



**Rob Brezsny's Astrology Newsletter**  
**October 23, 2019**  
[FreeWillAstrology.com](http://FreeWillAstrology.com)

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**SUBTERRANEAN PRONOIA THERAPY**

excerpted from my book *Pronoia Is the Antidote for Paranoia: How the Whole World Is Conspiring to Shower You with Blessings* — [bit.ly/Pronoia](http://bit.ly/Pronoia)

1. The greatest gift you can give might be the gift that you yourself were never given. Give that gift.

The most valuable service you have to offer your fellow humans may be the service you have always wished were performed for you. Offer that service.

An experience that wounded you could move you to help people who've been similarly wounded. Heal yourself by healing others.

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2. Declare amnesty for the part of you that you don't love very well. Forgive that poor sucker. Hold its hand and take it out to dinner and a movie. Tactfully offer it a chance to make amends for the dumb things it has done.

And then do a dramatic reading of this proclamation by the playwright Theodore Rubín: "I must learn to love the fool in me—the one who feels too much, talks too much, takes too many chances, wins sometimes and loses often, lacks self-control, loves and hates, hurts and gets hurt, promises and breaks promises, laughs and cries. It alone protects me against that utterly self-controlled, masterful tyrant whom I also harbor and who would rob me of human aliveness, humility, and dignity but for my fool."

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3. Pathologist Paul Wolf has suggested that some of history's great artists may have never created their masterpieces if the wonders of modern medicine had been available to them. For example, what if doctors had cured van Gogh's mental illness with a regimen of drugs like Prozac and Xanax?

Maybe he would have been spared the torment that goaded him to the outbursts of genius that erupted on his canvases.

Are there ways in which the very things that have driven you crazy might play a role in your finest accomplishments?

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4. Some of my readers complain when I draw inspiration from a public figure they consider a bad person. Once I cited philosopher Bertrand Russell, and a woman from Austin went into a rage: "Russell was a terrible father! How dare you give him any credence?"

Another time I invoked the wisdom of ex-U.S. president Teddy Roosevelt. "What possessed you to quote such a militaristic bully?" wrote an outraged emailer.

Here's how I respond to these grumbles: If I refused to learn from people unless I agreed with everything they had ever said and done, I would never learn from anyone.

What about you? Have you set up your life so that everyone is either on or off your good list? If so, consider trying something new: Cultivate a capacity to derive help and insight from people who aren't perfect.

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5. No matter how holy and good, everyone in the world has a portion of the world's sickness inside them. It's known by many names: neurosis, shadow, demon, devil. Many people try to deny that it inhabits them. Others acknowledge its power so readily that they allow themselves to be overwhelmed and distorted by it.

At the Beauty and Truth Lab, we take a position between those two positions. We accept the fact that the evil is part of us, but treat it with compassionate amusement and flexible vigilance. Our stance is partly that of loving parents and partly that of warriors.

Once you make a commitment to explore the mysteries of pronia, your shadow will try to play tricks on you that it has never tried before. How will you respond? We recommend an aggressive, tender, improvisational approach. Be ready for anything. Avoid both blithe excesses of tolerance and grave fundamentalism.

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6. "We are attracted to people who express the qualities we deny or repress in ourselves," says creativity expert Shakti Gawain. Using this idea as your hypothesis, take an inventory of the people you're most drawn to. Ask yourself whether they have talents and dreams that you wish could come alive in you. If you find this to be the case, consider the possibility that it's time to claim those talents or dreams as your own.

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7. Philosopher William James proposed that if our culture ever hoped to shed the deeply ingrained habit of going to war, we'd have to create a moral equivalent. It's not enough to preach the value of peace, he said. We have to find other ways to channel our aggressive instincts in order to accomplish what war does, like stimulate political unity and build civic virtue.

Astrology provides a complementary perspective. Each of us has the warrior energy of the planet Mars in our psychological makeup. We can't simply repress it, but must find a positive way to express it. How might you go about this project?

