

# *The Real Magic*



*By Eric & Katrina Rasbold*

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## Foreword

Have you ever wondered why there seems to be a rift or a dividing line between mundane daily life and our holy connection with the Divine?

Have you ever been disillusioned with the limitations of mainstream spiritual practice, which segregates the time for worship and the time for life?

Are you disappointed with the knowledge that so much of traditional religious practices do not seem to offer the practitioner any semblance of tangible purpose to their practice?

If so, then look no further. CUSP offers both the adherents of every faith along with those who practice CUSP alone a methodology of spiritual understanding and practice that will give both meaning and purpose to worship and life's daily activities. CUSP is the way to dedicate your every action, thought and prayer towards complete connection and deep communion with the Divine while bringing about positive directed change within your life.

The CUSP principles provide a framework of spiritual progression – not just ritualistic repetition. CUSP employs all aspects of the cycles of nature, the cycles of human life and the increase of spiritual maturity and wisdom to give purpose and meaning to the soul and to enhance the Human Experience.

CUSP may be used as its own path to God or may be integrated with your current spiritual path. You in no way have to surrender your current beliefs in order to lead a fulfilling and successful CUSP life.

At its most basic level, the CUSP process will have the practitioner physically participate in the agricultural cycle of the year through the process of planting. At the same time, the practitioner participates meditatively in the cycle of spiritual manifestation through the same year. This provides a dual approach to creation – physically planting through to the harvest and spiritual conception through to manifestation. As Above, So Below. We have found this practice exceedingly effective in bringing about intended results on all level of existence.

## Introduction

It is becoming increasingly obvious that humanity now walks in the Age of Aquarius after spending the last two thousand years in the Age of Pisces – a period demarcated by confusion as to one's relationship to the Divine. The symbol of Pisces is the fish, and we have been acting the part quite well – going to and fro en masse but really unaware of where we are going or why. Answers to the fundamentally important questions of the meaning of life have been purposefully withheld from the average person and it was anathema to even put the question to authority in the first place.

A cursory examination of history will show that any kind of religious exploration outside of the mainstream has garnered overwhelmingly negative repercussions over the last two millennia. It has only been in the last fifty years or so that the attitudes of society have shifted to allow for serious inquest into the nature of Nature. In our current age, spiritual knowledge is no longer guarded; it is there for the taking. Attitudes are changing; realization is beginning to take hold. Spiritual matters, not *religious* matters are entering the public discourse.

The technological advances of the Internet have allowed for mass communication and sharing of ideas. Just as the Water Bearer Aquarius pours her never-ending bounty of water onto the Earth for all, we pour forth our knowledge and experiences for the entire world to see and experience for themselves. This 'pouring forth' has formed the River of Knowledge, which is life itself. Now, in the Aquarian Way, symbolized by the Water Bearer who dispenses the liquid of life into the river for all to know and enjoy; we invite you to step into the River of Consciousness and explore your relationship with your spirit, your soul and the Divine.

Over sixteen years ago, Eric and Katrina Rasbold began developing an interfaith system of positive manifestation that would bring those who use it closer to God and to their own Higher Selves. Since then, CUSP (Climbing Up the Spiral Pathway) has been practiced worldwide by people of many different path with the same consistent results: it works. Using the eight ancient agricultural holidays to demarcate turning points in the harvest year, CUSP practitioners proactively craft their lives into fulfilling experiences. Each year, they build on the progress and lessons of the previous year to create the life they want to manifest into the world.

CUSP strengthens the relationship its practitioners have with The Divine, regardless of the name or label they assign to It. Creator/Universe/God/Goddess/Great Spirit...that which is

truly sacred and holy does not care what you call It, but instead, just wants you to come home and live a spiritual life as your most magical and sacred self.

This book provides a brief and basic introduction to the techniques and application of CUSP philosophy. For those who wish to learn more about this vibrant and rewarding spiritual path, we recommend studying our book *CUSP*, as well as the Bio-Universal Energy Series that elaborates in great detail the practice of combining your own personal energy with that of The Divine to bring the life you want to live into physical manifestation in this world.

Over many years of practice, the techniques described in the Bio-Universal Energy Series and introduced in this book have consistently provided impressive and enjoyable results for those who closely follow the way of the “spiritual farmer.”

The additional books mentioned above that provide deeper exploration of the very basic techniques and premises discussed here are available at [www.rasboldink.com](http://www.rasboldink.com) in both paperback and Kindle formats. Eric and Katrina are also available in El Dorado, Placer, and Sacramento Counties in California for classes and workshops pertaining to CUSP and Energy Magic work.

In a few places in this book, you will hear the phrase “bio-universal energy” mentioned. Bio-universal energy is the combining of our own personal energy with the energy of God/The Divine for the purpose of positive manifestation in our lives.

We hope that you will enjoy this introductory book and find that the CUSP way is an effective and enjoyable process to integrate into your own spiritual progress.

## **A Note Concerning the Timing of the CUSP Process**

Ideally, the CUSP system for manifestation begins its cycle in the winter, around the time of Yule for harvesting in the following Autumn. This is what will bring you the very best results. In the real world, however, you might acquire this book in June or September and not want to wait several months to begin.

Do not despair. People have successfully started their process well into the harvest cycle and have had beautiful results. If you want to jump in at any time and pick up where the calendar places you in the harvest cycle, you will still benefit greatly by your efforts. If you start at Summer Solstice, for instance, skip over the planning and fertilizing phase and just lay out your goals and then visualize “your crops in the field.” See what you want to manifest for your goals as reality and start from there, moving forward into your CUSP cycles.

If you start in October, you are already well into harvesting and would do well to use the time in preparation of the coming harvest season. Start releasing the obstacles that hold you back from success and move forward into the dark of the year. August and September are a little iffy, but let’s face it, some crops grow quickly! You could visualize that you are transplanting existing crops instead of planting from seed and draw up a late harvest. Do not be afraid to adjust and adapt. CUSP is very flexible. Just tap into the energy of the holiday that is prevalent when you start reading and work from there. Trust the process.

