

Ondinnonk is an Iroquois word with two related meanings: 1. a secret wish of the soul, especially as revealed in dreams; 2. the spiritual part of our nature that longs to do good deeds.

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In the best-known version of the Greek myth, Persephone is dragged down into the underworld by Hades, whose title is "Pluto." But in earlier, pre-patriarchal tales, she descends there under her own power, actively seeking to graduate from her virginal naiveté by exploring the intriguing land of shadows.

"Pluto" is derived from the Greek word *plutus*, meaning "wealth." Psychologist James Hillman says this refers to the psyche-building riches available in Pluto's domain. Hades, he says, is "the giver of nourishment to the soul."

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Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul.

—Oscar Wilde

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"There is a saying that when the student is ready, the teacher appears," writes Clarissa Pinkola Estes. But the magic of that formula may not unfold with smooth simplicity, she says: "The teacher comes when the soul, not the ego, is ready. The teacher comes when the soul calls, and thank goodness—for the ego is never fully ready."

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What is the "soul," anyway? Is it a ghostly blob of magic stuff within us that keeps us connected to the world of dreams and the divine realms? Is it an amorphous metaphor for the secret source of our spiritual power? Is it a myth that people entertain because they desperately want to believe there's more to them than just their physical bodies?

Here's what I think: The soul is a perspective that pushes us to go deeper and see further and live wilder. It's what drives our imagination to flesh out our raw experience, transforming that chaotic stuff into rich storylines that animate our love of life.

With the gently propulsive force of the soul, we probe beyond the surface level of things, working to find the hidden meaning and truer feeling.

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Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.

—Pablo Picasso.

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"The works must be conceived with fire in the soul but executed with clinical coolness," said the painter Joan Miró in describing his artistic process.

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"Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul," wrote environmentalist Edward Abbey.

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"I had tended to view waiting as mere passivity," wrote author Sue Monk Kidd in her memoir. "When I looked it up in my dictionary, however, I found that the words 'passive' and 'passion' come from the same Latin root, *patis*, which means 'to endure.' Waiting is thus both passive and passionate. It's a vibrant, contemplative work . . . It involves listening to disinherited voices within, facing the wounded holes in the soul, the denied and undiscovered, the places one lives falsely."

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If you need to visualize the soul, think of it as a cross between a wolf howl, a photon, and a dribble of dark molasses. But what it really is, as near as I can tell, is a packet of information. It's a program, a piece of hyperspatial software designed explicitly to interface with the Mystery. Not a mystery, mind you, the Mystery. The one that can never be solved.

By waxing soulful you will have granted yourself the possibility of ecstatic participation in what the ancients considered a divinely animated universe."

—Tom Robbins

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As part of the Beauty and Truth Lab's ongoing crusade to wrestle the English language into a more formidable servant of the ecstatic impulse, we're pleased to present some alternate designations for "soul." See if any of the following concoctions feel right coming out of your mouth:

1. undulating superconductor;
2. nectar plasma;
3. golden lather;
4. smoldering crucible;

offer? Any insights that could help you plan better for your long-term future?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

The coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to buy yourself toys, change your image for no rational reason, and indulge in an interesting pleasure that you have been denying yourself for no good reason. In addition, I hope you will engage in at least two heart-to-heart talks with yourself, preferably using funny voices and comical body language. You could also align yourself gracefully with cosmic rhythms by dancing more than usual, and by goofing off more than usual, and by wandering in the wilderness and seeking to recapture your lost innocence more than usual.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

Although you'll never find an advertisement for Toyota or Coca Cola or Apple within my horoscope column, you will find hype for spiritual commodities like creativity, love, and freedom. Like everyone else, I'm a huckster. My flackery may be more ethical and uplifting than others', but the fact is that I still try to persuade you to "buy" my ideas. The moral of the story: Everyone, even the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, is selling something. I hope that what I'm saying here purges any reluctance you might have about presenting yourself and your ideas in the most favorable light. It's high time for you to hone your sales pitch; to explain why your approach to life is so wise; to be a forceful spokesperson and role model for the values you hold dear.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

