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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY
Week beginning December 5

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SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

"My greatest asset is that I am constantly changing," says Sagittarian actress and activist Jane Fonda. This description may not always be applicable to you, but I think it should be during the coming weeks. You're primed to thrive on a robust commitment to self-transformation. As you proceed in your holy task, keep in mind this other advice from Fonda. 1. "One part of wisdom is knowing what you don't need anymore and letting it go." 2. "It is never too late to master your weaknesses." 3. "If you allow yourself, you can become stronger in the very places that you've been broken." 4. "The challenge is not to be perfect. It's to be whole." P.S. And what does it mean to be whole? Be respectful toward all your multiple facets, and welcome them into the conversation you have about how to live.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

You can't escape your past completely. You can't loosen its hold on you so thoroughly that it will forever allow you to move with limitless freedom into the future. But you definitely have the power to release yourself from at least a part of your past's grip. And the coming weeks will be an excellent time to do just that: to pay off a portion of your karmic debt and shed worn-out emotional baggage.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

Aquarian playwright August Strindberg didn't have much interest in people who "regurgitate what they have learned from books." He was bored by stories that have been told over and over again; was impatient with propaganda disguised as information and by sentimental platitudes masquerading as sage insights. He craved to hear about the unprecedented secrets of each person's life: the things they know and feel that no one else knows and feels. He was a student of "the natural history of the human heart." I bring Strindberg's perspective to your attention, my dear one-of-a-kind Aquarius, because now is a perfect time for you to fully embody it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

"It's no fun being in love with a shadow," wrote Piscean poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. And yet she indulged profusely in that no-fun activity, and even capitalized on it to create a number of decent, if morose, poems. But in alignment with your astrological omens, Pisces, I'm going to encourage you to fall out of love with shadows. The coming weeks will be an excellent time to channel your passions into solid realities: to focus your ardor and adoration on earthly pleasures and practical concerns and imperfect but interesting people.

ARIES (March 21-April 19):

In composing this oracle, I have called on the unruly wisdom of Vivienne Westwood. She's the fashion designer who incorporated the punk esthetic into mainstream styles. Here are four quotes by her that will be especially suitable for your use in the coming weeks. 1. "I disagree with everything I used to say." 2. "The only possible effect one can have on the world is through unpopular ideas." 3. "Intelligence is composed mostly of imagination, insight, and things that have nothing to do with reason." 4. "I'm attracted to people who are really true to themselves and who are always trying to do something that makes their life more interesting."

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

"I'm drowning in the things I never told you." Famous make-up artist Alexandra Joseph wrote that message to a companion with whom she had a complicated relationship. Are you experiencing a similar sensation, Taurus? If so, I invite you to do something about it! The coming weeks will be a good time to stop drowning. One option is to blurt out to your ally *all* the feelings and thoughts you've been withholding and hiding. A second option is to divulge just *some* of the feelings and thoughts you've been withholding and hiding—and then monitor the results of your partial revelation. A third option is to analyze why you've been withholding and hiding. Is it because your ally hasn't been receptive, or because you're afraid of being honest? Here's what I suggest: Start with the third option, then move on to the second.

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WHAT IF JOY AND PLEASURE ARE ESSENTIAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES?
WHAT IF FEELING HAPPY STIMULATES YOUR COMPASSION?

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.

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- Ari S., Ann Arbor, MI

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GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

I've got some borderline sentimental poetry to offer you in this horoscope. It may be too mushy for a mentally crisp person like you. You may worry that I've fallen under the sway of sappy versions of love rather than the snappy versions I usually favor. But there is a method in my madness: I suspect you need an emotionally suggestive nudge to fully activate your urge to merge; you require a jolt of sweetness to inspire you to go in quest of the love mojo that's potentially available to you in abundance. So please allow your heart to be moved by the following passage from poet Rabindranath Tagore: "My soul is alight with your infinitude of stars. Your world has broken upon me like a flood. The flowers of your garden blossom in my body."

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

Try saying this, and notice how it feels: "For the next 17 days, I will make ingenious efforts to interpret my problems as interesting opportunities that offer me the chance to liberate myself from my suffering and transform myself into the person I aspire to become." Now speak the following words and see what thoughts and sensations get triggered: "For the next 17 days, I will have fun imagining that my so-called flaws are signs of potential strengths and talents that I have not yet developed."

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

An interviewer asked singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen if he needed to feel bothered and agitated in order to stimulate his creativity. Cohen said no. "When I get up in the morning," he testified, "my real concern is to discover whether I'm in a state of grace." Surprised, the interviewer asked, "What do you mean by a state of grace?" Cohen described it as a knack for balance that he called on to ride the chaos around him. He knew he couldn't fix or banish the chaos—and it would be arrogant to try. His state of grace was more like skiing skillfully down a hill, gliding along the contours of unpredictable terrain. I'm telling you about Cohen's definition, Leo, because I think that's the state of grace you should cultivate right now. I bet it will stimulate your creativity in ways that surprise and delight you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

Poet Juan Felipe Herrera praises the value of making regular efforts to detox our cluttered minds. He says that one of the best methods for accomplishing this cleansing is to daydream. You give yourself permission to indulge in uncensored, unabashed fantasies. You feel no inhibition about envisioning scenes that you may or may not ever carry out in real life. You understand that this free-form play of images is a healing joy, a gift you give yourself. It's a crafty strategy to make sure you're not hiding any secrets from yourself. Now is a favorable time to practice this art, Virgo.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

In accordance with current astrological omens, here's your meditation, as articulated by the blogger named Riverselkie: "Let your life be guided by the things that produce the purest secret happiness, with no thought to what that may look like from the outside. Feed the absurd whims of your soul and create with no audience in mind but yourself. What is poignant to you is what others will be moved by, too. Embrace what you love about yourself and the right people will come."

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

"I swear I became a saint from waiting," wrote Scorpio poet Odysseus Elytis in his poem "Three Times the Truth." According to my reading of the astrological omens, you may be in a similar situation. And you'll be wise to welcome the break in the action and abide calmly in the motionless lull. You'll experiment with the hypothesis that temporary postponement is best not just for you, but for all concerned.

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HOMEWORK:

Evil is boring. Rousing fear is a hackneyed shtick. More: bit.ly/EvilisBoring

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