If, in fact, you live in the Southern Hemisphere, where the seasons are opposing to the Northern Hemisphere, you would simply flip your practice so that it fits into your own spiral of the year. The dates provided are NOT hard and fast and you may feel free to adjust as needed to accommodate your own environment. The most important factor is that the progression is relatable to YOU and that you feel the appropriate seasonal shift in a way that is meaningful. *When* that happens is secondary.



## **Important Points Regarding CUSP Terminology and Philosophy**

CUSP operates under the idea that we all come to our spiritual paths with conditioning that affects how we view the Sacred and Holy Energies usually identified as God, Goddess, Creator, Great Spirit, etc. It is expected that you, the practitioner, will integrate those existing beliefs into the CUSP framework regardless of your path.

Although CUSP does not have a specific behavioral doctrine in place, we do have certain beliefs and ethics that influence the tone of this book. It is helpful to the reader to know these ideas in order to understand the mindset in which the book is written. Presented below are the main tenets of CUSP that are important to embrace in order to receive the best results from the practice.

### ***CUSP Honors All Paths to God***

CUSP follows the idea of “Harms None,” meaning that as long as the path a person takes to connect with God does not harm, ostracize, or persecute others, we honor it fully. God only asks that we come with our spirit full and our minds open. We do not believe there is a “right” way or “one” way to commune with The Divine. We believe that God, being omniscient and omnipresent, can and does reach out to humans in a variety of different ways. God is smart enough to know that even people who come from the same geographical areas do not always speak the same “language.” God established many “languages” to use to speak to humans and these manifest in the forms of spiritual paths. Even within the same religion, one follower likely believes differently from another. To honor this individuality, CUSP follows the premise that all are welcome to God if they come in love and devotion.

CUSP does NOT honor any one particular path over another and does not denigrate any spiritual path that is born of love and does not bring harm or persecution to others.

### ***When We Say “God,” We Are NOT Implying Gender***

CUSP promotes the idea that as an omnipotent being, God is able to appear to humans in any form and any gender. We see God as genderless, formless, and without the possibility of rational definition by human understanding. In CUSP theology, God is neither male nor female, but is both at the same time. CUSP believes that placing limitations on the ability of God is not for humans to do and is actually quite arrogant. By “placing limitations,” we mean the identification of God as only male, only female, only Israelite or only of the Desert. When we attempt to define God, we attempt to place God in a box and therefore, limit the

power of God. In the Ten Commandments of the Christian Bible, the second commandment tells us that it is forbidden to attempt to conceive of a “form” for the “formless” nature of the Divine or to make any “graven” image of God that may represent shape, nature or otherwise attempt to define. This is a clear indication that God intends to be something that is beyond our understanding or comprehension

We do not believe that there are limits on how God appears to or interacts with us humans. Our feeling is that God is able to take on any appearance and speak any language. If God can appear as a burning bush or a donkey or a cloud of fire, God can just as easily appear as a woman Goddess, as a Saint, manifest within a living human or in any other form. If God made us in God’s own image, as is stated in the Bible, then God is both male and female. When, in the context of this web site, the word “God,” is used, it refers to the All, the Unknowable, the power that humans view as The Divine. It does NOT specifically designate a MALE or PATRIARCHAL God. Fortunately, the ability to interact with God does not require an understanding of God, just a willingness to reach out and experience God.

### ***My God Doesn’t Need to Beat Up Your God – Really***

We have been asked countless times,” How can you be certain that the God I experience through CUSP is the same God as the Christian God?” Honestly, anyone who has truly been in the presence of God and experienced the spiritual ecstasy that comes from knowing God will attest that it is impossible to mistake that feeling for something else or to mistake something else for that feeling. Being with God is a unique and breath-taking experience and not one that can ever be confused with anything else. Whether you encounter this feeling through Christianity or Paganism or Judaism or Hinduism or through any other path to God, when you feel it, you know it. It is completely unmistakable. Discovering God is similar to mining for gold; at first the novice mistakes pyrites, micas or anything the glitters for the genuine article; until that one moment, gold is found in the pan – after that blissful moment, there will never be doubt. Once you find gold, you will NEVER mistake anything for it as long as you shall live. It is *known* to you now. Those who would ask the question of the certainty of the discovery of God have most assuredly never truly been in the presence of God or there would be no need to ask. A wise man once said concerning the search for God, “Only one in a thousand will seek God. Of those who seek, only one will find God. Of those who find God, only one will know God.”

God is God. Period. The paths to God are many, by God’s own design. When Christ said, “In my Father’s house, there are many mansions,” we believe it is an allegory for the different “homes” that God as the Christ prepares for us to receive His Divine presence.

### ***Satan/The Devil***

We are often asked about the influence of Satan/The Devil on the CUSP practice. Each person who comes to any spiritual path has their own preconceived ideas about the powers of evil and their presence and impact to the world. CUSP is a path to God and to the expression of God's presence through the elements and cycles of nature. It is not about engaging Satan or any other negative entities. Within the concepts of CUSP, the only negative energies that are engaged are those within us as humans. We believe that each person has their own demons and devils inside of them and it is our own connection to God that will give us the tools needed to best those obstacles to being our best self. As such, we leave the ideology regarding negative entities to the individual's own belief system.

### ***Prayer/Manifestation for Personal Gain***

Another question that often presents is whether it is unethical to use the CUSP path for personal gain. Many religions do teach that we are not to aspire to wealth or creature comforts. We are taught that it is wrong to invest our energies into our own joy and satisfaction.

One of the primary premises of CUSP is that we are moving unerringly toward our own greatest good. For most people, having financial security and relaxation from money stresses is an important factor in our ability to enjoy life. Having someone in our life who loves us in a reciprocal and fundamentally rewarding way is often critical to our happiness. Having a job we love and spending our days in activities that allow us to feel good and positive about our productivity and our contribution to the world is vital to our self esteem and our ability to relate to others with confidence and joy.

