

For my sanity, I can't afford to be super extra careful around these aspects. There are simply too damn many of them. I don't want to constantly be in a state of red-alert alarm.

And as for the Mercury Retrograde itself:

Traditional astrologers regard each Mercury retrograde phenomenon to consist of eight phases:

Pre-Shadow phase

Pre-Shadow phase intensified

Mercury Retrograde Station

Mercury Retrograde Phase intensified

Mercury Retrograde Phase

Mercury Direct Station

Post-Shadow phase intensified

Post-Shadow phase

Every complete Mercury retrograde cycle lasts an average of 55 days. Since there is an average of three Mercury retrogrades per year, we are in some part of the Mercury retrograde phenomenon for at least 165 days per year -- about 45% of the time.

That's a lot of time to be on guard.

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I am aware that my views are not shared by many astrologers, but they reflect my observation and experiences. Here's a brief version:

Mercury retrograde does not mean communication snafus are inevitable. Rather, it tells you this is a propitious time to refine the ways you exchange information . . . and to concentrate harder on saying what you mean and meaning what you say . . . and to meditate on how to improve the ways you connect yourself to the people and resources you need and like.

Some people say that when Mercury is retrograde, it's a bad time to begin anything new. During one such period a few ago, an acquaintance of mine decided to delay accepting a dream job offer as editor of a magazine. By the time Mercury returned to "normal," the magazine had hired another applicant. I wish I'd have known, because I would have told her what I'll tell you: Some of America's biggest, most enduring Fortune 500 companies began when Mercury was retrograde, including Disney, Goodyear, and Boeing.

My deep skepticism about big corporations notwithstanding, the fact that their founders had great success in launching them during Mercury retrograde is a telling statement about Mercury retrograde.

In my understanding of astrology, there's no such thing as a bad astrological aspect. It's true that some may be more challenging than others, but every one of them presents an opportunity.

Having said that, I don't regard Mercury retrograde as being dauntingly challenging. If you fear and expect it to be, you may tend to be slightly more attractive to disruptive events. But then that's true about how every superstition works.

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THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF NOT TAKING YOUR THOUGHTS TOO SERIOUSLY

Here is a new spiritual practice: Don't take your thoughts too seriously.

—Eckhart Tolle

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Being spiritual has nothing to do with what you believe and everything to do with your state of consciousness.

—Eckhart Tolle

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YOU HAVE A PIECE TO SOMEONE ELSE'S PUZZLE

"Everyone carries with them at least one piece to someone else's puzzle." So wrote Lawrence Kushner in his book, *Honey from the Rock*.

In other words, you have in your possession certain clues to your loved ones' destinies -- secrets they haven't discovered themselves.

Wouldn't you love to hand over those clues -- to make a gift of the puzzle pieces that are most needed by the people you care about?

Search your depths for insights you've never communicated. Tell truths you haven't found a way to express before now. More than you know, you have the power to mobilize your companions' dreams.

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GREAT SPIRITS IN DISGUISE

"In myths and fairy tales, deities and other great spirits test the hearts of humans by showing up in various forms that disguise their divinity. They show up in robes, rags, silver sashes, or with muddy feet. They show up with skin like old wood, or in scales made of rose petal, as a frail child, as a lime-yellow old woman, as a man who cannot speak, or as an animal who can.

"The great powers are testing to see if humans have yet learned to recognize the greatness of soul in all its varying forms."

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

"Luck is what happens to you when fate gets tired of waiting," says author Gregory David Roberts. If that's true, I expect that a surge of luck will flow your way soon. According to my astrological analysis, fate has grown impatient waiting for you to take the actions that would launch your life story's next chapter. Hopefully, a series of propitious flukes will precipitate the postponed but necessary transformations. My advice? Don't question the unexpected perks. Don't get in their way. Allow them to work their magic.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

Have you formulated wily plans and crafty maneuvers to help you navigate through the labyrinthine tests and trials up ahead? I hope so. If you hope to solve the dicey riddles and elude the deceptive temptations, you'll need to use one of your best old tricks—and come up with a new trick, as well. But please keep this important caveat in mind: To succeed, you won't necessarily have to break the rules. It may be sufficient merely to make the rules more supple and flexible.

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YOU NEED MAGIC EVERY DAY

Every day, you have to wade through a relentless surge of soul-less facts. The experience tends to shut down your sense of wonder.

