



Lamp collection in the wood shop of Arklight in Ghent, New York. Photo by Eric.

Inner Space for Taurus

The Promised Land Beneath Your Feet

Dear Taurus Sun, Moon or Rising:

To begin with, this is a most unusual time in the history of your sign, and most likely, your life. I recently joked that every Taurus I know has lived in the same place for 37 years, and a few minutes later, I got back a letter from a Taurus friend who said she was finally moving out of a house she had been in for that long. I chose the number 37 randomly, though who knows, we may find it has some significance.

Taurus is usually the bedrock of stability — for everyone. It's also the creative dynamo of the zodiac system of organizing thought. Those born under this sign or who have other strong influences here tend to create work of lasting value and influence. They may not be “famous” but their work tends to establish an order of its

own, which serves as an example for others. In a strange way not accounted for in most astrology books, Taurus is the self-fueled creative power plant.

I have a theory why that is — borrowed from Alice Bailey and reinterpreted somewhat, preserving her original meaning. She wrote that Taurus is the blacksmith shop of the soul. While on the personality level, Taureans tend to present themselves impeccably, always dressed appropriately and understanding protocol, there is some profound fiery inner movement. You look at them from the outside, and you don't think "earthquake zone." But you know what I mean.

The more successful Taurus people know how to harness some of this raw intensity that they conceal so well, and do something constructive with it— it is not necessarily easy. But you may have discovered that to stay out of self-destruct mode, you simply must do so. Here, appearances no longer matter. You are excellent at creating beauty, but you know what it takes to get there.

Part of your success formula is being willing and able to do the parts of a creative task that others consider boring, repetitive or uncreative. You have a methodical quality and this is extremely helpful in any artistic or business endeavor. You know that the proverbial devil is in the details. You have a good mind for making sure they are taken care of, though you will need to protect this talent, here in the digital age.

That said, we now live in the era of Uranus in Taurus. Uranus is the planet that comes with the jolt, the revolt, the invention and the transformation too rapid to keep track of. It's about the acceleration of time and also unpredictable events and results.

And it's been in your sign since 2018, on a seven-year journey that is now more than half over. Uranus, which is pure energy of a certain highly volatile kind, has altered your life in ways you would have never imagined at the outset of the transit.

It has, in particular, been disruptive to the status quo of your relationships, sometimes in ways you have welcomed and sometimes in ways you decidedly did not. Either way, you know that you must use these circumstances to the best possible end result, and that means going through a process.

Closer to the core is that Uranus is driving your nonstop self-reinvention. While this has happened previously as a slow-paced experience, it now arrives in the form of tremors, shocks, bold ideas and the necessity for completely rethinking your approach to existence. While events can seem to be coming from outside of yourself, the core impetus is an internal movement that is driving your outer circumstances.

Under the influence of Uranus, you are probably more welcoming of new situations than you usually are. Of all the signs, Taurus tends to favor what is familiar and

established, though part of your evolution is to be more open to what is new, out of pattern or even downright strange. While Taurus is usually editor-in-chief of that which is conventional, you are now executive producer of the weird and unusual. You will be as good at this as you are at anything else.

The End of Pluto in Capricorn

Another influence that has transformed your affinity for the conventional is Pluto in Capricorn. This influence goes back to 2008. Many of the characteristics of a given Sun sign or rising sign come from elsewhere in the zodiac, and nothing says “do it by the book” like having Capricorn on the 9th house.

In the past (in Capricorn style), that book was likely to be the Bible, in some direct or indirect form. You may have immediate ancestors who were some form of Bible thumper, evangelist, perfectionist or moralist. You may not know their names, though their influence has been distinct (most likely flowing to you through your mother’s side of the family). Pluto has compelled you to look at and transform the meaning of morals, ethics, religion and spirituality in all forms, including various “personal religions,” ritual activities and the influence of any system of belief.

Pluto in Capricorn has not only demolished this: it has also liberated the spiritual essence from what seemed like a bunch of materialistic and over-dense mental substances: religion as the poor substitute for religious experience, in whatever form that may have taken.

More than any other influence, Pluto has blown you out of your preconceived notions of what existence — or at least your existence — is about. The result has been to put you into direct contact with an influence normally experienced through many layers of filtration and interpretation.

There is one crucial thing to keep in mind: right and wrong really do matter. Between what Pluto has removed and what Uranus is provoking, it is possible that you will do things that go against what you know is right, in a way uncharacteristic of the past. Be alert to the fact that you may not know when this is happening; it will seem like the right thing to do. So run things through your ethics checker a few times before you decide everything is OK, and please listen to the concerns of others who may be presenting you with evidence of an ethical breach or dilemma of some kind.