The more we positive contribute to the world around us, the more we further the critical mass thought toward positivity as a whole as net creditors to the whole and to the human condition itself. If you inspire others by that which has illumined you, then you have evolved the human race forward on a spiritual level. Our overall happiness (as opposed to our greed, envy or petulance) serves exclusively as a beneficial influence to society and to the evolution of the species itself. God wants us to be happy and to celebrate in our own joy and personal success! Using the CUSP path to embrace our connectivity to the Divine and better our lives is a positive and wondrous affirmation of our faith in God and in our own abilities. The Universe will step forward and meet us on any level that we choose to engage. As long as we will put forth the effort, spiritually and mundanely, God will be there to assist, guide and empower us.

## About CUSP



CUSP (Climbing Up the Spiral Pathway) is a vibrant, productive spiritual path that incorporates practices from many religions, bringing them all together to create an easy-to-follow and sacred way to connect with God and your own best self through the foundation built on the practices of your ancestors.

Truly, all you need to enjoy a vibrant and rewarding spiritual life using the CUSP process is an open mind, a willing spirit and a belief in a Higher Power that guides us. It does not matter if you believe that the Higher Power comes from inside or outside of us. You just have to believe that one is there and is a force of love and positivity in your life. The specific way you engage this Higher Power is very personal to you and is not of issue in order to explore CUSP to the fullest.

CUSP does not focus on the separateness of sacred paths, but instead honors the commonalities of spiritual practices that have brought joy, peace and understanding the world over. We, the creators of CUSP, independently and together, spent the majority of our adult lives in both academic and personal study of the world's religions with a focus on the practices people use to connect to God. As our avid and enthusiastic exploration of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Eastern religions and the associated esoteric areas of those religions such as the Jesuits, the Sufis, the Cabbalists, etc., as well as various earth-based nature religions, Native American practices and other spiritual paths unfolded, CUSP practically formed itself right before our eyes. The natural and continual evolution of CUSP beliefs and practices never fails to amaze us. It was as though all of these incredible, sacred practices came together of their own accord and formed this incredible path, right before our eyes. We are the ones who are honored to bring forth this path to the world in terms of writing down the words, but we cannot take credit for its development. That was an act of the Divine, a gift directly from God. We did not create this path, it was *revealed* to us.

CUSP is the result of more than two decades of working with other spiritual teachers and leaders, putting the various ideas into practice as they developed. The viability and benefits of the CUSP practice quickly became evident. Each year, the CUSP path developed and revealed itself to us on an even grander scale.

Those who incorporate the basic tenets of the path began to see benefits on all levels within the first year of working with the CUSP spiral of the year and putting its ongoing themes into practice. This manifested not only physically in overall improvement in their own day-to-day lives, but also in their connectivity to God, an increased awareness of the world around them, both seen and unseen, and their place in it. CUSP has enriched the lives of those who walk the path since its inception in 1997 by encouraging evolutionary growth in its practitioners and setting benchmarks for the assessing, planning and execution of forward momentum in life.

CUSP is built upon the ancient agricultural calendar created in the countries of the Northern Hemisphere as agriculture became an important part of life and survival. The shift from a nomadic lifestyle to the more sedentary, community-based establishment of the earliest known city states has been traced to more than 10,000 years ago. Climate change throughout the world following the last ice age created long periods of dry spells which were conducive to the growth of annual plants. In Asia, Europe and the northern parts of Africa and the Americas; nomadic people simultaneously realized that they could encourage the growth of desired plants and discourage the growth of or even eliminate vines and vegetation that were not useful to them. This was the first practice of cultivation. There is evidence of the use of "companion planting" which is the co-planting of vegetation that is complimentary to one another and fire stick farming which is controlling vegetation and wildlife attraction through selective burning of fields that has been traced to that time.

In the Germanic European countries, a cycle of eight observed holidays formed. These demarcations used the four astrological solstices and equinoxes as their foundation and interjected four other holidays within that structure to represent transitions that were significant to the agricultural harvest year. Over time, these eight touch points became evenly distributed and were assigned specific dates; however, in actual application in ancient times, they were likely very loosely scheduled based on seasonal climate changes of that particular year and the resulting progression of crop-related work that occurred. Many different religious paths have used these eight basic holidays to meld with their own beliefs, including the Christian path. CUSP embraces the universal appeal of these time-honored holidays and uses them in our own calibration for the celebration of the agricultural harvest year.

## How CUSP Works

CUSP is an acronym for “Climbing Up the Spiral Pathway.” Many paths embrace the concept of the “Wheel of the Year” to identify the eight agricultural holidays. The image of a wheel is appropriate to identify the cycles that return to use year after year. What it does not reflect is the progress that is made year after year and the ascension that has built by our practice in previous years that forms the foundation for our future successes. For that reason, CUSP embraces what is known as the Spiral of the Year. We continually return to the same points in the annual progression, but on the next higher level, incorporating and building upon the foundation of our prior lessons and successes. We climb the ever-ascending spiral toward greater progress and continual improvement of our life and our individual circumstances. This comes not only through the conscious manifestation of positive life changes that CUSP directly creates, but also through the lessons we learn from the changes that did not manifest or manifested in a way that we did not anticipate.

What drives CUSP is the underlying premise of “greatest good.” It is our belief that human beings are biologically driven to innately pursue their own greatest good and highest pleasure and satisfaction. Often, chemical changes in our bodies derail this natural drive. Alcohol, prescription medications, environmental pollutants and recreational drugs can all negatively affect the opiate sensors that encourage us to seek out our own most positive results.

