

# The Seasons of Life, Part 2 by Jim Rohn

First, life and business are like the changing seasons. That's one of the best ways to illustrate life: it's like the seasons that change. Second, you cannot change the seasons, but you can change yourself.

Now with those two key phrases in mind, let's look at what I consider to be the first major lesson in life to learn, and that is how to handle the winters. They come regularly, right after autumn. Some are long, some are short, some are difficult, some are easy, but they always come right after autumn. That is never going to change.

There are all kinds of winters - the "winter" when you can't figure it out, the "winter" when everything seems to go haywire. There are economic winters, social winters and personal winters. Wintertime can bring disappointment, and disappointment is common to all of us. So you must learn how to handle the winters. You must learn how to handle difficulty; it always comes after opportunity. You must learn to handle recessions; they come right after expansions. That isn't going to change.

The big question is what do you do about winters? You can't get rid of January simply by tearing it off the calendar. But here is what you can do: you can get stronger; you can get wiser; and you can get better. Remember that trio of words: stronger, wiser, better. The winters won't change, but you can.

Next is spring. Fortunately, following the turbulence of winter comes the season of activity and opportunity called springtime. It is the season for entering the fertile fields of life with seed, knowledge, commitment, and a determined effort.

However, the mere arrival of spring is no sign that things are going to look good in the fall. You must do something with the spring. In fact, everyone has to get good at one of two things: planting in the spring or begging in the fall. Take advantage of the day and the opportunities that spring can bring.

It is the promise of spring that as we sow, so shall we also reap. Faith further provides to us an irrevocable law decreed in heaven which assures that for every disciplined human effort we will receive a multiple reward. For each cup planted, a bushel reaped, for every good idea given to another, many shall be given to us in return. For every demonstrated act of faith, a multiplicity of the rewards; and for every act of love given, a life of love in return.

Just remember it is a natural characteristic of springtime to present itself ever so briefly, or to lull us into inactivity with its bounteous beauty. Do not pause too long to soak in the aroma of the blossoming flowers, lest you awaken to find springtime gone with your seed still in your sack. Get busy quickly on your springs, your opportunities. There are just a handful of springs that have been handed to each of us. Life is brief, even at its longest. Whatever you are going to do with your life, get at it. Don't just let the seasons pass by.

The third major lesson in life to learn; how to nourish and protect your crops all summer. Sure enough, as soon as you've planted, the busy bugs and noxious weeds are out to take things over. Here is the next bit of truth: they will take it, unless you prevent it.

There are two key phrases to consider with the third major lesson. The first is "all good will be attacked." Don't press me for a reason. I was not in on some of the early decisions, so I don't know why. I just know that it's true. Let reality be your best beginning. Every garden will be invaded. The second phrase is "all values must be defended." Social values, political values, friendship values, business values - all must be defended. Every garden must be tended all summer. If you don't develop this skill, you'll never wind up with anything of value.

But for those who make diligent efforts to plant, protect, and preserve there are not enough birds, bugs, or other obstacles to destroy all the efforts of last spring.

Now, the fourth and season is fall, the time of harvesting the fruits of our springtime labor. Fall also presents us with our fourth major lesson to learn in life, and that is to learn how to reap in the fall without apology if you have done well and without complaint if you have not.

For nothing is more exciting than a bounteous crop, and nothing more dreadful than a barren field in the fall. We must remember that in all areas of the human existence, what we put into this world, we get back from it. It is nature's way of evening the score. So regardless of the results, take full responsibility for your crop. One of the highest forms of human maturity is accepting full responsibility for our lives.

Which brings me back to the beginning of our discussion. We must remember that life is constantly recycling itself. Much of life is about the balancing of two opposites; like the positive and negative charge on a battery. Life's balancing of opposites totally surrounds our lives; man/woman, day/night, good/evil, life/death, water/land, summer/winter, recession/expansion, joy/sorrow, etc.

Yes, I believe we will have major changes, but I also believe we will continue to have just one winter, spring, summer and fall each year. Much of our success will lie in our ability and philosophy to plant in the springtime of opportunity. To weed and cultivate in the testing time of summer, to harvest without apology and/or complaint in the season of fall and to get stronger, wiser, better in the transition and learning times of winter.

Remember it is not what happens to you that determines your future; it is what you do about it.

So here's to a great, faith-filled and prosperous year.