

Leadership From Within

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

Wanting to improve one's lot in life, wanting to achieve useful or even excellent goals, the desire to change the world — they have all fallen under tough times.

Part of the struggle is the sorry shape of the planet and of our society right now. Among the many problems we now face is the lack of trust in authority figures, governments and corporations. A criminal class is proliferating on the highest levels of our society, and those in possession of their soul are just not interested in participating. That includes you.

Yet in many other ways, there is a kind of jam-up on the level of what used to be called opportunity. It seems there is so little room at the top, most people cannot even stand up where they're sitting. Young people are held down by debt — and also by the expectation that success can be attained without long years of effort, apprenticeship and slowly attaining mastery of one's art. It's obvious that owing a bank \$150,000 for one's undergraduate education could lead to a sense of entitlement.

And finally, there is a leadership crisis — there is so much going on it seems like a losing battle to take responsibility. Many feel they could never be paid enough for accepting the kinds of karma, and inconvenience, that come with being in charge of something the way the world is today.

Your charts, however, tell a different story. You understand this is a crucial time in your life to both take responsibility for something larger than yourself, and to achieve something you've never quite done before. This is a real calling, though it may be subtle. At other times it may feel like a crisis, in the style of knowing you have to do something but not being sure what that something is.

The Search for a Clean Place

You may be personally feeling your own sensitivity to the corruption of the world. You may be, correspondingly, searching for a clean place to establish yourself. Yet none of this can stop you from doing what you need or want to do. I would say for you aspiration to leadership exists as a necessity associated with your growth and personal evolution.

Further, there is an essential piece about healing your own relationship to authority, which means working through your relationship to your parents and other early caregivers. There are hardly any people in our society who do not struggle with what some call 'authority issues'. There are a number of ways to work through them. Therapy helps, of course, but experience is the most important teacher. That means the way to work through them is via a direct relationship to those in power; typically that means people who in theory have more than you do.

Those relationships are, at first, analogues of your relationships with the original powerful people — mother and father. Sometimes people never grow out of this. Their life story is one of dealing with this kind of total authority, whether overt or covert. Sadly, those parental relationships are often based in negligence, abuse, humiliation or — at best — lack of mutual respect. Given that setup, multiplied by tens of millions of lives, it only seems to make sense that society's official institutions are in such chaos.

You are on a leadership mission, but it's also a healing mission. I recognize that you may feel ambivalent about this. I recognize that you may not feel your influence, or your desire to contribute, will amount to much. How could it, when even the righteous and the powerful have so little influence?

Aaah, but this is also a healing mission. Your role is not to take over. Your role, rather, is to use the world as your healing space. All of your interactions with the world on the level of power and authority are opportunities — first, for healing yourself and then your environment.

But you must treat these experiences that are, at first, your own dream, and then those that extend into the collective or archetypal realm. In other words, this is not about fixing the world — your role is to heal your relationship to the world, by participating in the world. And that participation will be on the level of responsibility first, a prerequisite to leadership.

We might say the plight of the world right now involves leadership without responsibility or accountability; a recipe for disaster. It's therefore necessary that, above all else, you hold yourself accountable for your actions, and for the actions of those whom you would in some way guide, influence or direct. And you must take accountability for their influence on you. You might think of all of this as an expanded, real-time therapy process.

And if you're looking for the clean place, that would be you — if you invest your energy in being honest, clear and into staying in the moment.

Astrology Interlude: This is About the 10th House

In this discussion I'm mostly referencing your 10th solar house, Pisces. This would also be your 10th whole-sign house if you're Gemini rising. The 10th is the one about reputation, leadership, accountability, and corporate and governmental leadership. One of my delineations of the 10th is "all the way to the top."

The 10th also describes your true vocational calling. It's not about day-to-day work as much as it is about your trajectory of lifetime achievement. The 10th brings in the theme of taking responsibility, which is why it's either 1) not such a popular place, or 2) popular if you take the power and throw away the responsibility.

For you this house is one and the same as Pisces. Pisces is an interesting sign to have on the 10th because its creative and mystical leanings would seem to entirely controvert the whole presidential trip of that house. The way to read the overlay of a house and sign (one of the most

essential tools in reading astrology well) is to use the house as the field of experience, and the sign as representing the style or manner of that experience.

