

Rob Breznys's Astrology Newsletter

March 25, 2020

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See a pretty version of this newsletter: <https://bit.ly/YourFortitude>

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FLYING A 99-CENT KITE

My neighbor Jim is spending the apocalypse sitting in his little rowboat on the creek and flying his 99-cent kite for hours upon end. <https://tinyurl.com/Neighborjim>

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WE ARE AT OUR BEST WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS

Ira Byock writes: Anthropologist Margaret Mead was asked by a student what she considered to be the first sign of civilization in a culture. The student expected Mead to talk about fishhooks or clay pots or grinding stones.

But Mead said that the first sign of civilization in an ancient culture was a femur (thighbone) that had been broken and then healed. Mead explained that in the animal kingdom, if you break your leg, you die. You cannot run from danger, get to the river for a drink or hunt for food. You are meat for prowling beasts. No animal survives a broken leg long enough for the bone to heal.

"A broken femur that has healed is evidence that someone has taken time to stay with the one who fell, has bound up the wound, has carried the person to safety and has tended the person through recovery. Helping someone else through difficulty is where civilization starts," Mead said.

We are at our best when we serve others. Be civilized.

~ Ira Byock, *The Best Care Possible: A Physician's Quest to Transform Care Through the End of Life*

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HOROSCOPES FOR THE PANDEMIC

If you missed last week's message about the coronavirus, here it is again:

Throughout 2020, there is a rare confluence of three planets in Capricorn: Pluto, Saturn, and Jupiter. Right now that high-powered configuration has been getting supercharged by transiting Mars.

These potent energies are synergizing and compounding each other's impacts—interweaving in ways that confound us and rattle us.

In the best-case scenario, they will also activate us and motivate us to initiate brave transformations in our own personal lives as well as in our communities and nations.

We will use this crisis as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of how profoundly interconnected we all are. We'll respond to it by upgrading the way we take care of ourselves, the people we love, and our natural world.

Read more about the meaning of all this, plus horoscopes that suggest ways to respond: <https://bit.ly/HeroicLove>

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WHAT IF THE VIRUS IS THE MEDICINE?

Jonathan Hadas Edwards & Julia Hartsell wrote the essay below: What if the Virus is the Medicine?

The emerging pandemic is already a watershed of the early 21st century: things won't ever be the same. Yet for all that the havoc that the virus is wreaking, directly and indirectly, it may also be part of the bitter medicine the global body needs.

How could adding another crisis to an already crisis-ridden planet possibly be medicinal?

Before we explore that question, we want to be clear: our intent is not to downplay the severity or minimize the importance of lives lost to this disease. Behind the mortality figures lie very real pain and grief, and

these numbers, often discussed so casually, are personal, representing the potential loss of our parents, elders, teachers, dance companions, grandmothers or immune-compromised friends.

Already, our hearts are breaking for the physical distance with our aging parents until we know if we're infected. There's not only a risk of losing beloveds in this time, but having to do so from afar. Our hearts are breaking for those who may die or suffer alone, without the touch of their loved ones. We honor death as a sacred passage, but we do not minimize death, suffering or sickness in the slightest.

We pray that each one who transitions from this virus (as from the many other deadly diseases, accidents, overdoses, murders, suicides, mass shootings, and on and on) be met with on the other side by unexpected blessing, connection, peace.

Neither are the economic implications to be taken lightly. Many in this country have already seen massive impact, and the recession has only begun. As always, those closest to the edge will be hit hardest. For some, a month sequestered in beauty could be a vacation.

Others have a few months before financial panic sets in. And for others living paycheck to paycheck or gig to gig, there is a great immediacy of struggle. The economic 'side effects' of this coronavirus could be catastrophic.

And yet.

For many in our world, the pre-coronavirus status quo was already catastrophic. Many are facing an imminent end to their world--indeed, for many species and many peoples, the world has already ended. We are in the midst of a crisis of unprecedented magnitude: the choice for humanity is change or die. No one said change would be easy. (Neither is dying.)

And incremental change is not enough. It will take radical change to shift our current, calamitous trajectory away from massive environmental devastation, famine, energy crises, war & refugee crises, increasingly authoritarian regimes and escalating inequalities.

The world we know is dying. What is unsustainable cannot persist, by definition, and we are starting to see this play out.

What hope is there, then? There is the hope that breakdown will become, or coexist with, breakthrough. There is the hope that what is dying is the caterpillar of immature humanity in order that the metamorphosis yields a stunning emergence. That whatever survives this collective initiation process will be truer, more heart-connected, resilient and generative.