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8. In his book *The Thought of the Heart and the Soul of the World*, psychologist James Hillman writes: "The question of evil refers primarily to the anaesthetized heart, the heart that has no reaction to what it faces, thereby turning the variegated sensuous face of the world into monotony, sameness, oneness."

What would you have to do in order to triumph over this kind of evil in yourself?

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9. "The problem, if you love it, is as beautiful as the sunset," wrote J. Krishnamurti. "The obstacle is the path," says the Zen proverb. What frustrating puzzle do you love the best?

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10. Acquire a hand puppet, preferably a funky old-fashioned one from a thrift store, but any one will do. Give the puppet a name and wear it on your hand wherever you go for several days. In a voice different from your normal one, make this ally speak the "shadow truths" of every situation you encounter: the dicey subtexts everyone is shy about acknowledging, the layers of truth that lie beneath the surface, the agreed-upon illusions that cloud everyone's perceptual abilities.

11. All of us are eminently fallible nobodies. We're crammed with delusions and cracked beliefs. We give ourselves more slack than anyone else, and we're brilliant at justifying our irrational biases with seemingly logical explanations. Yet it's equally true that we're each a magnificently enigmatic creation unique in the history of the world. We're immortal geniuses in continuous telepathic touch with all of creation.

Dramatize this paradox. Tomorrow, buy and wear ugly, threadbare clothes from the same thrift store where you got your hand puppet. Eat the cheapest junk food possible and do the most menial tasks you can find.

The next day, attire yourself in your best clothes, wear a crown or diadem, and treat yourself to an expensive gourmet meal. Enjoy a massage, a pedicure, and other luxuries that require people to wait on you.

On the third day, switch back and forth between the previous two days' modes every couple of hours. As you do, cultivate a passionate indifference to the question of whether you are ultimately an unimportant nobody or a captivating hero.

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#### PURGE YOUR NEGATIVE CONDITIONING—OR AT LEAST SOME OF IT

Who knew that in one of my past lives I was a guerrilla Qabalistic performance artist studying at Exorcise Your Television University?

Who knew that at this time I was also a New Edge anti-guru who created a guided meditation designed to drive you sweetly crazy: [tinyurl.com/MassHypnosisParty](http://tinyurl.com/MassHypnosisParty)

Listen to this track if you'd like help in purging your negative conditioning!

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#### WEIRD ELDERS

Michael Meade says: "In old traditions those who acted as elders were considered to have one foot in daily life and the other foot in the otherworld. Elders acted as a bridge between the visible world and the unseen realms of spirit and soul. A person in touch with the otherworld stands out because something normally invisible can be seen through them.

"The old word for having a foot in each world is 'weird.' The original sense of weird involved both fate and destiny. Becoming weird enough to be wise requires that a person learn to accommodate

the strange way they are shaped within and aimed at the world.

"An old idea suggests that those seeking for an elder should look for someone weird enough to be wise. For just as there can be no general wisdom, there are no 'normal' elders. Normal bespeaks the 'norms' that society uses to regulate people, whereas an awakened destiny always involves connections to the weird and the warp of life.

"In Norse mythology, as in Shakespeare, the Fates appear as the Weird Sisters who hold time and the timeless together.

"Those who would become truly wise must become weird enough to be in touch with timeless things and abnormal enough to follow the guidance of the unseen. Elders are supposed to be weird, not simply 'weirdoes,' but strange and unusual in meaningful ways.

"Elders are supposed to be more in touch with the otherworld, but not out of touch with the struggles in this world. Elders have one foot firmly in the ground of survival and another in the realm of great imagination. This double-minded stance serves to help the living community and even helps the species survive."

