

intuition and being a good listener that's at the heart of my creative practice.

+

CONDUIT: Can you give an example or two of our psychological reactions to climate change?

BREZSNY: The one that I will say impacts me most directly is the fact that we're in the middle of the sixth mass extinction, that we are losing species at a rate that's unprecedented since the dinosaurs disappeared. It means we're losing all of the intelligences they have and their power to inform us about the truth of reality.

And, of course, it also means we're losing biodiversity. The biologist E. O. Wilson says that this is the most damaging thing that's occurring, the loss of biodiversity, because the loss of any particular species in any particular ecosphere sends ripples across the entire ecosphere and shrinks the way that the entire ecosphere works. So for me there is a constant awareness of the death of long-term life-forms on this planet that is devastating to me.

There's a kind of constant funeral – I don't mean to say that I'm depressed and demoralized all the time – but I do tune into this on a regular basis, and the parade of death that's going on in the natural world is very sad to me.

I think people don't realize that they're experiencing the same thing that I am. They don't understand that the sadness in their life has to do with these extinctions. They think it's something more personal. It helps to know that there's this collective grief that we're not fully tuned into that's interfering with our ability to enjoy life.

+

BREZSNY: To return to the issue of mass extinction: I'm interested in a hypothesis articulated by Jonathan Zap and Daniel Pinchbeck.

They propose that being on the verge of an ecocidal catastrophe may be a disguised opportunity for the human race to expedite the evolution of consciousness in ways that would not otherwise happen. With the possibility of doom hanging over us, we must get smarter faster in order to ensure our collective survival.

Zap and Pinchbeck invoke the ancient Roman legend of the Sword of Damocles, which they interpret to mean that when we are in great danger, and therefore our motivation to solve our predicament is heightened, as is our power to outgrow the habits that got us into this pickle.

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

WANT TO GET YOUR ASTROLOGICAL CHART READ?

If you want your personal chart done, I recommend a colleague whose approach to reading astrology charts closely matches my own. She's my wife, RO LOUGHRAN. We've been enjoying regular conversations about astrology since 1989! Her website's here: www.roloughran.com

Ro utilizes a blend of well-trained intuition, emotional warmth, and a high degree of technical proficiency in horoscope interpretation. She is skilled at exploring the mysteries of your life's purpose and nurturing your connection with your own inner wisdom.

In addition to over 30 years of astrological experience, Ro has been a licensed psychotherapist for 17 years. This enables her to integrate psychological insight with the cosmological perspective that astrology offers.

Ro is based in California, but can do phone consultations and otherwise work with you regardless of geographic boundaries.

Check out Ro's website at www.roloughran.com

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + +

MORE PRONOIA RESOURCES:

"Don't listen to the gloom-sayers. The world has improved by every measure of human flourishing over the past two centuries, and the progress continues. The Enlightenment Is Working."

By Steven Pinker:

For all their disagreements, the left and the right concur on one thing: The world is getting worse. Whether the decline is visible in inequality, racism and pollution, or in terrorism, crime and moral decay, both sides see profound failings in modernity and a deepening crisis in the West. They look back to various golden ages when America was great, blue-collar workers thrived in unionized jobs, and people found meaning in religion, family, community and nature.

Such gloominess is decidedly un-American. The U.S. was founded on the Enlightenment ideal that human ingenuity and benevolence could be channeled by institutions and result in progress. This concept may feel naive as we confront our biggest predicaments, but we can only understand where we are if we know how far we've come.

You can always fool yourself into seeing a decline if you compare rose-tinted images of the past with bleeding headlines of the present. What do the trajectories of the nation and world look like when we measure human well-being over time with a constant yardstick? Let's look at the numbers.

Consider the U.S. just three decades ago. Our annual homicide rate was 8.5 per 100,000. Eleven percent of us fell below the poverty line (as measured by consumption). And we spewed 20 million

tons of sulfur dioxide and 34.5 million tons of particulate matter into the atmosphere.

Fast forward to the most recent numbers available today. The homicide rate is 5.3 (a blip up from 4.4 in 2014). Three percent of us fall below the consumption poverty line. And we emit four million tons of sulfur dioxide and 20.6 million tons of particulates, despite generating more wealth and driving more miles.