In our modern life with its emphasis on material gain and the acquisition of power, most people have lost their birthright of intuition and self-awareness. Their ability to tune into the guidance and signs around them has dimmed to the point that many no longer see it and if they do, they describe it only as a “flash” or a “moment of clarity.” Humans are not wired up to have a “flash” of intuition or moments of clarity. They are intended to live in those moments totally, periods of lack of clarity being the exception rather than the rule.

One of the great benefits of CUSP is that the process naturally attunes you to the guidance of The Universal energies of God. You will become more aware of the gentle nudges you receive every day and as you practice more and more, they will become a valuable road map for you to navigate your way to your greatest success. How many times have you done something that made no sense to you or anyone else, simply because it felt right only later to be proven correct? Our inner guidance often defies common sense and is difficult to explain or justify. CUSP does not typically cause you to make dangerous or unwise choices, but it may press you to step out of your established comfort zone to try new avenues to your own success.

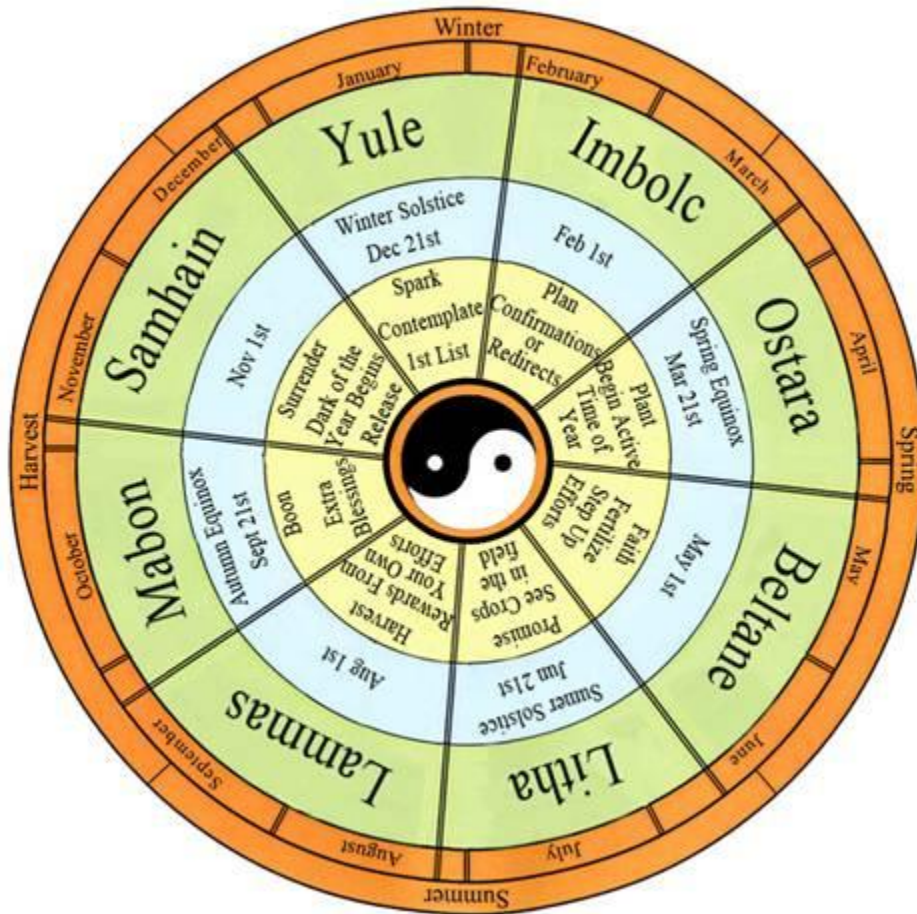
Beginning at Yule and ending at Samhain, the agricultural holidays will guide you through the harvest year, signifying the kick off of a new course of action on the road to achieving your goals. In the briefest of terms possible, it goes like this: You begin with the spark of an idea, come up with a solid plan, ask The Universe for input, begin your active process of manifestation, cultivate your goals, harvest your reward and then contemplate the lessons of the previous harvest year.

Our DNA is encoded with the repeated behaviors of our ancestors. We have specific psychological response to various stimuli simply because of how our ancestors lived. If we sense we are in danger, a “fight or flight” reaction is activated. Biochemically, our bodies still respond to food and water intake as though we were hunter gatherers. If our body senses we are low on food or water, it will begin to hold onto fluids and burn calories more slowly. These are just two of the many ways we are still attuned to the ancient way of living.

Because our ancestors honored the agricultural cycles of the year as sacred for so long, our instincts are innately attuned to those cycles. Although most of us are no longer literally farmers who harvest an actual crop each year, we can still use the same cycle to harvest positive and measurable results in our lives. Using mindful practice in physically taking part of the agricultural cycle, we put ourselves back in touch with the Earth and the Source of Life that modern technology and commercial agrarian methods have divorced our awareness from. In the next chapter, you will see how it works in detail and be shown how the tradition of the CUSP way is the way of the *Spiritual Farmer*.



## The Spiral of the Year



As you can see from the diagram above, there are eight touch points throughout the year that act as keystones to the entire CUSP process. These are dates that are recognizable to many as being important astrological and agricultural times that have prevailed in usage and have been celebrated throughout history. We wish by no means to promote the idea that the discovery of these particular dates as catalysts to progressive development is our own; far from it. Our intent is to celebrate the legacy they bring to us. Many spiritual paths are drawn to these dates or times near them to share in the energy that has become indigenous to them as a result of literally thousands of years of humankind's investment into and usage of their power.

When nomadic humans began to embrace the agricultural lifestyle and in the most literal sense, "put down roots" by cultivating crops to sustain their village, they found that these were the dates that held within them a particular significance to the process of natural

growth. Just as those dates marked the important transitions through the literal agricultural cycles for those first farmers, so does it take us, the modern “spiritual farmers,” through our own yearly progression of life.