The Peak of Chiron in Aries

As I have written many times, one of the most unusual things about Taurus is that you have Aries as your 12th house or place. The sign associated with identity is in the region where all the rules are suspended and nothing is tangible.

This creates a kind of irritant, or the feeling that you are looking for something about yourself that you cannot find. It's halfway between looking for your glasses but not being able to find them because you're not wearing your glasses; and not being able to find them because you're wearing them already. Such is the "dream logic" of the 12th, where it's sometimes necessary to hold two mutually exclusive thoughts as real at the same time.

Chiron has placed a lens in front of this experience — or what you might think of as a probe into the mysterious and elusive house containing your self-concept. This has provided an anchor into your journey to self-awareness.

Chiron in your 12th has opened up the mysteries of the universe, most of which (from your point of view) involve you. It's as if you didn't know how much you didn't know. And while Chiron has the ability to move around more freely in space and time than does Saturn, Chiron does have points of orientation; it has boundaries, it has limits and it both provides and insists upon documentation.

The 12th can have an "anything might be true" quality to it. Chiron says, anything *might* be true, but this is what you need to be aware of, in your interior reality. Therefore, I suggest taking any question you have to this place within you. You will know it's Chiron because the focus is on healing and teaching.

In the longer run, you will recognize Chiron due to its property of turning injury, pain and doubt into well-learned lessons and healing assets that you can share with others. The transformational power of Chiron is such that it turns poison into medicine and pain into compassion. However, this potential exists outside the belief structure of many people. In a sense, it must be experienced to be believed. Therefore, don't worry about whether you believe it or not.

The peak of this transit occurs in 2025 and 2026. This is the conjunction of Chiron and Eris in Aries. Though it's still a few years off, you are currently under its influence, and will be increasingly so as it approaches and finally arrives at full strength. Conjunctions of this kind are extremely rare; the most recent was in 2016-2017 (Uranus conjunct Eris); then 1993 (Uranus conjunct Neptune); before that in 1971-1972 (Chiron conjunct Eris) and prior to that in 1965-1966 (Uranus conjunct Pluto). I may be missing a couple of events in this league, but you get the idea: they are few and remote to one another, and they also come with major upheavals and turning points in history.

Eris in Aries (1925-present) has had a dismembering or fragmenting effect on consciousness and self-awareness. This fragmenting effect is responsible for much of the destabilization of the world that we are witnessing today. As a great poet once wrote, “I can’t change the world, but I can change the world in me.”

The role of Chiron is to help us remember, and connect with ourselves, which would come in the form of wholeness through the holistic principle: recognizing that the whole is contained in the parts; the parts contain the whole; and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This may sound abstract or esoteric, but it is a basic law of nature. You are more than a bucket of water and a pile of carbon. Your awareness is more than all the individual things you might focus on. Your self-awareness is more than the collected details of your life. Wholeness is not something that can be imposed. It can only be discovered, uncovered, or connected with.

This is the essence of healing, especially on the spiritual or psychological level. You have the experience of being whole. Sometimes it’s so powerful that it changes you forever. Other times you need to keep having it, until you figure out that it’s real and accept it as your reality.

I would remind you of an idea from A Course in Miracles: someone is a teacher of God when they recognize that their interests are not separate from those of others. Part of the wholeness you contain is that your entire life process contains all that you perceive. Part of the “dis-memberment” process has been casting off the experience of other people as separate from yourself, when this is not true.

Jupiter Sweeps Through Aries and Lands in Taurus

Jupiter arrived in Aries Dec. 20, 2022 and goes clear through to Taurus, where it arrives May 16, 2023; it will remain there through late May of 2024.

This is on the list of “it doesn’t get better” transits. That is to say, you have a resource you can take advantage of. The first part of this transit, Jupiter through Aries, will take you on a tour of everything I’ve written about in the section above. It will have a way of magnifying the effects of Chiron and Eris in Aries, of which you have a sense.

This may come with a series of “a-ha moments” where you can suddenly see what was hidden; where the secrets lurking behind the veil (about yourself) are revealed to you.

One thing to look for is some coherent information about the influence of your ancestors on who you think you are. I say this because the 12th is a kind of drainage

pond of ancestral influences, and you do a lot of self-searching in this area of your chart.

Sticking with the “local” generations where you may have known a few people — through grandparents and great-grandparents — what were their issues around sex-bias? This is not all about “women are not as good as men.” Plenty of damage is done to boys (for example, by men who lack self-respect, women who do not respect men, people who hate themselves and everyone else, etc.).