We are entering the chrysalis. There's no instruction manual for what happens next. But we can learn some things from observing nature (thank you Megan Toben for some of this biological info). For one thing, the chrysalis stage is preceded by a feeding frenzy in which the caterpillar massively overconsumes (sound familiar? We've been there for decades). Then its tissues melt into a virtually undifferentiated goo. What remain separate are so-called imaginal cells, which link together and become the template from which the goo reorganizes itself into a butterfly.

Does the caterpillar overconsume strategically, or out of blind instinct? Does it know what's coming and trust in the process, or does it feel like it's dying? We don't know. It's natural to resist radical, painful change. But ultimately there's little choice but to surrender to it. We can practice welcoming the circumstances that force us away from dysfunctional old patterns, be they economic or personal. We have that opportunity now.

Let's return to a crucial word, initiation. On an individual level, initiations are those processes or rituals by which one reaches a new state of being and corresponding social status: from girl to woman, from layperson to clergy, and so on. Initiations can be deliberate or spontaneous, as in the case of the archetypal shamanic initiation, which comes by way of a healing crisis.

To paraphrase Michael Meade, initiations are events that pull us deeper into life than we would otherwise go. They vary widely from culture to culture and individual to individual, but two characteristics they share are intensity and transformation. They bring us face to face with life and with death; they always involve an element of dying or shedding so that the new can be born.

Most all of us have undergone initiations of one sort or another, from the death of a parent to the birth of a child. Many have experienced initiation in the form of a crisis or trial by fire. Those of us who have gone through more deliberate, ritualized forms of initiation can state unequivocally: the process is not fun, comfortable or predictable.

You may well feel like you're going nuts. You may not know who you are anymore. You don't get to choose which parts of you die, or even to know ahead of time.

One of the overriding feelings is of uncertainty: you don't know where you're going, only that there's no going back. And there's no way of knowing how long the transformation will take. It can help to remember that the initiatory chrysalis phase is a sacred time, set apart from normal life. That it has its own demands and its own logic. That it cannot be rushed, only surrendered to. That it may be painful, but also, ultimately, healing.

Imagine what happens when an entire society finds itself in the midst of a critical initiation. Except you don't have to imagine: it's already happening, or starting to. It looks like chaos, a meltdown. We're in a moment of collective, global-level crisis and uncertainty that has little precedent in living memory.

The economic machine--the source of our financial needs and also a system that profits from disease, divorce, crime and tragedy--is faced with a dramatic slow-down. We are all facing the cessation of non-essential activities. There is opportunity here, if we claim it.

This is a sacred time.

However, unlike a traditional rite of passage ceremony, there's no priest or elder with wisdom born of experience holding the ritual container, tracking everything seen and unseen. Instead, all at once there are millions of personal quests inside one enormous initiatory chrysalis.

And yet, look closely: amid the goo, you may start to notice imaginal cells appearing. Pockets of people who are aligned with something they may not fully understand, in receipt of a vision or pieces of one, beaming out their signal to say: let's try something different.

This is an opportunity to loosen our grip on old and familiar ways. Those ways worked for as long as they did, and they got us here, for better and for worse. They seem unlikely to carry us much further.

What if we're instead being asked to feel our way forward, from the heart, without benefit of certainty--which, when concentrated, quickly becomes toxic? No one has all the answers in this or any other time. Right now the questions may be more valuable.

What if we honor this time with sacred respect?

What if we take the time to listen for the boundaries and limits of our Earth mother?

What is truly important?

How can we receive the bitter medicine of the moment deep into our cells and let it align us with latent possibility?

How can we, with the support of the unseen, serve as midwives to all that is dying here and all that is being born?

With these questions resounding, let us s l o w d o w n and listen. For echo back from the unseen, for whisperings from the depths of our souls and from the heart of the mystery that--no less so in times of crisis--embraces us all.

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KEEPING QUITE by Pablo Neruda

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still
for once on the face of the earth,
let's not speak in any language;
let's stop for a second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines;
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.

Fishermen in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused
with total inactivity.
Life is what it is about;
I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death.

Perhaps the earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.

Translation of this poem by Pablo Neruda is by Alistair Reed

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PANDEMIC
by Lynn Ungar

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down. And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch. Promise this world your love--

for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

--Lynn Ungar

More of Lynn's poetry: <http://lynnungar.com>

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WE'RE EACH A STRAND OF THE INTRICATE WEB

Astrologer Chani Nicholas writes: We are each a strand of the impossibly intricate web of this world. Our care for one another is the glue. Our interdependence is non-negotiable. The myth of making it solely on our own is a fantastical tale with a bitter end.

Even when our privilege allows us the delusion of being self-made, we will eventually succumb to the insecurity of being in a body. Moments like this make us well aware of that.

