



Excerpt from Nancy VanArsdall's 1996 book
Coming Full Circle

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A relationship between two people who love and care for one another takes on a rhythm of its own: its process is cyclical—waxing and waning in the flow and ebb of energy. Typically, the first cycle commences at the time of meeting. (At that moment of mutual attraction and response, some even report having been “moonstruck.”) The cycle begins when two of us experience a focusing of energy on one another. For one of a multitude of reasons—that often defy even the pens of poets—we are attracted to one another and the dynamic of the relationship is set in motion.

In a growing, dynamic relationship, we experience a number of cycles. *Coming Full Circle* explores four cycles that occur in a lifelong relationship. Each cycle has unique characteristics, but there is a commonality in the process or dynamic of the waxing and waning in each of these cycles that varies, to some degree, in intensity.

The dynamic of each cycle in the relationship begins at New Moon with a connection (or, in ensuing cycles, with a reconnection.) Flowing into the waxing moon phase is a time of closeness, of sharing, a veritable high. In the first cycle, the two lovers are focused on one another; the energy between them is exhilarating and intense. This is the time of romance and intentionality in the relationship. Often people report feeling extremely excited *and* vulnerable *and* sexual *and* creative *and* tireless. This is the time of hope, of ecstasy, of intense erotic feelings. In the cycles that follow, the waxing phase will certainly be less intense, yet energy nonetheless increases into the fullness of each cycle.

While we can certainly have sex without love and love without sex, the waxing time is the time when romantic passion (especially in the New Moon Cycle of a relationship) is often at its peak. The waxing phase is the time of “organic and instinctual growth.” Energies soar! Sensuality reigns! Life becomes poetry in action!

Anything is possible.! Waxing, in the later cycles, is the time of renewal, of reconnection; the power available here must not be underestimated. In the mature relationship, the waxing time, in subsequent cycles, is a time for new/renewed beginnings: undertaking dreamed-of-projects together, practicing untried behaviors, exploring and deepening ways of *being* together. Because so much energy is available to the partnership, it behooves the couple to utilize this resource to enrich the relationship by taking risks with each other.

The New Moon Cycle has, for many, the most intense of the waxings; yet through the cycles, the flow of energy is ever-increasing into the fullness of the cycle. We resist relinquishing the utter deliciousness of the waxing; it can be addictive, this blissful flowing—indeed a time for creating visions and dreams and possibilities. Whether it be new or renewed, preparation for the fullness of the partnership is taking place. We are euphoric!

The full moon phase of each cycle of the relationship is the center and highest point of energy and brings with it a sense of wholeness. We feel one with the other and with the world. The seeds of thoughts and feelings sown during the new moon phase, having reached fruition during the waxing moon phase, are now being harvested. We pause in the full moon phase (celebrate the Sabbath—heart-rest) to take in the fullness of the expression of being with one another.

Although relatively short-lived, because no healthy relationship remains static, this full moon time is the time of creative release. The couple, experiencing a sense of fulfillment, is at the height of creativity. Metaphorically, the full moon is the time of ovulation, so the relationship is, again symbolically, pregnant, mature, at its peak in fertility and sensuality. Fully illuminated, the relationship is ripe for choice-making—to have children, buy a home, make a commitment to a joint venture, support one or the other in a dream of her own. The amount of energy for creating, accomplishing, for transforming dreams and ideas into reality is enormous and can be awe-inspiring. The couple is urged to take this power and channel it into ways that are truly enriching for the relationship. The creative release in the full moon phase often takes the form of a celebration, of a ritual.

Sometimes, in reaction to all the intensity of the full moon phase of the cycle or perhaps due to an outside force, the relationship becomes impacted by conflict: the waning moon phase begins.

Because the nature of the waning of any cycle connotes increasing darkness, most of us approach the waning time with feelings of dread and fear. And either in anticipation of or in response to the darkening, we tend to be more reactive than proactive. We respond to the decreasing light not by simply honoring the naturally rhythmic process but in ways that are based in fear and anger. We seem more easily able and willing to honor the increasing, the waxing, than we are able to honor the decreasing, the waning.

What is important to remember is that there are many opportunities available to us throughout the waning, the most significant of which is that this time allows us—if we choose—a deepening of ourselves. While we may, after careful reflection, in the waning, choose to end the relationship—and this certainly is the appropriate time for a healthy ending—what is most important to realize is that it is the *cycle that is waning, not necessarily the relationship*. Yet out of our fear of loss and abandonment, we are usually much too quick to react to the necessary separateness; we often withdraw, create a crisis, or stir up a conflict.

The waning moon phase is vital in the dynamic of any relationship. Without darkness, there is not light; without death, there can be no rebirth. The waning moon phase of a relationship is the phase of positive darkness, and the waning requires affirmation and honoring just as do the other aspects of the cycle.