

TRUE NATURE OF FUNDAMENTALISM

The fundamentalist takes everything way too seriously and way too personally and way too literally. He divides the world into two camps, those who agree with him and those who don't. There is only one right way to interpret the world, and a million wrong ways. Correct belief is the only virtue.

To the fundamentalist, the liberated imagination is a sinful taboo. He not only enslaves his own imagination to his ideology, but wants to enslave our imaginations, too.

And who are the fundamentalists? Let's not remain under the delusion that they are only the usual suspects—the religious fanatics of Islam and Christianity and Judaism and Hinduism.

There are many other kinds of fundamentalists, and some of them have gotten away with practicing their tragic magic in a stealth mode. Among the most successful are those who believe in what Robert Anton Wilson calls fundamentalist materialism. This is the faith-based dogma that swears physical matter is the only reality and that nothing exists unless it can be detected by our five senses or by technologies that humans have made.

Life has no transcendent meaning or purpose, the fundamentalist materialists proclaim. There is no such thing as a divine intelligence. The universe is a dumb accidental machine that grinds on endlessly out of blind necessity.

I see spread out before me in every direction a staggeringly sublime miracle lovingly crafted by a supernal consciousness that oversees the evolution of 500 billion galaxies, yet is also available as an intimate companion and daily advisor to every one of us. But to the fundamentalist materialists, my perceptions are indisputably wrong and idiotic.

Many other varieties of fundamentalism thrive and propagate. Every ideology, even some of the ones I like, has its share of true believers—fanatics who judge all other ideologies as inferior, flawed, and foolish.

I know astrologers who insist there's only one way to do astrology right. I know Buddhists who adamantly decree that the inherent nature of life on Earth is suffering.

I know progressive activists who sincerely believe that every single Republican is either stupid or evil or both.

I know college administrators who would excommunicate any psychology professor who dared to discuss the teachings of Carl Jung, who was in my opinion one of the greatest minds of the 20th century.

I know pagans who refuse to consider any other version of Jesus Christ beyond the sick parody the Christian right has fabricated.

None of the true believers like to hear that there are at least three sides to every story. They don't want to consider the hypothesis that everyone has a piece of the truth.

And here's the really bad news: We all have our own share of the fundamentalist virus. Each of us is fanatical, rigid, and intolerant about products of the imagination that we don't like. We wish that certain people would not imagine the things they do, and we allow ourselves to beam hateful, war-like thoughts in their direction.

We even wage war against our own imaginations, commanding ourselves, sometimes half-consciously, to ignore possibilities that don't fit into our neatly _constructed theories. Each of us sets aside certain precious beliefs and symbols that we give ourselves permission to take very seriously and personally and literally.

Our fundamentalism, yours and mine, may not be as dangerous to the collective welfare as, say, the fundamentalism of Islamic terrorists and right-wing Christian politicians. It may not be as destructive as that of the CEOs who worship financial profit as the supreme measure of value, and the scientists who ignore and deny every mystery that can't be measured, and the journalists, filmmakers, novelists, musicians, and pundits who relentlessly generate rotten visions of the human condition.

But still: We are all infected, you and I. We are fueling the war against the imagination. What's your version of the virus?

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WANT TO GET YOUR ASTROLOGICAL CHART READ?

If you want your personal chart done, I recommend a colleague whose approach to reading astrology charts closely matches my own. She's my wife, RO LOUGHRAN. She's at <http://www.roloughran.com>.

Ro utilizes a blend of well-trained intuition, emotional warmth, and technical proficiency in horoscope interpretation. She is skilled at exploring the mysteries of your life's purpose and nurturing your connection with your own inner wisdom.

In addition to over 30 years of astrological experience, Ro has been a licensed psychotherapist for 17 years. She integrates psychological insight with astrology's cosmological perspective.

Ro is based in California, but can do phone consultations and otherwise work with you regardless of geographic boundaries.

Check out Ro's website at <http://www.roloughran.com>

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MY BOOK OF ANGER

Someday I'll have an epiphany and tap adeptly into the raw, supercharged fuel of my anger. I'll stop going numb with blind rage when I think about misogyny and racism and militarism and plutocracy and homophobia and the rape of the earth.

On that day, my fury will become so beautiful and strong that I'll sit down and write "The Book of Good Anger" in one sustained three-week frenzy of creative indignation. It'll be filled with stories that inspire everyone who reads it to express their sacred wrath in the most constructive ways possible.

In the meantime, I'll be here urging you to seize those times when getting mad naturally gives you the lucid clarity to help correct the injustices you perceive—and encourages you to not wallow in rage for rage's sake.

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MAGICAL THINKING

One of my readers, Jay O'Dell, told me this story: "After my cancer surgery, a nurse said to me, 'You may as well try magical thinking. Regular thinking hasn't helped.' I said to the nurse, 'Well, why the hell not?' That was seven years ago."

In bringing O'Dell's testimony to your attention, I don't mean to suggest you will have any health problems that warrant a strong dose of magical thinking. Not at all. But now and then in the coming years, you may get wrapped up in a psychological twist or a spiritual riddle that could benefit from magical thinking.

And what exactly is magical thinking? Here's one definition: The stories that unfold in your imagination may have important effects on what actually happens to you.

