

On the Path of Dharma Yoga

Vision Quest for Cancer by Eric Francis Coppolino. Published by Planet Waves, Inc.

“Escape from Freedom attempts to show, modern man still is anxious and tempted to surrender his freedom to dictators of all kinds, or to lose it by transforming himself into a small cog in the machine, well fed, and well clothed, yet not a free man but an automaton.” — Erich Fromm

The sign Cancer is often thought of as retreating, private, obsessed with security and being self-focused — but despite this, I’ve found it to be one of the signs that’s most likely to take action in the world.

Maybe it’s the mama wolf thing (Cancer is associated with motherhood, which must be bold to be effective).

Maybe it’s the fact that in the oldest known chart, the Thema Mundi, Cancer is the sign rising — you could say, it’s the rising sign of the planet. On our particular planet, anything is possible, and you can go anywhere — but action is everything.

Maybe it’s about having some emotional grounding; that is, because you actually care.

Maybe it is because you’re so self-focused, the state of your life, the community or the planet matters to you, and if you make things a little better for yourself, the rest of us benefit. In any event, I consider Cancer to be one of the most motivated signs of the lot, including Cancer rising and Moon.

The next 18 months or longer promise to be a time of unusual outward expression for you, which may mean moving up in the world.

This is driven by what appears to be a profound personal need to reinvent yourself, or perhaps just to express the real self you’ve been carrying around inside for many years. In fact, your drive to become, to express yourself and to have an impact on the world in the process, in a word — to *succeed* at what you do best — is taking over. It’s likely to be so powerful I’m devoting a section of this reading to how to temper that drive, purely for the purpose of making sure you actually get the job done.

The astrology that’s led up to the events of 2016 and 2017 has been long in developing. Some of it is inherent in your birth chart. Unless you were born before 1925, Eris, one of the main planets involved, is still in the same sign it was in on the day you were born (that would be Aries, where Eris is spending more than a century; it’s a new kind of planet, taking 558 years to orbit the Sun).

Uranus, another element in the equation (also slow-moving but not as slow), ingressed Aries in three phases between 2010 and 2011. The two of them are about to be conjunct in Aries, which in many ways tells the story of your life.

Why is Aries so important for you? This sign is situated as your solar 10th house, the one that covers achievement, reputation and your relationship with the world of events and activities that reach far beyond your personal sphere. You might say the 10th is what you reach for, assuming you have some aspirational drive — and this I think you have.

You have so much Aries in your chart that the most serious issues with that sign — the need for follow-through, and false lack of confidence — are also often things people with Cancer charts must work through. In other words, one of your most profound sets of ‘life lessons’ includes learning how to have confidence in yourself, and how to complete what you begin.

You are now in a breakthrough phase where long delays in the past give way to rapid developments, yet persisting is absolutely necessary. The more things seem to happen to you (including advancement and progress), the more you must take control.

The astrology that’s now brewing is charged with initiative, with a rebellious spirit and a fearlessness about change. Yet you must remind yourself that you’re up to the task. Remember all the time that while a job begun is halfway done, the other half is necessary: driving things to completion, to closure and toward a focused set of goals. You have the drive; the focus is what you must bring to the table. Thankfully you have help, in the form of both astrology and what it symbolizes.

Yet it would seem the most necessary element is making sure you have some cohesion to your vision. This can mean an evolving vision; there is nothing ‘fixed’ about your chart right now. Vision is more like animation than a dusty diorama in a museum.

One theme of your astrology is the message coming to you over and over that anything is possible. It’s true that anything is always possible, but at certain times certain things seem more possible than others — or there are more potentials available. It’s partly the sense that so much is possible that is going to require discipline. Yet it’s also the potential sensation of *too much available to choose from* that will require you to not just make decisions, but also get good at doing so quickly and efficiently.

Aries on the 10th House: The Freedom of Self

For everyone, there is an element of identity to be found in Aries. Though Aries can turn up anywhere in a natal chart, astrologers will typically look to the 1st house for information about the “I am” factor. Yet Aries, wherever it lands, can provide vital information about identity; using the solar houses it’s an essential key, yet it’s much more influential than people think.

