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From the **Publisher**



Here is part three of our 2020 theme "BEING", where our cover and content continues to feature various members of our community who represent their true identity; being gay, lesbian, trans, 2-Spirit, non-conforming, non-binary, bisexual, pansexual, and asexual.

In this issue we give platform to our non-conforming and non-binary community.

The web explains childhood gender nonconformity (CGN) as a phenomenon in which prepubescent children do not conform to expected gender-related sociological or psychological patterns, or identify with the opposite sex/gender. The gender binary, also referred to as gender binarism (sometimes shortened to just binarism), is the classification of sex and gender into two distinct, opposite and disconnected forms of masculine and feminine. Gender binary is one general type of a gender system.

To me understanding the difference is important and respectful, but more importantly it allows people to be who they are and how they feel.

Now about the season. I have been a little isolated during summer as I am really

incredibly careful about keeping up my health and strength to handle all the work I have to tend to in all our media platforms. It is fall, I love this time of the year; the colours, the brisk cool air, the leisurely walks with my dog Cowboy, the little bit warmer clothes, are giving me a lot of enjoyment.

Halloween is also here. To me that marks the start of my annual full month of watching horror movies every night. To be honest as much as I love it, by the end of month I am sick of being scared LOL. But it is one of those things I like to do to test my limits. As for parties and the Village annual festival, it will not be the same this year, but that is okay. We have to stay safe, and the better we do, the faster we can get back to celebrating together.

Enjoy this edition and have a safe Autumn :)

Antoine Elhashem
Publisher
publisher@pinkplaymags.com

Contributors

Writers: Aaron Rothermund, Liana Cusmano, Bee Dee, Jon Pressick, Kelly Wilk, Sherry Sylvain, Mychol Scully, Julie Antoinette, Bryen Dunn



Cover BEING... Non-binary & Non-conforming
Concept & Creative Direction Antoine Elhashem
Photography Shawn McGowan-Leaver
Representing our community
In the middle:

Robyn DeCradle – Non-Binary
Dan Bowen aka Brad Puddin aka Maya Naise
— Non-conforming

Rest of the group from left to right:

Amy Vaughan-Dolson – Asexual
Alia Carrerra – Bisexual
Marisa Rosa Grant – Lesbian
Mary Sue Robinet - 2Spirit
Ryan Bince – Gay
Marisa Cimadamore – Pansexual
Jeanette Jabier AKA Jeanette Dupree - Transsexual

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From the Editor



Greetings and salutations!

Continuing in our series of features on the topic of "Being...", this issues delves into the categories of Non Binary, Gender Non-Conforming, Gender Queer, and Asexual, taking a look at what this means in society.

Our main feature is written by **Aaron Rothermund**, and takes a look at the various pronouns and identities that have taken on more significance and acceptance over the past several years. The word is out that the world is not so binary anymore.

Our second feature is written by artist, **Liana Cusmano**, and delves into the way artists view themselves, and how this often reflects through the works

they create as well. Proving the fact that art knows no gender.

We also spotlight artist **Jess Sheridan**, and community organization **Casey House**, and offer some scary words from **Bee Dee** just in time for Halloween. As always, we give you our quarterly horoscopes, and the always inspiring *From The Heart* piece written by **Mychol Scully**.

With the current state of things around the world, our event listings are still primarily happening in the virtual world, however our Events Editor, **Sherry Sylvain**, has come up with a few taking place in the real world as well.

Finally, while travelling isn't at the top of mind for most people right now, we can still dream and plan for the future. Our special **Travel Supplement** has information on *Travelling During a Pandemic*, *Ontario: Yours to Discover*, and *A Chat with Air Canada*.

Thanks for being here with us, and enjoy the read!

Bryen Dunn
Editor-in-Chief
editor@pinkplaymags.com

“Being... Non-Binary/Non-Conforming”

By Aaron Rothermund

As I began to write this feature on aspects of the non-conforming and/or non-binary experiences, it happens to be *International Non-Binary People's Day*, which was first celebrated July 14th 2012, and sits proudly within *Non-Binary Awareness Week*, July 12th – 18th.

Gender identity is someone's internal sense of themselves as male, female, or an alternative – not to be confused with gender roles, as that refers to behaviors, attitudes, and personality traits assigned to a male or a female at birth. The term non-binary means a spectrum of gender identities, which are not solely masculine or feminine, and may (or may not) fall under the umbrella term of “trans.” They may (or may not) be CIS-gendered, as gender identity can be ever changing, because gender (unlike sex) is not exclusively linked to our biological body.

Being non-binary means you express yourself in a mixture that is both (or neither) masculine and feminine. Some non-conforming and non-binary people have pronouns that they use, and may feel unacknowledged if misrepresented. Others use all pronouns, or are most comfortable using “me.”

For me personally, I'm a gender non-conforming “man,” because I was raised to behave in a way that was according to the principles of a “man.” I turned to the queer community in hope of finding my way out of the strict rules of civility, which led to me performing drag. In many queer spaces I felt misunderstood or fraudulent, because I couldn't describe my gender or sexual orientation. I was often dismissed as “confused.”

I was presenting emotionally complex characters on stage, and yet I felt like a stranger in my own body. Instead of forcing myself to have the answer, I began to sit with my thoughts, and I

listened. As I began to embrace all my pronouns I became more authentic in my acting career, and emotionally mature in my personal life.

Celebrity Representation

Many popular celebrities have spoken out about being non-binary, including *Indya Moore* (Producer, Writer, Director), **Ruby Rose** (Boxer, Model, Actor), **Janelle Monae** (Singer, Model, Actor), and **Sam Smith** (Grammy Award winning singer.) In the case of trans filmmakers, the **Wachowskis** being in control of their projects led to the innovation of a new camera movement and angle fluidity for, *The Matrix*, and the creation of trans and non-binary characters in, *Sense8*.

Another proud non-binary person empowered by their perspective is **Rebecca Sugar**, creator of the critically acclaimed, *Steve Universe*, which is an animated series on the Cartoon Network that has multiple gender non-conforming/non-binary characters. **Kaitlyn Alexander** is a non-binary actor and *You Tube* personality that plays a non-binary character in the popular web-series, *Carmilla*, and, *The Carmilla Movie*. They credit this role as instrumental in developing a better understanding of their own gender identity.

