

BEFORE
THE
MOON IS FULL

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Before the Moon Is Full

We tend to admire the moon when it is full, as though only completeness deserved our attention. Yet some of its quietest beauty appears before then, when only a fragment is illuminated and there is still darkness around it. Nothing about that partial light suggests failure or absence. It simply belongs to a moment in a longer journey, one that cannot be hurried and has no reason to be.

The waxing moon carries no sense of urgency. Night after night, its illuminated surface grows almost imperceptibly, without announcing that anything has changed. Much of what transforms us happens in the same way, beyond the notice of others and sometimes even beyond our own. We spend years becoming, changing our minds, abandoning old certainties and discovering unexpected parts of ourselves. There are periods when growth is obvious, but more often it takes place quietly beneath the surface of ordinary days, long before we are able to recognize what has happened.

Perhaps this is why we are so easily deceived by appearances. We tend to measure ourselves by what has been completed: visible results, definitive answers, destinations reached. Anything unfinished can seem insufficient when compared with what we imagined it should become. Nature offers another perspective. A crescent moon is not an unsuccessful version of a full moon; it belongs entirely to its own moment and does not need to resemble tomorrow in order to possess beauty tonight. There is something profoundly human in that

idea, because much of a life is spent not arriving, but becoming.

Looking back, we may discover that the smallest decisions altered the direction of an entire life. A conversation, a refusal, the courage to leave or the courage to remain, a question we finally allowed ourselves to ask: none of these moments announces its importance when it arrives. Only later do we understand that something shifted and that, almost without noticing, we became someone who could not have existed without those seemingly insignificant moments.

The moon offers a beautiful image for this kind of transformation because it never appears concerned with its own progress. Darkness does not diminish it, and partial light does not make it less whole. What we see changes, but the moon itself remains. Perhaps we sometimes forget the same truth about ourselves. There are periods when only a small part of who we are seems illuminated, while loss, uncertainty, or exhaustion obscures everything else. What cannot presently be seen may feel as though it has disappeared, although absence from sight is not absence from existence. Strength can remain even when we do not feel strong, just as hope can survive quietly and a direction can exist long before the road becomes clear.

Patience, seen this way, is not passive waiting. It is the willingness to allow something to develop without forcing it to become visible before its time. Seeds do this beneath the earth; ideas do it before they become words, and human beings do it throughout their lives. We are accustomed to celebrating arrival—the finished work, the answer found, the wound healed, the destination reached—while giving far less attention to the uncertain territory in between. Yet that is

where much of life is actually lived, and the waxing moon belongs naturally to that territory.

Beginnings often need protection more than applause. A new intention may still be fragile, a different way of seeing ourselves may feel unfamiliar, and a decision may require time before we understand everything it has set in motion. There is no need to illuminate the entire road at once; enough light to recognize the next step may be all that is necessary. Perhaps this is one reason people have looked toward the moon for thousands of years. Beyond mythology, calendars and ancient beliefs lies the simple experience of watching something change while remaining itself, a language we understand because we live it too.

Every human life contains phases that might appear contradictory if viewed separately. There are seasons of expansion and retreat, certainty and doubt, belonging and solitude, and none of them tells the whole story. Neither does a single night tell the story of the moon. When we understand this, unfinished things begin to look different. Transition no longer needs to be treated as a defect, and what is emerging does not have to justify itself by already being complete.

The moon will become full when its course brings it there, but until then it loses nothing by being a crescent. Neither do we. There is dignity in becoming, beauty in what is still taking shape, and wisdom in allowing life to reveal itself gradually. We do not need to wait for fullness before recognizing the light, because sometimes the light that has already arrived is enough.