For more than a decade now, we have seen the ample benefits of patterning our lives around the cycles that have been worn and woven into the fabric of time by our ancestors before us. To embrace these integral patterns within us is to immerse ourselves into the symphony of nature that is ongoing and welcoming. After a short time of attuning ourselves to these cycles, we begin to feel in tune with the natural flow and process to life. Rather than feeling as though we are fighting against our destiny and our “greater good,” we find ourselves intuitively making choices that take us to a more fulfilling and successful life.

In this book, we will briefly discuss each touch point to illustrate its place and purpose in the spiral of the year. For a more extensive explanation of the individual holidays, CUSP in general, and the application of CUSP principles and techniques, please read the book *CUSP* and then move on to the other books in the Bio-Universal Energy series according to your own interests.

What is important to know is that the specific dates shown above represent a transition from waning energy of the previous holiday to the celebration of the influx of a new energy into the harvest process. You will see from the previous diagram that the actual influence of this energy continues until the following holiday. When we talk about the time of Beltane in regard to CUSP practice, we are referring to the six weeks between Beltane and Litha rather than the actual day of Beltane alone. Do not forget that you should adjust your time periods according to your own geographic location, especially if you live in the Southern Hemisphere.

As you look at the previous diagram of the eight major touch points, you may be confused since it was previously explained that the CUSP system is based on a “Spiral” of the year as opposed to the “Wheel” of the year. Clearly, the diagram shown is of a wheel. The limitations of text prevent a proper spiral illustration, so imagine that you are at the top of the spiral, looking down onto the many rounds of ascension from bottom to top. As you see the years loop one over another, each building on the last, imagine that the information you see on the diagram glows clearly on the platform from which the spiral rises.

Each time the spiral creates a rotation, it passes over the eight touch points, weaving its way through the year with each step you take bringing you to a higher point. What you do today is the result of where you were yesterday and last year and ten years ago. Your spiral ascends ever upward and your past becomes the foundation on which you stand. If you were to, as we suggest, stand over your spiral looking downward into it, you would see clearly the eight touch points glowing away around the edges, but when you look at it from

a side view, you can see that the path is ascending, taking you surely and confidently to your highest and best life.



## About the Holidays

Pre-Christian Celtic and Germanic agriculturalists honored the equinoxes and solstices as important turning points in their harvest cycle. The “High Holidays,” as the remaining four events were called, completed their Wheel of the Year. The holidays we will discuss are specific to the Northern Hemisphere of the world. Although the agricultural year in the Southern Hemisphere mimics that of the North, the progression occurs at different times due to the way the earth is tilted on its axis.

You will notice that between the Northern and Southern hemispheres, the seasons are always exactly opposite of one another. When it is spring in California, it will be autumn in Brazil. As such, this phenomenon of directly opposing energies is one of the things that maintain the balance of seasonal energies. We humans exist in a world of duality. You cannot experience anything without a relative experience with which to express or conceptualize. There is no knowledge of day without the knowledge of night. Therefore, the resulting energies of all things must be in balance and work in harmony, with one never truly exceeding another on a global scale.

Of all of the things that exist and can be perceived in our world, the Sun is the only thing that is outside of the closed system of the Earth that only gives without receiving. It is the only thing that is not balanced by an opposite force. It is the source of physical life itself. Early peoples recognized this as the first honored deity worshipped was the Sun. It gives energy, heat and light yet takes nothing in return from us. It could be said from this observation that the sun is not part of the duality of the human experience, but it really is. The light of the Sun is obviously balanced by day and night and, less obviously, by the change of the seasons in perfect balance around the globe. The Sun has always played a central role in all religious and spiritual paths, even to this day. Of all physical objects, it is the only one that is truly worthy of worship.

Of course, the concept of time keeping is manmade in origin and the tracking of the movements of the Sun and earth are our way of observing and attempting to understand the idea of a linear existence. The Spiral of the Year through these holidays is an underlying common thread that draws together many paths to God and brings us together to celebrate. The agricultural holidays and the religious counterparts that spin off from them are a sacred medium through which God gives and sustains life. In each organic item that the agricultural harvest creates, there still exists a breath of God within.

In ancient times, the changes of the season were vital for survival in terms of the effect on both hunting and the harvest cycle. Our lives are still bound by these cycles, even though we do not usually practice them actively. You do not have to work hard to attune yourself to these natural cycles. You are already attuned by virtue of being human due to the actions and beliefs of your ancestors. All you have to do is to honor the connection that is already within you and strengthen your existing bond to the natural flow.



### **Winter Solstice/Yule – The Spark – Approximately December 21st**

In the darkest moment of the longest night of the year comes the spark of light to the sky. Incrementally, the days will now begin to lengthen as the Sun returns to the sky. Many spiritual paths interpret the strong, sustained energy of the Sun to be masculine in nature and the Moon with its monthly cycles and gentle light to reflect the feminine qualities.

If we follow this theory, then this time of year is the most female time and therefore, the most nurturing and intuitive. When the spark of light returns to the sky, it begins to very subtly push away the darkness. We start our cycle of the year with the “spark” of intuition and desire that will create the goal that we will nurture and grow in the coming months. Like the spark of life that springs forth from the seed, the spark of idea that comes to us now begins the process of harvest that will culminate in the fall. The process of manifestation has now begun.





### **Imbolc – Plan– Approximately February 1st**

Six weeks ago, the spark of an idea formed in our minds of what we would like to bring into our lives when Harvest comes. By Imbolc, we should already have in our minds a solid plan for what we will plant for the coming year. Now it is time to commit to that plan and put it out into the Universe as a solid and substantial determination. Once we do so, we will be shown over the coming 6 weeks whether or not this plan is indeed in our best interest. Our task during this time is to pay attention, watch for signs, and trust that we will be given clear confirmations or redirections regarding our plan. Vigilance and objectivity are vital at this point in the agricultural year. Sometimes, what we think we want in our lives is not what our inner selves know is actually for the best and The Universe will clearly show us if this is the case. This is a time to be very alert and aware of subtle (or profoundly direct) nudges and any guidance that presents. It is part of the human condition to ignore what we do not wish to hear, but it is to our greatest advantage to be very honest with ourselves and

accept the wisdom we are shown during this time. At this time of the year, the return of the Sun is evident, the creeks and rivers are beginning to flow. The winter loosens its grip as the ground begins to thaw. The farmer realizes the time of the planting is near, and the prudent one is he who through experience, knowledge and the contemplation of those is able to determine what shall be planted and what shall not. For us, as the Spiritual Farmers, we must open ourselves to be able to successfully determine not what we *want* to plant, but what we *should* plant. This is wisdom.