What distinguishes your solar chart is having Aries on the 10th house: the house of achievement, reputation, profession and leadership. Contrary to all the descriptions of Cancer as being ambitious enough to bake an extra loaf of bread, this tells us you have a mighty streak of professional drive.

Yet what it also tells us is you seek your identity in your work and your relationship to the wide world. Yes, it’s true that in the United States, as in much of the Western world, people largely

identify with their work. The question “what do you do?” follows soon after “how do you do?” Yet in your situation, the connection is particularly vital to the point of urgency.

Said another way, you simply must actually identify with and relate to the work you do, or it’s not going to be any fun and you’re unlikely to be especially successful. This is an evolved state of being. It’s a point of integrity — to be able to relate to your potential, to your mission or to a sense of purpose as being inherently about who you are. It’s also subject to doubt, and the often vicious lack of cooperation can be discouraging.

You have the power to push through that, and indeed to bring others together for a common purpose as a co-factor with your success and growth.

If you’re still wondering, *Yes, but what is this thing?* you need to start at the top of your list of priorities, preferences, abilities and passions. If that’s about kite flying, figure out how to be a pro. If it’s about cars, figure out how to do it. If music gets you going, work your way into that.

If what you want to do involves creativity, the fact that success requires creativity is a natural expression of that — and you have the creativity to create the solutions you need. When an ambition is long delayed (as may be the case) there is always the question of when is the most favorable time to begin, and I would say it’s as soon as possible.

Among other things, Aries on your solar 10th describes your natural affinity for leadership. Part of leadership is the ability to commence things — it’s the ability to begin, often on behalf of a group of some kind but at least for yourself. Leadership is something you’re drawn to and do naturally. And now that is being activated by not only a mighty transit, but an interesting, extremely rare one. This is something nobody alive has lived through unless they are 90, and they would have been an infant at the time. For our lifetimes, Uranus conjunct Eris is unprecedented.

Uranus conjunct Eris is potentially explosive, chaotic and arguably uncontrollable. Yet you are going to need to get some control if you’re going to get where you want to, particularly in a leadership role. I would caution you that the potential to lose control is real. So too is the potential to be so daunted by the power being unleashed that you crawl into your cubicle or bedroom closet, and don’t take advantage of it.

So far as I understand the world, this kind of impulse to retreat will happen to a lot of people. The reactionary conservatism we are seeing in our times — whether religious, political or the exponentially more toxic blend of the two — is largely a reaction against potential and freedom. Freedom feels dangerous to those devoted to being ensnared in the past, in fear or in their safety zone.

The book *Escape from Freedom* by Erich Fromm describes the psychology of why people avoid being free, and in the process, make it difficult for people who want to be free to be so. Often people avoid freedom by avoiding self-awareness. Self-awareness is one of the ultimate paths to liberation. It is dangerous, particularly to anyone who would take authority over you.

On this topic, Fromm writes: “The frightened individual seeks for somebody or something to tie his self to; he cannot bear to be his own individual self any longer, and he tries frantically to get rid of it and to feel security again by the elimination of this burden: the self.”

It would be fair to call Uranus and Eris a summoning to self-awareness. They are also two of the most rebellious and revolutionary planetary energies; but remember that self-knowledge really is a revolt. As such it is unlikely that you will strive to bind yourself to some concept, unless of course you really fall for the fear of freedom. There is another matter, which is pushing your identity as a leader or as a creator to an extreme degree.

Stay Grounded and Beware of Fame

Uranus in Aries is, by itself, a caution against seeking fame, glamour or attention for its own sake. It is at the same time an opportunity to stand out, to assert one’s differences and to be original. You don’t have to be totally original to take advantage of this; you merely need to be yourself, and to know when to turn up the originality and when to dial it back a little. It’s somewhat like having an outfit for every occasion. Wearing the right outfit might be seen as conformist, but you might also see it as a means to being yourself, which is easier if you blend in a little bit. If the tux or evening gown are what you need to get into the party, that’s what you wear.

Yet I would caution that Uranus conjunct Eris positioned as it is in your chart could lead to the temptation of fame either for its own sake, or as compensatory behavior.

