

Rob Brezsnys's Astrology Newsletter

April 12, 2017

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See a pretty version of this newsletter: <http://bit.ly/2oZWcU3>

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My book *PRONOIA IS THE ANTIDOTE FOR PARANOIA* is available at Amazon: <http://bit.ly/Pronoia> or Powells: <http://bit.ly/PronoiaPowells>

Below are excerpts.

EXPERIMENT: Be scarier than your fears. If an anxious thought pops into your mind, bare your teeth and growl, "Get out of here or I will rip you to shreds!" If a demon visits you in a nightly dream, chase after it with a torch and sword, screaming, "Begone, foul spirit, or I will burn your mangy ass!"

Don't tolerate bullying in any form, whether it comes from a critical little voice in your head or from supposedly nice people who are trying to guilt-trip you. "I am a brave conqueror who cannot be intimidated!" is what you could say, or "I am a monster of love and goodness who will defeat all threats to my integrity!"

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MAYBE. MAYBE NOT.

There was once a poor farmer who could afford to own just one horse. He cared well for the animal, but one summer night, the horse escaped through a weak fence and ran away.

When his neighbors discovered what had happened, they visited to offer their condolences. "What bad luck!" they exclaimed. The farmer replied, "Maybe. Maybe not."

A week later, the fugitive horse sauntered back to the homestead, accompanied by six wild horses. The farmer and his son managed to corral all of them. Again the neighbors descended. "What great luck!" they exclaimed. "Maybe," the farmer replied. "Maybe not."

Soon the farmer's son began the work of taming the new arrivals. While attempting to ride the roan stallion, he was thrown to the ground and half-trampled. His leg was badly broken. The neighbors came to investigate. "What terrible luck!" they exclaimed. The farmer replied, "Maybe. Maybe not."

The next day, soldiers visited the farmer's village. Strife had recently broken out between two warlords, and one of them had come to conscript all the local young men. Though every other son was commandeered, the farmer's boy was exempted because of his injury. The neighbors gathered again. "What fantastic luck!" they exclaimed.

"Maybe," the farmer said. "Maybe not."

-Source: an old Taoist folktale

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THE JOY OF INTEGRITY

"Picture the Grand Canyon," says Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield. "Every hundred years, a child comes by and throws a mustard seed into it. In the time it takes to fill the hole in the earth with mustard seeds, one maha_kal_pa will have passed. To perfect the virtuous heart—the joy of integrity—takes a thousand mahakalpas."

If that's true, then we've got a lot of work to do. The good news is that civilization is in the midst of a critical turning point that could

tremendously expedite our ripening. So we could make unusually great progress toward the goal of perfecting the virtuous heart in the next 40 years.

For best results, we might meditate often on the phrase "the joy of integrity." We could get familiar with the pleasurable emotion that comes from acting with impeccability. And we can try out this idea from Gandhi: Integrity is the royal road to our inner freedom.

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WHAT IF YOUR EGO IS NOT YOUR ENEMY?

Jeff Brown says: "There is no way to dissolve the ego in its entirety. It is intrinsic to human functioning. This is why the ego bashing fundamental to the spiritual bypass community is so dangerous. They invite seekers to shed aspects that are essential in their daily lives.

"Instead, let's make a conscious distinction between the healthy and the unhealthy ego. When I think of the latter, I think of Trump. This is clearly not a man with a strong, healthy self-concept. This is a man in a perpetual state of self-hatred, so egoically depleted that no achievement will ever bring him peace.

"It is crystal clear that something happened to him in his early years, a hole so big that not even the Presidency can fill it.

"Perhaps never before have we been able to so clearly see into the inner world of a fractured, over-compensatory ego. And perhaps never before has it been more obvious that inviting humanity to dissolve the ego is as dangerous as shaming it.

"What we need instead is to support the development of a healthy, balanced ego. One that knows where it ends and the other begins. One that celebrates one's value, without imagining itself 'all that'. One that honors the self, without a need to dishonor others.

"A healthy ego is not the enemy of the sacred. It's the foundation that it stands upon."

