

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

by Rob Brezsny forAug. 27-Sept. 2

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Our sun doesn't really have a name. The word "sun" is a generic term that can refer to any of trillions of stars. So I'd like to propose that you come up with a name for it. It could be a nickname or a title, like "Big Singer" or "Aurora Rex" or "Joy Shouter" or "Renaldo." I hope this exercise will get you in the mood to find names for a whole host of other underidentified things in your life, like the mysterious feelings that are swirling around inside you right now and your longings for experiences that don't exist yet and your dreams about the elusive blessings you want so badly.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): The odometer will turn over soon, metaphorically speaking. The big supply of the stuff you stocked up on a while back is about to run out. The lessons you began studying a year ago have been completed, at least for now, and you're not yet ready for the next round of teachings. These are just some of the indicators that suggest you should set aside time for reflection and evaluation. The world may come pounding at your door, demanding that you make a dramatic declaration or take decisive action, but in my opinion you should stall. You need to steep in this pregnant pause.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Most discussions on TV news shows involve so-called experts shouting simplistic opinions at one another. They may provide some meager entertainment value but are rarely enlightening. In contrast to these paltry spectacles were the salons at Paris' Cafe Guerbois in 1869. A group of hard-working artists and writers gathered there to inspire one another. The painter Claude Monet wrote that their discussions "sharpened one's wits, encouraged frank and impartial inquiry, and provided enthusiasm that kept us going for weeks. ... One always came away feeling more involved, more determined, and thinking more clearly and distinctly." That's the kind of dynamic interaction you should seek out in abundance, Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): In the movies I've seen that depict battle scenes from hundreds of years ago, every army has numerous soldiers whose job it is to carry festive flags and pennants. If this is an accurate depiction of history, what does it mean? That powerful symbols were crucial to inspiring the troops' heroic efforts? That touches of color and beauty lifted their morale? That they were more inclined to do their best if inspired to imagine they were participating in an epic story? Whether or not my theories apply to what actually happened back then, they apply to you now. As you go forth to fight for what you believe in, bring your equivalent of an evocative emblem.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Using a radio telescope, astronomers at Germany's Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy have been scanning the center of the galaxy. They're looking for evidence of amino acids that could be the building blocks of life. So far their hunt has been inconclusive. In my opinion, though, they've stumbled upon an even more appealing discovery: The huge dust cloud at the heart of the Milky Way, they say, tastes like raspberries and smells like rum. That's the kind of switcheroo I predict for you in the upcoming weeks, Capricorn. You may not locate the smoking gun you're hoping to find, but in the process of searching I bet you'll hook up with something even better.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Each one of us is a blend of life and death. In the most literal sense, our bodies always contain old cells that are dying and new cells that are emerging as replacements. From a more metaphorical perspective, our familiar ways of seeing and thinking and feeling are constantly atrophying, even as fresh modes emerge. Both losing and winning are woven into every day: sinking down and rising up, shrinking and expanding. In any given phase of our lives, one or the other polarity is usually more pronounced. But for you in the foreseeable future, Aquarius, they will be evenly balanced. Welcome to the season of rot and regeneration.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Allure magazine sought out Luca Turin and Tania Sanchez, the women who wrote the book *Perfumes: The A-Z Guide.* "What are the sexiest-smelling perfumes of all time?" they asked. Turin and Sanchez said Chinatown was at the top of their list. Their explanation: "If wearing Opium is like walking around with a bullhorn shouting, 'Come and get it!', Chinatown is like discreetly whispering the same thing." The Chinatown approach is what I recommend for you in the coming weeks, Pisces.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Why should you work harder than everyone else? Why is it up to you to pick up the slack when others are suffering from outbreaks of laziness and incompetence? And why should you be the fearless leader who is focused on fixing the glitches and smoothing over the rough patches when no one else seems to care whether things fall apart? I'll tell you why, Aries: because it's the karmic correction phase of your long-term cycle – a time when you can atome for past mistakes, pay off old debts, and make up for less-than-conscientious moves you got away with once upon a time.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "What is the source of our first suffering?" wrote philosopher Gaston Bachelard. "It lies in the fact that we hesitated to speak. It was born in the moment when we accumulated silent things within us." Lucklip for you, Taurus, the cosmic rhythms are aligned in such a way as to free you from at least some of that old suffering in the coming weeks. I expect that you will have more power than usual to say what you've never been able to say and express a part of you that has been buried too long.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): More than 2,000 people have climbed to the top of Mount Everest, and 12 men have walked on the moon. But only two humans have ever ventured to the lowest spot on our planet. In 1960, Jacques Piccard and Donald Walsh rode in a bathyscaphe all the way down to the Mariana Trench, which is almost 7 miles beneath the surface of the Pacific Ocean. Your assignment in the coming weeks, Gemini, is to move in their direction, metaphorically speaking. In my astrological opinion, ascending and soaring shouldn't be on your agenda. It's time to dive into the mysterious depths.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): I propose that we do to Mercury what astronomers did to Pluto in 2006: demote it. After all, it's smaller than both Saturn's moon Titan and Jupiter's moon Ganymede. Who wants to bestow the majestic title of "planet" on such a piddling peewee? In fact, let's make the change now, just in time for Mercury's retrograde phase, which began recently. That way we won't have to get all riled up about the supposedly disruptive effects this aspect portends. How could a barren runt like Mercury stir up any kind of meaningful ruckus? I hereby declare you free and clear of the whole Mercury retrograde superstition. Please proceed on the assumption that the period between now and Sept. 12 will be an excellent time to deepen and refine your communication with anyone you care about.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): A Chinese company reached out to me by e-mail today. "Dear Sir," the message began, "As the leading professional conveyor belt manufacturers in Shanghai, we present to you our very best sincere regards, desiring to find out if there is a chance for us to be your top-rate conveyor belt supplier." I wrote back, thanking them for their friendly inquiry. I said that personally I didn't have any need of conveyor belts right now, but I told them I would check with my Leo readers to see if they might. According to my reading of the astrological omens, you see, you're entering a time when it makes sense to expand and refine your approach to work. It'll be a good time, for example, to get more efficient and step up production. So how about it? Do you need any conveyor belts?

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