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free will astrology

BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your assignment in 2005 is to wage a revolution in the sphere where you have the most power. Your home? Your marriage? Your workplace? Local government? Wherever it is, Aries, arm yourself with tact and compassion as you overthrow the stale status quo by manifesting your shining ideal. Let this advice from Buckminster Fuller serve as your touchstone: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): I'll send many suggestions your way in the coming months, Taurus. Some of them will ring true to you, and others may not. Some will be evocative clues you'll meditate on for days, while others may fade from your awareness right after you read them. Through it all, there will be two constants. First, every horoscope will be offered to you in a spirit of love. Second, you will always be free to take it or leave it. And now I present what I consider the most important advice for you to keep in mind throughout 2005, though only you can decide if it actually is: Consistently cut away the smaller, weaker buds in order to direct all the forces of growth into the few buds most likely to succeed.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Am I afraid of sounding too extravagantly optimistic as I deliver my predictions for your year ahead? Well, yes, a little. But I think you can handle it. Besides, there is a caveat: Since even the arrival of good news can be stressful, you may have to struggle at times to deal with all the positive changes that are on the way. Here's an example: I believe 2005 will be your Year of Mind-Wobbling, Heart-Opening Adventures in Love. To receive the fullness of the demanding gifts you'll be offered, you'll probably have to make big adjustments in your habitual behavior.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Here's an odd paradox about your fate in 2005: You will get as close to your true home as you have ever been, and yet you'll also be teased and intrigued by a provocative mystery. Let me say it another way: More than at any other time in your life, you will feel like you truly belong here — and yet you'll often be amazed at how enigmatic everything is. I'll give you one more angle on the confounding security that will visit you in the coming months: You'll have an uncanny sense of being cared for by a mother goddess, even as you keep delving further than ever before into the riddles of your unpredictable destiny.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Last month, a religious fanatic in Taiwan decided to reach out to a previously neglected group of heathens. At a zoo, he leaped into a lion's den and began trying to convert the beasts to the Christian faith. "Jesus will save you!" was one of his oft-repeated exhortations. The lions seemed enraged by his appeals, and it was only through the heroic efforts of the zookeepers that the crusader was saved from martyrdom. Let him serve as your anti-role model in 2005, Leo. Work diligently to spread your good intentions; be brave in promoting your high ideals; ramp up your powers of persuasion to a new level; but don't waste your time trying to win over dumb beasts, bad listeners, and narrow-minded dogmatists.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Marilynne Robinson published her first novel, *Housekeeping*, in 1982. It was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, and an influential critic called it one of the ten best novels of the twentieth century. This November, 22 years later, Robinson came out with her second work of fiction, *Gilead*. "Writing is like praying," she told Carin Besser in *The New Yorker Online*. "In both, if they are to be authentic, grace and truth must discipline thought." I nominate Robinson to be your patron saint in 2005, Virgo. May she inspire you to produce another gem like the one you did some years ago. May her example give you the faith to work as slowly as you need to in order to remain impeccable, allowing grace and truth to discipline your thought.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A 4-year-old artist from Binghamton, New York has sold 25 of her paint-

ings, earning \$40,000. Marla Olmstead's works have been compared to those of Wassily Kandinsky and Jackson Pollack, and many have appeared in galleries. One critic wrote, "Painting with fingers, spatulas, and brushes, and using plastic mustard bottles to squirt out acrylics, she creates textured, abstract landscapes laden with emotion, depth, and real talent." I'm naming Marla as your official role model for 2005, Libra. I expect the youngest part of you to blossom, unleashing frequent bursts of creativity.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A few years ago East Timor was described as an "unimaginable, apocalyptic ruin" by U.N. peacekeepers. More than 200,000 people had died during a 25-year struggle to separate from Indonesia. But after finally gaining its independence, the new nation is now prospering in peace. With this as your inspiration, Scorpio, identify the most intractable and painful problem in your life. Now imagine that in the next 10 months, you will transform it as dramatically as the people of East Timor did theirs.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): One of your main assignments in 2005 is to cultivate your sense of wonder. It's true that you already possess a more acutely developed sensitivity to marvels and miracles than most of the other astrological signs, but you still have a way to go to reach your highest potential. With this in mind, I'll ask you to make 52 appointments with yourself in the coming year. They could be at noon every Monday, or whatever time you choose. During each meeting, you will renew your commitment to seeing with fresh eyes. You'll vow to be alert for previously unnoticed delights lurking in the midst of your familiar surroundings. You'll promise yourself to seek out experiences that teach you things you don't know.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): In her book *Soul Sounds*, Mary Summer Rain recounts a conversation between a man and God. "How long is a million years to you," the man asked. "A second," God replied. Then the man asked, "How much money is a million dollars to you?" "A penny," God said. "Can I borrow a penny?" the man asked. "Sure," God said, "in a second." Here's my interpretation of this anecdote: God was struck by the man's greed and decided to have a joke at his expense. Now if you, on the other hand, Capricorn, are less grandiose in your financial requests for 2005, I believe God will be pretty responsive.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): The planetary omens for 2005 are unambiguous: You've got to spend more time in nature. For the sake of your physical and mental health, you must escape the familiar confines of your comfy cages — must wander out into wild places that are far from plastic, concrete, bricks, and glass. Your Official Maxim of the Year comes from essayist Edward Dahlberg: "Man is at the nadir of his strength when the earth, the seas, the mountains are not in him, for without them his soul is unsourced, and he has no images by which to abide." In the coming months, Aquarius, find a way to get the earth, the seas, and the mountains inside you.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The coming year will be prime time for you to reinvent your conception of and relationship with God. The best way to begin this fun project is to throw away everything you think you know about the subject and start from scratch. Why not imagine a Divine Creator who is wild and free, who inhabits both the dark and the light, who exudes mystery as well as goodness, who heals with strange beauty as much as with sweet insight, and who gives you puzzles that bring you to the brink of crazed excitement, at which point you break through into a higher way of knowing—an almost sensual contact with a marvelous, difficult, entertaining God?

HOMEWORK: All of us are trying to wake up from our sleepy delusions about the nature of life. What will be your most potent wake-up technique in 2005? Testify at www.freewillastrology.com.

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