If you have Pisces on the 10th, that means you will experience aspiration, authority and leadership in the style of Pisces. At its best that starts to sound like creative leadership, a service orientation and doing things in a beautiful way.

At worst there can be an avoidance of responsibility — in the form of a Peter Pan complex, staying stoned all day and not getting much done, or being an artist with no special direction.

You currently have many planets in your 10th house. They are giving you direction, and perhaps provoking a sense of crisis. There are four slow-moving planets in Pisces right now: [Nessus](#), a centaur; [Neptune](#), a modern planet; [Chiron](#), a centaur; and [Borasisi](#), what's called a Kuiper object (similar to Pluto). It will be easier to give delineations of these in the spoken word portion, though if you are curious about these points individually, just click the name of the planet and you will be taken offsite to articles about them.

In all, this blend is calling forth from you the highest level of integrity, as much as it is stoking your imagination. And at the same time, you are being compelled to have faith in yourself above what you normally might.

Most of all, what this grouping of slow-moving planets is doing is giving substance to your visions and your aspirations. Still, because Pisces is involved, it's possible to ignore, deny or subvert your most valued priorities — at least, up to a point.

If you don't embrace them consciously, what's likely to happen is they will work covertly. What is not taken up with full awareness will have a tendency to subvert itself as shadow, as fear, or as paralysis. There are ways to wake up, to devote yourself to your own existence, and to make the choice to consciously grow. They all require vulnerability. If you want a real exchange you will need to open up, and that means trusting the world enough to be vulnerable.

Self-Parenting: Taking Charge of Your Life

Many have noted that in the therapy process, they are being taught to be their own parents; in effect, to raise themselves. In order to do this, it's necessary to be in touch with what happened to you as a child, and to understand how this shaped your worldview. This almost always involves going over sensitive territory, doing what I call 'picking out the shrapnel.' Along the way, you will also find some gems embedded in your body or memory. Even parents and caregivers who were mostly ineffectual gave you gifts, and as part of the healing process it's necessary to claim those.

One example might be that someone who you otherwise disliked had a love for music, and passed that along to you. But your appreciation of music is contaminated by their poor treatment of you in other areas.

Other times, parents put a kind of curse on success, like that line from the Grateful Dead song “[Dupree’s Diamond Blues](#),” where Dupree’s father tells him he’ll never get far because there really isn’t very far to go. (So therefore he robs a jewelry store and shoots the jeweler, perhaps to spite his father. Then he gets in really big trouble.)

Now, this is an exaggerated version of what happens a lot. It’s easy to blame our parents for what they did to us, without taking responsibility for it. After all, they did it. But what your charts say is that the buck must stop with you. They did it, you must account for that, and then you have to take up your role as the person ultimately accountable for making your life right. There must be both a confrontation — and taking personal accountability.

Then the real process of raising yourself can take place. It’s a little like adopting a dog. If you meet a homeless dog and you intervene in its life, you must see that through in some way, either by adopting or making sure he or she ends up in a place of safety. If you adopt her, you have to take responsibility for what was done to her in the past. Only you’re the dog we’re talking about. In essence, you must adopt yourself, and take over the process of raising yourself. That includes being the manager of your own healing process, seeking the appropriate help, and providing yourself various missing experiences, as you become aware of them.

The thing parents are supposed to provide us with is a sense of security; literally, a foundation. We all get one — although it’s not necessarily such a good one. Yet our foundations come from many other places, including genetics, karma, experiences outside the home, and an unusual thing that seems to manifest for some people in the form of *original intention* or *original instructions*.

Your own healing process, particularly around authority, will help you recognize how deep your roots are, and how much deeper they can go. What I’m seeing is that the more you sincerely engage with your own power and the power of others — with the intention of rising to the occasion — the more you will be watering the tree of your own growth, and your own sense of grounding. It’s as if you are becoming a personal bridge between earth and sky, drawing the energy down — where it will do you the most good.

And without even intending to be so, you’re likely to serve as a positive influence on your environment, in part by providing an organizing principle, a central idea that can serve the greatest good for all concerned.