- Jeff Brown, <http://tinyurl.com/m3x2qtt>

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MORE PRONOIA RESOURCES:

Problem: The Trump administration wants to limit women's access to birth control around the world. Partial antidotes: 1. The Gates Foundation has pledged to provide birth control to 120 million women worldwide by 2020. 2. Donations to Planned Parenthood have skyrocketed. <http://tinyurl.com/hxyrbq5>

6 Ways Citizens Across the U.S. Are Using Science to Build a Better World. By collecting climate change data, monitoring air quality, and reverse-engineering insulin, locals are creating a more just and equitable society. <http://tinyurl.com/j75acbf>

This Invention Lets Rural Hondurans Clean Their Water—And Own the Treatment Plants. What's at stake in a world where science is marginalized? Programs like AguaClara, which offer sustainable, low-cost solutions to communities in need. <http://tinyurl.com/jtpqyhq>

(Note: I endorse these because I like them. They aren't advertisements, and I get no kickbacks. Please tell me your own nominations for PRONOIA RESOURCES: Truthrooster@gmail.com.

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY
Week beginning April 13

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Before visiting Sicily for the first time, American poet Billy Collins learned to speak Italian. In his poem "By a Swimming Pool Outside Siracusa," he describes how the new language is changing his perspective. If he were thinking in English, he might say that the gin he's drinking while sitting alone in the evening light "has softened my mood." But the newly Italianized part of his mind would prefer to say that the gin "has allowed my thoughts to traverse my brain with greater gentleness" and "has extended permission to my mind to feel a friendship with the vast sky." Your assignment in the coming week, Aries, is to Italianize your view of the world. Infuse your thoughts with expansive lyricism and voluptuous relaxation. If you're Italian, celebrate and amplify your Italianness.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): It's closing time. You have finished toiling in the shadow of an old sacred cow. You've climaxed your relationship with ill-fitting ideas that you borrowed from mediocre and inappropriate teachers once upon a time. And you can finally give up your quest for a supposed Holy Grail that never actually existed in the first place. It's time to move on to the next chapter of your life story, Taurus! You have been authorized to graduate from any influence, attachment, and attraction that wouldn't serve your greater good in the future. Does this mean you'll soon be ready to embrace more freedom than you have in years? I'm betting on it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): The heaviest butterfly on the planet is the female Queen Victorian Birdwing. It tips the scales at two grams. The female Queen Alexandra Birdwing is the butterfly with the longest wingspan: over 12 inches. These two creatures remind me of you these days. Like them, you're freakishly beautiful. You're a marvelous and somewhat vertiginous spectacle. The tasks you're working on are graceful and elegant, yet also big and weighty. Because of your intensity, you may not look flight-worthy, but you're actually quite aerodynamic. In fact, your sorties are dazzling and influential. Though your acrobatic zigzags seem improbable, they're effective.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Picasso had mixed feelings about his fellow painter Marc Chagall, who was born under the sign of Cancer. "I'm not crazy about his roosters and donkeys and flying violinists, and all the folklore," Picasso said, referring to the subject matter of Chagall's compositions. But he also felt that Chagall was one of the only painters "who understands what color really is," adding, "There's never been anybody since Renoir who has the feeling for light that Chagall has." I suspect that in the coming weeks, you will be the recipient of mixed messages like these. Praise and disapproval may come your way. Recognition and neglect. Kudos and apathy. Please don't dwell on the criticism and downplay the applause. In fact, do the reverse!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "Go Tell It on the Mountain" is the title of an old gospel song, and now it's the metaphorical theme of your horoscope. I advise you to climb a tall peak -- even if it's just a magic mountain in your imagination -- and deliver the spicy monologue that has been marinating within you. It would be great if you could gather a sympathetic audience for your revelations, but that's not mandatory to achieve the necessary catharsis. You simply need to be gazing at the big picture as you declare your big, ripe truths.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): If you were a snake, it would be a fine time to molt your skin. If you were a river, it would be a perfect moment to overflow your banks in a spring flood. If you were an office worker, it would be an excellent phase to trade in your claustrophobic cubicle for a spacious new niche. In other words, Virgo, you're primed to outgrow at least one of your containers. The boundaries you knew you would have to transgress some day are finally ready to be transgressed. Even now, your attention span is expanding and your imagination is stretching.

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WHY IS IT CALLED "FREE WILL" ASTROLOGY?

It's called Free Will Astrology because my goal is to create horoscopes that nurture your free will!