The very real threat to our physical health that we are facing forces us to unpack emotions that live beneath the surface of our conscious awareness.

Living in a society that leaves the marginalized among us out to dry, condemned to suffer from the systems set up to have them fail, will plague us until we remedy it.

It's time, past time, to live in a world where necessities are provided and excess is shared.

More from Chani Nicholas:
<https://chaninicholas.com/>
and
<https://www.instagram.com/chaninicholas/>

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MORE PRONOIA RESOURCES:

Positive Updates on the COVID-19 Outbreaks From Around the World:
<https://tinyurl.com/yx2cpt2n>

* Distilleries Across the United States Are Making Their Own Hand

Sanitizers to Give Away for Free

* Air Pollution Plummet in Cities With High Rates of Quarantine

* Johns Hopkins Researcher Says That Antibodies From Recovered COVID Patients Could Help Protect People At Risk

* Uber Eats is Supporting the North American Restaurant Industry By Waiving Delivery Fees for 100,000 Restaurants

* Athletes and sports teams are pledging to pay the wages of arena employees during the shutdown.

* Utility companies, landlords, automakers, and internet providers are waiving a number of late fees and payments to ease the financial burden of the shutdown.

* School districts across the country are still opening their doors to serve meals to kids and families.

* Seattle-based author Ijeoma Oluo has launched a relief fund to help artists who have been severely affected by the outbreak.

* In the small town of Coos Bay, Oregon, coffee shop owner John Beane is hosting virtual story times for kids after shutting down his cafe.

* The supermarket chain Raley's started a special program offering a bag of groceries at a reduced price for seniors and people in need.

* The popular restaurant chain Puesto, which was forced to shut down because of the virus, gave away some 500 free care packages this week.

More: <https://tinyurl.com/t7sm2y5>

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More Positive Updates on the COVID Outbreaks From Around the World:

* World Health Organization (WHO) Officials Say There Are Now 20 Coronavirus Vaccines in Development

* From Individuals to Countries and World Governments-Everybody is Sharing Face Masks

* As American Cities Close Up Amidst Outbreaks, Pollution Plummet

* As Physicians Worry About Potential Ventilator Shortages, Researchers Develop Several Low-Cost Solutions

* Communities and Countries Are Opening Up New Lanes of Free Entertainment for the Masses

* More Than 100,000 People Have Already Recovered From the Virus Worldwide

* Celebrities and Businesses Have Contributed Millions Towards Feeding and Caring for At-Risk People

* No Matter Where You Look, People Are Being Kind to Each Other

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

Week beginning March 26

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Grammar key: Asterisks equal *italics**

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your oracle comes from Aries poet Octavio Paz: "The path the ancestors cleared is overgrown, unused. The other path, smooth and broad, is crowded with travelers. It goes nowhere. There's a third path: mine. Before me, no one. Behind me, no one. Alone, I find my way." APRIL FOOL! Although the passage by Octavio Paz is mostly accurate for your destiny during the rest of 2020, it's off-kilter in one way: It's too ponderously serious and melodramatic. You should find a way to carry out its advice with meditative grace and effervescent calm.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A century ago, fiery writer Maxim Gorky and hard-ass Taurus politician Vladimir Lenin were listening to a Beethoven sonata together. "I can't listen to music too often," Lenin told his companion. "It affects your nerves, makes you want to say stupid, nice things." This is crucial advice for you to heed in the coming weeks, Taurus. You need to be as smart and tough as possible, so don't you dare listen to music. APRIL FOOL! Lenin was half-mistaken, and I half-lied. The fact is, music makes you smarter and nicer, and those will be key assets for you to cultivate in the coming weeks. So yes, do listen to a lot of music.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): By the time he was 55 years old, Gemini author Thomas Hardy had written 18 novels and many poems. His stuff was good enough to win him two separate nominations for a Nobel Prize in Literature. But during the last 32+ years of his life, he never wrote another novel. According to one theory, it was because he was discouraged