If there’s a catch, this is it: Accountability is more than most people can bear. Debbi Kempton-Smith, author of the indispensable *Secrets from a Stargazer’s Notebook*, once joked that having a powerful 10th house (in that case, the Sun) is fine, as long as you don’t mind the feeling of being followed around by a TV crew all the time.

You may feel like you’re standing in some kind of invisible spotlight that renders you transparent. You might be inclined to resist that transparency, since the main thing it reveals is your vulnerability. Now, this presents a challenge, because the very last thing you want to do is reveal how vulnerable you are; yet the thing you may need the very most is to do just that.

In any healing process, this is necessary, and in a process where healing power dynamics is in question, it really is the missing piece from the equation of our society. Our leaders tend to be invulnerable and inaccessible. It's like they don't even exist, and when that is the scenario, profound abuse of power is possible.

You might evaluate the people who were around you as a child on the basis of their vulnerability. You might notice how you feel around children and animals, and compare that with how you were treated, how other children were treated, and how animals were treated. As a guide, the kind of vulnerability you're seeking and would benefit from is a lot like how you might feel cuddling a two-week old puppy who is trying to climb up your face in total trust.

Practical Matters of Profession and Vocation

All this healing and psychology aside for a moment, such a powerful 10th house is calling on you to take your goals seriously. There could barely be a better time to do so. You're likely to encounter people in your life who seem like they're there just to get you to do that.

All of the planets I've described, and their themes, sum up nicely as your calling — what you're being called to do. However, I could also see you being confused about what that is supposed to be. So my question for you is: What do you want to do?

There are two ways to answer that. One is, what do you want to do now? The other is, over the years, what desire or goal has consistently presented itself to you, perhaps over many years? That's the thing to focus on. It's difficult to trust desire if you're not confident in it. One way to attain that confidence is to use the test of time.

You might not think of it as the test of time; it might be the thing you avoid, or wish would go away. Maybe you figured out it's not going away. Maybe you're worried that it's a dream deferred. Maybe it is — and you have the opportunity to rehydrate that raisin in the Sun. Part of what one might call your 10th house work is going to be taking yourself seriously. This will be true despite what was done to you.

My father told me I was a good writer but that I would never make a living as a writer. As late as 2000, he was sending me the application for the Post Office civil service exam. Ben Franklin invented the Post Office. I love Ben, but I was not going to go postal. I have Chiron in Pisces in the 10th house. I didn't listen. Instead, I honored my Piscean Chirotic career, and you have paid me for my writing. I have learned to take myself seriously and you can as well. You may have to cut through the grease all those other people put on your ideas, your desires, your goals and your vision for yourself — but the presence of Chiron and Nessus will provide that grease-cutter. They will also provide you with the utility and motivation to approach your best work as your most important healing path.

It is clear from the many factors involved that for you, this is about building confidence.

Part of what you do in the 10th house is establish your reputation. With Pisces on your 10th, you might feel invisible. With Neptune in Pisces in your 10th, that may rise to the level of a crisis

certain days. It's challenging to be seen, to cut through the noise (as Bono put it, explaining why U2 had spammed half a billion iTunes customers with their new CD one year). If it's difficult for U2 to cut through the static, you can be sure it's challenging for you, too, to cut through that same static in our overloaded public realm.

Still, go about that process of reputation-building. Forget the fact that 100 or more other people think they do what you do. They don't. That's the thing. Only you do what you do, and you must figure that out. This is not a matter of being puffed up; it's more like DNA matching, or your fingerprint. What you do is what you do. Learn to distinguish yourself, which you will do through the learning process of the activity itself.

One vital thing before we move on from Pisces is that it is the energy field that is the true essence of *holism*. Pisces is the sea that refuses no river. It is seawater in that it contains every element. Though you are a Sun or rising sign Gemini, right now at least, all roads lead to Pisces.

Part of this also relates to your 6th house. With the 10th, the 6th is the house of achievement, but it's the low-key, get-it-done kind of achievement rather than the show-everyone-what-you-can-do kind. You have Scorpio on this house. Scorpio resonates with Pisces; Scorpio is tireless, it is intense, it has something verging on infinite strength, and it must, must, must, go deep. As flaky as the reputation of Gemini is alleged to be, you need depth and you need stability. If Gemini is about dualism, this is resolved in both Scorpio and Pisces.

