



MORE ON MAGA - THE AUTUMN SEASON OF OUR LIVES

Times Are A-Changing

Autumn 2011

There's a lot of life enhancing wisdom shared at the "[Moonsong](#)" workshops, and one of my favourites, because its so close to my experience, is the awareness of the autumn season of our lives. The **freedom** and **direction** (not mutually exclusive terms!) that this information enables for a woman, can be life changing.

Just as a mother in her mother/ summer life season makes her choices focussing on the children, or on growing and nurturing new things/ ways/ ideas etc if she doesn't have her own children, the maga/ autumn phase of our lives is about **reaping and sharing our harvest**, our **knowledge** and **experience**, with our communities. Just as it is the mother's responsibility to tend, nurture and help growth, the maga's responsibility is to give back by sharing what she has learned, through her mother/ summer and maiden/ spring seasons.

However, in the deep value making mind of our patriarchal culture, women beyond their child bearing **lose their value**, in fact the women of most value are the ovulating flower like maidens that we see as the prototypical woman who is used in advertising to sell just about anything. And thankfully times and our **culture's values** are a-changing. Australia has a woman Prime Minister, two states have women Premiers and the Governor General is a woman. And they are in their maga life season or verging on it.

The Evolution Of The Triple Goddess

Maga is the life season heralded by menopause and usually occurs from about 45-55 years old. In a typical situation a maga woman who has had children is less required by them on a daily basis for their basic needs and has more time on her hands. Her children have grown, her parents are aging and she is faced with the big questions about self worth, value and what now? And on top of these big questions - who's answers are all about revelation and self awareness - is our inheritance from our ancestors of an old map of the life cycle, life phases or seasons - Maiden, Mother, Crone; known as the Triple Goddess.

This means that after menopause, traditionally a woman enters her Crone phase or season. Since the life expectancy of women has basically doubled since this original story, the life season of Crone has also doubled in length. According to this map, nowadays, a woman spends the second half of her life in the Crone season. But this second half of her life can easily and simply be divided into both of the seasons of the descent, autumn and winter. For those of us in our late 40's and 50's whose mothers are alive, the difference between the autumn and winter life season is obvious. At 52, I know I am not yet a crone, my mother is. I have a lot more life experience to gain to wear that mantle. Each season informs the next, just like the Earth seasons. The autumn season of our lives is different to the winter season. And this information for women at this age that opens up a whole other experience.

The Autumn Season Of Our lives

*“As she moves through autumn, a woman feels a passionate **connection with all life**. Yet, wise in the seasons of living, she can be unsentimental, even pitiless. She does not try to nurture everything and everyone, for she knows not all can - should - survive. She becomes **selective**. There is enough of everything - strength, love, passion, lust - everything but time.*

***Time** she knows grows short. Nothing seems endless anymore. Her life grows full of **endings**: parents and friends die, animals she has loved disappear in a gasp, dreams fade beyond reclaiming. She does not recognise, when the death starts that fall has begun. But later she will remember: After that one, it was never the same. Never again will she hold a living body without knowing the **fragility of its life**, the closeness of its death.*

*She finds she has **limits**. Her energy falters, her mind drifts, her patience snaps. She begins to husband herself, to save herself for what really matters. She has seen enough to guess the trajectory of most events, to hold herself back from repeating old mistakes. She knows now that some energy is wasted. So sometimes she seems parsimonious, unwilling to expend in **waste**. But other times she is **generous**. That old coat? Give it away. That pretty pin? Oh, do take it. The half-finished book? No, it's yours. She does not need to cling to what she has outlasted. Things leave her: she does not need it all.*

*Fall consumes a woman many times before and after middle life, whenever the time demands that she become **decisive**. She empties her womb of conception; she leaves a convent, a marriage, a career; she puts a loved old pet to sleep. She cleans a closet, gives away old books, cuts off her hair. Autumn moods find her **free and vibrant**, impatient of delusions, **ready** to do whatever she needs to do.*

*For she knows what she needs, and she wants it fiercely. For every false dream that dies, a true one is remembered. She climbs mountains to stand in alpenglow, she gallops out on a magnificent horse, she paints her secrets and nightmares. She bears a last and cherished child; she remembers passion with an old friend; **she writes her own, her individual story**. She knows what memories she needs to store, to provide her winter years.*

*The autumn woman moves towards dreamtime. Though she knows her limits, She has also felt limitless. She has known the ineffable. She wakes at night from dreams of high windy places where small blue flowers bloom, and she knows in her bones that such places exist. Luminous beings appear in her dreams and pull her towards them. She recognises the dust of infinity in a windstorm, the fragrance of **timelessness** in a fire. There is a **transcendent** energy about her, but she remains **rooted** in life's imminent realities. In her eyes you see the fire of primal knowledge: the knowledge of life and death. She knows that she will not escape this life alive. And so she **embraces** it, moment by moment.”*

“Fall” by Patricia Monaghan from “Seasons of the Witch”

Giving Birth To Herself

Others have referred to this season as the time of the ‘**give away**’, a time that comes from **taking stock, reflection and introspection**. And a time of **seeking balance**. Interestingly, divorce rates after 50 have increased over the years and the majority of divorces are instigated by women.

“Thirty years ago, the notion that people could be sexually active in their 60s wasn't discussed,” says gerontologist John Cavanaugh, president of the University of West Florida and author of Adult Development and Aging. “The stereotype was that once women hit menopause that was that. Now people want to stay active sexually, and if that's important then a meaningful relationship helps.”