Asia Kate Dillon became one of the first non-binary actors to play two non-binary main characters on-screen in, *Billions*, and, *John Wick: Chapter 3*. In 2017, Asia engaged in a conversation with the *Emmy* Board of Directors, asking for clarification on the definition of the actor and actress categories. On May 7, 2017, the organization presented the first gender-neutral acting award to **Emma Watson**, at the *MTV Movie & TV Awards*.

On June 10th, 2020, Asia sent a letter to the *Screen Actors Guild* to ask for the immediate combination of gendered acting awards. She stated, “Separating people based on their assigned sex, and/or their gender identity, is not only irrelevant when it comes to how an acting performance should be judged, it is also a form of discrimination.”

As there's an increase in media representation, it's essential for non-conforming and non-binary people to hold key jobs in writing, directing

and producing our own stories. This way we can start conversations with our production teams about portraying our gender identity on-screen without fear of rejection, mockery, or damage to our careers. As the industry changes to be more inclusive of gender expression and identity we will see new stories emerge, and with them new ways of storytelling. Being freed from categories and stereotypes will permit a rebirth of emotional vulnerability in performances, which may lead to new avenues of thought, and produce a deeper emotional relief.

In trying to better understand myself I had to look inward, and then reach outward to find a positive non-binary / non-conforming media representative. I needed to find someone who is brave in their gender expression, engaged in the artistic practice, and present in their gender identity.

Meet Esther Stellar

performer, model, singer, and fight coordinator for film and theatre

I grew up in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing before moving to my place of birth, what we currently call Canada, in 2014. I write, sing, fight, and educate others on ways to safely do the same. I'm most active on my Instagram @esther.esthim

Do you self-identify as non-binary? What pronouns would you use?

I'd say I'm trans and non-binary. That is the best way to describe the fact that I do not have a gender, while also feeling like my genderlessness is sometimes a gender in and of itself. So I feel my non-binaryness is both under, and sometimes not under, the trans umbrella. In that way I'd also call myself gender fluid! Or maybe gender-nonconforming is the best way to sum it up. Truly, who cares: mostly, I just call myself a person.

I use any and all pronouns. They just feel like a hurdle to get over—especially in the English-speaking language, and many other gendered languages, because they have come to enforce the binary no matter what. But that is not as pervasive in other languages. For example, in Mandarin (my second language), the spoken pronoun

“ta” is pretty indistinguishable between “they,” “him,” and “her”—it’s just a difference of tones. This illustrates that the concept of pronouns and gender are shaped by culture, and is also a reminder that our Earth is vast and English is just one language. It is also a language of the colonizer, so maybe we shouldn’t trust it so much all the time.

What does being outside of the gender binary mean to you?

Being outside looking in absolutely gives one a different perspective. I believe it opens my mind, heart, and soul to a whole new way of thinking and being. Existing in peripheries, liminalities, and divestments of something, often allows us to see it more for what it really is. To me, in the way gender is defined in the mainstream right now is white supremacist poison. It is choking the life out of us, and yet we still hold onto it with a choke hold. It’s time to really investigate the stake we have in the binary/ Why is something that has made us fit ourselves into an impossible box something we long to continue serving?

Were you able to use your unique perspective to your advantage?

Being non-binary allows me to think more critically of ways we engage in binary thinking in general—a form of thinking drilled into us by white supremacy, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism, which is often at the expense of our joy, freedom, peace, and life.

Were you able to access support / resources?

I grew up in an incredibly conservative Christian community in the middle of China, so no. I did not have resources. I only had the closeted queer, trans, and non-binary people I briefly crossed paths with, and my own internal compass telling me that my way of viewing myself and the world was worth investigating. Upon moving to Canada, things began to open up, but Canada, in some ways, was more binary than China. There is a large trans community in China that I didn’t know about while living there (refer back to conservative Christian community), not to mention the different way we use language (refer back to spoken pronouns in Mandarin.)

Mostly, the support and resources I have are from my trans and non-binary siblings— their books, their talks, and their art. And the more I unpack my own internalized white supremacy, the more I am especially able to learn from my Black Trans siblings, my 2Spirit siblings, and my gender non-conforming siblings from all around the world.

Where do you see the state of gender in 25 years?

I have no idea! I’m not a gender theorist—just a gender non-conformist. Although I have looked into the history of trans, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming peoples, it is so vast and I will always have more to learn about the history and future of living outside the binary. Although I see shifts in our society, I think gender is something that has such a hold on us. That being said, I don’t vilify gender or think it is irrelevant. Gender is just one way we express ourselves, and that can be beautiful. We’ve seen the beauty because of Trans, non-binary, and 2Spirit peoples who breathe new life into gender, and/or divest from it completely! The white supremacist delusion of binary needs to fall. I believe it gradually releases its hold on us as we work to build new ways of being together.

Instagram @esther.esthim

Note: Esther’s thoughts and ideas are heavily influenced by the work of so many people: **Sonya Renee Taylor, Tiffany Jana, Layla Saad, and Pam Palmater**—to name a few.

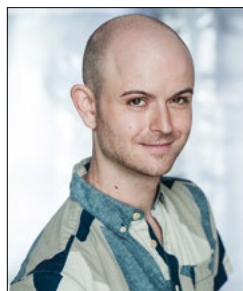
Aaron Rothermund wrote, directed, and produced two plays, *Ambiguous* and *Charming Monsters*. Aaron made three films as part of the Script to Screen program at Centennial College. *Power Lines* and *Love Wins* are currently touring Canada, UK, and the US. *Respect* was chosen as the main class project, to be released in 2021.

Since graduating Aaron co-directed the film, *Surprise in the Night* and produced, *Baby Fever*, which will be released in 2022.

Instagram: @aarrow

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Art Has No Gender

Non-Binary Artists and Queerness as Visibility

By Liana Cusmano



Ezechiel

"As humans, we desperately search for connection. We want to be understood, to not feel alone," explains artist, singer and songwriter, **Ezechiel**. "The artist has the incredible power to connect and to unite. Despite this, I think it's important not to offer yourself up, body and soul, to an audience that might not always be receptive. That's an unfortunate risk when you're being vulnerable."

Artists often expose themselves to their audience in the interest of making a connection, one that is only possible with vulnerability. Similarly, when queer and trans people, including non-binary individuals, come out - over and over again - they make themselves vulnerable in order to be true to who they are. The quality of the ensuing connection between them and the person they're coming out to can vary tremendously, but the act of coming out itself remains a form of exposure, and sometimes a huge risk.



