



**Rob Brezsnys's Astrology Newsletter**  
**May 20, 2020**  
[FreeWillAstrology.com](http://FreeWillAstrology.com)

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We are in a collective Dark Night of the Soul, where all the stories are scrambled into one messy and incomprehensible Zen Riddle. One set of useful responses:

- \* Don't go numb
- \* Be willing to dwell with poise and grace amidst the fear and uncertainty
- \* Don't indulge in primitive, runaway thinking that concocts crazy stories
- \* Stay anchored in the quizzical here and now

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Dear Readers

You've been so extraordinarily kind to me lately! Thank you for your generous donations and beautiful notes!

Here's the back story: In my last newsletter, I told you about how the alternative weekly newspapers have been suffering financially from the pandemic. I described how I've been allowing them to publish my horoscopes for free, hoping that will help them survive.

This means, of course, that none of those newspapers have been paying me, as they have done for so many years.

In response, many of you readers stepped forward to send me actual money. I've been amazed at your largesse! So many of you have also written me messages to express how much you love my work. I've been touched by the deep feelings you've conveyed.

At the risk of asking too much, I will remind you of the ways you can contribute to me:

1. Visit my Gift Page — [paypal.me/GiftsForRob](https://paypal.me/GiftsForRob) — and contribute to me now and then via the "Friends and Family" option.
2. Commit to offering me a regular donation through my Patreon page at [Patreon.com/FreeWillAstrology](https://Patreon.com/FreeWillAstrology)
3. Send checks or cash to me at P.O. Box 4400, San Rafael, CA 94913.
4. Buy my Expanded Audio Horoscopes and/or Daily Text Message Horoscopes. Go here: [RealAstrology.com](http://RealAstrology.com)

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P.S.: No pressure, though! I understand that some of you don't have enough money yourself, and it wouldn't make sense for you to give some to me.

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**REAL HOPE, NOT FAKE HOPE**

Rebecca Solnit writes: "I use the term hope because it navigates a way forward between the false certainties of optimism and of pessimism, and the complacency or passivity that goes with both.

"Optimism assumes that all will go well without our effort; pessimism assumes it's all irredeemable; both let us stay home and do nothing.

"Hope for me has meant a sense that the future is unpredictable, and that we don't actually know what will happen, but know we may be able write it ourselves.

"Hope is a belief that what we do might matter, an understanding that the future is not yet written. It's informed, astute open-mindedness about what can happen and what role we may play in it.

"Hope looks forward, but it draws its energies from the past, from knowing histories, including our victories, and their complexities and imperfections.

"It means not being the perfect that is the enemy of the good, not snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, not assuming you know what will happen when the future is unwritten, and part of what happens is up to us."

Read Rebecca Solnit's essay: [tinyurl.com/y38m3sbu](https://tinyurl.com/y38m3sbu)

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GOOD QUESTIONS FOR YOU

- Which aspects of your soulful beauty are potentially of greatest service to the world?
- How can you express your uniqueness in ways that activate your most profound generosity?
- What could you personally do to make the world a better place for our descendants?
- What are the gifts and blessings that constitute your finest legacy?
- Can you foresee yourself becoming completely committed to performing the magic that no one else can do?

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OPTIMISM  
by Jane Hirshfield

More and more I have come to admire resilience.  
 Not the simple resistance of a pillow, whose foam  
 returns over and over to the same shape,  
 but the sinuous tenacity of a tree:  
 finding the light newly blocked on one side,  
 it turns in another. A blind intelligence, true.  
 But out of such persistence arose  
 turtles, rivers, mitochondria, figs --  
 all this resinous, unretractable earth.

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WANT TO GET YOUR PERSONAL ASTROLOGICAL CHART READ?

If you want your personal chart done, I recommend a colleague whose approach to reading astrology charts closely matches my own. She's my wife, RO LOUGHRAN. Her website is [www.roloughran.com](http://www.roloughran.com).

Ro utilizes a blend of well-trained intuition, emotional warmth, and technical proficiency in horoscope interpretation. She is skilled at exploring the mysteries of your life's purpose and nurturing your connection with your own inner wisdom.

In addition to over 30 years of astrological experience, Ro has been a licensed psychotherapist for 20 years. She integrates psychological insight with astrology's cosmological perspective.

Ro is based in California, but can do phone consultations and otherwise work with you regardless of geographic boundaries.

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HOW DO WE BECOME SKILLED THINKERS?

Williams James said, "A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices."

I would add that a great many people think they are thinking when they are merely trying to rationalize their unconsciously generated and habitual feelings.

