

## SEASON'S GREETINGS

Whether we observe Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, Bhodi Day (the Buddhist day of enlightenment), or Solstice, this is the time of year that we celebrate the coming of light out of darkness.

In Chicago, under gray skies, buffeted by the cold winds off Lake Michigan, amidst the hustle and bustle of the season, it isn't hard to understand why our ancestors felt the need to remind themselves that brighter days would indeed return. It seems ironic that these holidays of light often bring a sense of darkness with them. Whether we are suffering from a lack of UV rays, or from the disparity between the Hallmark version of what the festivities are *supposed* to be and what our experience actually is, December can be difficult.

Theologians speak of a "Dark Night of the Soul," a time of loneliness and desolation brought about by the letting go of the ego's hold on the psyche. This surrender makes space for a transformation in the way we define ourselves and our relationship to both the world and the All That Is. The interim period can be frightening, hence the perceived "darkness". But those who have preceded us through the night advise that there are blessings to be had in the dark. Helen Keller reminds, "everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence," while Og Mandino states, "I will endure the darkness for it shows me the stars." And while in the midst of our pain, it seems as if it will never end, mythologist Joseph Campbell assures, "at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light."

Perhaps these holidays come at the perfect time, giving us a unique opportunity to practice the faith and hope that will sustain us on both our physical and spiritual journeys. And the blessing is two-fold, for not only do we receive this timely

reminder that dawn follows even the longest night, but we are also granted the privilege of gifting light to those we come into contact with, both loved ones and strangers. If you were to fly across the country this evening, looking down at the houses below, you would see that every community is connected by a network of holiday lights, a physical manifestation of the energetic web of life that literally connects each living entity to every other. We just never know when the joy and good cheer, the kind word and warmth, we share might be the very spark another needs in order to relight their candle in the dark. And this gift we give comes back to us. Motivational speaker Ben Sweetland promises, "we cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own."

Here at HHP, it is our privilege to bear lanterns in the night, to be torchbearers through the labyrinth of personal transformation, and we are honored by your trust. We are so very blessed to have each and every one of you in our lives, to witness and support the unique and beautiful light you bring to the world. Remember during these cold days of darkness that we are right here, lighting candles!

May you and yours experience  
Peace, Joy, and Light for this  
holiday season and beyond!

*Kurt, Sara, Amie, Tara, Kevin,  
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