



Autumn

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When August approaches people often think of the “end”- The end of summer, the end of fun, the end of relaxation. This thinking is understandable as we are often sad to see the summer days fade. However, we can also look at this season as one in which we can prepare and optimize ourselves for the remainder of the year. The fall months can bring with it a renewed sense of motivation, goals and changes in behaviors that can benefit us as we move into the winter. Times of transition, including autumn, can be used to stop, reflect and refocus ourselves.

The word *autumn* has been used for centuries, but before this the word *harvest* was more common in everyday speech to describe the time of late August-November where people would gather, reap and collect food for the winter months. If you delve into the word harvest you will find deeper meaning and traditions practiced during this time. Harvesting not only meant preparation but also the frequent gathering of friends and loved ones. It was a time of support where people shared a common goal. After the summer months of individual activities, recreation and travel, families and friends would come back together to transition to another season. The harvest time didn't signal an end to the year, but a period during the year that brought new ideas, habits and ways in which people lived together. This is a common theme that has been carried into our present day culture as autumn signifies the re-gathering of students at school, upcoming holiday celebrations, and a general sense of being together for the colder months. Perhaps we aren't out gathering in the way our ancestors did, but the idea of coming together toward a common goal promotes healthy living and a solid foundation for mental well-being throughout the course of the winter. We don't have to perceive autumn as the end of summer, but as the continuation of preparation, togetherness, and a refocus on our close community. Autumn brings with it a time of harvest and motivation to prepare ourselves not only mentally but physically, socially and emotionally for the upcoming winter.

Let's not look at fall as an end, but as a time of preparation leading us into a beautiful winter knowing summer will be here again soon.