

Rob Brezsnys's Astrology Newsletter

May 16, 2018

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

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QUESTION. How can an intelligent person possibly believe astrology has any merit?

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. Many of the debunkers who try to discredit astrology have done no research on the subject. They haven't read smart astrological philosophers like Dane Rudhyar, don't know that seminal astronomers Johannes Kepler and Galileo were skilled astrologers, and aren't aware that eminent psychologist C.G. Jung cast horoscopes and believed that "astrology represents the summation of all the psychological knowledge of antiquity."

The closest approach the fraudulent "skeptics" usually make to the ancient art is to glance at a random horoscope column in a newspaper or on a website. To match their carelessness, I might make a drive-by of a strip mall and declare that the profession of architecture is shallow and debased.

That's one reason why these ill-informed "skeptics" spread so many ignorant lies. For instance, they say that astrologers think the stars and planets emit invisible beams that affect people's lives. The truth is, many Western astrologers don't believe any such thing. (You can read more comments about this below.)

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QUESTION. Because you pack your column with doses of wry humor and wild imagery, some people think you don't take astrology seriously.

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. On the contrary, I think my humor and imagery, along with my passion for crafting cliché-free language, demonstrate how much respect I have for astrology. With the vigor I apply to writing my oracles, I feel I'm alerting people to the possibility that astrology may have more credibility than both its sloppy practitioners and careless debunkers have afforded it.

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QUESTION. You have said in the past that you believe in astrology "about 80 percent." What's up with the other 20 percent?

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. I use the same 80-20 approach with every belief system I love and benefit from: Qabala, science, paganism, transpersonal psychology, postmodern rationalism, feminism, and others. I take what's useful from each, but am not so deluded as to think that any single system is the holy grail the physicists call the "Theory of Everything." Unconditional, unskeptical faith is the path of the fanatic and fundamentalist, and I aspire to be a rowdy philosophical anarchist, aflame with objectivity and committed to the truth that the truth is always mutating.

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QUESTION. But don't you risk playing the same role the lazy astrologers do: enticing people to take on a superstitious approach to life and seducing them into believing their fate is determined by supernatural forces beyond the influence of their willpower?

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. I call what I do predicting the present, not forecasting the future. My goal is to awaken my readers to the hidden agendas, unconscious forces, and long-term cycles at work in their lives so that they can respond to the totality of what's happening instead of to mere appearances. I want to be a friendly shocker who helps unleash their imaginations, giving them the power to create their destinies with the same liberated fertility that great artists summon to forge their masterpieces.

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QUESTION. How do you write your column? Do you use actual astrological data, or just go into a trance and let your imagination run wild?

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. I draw up a weekly chart for the sun, moon, and major aspects of each sign. It's the framework within which I improvise. The artistic part of the work is harder to pin down. One of my guiding principles, though, is to treat each sign's horoscope as a personal love letter—to speak as intimately about the mysteries of the moment as if I were addressing a close friend.

Where do my inspirations come from? Dreams, letters from readers, overheard conversations, meditation, lots of reading in a wide variety of texts both sacred and profane, and the intensive cultivation of my own receptivity.

I also rely on fact-finding missions I call whirlygigs. During these, I steep myself with the intention of attracting lessons I don't know I need, then meander the streets at random, going places I've never been and striking up conversations with strangers with whom I apparently have nothing in common.

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QUESTION: Many modern skeptics/scientists' assumption imagine that astrology is based on the belief that the gravity or movements of the planetary bodies themselves is what influences us. Is that a misconception?

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. Yes. It's another case of scientists not acting like scientists -- not bothering to research the subject they speak about authoritatively.

In his book **Cosmos and Psyche**, Richard Tarnas says the planets don't emit invisible forces that shape our destinies as if we were puppets. Rather, they are symbols of the unfolding evolutionary pattern. Just as clocks tell time but don't create it, the heavenly bodies show us the big picture but don't cause it.

Quoting Greek philosopher Plotinus, Tarnas writes, "The stars are like letters that inscribe themselves at every moment in the sky. Everything in the world is full of signs. All events are coordinated. All things depend on each other. Everything breathes together."

So it's not just the distant globes whose movements and relationships serve as divinatory clues. If you're sufficiently attuned to the gestalt of creation and pay close enough attention to its unfolding details, you can read the current mood of the universe in the arrangement of red onions in the grocery store bin or the fluttering of sunlight and shadow on the mimosa tree or the scatter of soap suds in your sink after you've finished washing the dishes.