Also: if you identify negative influences, and we all have them, who were the ancestors who give you reason to feel good about yourself? It may have been one thing that one of them said just one time; it may have been the aunt, uncle or cousin who recognized you as a sensitive human when maybe your parents didn’t quite get that far.

After Jupiter makes this rather dramatic sweep through Aries (making conjunctions to Chiron and Eris along the way), it lands in your own sign. And this will be exciting. I strive to never make an astrological promise that I cannot keep. This will be a helpful transit, though the requirement is that you take action on your opportunities and use your luck wisely. Some say that fortune is a god, and if so, it’s probably Jupiter. I say that fortune is a resource, like a book of matches that allows you to light a new fire only so many times.

Under this transit you will want to push your luck — a little. Then, maybe a little more. However, as you know, there are limits to relying on luck, and Jupiter provides other resources. One of them is knowledge. The potential pitfall here is false clarity: thinking you know when you do not. Therefore, as with so many other things, verify, verify and verify. Please do not assume yourself correct, even on matters where you have extensive experience.

That all said, you are likely to find this extended transit of Jupiter through Aries and Taurus to be a time when you feel your own presence in the world, and feel good about yourself too. Jupiter brings substance, confidence and a degree of qualification. Use that well, and tread lightly on the Earth.

Saturn Followed by Pluto in Aquarius

In my view, all of this is about leadership training. As we go deeper into the second decade of the new century, the theme of your astrology is leadership. Not everyone is interested; not everyone is made of what they think the right stuff is.

Yet the only leadership that matters is the example that you set, and part of that example will be taking responsibility for some crucial element of the world around you. This is a natural outgrowth of your own healing process.

Yet it is happening, and demanding a degree of impeccability that most people would find uncomfortable. This is leadership by example, and you would prefer not to be studied or held to account. Usually for you, those are private matters.

These developments are occurring as you go deeper into your own personal investigation, your inner psychology and the influences of what shaped you into being the person that you are. And usually these, too, are private matters. Yet, due to all the Aries astrology, your chart has an inside-out quality to it, as if your innermost matters are exposed for anyone to see.

So, that you are leading by example is a given — even though that was not always the case. The leadership factor has been brewing the past three years of Saturn in your 10th house, Aquarius (which ends in March). I suggest you do a review of all your relationships to the business and corporate world. Saturn has a way of clearing the decks to make room for something new. Given what comes next, though, Saturn in Aquarius was like attending country day school when you are on the way to your Ph.D.

That advanced degree you will be working on is Pluto in Aquarius. I will have more opportunities to prep you for this. However, you should at least know this much: taking on a measure of significant public responsibility is a kind of personal evolutionary necessity. You will be drawn to it, it will be drawn to you, and you would be wise to plan and prepare for this.

There are pitfalls; you are going to be granted power that is extremely easy to abuse. This is why in many facets of your astrology you are being called to have a strict code of ethics. Under the influence of Pluto through your 10th house, you will multiply karma with every action you take. This is ALL on you. Any problem you create for anyone else will be your problem. Therefore, you are being called on to practice impeccability in a time of near-total moral and ethical collapse.

Yet the benefit will be that the world has access to your skills, your knowledge, your experience and most of all, your good judgment. Therefore, do not balk at any opportunity to wrestle with your conscience and to see how it's very difficult to actually be right about anything. You must therefore understand what "right" means. Is your assessment based on clear and convincing evidence?

Is it based on which way the evidence leans (called preponderance)? Do you strive to be correct beyond a shadow of a doubt? Remember, with the kind of power you will

have, doubt is your friend. Uncertainty is essential, until the moment you must take action, and take full responsibility for your level of awareness, and your decisions.

For in-depth information about what is happening in the sign Aquarius as it affects everyone, [please check this reading from 2021](#).

Mars Retrograde in Gemini

(Oct. 30, 2022-Jan. 12, 2023, total duration of Mars in Gemini spans Aug. 20, 2022 through March 25, 2023)

Mars is making its retrograde maneuver in your 2nd house, Gemini. Here you have the astrology of what I would call a “fearless and searching moral inventory.”

You still have three months to this transit, and a little of the retrograde left. Most significantly, the days surrounding the station-direct on Jan. 12 will be revealing and present you with information that was right in front of you, but which you could not recognize before.

Having Gemini on the 2nd is a caution against two sets of standards; two sets of priorities; two sets of ethical principles that you may switch between. I suggest, in light of events surrounding Mars, that you do everything to one standard: that you have one set of fully transparent principles (what our Gemini sister Rosanne Cash calls rules of travel).

The 2nd house is in many ways the seat of self-respect. For you, this is closely related to the “dual viewpoint” of Gemini and making sure that you don’t burn up your respect for yourself by holding contradictory positions. Make sure those twins get along. There is no majority when there are only two votes, but you must always cast the deciding ballot.