– Michael Meade, *Fate and Destiny: The Two Agreements of the Soul*

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#### WE NEED AN UNCOLONIZED IMAGINATION

Excerpts from an interview with storyteller and mythologist Martin Shaw: We need an uncolonized imagination, a mythic intelligence. Why? Because we are constantly being fed signs that frighten us, and then paralyze us, and then colonize us. And imagination, through myth, wants to give you symbols to raise you up.

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People often prefer to dismiss myth, saying: it's not true. But a way to think about myth is as something that never was and always is. Or as a beautiful lie that tells a much deeper truth.

But one way or another when we lose our mythic sensibility, the powers in this world that may not wish us well have a greater purchase on us, a greater hold.

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Whatever we are facing now we need to have a root system embedded in weather patterns, the presences of animals, our dreams, and the ones who came before us.

Myth is insistent that when there is a crisis, genius lives on the margins not the centre.

If we are constantly using the language of politics to combat the language of politics at some point the soul grows weary and turns its head away because we are not allowing it into the conversation, and by denying soul we are ignoring what the Mexicans call the river beneath the river.

We're not listening to the thoughts of the world. We're only listening to our own neurosis and our own anxiety.

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The days of conventional hero myths are not serving us. What is being called for now culturally is a word you find often in Ancient Greece: metis. Metis is a kind of divine cunning in service to wisdom.

We can't be naïve in times like this, because we are in the presence of underworld forces that will do one of two things: they will either educate us, or annihilate us.

And in fairy tales whenever the movement is down – and the movement culturally is down right now – you have to get underworld smart, have underworld intelligence, underworld metis.

I have a strong feeling that a lot of what wants to emerge through many ancient stories is a kind of wily, tough, ingenious and romantic force that needs to come forward at this point in time.

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If you don't have ancestors you have ghosts. At the moment many of us are so impoverished and lacking in a cultural root system that what is around us are not ancestors supporting us but ghosts depleting us.

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I notice that several times a day I go into what you could call a mild trance state. I'm not talking about ouija boards here! I'm just talking about falling under the influence of advertising, or various politically engineered neuroses that might be floating around.

But I recognize I have come into a kind of enchantment. And the way I recognize it is that I feel less than grounded. I feel I'm not in the realm of imagination, I'm in the realm of fantasy. So the imaginal is not present; the Earth as a lived, breathing, thinking being is not present.

What's happening is I'm simply fretting – to use my mother's language – I'm spinning my wheels. And so actually I think stories have a capacity to wake us up.

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Gaston Bachelard says, "the Earth seeks to be admired by you."

So if you do nothing else, admire natural things. Learn to give them praise. Learn to speak their 12 secret names. You hear about the Inuit having all these different names for snow.

Well, I thought, what are the 12 secret names of those old-growth oaks that I see down near Greenwich docks? My advice really is what the Hindus call the 'joyful participation in the sorrows of the world'.

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Read the entire interview with Martin Shaw: [tinyurl.com/z2evq6e](http://tinyurl.com/z2evq6e)

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**DREAM WORK AS AN AID TO ACTIVISM**

Modern post-industrial societies tend to produce un-sane populations -- multitudes of people who are unbalanced in their adaptation to the destructive stress of daily existence. One of the symptoms of this un-sanity is the loss of contact between the waking ego and the depths of the self, a contact that requires involvement in dream experiences and information.

Cultures generally resist change, and modern materialist societies are no different in this respect. Devaluation of dreaming and other spiritually efficacious experiences is part of the foundation of 'false consciousness' required by capitalist/materialist political economies.

Materialist cultures require that the focus of awareness be upon the material conditions of life and away from involvement with the inner being which is the only road to spiritual maturation.