Your Moon is in Scorpio in the chart for this reading. This suggests you must bring your body and your emotions into your work as much as you do your mind. This also grants persistence, and a distinct psychological gift — that is, the gift of others being transparent.

The flaw of the Scorpio Moon is that it can be mean, in a way that is unrepentant. Your workplace is your home, whether your dining room, an office tower, or your private jet. Be kind to the people you share this space with, and if you get in a bitchy mood one day, make sure you apologize and bring coffee and donuts. Everyone has their moods, and there is plenty to be irritated about right now. The difference you need to bring in is self-awareness, a reflective quality that says, "Yeah, I get it!"

Part of the leading-from-within factor is bringing feeling and passion to what you do. If you can keep this on a productive and friendly level, you will inspire others to do so as well.

Scorpio will be activated mid-year by Mars retrograde, which also crosses over your 7th house of relationships. This means a number of things, one of which is that your working relationships and your personal relationships will have necessary overlap. This is another place to be on the lookout for a potential conflict, and to use your gift of foresight to defuse it sooner rather than later.

Remember that in our world, whether in Japan, Australia, Leeds or Kentucky, working relationships are some of the most important relationships there are. We spend most of our time working — with our coworkers. These are collaborative friendships, or they have the potential to be. I suggest you be mindful of how they might be more than that. Any relationship that has

chemistry also has sexual chemistry on some level, even if you just think your boss or co-worker is hot. That is a form of fuel. The chemistry may come in the form of antipathy, which is also a form of fuel.

Relationship with Purpose, by Agreement

The most important new transit you're having is Saturn in Sagittarius. The other transits are important, but they go back longer than Saturn arriving in your sign of relationships.

Saturn presents the occasion for what you would call major focus. You cannot ignore Saturn, especially in an angular house — that is, opposite your Sun and/or rising sign. This transit is describing a time to take all your relationships and partnerships seriously.

Saturn will help focus the somewhat-ethereal energy of Sagittarius, making people and your environment more tangible. The first thing you want to do with Saturn, however, is to make sure your responsibilities to others are taken care of. You must come through, or get out of the commitment. There is no middle ground.

Saturn may confront you with 'the reality' of your relationships. It will bring the often-alloof and distant energy of Sagittarius right into your immediate environment. The quality of the best of these relationships will be to push you into greater achievement.

I strongly suggest you commence no new relationships that are not directly in service of your mission in life. There is no room for competition between others in your environment, and what you must do. Saturn may have a sweeping effect of helping you eliminate, by choice or circumstance, all relationships that don't support your true work. In my own life this is the guitar practice rule. If someone doesn't like the sound of my playing guitar, or feels in some way threatened by it, they don't get bed privileges.

Saturn is associated with two houses in your chart — the two signs it rules from classical astrology, which are your 8th house (agreements, profound sex, transformation), and the 9th house (beliefs, longterm plans, distant connections). You might think of Saturn as the embodiment of these two houses at once; though of the two, the Capricorn connection is the most relevant now.

Right now you have Pluto moving through your 8th house, on its long trip through Capricorn (see that reading for more information). Pluto in the 8th, especially in Capricorn, sets up a power dynamic. Initially you might feel you have the upper-hand in all matters of authority and finance. It's easy to get the impression that everyone has some way of controlling you. If that is true, those relationships need the re-evaluation and dismantling they are currently getting.

Do not hesitate to bring these dynamics to light. Do not hesitate to understand what it means for others to have power over you. And make sure you keep going, rise to the occasion and claim your power in the situation. Remember, most power is perceived. Someone can think they control you because they control the money, which suddenly becomes irrelevant when you figure out that you can eat, and that you're happier paying for your own groceries.

Pluto has been in Cap for a while, though the reason it comes up this year in a special way is that Saturn is now a major player in your chart — as it's entered your opposite sign, which has it showing up in the immediate environment of your relationships. Saturn in your 7th would present opportunities in any event, but with Pluto in Capricorn pumping energy into it, this is one supercharged Saturn.