Nick Saanto

Being queer means something different to everyone, and so does being non-binary. Simply by virtue of not identifying with the gender they were assigned at birth, non-binary people fall under the trans umbrella, although not all of them will

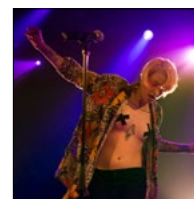
identify as trans. According to multidisciplinary artist **Nick Saanto**, "Some people's gender identity will fluctuate with the seasons. One moment I feel more masculine, then it's the divine feminine. Most times it's multiple variants making a whole, not really one or the other."

Others, like Ezechiel, see themselves as "adrogyné, but with an inclination that's more feminine than masculine." Adrogyné refers to a person who does not fit cleanly into the typical gender roles of their society. For queer artists, art and identity intersect in different and complex ways, although everyone has a different definition of what it means to be queer, and of what limits they place on their vulnerability.

Non-binary artist and singer-songwriter **Narcisse**, for example, has a different perspective than Ezechiel, setting no limits for himself: "It's crucial for me to be as vulnerable as possible on stage, in the studio, and in my writing. I want to be as real as possible." Saanto agrees, "There is no such thing as being too vulnerable, especially in relating lived experiences." Music videos, live performances, lyrics, and dance are all vehicles for a vulnerability that's intended to impact an audience. A queer artist's vulnerable expression of their identity through their work can in fact be seen as a perpetual coming out.

The artist's stereotype is that many of us are self-absorbed, overly-emotional, and often preoccupied with our own little worlds at the

expense of everything and everyone else. For many artists this isn't exactly untrue. But what a lot of people forget is that an artist's performance, of any kind, especially when they're queer, not only requires heaps of courage, but also calls for an introspection, a self-awareness, and a process of exploration that then manifests itself in the artwork. Our favourite films, music, and poetry move us because someone took the time, and often the courage, to express a feeling or a lived experience that we can relate to. And for a lot of artists, expressing their marginalized identity through their work is a way not only of coming to terms with who they are, but of finding themselves after years of shame, fear, and hiding.



Narcisse

Sharing that experience often inspires others to do the same. As Narcisse explains, "Art has been at the centre of discovering my identity. Thanks to music, writing lyrics, and prose, I've been able to deepen what I was experiencing through an introspection, which was directed by my creativity. I really understood what being non-binary was while writing my first EP, and certain songs touch on my transition to this new life." In a society that has conditioned us to fit into boxes that aren't always right for us, non-normative identities can be a source of interrogation. As Ezechiel remarks, "In the end, self-acceptance can only happen once we really know ourselves."

Artists run the unfortunate risk of being boxed in or limited by labels, having their body of work being reduced to a single subject or theme. "Queer means different, odd, weird, and all those variations do help to define who I am," states Saanto, but "I don't believe words box me in. If anything they help people who don't know my reality to somewhat understand, or even to a certain extent, know what to expect when they see me." On being labelled a queer artist, Narcisse explains that it can in fact limit him, but largely because, "existence in itself can make people feel confused and uncomfortable. People in positions of authority have asked that I censor myself to appeal to a crowd," - requests he tends to refuse.

Coordinates

Nick Saanto:

www.facebook.com/NickSaantoOfficial/

www.instagram.com/nicksaanto

Narcisse:

www.facebook.com/narcisse.pedneault

www.instagram.com/narcisse.calice

Ezechiel:

[www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/Ezechiel-2504983266220844)

[Ezechiel-2504983266220844](https://www.facebook.com/Ezechiel-2504983266220844)

www.instagram.com/ezechieldeforest

Saanto adds, "I believe there's so much more to a person than their gender, and I do believe that gender is fluid. Gender is shaped by the experience of emotions, and how a person allows themselves to feel. It's therefore related to everything I touch upon in my music, and so much more". For Ezechiel, the themes he explores are a critical part of his work taken all together, and the work itself is, "a way to capture an interior moment in a form that becomes both consumable and alive."

These queer and non-binary artists explore mental health, love, solitude, religion, family, the ego, dysphoria, self-sabotage, and queer reinterpretations of Greek myths. Their work is made up of explorations that go beyond queer and non-binary identity, but remain informed by it.

The lived experience of non-binary artists allows them to comment on their marginalized identities, but never in a way that is one-dimensional or within a vacuum. Their art depends on a vulnerability that allows for a deeper connection, both within themselves, and with those of us who consume their work and see ourselves within it.

Liana Cusmano is a writer, poet, filmmaker, and spoken word artist. Their work touches on heritage, queerness, relationships, and mental health, and their aim is to help others feel both seen and safe. Projects include, *La Femme Finale*, and *Matters of Great Unimportance*.



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TRAVELLING DURING A PANDEMIC

By Bryen Dunn

The New Normal in Travel

So here we are, six months into the pandemic, and how things have changed. Adapting to any change can be both disruptive and stressful, and each and everyone of us has had to deal with these current circumstances in our own unique ways. For those of us who love to travel, that means perhaps putting off those international destinations for now and looking more locally for ways to scratch that travel itch. Now, as summer winds its way down, it may well be the first winter for many without an escape to the sunny south. Again, it's a time of change, so let's make the best of where we are at.

Oh Canada

While this past summer saw a surge in outdoor pursuits, which led to unprecedented sales of [bicycles, RV's and boats](#), it will soon be time to put these into storage as winter approaches. Will we see the same increase in winter related sports equipment, such as skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and ice skating? Also, this year saw a sharp increase in campground reservations, and there's no need to stop because summer is ending. Many provincial parks offer a variety of year-

round accommodations, from yurts and huts, to cabins and chalets.

Melanie Joly, the *Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages*, recently announced over \$110 million in support for Canadian tourism. This includes \$30 million for domestic marketing through [Destination Canada](#). Joly stated, "While it has always promoted Canada abroad, which is what the money was originally earmarked for, COVID-19 has spurred us to refocus Destination Canada towards domestic travel, one of the first times it will actually be marketing Canada to Canadians."

A new [Expedia Canada micro-site](#) provides an easily discoverable Canadian presence within the Expedia family's extensive brand portfolio, which includes some of the world's leading online travel brands. Over the last several months, Destination Canada has worked closely with their partners in all thirteen provinces and territories, as well as, [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](#) and the [Canadian Ski Council](#) to develop a highly functional and robust content hub. This will make destination selection, planning, and booking easier for visitors now, and in the future. Destination Canada has also put together a series of "Canada

Nice" videos to help you in planning your next Canadian Escape.

