

essential to his or her spiritual inquiry. Some practitioners of Taoist alchemy take a similar approach.

Among early Gnostic Christians, a few proposed that Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene were equal collaborators in the mission to manifest heaven on earth. Sufi mystic poet Rumi may not have actually made love with his teacher Shams (then again, he might have), but it's clear the two men sought divine communion together, not through lonely solo work.

Under the influence of Westernized Buddhism, some modern psychotherapists have also departed from Campbell's perspective. The quest for illumination, they say, can thrive on the daily challenges of loving and living with an actual person. In John Welwood's book *Love and Awakening: Discovering the Sacred Path of Intimate Relationship**, he reimagines a close bond as potentially an "alliance of warriors" devoted to awakening each other's "holy longing."

What a revolutionary proposal! That the heroic power to accomplish miracles and attract epiphanies might stem not only from a rugged individual drawing from his or her independent strength, but also from a synergistic duo whose interdependence generates transcendent transformation.

In the view of Zen teacher Joshu Sasaki, a solitary contemplative life may not be the most promising discipline for those seeking enlightenment. He writes, "The best monastery for Americans might in fact be marriage."

The scholar Megan Rose Woolever provides a further nuance. Drawing on extensive historical research from various cultures, she suggests that the heroic journey has been and can be the collaborative adventure of a human and an otherworldly being who are joined together in a "spirit marriage." Together, they draw on the power of both the physical realm and astral realm as they navigate the challenges of the Great Mystery.

In Wiccan practice, a witch's "familiar," or supernatural guide, might take the form of a cat or other animal. The help provided by the creature might be indispensable to the witch's magical experiments.

The television show *Sense8* extends the concept of the hero's journey even beyond all the above modes. Although its story is technically science fiction, it offers an intriguing possibility: that as many as eight people might be so telepathically bonded, so overlapping in their identities, that they in effect constitute a group soul working together to master the art of love—which is, of course, the righteous agenda behind all striving for peace and understanding.

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SOUL-ENHANCING WORDS

The language we use shapes our lives. Here are some words I use to help to reconfigure mine:

vorfreude: (n.) the joyful, intense anticipation that comes from imagining future pleasures

numinous: (adj.) describing an experience that makes you overwhelmed yet fascinated, awed yet attracted -- the powerful, personal feeling of being viscerally inspired

ostranenie: (n.) encouraging people to see common things as strange, wild, or unfamiliar; defamiliarizing what is known in order to know it differently or more deeply

smultronställe: (n.) lit. "place of wild strawberries"; a special place discovered, treasured, returned to for solace and relaxation; a personal idyll free from stress or sadness

rasasvada: (n.) the taste of bliss in the absence of all thoughts

firgun: (n.) the act of sharing in or even contributing to someone else's pleasure or fortune, with a purely generous heart and without jealousy

namascray: (n.) The crazy in me recognizes and honors the crazy in you.

- "Vorfreude" is a German word.
- "Numinous" is English.
- "Ostranenie" is Russian.
- "Smultronställe" is Swedish.
- "Rasasvada" is Sanskrit.
- "Firgun" is Hebrew.

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PANDEMIC SOLIDARITY

Author and activist extraordinaire Rebecca Solnit wrote the foreword to the book *Pandemic Solidarity*, so it's got to be a winner.

A description from the book: "The world's media was quick to weave a narrative of selfish individualism, full of empty supermarket shelves and con-men. However, if you scratch the surface, you find a different story of community and self-sacrifice.

"Looking at eighteen countries and regions, including India, Rojava, Taiwan, South Africa, Iraq and North America, the personal accounts in the book weave together to create a larger picture, revealing a universality of experience - a housewife in Istanbul supports her neighbor in the same way as a teacher in Argentina, a punk in Portland, and a disability activist in South Korea does.

"Moving beyond the present, these stories reveal what an alternative society could look like, and reflect the skills and relationships we already have to create that society, challenging institutions of power that have already shown their fragility."

More: tinyurl.com/ybh5kwn4 and tinyurl.com/y9mvs1xy

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THE NIRVANA FALLACY

"The nirvana fallacy is the belief that because something is not completely perfect, it is deeply flawed or even broken. It is very common in economic and political discourse.

