

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You have officially arrived at the heart of the most therapeutic phase of your cycle. Congratulations! It's an excellent time to fix what's wrong, hurt, or distorted. You will attract more help than you can imagine if you summon an aggressive approach toward finding antidotes and cures. A good way to set the tone for your aggressive determination to feel better is to heed this advice from poet Maya Angelou: "Take a day to heal from the lies you've told yourself and the ones that have been told to you."

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): U2's singer Bono, born under the sign of Taurus, says that all of us suffer from the sense that something's missing from our lives. We imagine that we lack an essential quality or experience, and its absence makes us feel sad and insufficient. French philosopher Blaise Pascal referred to this emptiness as "a God-shaped hole." Bono adds that "you can never completely fill that hole," but you may find partial fixes through love and sex, creative expression, family, meaningful work, parenting, activism, and spiritual devotion. I bring this to your attention, Taurus, because I have a strong suspicion that in the coming weeks you will have more power to fill your God-shaped hole than you've had in a long time.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "Most of our desires are clichés, right? Ready to wear, one size fits all. I doubt if it's even possible to have an original desire anymore." So says a character in Gemini author Tobias Wolff's short story "Sanity." Your assignment in the coming weeks, Gemini, is to refute and rebel against this notion. The cosmic rhythms will work in your favor to the degree that you cultivate innovative yearnings and unique urges. I hope you'll make it your goal to have the experiences necessary to stir up an outbreak of original desires.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): If you're a typical member of the Cancerian tribe, you're skilled at responding constructively when things go wrong. Your intelligence rises up hot and strong when you get sick or rejected or burned. But if you're a classic Crab, you have less savvy in dealing with triumphs. You may sputter when faced with splashy joy, smart praise, or lucky breaks. But everything I just said is meant to be a challenge, not a curse. One of the best reasons to study astrology is to be aware of the potential shortcomings of your sign so you can outwit and overcome them. That's why I think that eventually you'll evolve to the point where you won't be a bit flustered when blessings arrive. And the immediate future will bring you excellent opportunities to upgrade your response to good fortune.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "Each of us needs something of an island in her life," said poet John Keats. "If not an actual island, at least some place, or space in time, in which to be herself, free to cultivate her differences from others." According to my reading of the astrological omens, Leo, you'll be wise to spend extra time on your own island in the next two weeks. Solitude is unlikely to breed unpleasant loneliness, but will instead inspire creative power and evoke inner strength. If you don't have an island yet, go in search! [P.S.: I translated Keats' pronouns into the feminine gender.]

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I'm rooting for you to engage in experimental intimacy, Virgo. I hope you'll have an affinity for sweet blends and incandescent mixtures and arousing juxtapositions. To get in the right mood for this playful work, you could read love poetry and listen to uplifting songs that potentize your urge to merge. Here are a few lyrical passages to get you warmed up. 1. "Your flesh quivers against mine like moonlight on the sea." — Julio Cortázar; 2. "When she smiles like that she is as beautiful as all my secrets." — Anne Carson; 3. "My soul is alight with your infinitude of stars . . . The flowers of your garden blossom in my body." — Rabin-dranath Tagore; 4. "I can only find you by looking deeper, that's how love leads us into the world." — Anne Michaels

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Of course I want you to have more money. I'd love for you to buy experiences that expand your mind, deepen your emotional intelligence, and foster your ability to create inspiring forms of togetherness. My soul would celebrate if you got access to wealth that enabled you to go in quest of spiritual fun and educational adventures. On the other hand, I wouldn't be thrilled about you spending extra cash on trivial desires or fancy junk you don't really need. Here's why I feel this way: to the extent that you seek more money to pursue your most righteous cravings, you're likely to get more money.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "Penetralia" is a word that means the innermost or most private parts, the most secret and mysterious places. It's derived from the same Latin term that evolved into the word "penetrate." You Scorpions are of course the zodiac's masters of penetralia. More than any other sign, you're likely to know where the penetralia are, as well as how to get to them and what to do when you get to them. I suspect that this tricky skill will come in extra handy during the coming weeks. I bet your intimate adeptness with penetralia will bring you power, fun, and knowledge.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Sagittarian poet Rainer Maria Rilke suggested that we cultivate an alertness for the ever-present possibility of germination and gestation. On a regular basis, he advised, we should send probes down into the darkness, into our unconscious minds, to explore for early signs of awakening. And when we discover the forces of renewal stirring there in the depths, we should be humble and reverent toward them, understanding that they are as-yet beyond the reach of our ability to understand. We shouldn't seek to explain and define them at first, but simply devote ourselves to nurturing them. Everything I just said is your top assignment in the coming weeks.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You're in a phase of your cycle when your influence is at a peak. People are more receptive than usual to your ideas and more likely to want the same things you do. Given these conditions, I think the best information I can offer you is the following meditation by Capricorn activist Martin Luther King Jr. "Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love."

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Aquarian environmentalist Edward Abbey spent much of his life rambling around in the great outdoors. He was an emancipated spirit who regarded the natural world as the only church he needed. In an eruption of ecstatic appreciation, he once testified that "Life is a joyous dance through daffodils beneath cerulean blue skies and then, then what? I forget what happens next." And yet the truth is, Abbey was more than a wild-hearted Dionysian explorer in the wilderness. He found the discipline and diligence to write 23 books! I mention this, Aquarius, because now is a perfect time for you to be like the disciplined and diligent and productive version of Abbey.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): For renowned Piscean visual artist Anne Truitt (1921–2004), creating her work was high adventure. She testified that artists like her had "to catapult themselves wholly, without holding back one bit, into a course of action without having any idea where they will end up. They are like riders who gallop into the night, eagerly leaning on their horse's neck, peering into a blinding rain." Whether or not you're an artist, Pisces, I suspect your life in the coming weeks may feel like the process she described. And that's a good thing! A fun thing! Enjoy your ride.

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