The [Canadian Travel & Tourism Roundtable](#) is another organization working to keep tourism going. It's comprised of leaders across the travel and tourism industry, with representatives across the country from airlines, airports, hotels, and chambers of commerce. Highlights include safety measures, a list of places available to travel to, and what restrictions each destination has in place.

What's New?

Travel tech company [Pilota](#) has launched a new product to keep air travelers safe as they book their flights and begin flying again. The product, **FlySafe**, is a free browser extension that shows travelers which safety precautions are being taken on each flight as they shop for travel. The product allows users to easily compare flight safety, health and flexibility precautions on the booking sites they are already using, like *Google Flights*, *Expedia* and others. To make the process of comparing and considering flights easier, it even allows users to save the flights they are interested in, compare them across websites, get flight status, price changes, and much more all in one place.

As we enter new phases of reopening it's important to protect ourselves from germs and viruses that may collect on our personal items (phone, face masks, wallet, glasses etc.). The [Coral UV 3-in-1 Sterilizer](#) is a compact, UV-C sterilizer that provides an easy and chemical free solution for sanitizing and drying everyday items. Coral UV uses a high energy, UV-C ray that breaks down the DNA of bacteria and germs and disrupts their ability to reproduce in as little as 10 minutes. Coral UV is one of the only UV brands that publicly discloses their third-party testing results of a 99.9% bacteria kill rate on their website.

Still Want to Fly?

So you've done all there is to do locally and aren't a fan of long road trips. What next? Well, if you're not opposed to jumping on a plane, you still can. In fact there are more people flying than the media would have you think. There are plenty of deals to be had right now, not only on flights, but hotels, vacation packages, and tourist attractions.

Younger travellers may be the key to tourism's immediate recovery, says a newly released survey by online marketplace **TourRadar**, which reports that 42 percent of respondents under the age of 35 still hope to travel in 2020. They are also less inclined than other demographic groups to wait for a COVID-19 vaccine or acquired immunity before doing so. Comparatively, the June travel habits poll of 5,000 TourRadar global email subscribers in English-speaking markets including Canada, says only 28% of those over 55 years still hope to travel this year.

"The tourism industry is experiencing a rapid shift in its marketing focus for the immediate future," says TourRadar CMO Christian Wolters. "Travellers over the age of 55 have been a driving force for tourism over the past decade, but when it comes to travel's recovery, 18 to 34-year-olds will lead the way in the short term."

Obviously, travelling within one's own country is likely your best bet at the moment, however international destinations are still welcoming visitors. Just be aware that each country will have their own unique restrictions and regulations in place, which may mean quarantining upon arrival, and upon your return home.

[Fit-to-Fly](#) health certificates are needed for many destinations around the world and you need to sort it out before you arrive at your destination. The best source of information regarding flying regulations is the [official government immigration website](#).

Whether you decide to travel local or further abroad, one thing is certain – travel has changed. Be open-minded, courteous, respectful, and stay safe.

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities.



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A Word From Air Canada spokesperson, Peter Fitzgerald, Manager, Corporate Communications

by Bryen Dunn

The biggest concern most individuals now have with flying is the decision AC made to discontinue having the middle seat blocked on flights. In lieu of this policy, AC will be providing notification to confirmed passengers booked on flights that will be departing (almost) at capacity, and passengers will then have the opportunity to change to a different flight at no cost. This is in addition to the enhanced safety protocols being implemented, including use of HEPA filters on board, along with individual packages of hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, ear buds, a snack, and bottled water.

Despite this, there are reports of several flights cited as having flown with someone onboard who later tested positive with the virus. Can you offer some input on this?

The reports you are seeing are based on Government of Canada notifications that are issued when health authorities discover someone who has recently travelled on a plane, train or cruise ship has been diagnosed with COVID-19. We have not seen any change in the level of such incidents since we ended our adjacent seat policy (which from the outset was introduced as a temporary measure). I invite you to follow up with Health Canada on this, but it is important to understand these incidents do not mean the individual contracted COVID-19 while on board.

In fact, transmission of communicable diseases on board aircraft is exceedingly rare. As evidence, consider that what are called "cluster outbreaks", where a group of people contract a disease at the same time and location. These are rarely if ever

tied to modes of travel, whereas you often see reports of outbreaks arising from funerals, bars or other gatherings. [This article](#) is quite informative on this topic.

How much more can an airline do to ensure some form of safety and assurance that it's okay to fly again?

We have adopted and, in many cases, led in implementing [best practices](#) for ensuring the safest possible journey for our customers and our crew. The approach is based on the agreed understanding that no single measure (such as social distancing) provides 100% protection, and instead it is most effective to take a multi-layered approach. For us that means instituting measures at all stages of the journey. This includes, remote check-in and baggage tagging procedures so customers can do these things "touchless-ly" at the airport. Customers are asked a series of screening questions to ensure they are fit to fly and we also take customers' temperatures. We require face coverings throughout the journey, we supply sanitizer and wipes in our care kits, and, to the extent possible, during gate and boarding procedures we promote social distancing. As well, we have revised our on-board service to minimize interactions and adopted new cleaning protocols. Finally, aircraft in our fleet are equipped with [HEPA filters](#), which purify the air to hospital operating room standards. More information on safety procedures can be found [here](#).

As far as what more can be done, we continue to look for new technologies and procedures as they



become available and are shown to be effective. As part of this, we are also seeking and establishing partnerships with medical organizations and companies who can supply added expertise, that includes recently announced agreements with Spartan and the Cleveland Clinic. In fact, well before the pandemic even occurred, we had partnered early last year with a company called Blue Dot, which monitors worldwide outbreaks of disease, and this gave us advance warning of COVID-19, which factored into our early decision to withdraw from the China market ahead of most other carriers.

Are you currently, or contemplating, offering any booking incentives to travellers, by way of seat sales, or any other value-added perks?

At this point, to facilitate a return of travel our focus is on ensuring that travel restrictions within Canada and to certain international destinations be eased in a responsible, measured way consistent with good medical science. Apart from this, we have continued to run promotions that offer great deals for travel.

Are you offering confirmed passengers the opportunity to upgrade seat categories/class of service, or change their seats at the time of check in or once on board within the cabin to allow for greater distancing?

Customers can upgrade through our normal processes. In certain cases, if possible, gate agents will also reassign seats, and once on board we will also relocate within their original cabin to the extent possible consistent with safety and other considerations.