### **Spring Equinox/Ostara – Plant – Approximately March 21st**

Spring comes to us as a time of new life and new beginnings. The earth has softened and awaits the seed that it will nurture and sustain in the coming months. The world sings with possibilities and potential. We have now invested 6 weeks in determining whether our plan is a good one or should be adjusted according to the redirections we receive. It is now time to plant our goals and begin the active part of the year which will last for exactly six months.

As ones who follow the natural flow of the year, we rest, reflect, plan and contemplate during the cold months and emerge ready for action when the first warmth of the Sun touches the earth In Spring. By “planting” our goals, we begin the process of welcoming the outcome into our lives and we signal the start of the physical actions we will invest into

making them a reality. Planting represents the end of the time of “planning” and our transition into the time of “doing.”



(Yes, that is Eric and yes, that dear is wild, and yes, that is how things roll where we live)

### **Beltane – Faith – Approximately May 1st**

In many ways, this is the hardest time of the year because we have invested effort into the conception of our goals and now they feel tiny and vulnerable. After the planting is done, we may begin to see the first tiny signs of life emerging from our goals...or we may not just yet.

An old saying tells us, “Do not dig up in doubt what you planted in faith.” It is tempting to want to poke down into the planting area to see if our goals are manifesting; however, this is a time to step back, provide essential maintenance and allow the process of growth to be established. Fertilization occurs at this time and the seeds have been given a good start in life during the planting. Now, we fertilize the ground around it, gently protect it from encroaching weeds or other dangers, water it just enough and wait.



### **Summer Solstice/Litha/Midsummer – Promise – Approximately September 21st**

The time of promise is the direct opposite of the time of the spark. The Sun is now at its zenith and masculine energy is in full force: Do, Make, Create, Fix, Protect. The longest day of the year was a blessing for farmers as it gave them more time to work in the fields.

At this time, the crops are very visible above the ground and although still young and vulnerable, they are seen to be green, strong and full of the promise of a successful harvest. In our own lives, we begin to see the results of our efforts and know that with continued effort, we will achieve in the fall what we planned in the winter.





### **Lammas – Harvest – Approximately August 1st**

Although this is a joyful time in the cycle of the agricultural year, the Harvest is also a time of tremendous, back-breaking, sweaty, muscle-wrenching hard work. It is a labor of love, there is no doubt, but it is certainly a challenging time. It is often easier to invest tremendous energy into a situation when we can see the results of our efforts right away, much like the burst of energy marathon runners get when they see the finish line.

Many people who follow the CUSP flow of the year (and many who do not) find that this time of the year is extremely busy and productive as the fruits of their efforts begin to manifest and they are rewarded for the energy they have invested. The first harvest is the direct result of our own actions and our own efforts. What we have planted in faith is now manifesting in our lives and we experience the exhilarating rush of its fruition.



### **Autumn Equinox – Boon – Approximately September 21st**

Historically, the time of the second harvest was seen as an incredible blessing to the ancient farmers. While they were still putting away crops from the fields for Winter storage, nature yielded up another bounty that would grow with or without their efforts. As they made their way into the untended forests, they found fruits of the trees, bushes and vines. Nuts, roots and other forms of food that were seen as gifts from God to supplement their harvest.

In our modern day lives, we often find that during this time, blessings rain down upon us in addition to the fulfillment of the goals we planted in our own life's "fields." These extra blessings are The Universe's way of telling us that we have done well with our year's planning and planting. "You did a great job and yielded wonderful results. Here, have some more."



### **Samhain – Surrender – Approximately November 1st**

In some European traditions, any crops remaining in the field on November 1st were said to be “poisoned” and had to be sacrificed when the fields were burned to cleanse them for the planting of the following year. Although we certainly know in this day and time that the crops would be no more poisoned on November 1st than they were on October 31st, there is a valuable lesson to us in this ancient wisdom. “Know when you are done.” “Understand when to let go; when to release.” Take that which you need and no more. This eliminates the human tendency to seek after greed.

Even in today’s demanding society, there are ways that we are able to take our hands off of the constant need to control and allow for a time of relaxation through the winter months. The advent of November tells us it is time to do just that and in following the CUSP progression, this is when we celebrate the successes of our harvest and release our expectations for the things that, for whatever reason, did not come to us this year. Fields

are burned away, cleansing us of the old and outmoded and encouraging us to release the parts of our lives that do not serve us. We then fall softly into the embrace of Winter when we will reflect on the previous year and wipe clean our slates to receive the new spark for the coming year that will present to us in December as the cycle begins again.



## Putting it All Together

Now that you are familiar with the eight holidays used in the CUSP agricultural cycle, you are likely wondering how to put all of that together into a substantial practice that manifests positive change in your life.

Ideally, you would begin this process at Yule/Winter Solstice. It is possible to jump into the harvest process at any time of the year, just like with planting “real” crops, you should usually follow the cycles of nature.

In the darkness of winter, when the light is fading more from the sky with every passing day, we come to **Winter Solstice/Yule** when very gradually, the light begins to return to the sky. In CUSP, this is celebrated as the “spark” of light that illuminates inspiration and ideas within us. At Winter Solstice, you receive the “spark” that lights the harvest year. Come up with a preliminary idea of what you want to plant in the coming harvest year and write it down. You can start by effectively making a “grocery list” of things you want to change in your life. Give some concerted thought to what you want to be different in your life a year later. If you feel yourself doubting or qualifying (“THAT could never happen” or “I don’t deserve to have THAT”), strike out those doubts and write down the goal.

