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CELEBRATION OF LIFE

My father died recently after a long and successful life. His wife of many decades (my mom), along with his four children and their four daughters, gathered to celebrate his life.

Of the many reasons I am grateful for him: The tender and respectful and generous way he consistently treated my mother—as well as other women—was crucial in influencing me to become a devoted feminist at an early age.

My commitment to healing toxic gender roles and building emotionally intelligent new models of relationship are central to my life, and my dad played a key role in helping me develop that part of my soul's code.

More words and photos about this are here: tinyurl.com/GoodLifeCelebration

(In the photo, I'm the one on the far left.)

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BEING KIND IS GOOD FOR YOU

Research shows:

1. Exercising compassion stimulates the same pleasure centers associated with the drive for food, water and sex.
2. Practicing compassion with intention has a positive physiological effect on the body. It can lower blood pressure, boost your immune response and increase your calmness.
3. Not only are we hard-wired to be kind, but it is essential for the survival of our species.
4. Recognizing common fears or vulnerabilities rather than differences -- be it with a difficult friend, an abrasive colleague or a noisy neighbor -- calms the nervous system, boosting feelings of contentment and self worth.

More: tinyurl.com/n2m3t2t

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JOYFUL REBELLION. Tending to my sanity and being in service to the world require me to be in a chronic state of rebellion.

But here's an important caveat: While the rebellion can and should be partially fueled by anger at the injustices of misogyny, plutocracy, racism, militarism, jingoism, and transphobia, it must be primarily motivated by love and joy and the desire to bestow blessings.

A healthy proportion, at least for me, seems to be 15% rage, indignation, and complaint, and 85% compassion, celebration, and lust for life.

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YOU FLOWER AND FLEX

Above willow trees healing from false warmth,
under star jelly and floating spiders,
under golden frogs raining from the sky—
who knows how?—
you flash and fly

Amid swollen joys,
exploded hopes,
and night chimes.
amid prayer stones,
amid cloud-scriptures,
with the pregnant mist from the west
and the spree-fucking wind,
you flare and flow

Deeper, older,
between the borrowed morning light
and its protectors,
between the hidden salamanders
that give names to the earth
and the songbirds
that only sing when necessary,
you flicker and flourish

Newer than the bone and sinew
yet to be predicted,
more valuable than the gold
buried too deep to retrieve,
stronger than the blood
that renews itself every winter,
you flower and flex

—by me

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THE MORE SPECIFIC YOUR GOALS, THE BETTER

"Having very broad and abstract goals may maintain and exacerbate depression. Goals that are

tricky sucker that keeps changing its mind about where it wants to go. The stars may impel, as the astrological saying goes, but they don't compel.

That's why I've never considered myself a fortuneteller. I prefer to think that my greatest service is as a psychic intelligence agent, helping you explore the hidden patterns and unconscious forces that may be affecting your life without your full knowledge.

If I "predict" anything, it's not so much the future as the unknown part of the present.

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VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

Over a period of 40 years, the artist Rembrandt (1606–1663) gazed into a mirror as he created more than ninety self-portraits—about ten percent of his total work. Why? Art scholars don't have a definitive answer. Some think he did self-portraits because they sold well. Others say that because he worked so slowly, he himself was the only person he could get to model for long periods. Still others believe this was his way of cultivating self-knowledge, equivalent to an author writing an autobiography. In the coming weeks, I highly recommend that you engage in your personal equivalent of extended mirror-gazing. It's a favorable time to understand yourself better.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

From author Don DeLillo's many literary works, I've gathered five quotes to serve as your guideposts in the coming weeks. These observations are all in synchronistic alignment with your current needs. 1. Sometimes a thing that's hard is hard because you're doing it wrong. 2. You have to break through the structure of your own stonework habit just to make yourself listen. 3. Something is always happening, even on the quietest days and deep into the night, if you stand a while and look. 4. The world is full of abandoned meanings. In the commonplace, I find unexpected themes and intensities. 5. What we are reluctant to touch often seems the very fabric of our salvation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

"I remember a time when a cabbage could sell itself just by being a cabbage," wrote Scorpio author Jean Giraudoux (1882–1944). "Nowadays it's no good being a cabbage—unless you have an agent and pay him a commission." He was making the point that for us humans, it's not enough to simply become good at a skill and express that skill; we need to hire a publicist or marketing wizard or distributor to make sure the world knows about our offerings. Generally, I agree with Giraudoux's assessment. But I think that right now it applies to you only minimally. The coming weeks will be one of those rare times when your interestingness will shine so brightly, it will naturally attract its deserved attention. Your motto, from industrialist Henry J. Kaiser: "When your work speaks for itself, don't interrupt."

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

When he was 29 years old, Sagittarian composer Ludwig Beethoven published his *String Quartet, Op. 18, No. 4*. Most scholars believe that the piece was an assemblage of older material he had created as a young man. A similar approach might work well for you in the coming weeks, Sagittarius. I invite you to consider the possibility of repurposing tricks and ideas that weren't quite ripe when you first used them. Recycling yourself makes good sense.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

Are there parts of your life that seem to undermine other parts of your life? Do you wish there was greater harmony between your heart and your head, between your giving and your taking, between your past and your future? Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could infuse your cautiousness with the wildness of your secret self? I bring these questions to your attention, Capricorn, because I suspect you're primed to address them with a surge of innovative energy. Here's my prediction: Healing will come as you juxtapose apparent opposites and unite elements that have previously been unconnected.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

When he was 19, the young poet Robert Graves joined the British army to fight in World War I. Two years later, the *Times of London* newspaper reported that he had been killed at the Battle of the Somme in France. But it wasn't true. Graves was very much alive, and continued to be for another 69 years. During that time, he wrote 55 books of poetry, 18 novels, and 55 other books. I'm going to be bold and predict that this story can serve as an apt metaphor for your destiny in the coming weeks and months. Some dream or situation or influence that you believed to be gone will in fact have a very long second life filled with interesting developments.

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HOMEWORK:

Try to identify which aspect of your life needs healing more than any other aspect.

FreeWillAstrology.com

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Submissions sent to Rob Breznsny's Astrology Newsletter or in response to "homework assignments" may be published in a variety of formats at Rob Breznsny'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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