As for myself, I'm still learning how to think. Fortunately for me, I do keep improving.

I have steadily become more objective. I'm a better researcher. I'm more precise in my use of language, a better evaluator of what's factual and what's opinion-driven, more humble about my ability to grasp what's true, and more committed to seeing things as they are rather than as I would like them to be or hallucinate them to be.

I'm more truly skeptical—not faux skeptical as so many dogmatically skeptical "skeptics" are.

I'm better at formulating useful questions. I know that asking good questions is preferable to clinging to easy, pat, simplistic answers.

I've been able to critique rampant scientism, that distortion of true science, even as I make rigorous use of the scientific method, with its beautiful, clean, elegant approach to assessing the world.

My effort to become a better thinker has been hard work. None of it would have happened if I hadn't been deeply committed to becoming a better practitioner of the art of thinking.

And I still have a long way to go before I become the THINKER I could be.

What about you? How are you doing in your relationship with the art of thinking clearly?

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One person told me, reacting to my thoughts above, that she aspires to move beyond thought—to not stay in the duality of right/wrong, true/false, good/bad, which in her opinion, thinking engenders.

Here's what I said in response: In my view, it's an excellent and healthy strategy to regularly move beyond thought. We need that refreshment! But it's also crucial to have a strong thinking function, which keeps my discernment strong.

For me, using the thinking function does the opposite of shunting me into dualism. It gives me a sense of the complicated nuance of everything in the world, and makes me less likely to try to pigeonhole phenomena into simplistic categories.

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CITIZEN OF DARK TIMES  
by Kim Stafford

Agenda in a time of fear: Be not afraid.  
When things go wrong, do right.

Set out by the half-light of the seeker.  
For the well-lit problem begins to heal.

Learn tropism toward the difficult.  
We have not arrived to explain, but to sing.

Young idealism ripens into an ethical life.  
Prune back regret to let faith grow.

When you hit rock bottom, dig farther down.  
Grief is the seed of singing, shame the seed of song.

Keep seeing what you are not saying.  
Plunder your reticence.

Songbird guards a twig,  
its only weapon a song.

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#### INTERNATIONAL CRYING WEEK

This is International Crying Week. You have a poetic license to sob, mourn, lament, blubber, and weep because of deep sadness or unreasonable joy or cathartic epiphanies or compassion for the suffering of others or visions of the interconnectedness of all life.

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My friend Marika regards her crying spells as surrogate orgasms. They bring a surging release of pent-up emotions, and leave her deeply relaxed and in love with life.

Another friend, Ariane, weeps now and then out of self-pity, but more often her sobs are triggered by overwhelming beauty, like the sight of a dragonfly alighting beside her as she gazes on Mt. Tamalpais at dusk.

Myself, I experience my tears as a well-earned triumph, whether they're driven by loss or fullness; they're the sign of the inner work I've done to feel things deeply.

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In his book *Crying: the Natural and Cultural History of Tears*, Tom Lutz asserts that people don't cry as much as they used to. The English of the Victorian era, supposedly renowned for their stuffy behavior, put us to shame with their abundant outpouring of tears.

So what's our excuse? There's as much, if not more, to be mournful about nowadays; and we certainly don't suffer from a lack of events to spur our cathartic joy and empathy.

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Would you like to volunteer to do something about the modern weeping deficit? Because of our current Global Healing Crisis, you now have rich opportunities to unleash extra tears.

Experiment: Walk into the hills or woods and find a large rock jutting up out of the earth in a place that makes you feel at home. Sit down on or next to that rock and let go of the tightly wound emotions you've been holding onto. Sob or sigh until you achieve a spiritual release that will free your mind and heart to feel uninhibited compassion for our global predicament.

Ever hereafter you will call this the Crying Rock, and you will go there whenever you need the kind of release that only a beloved natural power spot can facilitate.

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Rambunctious singer Tom Waits is not known for his scientific research, but a few years ago he made a valuable contribution in the quest to measure sadness.

Holding a spoon to his cheek during an especially blue period of his life, he found that it takes 121 teardrops to fill a teaspoon.

Building on his work, I've discovered that crying for joy causes a spoon to overflow after only 98 tears, suggesting that they're bigger.

I invite you to do further studies on this subject. Tap into watery breakthroughs of several varieties, ranging from the relatively poignant to the outrageously sublime.

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In Janet Fitch's novel *White Oleander*, a character makes a list of "twenty-seven names for tears," including "Heartdew. Griefhoney. Sadwater. Die tränen. Eau de douleur. Los rios del corazón."