When you have list of things you want to change, see how many of them relate to one another. Let’s say your list looks like this:

A better house

A new car,

A raise at work

New clothes

These are all tangible results of “greater financial security” or “increased income.” Make one of those two your goal instead of the other four. Go to the root or heart of the matter rather than the symptoms.

Let’s look at another list:

Good friends

A romantic lover

## Better family relationships

Those all relate to being loved and giving love; to being accepted and appreciated. You could make “LOVE in all its forms” your goal for the year and cover them all.

Give your list some thought and see if you can distill your list down to two or three basic goals for the year. This is your “spark of inspiration” and you may adjust the list in the coming six weeks until Imbloc.

By **Imbolc**, your list should be refined to perfection and now it is time to offer it up to The Divine for what we call “confirmations and redirects.” This enters into a period when God will tell you, usually in very clear guidance, whether what you plan to plant is good for you or if possibly you should move in a different direction. The next six weeks after Imbolc are critical to your CUSP process. Pay close attention to hunches, events, comments made by other people, and other indicators in this time to guide you in your process of manifestation.

Here is an example of a redirect:

You are unhappy at your work because you and your boss have a serious personality clash. You don't like your boss. Your boss doesn't like you. The tension is building and you are not happy, so at Winter Solstice, you decide that your goal for the year will be “New job.”

Just after Imbolc, you learn that your boss received a promotion that resulted in them moving to an office in a different state. A new boss comes in and the two of you hit it off great. This is a redirect, which is basically God say, “Don't worry. I've got this. Send your energy somewhere else.”

And here is an example of a confirmation:

At Yule, you decide that your goal for the harvest will be to join a gym, begin strength training, and tone your physique. Just after Imbolc, a friend of yours tells you unexpectedly about the new gym they just joined that has a fantastic weight room and is running a low cost membership drive. This is a confirmation.

You will often find that you receive several confirmations and redirects, just to make sure you got the message. Like the examples above, they are usually pretty clear. The biggest challenge comes when people *do not want to hear* the message of the confirmation and redirect and choose to ignore it. For instance, you may be determined to move to Seattle for your harvest goal and ignore the redirects that show you that this is not a good idea. For instance, the job you heard about in Seattle is no longer available, the roommate who was going to go with you suddenly has a change of plans, housing costs in Seattle suddenly

skyrockets. It is always best to put your own ego aside and *listen* to what The Universe tells you and adjust accordingly.

It is not at all unusual for some of the goals you plant to be fulfilled right away in the confirmation and redirect phase (such as the boss relocating). Again, this is The Universe assuring you that the problem is already being addressed and you are free to work on other goals. Consider that when you start your list at Yule, you have already invested energy into the manifestation process by doing so. Sometimes, that is enough to make things happen on its own.

At **Spring Equinox/Ostara**, your list is complete and you have received and processed your confirmations and redirects. This is the time when we “plant” our goals. This means that we commit to the process of manifestation, just as you do when you plant a real seed. Ostara begins the “active” part of the year with less thinking and planning and more doing. At this time, you begin the initial process of manifesting your goals.

While we depend on God/Goddess to bless and assist our efforts, we must also take steps ourselves to make our goals into realities. Think of that seed again. We plant. Nature sends the sun, the rain, and provides the nourishing earth. We weed, fertilize, cultivate, and nourish the seed as it grows. It is a dynamic and symbiotic process. It is the same with long-term manifestation in the CUSP year. We work *with* Deity to create positive change.

At this time, if your goal was the strength training mentioned before, you begin with a consult with the gym’s personal trainer, set up a good training program, and begin your workouts. No, your goals are not yet complete, but you begin the process of working toward them and making them a reality.

**Beltane** is the time of fertilization and this is when we amp up our own efforts toward our goals. If, for instance, our goal was to get a job, we got our resume updated and turned in job applications during the time of Ostara and now we are beginning to aggressively hunt for a job. We are plowing through want ads and contacting temp agencies. We take classes to improve our marketability and work on our wardrobe so that it fits the field in which we wish to work.

**Summer Solstice/Litha** is the time when we “see the crops in the field.” This means that we see some results for our efforts, but the results are not yet final. At this time, we are still in the active time of the year, so we are doing actual activities to fulfill our goal. In the job search example, now we are starting to get calls for interviews and we see that certain jobs are available to us and others are not. This allows us to consolidate our energies and focus on the most productive leads.

**Lammas** is the first harvest and now our rewards begin to manifest. There is still a lot of work to do. Harvest may be rich and bountiful out in the fields, but it is not going to bring itself in and preserve itself! We still have to do the work. Harvest is when you will begin to see those muscles taking good shape and will notice that you have lost inches off of your waistline. Harvest is when you get the call that the job is yours and you start in two weeks. You will notice that we said “the first harvest.” The first harvest is the harvest of the garden; the fields. This represents the work that we invested into the harvest process; therefore, during the Lammas season, you will see the return of goals into which you invested your own energy to a large degree.

**Autumn Equinox/Mabon** is the second harvest and is a very interesting and sometimes “game-changing” time. The second harvest celebrates the gifts and boons from The Universe for a job well done. Typically, the rewards you receive at Mabon are surprises and little miracles that you did not expect. In agricultural terms, the second harvest is the harvest of the fruits, nuts, and foods on the vines. Think about apple trees and nut trees. They would produce their bounty with or without human assistance. Sure, if we care for the tree by pruning and keeping it free from parasites, the produce will be of better quality, but mostly, it is the tree doing the work. We do not have to “tend” to the trees the way we do our garden vegetables. Because ancient people used these foods to supplement their harvest, they viewed this as an additional blessing. Sometimes, this extra food was the difference between life and death if a harvest was scarce.