And if you ever want more than the 'scopes you're reading here, keep in mind that I also create EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES for you. They're

four-to-five-minute meditations on the current state of your destiny.

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The cost is \$6 per sign on the Web (discounts available for bulk purchases), or \$1.99 per minute by phone.

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"Your expanded astrology thingees help me remember who I really am." - Gareth N., Toronto

"I never knew it was possible to get my butt kicked and my head patted at the same time -- until I listened to you, Rob." -Kristi P., Portland, OR

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LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): For over a century, the Ringsaker Lutheran Church in Buxton, North Dakota hosted rites of passage, including 362 baptisms, 50 marriages, and 97 funerals. It closed in 2002, a victim of the area's shrinking population. I invite you to consider the possibility that this can serve as a useful metaphor for you, Libra. Is there a place that has been a sanctuary for you, but has begun to lose its magic? Is there a traditional power spot from which the power has been ebbing? Has a holy refuge evolved into a mundane hang-out? If so, mourn for a while, then go in search of a vibrant replacement.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Most people throw away lemon rinds, walnut shells, and pomegranate skins. But some resourceful types find uses for these apparent wastes. Lemon rind can serve as a deodorizer, cleaner, and skin tonic, as well as a zesty ingredient in recipes. Ground-up walnut shells work well in facial scrubs and pet bedding. When made into a powder, pomegranate peels have a variety of applications for skin care. I suggest you look for metaphorically similar things, Scorpio. You're typically inclined to dismiss the surfaces and discard the packaging and ignore the outer layers, but I urge you to consider the possibility that right now they may have value.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You're growing too fast, but that's fine as long as you don't make people around you feel they're moving too slowly. You know too much, but that won't be a problem as long as you don't act snooty. And you're almost too attractive for your own good, but that won't hurt you as long as you overflow with spontaneous generosity. What I'm trying to convey, Sagittarius, is that your excesses are likely to be more beautiful than chaotic, more fertile than confusing. And that should provide you with plenty of slack when dealing with cautious folks who are a bit rattled by your lust for life.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Until recently, scientists believed the number of trees on the planet was about 400 billion. But research published in the journal *Nature* says that's wrong. There are actually three trillion trees on earth -- almost eight times more than was previously thought. In a similar way, I suspect you have also underestimated certain resources that are personally available to you, Capricorn. Now is a good time to correct your undervaluation. Summon the audacity to recognize the potential abundance you have at your disposal. Then make plans to tap into it with a greater sense of purpose.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): The poet John Keats identified a quality he called "negative capability." He defined it as the power to calmly accept "uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." I would extend the meaning to include three other things not to be irritably reached for: artificial clarity, premature resolution, and simplistic answers. Now is an excellent time to learn more about this fine art, Aquarius.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Are you ready for a riddle that's more enjoyable than the kind you're used to? I'm not sure if you are. You may

be too jaded to embrace this unusual gift. You could assume it's another one of the crazy-making cosmic jokes that have sometimes tormented you in the past. But I hope that doesn't happen. I hope you'll welcome the riddle in the liberating spirit in which it's offered. If you do, you'll be pleasantly surprised as it teases you in ways you didn't know you wanted to be teased. You'll feel a delightful itch or a soothing burn in your secret self, like a funny-bone feeling that titillates your immortal soul. P.S.: To take full advantage of the blessed riddle, you may have to expand your understanding of what's good for you.

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Test this hypothesis: The answer to a pressing question will come within 72 hours after you do a ritual in which you ask for clarity.

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NEED TO CHANGE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

To join or leave the email list for this newsletter, or to change the address where you receive it, go to:

<http://www.freewillastrology.com/newsletter/>

Once you join, check these points to ensure you'll actually receive the newsletter:

1. Add my address, televisionary@comcast.net, to your address book so that the newsletter won't be treated as spam and filtered out.
2. Adjust your spam filter so it doesn't treat my address as spam.
3. Tell your company's IT group to let my address pass through any filtering software they have set up.
4. If my newsletters don't reach your inbox, look in your "Bulk Mail" or "Junk Mail" folder.
5. Problems could originate with your email provider. It may be using a "content filter" that prevents my newsletter from reaching you. If you suspect that's true, complain. Tell your email provider to stop blocking my newsletter.

P.S. I totally respect your privacy. I'll never sell or give away your address to anyone.

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