TIP: Air Canada often offers the opportunity to bid on upgrades to either their Comfort Class or Business Class cabins prior to departure. For longer haul flights, this is money well spent. As well, booking a bulkhead or exit row seat in

advance is an economical way of getting yourself more space on a flight.

In terms of AC facts and figures, what routes are currently flying at greatest capacity and regularity within Canada, and internationally? Are you seeing any increase in demand since the pandemic first began, and if so, is this more for leisure or business traffic?

Because we are a public company, we do not disclose capacity and traffic information outside of our quarterly financial reporting (the second quarter was reported July 29). We have said that our expectation is that domestic leisure and family travel will resume first with business travel to follow.

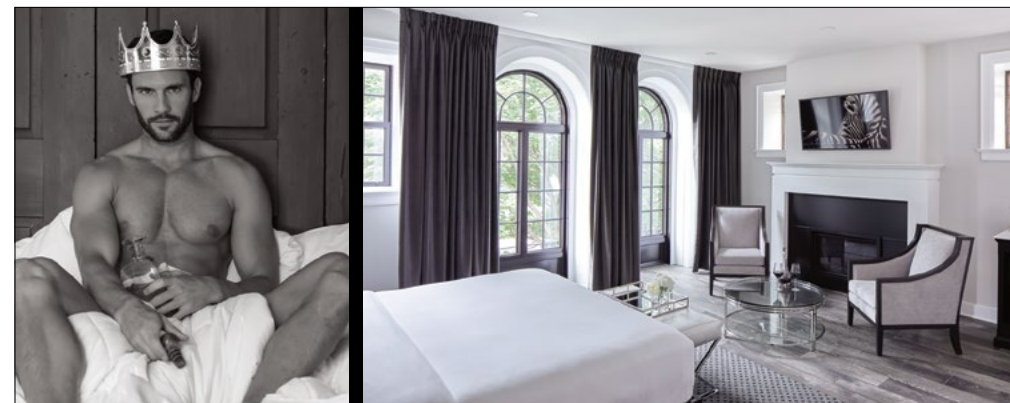
Note: The Toronto-Vancouver route is one of the busiest in the AC network domestically, after the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal triangle.

Are your Maple Leaf lounges open again at all Canadian airports? What precautions have been put in place there to help ensure the safety and well-being of guests?

Lounges are reopening with special bio-safety measures put in place.

Note: Access is granted to select frequent travellers, however there are often promotions from credit card companies, and the airline itself that will allow others in on occasion. A great way to begin your journey before take off!

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities.



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Ontario – Yours To Discover

by Bryen Dunn

Spending time outdoors is said to be one of the fastest ways to increase one's mood and happiness levels. Ontario Heritage Trust's [Doors Open Ontario](#) wants to help Canadians not only spend time outdoors, but also discover historic Ontario destinations. See below for five attractions that are now offering in-person experiences that are perfect for day trips, adventures and mini-getaways.

[Warsaw Caves](#) are located near Peterborough and were created by glacial activity at the end of the last ice age over 10,000 years ago. This conservation area is filled with trails, and great for camping and canoeing.

[Sleeping Giant Provincial Park](#) is a massive lakeside park near Thunder Bay that offers breathtaking views of Lake Superior. This majestic beauty was appropriately named for its resemblance to a sleeping giant.

[Flora Gorge](#) is a spectacular natural area, located in the Grand River Valley and just north of Guelph. These scenic, riverside trails overlook views of the water below where kayakers and canoeists make their way through the rapids.

[Niagara Falls](#) is one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the world, known both for its scenic beauty and its immense force, with over 700,000 gallons of water travelling downward every second!

[Tommy Thompson Park](#) is Toronto's secret park and just minutes from downtown. This unique urban wilderness offers some of the best bird watching in the city – with more than 300 species.

Don't want to leave home? Visit [Doors Open Ontario](#) [digitally](#). Want to go on a road trip, but stay close to home? Check out these scenic routes all found within a two-hour drive from Toronto. Filled with a mix of natural wonders and charming towns, with the added excitement of world-class wineries and restaurants, the [Niagara Region](#) is the perfect getaway.

The 55 km [Niagara Parkway](#) aligns itself with the Niagara River as it connects [Niagara-on-the-Lake](#) in the North to Fort Erie in the South. Some of the sights along the way include, *Brock's Monument at Queenston Heights Park, Niagara Floral Clock, Butterfly Conservatory, Whirlpool Rapids, Willoughby Historical Museum*, and of course the iconic *Horseshoe Falls*.

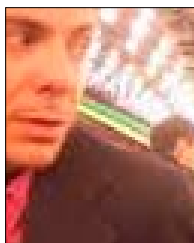
Have your designated driver enjoy the fresh local fare while you sip your way from [Twenty Valley to St. Catharines](#). Stop by [Fielding Estate Winery](#), [Hidden Bench Winery](#), [Stoney Ridge Estate](#), or [Flat Rock Cellars](#). For some adventure, stop at [Short Hills Provincial Park](#), where you'll be greeted by 735-hectares of the natural environment, offering hiking, fishing, bird watching, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and mountain biking.

For something completely different, check out [Wild Tails Family Campsite](#), which is located within the [Toronto Zoo](#)! Newly opened this year, the overnight experience includes a campsite for up to five people (tents only), self-guided after-hours exploration of the grounds, dinner at Simba Safari restaurant, and light morning snack.

Discover More

www.ontariotravel.net
www.ontario.canada.expedia.ca
www.todoontario.com

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities.



AUTUMN IN THE CITY

by Sherry Sylvain

Self-Defense Workshops

October 18, November 15, December 20; 1:00pm to 2:00pm
Online

Free and inclusive self-defense workshop designed for folks with all fitness levels, age 18 and up. Classes are facilitated through Zoom, and provided by The 519 Community Centre. Pre-registration is requested.

www.the519.org/programs/self-defense-workshop

Tip: Wear comfortable clothing, and provide yourself with sufficient space for physical activity.

O'Cannabiz International Conference & Expo

October 29, 2020; 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The International Centre, Hall 5, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga

Public exhibition of cannabis producers, products, and suppliers with guest speakers. This is a 19+ event and photo identification is required. www.ocannabiz.com

Tip: All tickets are non-refundable, but are transferable. Purchase tickets early as capacity limits may be an issue.