Erich Fromm explains it this way, again from *Escape From Freedom*: “If the meaning of life has become doubtful, if one’s relations to others and to oneself do not offer security, then fame is one means to silence one’s doubts. It has a function to be compared with that of the Egyptian pyramids or the Christian faith in immortality: it elevates one’s individual life from its limitations and instability to the plane of indestructibility; if one’s name is known to one’s contemporaries and if one can hope that it will last for centuries, then one’s life has meaning and significance by this very reflection of it in the judgments of others.”

However, this is no guarantee of accomplishing something relevant or helpful, much less fulfilling or meaningful. And at the same time, with success does come some recognition. This in itself is not a bad thing; the problem would lie in seeking recognition for the sake of nothing other than being known.

Uranus-Eris has a subversive streak, and in your 10th house, you might be inclined to provoke authority figures. I would suggest this be on a need basis; you might have to do that occasionally, and if you do, you must do it well — and not make enemies if you can avoid it. If you do make enemies there may be blowback. It’s essential that you cultivate or dial in your innate political skill, presenting yourself as a little more conservative than you really are.

It will be vital you know when you’re playing by the rules, when you’re breaking the rules, and exactly what rules you’re adhering to or violating.

This will keep you out of trouble, whether legal or otherwise. This is not the time to say that authority can go bugger off. It's time to learn how to maneuver well enough to express your creativity and take charge of what you need to take charge of; most significantly your own work, your own business, your own career.

Any form of rebellion needs to be connected directly, not indirectly but very directly, to a purpose you know and understand. And it needs to be connected to practical, grounded, honest activity. This is a matter of integrity, and for you, under these profound influences, integrity is everything. Acting as if to hold the world together means maintaining the integrity of what you do at all times.

Chaos Theory 101: Seeing the Patterns

Two additional ideas connect to Uranus conjunct Eris. It would be an understatement to say this is a potentially chaotic aspect. It describes the world you live in, with its pandemic of *identity crisis* that is ripping through the world right now (rarely described as such — that concept is so 20th century).

And it describes the way our society has turned identity into a branded commodity. In other words, we are thought of not as people with lives who might use an iPhone or drive a Subaru, but rather as an Apple consumer, or as a Subaru person. The result is we have thousands of corporate cults competing for our investment. Then we start to think of ourselves that way, which in turn competes with every other factor seeking a home in our sense of personal identity. This is extremely chaotic.

As such, the times we live in call for the application of Chaos Theory. I never hear about this branch of science anymore, though it's especially useful today. It used to be so popular, like Ivory soap.

Chaos Theory really should be called There Is No Such Thing as Randomness Theory. Astrology is based on this principle. You might say it's the science behind synchronicity. Cutting to the chase, you will need to be able to spot patterns in what is apparently a psychic maelstrom. These include the most vital patterns of all — the ones that describe who you are.

If you can see the pattern, you can get some clear ideas; you can see some puzzles and solutions; you can start to see what you want to do or where you belong. Now, this may not be an issue for you, though I think with the world struggling with internet-induced vertigo, there have never been more people walking around more clueless about who they are.

This is contagious, and if you focus on pattern recognition you will have some inoculation against the confusion of others — others not as adept at seeing patterns as you are. You will also get a better view of where your life intersects with others, and where you might find a productive meeting space.

One thing I've noticed about the Age of Eris in Aries is that due to the chaos factor, it's difficult to complete the statement, "I am _____" when it comes to one's work.

Many people carry three business cards, such as one for feng shui, one for real estate and the other for dog sitting. It might seem like asking too much to identify with one thing for a while, though I suggest you try this, and let that one thing be your highest priority. In other words, the answer to the question is the activity that is most important to you, in that context.

You're not lying if someone asks you what you do, and you respond that you're helping start a health food store, even if you also do photography, interior design and are a doula.

You need to concentrate your primary mission, which includes concentrating your statements about your mission. The question, "What do you do?" is not an invitation to give up your entire CV in a 20-second presentation, justifying why you're both a painter and a librarian, but rather to put forward the facet of what you are doing that is the most relevant one right then; the most appropriate to that circumstance.

