark on the journey of self-discovery*

Self-Discovery

- Key for Personal Transformation
 - Many people are unaware of crucial pieces of our own personal “self”
 - judgments, ideas, perceptions, assumptions, and feelings
 - pieces buried at darkest corners of our consciousness
 - We talk to people, make decisions, engage with life, choose work, and perform any other human interaction, under the influence of those deeply buried pieces of ourselves
 - not consciously aware of their impact—and yet they impact us profoundly
 - we do it unconsciously, make choices according to it
 - “I don’t have the required level of experience/education” =
 - “I am not good enough to do this”
 - “I am not worthy of this opportunity”
 - self-awareness helps us move past this
 - increasing self-awareness, and gaining greater self-knowledge shift those pieces
 - from darkness into the light
 - from unconscious into the conscious
- Self-awareness helps to
 - experience self-development
 - exercise self-control
 - produce creative accomplishments
 - experience higher self-esteem
- leads to increased self-care and decreased burn-out

- leads to greater acceptance of oneself and others
- an essential component in our psychological well being

Increasing Self-Awareness: Practical Steps

- Learn New Skills
 - When you learn a new skill, you learn about
 - your personal boundaries
 - your comfort zone
 - how to move beyond it
- Classes
 - courses, workshops, retreats, etc inviting self-awareness
 - need to have introspection woven into their teaching
- Read
 - Some books are written with intention to invite self-observation
 - trigger questions and insights, lead to greater knowledge of yourself
- Therapy/Coaching
 - Working with a therapist, psychologist, coach, etc
 - provides a healthy environment for self-reflection
 - observe yourself without judgment
- Friendly Feedback
 - Other perspectives can provide interesting insights
 - Should be someone close to you, or someone who knows you well
 - Ask questions about yourself – and begin by stating that you are truly open to hearing any reflection they could offer
 - Insights might not be 100% accurate, but they provide food for thought
- Meditate
 - Meditation invites you to meet yourself
 - If attention is not wandering, it has to sit still and observe in-the-moment thoughts and emotions
- Connect with Nature
 - reduced cognitive “noise” while spending time in nature
 - peaceful state of mind is an excellent space to meet yourself
 - Tree Preaching - passion!

How to Transform?

- "How to Change" by author and researcher Katy Milkman of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School
 - Value: 40% of premature deaths are due to behaviors that can be changed

- Remember the power of fresh starts
 - humans tend to organize time around events, or exiting one chapter in life and entering another
 - Recognizing and highlighting opportunities to create fresh starts, even if they're small, like the start of a new week, can change behavior
 - just flagging an upcoming birthday can encourage people to start saving more for retirement
- Change isn't one and done
 - no quick fix if you want change to last
 - lasting change requires lasting attention
- Flexibility
 - too much rigidity is the enemy of a good habit
 - Members of a group that worked out on a strict schedule simply didn't go to the gym if they missed that window. More flexible group formed a more lasting workout habit.
- Procrastination
 - "present bias" — we value the rewards we can get in this instant above the rewards we'll achieve in the long run
 - So set restrictions on ourselves
 - time/deadlines: improve performance in school
 - financial: impose a fine on your future self and commit to paying if you don't follow through with your goals
 - Sumbel oath example
- Making accountability public can be a powerful motivator — for good!
 - negative emotions associated with feeling like you're being watched by other people
 - use accountability partners as a way to enforce a "penalty" on yourself
 - Sumbel oath example
- Ways for Self-Improvement And Self-Growth
 - Read Every Day
 - Pick up a new Hobby
 - Take a course
 - Overcome a fear
 - Learn Public Speaking
 - Weekly exercise routine

- Set Big Goals
- Acknowledge Your Flaws
- Learn From People Who Inspire You
- Quit a Bad Habit
- Cultivate a New Habit
- Learn to Deal With Difficult People
- Avoid Negative People
 - “You are the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with”
- Start a Journal
- Reduce the Time You Spend on Messaging Apps
- Let Go of the Past
- Take a Break
- Commit to Your Personal Growth
- Whenever we think we are good, we can be even better!

Closing Remarks:

- As we stand on the threshold of spring, let us embark on this journey of transformation together, knowing that we are guided by the wisdom of the ages and the eternal rhythms of the universe
- Let us release the burdens of the past, the doubts that hold us back, and the fears that keep us small
- May we sow the seeds of love, compassion, and understanding, nurturing them with the waters of empathy and the light of wisdom
- May we be vessels of transformation, radiating the light of love and healing into the world
- Remember the swinging gate: transformation means changing back and forth a little at a time
- author Richard Bach: “Here is a test to find whether your mission on Earth is finished: If you're alive, it isn't.”
 - And you are alive, so keep on looking at the mirror, look closely, you might be surprised by what you find
- May we be guided by the wisdom of the ancient ones, the whispers of the wind, and the song of the Earth as we journey ever deeper into the mystery of our own becoming
- In the spirit of Ostara, let us embrace the sacred art of reinvention
 - each new beginning is an opportunity to rewrite our stories, redefine ourselves, and step into the fullness of our power

- May this season be a time of renewal, a time of transformation and transcendence. May we dance in the light of the returning sun, celebrating the magic of new beginnings and the infinite possibilities that await us.