



Rob Brezsnys's Astrology Newsletter
April 13, 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

John Keats wrote that "if something is not beautiful, it is probably not true." I celebrate that hypothesis in my book.

I further propose that the universe is inherently friendly to human beings; that all of creation is set up to liberate us from our suffering and teach us how to love intelligently; and that life always gives us exactly what we need, exactly when we need it (although not necessarily what we want).

Dogmatic cynics are often so mad about my book's title that they can't bring themselves to explore the inside. Why bother to actually read about such a preposterous idea? They accuse me of intellectual dishonesty, disingenuous Pollyannaism, or New Age delusion.

If they do manage to read even a few pages, they find that the blessings I reference in the title are not materialistic fetishes like luxurious vacation homes, high status, and a perfect physique.

I'm more interested in fascinating surprises, dizzying adventures, challenging gifts we hardly know what to do with, and conundrums that compel us to get smarter and wilder and kinder and trickier.

I also enjoy exposing secret miracles, like the way the sun continually detonates nuclear explosions in order to convert its own body into heat, light, and energy for our personal use.

But I don't take the cynics' fury personally. When I suggest that life is a sublime mystery designed to grow us all into strong, supple messiahs, I understand that's the equivalent, for them, of denying the Holocaust. They're addicted to a formulation that's the opposite of Keats': If something is not ugly, it is probably not true.

Modern storytellers are at the vanguard of promoting this doctrine, which I refer to as pop nihilism. Many journalists, filmmakers, novelists, critics, talk-show hosts, musicians, and pundits act as if breakdown is far more common and far more interesting than breakthrough; that painful twists outnumber redemptive transformations by a wide margin, and are profoundly more entertaining as well.

Earlier in my life, I, too, worshiped the religion of pop nihilism. In the 1980s, for example, I launched a crusade against what I called "the global genocide of the imagination." I railed against the "entertainment criminals" who barrage us with floods of fake information and inane ugliness, decimating and paralyzing our image-making faculties. For years, much of my creative work was stoked by my rage against the machine for its soulless crimes of injustice and greed and rapaciousness and cruelty.

But as the crazy wisdom of pronoia overtook me in the late 1990s, I gradually weaned myself from the gratuitous gratification that wrath offered. Against the grain, I experimented with strategies for motivating myself through crafty joy and purified desire and the longing for freedom. I played with ideas that helped me shed the habit of seeing the worst in everything and everyone. In its place I built a new habit of looking for the best.

But I never formally renounced my affiliation with the religion of cynicism. I didn't become a fundamentalist apostate preaching the doctrine of fanatical optimism. In the back of my wild heart, I knew I couldn't thrive without at least a tincture of the ferocity and outrage that had driven so much of my earlier self-expression.

Even at the height of my infatuation with the beautiful truths that swarmed into me while writing *Pronoia*, I nurtured a relationship with the awful truths. And I didn't hide that from my readers.

Yes, I did purposely go overboard in championing the cause of liberation and pleasure and ingenuity and integrity and renewal and harmony and love. The book's destiny was, after all, to serve as a counterbalance to the trendy predominance of bad news and paranoid attitudes. It was meant to be an antidote for the pandemic of snark.

But I made sure that *Pronoia* also contained numerous "Homeopathic Medicine Spells," talismans that cram long lists of the world's evils inside ritually consecrated mandalas. These spells diffuse the hypnotizing lure of doom and gloom by acknowledging the horror with a sardonic wink.

Pronoia also has many variations on a theme captured in William Vollman's testimony: "The most

Pronoia also has many variations on a theme captured in William S. Burroughs' testimony. The most important and enjoyable thing in life is doing something that's a complicated, tricky problem that you don't know how to solve."

Furthermore, the book stops far short of calling for the totalitarian imposition of good cheer. I say I can tolerate the news media filling up half their pages and airwaves and bandwidths with poker-faced accounts of decline and degeneration, misery and destruction. All I seek is equal time for stories that inspire us to adore life instead of fearing it. And I'd gladly accept 25 percent. Even 10 percent.

So *Pronoia* hints at a paradoxical philosophy more complex than a naive quest for beauty and benevolence. It welcomes in a taste of darkness, acknowledging the shadows in the big picture.