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QUESTION. You confuse me in the way that you praise rational thought and the scientific method, yet reserve the right to believe in astrology, angels, miracles, and other woo-woo.

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. Thousands of amazing, inexplicable, and even supernatural events occur every day. And yet most are unreported by the media. The few that are cited are ridiculed. Why?

Here's one possible reason: The people most likely to believe in wonders and marvels are superstitious, uneducated, and prone to having a blind, literalist faith in their religions' myths. Those who are least likely to believe in wonders and marvels are skilled at analytical thought, well-educated, and yet prone to having a blind, literalist faith in the ideology of materialism, which dogmatically asserts that the universe consists entirely of things that can be perceived by the five human senses or detected by instruments that scientists have thus far invented.

The media is largely composed of people from the second group. It's virtually impossible for them to admit to the possibility of events that elude the rational mind's explanations, let alone experience them. If anyone from this group manages to escape peer pressure and cultivate a receptivity to the miraculous, it's because they have successfully fought against being demoralized by the unsophisticated way wonders and marvels are framed by the first group.

I try to be immune to the double-barreled ignorance. When I behold

astounding synchronicities and numinous breakthroughs that seem to violate natural law, I'm willing to consider the possibility that my understanding of natural law is too narrow. And yet I also refrain from lapsing into irrational gullibility; I actively seek mundane explanations for apparent miracles.

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QUESTION. Can you sum up your approach to seeing the world?

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. My outlook combines the rigorous objectivity of a scientist, the "beginner's mind" of Zen Buddhism, and the compassionate friendliness of the Dalai Lama. I blend a scrupulously dispassionate curiosity with a skepticism driven by expansiveness, not spleen.

To pull this off, I have to be willing to regularly suspend my theories about the way the world works. I accept with good humor the possibility that what I've learned in the past may not be a reliable guide to understanding the fresh phenomenon that's right in front of me. I'm suspicious of my biases, even the rational and benevolent ones. I open my heart as I strip away the interpretations that my emotions might be inclined to impose.

"Before we can receive the unbiased truth about anything," wrote my teacher Ann Davies, "we have to be ready to ignore what we would like to be true."

At the same time, I don't want to turn into a hard-ass, poker-faced robot. I keep my feelings moist and receptive. I remember my natural affection for all of creation. I enjoy the power of tender sympathy as it drives me to probe for the unimaginable revelations of every new moment. "Before we can receive the entire truth about anything," said Ann Davies, "we have to love it."

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INTERVIEWER: Can you provide a 25-words-or-less summary of what "Free Will Astrology" is not?

ROB'S BREZSNY'S ANSWER. My Free Will Astrology horoscopes are not rooted in or justified by any belief system, doctrine, fairy tale, authoritative teacher, elaborate secret joke, mystical wishing, well-rationalized bias, or rebellion against science. My horoscopes are fueled by poetry and in service to the liberated imagination.

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ARCHIVES OF FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

Here are the Free Will Astrology horoscopes from a year ago:
<http://bit.ly/2qocYN1>. (When you reach the link, scroll down to read your horoscope.)

Here are the long-term, big-picture horoscopes I wrote for you at the beginning of 2018. How are they working for you?
<http://bit.ly/YourGloriousStory2018>

Here are the Free Will Astrology archives for the last 15 years:
<http://bit.ly/10x1Ghu>

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CRITICISM

Below is some reader email that came in recently. (If you'd like to tell me your opinions on my work, either positive or negative, send them to Truthrooster@gmail.com.)

Mr. So-Called Astrologer: I was browsing through the Folio Weekly newspaper in Jacksonville, and saw your horoscopes, and really had to say: what the hell?!

One horoscope has a bunch of synonyms and antonyms mashed together. What is "strong softness" supposed to mean? Or "daring acts of nurturing"? Just sounds like nonsense to me.

Another horoscope has a weird story about the history of cars (although thanks for providing the moral of the story, because otherwise I would not have realized the point)

So this is just my request to, if possible, give us more of a horoscope and less of a game of words that really do not have any usefulness.

Hold off on the irrelevant stories and be more direct in giving some practical advice about my finances or who I should date. Maybe put in some numerology or even what to watch out for in the current week.

I love reading horoscopes but yours were very confusing and disappointing.

