

free will astrology BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Professional basketball player Tim Duncan has a nickname that I invite you to take on for the next two weeks: The Big Fundamental. To live up to the daunting yet fun responsibility of that title, you'll have to put on your game face and get waaayyy down to basics. Banish distractions, purge the inessential, and cut the crap. Give yourself with ferocious impeccability to the Three Things That Matter Most, and do it with a raging integrity that will scare away all the phonies, lazy-bones, and ethically challenged mediocrities.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): When my Taurus daughter Zoe was seven years old, I detected signs that her natural inclination to be kind and gentle was beginning to slip into passive docility. I wondered whether I could or should do anything to nurture what astrologers call the Mars energy – the forceful, willful aspect of her psyche. As an experiment, I had her throw baseballs as hard as she could against the side of the house. I bought her a punching bag and encouraged her to smash it. Seven years later, she's as kind and gentle as ever, but also has an indomitable strength and forceful grace. Her Mars force is fully awake. Did my experiments have anything to do with it? Just in case they did, try something similar, Taurus. In the most constructive way possible, feed your aggressiveness.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): A young goth woman was weaving her bicycle through heavy traffic. She was talking on a cell phone with her left hand and smoking a cigarette with her right. Watching from my Honda, I marveled at how well she maneuvered without the guiding influence of her hands on the handlebars. I stopped next to her at a red light, and was further impressed when she pulled out a candy bar and a small book of poems by Charles Baudelaire. For a minute or so, she smoked, ate, read, and chatted on her phone. Just before the light changed, I leaned out the window and said, "You're not a Gemini, are you?" "Yeah," she replied. "Of course. How did you know?" I knew because not only are you the zodiac's best multitasker, you're also at the very peak of your ability to do five things at once.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): One of your lifelong projects is to learn the art of keeping proper boundaries. That doesn't always come easy for you. In your subconscious mind you're often thinking, "I can't figure out where I leave off and everyone else begins." Having sounded this warning, though, I'll now advise you to completely surrender to the urge to merge, at least temporarily. Blend, connect, and commune with abandon. Write this declaration by sculptor Malvina Hoffman on your arm: "My true center is an enormous capacity for falling in love with everything around me."

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Since 1921, the official length of a marathon race held anywhere in the world has been 26.2 miles. Runners train for that specific distance. That's why many participants in this year's Lakeshore Marathon in Chicago were confused at the end of the race. Their times were surprisingly slow and they were more fatigued than they'd anticipated. It was only a few days later that marathon officials announced the course had been laid out mistakenly: There was an extra mile. I think you can expect an analogous development in your life, Leo. The finish line will be farther than you expected – maybe farther than is fair. Should you stop before the end and complain? Or should you complete the task and then complain? I'll leave that up to you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): For a time, my new book *Pronoia is the Antidote for Paranoia: How the Whole World Is Conspiring to Shower You with Blessings* was #12 on the bestseller list at Powells.com. Right behind it at #13 was James Howard Kunstler's *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century*. That snapshot of book buyers' schizophrenic inclinations has a resemblance to your outlook, Virgo. Half of you is overflowing with a talent for cultivating intelligent hope, while the other half is always preparing for the worst. Being as objective as an optimist like me can be, I firm-

ly believe you should adjust the ratio. According to the astrological omens, the right approach is to be 90 percent devoted to expecting the best and 10 percent invested in guarding yourself against trouble.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Seven years ago, Random House announced its "Modern Library 100 Best Books of the 20th Century: Fiction." In this collection, 91 texts were written in English by white males. I suppose there's a remote possible that's an accurate inventory, though I doubt it. But whether it is or not, I feel it's critical to the health of our culture and even our planet that the best books of the 21st century will be authored by a far more diverse mix. And what, you may ask, does this have to do with your personal destiny in July 2005? The astrological omens say it's a perfect moment to decide what you'll do in the coming years to contribute to a world in which white men who speak English don't run everything. (P.S. This is crucial even if you yourself are an English-speaking white man.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): At Tufts Educational Day Care in Somerville, Mass., kids from ages 3 to 5 have to sign contracts guaranteeing their good behavior. "I know how to listen to my teachers," they promise. "When my teachers talk to me, I will not scream, try to hit, or say, 'you're not my boss.'" I'd like you to ask both your inner child and your inner teenager to make a similar vow right now, Scorpio. There are valuable teachers hovering in your vicinity. Some may have educational techniques that are less than adroit, but they all deserve your close, sincere, and humble attention.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): In the Netherlands, people often give each other three kisses when they meet, two on the cheek and one on the lips. A Dutch prude named Dolph Kohnstamm is mad about it, and has launched a campaign to squash the custom. "Foreigners are quite upset when they have to give three kisses," he rants, "especially when the third kiss is on the mouth." In solidarity with naturally affectionate Dutch people, and in response to the lovey-dovey astrological omens now coming to bear on you Sagittarians, I request that you dole out scores of triple kisses in the coming week.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Sometimes we have a strong sense of what our destiny is calling us to do, but we don't feel quite ready or brave enough to answer the call. We need a push, an intervention, a serendipitous stroke – what I call *fate bait*. It's a person or event that awakens our dormant willpower and draws us inexorably towards our fate; it's a thunderbolt or siren song or stage whisper that gives us a good excuse to go do what we know we should do. I suspect that you, Capricorn, are about to meet your fate bait.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Please repeat the following affirmation, first articulated by poet Robert Frost: "I am not confused. I am just well mixed." Say it aloud at least 10 times a day for the next week. It will help you put a positive spin on certain events that might otherwise throw you off balance. Your next medicinal sound bite comes from playwright W.S. Gilbert: "I am rich in never-ending unrest." This one will encourage you to regard your turbulence as a creative gift, not a pathological distraction.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): It's a hang-your-head-out-the-window-of-a-speeding-car-like-a-golden-retriever kind of week. You should make yourself as innocent and unselfconscious as possible as you seek out simple, intense pleasures, whether that's letting the wind rush over your face or soaking up the spray of a waterfall or getting a massage every single day or standing near the stage at a live concert so the raw music can surge through you. The object is to scour out your mind with vivid sensations, allowing you to become as empty and fresh as possible.

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