"The nirvana fallacy compares actual things with unrealistic, idealized alternatives. It can also refer to the tendency to assume that there is a perfect solution to a particular problem. A closely related concept is the perfect solution fallacy.

"By creating a false dichotomy that presents one option which is obviously advantageous — while at the same time being completely implausible — a person using the nirvana fallacy can attack any opposing idea because it is imperfect.

"Under this fallacy, the choice is not between real world solutions; it is, rather, a choice between one realistic achievable possibility and another unrealistic solution that could in some way be 'better.'"

—from Wikipedia

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FINALLY! REPARATIONS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS!

I hope to see a lot more of this: The city of Asheville, North Carolina voted to give reparations to Black residents because "removing statues isn't enough." Representatives of the city apologized for its role in slavery and voted in favor of providing reparations to its African-American community.

tinyurl.com/yab7p45z

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Would you like to read the brilliant Ta-Nehisi Coates' essay on "The Case for Reparations"? It's here:

tinyurl.com/y6j2pskl

Coates writes: "Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy. Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole."

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MORE PRONOA RESOURCES:

We Interrupt This Gloom to Offer Hope: from *The New York Times*:

1. What we're seeing today is a sort of national convulsion over the recognition that racism in America is real and it's not a figment of the imagination of Black people in this country.
2. Sixty percent of Americans, including a majority of white people, said in a CBS News poll last month that they support ideas promoted by the Black Lives Matter movement.
3. Eighty-nine percent of Americans favor higher taxes on the rich to reduce poverty in America.

More: tinyurl.com/y6uv37hz

(Note: I endorse these because I like them. They aren't advertisements, and I get no kickbacks.)

Please tell me your own nominations for PRONOA RESOURCES: Truthrooster@gmail.com.

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

Week beginning July 23

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FreeWillAstrology.com

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

"How can I communicate to wild bunnies that I am their ally?" asked a Twitter blogger named Ghost Girl. That question is a good place to start my oracle for you. In the coming weeks, I think you'll be wise to meditate on how to enhance your relationship with all kinds of wild things: animals, people, weather, landscapes, and your own exotic thoughts and fantasies. In my opinion, you will upgrade your intelligence and well-being by increasing your access to influences that don't necessarily play by conventional rules and that draw their energy from primal sources.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

It's never too late to have a rebellious adolescence—hopefully bigger and better and smarter than any you've had before. And according to my analysis, now would be a favorable time to get started. Is there any stuffy authority you'd be wise to flout? Any dumb and oppressive conventions you would benefit from breaking? Any stale old traditions you're primed to ignore so you can create some lively new traditions? In my estimation, you will generate good fortune for yourself if you try some benevolent mischief and creative experiments.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

Your word of power for the coming weeks is *ubuntu*, a Zulu term meaning "I am because we are" or "the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity." Nobel Prize-winning theologian Archbishop Desmond Tutu writes, "A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished." I hope that between now and August 25, Libra, you will put *ubuntu* at the center of everything you do. Make it an intensely practical practice.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

"The size of your dreams must always exceed your current capacity to achieve them," says Scorpio-born Liberian politician Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. "If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough." I trust you've arrived at this realization on your own in the past few weeks. And I hope you have audaciously expanded and supercharged your dreams so that they do indeed

surpass your current ability to accomplish them. If you have not yet done this daring work, please attend to it now. If you have done it, move on to the next step: making definite plans to acquire the power and resources necessary to achieve your new, improved dreams.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

"The soul should always stand ajar," wrote Sagittarian poet Emily Dickinson, "That if the heaven inquire, / He will not be obliged to wait, / Or shy of troubling her." I'm confident that this will be a fertile meditation for you in the coming weeks. So what does it mean? By "heaven," I assume Dickinson meant marvelous interventions, sacred revelations, and lucky accidents—and maybe also soulful invitations, out-of-the-blue opportunities, and supernatural breakthroughs. What do you think, Sagittarius? What can you do to make your soul ajar for phenomena like those?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

"Everything is complicated," wrote poet Wallace Stevens. "If that were not so, life and poetry and everything else would be a bore." I agree! And therefore, I conclude, you should shed any resentment you might feel for the fact that our world is a crazy tangle of mystifying and interesting stories. Drop any wish that life will stop being so fascinatingly messy and confusingly intriguing. Instead, why not celebrate the deep riddles? And revel in the intriguing complexity? And give holy thanks for the paradoxical beauty? Everything I just said should prepare you well for the next four weeks.

