

Experiment: keep checking yourself for irrelevant, self-perpetuating negativity and bitterness.

A certain degree of negativity and bitterness is sensible, even necessary. You can't stay healthy without cultivating a medicinal dose of the stuff.

But it's in your interests to cultivate just the amount you need, no more.

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HOW TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

The teacher Rudolf Steiner had a devotee who complained that after years of meditating and studying sacred texts he had not yet had a spiritual experience.

Steiner asked him if he'd noticed the face of the conductor on the train on which they were riding. The man said no. Steiner replied, "Then you just missed a spiritual experience."

My interpretation: You can expedite and intensify your education about spiritual matters by noticing the beauty and holiness in the most mundane things.

Also, this: Every event that happens is an opportunity to meditate.

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YOU'RE IN SACRED SPACE RIGHT NOW

No matter what comes along, we're always standing at the center of the world in the middle of sacred space, and everything that comes into that circle and exists with us there has come to teach us what we need to know.

—Pema Chödrön, *The Wisdom of No Escape*

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INSIDE INFORMATION

"What you seek is seeking you."
Rumi

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THE END OF SPIRITUALITY by Jeff Foster

My yoga mat has disappeared into the ground under my feet.

My ashram has become the coffee counter, a bad joke exchanged with the barista, a friendly smile creeping over a frozen face, and the whole world willing us along.

My temple is the shopping mall, the dentist's waiting room, the empty meadow in the morning with its soft yellow light and virginal air.

My guru is the incubating roar in the belly, the melancholy of the evening and the hope and despair of raw existence itself.

Nothing needs to be added.

My enlightenment is the ordinary moment, this mundane experience drenched in the sweet nectar of my own attention.

My origin is the breath and the breath is my destination.

My lineage is the hungry cat greeting me on my evening walk, ambling beside me awhile, rubbing her fur against my shin, her fur soft like the cashmere blanket grandma used to wrap around us as the nights came in early, fur becoming skin, and the cat nonchalantly moving on to peruse a discarded sandwich wrapper, and me walking on.

My spirituality is deep in the earth; it is in the mud, the heat, the bowels, the awkward and the inconvenient, the cry for mother and the courage to penetrate unexplored regions of the psyche. It is the yearning for home and the happily exhausted return.

My bliss is nothing the mind could ever grasp, not in a billion years of searching.

My joy is simple, like those who have lived a full life and are ready to die.

I lie down in the meadow, my backpack my pillow, my hands entering into the silky, sticky grass, my entire life reduced to a single thought and memory and momentary vision, and then that is gone too, and I am gone with it all, replaced by the meadow itself, its soft yellow light and its clean invigorating air, its hope and its promise, its fullness and its mercy.

Do not look for me. You will not find me here, or recognise me if you do. I am invisible because I have become all that is seen and all that is known and unknown still.

I do not practice spirituality. I have been destroyed, deconstructed, de-boned and born again, reconstituted as man, formless as form. I have been recreated inseparable from this ordinariness,

deepen your relationship with it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

Aquarian environmentalist Edward Abbey once formulated a concise list of his requirements for living well. "One must be reasonable in one's demands on life," he wrote. "For myself, all that I ask is: 1. accurate information; 2. coherent knowledge; 3. deep understanding; 4. infinite loving wisdom; 5. no more kidney stones, please." According to my analysis of the astrological omens, now would be an excellent time for you to create your own tally of the Five Crucial Provisions. Be bold and precise as you inform life about your needs.

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OUR COLLABORATION

I really do feel that you're here with me as I create these horoscopes. In a sense, you're my assistant. Our telepathic connection is utterly palpable and practical. The hopes and questions you project my way stream into my higher mind, coloring my psychic environment and enriching my desire to give you what you need.

If you ever want more inspiration generated in that same collaborative spirit -- beyond the horoscopes you're reading here -- keep in mind that every week I also offer EXPANDED AUDIO HOROSCOPES for you. They're four-to-five-minute meditations on the current state of your destiny.

These forecasts are different in tone and format from the written horoscopes you read here in the newsletter. They're longer and more leisurely in tone.

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

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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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PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

"We may be surprised at whom God sends to answer our prayers," wrote author Janette Oke. I suspect that observation will apply to you in the coming weeks. If you're an atheist or agnostic, I'll rephrase her formulation for you: "We may be surprised at whom Life sends to answer our entreaties." There's only one important thing you have to do to cooperate with this experience: set aside your expectations about how help and blessings might appear.

ARIES (March 21-April 19):

It's not cost-efficient to recycle plastic. Sorting and processing the used materials to make them available for fresh stuff is at least as expensive as creating new plastic items from scratch. On the other hand, sending used plastic to a recycling center makes it far less likely that it will end up in the oceans and waterways, harming living creatures. So in this case, the short-term financial argument in favor of recycling is insubstantial, whereas the moral argument is strong. I invite you to apply a similar perspective to your upcoming decisions.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

African American slaves suffered many horrendous deprivations. For example, it was illegal for them to learn to read. Their oppressors feared that educated slaves would be better equipped to agitate for freedom, and took extreme measures to keep them illiterate. Frederick Douglass was one slave who managed to beat the ban. As he secretly mastered the art of reading and writing, he came upon literature that ultimately emboldened him to escape his "owners" and flee to safety. He became one of the nineteenth century's most powerful abolitionists, producing reams of influential writing and speeches. I propose that we make Douglass your inspiring role model for the coming months. I think you're ready to break the hold of a certain curse—and go on to achieve a gritty success that the curse had prevented you from accomplishing.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

For twenty-five years, businessman Don Thompson worked for the McDonald's fast food company, including three years as its CEO. During that time, he oversaw the sale and consumption of millions of hamburgers. But in 2015, he left McDonald's and became part of Beyond Meat, a company that sells vegan alternatives to meat. I could see you undergoing an equally dramatic shift in the coming months, Gemini: a transition into a new role that resembles but is also very different from a role you've been playing. I urge you to step up your fantasies about what that change might entail.

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

"The learning process is something you can incite, literally incite, like a riot," wrote author Audre Lorde. As an astrologer I would add this nuance: although what Lourde says is true, some phases of your life are more favorable than others to seek deep and rapid education. For example, the coming weeks will bring you especially rich teachings if you incite the learning process now.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

The American idiom "stay in your lane" has come to mean "mind your own business," and usually has a pejorative sense. But I'd like to expand it and soften it for your use in the coming weeks. Let's define it as meaning "stick to what you're good at and know about" or "don't try to operate outside your area of expertise" or "express yourself in ways that you have earned the right to do." Author Zadie Smith says that this is good advice for writers. "You have to work out what it is you can't do, obscure it, and focus on what works," she attests. Apply that counsel to your own sphere or field, Leo.

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HOMEWORK:

Poet Muriel Rukeyser said, "The world is made of stories, not atoms." I'd add, "You are made of stories, too." What's your favorite story that you're made of? 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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