



Sunset behind Marine Parkway Bridge, which connects Brooklyn with Far Rockaway in Queens (of “Rock rock, Rockaway Beach” and the Ramones fame). There is such a place. Photo by Eric Francis.

Inner Space for Virgo

Where you’re at. Where you’re going.

Dear Virgo Sun, Moon or Rising:

Over the past decade, it would seem that personal relationships have been the most significant challenge you’ve faced.

Because you’re such a shape-shifter in your professional life, you’ve very likely adapted to the never-ending challenges being thrown at you by way of various manufactured crises, and also by the rising tide of digital conditions, which require extreme skills of adaptation. You have such a gift, a particularly valuable one in our era of nonstop rearrangement of the notions of job, gig, career, vocation, profession and what it means to be a person.

Unlike most people, you're someone who can pull a whole new set of job skills out of your vest pocket and transform your career in the space of about two weeks. You usually have two or three solid lines of involvement going at the same time, though you don't necessarily integrate them.

Mars retrograde through the later parts of 2022 and into 2023 may be delivering some kind of added shakeup on the job front, or skirmishes with bosses. You may have faced or be facing some kind of minor controversy. However, this is a classic kind of scenario where your gift for synthesis will carry you through. You know you're the one who knows how to make things work for you.

The extended visit of Mars may be giving you new determination to figure out how to break through to another level of not just work, but professional accomplishment. You will, of necessity, ruffle some feathers along the way, though that's often true. You are sorting out who is helpful and who is taking up space.

Mars retrograde in its current form is about sorting through deception, denial and misinformation. Where this relates to your professional choices, I suggest this: pull out your resume file, your CV, or your LinkedIn profile and print it out. Then, read it and make an assessment of what you've accomplished and how close to your personal goals it is. This is the "review" part of the retrograde: look back.

Then, ask yourself what you *want* to be doing. Not what you *can* do; not what you *would logically do* next, but what you really *want* to be doing. I know this can be a challenging question for some, while others just say, "Organizing celebrity aqua volleyball in the Bahamas." Do your best to state your absolutely ideal activity and place of work. This way, you know what it is. You will recognize an opportunity when it comes up, and you will have some sense of when you're moving toward it or away from it.

There is more to say about your vocational life, related to Pluto entering Aquarius and other factors. Before I go there, while we are still at the top of this reading: I encourage you to learn everything you possibly can about the true nature of digital technology and its impact on humanity. This is not about the "good things" it can do, or any other capability, but rather what you have noticed about the impact on yourself, your kids, your relationships, and the people around you.

You are about to be at the center of that particular cyclone, and have the ability to harness its potential, rather than to be worn down by it — though you need to know the difference.

One source is my reference reading for the Aquarian Era series, [which you may read here](#) when you're ready (it was written for the sign Cancer, but it also applies to everyone.) It explains what I perceive as the spiritual problem. I will have more to say about this later on in this reading. Were I to reduce my journalism to covering only one topic, it would be going deep into the profound spiritual impact of digital conditions on individuals, and especially on children. It is easy to count the ways in which the idea of "human" is being recreated into a dataset.

This new environment, while it is charming and convenient in some ways, is also ripping society apart. It demands a discussion of how we are going to remain sane and healthy in this environment. Oh, and employed. One of the main goals of the digital overlords is to turn every job into an algorithm that a device can do. I will come back to this when I cover the influence of Pluto in Aquarius.

You have what it takes to stay out of harm's way and also to thrive, even under all of these strange influences. Yet this will require what seems like extraordinary sensitivity to yourself and your environment. You will need to see what is currently invisible to nearly everyone. And at the same time, once the problem is seen and given a name, most people would say it cannot be solved.

There is just one remedy to the problem of being swallowed by the digital environment, and it's not "getting away from the internet." It is staying awake and using all of your tools in a creative way, every time you use them. The digital trance comes from being overwhelmed and cutting oneself off. I am suggesting that you do exactly the opposite.

Saturn in Pisces and the 7th House (March 2023-Feb. 2026)

The personal and intimate dimension of life is rarely as easy to maneuver as the professional aspect. There are fewer options, and it's not nearly as structured. People go a little far with "all is fair in love and war," or what is called love.

The challenge is especially true for Virgo, which is always looking in the direction of Pisces for information about people and the environment. Pisces can have an idealistic and nebulous quality to it that defies the kind of tangible situations that you want and that you may need. You do love what is dreamy and romantic, though your pragmatic side demands the presence of people who know how to get the job done or at least get through the day.

However, this is not usually a criterion in the choice of romantic or sexual partners, who end up becoming partners in the business of life.