Globally, the 30-year scorecard also favors the present. In 1988, 23 wars raged, killing people at a rate of 3.4 per 100,000; today it's 12 wars killing 1.2 per 100,000. The number of nuclear weapons has fallen from 60,780 to 10,325. In 1988, the world had just 45 democracies, embracing two billion people; today it has 103, embracing 4.1 billion. That year saw 46 oil spills; 2016, just five. And 37% of the population lived in extreme poverty, barely able to feed themselves, compared with 9.6% today. True, 2016 was a bad year for terrorism in Western Europe, with 238 deaths. But 1988 was even worse, with 440.

The headway made around the turn of the millennium is not a fluke. It's a continuation of a process set in motion by the Enlightenment in the late 18th century that has brought improvements in every measure of human flourishing.

Start with the most precious resource, life. Through most of human history, continuing into the 19th century, a newborn was expected to live around 30 years. In the two centuries since, life expectancy across the world has risen to 71, and in the developed world to 81.

When the Enlightenment began, a third of the children born in the richest parts of the world died before their fifth birthday; today, that fate befalls 6% of the children in the poorest parts. In those countries, infectious diseases are in steady decline, and many will soon follow smallpox into extinction.

The poor may not always be with us. The world is about a hundred times wealthier today than it was two centuries ago, and the prosperity is becoming more evenly distributed across countries and people. Within the lifetimes of most readers, the rate of extreme poverty could approach zero. Catastrophic famine, never far away in the past, has vanished from all but the most remote and war-ravaged regions, and undernourishment is in steady decline.

Read the rest of this article:
tinyurl.com/y8gasaye

(Note: I endorse this because I like it. It's not an advertisement, and I get no kickback.)

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

+++++

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY **Week beginning March 1**

Copyright 2018 by Rob Breznsny
FreeWillAstrology.com

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

As you make appointments in the coming months, you could re-use calendars from 2007 and 2001. During those years, all the dates fell on the same days of the week as they do in 2018. On the other hand, Pisces, please don't try to learn the same lessons you learned in 2007 and 2001. Don't get snagged in identical traps or sucked into similar riddles or obsessed with comparable illusions. On the *other* other hand, it might help for you to recall the detours you had to take back then, since you may thereby figure out how to avoid having to repeat boring old experiences that you don't need to repeat.

ARIES (March 21-April 19):

On September 1, 1666, a London baker named Thomas Farriner didn't take proper precautions to douse the fire in his oven before he went to sleep. Consequences were serious. The conflagration that ignited in his little shop burned down large parts of the city. Three hundred twenty years later, a group of bakers gathered at the original site to offer a ritual atonement. "It's never too late to apologize," said one official, acknowledging the tardiness of the gesture. In that spirit, Aries, I invite you to finally dissolve a clump of guilt you've been carrying . . . or express gratitude that you should have delivered long ago . . . or resolve a messy ending that still bothers you . . . or transform your relationship with an old wound . . . or all of the above.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

The Committee to Fanatically Promote Taurus's Success is pleased to see that you're not waiting politely for your next turn. You have come to the brilliant realization that what used to be your fair share is no longer sufficient. You intuitively sense that you have a cosmic mandate to skip a few steps -- to ask for more and better and faster results. As a reward for this outbreak of shrewd and well-deserved self-love, and in recognition of the blessings that are currently showering down on your astrological House of Noble Greed, you are hereby granted three weeks' worth of extra service, free bonuses, special treatment, and abundant slack.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

No one can be somewhat pregnant. You either are or you're not. But from a metaphorical perspective, your current state is a close approximation to that impossible condition. Are you or are you not going to commit yourself to birthing a new creation? Decide soon, please. Opt for one or the other resolution: don't remain in the gray area. And there's more to consider. You are

of the other resolution, don't remain in the gray area. And there's more to consider. You are indulging in excessive in-betweenness in other areas of your life, as well. You're almost brave and sort of free and semi-faithful. My advice about these halfway states is the same: Either go all the way or else stop pretending you might.