Thank you :)

Fran R.

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SUPPORT

I was born under the sign of Cancerian the Crab. One of the potential weaknesses of our tribe is that we can tend to be almost pathologically self-sufficient. Some of us may find it challenging to ask for help and support. In my continuing effort to overcome this inclination, I'm asking for your support!

If you would like to contribute to me and my ongoing work, please visit my Virtual Tip Jar at Paypal. It's here:
<https://paypal.me/FreeWillAstrology>

You can also contribute to my well-being by buying the Expanded Audio Horoscopes I create every week. These forecasts are different in tone and content from the written horoscopes I provide here. They're my four- to five-minute-long ruminations about the current chapter of your life story. They're available at <http://RealAstrology.com>.

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MORE PRONOIA RESOURCES:

Adidas tuned garbage into money, selling a million shoes made from recycled ocean plastic.
<https://tinyurl.com/ya93lndk>

TV Stations Follow John Oliver's Lead in the Movement to Forgive Medical Debt. How former debt collectors showed everyone how to buy up people's medical debt at pennies on the dollar.
<https://tinyurl.com/y9gqmqqq>

A Lesson From the Fireflies. The principles made apparent by biological research show us that life is, at nearly every level, a collective concern.
<https://tinyurl.com/y78tq99b>

(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 May 17
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<http://www.freewillastrology.com/horoscopes/>
Grammar key: Asterisks equal **italics**

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A chemist named Marcellus Gilmore Edson got a patent on peanut butter in 1894. A businessperson named George Bayle started selling peanut butter as a snack in 1894. In 1901, a genius

named Julia David Chandler published the first recipe for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. In 1922, another pioneer came up with a new process for producing peanut butter that made it taste better and last longer. In 1928, two trailblazers invented loaves of sliced bread, setting the stage for the ascension of the peanut butter and jelly sandwich to its full glory. According to my analysis, Taurus, you're partway through your own process of generating a very practical marvel. I suspect you're now at a phase equivalent to Julia David Chandler's original recipe. Onward! Keep going!

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): One of the most popular brands of candy in North America is Milk Duds. They're irregularly shaped globs of chocolate caramel. When they were first invented in 1926, the manufacturer's plan was to make them perfect little spheres. But with the rather primitive technology available at that time, this proved impossible. The finished products were globs, not globes. They tasted good, though. Workers jokingly suggested that the new confection's name include "dud," a word meaning "failure" or "flop." Having sold well now for more than 90 years, Milk Duds have proved that success doesn't necessarily require perfection. Who knows? Maybe their dud-ness has been an essential part of their charm. I suspect there's a metaphorical version of Milk Duds in your future, Gemini.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): In my vision of your life in the coming weeks, you're hunting for the intimate power that you lost a while back. After many twists and trials, you find it almost by accident in a seemingly unimportant location, a place you have paid little attention to for a long time. When you recognize it, and realize you can reclaim it, your demeanor transforms. Your eyes brighten, your skin glows, your body language galvanizes. A vivid hope arises in your imagination: how to make that once-lost, now-rediscovered power come alive again and be of use to you in the present time.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): The etymological dictionary says that the English slang word "cool" meant "calmly audacious" as far back as 1825. The term "groovy" was first used by jazz musicians in the 1930s to signify "performing well without grandstanding." "Hip," which was originally "hep," was also popularized by the jazz community. It meant, "informed, aware, up-to-date." I'm bringing these words to your attention because I regard them as your words of power in the coming weeks. You can be and should be as hip, cool, and groovy as you have been in a long time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I hope you will seek out influences that give you grinning power over your worries. I hope you'll be daring enough to risk a breakthrough in service to your most demanding dream. I hope you will make an effort to understand yourself as your best teacher might understand you. I hope you will find out how to summon more faith in yourself -- a faith not rooted in lazy wishes but in a rigorous self-assessment. Now here's my prediction: You will fulfill at least one of my hopes, and probably more.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): The Polish pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski once performed for England's Queen Victoria. Since she possessed that bygone era's equivalent of a backstage pass, she was able to converse with him after the show. "You're a genius," she told him, having been impressed with his artistry. "Perhaps, Your Majesty," Paderewski said. "But before that I was a drudge." He meant that he had labored long and hard before reaching the mastery the Queen attributed to him. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you Libras are currently in an extended "drudge" phase of your own. That's a good thing! Take maximum advantage of this opportunity to slowly and surely improve your skills.

