

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Palestinian American writer Susan Abulhawa writes that in the Arab world, to say a mere "thank you" is regarded as spiritless and ungenerous. The point of communicating gratitude is to light up with lively and expressive emotions that respond in kind to the kindness bestowed. For instance, a recipient may exclaim, "May Allah bless the hands that give me this blessing," or "Beauty is in the eyes that find me beautiful." In accordance with current astrological omens, I propose that you experiment with this approach. Be specific in your praise. Be exact in your appreciation. Acknowledge the unique mood and meaning of each rich exchange.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you need this advice from mythologist Joseph Campbell: "Your sacred space is where you can find yourself again and again." He says it's "a rescue land ... some field of action where there is a spring of ambrosia — a joy that comes from inside, not something external that puts joy into you — a place that lets you experience your own will and your own intention and your own wish." Do you have such a place, Taurus? If not, now is a great time to find one. If you do, now is a great time to go there for a spell and renew the hell out of yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): When he was 20 years old, future U.S. President Thomas Jefferson had an awkward encounter with a young woman who piqued his interest. He was embarrassed by the gracelessness he displayed. For two days afterward, he endured a terrible headache. We might speculate that it was a psychosomatic reaction. I bring this up because I'm wondering if your emotions are also trying to send coded messages to you via your body. Are you aware of unusual symptoms or mysterious sensations? See if you can trace them back to their source in your soul.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): There's a zone in your psyche where selfishness overlaps generosity, where the line between being emotionally manipulative and gracefully magnanimous almost disappears. With both hope and trepidation for the people in your life, I advise you to hang out in that grey area for now. Yes, it's a risk. You could end up finessing people mostly for your own good and making them think it's mostly for their own good. But the more likely outcome is that you will employ ethical abracadabra to bring out the best in others, even as you get what you want, too.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You probably gaze at the sky enough to realize when there's a full moon. But you may not monitor the heavenly cycles closely enough to tune in to the new moon, that phase each month when the lunar orb is invisible. We astrologers regard it as a ripe time to formulate fresh intentions. We understand it to be a propitious moment to plant metaphorical seeds for the desires you want to fulfill in the coming four weeks. When this phenomenon happens during the astrological month of Leo, the potency is intensified for you. Your next appointment with this holiday is Aug. 10 and 11.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): In her poem "Dogfish," Virgo poet Mary Oliver writes, "I wanted the past to go away, I wanted to leave it." Why? Because she wanted her life "to open like a hinge, like a wing." I'm happy to tell you, Virgo, that you now have more power than usual to make your past go away. I'm also pleased to speculate that as you perform this service for yourself, you'll be skillful enough to preserve the parts of your past that inspire you, even as you shrink and neutralize memories that drain you. In response to this good work, I bet your life will open like a hinge, like a wing — no later than your birthday and most likely before that.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Libran fashion writer Diana Vreeland (1903-1989) championed the beauty of the strong nose. She didn't approve of women wanting to look like "piglets and kittens." If she were alive today, she'd be pleased that nose jobs in the U.S. have declined 43 percent since 2000. According to journalist Madeleine Schwartz writing in *Garage* magazine, historians of rhinoplasty say there has been a revival of appreciation for the distinctive character revealed in an unaltered nose. I propose, Libra, that in accordance with current astrological omens, we extrapolate some even bigger inspiration from that marvelous fact. The coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to celebrate and honor and express pride in your idiosyncratic natural magnificence.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "Maybe happiness is this: not feeling like you should be elsewhere, doing something else, being someone else." This definition, articulated by author Isaac Asimov, will be an excellent fit for you between now and Sept. 20. I suspect you'll be unusually likely to feel at peace with yourself and at home in the world. I don't mean to imply that every event will make you cheerful and calm. What I'm saying is that you will have an extraordinary capacity to make clear decisions based on accurate appraisals of what's best for you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): I've compiled a list of new blessings you need and deserve during the next 14 months. To the best of my ability, I will assist you to procure them. Here they are: a practical freedom song and a mature love song; an exciting plaything and a renaissance of innocence; an evocative new symbol that helps mobilize your evolving desires; escape from the influence of a pest you no longer want to answer to; insights about how to close the gap between the richest and poorest parts of yourself; and the cutting of a knot that has hindered you for years.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "It has become clear to me that I must either find a willing nurturer to cuddle and nuzzle and whisper sweet truths with me for six hours or else seek sumptuous solace through the aid of eight shots of whiskey." My Capricorn friend Tammuz confided that message to me. I wouldn't be surprised if you were feeling a comparable tug. According to my assessment of the Capricorn zeitgeist, you acutely need the revelations that would become available to you through altered states of emotional intelligence. A lavish whoosh of alcohol might do the trick, but a more reliable and effective method would be through immersions in intricate, affectionate intimacy.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Not even five percent of the world's population lives in a complete democracy. Congratulations to Norway, Canada, Australia, Finland, Ireland, Iceland, Denmark, New Zealand, Switzerland and Sweden. Sadly, three countries where my column is published — the U.S., Italy and France — are categorized as "flawed democracies." Yet they're far better than the authoritarian regimes in China and Russia (Source: *The Economist*). I offer this public service announcement as a prelude to your homework assignment. According to my astrological analysis, you will personally benefit from working to bring more democracy into your personal sphere. How can you ensure that people you care about feel equal to you and have confidence that you will listen to and consider their needs and believe they have a strong say in shaping your shared experiences?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Mystic poet Kabir wrote, "The flower blooms for the fruit: when the fruit comes, the flower withers." He was invoking a metaphor to describe his spiritual practice and reward. The hard inner work he did to identify himself with God was the blooming flower that eventually made way for the fruit. The fruit was his conscious, deeply felt union with God. I see this scenario as applicable to your life, Pisces. Should you feel sadness about the flower's withering? It's fine to do so. But the important thing is that you now have the fruit. Celebrate it! Enjoy it!

HOMEWORK If you could make money from doing exactly what you love to do, what would it be? Testify at Freewillastrology.com

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