Immersive Van Gogh Exhibit

Through October 31, 2020

1 Yonge St., Toronto

Wander through 600,000 cubic feet of giant projections that highlight Van Gogh's brushstroke, detail, and colour as you have never experienced them, from his sunny landscapes and night scenes, to his portraits and still life paintings. Tickets are for timed entry. www.vangoghexhibit.ca

Tip: Check the website for ticket and tour options, including "Gogh By Car" – a drive-in experience.



TD Toronto Jazz Festival: Smokey Robinson

November 17; 8:00 p.m.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St., Toronto

With over 4,000 songs to his credit, legendary singer-songwriter Smokey Robinson continues to push the envelope of an over 50-year career.

www.meridianhall.com

Tip: This is a rescheduled event with limited capacity, so grab your tickets early.

Brubeck Brothers Quartet Celebrate Dave Brubeck's Centennial

November 28, 2020; 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto

Celebrate the life and music of Dave Brubeck with his sons, pianist Darius, bassist Chris, drummer Dan, and cellist Matt, plus saxophonist Bobby Militello, who performed and recorded with Brubeck from the 1970s. Limited seating.

www.rcmusic.com/events-and-performances/the-brubeck-brothers-quartet-celebrates-dave-brubeck

Tip: Seating will be assigned by section rather than specific seats.

Winnie-the-Pooh: Exploring a Classic

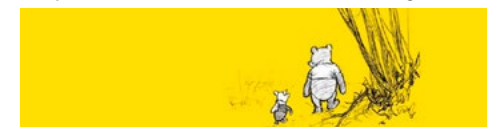
Through January 17, 2021

Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto

Experience the timeless and universal appeal of one of the most adored fictional characters of all time, Winnie-the-Pooh, in this immersive and playful exhibition. Advanced, timed entry tickets are required. Most additional galleries are open.

www.rom.on.ca

Tip: Bring your own water bottle, avoid large bags or backpacks. Wear comfortable shoes since seating is limited.



Flamingo Market

Through December 31, 2020

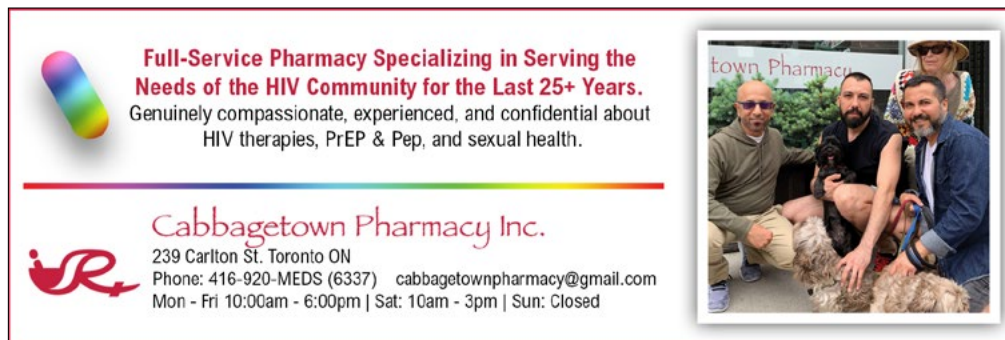
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Tip: A great opportunity to find unique LGBTQ2SIA+ made gifts for whatever holidays you celebrate.

Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).





A Wake

"Sometimes all I need is the air that I breathe"

My fascination with death and dying began at an early age when I attended the funeral of a childhood friend of mine. Walking past the casket, and peering at his lifeless limbs, gave me a sudden sensation of comfort. The sounds of the The Hollies song, *The Air That I Breathe*, was barely audible in the background, but the haunting lyrics were forever engraved in my brain.

*"Peace came upon me and it leaves me weak
So sleep, silent angel, go to sleep"*

My fascination with vampires also began at an early age, and only increased with my consumption of Anne Rice novels. The movie version of *The Vampire Lestat*, and the scene where Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise have an onscreen lust fest, made me question my vampiric self-awareness that much more. I wanted to suck the blood out of both of them, and become another of their miniature protégés.

Without much thought, I began to dress in black... a lot ...like, everyday. I became fascinated with Goth music and Goth culture. I had become the undead. I decided to make a trip to New Orleans to seek out more of my kind. One night, I jumped on a bus heading out toward the suburbs to see some bands who were performing at a run down space in the middle of nowhere. There were stares as I definitely didn't fit in with the locals who were my travel companions. Until, there they were, two others from my tribe. We

locked eyes and knew we were headed to the same ceremony.

Four hours after dropping acid, we were the only two left at the venue. Her friend had left her, and neither of us had a way out of there. Well, except for a possible ride with the janitor, who appeared to be the perfect character for any horror film villain. He reluctantly agreed, and we hitched a ride. Suddenly he stopped the car, and told us that's as far as he was going and we had to get out.

Still high, we walked and found a 24-hour grocery store to occupy our deadly souls in. My pale companion suddenly screeched loudly at two hippie-looking dudes who she apparently knew. They finished up their shopping and offered to give us both a lift back to the city, to her place. I followed these unknown creatures of the night through the parking lot to their vehicle, which to my surprise was a hearse. There was room in the front for three, and myself being the stranger in town was offered a ride in the back.

We made it back to her place, which was one of those New Orleans mansions depicted in movies, and we eventually fell asleep. Her on the top, and me on the bottom, bunk. I could see that her throat had two tiny incisions with a dribble of dried blood on each. I suddenly realized I was at a wake. My own. And I was fully awake!

Bee Dee is a globally-inspired immortal scribe of inconsequence. 'Til death do us part.





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When **Casey House** first opened its doors back in 1988, it was Ontario's first HIV/AIDS treatment facility and hospice. Now, the facility is Canada's first and only stand-alone sub-acute hospital for people living with HIV/AIDS. It continues to offer the same palliative services, and better end-of-life care, along with an innovative ambulatory, outpatient program.

Patients come mostly for complications like hepatitis, tuberculosis, diabetes, chronic pain, and opportunistic infections, often with up to five conditions at a time. When using holistic therapies headway is made by looking at the body as a whole. Clinicians, doctors, and nurses help clients identify health goals, later informing and discussing the outcomes with them.

Communications Officer, **Lisa McDonald**, explained the process behind their holistic and multi-disciplinary approach for HIV patients. "I believe we are only one of three hospitals in Canada that have massage therapy staff in our comprehensive care approach, which includes physiotherapy, recreational therapy, music therapy, skill based learning, and socializing. We also provide access to social workers, case managers for harm reduction work, and mental health clinicians."

