

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your life in the first half of 2018 will be like a psychological boot camp that's designed to beef up your emotional intelligence. Here's another way to visualize your oncoming adventures: They will constitute a friendly nudge from the cosmos, pushing you to be energetic and ingenious in creating the kind of partnerships you want for the rest of your long life. As you go through your interesting tests and riddles, be on the lookout for glimpses of what your daily experience could be like in five years if you begin now to deepen your commitment to love and collaboration.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You'll soon have a chance to glide out into the frontier. I suggest you pack your bag of tricks. Bring gifts with you, too, just in case you must curry favor in the frontiers where the rules are a bit loose. How are your improvisational instincts? Be sure they're in top shape. How willing are you to summon spontaneity and deal with unpredictability and try impromptu experiments? I hope you're very willing. This may sound like a lot of work, but I swear it'll be in a good cause. If you're well-prepared as you wander in the borderlands, you'll score sweet secrets and magic cookies. Here's more good news: Your explorations will position you well to take advantage of the opportunities that'll become available throughout 2018.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): These days it's not unusual to see male celebrities who shave their heads. Bruce Willis, Dwayne Johnson, Seal, Tyrese Gibson and Vin Diesel are among them. But in the 20th century, the bare-headed style was rare. One famous case was actor Yul Brynner. By age 30, he'd begun to go bald. In 1951, for his role as the King of Siam in the Broadway play "The King and I," he decided to shave off all his hair. From then on, the naked-headed look became his trademark as he plied a successful acting career. So he capitalized on what many in his profession considered a liability. He built his power and success by embracing an apparent disadvantage. I recommend you practice your own version of this strategy in 2018. The coming weeks will be an excellent time to begin.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): In the Northern Hemisphere, where 88 percent of the world's population resides, this is a quiescent time for the natural world. Less sunlight is available and plants' metabolisms slow down as photosynthesis diminishes. Deciduous trees lose their leaves and even many evergreens approach dormancy. And yet in the midst of this stasis, Cancerian, you are beginning to flourish. Gradually at first, but with increasing urgency, you're embarking on an unprecedented phase of growth. I foresee that 2018 will be your Year of Blossoming.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): If you've had an unfulfilled curiosity about genealogy or your ancestors or the riddles of your past, 2018 will be a favorable time to investigate. Out-of-touch relatives will be easier to locate than usual. Lost heirlooms, too. You may be able to track down and make use of a neglected legacy. Even family secrets could leak into view — both the awkward and the charming kinds. If you think you have everything figured out about the people you grew up with and the history of where you came from, you're in for surprises.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Most of us regard our ring fingers as the least important of our digits. What are they good for? Is there any activity for which they're useful? But our ancestors had a stronger relationship with their fourth fingers. There was a folk belief that a special vein connected the fourth finger on the left hand directly to the heart. That's why a tradition arose around the wedding ring being worn there. It may have also been a reason why pharmacists regarded their fourth fingers as having an aptitude for discerning useful blends of herbs. I bring this up, Virgo, because I think it's an apt metaphor for one of 2018's important themes: A resource you have underestimated or neglected will be especially valuable — and may even redefine your understanding of what's truly valuable.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): In fairy tales, characters are often rewarded for their acts of kindness. They may be given magical objects that serve as protection, like cloaks of invisibility or shoes that enable them to flee trouble. Or the blessings they receive may be life-enhancing, like enchanted cauldrons that provide a never-ending supply of delicious food or musical instruments that have the power to summon delightful playmates. I bring this up, Libra, because I suspect that a similar principle will be very active in your life during 2018. You'll find it easier and more natural than usual to express kindness, empathy and compassion. If you consistently capitalize on this predilection, life will readily provide you with the resources you need.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Like all of us, you go through mediocre phases when you're not functioning at peak efficiency. But I suspect that in 2018 you will experience fewer of these blah times. We will see a lot of you at your best. Even more than usual, you'll be an interesting catalyst who energizes and ripens collaborative projects. You'll demonstrate why the sweet bracing brightness needs the deep dark depths and vice versa. You'll help allies open doors that they can't open by themselves. The rest of us thank you in advance!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): The blunt fact is that you can't be delivered from the old demoralizing pattern that has repeated and repeated itself — until you forgive yourself completely. For that matter, you probably can't move on to the next chapter of your life story until you compensate yourself for at least some of the unnecessary torment you've inflicted on yourself. Now here's the good news: 2018 will be an excellent time to accomplish these healings.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): In 2018, one of your primary missions will be to practice what you preach; to walk your talk; to be ambitious and masterful in all the ways a soulful human can and should be ambitious and masterful. Live up to your hype in the coming months, Capricorn! Do what you have promised! Stop postponing your dreams! Fulfill the noble expectations you have for yourself! Don't be shy about using exclamation points to express your visions of what's right and good and just!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Years ago, when I started my career as a horoscope writer, my editor counseled me, "Always give priority to the Big Three. Romance, money and power are what people care about most." After a few months, he was disgruntled to realize that I wrote about how to cultivate psychological health and nourish spiritual aspirations as much as his Big Three. He would have replaced me if he could have found another astrology writer whose spelling and grammar were as good as mine. But his edict traumatized me a bit. Even today, I worry that I don't provide you with enough help concerning the Big Three. Fortunately, that's not relevant now, since I can sincerely declare that 2018 will bring you chances to become more powerful by working hard on your psychological health... and to grow wealthier by cultivating your spiritual aspirations... and to generate more love by being wise and ethical in your quest for money and power.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): What binds you? What keeps you closed down and locked up? I urge you to ponder those questions, Pisces. Once you get useful answers, the next step will be to meditate on how you can undo the binds. Fantasize and brainstorm about the specific actions you can take to unlock and unclose yourself. This project will be excellent preparation for the opportunities that the coming months will make available to you. I'm happy to announce that 2018 will be your personal Year of Liberation.

HOMEWORK: Write a parable or fairy tale that captures what your life has been like in 2017. Freewillastrology.com

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