There is an added challenge in that you've had Neptune moving through Pisces, opposite your Virgo assets, for more than 10 years, and working its way through the relationship area of your chart (your 7th house or place). This is the very sigil of confusion. Everyone you try to relate to on equal (which means honest) terms is going to be colored or shaded by Neptune (which often means not understanding what is true, or what people mean when they say something).

If you have managed to get this far into Neptune in Pisces without feeling like you've lived through some kind of incomprehensible isolation, that would be excellent. But we all lived through 2020 and 2021 and got a blast of that. It may have impacted you far more than others. The challenge of Neptune through the 7th is an experience of seeming distance from people and the world that you may not consciously register as such. It may seem like

something else, perhaps that you have blamed on yourself when really the issue is one of your surrounding environment.

In March, Saturn enters your 7th house or your opposite sign, which will have quite a different feeling from Neptune. While Saturn here is considered a challenging transit, you may find that it's a lot easier to manage because Saturn at least offers the property of something tangible. Saturn is the astrological utility by which we set limits, define boundaries, define space and understand purpose in a coherent way. Neptune tends to dissolve all of these things.

This is unlikely to turn around overnight, though Saturn might very well come along like a raft, and you may discover that you were in the water.

What you will get from Saturn in Pisces, in effect through early 2026, is realism. If that is what you need, then you'll perceive this as helpful. If you are currently getting by living in ways that you know require denial as a sustaining force, this transit will surely have a chilling effect and require you to get a handle on what is real.

If, however, you are done with ambiguity, and feel that you need some clarity, this is your transit. In any event, the most useful asset of this transit will be to help you draw the boundary between yourself and others. This already blurry partition will get slippery under the influence of a Neptune transit.

I suggest that awareness of, and use of, boundaries of all kinds be your guiding principle. I am not talking about the conceptual or New Agey sense of boundaries, but rather things like how you organize your time, whether you have clearly defined space of your own in your own home, what portion of household income belongs to you, and what your privileges and expectations are within any relationship situation. You will have the opportunity to discover where you end and someone else begins. You may also discover that boundary got so hazy that you forgot you needed it.

Pluto from Capricorn to Aquarius

(Pluto makes this transition between March 2023 and late 2024)

Since 2008, Pluto has been in Capricorn, your 5th place, related to experimentation, creativity, play, fun and taking risks. To have Capricorn on this house can make you risk averse, conservative, and someone who tends to honor responsibilities over play. Many people with strong Virgo placements are made to grow up too fast.

This serves the adults in that they get some extra help, and also serves the child in that he or she may seem to get added privileges in the adult world, though often at the expense of experiencing youth.

Pluto through Capricorn has in many ways helped you reverse this. Maybe you didn't get a second childhood. However, you may have done what you could to emphasize fun and preference over duty. To have a 5th house Pluto transit is about as good as they get. With

Capricorn involved, you have to penetrate through old influences, though once you have a creative fire burning, those make good fuel.

Another strong positive of Pluto in Capricorn is that it resonates with your plants-and-trees nature in a time that is anything but grounded in reality, on the physical world, or in tradition. Always remember that you're born under an earthy sign. Pluto in Capricorn has emphasized this point for you and given you a way to stay connected to your true nature. It has reminded you that sex is something you do and experience with your physical body.

The 6th house, Aquarius, where Pluto is headed, is somewhat more complicated. The element shifts from earth to air, and from the natural world (the one that existed before humans) to the technological one (the one we made).

The 6th is primarily about work and wellbeing: what you do, and how you take care of yourself. We must all be forewarned that Pluto's transit through Aquarius is likely to emphasize technical "solutions" to everything more than we have seen. And this will continue on its present trajectory, straight to employment and healthcare, with far more intensity than we are experiencing now.

Everything being some form of tech or biotech thrills many people; I don't think it should thrill you. You are too connected to the human world and connected to your humanity, though it's easy to be conned. It's easy to be told (meaning pressured to believe) there is now just one way to do things. Note how the persistent use of GPS navigation means that people no longer know how to get places. They must be told, rather than figure it out. Multiply this by a few million to understand the vision of the world that technologists have for us.

So I am here with a warning, and with two suggestions.

The warning is not to trust your health and wellbeing solely to any form of computer diagnostics, particularly genetic. Some people immediately recognize the danger of this: you are human and computers are not. Others may be taken in by their belief that technology is infallible. However, we are being confronted by the ultimate hubris. It is not difficult to see that to turn people into digital samples is to take away their humanity. And it has nothing to do with wellness or healing.

Pluto through your 6th is saying that you must learn how to take care of yourself as a high-order matter of your personal evolution. As the years go on, there will be increasing pressure to "trust the gadget." I am suggesting that you learn to trust yourself.

My proposals all involve doing what you can to stay wholly grounded in the human world, which means the world of people, critters, plants and trees; and of occupying your time with real tasks that perform actual service to honest-to-goodness living creatures.

