



Rob Brezsnys's Astrology Newsletter
March 16, 2016
FreeWillAstrology.com

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My book *PRONOIA IS THE ANTIDOTE FOR PARANOIA* is available at Amazon: bit.ly/Pronoia or Powells: bit.ly/PronoiaPowells

Below are excerpts.

THE OUTLAW CATALOG OF CAGEY OPTIMISM:

COMPASSIONATE DISCRIMINATION. Having astute judgment without being scornfully judgmental; seeing difficult truths about a situation or person without closing your heart or feeling superior. In the words of Alan Jones: having the ability "to smell a rat without allowing your ability to discern deception sour your vision of the glory and joy that is everyone's birthright."

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COMIC INTROSPECTION. Being fully aware of your own foibles while still loving yourself tenderly and maintaining confidence in your ability to give your specific genius to the world. To paraphrase Alan Jones, Dean of Grace Cathedral: following the Byzantine ploys of your ego with compassion and humor as it tries to make itself the center of everything, even the center of its own suffering and struggle.

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NOT HAVING TO BE RIGHT. Fostering an ability, even a willingness, to be proven wrong about one of your initial perceptions or pet theories; having an eagerness to gather information that may change your mind about something you have fervently believed; cultivating a tendency to enjoy being corrected, especially about ideas that are negative or hostile.

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RELENTLESS UNPRETENTIOUSNESS. Possessing a strong determination to not take yourself too seriously, not take your cherished beliefs too literally, and not take other people's ideas about you too personally.

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JOYFUL POIGNANCE. Feeling buoyantly joyful about the beauty and mystery of life while remaining aware of the sadness, injustices, wounds, and future fears that form the challenges in an examined life.

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- More healthy states of mind are listed in The Outlaw Catalog of Cagey Optimism: bit.ly/Zdyxc9

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"The most powerful starting point for any endeavor is not the question 'What do I want?', but 'What does Life (God, Consciousness) want from me? How do I serve the whole?'"
-Eckhart Tolle

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"From a Sufi perspective, the whole universe is a phenomenon of desire. The Divine desire pervades all things and beings, empowering each according to its capacity. For the mystic, the truest education is the education of desire. By means of this education the indwelling Divine desire is liberated from the constraints of the ego and becomes a force for the transfiguration of the world."
- Pir Zia Inayat-Khan, tinyurl.com/ck4sdjf

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Artist Steven Spazuk works exclusively with an unusual medium: soot from candles and torches. He spreads the stuff across a blank canvas, then uses various instruments to sculpt the accidental blobs into definitive forms. I've seen the results, and they're both well-done and intriguing. What would be the metaphorical equivalent, in your world, of using soot to make beautiful and interesting things? I think you're primed to turn waste into building blocks, rot into splendor, and lead into gold. (See Spazuk's work at spazuk.com.)

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

Carl Sagan said that science thrives on "two seemingly contradictory attitudes: an openness to new ideas, no matter how bizarre or counterintuitive, and the most ruthless skeptical scrutiny of all ideas, old and new." Whether or not you are a scientist, Taurus, I recommend that you practice this approach in the coming weeks. It's the tool that's most likely to keep you centered and free of both rigidity and illusion. As Sagan concluded, this is "how deep truths are winnowed from deep nonsense."

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

"Excess on occasion is exhilarating," said British author W. Somerset Maugham. "It prevents moderation from acquiring the deadening effect of a habit." Now would be an excellent time to take that advice to heart, Gemini. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you not only have a license to engage in rowdy fun and extravagant pleasures; it's your sacred duty. So get out there and treat yourself to an orgy of naughty adventures -- or at least a celebration of meaningful thrills. You can return to the rigors of discipline and order once you have harvested the healthy benefits that will come from escaping them.

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

At one point in Friedrich Nietzsche's book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the hero is having a conversation with himself. "You have wanted to pet every monster," he says. "A whiff of warm breath, a little soft tuft on the paw -- and at once you were ready to love and to lure it." If I were you, Cancerian, I would regard that type of behavior as forbidden in the coming weeks. In fact, I will ask you not to pet any monsters at all -- not even the cute ones; not even the beasties and rascals and imps that have slight resemblances to monsters. It's time for maximum discernment and caution. (P.S.: One of the monsters may ultimately become a non-monstrous ally if you are wary toward it now.)