In terms of this experience as an inner journey, I have noticed people who do two major things, or several things, don't often see the connections between them. Sometimes they do; sometimes very bright people miss the obvious. Noam Chomsky is an example. Dr. Chomsky is considered one of the most brilliant scholars and theorists of linguistics of our lifetimes. He is also one of the most prolific, eloquent writers and thinkers to the left side of the American political spectrum. He could fill up the biggest lecture hall at the University of Toledo or just about any campus anywhere.

And he says his work in linguistics is totally removed from his work in political analysis. So far as I know, he has not changed this position; as far as he's concerned, he just does two different things. I've long wanted to write him a letter and propose that not only is politics conducted in language, but that the coding goes so deep as to reach into the primal level where language has a strong hand in creating reality. Linguistics may be the very most influential factor in politics.

Your job is to see past this, and to feel, understand and live out the relationships between the various things you do and the contexts in which you do them. This will help you draw energy from the many seemingly different facets of what you do, and focus it into the primary thing you are working to accomplish. It's up to you to figure out what that is; assessing that astrologically is beyond the scope of what I can do here, except to offer some clues — and here is another.

That is liminality. This is the property of advancing to a new phase of your life; you might say it's the process of successfully going through an initiation or a series of them.

The charts I am using for this series of readings are the Sun's ingress into the signs; your chart is for the Cancer solstice.

In this chart, the Uranus-Eris conjunction is not only exact; there is a third planet in the conjunction, that being Ceres. I am working with a new property of Ceres, something I learned from dipping into Roman history: this complex goddess was considered the one who prevailed over the process of *going from one social level to another*.

It's not difficult to apply this to Uranus-Ceres. It's saying that the solution set to this complex aspect involves you transforming yourself into the next level or form of who you are. In other words, if you can see advancement — not so much the 'getting promoted' kind, but rather the personal development kind — you can start to look at the pattern that forms around that.

Said another way, what you're experiencing with your work is not about getting promoted or finding a new job. It's a path of initiation into not just something new, but a new experience of existence; something unique in all the world; and where you are being shaped and formed into a leadership role that is appropriate for the times in which we are living.

There are two additional facets to this I'd like to discuss — one involving Pluto in Capricorn, and the second involving Saturn (the ruler of Capricorn) in Sagittarius. Let's begin with Pluto, then tie all of these ideas together with Saturn in Sagittarius.

Pluto in Capricorn: Relationship For Progress

One thing I've learned from doing astrology readings for 21 years is that most people treat relationships as agreements not to grow.

They are generally based on a static concept of who a person is. Once a relationship is entered, typically people want 'it' to stay the way it is — which really is the covert expectation that nobody will change.

With Capricorn on your 7th house, the house of partnerships, you're likely to have gone through a phase (perhaps a long one) where this was true for you. Your sign is ruled by the Moon, which changes every single day; the Moon moves one degree every two hours and a sign in less than three days.

Said another way, the object associated with your sign orbits in 29 days. The object associated with your relationship sign orbits in 29 years. Under these circumstances, I could see you wanting stability, and thinking you're going to find it in relationships. You might have succeeded for a while — then Pluto came along, entered Capricorn and began to recreate everything.

Pluto first entered Capricorn, your relationship house, in 2007 and arrived to stay in 2008. Since then your relationship life has likely been in a state of constant flux. There is no one structure, idea, definition or concept that you've been able to hold on to.

At the same time, powerful influences have entered your life, making you rise to the challenge of your own growth. There have been and still are people in your life about whom you feel profoundly, but for whom you have no real category. The astrology we are talking about defies the categorizing of people.

In modern astrology, Pluto embodies the evolutionary principle. That makes change, progress and inner development inevitable. It also means you must exist in an environment where there are no dependable traditions that provide instructions or a model for what you are doing.

You must be in a constant state of adaptation, and cannot rely on modes that may have worked in the past (and whether they really did is a valid question to ask). This will be difficult for anyone who is intent on false security as the basis of relationship; anyone who falls for the idea that a relationship is an agreement not to change. If any of your relationships have blown up some time during the past few years, you might want to ask whether that was the prevailing factor; the thing that could not withstand the influence of Pluto.

This is leaving you with no option but to be yourself — by which I mean in your relationships. That is a very good thing. As Bob Dylan once quipped, “If you try to be anyone but yourself, you will fail.” This may seem radical; he’s merely pointing out the obvious.