You are growing almost too fast, but that won't necessarily be a problem—as long as you don't expect everyone around you to grow as fast as you. I suspect that you also know almost too much—but I don't anticipate that will spawn envy and resistance as long as you cultivate a bit of humility. I have an additional duty to report that you're on the verge of being too attractive for your own good—although you have not yet actually reached the tipping point, so maybe your hyper-attractiveness will serve you rather than undermine you. In conclusion, Scorpio, I invite you to celebrate your abundance, but don't flaunt it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

The snow leopards of Central Asia crave a lot of room to wander. Zoologists say that each male prefers its territory to be about 84 square miles, and each female likes to have 44 square miles. I don't think you'll require quite that vast a turf in the coming weeks, Sagittarius. But on the other hand, it will be important not to underestimate the spaciousness you'll need in order to thrive. Give yourself permission to be expansive.

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

"I want to do things so wild with you that I don't know how to say them." Author Anaïs Nin wrote that in a letter to her Capricorn lover Henry Miller. Is there anyone you could or should or want to say something like that? If your answer is yes, now is a good time to be so candid and bold. If the answer is no, now would be a good time to scout around for a person to whom you could or should or want to say such a thing. And if you'd like to throw in a bit more enticement, here's another seductive lyric from Anaïs: "Only the united beat of sex and heart together can create ecstasy."

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

Did you hear the story about the California mom who started a series of forest fires so as to boost

her son's career as a firefighter? She is an apt role model for behavior you should diligently avoid in the coming weeks. It's unwise and unprofitable for you and yours to stir up a certain kind of trouble simply because it's trouble that you and yours have become skilled at solving. So how should you use your problem-solving energy, which I suspect will be at a peak? I suggest you go hunting for some very interesting and potentially productive trouble that you haven't wrangled with before—some rousing challenge that will make you even smarter than you already are.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

The heroine of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* is curious, adventurous, and brave. First she follows a well-dressed rabbit down a rabbit hole into an alternate universe. Later she slips through a mirror into yet another parallel reality. Both times, with great composure, she navigates her way through many odd, paranormal, and unpredictable events. She enjoys herself immensely as she deals with a series of unusual characters and unfamiliar situations. I'm going to speculate that Alice is a Pisces. Are you ready for your very own Alice-in-Wonderland phase? Here it comes!

ARIES (March 21-April 19):

An Aries reader sent me a boisterous email. "I was afraid I was getting too bogged down by my duties," he said, "too hypnotized by routine, too serious about my problems. So I took drastic action." He then described the ways he broke out of his slump. Here's an excerpt: "I gave laughing lessons to a cat. I ate a spider. I conducted a sneezing contest. I smashed an alarm clock with a hammer. Whenever an elderly woman walked by, I called out 'Hail to the Queen!' and did a backflip. I gave names to my spoon (Hortense), the table (Beatrice), a fly that was buzzing around (Fallon), and a toothpick (Arturo)." According to my analysis of the astrological omens, Aries, you'd be wise to stage a comparable uprising.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

Welcome home, homegirls and homeboys. After observing all your homesteading in homes away from home, I'm pleased to see you getting curious about the real home brew again. I wonder how many times I'll say the word "home" before you register the message that it's high time for you to home in on some homemade, homegrown homework? Now here's a special note to any of you who may be feeling psychologically homeless or exiled from your spiritual home: the coming weeks will be a favorable time to address that ache and remedy that problem.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

The world is full of eternally restless people who seethe with confused desires they don't understand. Fueled by such unfathomable urges, they are driven in unknown directions to accomplish fuzzy goals. They may be obsessed in ways that make them appear to be highly focused, but the objects of their obsession are impossible to attain or unite with. Those objects don't truly exist! I have described this phenomenon in detail, Gemini, because the coming months will offer you all the help and support you could ever need to make sure you're forever free of any inclination to be like that.

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HOMEWORK:

Name something you could change about yourself that might enhance your love life. Testify at FreeWillAstrology.com.

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