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

The Appalachian Trail is a 2,200-mile path that runs through the eastern United States. Hikers can wind their way through forests and wilderness areas from Mount Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia. Along the way they may encounter black bears, bobcats, porcupines, and wild boars. These natural wonders may seem to be at a remote distance from civilization, but they are in fact conveniently accessible from America's biggest metropolis. For \$8.75, you can take a train from Grand Central Station in New York City to an entry point of the Appalachian Trail. This scenario is an apt metaphor for you right now, Cancerian. With relative ease, you can escape from your routines and habits. I hope you take advantage!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

Is 2018 turning out to be as I expected it would be for you? Have you become more accepting of yourself and further at peace with your mysterious destiny? Are you benefiting from greater stability and security? Do you feel more at home in the world and better nurtured by your close allies? If for some reason these developments are not yet in bloom, withdraw from every lesser concern and turn your focus to them. Make sure you make full use of the gifts that life is conspiring to provide for you.

+++++

EXPLORING THE BIG PICTURE OF YOUR LONG-RANGE FUTURE

Would you like some inspiration as you muse and wonder about your upcoming adventures in 2018?

You can still buy access to my long-range, in-depth explorations of your destiny in the coming months. Each report in the three-part series is 7 to 9 minutes long.

Go to RealAstrology.com to register and/or sign in through the main page.

Then access the horoscopes by clicking on "Long Range Prediction." Choose from Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3. Each part is a standalone report, not dependent on the other two.

Each of the three-part reports is seven to nine minutes long. The cost is \$6 per report. There are discounts for the purchase of multiple reports.

A new short-range forecast for this week is also available.

+

"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

+++++

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

"You can't find intimacy -- you can't find home -- when you're always hiding behind masks," says Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Junot Díaz. "Intimacy requires a certain level of vulnerability. It requires a certain level of you exposing your fragmented, contradictory self to someone else. You running the risk of having your core self rejected and hurt and misunderstood." I can't imagine any better advice to offer you as you navigate your way through the next seven weeks, Virgo. You will have a wildly fertile opportunity to find and create more intimacy. But in order to take full advantage, you'll have to be brave and candid and unshielded.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

In the coming weeks, you could reach several odd personal bests. For instance, your ability to distinguish between flowery bullshit and inventive truth-telling will be at a peak. Your "imperfections" will be more interesting and forgivable than usual, and might even work to your advantage, as well. I suspect you'll also have an adorable inclination to accomplish the half-right thing when it's impossible to do the perfectly right thing. Finally, all the astrological omens suggest that you will have a tricky power to capitalize on lucky lapses.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

French philosopher Blaise Pascal said, "If you do not love too much, you do not love enough." American author Henry David Thoreau declared, "There is no remedy for love but to love more." I would hesitate to offer these two formulations in the horoscope of any other sign but yours, Scorpio. And I would even hesitate to offer them to you at any other time besides right now. But I feel that you currently have the strength of character and fertile willpower necessary to make righteous use of such stringently medicinal magic. So please proceed with my agenda for you, which is to become the Smartest, Feistiest, Most Resourceful Lover Who Has Ever Lived.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

The state of Kansas has over 6,000 ghost towns -- places where people once lived, but then

abandoned. Daniel C. Fitzgerald has written six books documenting these places. He's an expert on researching what remains of the past and drawing conclusions based on the old evidence. In accordance with current astrological omens, I suggest you consider doing comparable research into your own lost and half-forgotten history. You can generate vigorous psychic energy by communing with origins and memories. Remembering who you used to be will clarify your future.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

It's not quite a revolution that's in the works. But it is a sprightly evolution. Accelerating developments may test your ability to adjust gracefully. Quickly-shifting story lines will ask you to be resilient and flexible. But the unruly flow won't throw you into a stressful tizzy as long as you treat it as an interesting challenge instead of an inconvenient imposition. My advice is not to stiffen your mood or narrow your range of expression, but rather to be like an actor in an improvisation class. *Fluidity* is your word of power.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

It's the Productive Paradox Phase of your cycle. You can generate good luck and unexpected help by romancing the contradictions. For example: 1. You'll enhance your freedom by risking deeper commitment. 2. You'll gain greater control over wild influences by loosening your grip and providing more spaciousness. 3. If you are willing to appear naive, empty, or foolish, you'll set the stage for getting smarter. 4. A blessing you didn't realize you needed will come your way after you relinquish a burdensome "asset." 5. Greater power will flow your way if you expand your capacity for receptivity.

+++++

HOMEWORK:

What good old thing could you give up in order to attract a great new thing into your life? Testify at FreeWillAstrology.com.

+++++

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.

Contents of the Free Will Astrology Newsletter are Copyright 2018 Rob Brezsny

+++++