Every day, you're over-exposed to cynical narratives that have been sucked free of delight and mystery. That's why you have to make such strenuous efforts to keep your world enchanted.

I like to think I can contribute to the sacred cause of feeding your sense of wonder and enchantment. In fact, that's one of my prime motivations for offering you the free weekly horoscopes you read in this newsletter.

If you ever want more of that good stuff, and think it's worth paying for, please consider trying out my EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES. They're four-to-five-minute meditations on the current state of your destiny.

To 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 online. (Discounts are available for bulk purchases.)

You can also listen over the phone by calling 1-877-873-4888. The cost is \$1.99 per minute. Each forecast is 4-5 minutes long.

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"I almost always come away from listening to your audio horoscopes with greater clarity about what's best for me to give my attention to next."
—Jada Washington, New York

"I love how your audio horoscopes stimulate my idealism and also help me think about the practical actions I can take to support my idealism."
—Rita Mashner, Tampa

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ARIES (March 21-April 19):

Would you be willing to meditate on how you might become more skilled in the arts of intimacy? Would you consider reading books and websites that offer guidance about strategies for being the best partner and ally you can be? Are you receptive to becoming more devoted to practicing empathy and deep listening? I'm not saying you're deficient in these matters, nor am I implying that you need to improve your mastery of them any more than the rest of us. I simply want you to know that now is an especially favorable time for you to make progress.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

Entre chien et loup is a French idiom that literally means "between dog and wolf." It's used to describe twilight or dusk, when the light is faint and it's tough to distinguish between a dog and a wolf. But it may also suggest a situation that is a blend of the familiar and the unknown, or even a moment when what's ordinary and routine is becoming unruly or wild. *Entre chien et loup* suggests an intermediary state that's unpredictable or beyond our ability to define. In accordance with astrological omens, I propose you regard it as one of your main themes for now. Don't fight it; enjoy it! Thrive on it!

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

For 34 years, the beloved American TV personality Mr. Rogers did a show for children. He's now widely acknowledged as having been a powerful teacher of goodness and morality. Here's a fun fact: His actual middle name was "McFeely." I propose that you use that as a nickname for yourself. If McFeely doesn't quite appeal to you, maybe try "Feel Maestro" or "Emotion Adept" or "Sensitivity Genius." Doing so might help inspire you to fulfill your astrological assignment in the coming weeks, which is to allow yourself to experience more deep feelings than usual—and thereby enhance your heart intelligence. That's crucial! In the coming weeks, your head intelligence needs your heart intelligence to be working at peak capacity.

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

A blogger named Dr.LoveLlama writes, "You may think I am walking around the house with a blanket around my shoulders because I am cold, but in fact the 'blanket' is my cloak and I am on a fantasy adventure." I approve of such behavior during our ongoing struggles with COVID-19, and I especially recommend it to you in the coming days. You'll be wise to supercharge your imagination, giving it permission to dream up heroic adventures and epic exploits that you may or may not actually undertake someday. It's time to become braver and more playful in the inner realms.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

According to author Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell, "The body has its own way of knowing, a knowing that has little to do with logic, and much to do with truth." I recommend that you meditate on that perspective. Make it your keynote. Your physical organism always has wisdom to impart, and you can always benefit from tuning in to it—and that's especially important for you right now. So let me ask you: How much skill do you have in listening to what your body tells you? How receptive are you to its unique and sometimes subtle forms of expression? I hope you'll enhance your ability to commune with it during the next four weeks.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

In his fictional memoir *Running in the Family*, Virgo author Michael Ondaatje returns to Sri Lanka, the land where he spent his childhood, after many years away. At one point he enthuses that he would sometimes wake up in the morning and "just smell things for the whole day." I'd love for you to try a similar experiment, Virgo: Treat yourself to a festival of aromas. Give yourself freely to consorting with the sensual joy of the world's many scents. Does that sound frivolous? I don't think it is. I believe it would have a deeply calming and grounding effect on you. It would anchor you more thoroughly in the here and now of your actual life, and inspire you to shed any fantasies that you should be different from who you are.

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HOMEWORK:

What subject might you be willing to change your mind about if presented with convincing counter-evidence? FreeWillAstrology.com

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Submissions sent to Rob Breznsny's Astrology Newsletter or in response to "homework assignments" may be published in a variety of formats at Rob Breznsny'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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