





TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You're in a phase of your cycle when you'll be rewarded for your freshness and originality. The more you cultivate a "beginner's mind," the smarter you will be. What you want will become more possible to the degree that you shed everything you think you know about what you want. As the artist Henri Matisse said, if a truly creative painter hopes to paint a rose, he or she "first has to forget all the roses that were ever painted." What would be the equivalent type of forgetting in your own life?

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "Am I still a hero if the only person I save is myself?" asks poet B. Damani. If you posed that question to me right now, I would reply, "Yes, Gemini. You are still a hero if the only person you save is yourself." If you asked me to elaborate, I'd say, "In fact, saving yourself is the only way you can be a hero right now. You can't rescue or fix or rehabilitate anyone else unless and until you can rescue and fix and rehabilitate yourself." If you pushed me to provide you with a hint about how you should approach this challenge, I'd be bold and finish with a flourish: "Now I dare you to be the kind of hero you have always feared was beyond your capacity."

CANCER (June 21-July 22): "We need people in our lives with whom we can be as open as possible," declares psychotherapist Thomas Moore. I agree. Our mental health thrives when we can have candid conversations with free spirits who don't censor themselves and don't expect us to water down what we say. This is always true, of course, but it will be an absolute necessity for you in the coming weeks. So I suggest that you do everything you can to put yourself in the company of curious minds that love to hear and tell the truth. Look for opportunities to express yourself with extra clarity and depth. "To have real conversations with people may seem like such a simple, obvious suggestion," says Moore, "but it involves courage and risk."

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): I watched a video of a helicopter pilot as he descended from the sky and tried to land his vehicle on the small deck of a Danish ship patrolling the North Sea. The weather was blustery and the seas were choppy. The task looked at best strenuous, at worst impossible. The pilot hovered patiently as the ship pitched wildly. Finally there was a brief calm, and he seized on that moment to settle down safely. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you may have a metaphorically similar challenge in the coming days. To be successful, all you have to do is be alert for the brief calm, and then act with swift, relaxed decisiveness.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "Show me a man who isn't a slave," wrote the Roman philosopher Seneca. "One is a slave to sex, another to money, another to ambition; all are slaves to hope or fear." Commenting on Seneca's thought, blogger Ryan Holiday says, "I'm disappointed in my enslavement to self-doubt, to my resentment towards those that I dislike, to the power that the favor and approval of certain people hold over me." What about you, Virgo? Are there any emotional states or bedeviling thoughts or addictive desires that you're a slave to? The coming weeks will be a favorable time to emancipate yourself. As you do, remember this: There's a difference between being compulsively driven by a delusion and lovingly devoted to a worthy goal.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): "Everyone who has ever built a new heaven first found the power to do so in his own hell." That noble truth was uttered by Libran philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, and I bet it will be especially meaningful for most of you during the rest of 2016. The bad news is that in the past few months you've had to reconnoiter your own hell a little more than you would have liked, even if it has been pretty damn interesting. The good news is that these explorations will soon be winding down. The fantastic news is that you are already getting glimpses of how to use what you've been learning. You'll be well-prepared when the time comes to start constructing a new heaven.

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SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "Zugzwang" is a German-derived word used in chess and other games. It refers to a predicament in which a player cannot possibly make a good move. Every available option will weaken his or her position. I propose that we coin a new word that means the opposite of zugzwang: "zugfrei," which shall hereafter signify a situation in which every choice you have in front of you is a positive or constructive one; you cannot make a wrong move. I think this captures the essence of the coming days for you, Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "We have to learn how to live with our frailties," poet Stanley Kunitz told *The Paris Review*. "The best people I know are inadequate and unashamed." That's the keynote I hope you will adopt in the coming weeks. No matter how strong and capable you are, no matter how hard you try to be your best, there are ways you fall short of perfection. And now is a special phase of your astrological cycle when you can learn a lot about how to feel at peace with that fact.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): How do plants reproduce? They generate seeds that are designed to travel. Dandelion and orchid seeds are so light they can drift long distances through the air. Milkweed seeds are a bit heavier, but are easily carried by the wind. Foxglove and sycamore seeds are so buoyant they can float on flowing water. Birds and other animals serve as transportation for burdock seeds, which hook onto feather and fur. Fruit seeds may be eaten by animals and later excreted, fully intact, far from their original homes. I hope this meditation stimulates you to think creatively about dispersing your own metaphorical seeds, Capricorn. It's time for you to vividly express your essence, make your mark, spread your influence.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): "It is a fault to wish to be understood before we have made ourselves clear to ourselves," said philosopher Simone Weil. I hope that prod makes you feel a bit uncomfortable, Aquarius. I hope it motivates you to get busy investigating some of your vague ideas and fuzzy self-images and confused intentions. It will soon be high time for you to ask for more empathy and acknowledgment from those whose opinions matter to you. You're overdue to be more appreciated, to be seen for who you really are. But before any of that good stuff can happen, you will have to engage in a flurry of introspection. You've got to clarify and deepen your relationship with yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): "I have never let my schooling interfere with my education," said writer Mark Twain. That's excellent advice for you to apply and explore in the coming weeks. Much of the time, the knowledge you have accumulated and the skills you have developed are supreme assets. But for the immediate future, they could obstruct you from learning the lessons you need most. For instance, they might trick you into thinking you are smarter than you really are. Or they could cause you to miss simple and seemingly obvious truths that your sophisticated

perspective is too proud to notice. Be a humble student, my dear.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): The oracle I'm about to present may be controversial. It contains advice that most astrologers would never dare to offer an Aries. But I believe you are more receptive than usual to this challenge, and I am also convinced that you especially need it right now. Are you ready to be pushed further than I have ever pushed you? Study this quote from novelist Mark Z. Danielewski: "Passion has little to do with euphoria and everything to do with patience. It is not about feeling good. It is about endurance. Like patience, passion comes from the same Latin root: \*pati.\*"

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Homework: Describe how you've fought off the seductive power of trendy cynicism without turning into a gullible Pollyanna. [Freewillastrology.com](http://freewillastrology.com).

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