—Charles D. Laughlin, *Communing with the Gods: Consciousness, Culture and the Dreaming Brain* - [tinyurl.com/j3dt36a](http://tinyurl.com/j3dt36a)

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**MORE PRONOIA RESOURCES:**

Indigenous Women Are Publishing the First Maya Works in Over 400 Years. A bookmaking collective in San Cristobal de las Casas is helping keep the Tzotzil language alive. [tinyurl.com/y5doyxyp](http://tinyurl.com/y5doyxyp)

After his grandmother got diagnosed with dementia, teen Logan Wells made an app to help care for her. Then he released it free for all caregivers. [outline.com/w3m2Kq](http://outline.com/w3m2Kq)

Costa Rica will run on more than 98% renewable energy for fifth consecutive year. [tinyurl.com/yyjrx796](http://tinyurl.com/yyjrx796)

(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](mailto:Truthrooster@gmail.com).

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**FREE WILL ASTROLOGY  
Week beginning October 24**

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**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):**

"Sometimes the easiest way to get something done is to be a little naive about it," writes computer engineer Bill Joy. I invite you to consider the value of that perspective, Scorpio—even though you're the least likely sign in all the zodiac to do so. Being naive just doesn't come naturally to you; you often know more than everyone else around you. Maybe you'll be more receptive to my suggestion if I reframe the task. Are you familiar with the Zen Buddhist concept of "beginner's mind"? You wipe away your assumptions and see everything as if it were the first time you were in its presence.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):**

Is it always a bad thing to be lost? To wander in the unknown without a map? I'd like to propose a good version of being lost. It requires you to be willing to give up your certainties, to relinquish your grip on the comforting dogmas that have structured your world—but to do so gladly, with a spirit of cheerful expectancy and curiosity. It *doesn't* require you to be a macho hero who feels no fear or confusion. Rather, you have faith that life will provide blessings that weren't possible until you got lost.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):**

"Worrying is the most natural and spontaneous of all human functions," wrote science educator Lewis Thomas. "Let's acknowledge this, perhaps even learn to do it better." I agree with him! And I think it's an ideal time for you to learn how to worry more effectively, more potently, and with greater artistry. What might that look like? First, you wouldn't feel shame or guilt about worrying. You wouldn't regard it as a failing. Rather, you would raise your worrying to a higher power. You'd

wield it as a savvy tool to discern which situations truly need your concerned energy and which don't.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):**

"Some wounds go so deep that you don't even feel them until months, maybe years, later," wrote Aquarian author Julius Lester. Pay attention to that thought, Aquarius. The bad news is that you are just now beginning to feel a wound that was inflicted some time ago. But that's also the good news, because it means the wound will no longer be hidden and unknowable. And because you'll be fully aware of it, you'll be empowered to launch the healing process. I suggest you follow your early intuitions about how best to proceed with the cure.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):**

If you've been having dreams or fantasies that the roof is sinking or the walls are closing in, you should interpret it as a sign that you should consider moving into a more spacious situation. If you have been trapped within the narrow confines of limited possibilities, it's time to break free and flee to a wide open frontier. In general, Pisces, I urge you to insist on more expansiveness in everything you do, even if that requires you to demolish cute little mental blocks that have tricked you into thinking small.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):**

Singapore has one of the world's lowest fertility rate. A few years ago, this state of affairs prompted the government to urge Singaporeans to have sex on an annual holiday known as National Day. A new rap song was released in the hope of pumping up everyone's libidos and instigating a baby boom. It included the lyrics, "Let's make fireworks ignite / Let's make Singapore's birthrate spike." I have a different reason for encouraging you to seek abundant high-quality sex, Aries. According to my analysis, tender orgasmic experiences will profoundly enhance your emotional intelligence in the coming weeks—and make you an excellent decision-maker just in time for your big decisions. (P.S. You don't necessarily need a partner.)

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**MAYBE JOY AND BLISS ARE CATALYTIC SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES**

Assume that pleasure and happiness doesn't interfere with your spiritual growth, but may in fact stimulate it. Proceed on the hypothesis that cultivating delight and wonder might 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.

To listen to your Expanded Audio Horoscope online, go to [freewillastrology.sparkns.com](http://freewillastrology.sparkns.com)

Register and/or log in through the main page.