TO READ THE REST OF THIS ESSAY, GO HERE: bit.ly/HoneyVinegar

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"I scarcely know where to begin, but love is always a safe place."
- Emily Dickinson
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from a letter to Louise and Frances Norcross, March 1886

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Are you willing to push hard to get better, become smarter, grow your devotion to the truth, fuel your commitment to beauty, refine your emotional intelligence, hone your dreams, negotiate with your shadow, cure your ignorance, shed your pettiness, heighten your drive to look for the best in people, and soften your heart -- even as you always accept yourself for exactly who you are with all of your so-called imperfections, never demeaning the present by comparing it to an idealized past or future?

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"People with a psychological need to believe in marvels are no more prejudiced and gullible than people with a psychological need not to believe in marvels."
- Charles Fort

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Maxim's "Hot 100" is the magazine's list of the planet's sexiest women. Sports Illustrated has its yearly Swimsuit Issue, which presents a bevy of twenty-something women dressed in skimpy bikinis. Esquire's regular feature "Women We Love" is a gathering of skinny young celebrities. Now here are some of my current favorite beauties:

tinyurl.com/o7c3hp6

The images are from photographer Katarzyna Majak's assemblage of witches and healers of Poland.

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MORE PRONOIA RESOURCES:

Mysterious stacks of books in New York City are connecting strangers.
tinyurl.com/jcydw3t

Rich guy says he has \$4 billion more than he needs. He plans to spend his fortune to distribute 10,000 free electric battery-equipped stationary bikes in India, which will run lights and basic appliances for one day per one hour of pedaling.
tinyurl.com/ofkmpic

Organization started to fight world hunger has packed and shipped more than 50 million meals to the hungry.
tinyurl.com/gso2zbq

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

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

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY Week beginning April 14

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ARIES (March 21-April 19):

"When I discover who I am, I'll be free," said novelist Ralph Ellison. Would you consider making that a paramount theme in the coming weeks? Will you keep it in the forefront of your mind, and be vigilant for juicy clues that might show up in the experiences headed your way? In suggesting that you do, I'm not guaranteeing that you will gather numerous extravagant insights about your true identity and thereby achieve a blissful eruption of total liberation. But I

insights about your true identity and thereby achieve a blissful eruption of total liberation. But I suspect that at the very least you will understand previously hidden mysteries about your primal nature. And as they come into focus, you will indeed be led in the direction of cathartic emancipation.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

"We never know the wine we are becoming while we are being crushed like grapes," said author Henri Nouwen. I don't think that's true in your case, Taurus. Any minute now, you could get a clear intuition about what wine you will ultimately turn into once the grape-crushing stage ends. So my advice is to expect that clear intuition. Once you're in possession of it, I bet the crushing will begin to feel more like a massage -- maybe even a series of strong but tender caresses.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

Your sustaining mantra for the coming weeks comes from Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer: "I am not empty; I am open." Say that aloud whenever you're inclined to feel lonely or lost. "I am not empty; I am open." Whisper it to yourself as you wonder about the things that used to be important but no longer are. "I am not empty; I am open." Allow it to loop through your imagination like a catchy song lyric whenever you're tempted to feel melancholy about vanished certainties or unavailable stabilizers or missing fillers. "I am not empty; I am open."

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you are close to tapping into hidden powers, dormant talents, and future knowledge. Truths that have been off-limits are on the verge of catching your attention and revealing themselves. Secrets you have been concealing from yourself are ready to be plucked and transformed. And now I will tell you a trick you can use that will enable you to fully cash in on these pregnant possibilities: Don't adopt a passive wait-and-see attitude. Don't expect everything to happen on its own. Instead, be a willful magician who aggressively collects and activates the potential gifts.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

This would be a perfect moment to give yourself a new nickname like "Sugar Pepper" or "Honey Chili" or "Itchy Sweet." It's also a favorable time to explore the joys of running in slow motion or getting a tattoo of a fierce howling bunny or having gentle sex standing up. This phase of your cycle is most likely to unfold with maximum effectiveness if you play along with its complicated, sometimes paradoxical twists and turns. The more willing you are to celebrate life's riddles as blessings in disguise, the more likely you'll be to use the riddles to your advantage.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

Right about now you might be feeling a bit extreme, maybe even zealous or melodramatic. I wouldn't be surprised if you were tempted to make outlandish expostulations similar to those that the poet Arthur Rimbaud articulated in one of his histrionic poems: "What beast must I worship? What sacred images should I destroy? What hearts shall I break? What lies am I supposed to believe?" I encourage you to articulate salty sentiments like these in the coming days -- with the understanding that by venting your intensity you won't need to actually act it all out in real life. In other words, allow your fantasy life and creative artistry to be boisterous outlets for emotions that shouldn't necessarily get translated into literal behavior.