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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.

Contrary to what some horoscope fans believe, there's no such thing as predestination. Fate is a tricky sucker that keeps changing its mind about where it wants to go. The stars may impel, as the astrological saying goes, but they don't compel.

That's why I've never considered myself a fortuneteller. I prefer to think that my greatest service is as a psychic intelligence agent, helping you explore the hidden patterns and unconscious forces that may be affecting your life without your full knowledge.

If I "predict" anything, it's not so much the future as the unknown part of the present.

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.

To buy and listen to your Expanded Audio Horoscope online, go to RealAstrology.com

Register and/or log in through the main page.

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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. Each forecast is 4-5 minutes long.

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"I don't much believe in astrology. But that doesn't seem to get in the way of me deriving a whole lot of benefits from your expanded audio horoscopes."
—A. Arrosto, Indianapolis

"You have an amazing aptitude for cutting through the lies I tell myself. Thanks for the gentle shocks."
—T. Preneris, Toronto

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AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

You'll be extra sensitive to stimuli in the coming weeks. Every little event will touch you more intensely than usual. Every perception will flow into you with an unusually strong potential to move you and influence you. That's why I think you should be vigilantly self-protective. Erect a psychic shield around yourself. Make sure your boundaries are firm and clear. Affirm your unshakable commitment to deflecting vibes that aren't of use to you and welcoming vibes that will enhance your well-being.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

Actress Gwyneth Paltrow founded Goop, a company that markets exotic, expensive health treatments. She claims that far-infrared gemstone therapy and crystal-based sound-healing baths will dissolve your negativity. Allowing bees to sting your scars will supposedly cause the scars to fade. Drinking "sex juice," a blend of watermelon and alkaline water, will enhance your libido. The "collagen martini," which is a mix of vodka, vermouth, olive juice, and collagen peptides, will smooth your skin's wrinkles. I'm favorably disposed to you taking strong actions to improve your well-being in the coming weeks, Pisces, but I recommend that you try cheaper, more reliable modalities than those Paltrow recommends. Like what? Ample sleep and good food, for starters, along with fun exercise, time in nature, enjoyable meditation sessions, and tender expressions of love.

ARIES (March 21-April 19):

"The creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place every day." Aries playwright Samuel Beckett made that observation, and now I'm passing it on to you as you glide into an extra-creative phase of your psyche that are crucial for you to include in your total sense of self. You've been neglecting to nurture certain soulful qualities that keep you healthy and wise. Please note: It won't be useful to try to find those parts of you in other people; you will have to locate them in your own depths. Here's the good news: The coming weeks will be an

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

Author Diane Ackerman tells us, "So often loneliness comes from being out of touch with parts of oneself." That's the kind of loneliness I worry you may be susceptible to right now, Taurus. You're a bit out of touch with aspects of your psyche that are crucial for you to include in your total sense of self. You've been neglecting to nurture certain soulful qualities that keep you healthy and wise. Please note: It won't be useful to try to find those parts of you in other people; you will have to locate them in your own depths. Here's the good news: The coming weeks will be an

excellent time to do just that.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

"Someone ought to do it, but why should I?" Author and activist Annie Besant identified that sentence as the motto of people who are moral cowards: those who know about an injustice but do nothing to address it. Very few of us have completely avoided that behavior. Most of us, including me, have now and then chosen to serve our need for comfort instead of standing up against corruption or unfairness. But I think it's more important than usual that you Geminis don't engage in such moral cowardice now. More depends on your integrity and bravery than you realize.

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

Born in 1936, Cancerian author and activist June Jordan was a black feminist bisexual born to Jamaican immigrant parents. When she was growing up, her father beat her and her mother committed suicide. Later, she raised her child alone as a single mother. Despite the challenges she faced, she published 28 books, won numerous awards, and wielded significant influence. How did she do it? She was a highly evolved Cancerian in the sense that she put a priority on treating herself well. "I must undertake to love myself and to respect myself as though my very life depends upon self-love and self-respect," she testified. I'd like to make that your keynote for the rest of 2020. Your task is to achieve June Jordan-levels of self-care.

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HOMEWORK:

Are there any ways in which you would benefit from becoming more well-balanced? Testify at FreeWillAstrology.com

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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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