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

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The cost is \$6 per sign on the On the Web. (Discounts are available for bulk purchases.) You can also access them for \$1.99 per minute by phone.

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"The best part about your audio horoscopes is that they pat me on the head and kick me in the ass at the same time." - Rita L., San Diego

"Your audio oracles go beyond helping me find the truth -- they inspire me to find the WILD truth." - Patrick K., Montreal

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**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):**

In the 1530s, explorer Jacques Cartier led expeditions from France to the New World. As Europeans often did back then, he and his team were rude and brutish to the indigenous folks who lived there, stealing their land, kidnapping some of them, and slaughtering herds of great auks in a bird sanctuary. Yet there was one winter when Cartier's marauders got crucial help from their victims, who gave them vitamin C-rich pine needle tea that cured their scurvy. I suspect you Taurus will embark on quests and journeys in the coming months, and I'm hoping your behavior will be different from Cartier's. When you arrive in unfamiliar places, be humble, curious, and respectful. Be hesitant to impose your concepts of what's true, and be eager to learn from the locals. If you do, you're likely to get rich teachings and benefits equivalent to the pine needle tea.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):**

Many software engineers have enjoyed *The Pragmatic Programmer*, a book that helps them develop and refine their code. One popular technique the book offers is "rubber duck deprogramming." Programmers place a toy rubber duck in front of them, and describe to it the problems they're having. As they explain each line of code to their very good listener, they may discover what's amiss. I recommend a similar approach to you as you embark on metaphorically debugging your own program, Gemini. If a rubber duck isn't available, call on your favorite statue or stuffed animal, or even a photo of a catalytic teacher or relative or spirit.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):**

Read the following passage from Gabriel García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. "Gaston was not only a fierce lover, with endless wisdom and imagination, but he was also, perhaps, the first man in the history of the species who had made an emergency landing and had come close to killing himself and his sweetheart simply to make love in a field of violets." I admire the romantic artistry of Gaston's dramatic gesture. I applaud his imaginative desire to express his love in a carefully chosen sanctuary filled with beauty. I praise his intense devotion to playful extravagance. But I don't recommend you do anything quite so extreme in behalf of love during the coming weeks. Being twenty percent as extreme might be just right, though.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):**

In his song "Diplomatic Immunity," rapper Drake disparages tranquility and harmony. "I listen to heavy metal for meditation, no silence," he brags. "My body isn't much of a sacred temple, with vodka and wine, and sleep at the opposite times," he declares. Is there a method in his madness? It's revealed in these lyrics: "All that peace and that unity: all that weak sh-- will ruin me." In the coming weeks, Leo, I urge you to practice the exact opposite of Drake's approach. It's time to treat yourself to an intense and extended phase of self-care.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):**

It's a favorable time to refresh your relationships with your basic sources and to make connections with new basic sources. To spur your creative thought on these matters, I offer the following questions to meditate on. 1. If you weren't living where you do now, what other place might you like to call home? 2. If you didn't have the name you actually go by, what other name would you choose? 3. If you had an urge to expand the circle of allies that supports and stimulates you, whom would you seek out? 4. If you wanted to add new foods and herbs that would nurture your physical health and new experiences that would nurture your mental health, what would they be?

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):**

Mushrooms have spores, not seeds. They're tiny. If you could stack 2,500 of them, they'd be an inch high. On the other hand, they are numerous. A ripe mushroom may release up to 16 million spores. And each spore is so light-weight, the wind can pick it up and fling it long distances. I'll encourage you to express your power and influence like a mushroom in the coming days: subtle and airy but abundant; light and fine, but relentless and bountiful.

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**HOMEWORK:**

You don't have to feel emotions that others try to manipulate you into feeling. You are free to be who you want to be. Testify! [FreeWillAstrology.com](http://FreeWillAstrology.com)

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