This creates a safe space, judgment-free care, and protection from daily stigma, allowing clients to focus outward. The team can recommend other treatments or complimentary care, and advocate

by Kelly Wilk

Community Cornerstone

for individuals in a system that creates barriers to accessing health care. "There are a lot of isolation challenges with HIV, whether self-imposed or systemic," advises McDonald. "When someone has such a complicated health history, not having to disclose one's HIV status removes some of the weight to advocate for themselves."

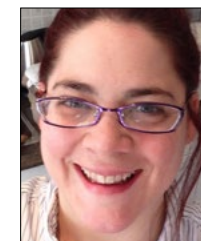
McDonald continues, "At our facility we are here to improve the lives of our clients through improved infection control standards and a compassionate approach. Everyone has their own bathroom, shower, and window that fills the room with sunlight. There's also an inner courtyard, which is important for mental well-being."

Another part of *Casey House's* work is to try and change the way people living with HIV/AIDS are viewed, with awareness campaigns like *Smash Stigma*. Some people are still unclear as to how HIV is transmitted, even though the height of epidemic began more than 30 years ago.

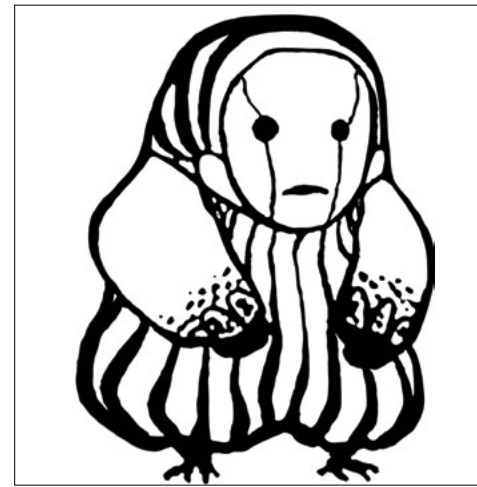
"There's a lack of education, or a lack of willingness to absorb that information. HIV is still criminalized for non-disclosure in Canada, and unfortunately we have a high conviction rate that is disproportionately higher for people of colour, and black men in particular. We also have a blood ban where men who have sex with men are prevented from donating blood unless they have been abstaining," McDonald concludes.

Casey House is more than a place to get better. It's a place to receive compassion, to feel empowered and respected, and to feel included.

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer and single mom to red-headed, Irish, Aries boy who is growing up way too fast. Follow their adventures on PinkPlayMags' parenting blog "The Ginger Gent", and also on Kelly's own website and blog, Brave. Creative. Me at www.kellywilk.ca



Hot Artist



Jess Sheridan

Discovering demisexuality through comics

Jess Sheridan is a Toronto-based comic artist, illustrator, printmaker, and costume designer who works as a graphic designer in the film industry. Her journey to understanding where her own identity falls on the sexuality spectrum was not easy, but it did lead to her discovery of demisexuality, a sexual orientation where people only experience sexual attraction to folks after they have close emotional connections with them. To help herself and others understand this, she created two comics, *Demi* and *Demi 2*, that both share her experiences.

Community and personal relationships were an integral part of Jess learning about the different aspects where she fits in. "I'm lucky to have a number of ace friends," she explains, "So it helped me realize that I was ace-spec too from being around them and hearing their experiences. Two of my closest friends are aro-ace (aromantic/asexual), and demisexual. I think I learned the term from Tumblr in the mid 2010s, but had the definition solidified through that friend," she explains.

"I'd always assumed I didn't really date for a million reasons, the biggest of which was anxiety about dating. I was actually in group therapy for my *Generalized Anxiety Disorder* in 2017, and I had this really eye-opening experience of trying to explain that being hit on or trying to hit on others was bad. It felt threatening, either that I was being

threatened or that I was making the other person uncomfortable (because I felt uncomfortable in such situations)," she adds.

With the help of her therapist, who explained that even anxious people don't usually feel this way, she started to put the puzzle together. "I think one of the most universal queer experiences is trying to make yourself be *normal*, making as many excuses as you need until they don't make sense anymore. That's what it was like for me."

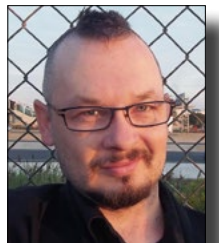
In her two *Demi* works, Jess shares her story in a brilliant, relatable narrative that will help anyone better understand their own or other people's experiences within the sexuality spectrum. Her illustrative approach reflects rigidity in style that mirrors societal expectations of sexual attraction, while at the same time being fluid and immersive. You can see many of her artistic inspirations in her characters, particularly Art Nouveau, and the style blends tremendously with how she tells her story.

"I've met a lot of ace-spec people through my books, many of whom have told me how relatable they were, and how close to home they hit. I've also had friends and family who didn't understand what being demi was, later tell me that they got it after reading my first *Demi* comic," she states.

Jess has plans for future *Demi* comics focusing on realizing her demisexuality in therapy, the pressures of knowing your label at an early age, and how difficult dating can be for ace-spec people because of the assumed integration of sex into relationships.

Follow Jess' work at www.jess-sheridan.com, on Twitter @inkandandroids and on Instagram @jesssheridanillustration

Jon Pressick is a writer who focuses on sex and sexuality. View his work at sexinwords.ca



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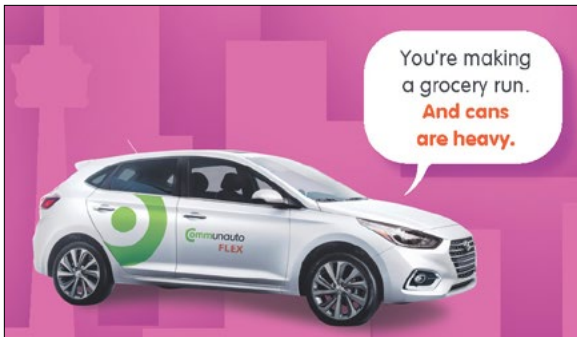
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From The Heart

By Mychol Scully

The Flow of Being

A common human foible is the notion that "who we are" is a fixed quality. Who we've been is who we are is who we will always be. We think and feel this way even though it's patently obvious that this cannot be a true statement!

Our environment, experiences and relationships shape us moment by moment. You are not the same person you were ten years ago, a year ago or even six months ago. What makes you think that you will be the same person ten years from now, a year from now or six months from NOW?