(The last three can be translated as "The Tears," "Water of Pain," and "The Rivers of the Heart.")

I invite you to emulate this playfully extravagant approach to the art of crying. Now is an excellent time to celebrate and honor your sadness, as well as all the other rich emotions that provoke tears. You'll be wise to feel profound gratitude for your capacity to feel so deeply.

For best results, go in search of experiences and insights that will unleash the full cathartic power of weeping. Act as if empathy is a superpower.

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#### BYPASSING BYPASSING

If your path to so-called spiritual "enlightenment" or "growth" or "evolution" doesn't lead you to have more of a capacity to witness and acknowledge the suffering of your fellow humans, then it's not enlightenment, growth or evolution; it's "BYPASS."

—Andrew Strowbridge



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**WOULD YOU LIKE FURTHER INSPIRATION?**

My Expanded Audio Horoscopes offer suggestions about how you might make best use of your time as you navigate your way through our Shared Healing Crisis.

To buy and listen to your Expanded Audio Horoscope online, go to [RealAstrology.com](http://RealAstrology.com)

Register and/or log in through the main page.

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The cost is \$6 per sign. (Discounts are available for bulk purchases.)

You can also access the horoscopes for \$1.99 per minute by phone at 1-877-873-4888.

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"I always feel like I know myself better after listening to your audio 'scopes."  
-June R., Austin, TX

"Your audio horoscopes calm me down when I'm too manic and pep me up when I'm down."  
-Arthur T., Cleveland, OH

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

I'm sad that my two favorite 19th-century poets were unfamiliar with each other's poetry. Walt Whitman was 11 years older than Emily Dickinson, but didn't know her work. Dickinson had heard of Whitman, but didn't read his stuff. Their styles were indeed very different: hers intimate, elliptical, psychologically acute; his expansive, gregarious, earthy. But they were alike in being the most innovative American poets of their time, and equally transgressive in their disregard for standard poetic forms. If there were such a thing as time travel, I'd send one of you Sagittarians back to set up a meeting between them. Acts of innovative blending and creative unifying will be your specialties in the coming weeks.

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

The fictional character Sherlock Holmes (born January 6, and thus a Capricorn) is a brilliant logician and acute observer who has astonishing crime-solving skills. On the other hand, according to his friend Dr. Watson, he "knows next to nothing" about "contemporary literature, philosophy, and politics." So he's not a well-rounded person. He's smart in some ways, dumb in others. Most of us fit that description. We are both brilliant and ignorant; talented and inept; interesting and boring. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, the coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to hone and cultivate the less mature aspects of your own nature. I bet you'll reap rich rewards by doing so.

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

"People become like what they love," observed theologian St. Catherine of Siena. That'll be an interesting truth for you to meditate on in the coming weeks. You'll attract experiences that are intense reflections of the kind of love you have cultivated and expressed for quite some time. You'll be blessed in ways similar to the ways you have blessed. You'll be challenged with questions about love that you have not been dealing with. And here's a promise for the future: You'll have the opportunity to refine and deepen your approach to love so as to transform yourself into more of the person you'd like to become.

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

"Humanity is a mystery," wrote author Fyodor Dostoevsky. "The mystery needs to be unraveled, and if you spend your whole life unraveling it, you haven't wasted your time. I am studying that mystery because I want to be a complete human being." I love this tender perspective on the preciousness of the Great Riddle we're all immersed in. It's especially useful and apropos for you to adopt right now, Pisces, because you are undergoing an unusually deep and intense communion with the mystery. As you marinate, you shouldn't measure your success and good fortune by how much new understanding you have attained, but rather by how much reverence and gratitude you feel and how stirring your questions are.

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

"Excellence does not require perfection," wrote Aries author Henry James. Now I'm conveying this brilliant counsel to you—just in time for the season when it will make good sense to strive for shining excellence without getting bogged down in a debilitating quest for perfection. Have fun re-committing yourself to doing the best you can, Aries, even as you refuse to be tempted by the unprofitable lure of absolute purity and juvenile forms of idealism.

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

To generate an ounce of pure cocaine, you must collect 52 pounds of raw coca leaf and work hard to transform it. But please don't do that. Fate won't be on your side if you do. However, I will suggest that you consider undertaking a metaphorically comparable process—by gathering a sizable amount of raw material or basic stuff that will be necessary to produce the small treasure or precious resource that you require.

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**HOMEWORK:**

What has been your favorite lesson during our Global Healing Crisis? [FreeWillAstrology.com](http://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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