Gemini as your 2nd house is where you seek within yourself for confirmation of your personal worth, as apart from dollars, pounds or euros. Mars through this house has hopefully provoked a true self-examination; it may have spurred a few crises of self-respect that you have had time to resolve in your own favor.

There are times when you will find true wisdom in insecurity. It is possible to harness strength and power from your doubts rather than to be paralyzed by them.

Another crucial matter of the 2nd is keeping your priorities in order. I gather that you have addressed some of the Gemini-styled splits or parallel realities that you’ve lived

with. This is the time to consolidate your resources, and to make an evaluation of what you have, what you may lack, and what you need.

Of those things you have, the most valuable assets are your talents, abilities and your knowledge. This includes the condition of your mind and your body as a useful instrument for doing the work you came here to do. Yet here, the use of your personal assets must be regulated by your knowledge of your own priorities and the values that drive them. You can have all the talent in the world, but if your priorities are off, neither you nor the world get the full benefits.

If you are doing this assessment well, you are likely to reach points in your analysis where you realize you were absolutely wrong about certain matters; at that stage, it would be wise to do your best to make amends with anyone who followed your example.

Mars in Cancer; Saturn in Pisces

Let's take up the transits to the water signs together. Mars arrives in Cancer on March 25, 2023. It will be there through May 20, 2023, when it arrives in Leo. This is an unusual transit because it's the first sign change of Mars after a truly unusual retrograde in Gemini.

It adds the property of heat to the element of water. That adds up to passion.

Having Cancer on the 3rd place (words, ideas, local travel) enables you to be a convincing, emotional communicator. It also facilitates a kind of revolving point of view that you might want to address by having distinct points of orientation. In other words, it's easier not to travel (or talk) in circles if you know which way is north.

Mars in Cancer may make you feel something is right, regardless of whether that feeling is true. A strong, emotional transit like this calls for backup that is based on reasoning. Something that is true should work out on both sides of the "feeling" and "thinking" equation.

This is yet another transit calling for cross-checking and verification of what you know and what you think you know; it's a reminder that while "your gut" may have one idea, it's always necessary to check the facts and the figures to at least see how they comport with what you believe, assume or presume.

The cooler of the two water sign transits is Saturn in Pisces.

The similarity is that, like Cancer in the 3rd, Pisces has a community flavor as well, as your 11th house of groups: it is inherently social, collaborative and a place that is easy for you to call home (or it was, until we were all driven apart from one another in 2020 and 2021).

Saturn and Pisces are not said to be very compatible, though Saturn's resonance to Capricorn in fact comports well with feminine water sign Pisces.

Saturn tends to clear and reorganize. This transit will help you figure out who your friends are and who they are not. The keynote of Saturn is respect. You are excellent at this, when you want to be. Saturn in Pisces says treat everyone as your fellow officer until they give you a reason to do something else. Extend respect first, and see how people respond. In Pisces style, this will not be instantaneous.

Venus Retrograde in Leo

(July 22-Sept. 3, 2023; Venus in Leo spans from June 5 through Oct. 8.)

Let's wrap up with your ruling planet being retrograde in Leo, your solar 4th house: home (your literal four walls), your sense of security, emotional grounding and stability, and the affairs of your father. The 4th has a lot to do with confidence, and faith in yourself, and you are blessed to have Leo here.

Even if you think you lack self-confidence, you have more than you think. Be reminded of this when you meet people who really, truly struggle to get through the day or even get out the door.

The previous times Venus was retrograde in Leo were in the summer of 2015, late 2007, late 1999, late 1991 and 1983. That works out to roughly once every eight years. (These retrogrades are not evenly distributed, but that is a topic better suited for a scholarly article).

This transit has a "coming home" quality to it. You may already be on this wavelength, though your astrology is encouraging you to orient your whole life on your domestic realm — which will support the many public facets of experience that arise in the coming years.

Any transit of Venus, even a retrograde, is short-lived, compared to something like Saturn or Pluto. So this is a teachable moment and your opportunity to "make home" and deepen your relationship with the physical space — and perhaps land — that you occupy.

Like many facets of your astrology, this seems custom-designed to draw you into yourself and remind you that in many crucial ways, existence proceeds from the inside out. This transit reminds me of my personal favorite Carole King song, "Been to Canaan."

Here are some of the words. Remember that this is a promise you can only keep for yourself.

*Been so long, I'm living till then
Cause I've been to Canaan and I won't rest until
I go back again. Though I'm content with myself
Sometimes I long to be somewhere else
I try to do what I can, but with our day-to-day demands
We all need a promised land.*

With love,