Who we are is a fluid, dynamic quality. As we learn from our experiences, we are changed and shaped by them.

Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.

~ Maya Angelou

It's important to understand that there is no judgement in realizing you have changed. The previous versions of yourself were not "wrong." Have compassion for your previous self, accept that you did the best you could with what you knew and who you were. Also have compassion and appreciation for your present self in the same way. Looking forward, accept that who you will be is not who you are now, nor will it be a copy of who you were.

Being is flowing and growing. This is a natural process which we have the power to direct. Our present choices contribute to shaping who we will become.

Most people are familiar with the word *introspection*, "the examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes." I recently came across the invented word, *prosppection*. Dr. Benjamin Hardy created this word to describe the forward-looking version of the introspective experience. Essentially, *prosppection* is "the examination or observation of one's hopes and desires for our future state of being."

Prosppection can only be successful when we discard the notion that the future of our being will be more of the current version of how we are right now. Once we release that flawed belief, we become free to visualize any future, knowing that the future version of ourselves will not be driven or motivated by our current selves, but rather, by the future version of ourselves, shaped by experiences, environments and relationships it may be impossible to imagine from where we stand in this moment.

It's not a simple task. Our bias to imagine our future selves as "more of the same" makes it challenging to accept that our future self is completely "up for grabs." If we can find a way to let go of our assumptions about who we are and who we CAN be, the possibilities are open-ended and quite exciting.

Who would you be, if you could be anybody?

(If you say Kim Kardashian, I WILL slap you!)

Mychol Scully is Senior Art Director for INspired Media publications PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, The Local Biz Magazine, and The Pink Pages Directory. Mychol is available for thoughtful conversation or lascivious teasing any time at mychol@mychol.com.

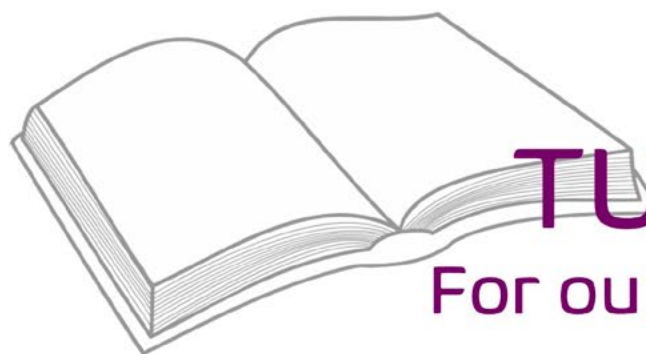




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Autumn Horoscopes

OCTOBER 2020 to DECEMBER 2020

by Julie Antoinette

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

A recent loss causes you to examine what truly matters. In the end, what is left in people's hearts remains and is remembered. Moving forward, think about your intentions of what you will have inscribed in the hearts of those who will hold you in memory and conduct yourself accordingly.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

You've happened across reminders of your childhood recently and have taken a journey of re-acquaintance into the past. You relive thoughts, emotions and future aspirations from that early perspective. You remember ideals and dreams that still burn within you. You must bring the clarity of your inner child to present day. A gift you gave yourself long ago is now ready to be opened.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

An unpleasant task looms over your head. You need momentum to reach the ideal timeline for completion. However, you are more comfortable thinking than acting. Recognize the discomfort you feel and decide to act regardless. Intentionality is your ignition, taking action is the key turn. The gears will be engaged and momentum will follow.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

You've accepted an obligation for someone you love dearly. A promise made is a promise kept. Consider this experience as a hidden gift. You never know what may transpire within you as you act on your promise. A long-held belief about love and suffering may be transformed out of its shadow-aspect and into its light-aspect.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

You seem to have hurt someone very special recently without knowing how. They've been repeating a message to you that you don't understand. You want harmony to return. This time Leo, it's not about you. For whatever reason, life is asking you to be a trigger and a mirror for your special person. The reflection you provide is for them to examine, learn and grow.

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

Feelings of future scarcity and lack threaten to lure you away from mental peace. It's understandable that you always wish to feel prepared. Could your anxiety over lack be the underlying unconscious drive that runs your life? Are you happy with that? What you feed is what will grow. You may choose to switch out anxiety of future lack for enjoyment of your present abundance — and watch that abundance perpetuate. Those who know what enough is will always have enough.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Discipline is zeroing in on you. With Venus as your ruler, you gravitate toward comfort, delights and pleasures. Activities of discipline and rigor charge negative emotions within you. You must change this. Allow yourself to be seduced into a romance with discipline. Search for the gratifications and satisfactions you may find within it. It is time to build this character within yourself. Discipline wants a relationship with you under new terms.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

It's time to really get a grip on your control issues. This will require bravery and courage as you will be asked to dive deep into your inner ocean of chaos. Trust the universal law that transforms order out of chaos. Recognize that chaos is simply the old order falling into decay so that the new can be birthed. You of all signs must master this process as Scorpio rules transformation, death and rebirth. Relax. Nothing is under control.

Sagittarius (November 23 – December 21)

Be careful not to entangle yourself energetically in a situational web. The adhesions that keep you stuck in this web will be directly related to your participation in gossip or secretive discussions. Strong emotions will be elicited and will beg your participation. Don't fall for it. Remain emotionally reticent and transparent in your interactions and you will walk away with your freedom and integrity intact.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Someone finds themselves in dire need of a quality listener. They struggle with an issue and need to confide. They do not need advice per se, as the correct path will be happened upon through their sharing. They just need a good soundboard and someone to hold up a mirror.

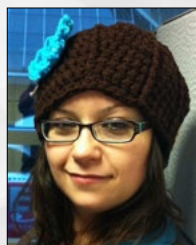
Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

You have always been a super-social person. But recently, your social circle is undergoing a transformation. Sometimes in life, we fall out of contact with people and situations that no longer serve our growth. It's okay to be sad but take comfort in the cliché that promises, "As one door closes, another door opens."

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

In your contemplative moments, you ponder cosmic-level ideas and are impressed with the greatness of existence outside yourself. You may consider yourself in this equation in one of two ways: That you are too small and insignificant to ever have an impact on the whole. Or, that you are an integral component of everything in existence. Like a puzzle with one piece missing, it would be incomplete without you. Embrace your place in space.

Julie is a Sociology and Psychology graduate, a Psychotherapy Intern and a lifelong student of the psyche. She seeks to relay intuitive messages of guidance from the collective astrological archetypes.



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