In our own lives, it is during this time that we receive extra little bonus miracles. Maybe if you manifested a job, this is when you find out that your pay is more than you expected or that there are additional benefits you did not know would come. Sometimes, the “boon” you receive is not even related to the goals you planted but is more of God saying, “Hey, it looked like you could use this, so here you go.”

**Samhain:** Samhain is a very blessed and important time that signifies the close of the harvest year and our descent into the darkness and quiet time of the year. As humans, we are not wired up to go full steam all year long. Sure, our modern lives tend to demand this, but the presence of diseases such as seasonal affective disorder and the high instance of suicides and depression in the dark months is plenty of evidence that we do not thrive when we do not rest. Samhain tells us to let go of the harvest and the expectations we assigned to it. Harvest is now done and “you got what you got.” Honor what you received and be thankful. Consider what you did not receive and see if the answer is present as to why your goal did not manifest as you planned. Did you miss critical confirmations and redirects? Did your goal possibly manifest in a different way that you have not noticed? There is much to consider in the next six weeks, but one thing is sure: we are to stop what we are doing and rest after an active and draining harvest season.

The entire process begins again at Yule/Winter Solstice and at that time, we will again receive the spark of inspiration. For the six weeks between Samhain and Yule, however, we are to still our minds and focus on the process of releasing the year with gratitude for all we have received and learned.

## **In Conclusion**

That is the CUSP year in a nutshell. There are specific rituals and practices that honor each individual holiday or “touchpoint” and those are discussed fully in the main CUSP book. The CUSP process can also be applied to the moon cycles for ongoing, short-term manifestation throughout the year, also discussed at length in the full volume.

If you enjoy these ideas and wish to employ them in your life, we recommend the full CUSP study through the Bio-Universal Energy Series. Below, you will find a description of each book and how it fits into the CUSP framework:

**CUSP:** This is our “Bible” of sorts that provides an extensive exploration of the CUSP way, including a detailed study of each of the eight holidays, rituals and observances for the entire CUSP year, and a description of how we, the authors, apply CUSP throughout our year. This book expounds in detail on the points briefly outlined in *The Real Magic*.

**Energy Magic:** This book discusses the use of bio-universal (personal and divine) energy to create ongoing positive manifestation. While CUSP is for long-term manifestation, *Energy Magic* works on immediate results and how to effectively achieve them.

**Properties of Magical Energy:** This book provides extensive information on what speeds up and slows down bio-universal energy. It also includes many techniques for directing the bio-universal energy you channel toward your goals.

**Reuniting the Two Selves:** Each person has “two selves,” the Higher Self and the Conscious Self. The Conscious Self is our aware and present self and the Higher Self is our most sacred, subconscious self. This book teaches the reader to create a more solid connection between these two selves and thereby forge a deeper and more meaningful relationship with God.

**The Art of Ritual:** All religious and spiritual paths incorporate the use of sacred ritual in some fashion or another. This book teaches you how to create effective rituals that are goal-oriented and awaken the Higher Self, bringing our most sacred being into action in cooperation with our own connection with God.

**Days and Times of Power:** This book explores the different ways to use the eight holidays, the moon cycles, other astrological events such as eclipses, and meteorological events to amplify bio-universal energy.

**Magical Ethics and Protection:** This book teaches the reader to use bio-universal energy in a purely ethical and safe manner. There is also discussion on creating a magical environment and cleaning out negative energies and other annoying distractions.

**The Making and Magic of Candles and Soaps:** Because of their porous nature, candles and soaps are the perfect medium for absorbing and storing bio-universal energy. This book tells you how to make and empower your own candles and soaps for bio-universal energy work.

**Energy Magic Compleat:** The full package, this book combines *CUSP* and *Energy Magic* into one volume.

**Beyond Energy Magic:** This book combines *Properties of Energy Magic*, *Reuniting the Two Selves*, *The Art of Ritual*, *Magical Ethics and Protection*, and *Days and Times of Power* into one volume.

All of these books are available at Amazon.com and Createspace.com. For links to order, go to [www.rasboldink.com](http://www.rasboldink.com).

## About the Authors



Eric and Katrina Rasbold are the co-founders of CUSP and have been developing the path and teaching its principles to students since 1997. They are happily married and live in the remote mountain community of Grizzly Flats, California where they enjoy a rural, blessed lifestyle. They have six children, ranging in age from teens to 30s.

Both Eric and Katrina are avid students of human spirituality and have devoted their entire adult lives to the exploration of the many ways human beings connect to God and vice versa.

Eric is a Commissioner of Veteran Affairs in El Dorado County, California and is an Economics Major. He is also a professional gold miner. Katrina is an author, instructor, public speaker, and life coach. She holds a Ph.D. in Religion with a minor in Psychology.

Katrina's books, lectures and classes are available through [www.katrinarasbold.com](http://www.katrinarasbold.com).

## **Other Books by the Authors**

**For easy links to order books by the authors, go to [www.rasboldink.com](http://www.rasboldink.com)**

Energy Magic: Creating Positive Life Change Through the Use of Bio-Universal Energy

Energy Magic Compleat

Goddess in the Kitchen: The Magic and Making of Food

CUSP: A New Way to Walk An Old Path

The Magic and Making of Candles and Soaps

Leaving Kentucky In the Broad Daylight

Crossing the Third Threshold: A Love Letter to Advanced Wiccan/Witchy/Pagan Practitioners

Reuniting the Two Selves: How to Effectively Reconnect the Higher Self & the Conscious Self for Positive Manifestation

An Insider's Guide to the General Hospital Fan Club Weekend

Properties of Magical Energy: Effectively Engaging the Flow

How to Create a Magical Working Group

The Art of Ritual Crafting

Days and Times of Power: A Guide to Optimizing High Energy Solar and Lunar Moments

Magical Ethics and Protection

The Daughters of Avalon (Book 1 of the fiction series "Seven Sisters of Avalon")

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