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MY OTHER HOROSCOPES

Factual information and reasonable thinking alone are not sufficient to guide you through life's labyrinthine tests. You need and deserve regular deliveries of uncanny revelation.

One of your inalienable rights as a human being should therefore be to receive mysteriously useful omens on a regular basis. In this spirit, I offer you the free weekly horoscopes you read here.

If you ever want more, and think it's worth paying for, try my EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES. They're four-to-five-minute meditations on the current state of your destiny and where you're headed.

To listen to your Expanded Audio Horoscope online, go to

<http://RealAstrology.com>.

Register and/or log in through the main page.

You can also listen over the phone by calling 1-877-873-4888.

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

The Expanded Audio Horoscopes work on most smart phones and tablets.

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"Your expanded horoscopes get more personal and intimate with me than some of my closest friends. Thanks for the loving reflections."
- Ari S., Ann Arbor, MI

"When I listen to your audio 'scopes, my free will lights up." - Alex D., Los Angeles

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SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): The ancient Greek poet Simonides was among the first of his profession to charge a fee for his services. He made money by composing verses on demand. On one occasion, he was asked to write a stirring tribute to the victor of a mule race. He declined, declaring that his sensibilities were too fine to create art for such a vulgar activity. In response, his potential patron dramatically boosted the proposed price. Soon thereafter, Simonides produced a rousing ode that included the phrase "wind-swift steeds." I offer the poet as a role model for you in the coming weeks, Scorpio. Be more flexible than usual about what you'll do to get the reward you'd like.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Here's the operative metaphor for you these days: You're like a painter who has had a vision of an interesting work of art you could create -- but who lacks some of the paint colors you would require to actualize this art. You may also need new types of brushes you haven't used before. So here's how I suggest you proceed: Be aggressive in tracking down the missing ingredients or tools that will enable you to accomplish your as-yet imaginary masterpiece.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Useful revelations and provocative epiphanies are headed your way. But they probably won't arrive sheathed in sweetness and light, accompanied by tinkling swells of celestial music. It's more likely they'll come barging in with a clatter, bringing bristly marvels and rough hope. In a related matter: At least one breakthrough is in your imminent future. But this blessing is more likely to resemble a wrestle in the mud than a dance on a mountaintop. None of this should be a problem, however! I suggest you enjoy the rugged but interesting fun.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): One of the saddest aspects of our lives as humans is the disparity between love and romance. Real love is hard work. It's unselfish, unwavering, and rooted in generous empathy. Romance, on the other hand, tends to be capricious and inconstant, often dependent on the fluctuations of mood and chemistry. Is there anything you could do about this crazy-making problem, Aquarius? Like could you maybe arrange for your romantic experiences to be more thoroughly suffused with the primal power of unconditional love? I think this is a realistic request, especially in the coming weeks. You will have exceptional potential to bring more compassion and spiritual affection into your practice of intimacy.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): In accordance with astrological omens, I invite you to dream up new rituals. The traditional observances and ceremonies bequeathed to you by your family and culture may satisfy your need for comfort and nostalgia, but not your need for renewal and reinvention. Imagine celebrating homemade rites of passage designed not for who you once were but for the new person you've become. You may be delighted to discover how much power they provide you to shape your life's long-term cycles. Ready to conjure up a new ritual right now? Take a piece of paper and write down two fears that inhibit your drive to create a totally interesting kind of success for yourself. Then burn that paper and those fears in the kitchen sink while chanting "I am a swashbuckling incinerator of fears!"

ARIES (March 21-April 19): According to my assessment of the astrological omens, your duty right now is to be a brave observer and fair-minded intermediary and honest storyteller. Your people need you to help them do the right thing. They require your influence in order to make

good decisions. So if you encounter lazy communication, dispel it with your clear and concise speech. If you find that foggy thinking has started to infect important discussions, inject your clear and concise insights.

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Homework: Do something that you will remember with pride and passion until the end of your days. Testify at Freewillastrology.com.

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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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Submissions sent to Rob Brezsny's Astrology Newsletter or in response to "homework assignments" may be published in a variety of formats at Rob Brezsny's discretion, including but not limited to newsletters, books, the Free Will Astrology column, and Free Will Astrology website. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, style, and content. Requests for anonymity will be honored. We are not responsible for unsolicited submission of any creative material.

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