You must also adapt to situations that have significant impact on your life, and therefore are meaningful to you in visceral and immediate ways — rather than sentimental ways. Indeed, so many elements of the past are being shredded and returned to the soil that there may be no ways at all that the past is a valid reference point for the present.

The result may feel like chaos, or like you have nothing familiar available to lean on. You must learn new forms of communication to contain these kinds of developments, and your relationships must be lived for right now, not for the future. This is enough to make many people really nervous; you would save yourself a lot of grief by stepping up to this condition of life, this challenge.

It’s essential that you be bold and direct; that you meet the power of Pluto with your own evolutionary force. To do this, you will need to summon that force from within yourself, and cultivate it every day. More to the point, it’s essential that this be a function of your relationships, arguably the only one that matters. This has been true for a while but there is no denying it: relationship is the platform for growth and evolution.

Saturn in Sagittarius: Journey Through Deep Space

Most of the influences I’ve described so far are somewhat chaotic. There is an essential stabilizing influence, though it’s also one you might think of as having the power to regulate and stabilize change. That is Saturn in Sagittarius, which is your solar 6th house (natal 6th by whole signs, if you’re Cancer rising).

The 6th covers the following territory: the here and now; healing and healing spaces; teaching; selfless service; authentically devoted professional service; daily work. Saturn in this house means the way to handle the chaos coming from two angular houses — your 10th (Aries) and your 7th (Capricorn) is to come back to your process every day, rain or shine. Spread out the effort. Get in a gentle groove that you slowly build up to full strength, or to 110%.

Think of Saturn as a portable structure you can use to concentrate your effort, your devotion and your energy. Saturn in Sagittarius can bring expansion and potential under control, and focus it into something meaningful. Saturn is saying come back to the work and devote yourself to incremental process; meaning (for example) if you are doing a writing project, set a daily word

count as a goal; if you're learning a musical instrument, practice for so long every day, or just every day regardless of how long.

But the main thing Saturn is saying is take leadership, in the most sublime and understated version of that concept. Leadership requires focus and integrity. That's what Saturn is offering to you. One way you do this is by relating consciously to the passage of time. People act as if time is infinite, or as if their lifetime is infinite. Saturn's message is that nothing lasts forever, so use this time and these opportunities well.

Whether we're talking about your 7th house (partnerships) or your 10th house (matters of reputation and authority), the same approach will help you distill the impact of these outer planets into something useful: Saturn in the 6th. It all comes down to daily devotion; to karma yoga.

Saturn Square Neptune in Pisces

Here is where things get more interesting and where your true resolve will be tested. Pisces is your solar 9th house. The 9th house is the house of long-range vision. It's possible to write a solid book chapter on any one of the houses, though we can summarize by saying that the 9th addresses the wide world in space, in time and in potential.

You have Pisces there. That's quite a bit of all of the above. Neptune is also in this house, which is not making it easy to see your potential clearly; but it's making it very easy to idealize what might be, what you might do and what might come to pass.

Saturn for its part is in Sagittarius, in the much-easier-to-grasp 6th house of everyday life, wellbeing and work. Sagittarius is also idealistic but Saturn is driving a kind of practicality. That is, until you notice it's making a series of squares to Neptune, which might contribute to clouding your immediate plans and put pressure on you to think for the long-term.

I hear a lot of young people say they're not ready to decide what they want to do for the rest of their life. I'm not sure where that idea comes from, but you're not ready either — and you don't have to decide. What would help is if you stay focused on your present efforts and your grounded ideals (which means ideals connected to action), and persist daily.

Your long-range vision will come into focus as you do. It will have the effect of modifying your daily routines as they slowly come into alignment with your activities. The thing not to do is to bother yourself with that silly 'rest of your life' thing, or worry about 'seeing the whole picture'.

Rather, put your emphasis on feeling your way to the truth; feeling your way to the future; tapping into your intuitive sense of what is correct. You will be making many small adjustments every day as the two main tenses of time modify one another — that is, the immediate moment and what you are gradually developing.

Many factors are in motion. The world is in motion. You and your thoughts and your ideas and your spirit are in motion, only to change a little or a lot every single day. When you grow to love that, you will be on top of the world; or certainly, of your world.