

to eat vegetables. In response, food researchers in that country marketed a variety of exotic variations designed to appeal to their palate. The new dishes included chocolate-flavored carrots, pizza-flavored corn, and cheese-and-onion-flavored cauliflower. I don't recommend that you get quite so extreme in trying to broaden your own appeal, Cancerian. But see if you can at least reach out to your potential constituency with a new wrinkle or fresh twist. Be imaginative as you expand the range of what your colleagues and clientele have to choose from.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): In speaking about the arduous quest to become one's authentic self, writer Thomas Merton used the example of poets who aspire to be original but end up being imitative. "Many poets never succeed in being themselves," he said. "They never get around to being the particular poet they are intended to be by God. They never become the person or artist who is called for by all of the circumstances of their individual lives. They waste their years in vain efforts to be some other poet. They wear out their minds and bodies in a hopeless endeavor to have somebody else's experiences or write somebody else's poems." I happen to believe that this is a problem for non-poets, as well. Many of us never succeed in becoming ourselves. Luckily for you, Leo, in the coming weeks and months you will have an unprecedented chance to become more of who you really are. To expedite the process, work on dissolving any attraction you might have to acting like someone other than yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): On numerous occasions, French acrobat Charles Blondin walked across a tightrope that spanned the gorge near Niagara Falls. His cable was three and a quarter inches in diameter, 1,100 feet long, and 160 feet above the Niagara River. Once he made the entire crossing by doing back flips and somersaults. Another time he carried a small stove on his back, stopped midway to cook an omelet, and ate the meal before finishing. Now would be an excellent time for you to carry out your personal equivalent of his feats, Virgo. What daring actions have you never tried before even though you've been sufficiently trained or educated to perform them well?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Ready for some subterranean journeys? They may not involve literal explorations of deep caverns and ancient tunnels and underground streams. You may not stumble upon lost treasure and forgotten artifacts and valuable ruins. But then again, you might. At the very least, you will encounter metaphorical versions of some of the above. What mysteries would you love to solve? What secrets would be fun to uncover? What shadows would you be excited to illuminate?

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MAYBE JOY AND PLEASURE ARE ESSENTIAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Assume that your drive to experience pleasure and happiness isn't a barrier to your spiritual growth, but is in fact essential to it. Proceed on the hypothesis that cultivating joy can make you a more ethical and compassionate person. Imagine that feeling good has something important to teach you every day.

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SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Why would you guzzle mind-clouding moonshine when you will eventually get a chance to sip a heart-reviving tonic? Why spoil your appetite by loading up on non-nutritious hors d'oeuvres when a healthy feast will be available sooner than you imagine? I advise you to suppress your compulsion for immediate gratification. It may seem impossible for you to summon such heroic patience, but I know you can. And in the long run, you'll be happy if you do.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "You'll always be my favorite what-if." Many years ago, I heard that phrase whispered in my ear. It came from the mouth of a wonderful-but-impossible woman. We had just decided that it was not a good plan, as we had previously fantasized, to run away and get married at Angkor Wat in Cambodia and then spend the next decade being tour guides who led travelers on exotic getaways to the world's sacred sites. "You'll always be my favorite what-if" was a poignant but liberating moment. It allowed us to move on with our lives and pursue other dreams that were more realistic and productive. I invite you to consider triggering a liberation like that sometime soon.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): I'd love to see you increase the number of people, places, and experiences you love, as well as the wise intensity with which you love them. From an astrological perspective, now is an excellent time to upgrade your appreciation and adoration for the whole world and everything in it. To get you in the mood, I'll call your attention to some unfamiliar forms of ardor you may want to pursue: eraunophilia, an attraction to thunder and lightning; cymophilia, a fascination with waves and waviness; chorophilia, a passion for dancing; asymmetrophilia, a zeal for asymmetrical things; sapiophilia, an erotic enchantment with intelligence.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You could go online and buy an antique Gothic throne or a psychedelic hippie couch to spruce up your living room. For your bathroom, you could get a Japanese "wonder toilet," complete with a heated seat, automated bidet, and white noise generator. Here's another good idea: You could build a sacred crazy altar in your bedroom where you will conduct rituals of playful liberation. Or how about this? Acquire a kit that enables you to create spontaneous poetry on your refrigerator door using tiny magnets with evocative words written on them. Can you think of other ideas to revitalize your home environment? It's high time you did so.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Among America's 50 states, Texas has the third-highest rate of teenage pregnancies. Uncoincidentally, sex education in Texas is steeped in ignorance. Most of its high schools offer no teaching about contraception other than to advise students to avoid sex. In the coming weeks, Pisces, you can't afford to be as deprived of the truth as those kids. Even more than usual, you need accurate information that's tailored to your precise needs, not fake news or ideological delusions or self-serving propaganda. Make sure you gather insight and wisdom from the very best sources. That's how you'll avoid behavior that's irrelevant to your life goals. That's how you'll attract experiences that serve your highest good.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): I have misgivings when I witness bears riding bicycles or tigers dancing on their hind legs or Aries people wielding diplomatic phrases and making careful compromises at committee meetings. While I am impressed by the disciplined expression of primal power, I worry for the soul of the creature that is behaving with such civilized restraint. So here's my advice for you in the coming weeks: Take advantage of opportunities to make deals and forge win-win situations. But also keep a part of your fiery heart untamed. Don't let people think they've got you all figured out.

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