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fortunate than you. But now is one of those times when I feel moved to speak of these matters. You are in a phase of your astrological cycle when it's crucial to perform specific work in behalf of a greater good. Why crucial? Because your personal well-being in the immediate future depends in part on your efforts to intensify your practical compassion.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "We are whiplashed between an arrogant overestimation of ourselves and a servile underestimation of ourselves," writes educator Parker Palmer. That's the bad news, Virgo. The good news is that you are in prime position to escape from the whiplash. Cosmic forces are conspiring with your eternal soul to coalesce a well-balanced vision of your true value that's free of both vain misapprehensions and self-deprecating delusions. Congrats! You're empowered to understand yourself with a tender objectivity that could at least partially heal lingering wounds. See yourself truly!

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): The country of Poland awards medals to couples that have stayed married for 50 years. It also gives out medals to members of the armed forces who have served for at least thirty years. But the marriage medal is of higher rank, and is more prestigious. In that spirit, I'd love for you to get a shiny badge or prize to acknowledge your devoted commitment to a sacred task—whether that commitment is to an intimate alliance, a noble quest, or a promise to yourself. It's time to reward yourself for how hard you've worked and how much you've given.

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THOUGHTFUL OPTIMISM

Some people regard me as more of a cheerleader and motivator than an impartial reporter. They think I downplay the pain and embellish the gain that awaits you.

There's a grain of truth in that. Now and then I may imply that paradise is nigh when in fact the suburbs of paradise are a more realistic goal. But I view my optimism as a healing counterbalance to the absurdly exaggerated doses of discouraging news you hear almost everywhere else you go.

If you ever want more of that good stuff, beyond the horoscopes you're reading here, keep in mind that every week I also create EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES for you. They're four-to-five-minute meditations on the current state of your destiny.

These forecasts are different in tone and format from the written horoscopes you read here in the newsletter. They're longer and more leisurely in tone. They tend to bring out more of the patient counselor in me, and have a bit less of the poet.

To listen to your Expanded Audio Horoscope online, go to <https://freewillastrology.sparkns.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 On the Web. (Discounts are available for bulk purchases.) You can also access them for \$1.99 per minute by phone

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"The best part about your audio horoscopes is that they pat me on the head and kick me in the ass at the same time." - Rita L., San Diego

"Your audio oracles go beyond helping me find the truth -- they inspire me to find the WILD truth." - Patrick K., Montreal

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SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Scorpio poet Sylvia Plath wrote, "I admit I desire, / Occasionally, some backtalk / From the mute sky." You'll be wise to borrow the spirit of that mischievous declaration. Now is a good time to solicit input from the sky, as well as from your allies and friends and favorite animals, and from every other source that might provide you with interesting feedback. I invite you to regard the whole

world as your mirror, your counselor, your informant.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): In January 1493, the notorious pirate and kidnapper Christopher Columbus was sailing his ship near the land we now call the Dominican Republic. He spotted three creatures he assumed were mermaids. Later he wrote in his log that they were "not half as beautiful as they are painted [by artists]." We know now that the "mermaids" were actually manatees, aquatic mammals with flippers and paddle-shaped tails. They are in fact quite beautiful in their own way, and would only be judged as homely by a person comparing them to mythical enchantresses. I trust you won't make a similar mistake, Sagittarius. Evaluate everything and everyone on their own merits, without comparing them to something they're not.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "I want what we all want," writes novelist Jonathan Lethem. "To move certain parts of the interior of myself into the exterior world, to see if they can be embraced." Even if you haven't passionately wanted that lately, Capricorn, I'm guessing you will soon. That's a good thing, because life will be conspiring with you to accomplish it. Your ability to express yourself in ways that are meaningful to you and interesting to other people will be at a peak.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Using algorithms to analyze 300 million facts, a British scientist concluded that April 11, 1954 was the most boring day in history. A Turkish man who would later become a noteworthy engineer was born that day, and Belgium staged a national election. But that's all. With this non-eventful day as your inspiration, I encourage you to have fun reminiscing about the most boring times in your own past. I think you need a prolonged respite from the stimulating frenzy of your daily rhythm. It's time to rest and relax in the sweet luxury of nothingness and emptiness.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): *The Blue Room* is a famous Picasso painting from 1901. Saturated with blue hues, it depicts a naked woman taking a bath. More than a century after its creation, scientists used X-rays to discover that there was an earlier painting beneath *The Blue Room* and obscured by it. It shows a man leaning his head against his right hand. Piscean poet Jane Hirshfield says that there are some people who are "like a painting hidden beneath another painting." More of you Pisceans fit that description than any other sign of the zodiac. You may even be like a painting beneath a painting beneath a painting—to a depth of five or more paintings. Is that a problem? Not necessarily. But it is important to be fully aware of the existence of all the layers. Now is a good time to have a check-in.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): "How prompt we are to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our bodies," wrote Henry David Thoreau. "How slow to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our souls!" Your first assignment in the coming days, Aries, is to devote yourself to quenching the hunger and thirst of your soul with the same relentless passion that you normally spend on giving your body the food and drink it craves. This could be challenging. You may be less knowledgeable about what your soul thrives on than what your body loves. So your second assignment is to do extensive research to determine what your soul needs to thrive.

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Homework: What are the five conditions you'd need in your world in order to feel you were living in utopia? Write FreeWillAstrology.com

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<https://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.
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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.

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