And this is why you want to make whomever that Saturn represents into your friend, ally, partner in crime or partner in solving crime. All the themes of authority I described in a few too many words above come home with this Saturn transit. In a phrase, you must not be intimidated by powerful people. You must learn to be yourself with whoever you are with, without hesitation. Whether you're with your lover, someone you wish was your lover, the state attorney general, the president, your mother, your child or a taxicab driver, be yourself.

This builds confidence. Notice how the most confident people *are confident in who they are*. The way to get confident in who you are is to practice being who you are, all the time. It's true there is situationally appropriate behavior, but deciphering that is a learning process, and it's necessary to push some boundaries. The way you do that is to always inject a little extra humanity into whatever situation you happen to be in.

There are of course other strategies, such as to be a character actor, and act like a different person with everyone. This will divide your energy and be working in the opposite direction of the building of integrity — the integration of your whole being — that is so essential to you right now. It's so essential you could call it the core theme of your life.

I'll come back to that in a moment. Regarding Saturn and its relationship to Pluto, I would say its two main themes are: relationship with purpose, by agreement; and relationship that pushes you to aspire to your greatest potential. The two factors are intimately related.

The Mercury Retrograde Factor

All the Mercury retrogrades this year center around the earthy signs. The one in January starts in Aquarius and is mostly in Capricorn. The rest are solidly in earthy signs. This describes you as seeking what is tangible, dependable, solid, and translates into lasting value. By value I mean values as well. Quality is indeed a value. Whether in the form of something you say, make, buy or sell, quality is a reflection of who you are, and I suggest you infuse it into everything you do.

I also suggest you learn to be repelled by tinny, tawdry and cheap, and be drawn to handmade, traditional, solid and real. This goes especially for your use of thought, language and other modes of communication.

In particular, I suggest you focus on the quality of your ideas. Bear in mind that ideas almost all require development. They go through stages, and often need time to ferment. You have a fast mind and you tend to like easy answers. Your astrology from many angles is saying slow down and let the process work — as much consciously as 'unconsciously'.

Do what you can to ground your ideas, whether creative thoughts for the purpose of sharing, or your personal ideas about life, in some form of pragmatic reality. Focus on the usefulness of what you're doing and what you're thinking — and remember that beauty for its own sake is a form of utility. The world needs beauty as much as it needs axel grease, parachutes that work, pens that work, and fire trucks to put out fires.

Uranus Conjunct Eris: Define Yourself

There is one last attribute of your chart to mention in this section of your reading, before we move onto the recordings that will be done in a few weeks. I've been pondering this for a few days. Here is what I've got for you: There is a powerful conjunction happening in Aries, which is your 11th solar house. That's the house that addresses your friends, their friends and groups and organizations to which you belong.

The 11th house is as close as most people come to 'the public'. You might think of it as your personal public. Particularly in the world of social media, we are all at least minor public figures, and as a result we are all conscious of our image. This a somewhat new thing that we're dealing with — ordinary folk who act like their own publicity agents.

What you may be noticing is a tendency to play to the public; that is, to live in such a way that meets the expectations of others. By others I mean those who are not necessarily intimate partners. I mean peer pressure on a kind of grand scale. Here is where you must be determined to stand the ground of who you know you are, rather than who others expect you to be. It is tempting indeed to yield to that kind of pressure or influence. However, it's essential that you maintain your inward focus, and define yourself in the way that you want to — based on who you are and what you want to do.

It will not serve you at all to have others do this for you, especially for the sake of popularity in any form. It's a ruse. You do, however, have the capability of sensing what is blowing in the wind and being responsive to it, coming from your own place of creative self-definition. You might even think of these influences as a challenge to your integrity, which you can only meet by having more integrity.

It's vital to remember you can be influenced, and you tend to seek your identity in groups as much as you do in more individualistic ways. This is a significant aspect of your character, and one you must take totally under your own control. You must decide who you are on your own terms, not those set by others — no matter what you're offered or how much fun it seems to be.

What you will discover is that by being yourself first, and answering to your own definition of what it means to be true to yourself, you will earn the respect of others who might otherwise seek to change you. But that respect is mere garnishing on the one-and-only thing that actually matters in this life, which is the respect you have for yourself.

You are on your own journey and you are your own leader. That still leaves you plenty of room to have living, breathing, mutually responsive relationships with people you love and admire. The more you stand boldly on your own, the more the feeling will be mutual.