The other part to this story is that according to Dr Christianne Northrup (“The Wisdom of Menopause”), a woman's experience around menopause is reflective of her experience around her premenstrual and menstrual times, every month, every cycle for the past 30-40 years of her life. If a woman **ignores the prompts her cycle gives her** during the third week of her cycle, her premenstrum, of all the things/ ways of being

and behaving that are not working in her life; if she “sweeps these - inequities, imbalances and ways that no longer serve her – under the carpet” then come perimenopause they all come out. For this is the beginning of the rest of her life, and the perimenopausal symptoms have been likened to **labour** and this time she gives birth to herself

Maga Musings

*“Since I can remember Autumn is my very favourite season. The return of the earth’s dampness, the sweet fetid, decaying scent of Autumn’s leaves, the colours of rusts, browns, maroons and every earthly shade in between bring me joy. All the crisp, misty, moist mornings and warm gentle sunny afternoons gives comfort to these bones and fills them with the spirit of Maga. I first understood the connection of the **Maga** phase in a woman’s life at a “Moonsong” gathering in November 2010.*

*Experiencing this workshop deepened my understanding of women’s **blood cycles** and their close spiritual relationship with the **cycles of the seasons** and the **cycles of the moon**. It was this shared wisdom that had sat deeply in my womb waiting for a key to unlock this wisdom to my consciousness. “Moonsong” gifted me with wisewoman teachings and I will always be so grateful for that weekend and that gathering of special women. As we were women gathering at all different stages in our life cycles we sat together in circle giving a rich, deep, fecund understanding of how important sharing this knowledge is with each other.*

From this spiritual place of learning some of what I came to know is that traditionally women have generally only been placed in three life cycle phases. That of The Maiden (Spring/ Waxing Moon), The Mother (Summer/ Full Moon) and The Crone (Winter/ Dark Moon). The cycle of Maga sits between The Mother and The Crone and is the Waning moon and the season of Autumn. The resonance of this teaching in my spirit allows deep women’s knowledge a place in my womb that has history connected to my umbilical cord.

*Now in my mid 50’s, this I now understand brings me to the Autumn of my life. I feel hugged and **nurtured with this new wisdom**. Wise women share that fourteen moons past your last menstrual bleed allows you to move into the Maga phase of your life. Medically explained as Post Menopausal. This is a powerful time in my life at present and I am feeling it in my bones and spirit. There is a **shifting** of my center, a movement of my anchor, a **shedding** of my layers and much unknown still to journey through. The Summer season of Mother is nearing its end with one last blast of firey strength and passion. Oh Autumn I am so looking forward to being with you this year of 2011. This poem is in honour of the The Maiden, The Mother, The Maga and The Crone in all of us and gifted with love to the beautiful “Moonsong” Women.“*

with love from Peta Greenough

COME CHILD

COME CHILD COME CHILD,
COME WITH ME HOLD MY HAND AS WE WALK
AN UNKNOWN PATH INTO
A FUTURE JOURNEY.

LET THE EARTH’S MUSIC
NOURISH US AND THE
WATERS LAP AROUND WITH
LIFE GIVING LOVE.

WE WILL EXPLORE OFFERINGS
OF KNOWLEDGE AND SHARE IN

THE RENEWING FIRES OF LIFE.

LET'S SEARCH FOR SOUL FOODS
FROM DEEP CENTERS
UNEXPLAINED.

COME CHILD, COME WITH ME
ALL LIFE WILL BE A CELEBRATION
A CEREMONY.

LET'S DANCE FEELING PROUD
NURTURING TRUST
ALLOWING SENSUAL EXPLORATIONS
AROUND OUR HEARTS
WE CAN SHARE THE WISDOMS
OF OUR ELDERS, UNRAVELLING THEM
AND SCULPTING NEW IMAGININGS.

WE WILL SMILE A LOT AND
UNDERSTAND CHANGE WITH
RESPECTFUL CLAPPING.

COME CHILD, COME WITH ME
LET'S HOLD HANDS AND SEARCH
FOR OUR SPIRITUALITY.

WE WILL DREAM, TOUCHING NEW
PLACES. OPENING OUR HEARTS
AND MINDS TO ESSENCES
THAT YET HAVE NO NAME.

WE'LL TREAD THE MUD AND TAKE
FLIGHT AMONGST THE ANGELS' WINGS,
LET'S ASK QUESTIONS AND
LISTEN MINDFULLY TO ANSWERS.

COME CHILD, COME WITH ME
LET'S LIGHT A CANDLE AND
HEAR OURSELVES BREATHE.

WE WILL BE OUR OWN
COMFORTERS AND SHIELD EACH
OTHER JUST SOMETIMES.

MOST OF ALL DEAR CHILD ON THIS
JOURNEY MY HAND, MY HEART MY
SOUL, MY ESSENCE WILL BE YOURS
WHENEVER. COME CHILD, COME WITH ME,
LET'S LIGHT A CANDLE AND BE.

Peta Greenough

Blessed Be!

*“This total transition from childbearing to past-childbearing is properly known as the “climacteric”. And because each woman is a biochemical and physiological individual it can last from a few months to as long as fifteen years. The climacteric is usually divided into three parts: **perimenopause** to indicate when hormonal shifts have already begun but a woman is still menstruating; **menopause**, the time at which the last period occurs; and **postmenopause**, which among wise women was traditionally considered to have begun on the fourteenth moon after a woman’s last menstruation since by then her reproductive capacity had most definitely finished.”*

“Passage to Power” by Leslie Kenton

So, just like every phase, season and stage in our lives, Maga is to be welcomed, embraced, cherished and flowed with. **The Earth is our greatest teacher**, seasons flow, one into the other over and over and She teaches us by example to ‘go with the flow’. And in this process, sometimes, some things, often change, so ‘hold on to your hat’ and keep your sense of humour and humility.

Blessed Be and Blessed Do