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

On a social media site, I posted the following quote from self-help teacher Byron Katie: "Our job is unconditional love. The job of everyone else in our life is to push our buttons." One commenter took issue with this. "'Pushing buttons' is a metaphor that's long past its expiration date," she wrote. "Can't you come up with something fresher?" So I did. Here are a few potential substitutes for "push our buttons": "tweak our manias" . . . "prank our obsessions" . . . "glitter-bomb our biases" . . . "squeeze our phobias" . . . "badger our compulsions" . . . "seduce our repressions" . . . "prick our dogmas." Whichever expression you prefer, Leo, find a graceful way to embrace your fate: Your current job is unconditional love. The job of everyone else in your life is to tweak your manias and prick your dogmas.

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FEELING JOY STIMULATES YOUR COMPASSION?

Assume that your drive to experience pleasure isn't a barrier to your spiritual growth, but is in fact essential to it. Proceed on the hypothesis that cultivating joy can make you a more ethical and compassionate person. Imagine that feeling good has something important to teach you every day.

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- 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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VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

In the coming weeks, you will have maximum power to revise and reinvigorate your approach to cultivating intimate relationships. To aid your quest, I offer this paraphrased advice from Andrew Boyd: Almost every one of us seeks a special partner who is just right. But there is no right person, just different flavors of wrong. Why? Because you yourself are "wrong" in some ways -- you have demons and flaws and problems. In fact, these "wrongs" are essential components of who you are. When you ripen into this understanding, you're ready to find and be with your

special counterpart. He or she has the precise set of problems you need -- is the person who is wrong for you in just the right ways. (See Boyd's original quote: tinyurl.com/boydquote.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

In her book *The Winter Vault*, Anne Michaels says, "We become ourselves when things are given to us or when things are taken away." If she's right, does it mean we should be grateful for those times when things are taken away? Should we regard moments of loss as therapeutic prods that compel us to understand ourselves better and to create ourselves with a fiercer determination? Meditate on these possibilities, Libra. In the meantime, I'm pleased to announce that the things-getting-taken-away period of your cycle is winding down. Soon you'll begin a new phase, when you can become a deeper, stronger version of yourself because of the things that are given to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

"I'll make love when the lust subsides," sings Denitia, one-half of the electro-pop band Denitia and Sene. That would be a good motto for you to play around with in the coming days, Scorpio -- in both literal and metaphorical ways. I'll enjoy seeing how your emotional intelligence ripens as the white-hot passion of recent weeks evolves into a more manageable warmth. As fun as the intensity has been, it has blinded you to some of the possibilities for collaborative growth that have been emerging. You may now be ready to explore and appreciate sweeter, subtler pleasures.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

"The poems I have loved the most are those I have understood the least," said T. S. Eliot. I'm going to steal and expand upon his idea for the purpose of giving you an accurate horoscope. In the coming days, Sagittarius, I suspect that the experiences you love most will be those that you understand the least. Indeed, the experiences you NEED the most will be those that surprise and mystify and intrigue you. Luckily, life will be ingenious in bypassing your analytical intelligence so as to provide you with rich emotional stimuli for your soul.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

Capricorn painter Henri Matisse made the following testimony about his creative process: "At each stage I reach a balance, a conclusion. At the next sitting, if I find that there is a weakness in the whole, I make my way back into the picture by means of the weakness -- I re-enter through the breach -- and I reconceive the whole. Thus everything becomes fluid again." I recommend this approach to you in the coming days, Capricorn. You've been making decent progress on your key project. To keep up the good work, you should now find where the cracks are, and let them teach you how to proceed from here.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

"We all lead three lives," said Austrian novelist Thomas Bernhard, "an actual one, an imaginary one, and the one we are not aware of." I suspect you'll get big glimpses of your third life in the coming weeks, Aquarius: the one you're normally not aware of. It might freak you out a bit, maybe unleash a few blasts of laughter and surges of tears. But if you approach these revelations with reverent curiosity, I bet they will be cleansing and catalytic. They are also likely to make you less entranced by your imaginary life and better grounded in your actual life.

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HOMEWORK:

Identify your fondest childhood memory, and recreate in the present time the feeling you had back then. 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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