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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!

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.

Need more help in figuring out the questions life is asking you? Crave more support in your efforts to build your courage? Check out the EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES.

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

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You can also listen over the phone by calling 1-877-873-4888.

The cost is \$6 per sign on the Web (discounts available for bulk purchases), or \$1.99 per minute by phone.

The Expanded Audio Horoscopes work on most smart phones and tablets.

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"Your Expanded Audio Horoscopes provide me with the Rest of the Story. I'm not necessarily a believer in the scientific accuracy of astrology, but I do think you've got a lot of practical wisdom to impart."

- M. Tennenbaum, New York

"No one knows more about me than me. But you're right up there near the top of the list of people who do understand something about how I tick. How is that possible?"

- R. Goren, Albuquerque

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LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

Adyashanti is my favorite mind-scrambling philosopher. One of his doses of crazy wisdom is just what you need to hear right now. "Whatever you resist you become," he says. "If you resist anger, you are always angry. If you resist sadness, you are always sad. If you resist suffering, you

anger, you are always angry. If you resist sadness, you are always sad. If you resist suffering, you are always suffering. If you resist confusion, you are always confused. We think that we resist certain states because they are there, but actually they are there because we resist them." Can you wrap your imagination around Adyashanti's counsel, Libra? I hope so, because the key to dissipating at least some of the dicey stuff that has been tweaking you lately is to STOP RESISTING IT!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

During every election season, media pundits exult in criticizing candidates who have altered their opinions about important issues. This puzzles me. In my understanding, an intelligent human is always learning new information about how the world works, and is therefore constantly evolving his or her beliefs and ideas. I don't trust people who stubbornly cling to all of their musty dogmas. I bring this to your attention, Scorpio, because the coming weeks will be an especially ripe time for you to change your mind about a few things, some of them rather important. Be alert for the cues and clues that will activate dormant aspects of your wisdom. Be eager to see further and deeper.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

Friedrich Nietzsche published his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, in 1872, when he was 28 years old. In 1886, he put out a revised edition that included a preface entitled "An Attempt at Self-Criticism." In this unprecedented essay, he said that he now found his text "clumsy and embarrassing, its images frenzied and confused, sentimental, uneven in pace, so sure of its convictions that it is above any need for proof." And yet he also glorified *The Birth of Tragedy*, praising it for its powerful impact on the world, for its "strange knack of seeking out its fellow-revelers and enticing them on to new secret paths and dancing-places." In accordance with the astrological omens, Sagittarius, I invite you to engage in an equally brave and celebratory re-evaluation of some of your earlier life and work.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

"Go back to where you started and learn to love it more." So advised Thaddeus Golas in his book *The Lazy Man's Guide to Enlightenment*. I think that's exactly what you should do right now, Capricorn. To undertake such a quest would reap long-lasting benefits. Here's what I propose: First, identify three dreams that are important for your future. Next, brainstorm about how you could return to the roots of your relationships with them. Finally, reinvigorate your love for those dreams. Supercharge your excitement about them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

"What am I doing here in mid-air?" asks Ted Hughes in his poem "Wodwo." Right about now you might have an urge to wonder that yourself. The challenging part of your situation is that you're unanchored, unable to find a firm footing. The fun part is that you have an unusual amount of leeway to improvise and experiment. Here's a suggestion: Why not focus on the fun part for now? You just may find that doing so will minimize the unsettled feelings. I suspect that as a result you will also be able to accomplish some interesting and unexpected work.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

How many fireflies would you have to gather together in order to create a light as bright as the sun? Entomologist Cole Gilbert estimates the number to be 14,286,000,000. That's probably beyond your ability to accomplish, Pisces, so I don't recommend you attempt it. But I bet you could pull off a more modest feat with a similar theme: accumulating a lot of small influences that add up to a big effect. Now is an excellent time to capitalize on the power of gradual, incremental progress.

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HOMEWORK:

Let's meet in dreams sometime soon. Describe to me the adventures you'd like us to have together. 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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