by the negative reviews he got for his last novel. I suspect you may be at a similar juncture in your life, Gemini. Maybe it's time to give up on a beloved activity that hasn't garnered the level of success you'd hoped for. APRIL FOOL! The truth is, it is most definitely NOT time to lose hope and faith. Don't be like Hardy. Rededicate yourself to your passionate quests.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Cancerian theologian John Wesley (1703-1791) was a Christian who embodied the liberal values that Christ actually taught. He advocated for the abolition of slavery, prison reform, the ordination of women priests, and a vegetarian diet. He gave away a lot of his money and administered many charities. To accomplish his life's work, he traveled 250,000 miles on horseback and preached 40,000 sermons. Let's make him your role model for the coming weeks. Be inspired by his life as you vividly express your care and compassion. APRIL FOOL! I lied a little bit. Although most of what I just recommended is a good idea, the part about traveling long distances, either on horseback or by other means, is not.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): The neurotic but talented French novelist Marcel Proust observed, "Everything vital in the world comes from neurotics. They alone have founded religions and composed our masterpieces." With that in mind, and in accordance with current astrological omens, I urge you to cultivate your own neurotic qualities in their extreme forms of expression during the coming weeks. You're due for some major creative breakthroughs. APRIL FOOL! I was kidding. The fact is, you can generate creative breakthroughs in the coming weeks by being poised and composed—not extra neurotic.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Virgo author Leon Edel wrote a five-volume biography of renowned author Henry James. In the course of his research, he read 15,000 letters that were written by James. He came to have a profound familiarity with the great man. In accordance with current astrological omens, I recommend that you choose a worthy character about whom you will become equally knowledgeable. APRIL FOOL! I half-lied. It's true that now is an excellent time to deepen your understanding of people you care about. But don't get as obsessed as Edel!

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OUR COLLABORATION

I really do feel that you're here with me as I create these horoscopes. In a sense, you're my assistant. Our telepathic connection is utterly palpable and practical. The hopes and questions you project my way stream into my higher mind, coloring my psychic environment and enriching my desire to give you exactly what you need.

If you ever want more inspiration generated in that same collaborative spirit -- beyond the horoscopes you're reading here -- keep in mind that every week I also offer EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES for you. They're four-to-five-minute meditations on the current state of your destiny.

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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LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): About 2,000 years ago, a Roman woman named Sulpicia wrote six short love poems—a total of 40 lines—that are still being analyzed and discussed by literary scholars today. I bring her to your attention because I think that in the next four weeks you, too, could generate a small burst of beauty that will still be appreciated 2,000 years from now. APRIL FOOL! I lied about the "small" part. The burst of beauty you create in the immediate future could actually be quite large, as well as enduring.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): French poet Louis Aragon (1897-1982) was an influential novelist and a pioneer of surrealistic poetry. Much of his writing had a lyrical quality, and many of his poems were set to music. He also had a belligerent streak. Before the publication of one of his books, he announced that he would thrash any writer who dared to review it in print. Success! There were no critical reviews at all. I recommend his approach to you in the coming weeks. Make it impossible for anyone to criticize you. APRIL FOOL! I lied. I would never suggest that you use violence to accomplish your aims. And besides that, the coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to solicit feedback of all varieties, even the critical kind.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): I hesitate to be so blunt, but it's my duty to report the facts. According to my reading of the astrological omens, you should have as many orgasms as possible in the next 15 days. You need to tap into the transformative psychological power that's available through monumental eruptions of pleasure and releases of tension. (P.S. Spiritual orgasms will be just as effective as physical orgasms.) APRIL FOOL! What I just said is true, but I left out an important component of

your assignment: Be loving and responsible as you pursue your joyous climaxes, never manipulative or exploitative or insensitive.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Ancient Greek orator Demosthenes was renowned for his skill at delivering powerful, charismatic speeches. While he was still learning his craft, he resorted to extreme measures to improve. For example, there was a time when he shaved just half of his head. It made him ashamed to go out in public, forcing him to spend all his time indoors practicing his speeches. Would you consider a similar strategy right now? APRIL FOOL! I was just messing with you. It's true that the coming weeks will be a good time to minimize your socializing and devote yourself to hard work in behalf of a beloved dream. But shaving half your head isn't the best way to accomplish that.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): The coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to tell as many lies as possible if doing so helps you get what you want. I hereby authorize you to engage in massive deceptions, misrepresentations, and manipulative messages as you seek to impose your will on every flow of events. APRIL FOOL! I lied. In fact, everything I just said was the exact opposite of your actual horoscope, which is as follows: You have a sacred duty to tell more of the truth than you have ever been able to tell before. As you dig deeper to discover more and more of what's essential for you to understand and express, dedicate your efforts to the goal of gliding along with the most beautiful and interesting flow you can find.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Fifteen minutes before the Big Bang occurred, where was the matter that now constitutes your body and my body? And if, as seems to be true, the Big Bang was the beginning of time, what time was it fifteen minutes earlier? Questions like these are crucial for you to ponder in the next two weeks. APRIL FOOL! I lied. The questions I articulated should in fact be very low priority for you. In the immediate future, you'll be wise to be as concrete and specific and pragmatic as you can possibly be. Focus on up-close personal questions that you can actually solve, not abstract, unsolvable riddles.

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Homework: Tell jokes to humorists. Be extra kind to kind people. Sing songs to the birds. Change the way you change. 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:
<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.
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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