

Your assignment, if you choose to accept it, is to compose an essay on at least one of the following themes: 1. "How I Fed and Fed My Demons Until They Gorged Themselves to Death." 2. "How I Exploited My Nightmares in Ways That Made Me Smarter and Cuter." 3. "How I Quietly and Heroically Transformed a Sticky Problem into a Sleek Opportunity." 4. "How I Helped Myself by Helping Other People." For extra credit, Capricorn -- and to earn the right to trade an unholy duty for a holy one -- write about all four subjects.

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MAYBE JOY AND PLEASURE ARE ESSENTIAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Assume that your drive to experience pleasure and happiness 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.

For inspiration in practicing this approach, tune in to your EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES. They're four-to-five-minute meditations on the current state of your destiny.

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"I always feel like I know myself better after listening to your audio 'scopes."
-June R., Austin, TX

"Your audio horoscopes calm me down when I'm too manic and pep me up when I'm down."
-Arthur T., Cleveland, OH

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AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

I suspect that in the coming months you will be drawn to wandering through the frontiers and exploring the unknown. Experimentation will come naturally. Places and situations you have previously considered to be off-limits may be downright comfortable. In fact, it's possible that you will have to escape your safety zones in order to fully be yourself. Got all that? Now here's the kicker. In the coming weeks, everything I just described will be especially apropos for your closest relationships. Are you interested in redefining and reconfiguring the ways that togetherness works for you?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

If you're playing the card game known as bridge, you're lucky if you are dealt a hand that has no cards of a particular suit. This enables you, right from the beginning, to capture tricks using the trump suit. In other words, the lack of a certain resource gives you a distinct advantage. Let's apply this metaphor to your immediate future, Pisces. I'm guessing that you will benefit from what may seem to be an inadequacy or deficit. An absence will be a useful asset.

ARIES (March 21-April 19):

Can you imagine feeling at home in the world no matter where you are? If you eventually master this art, outer circumstances won't distort your relationship with yourself. No matter how crazy or chaotic the people around you might be, you will remain rooted in your unshakable sense of purpose; you will respond to any given situation in ways that make you both calm and alert, amused and curious, compassionate for the suffering of others and determined to do what's best for you. If you think these are goals worth seeking, you can make dramatic progress toward them in the coming weeks.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

As I tried to meditate on your horoscope, my next-door neighbor was wielding a weed-whacker to trim her lawn, and the voices in my head were shouting extra loud. So I decided to drive down to the marsh to get some high-quality silence. When I arrived at the trail head, I found an older man in ragged clothes leaning against the fence. Nearby was a grocery cart full of what I assumed were all his earthly belongings. "Doing nothing is a very difficult art," he croaked as I slipped by him, "because you're never really sure when you are done." I immediately recognized that his wisdom might be useful to you. You are, after all, in the last few days of your recharging process. It's still a good idea for you to lie low and be extra calm and vegetate luxuriously. But when should you rise up and leap into action again? Here's my guess: Get one more dose of intense stillness and silence.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

My readers have a range of approaches for working with the counsel I offer. Some study the horoscopes for both their sun signs and rising signs, then create do-it-yourself blends of the two. Others prefer to wait until the week is over before consulting what I've written. They don't want my oracles to influence their future behavior, but enjoy evaluating their recent past in light of my analysis. Then there are the folks who read all 12 of my horoscopes. They refuse to be hemmed in by just one forecast, and want to be free to explore multiple options. I encourage you to try experiments like these in the coming days. The moment is ripe to cultivate more of your own unique strategies for using and interpreting the information you absorb -- both from me and from everyone else you listen to.

CANCER (June 21-July 20)

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

Have you been drinking a lot of liquids? Are you spending extra time soaking in hot baths and swimming in bodies of water that rejuvenate you? Have you been opening your soul to raw truths that dissolve your fixations and to beauty that makes you cry and to love that moves you to sing? I hope you're reverently attending to these fluidic needs. I hope you're giving your deepest yearnings free play and your freshest emotions lots of room to unfold. Smart, well-lubricated intimacy is a luxurious necessity, my dear. Stay very, very wet.

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HOMEWORK:

What's the situation in your life where it's hardest for you to be loving? Practice being a master of compassion there in the coming week.

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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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