During Pluto in Aquarius (which lasts through 2044), the business world is going to do what it can to make EVERY job — from Amazon warehouse worker to novelist — into a computer

script. We will see “concerts” of music written by computers “performed” by holograms — and countless other examples of similar absurdity. On the streaming channels, series after series is commenting on our lives being totally immersed in the digital world, and none of it is pretty. Yet slowly this is happening.

I suggest you do at least some work in the wholly analog world. If you want a rich life, do something that a computer cannot do. While you are probably extremely talented in the realm of technology (or can be if you want to be), it will help if you have other things to do. Many of the most stable and high-paying jobs will be “artisanal,” meaning traditional and requiring a human skill.

Speaking of: one of your talents, which will increase in value and importance as time goes on, is your ability to organize and orchestrate the efforts of groups of people. At the heart of this is that you recognize people’s individuality and work with them from there.

Chiron and Jupiter in Aries

(Chiron is in Aries 2018-2027; Jupiter is in Aries through May 16).

The location of Aries in any chart tells us about where a person seeks to discover themselves. This is a fair way to assess any kind of chart that pertains to a person. In the solar chart, it tells us something about the properties of the sign itself.

Virgo has Aries in the 8th house. The seeming contradiction here is that Aries is about you, while the 8th is about others. So the idea is that you seek yourself through your involvement with others. This tends to work until it does not — and it does not when your idea or experience of yourself outgrows the relationship.

This presents you with several possible choices: ignore what your growth is demanding for the sake of preserving the relationship; get partners to catch up with you; or decide that the relationship is not working and move on. You may have a pattern where you experience “the relationship you” as one thing and the “not in a relationship you” as another thing.

Most people define their personality through the relationship they are in. The relationship exists as a third party that can contain the unique personality mix of both people. This is part of why it’s so difficult for people to allow relationships to change, or to leave them when they are not working. Often, their personality and that of the relationship are morphed into one thing, and if that thing changes, there can be a profound effect (one that we have all experienced).

This angle of your chart has many transits, including long-term visitors Chiron, Salacia and Eris. Between late December and May, Jupiter will sweep through Aries. Whatever the slow-movers may be about, Jupiter is going to bring out that property. Anything you notice about a relationship was already there; Jupiter has a way of magnifying things.

One thing I can tell you about Chiron moving through this area of your chart between 2018 and 2027 (now past the halfway point) is that your prior approaches to relating to others are

not working the same way they used to. It now means something totally different to lose yourself in another, or involve yourself with their life. Chiron adds a highly self-aware element to consciousness, especially as it's placed in your chart now: in Aries, and in one of your most important relationship houses.

Chiron's necessity is about being one person consistently in all areas of your life, and with all people in your life. You may choose different activities with different people, though it will help if you really understand what you actually want, rather than what you believe you must do in order to be acceptable. They may be the same thing; they may be different.

The primary matter is being real with yourself about what you want. It will help if you notice the voices of various expectations and commitments speaking to you. This is about sorting out what you feel from "what you will let yourself feel."

Similarly, there is the critical matter of who you are versus how other people define you — a question that is likely to be coming up in many seemingly separate facets of your life. Yet where this arises, it's always about the same thing — and that thing is asserting itself boldly for you. The realer you are with yourself, the easier it will be to be real with others. This takes practice.

It will be helpful to sort out the benefits of the relationship (Jupiter in Aries) from how you actually experience yourself in the relationship (Chiron in Aries). One does not substitute for the other; to really be in any relationship, it's necessary to see and observe these as the same thing, not isolated ideas you can handle separately.

If you follow the guidance of Chiron, and persist in a policy of being real, you will discover the places where you can define a healing process. This must begin and end with you, though it's possible that a partner will come along on your healing journey.

As for Salacia and Eris, I will say only this: The electronic realm has only limited "relational" value for you; there is only so far you can take emotional relationships. This is true of everyone, though you're particularly sensitive here. What you want is in-person experience. Be careful, because the highly seductive digital realm can draw you away from the human realm, and you may be wondering what's gone missing.

The solution here is to make sure you get the people who are important to you but also at a distance in person, at least once.

Jupiter in Taurus

(May 2023-May 2024)

This will be a door-opening transit that will help you feel at home in the universe. I know, that's a tall order. It seems impossible. This is a 9th place transit, and the nature of the 9th tells us a lot about your relationship to existence. It covers your spiritual background, your concept of God or Source, your sense of the future, and your ideas related to travel and education.

Like most things, you want this made of some tangible substance that you can feel, work with and appreciate. You don't want it to change too fast. Taurus requires stability but not something inert — rather with an active core that irradiates heat. A good example is an old book that is alive, relevant and provocative hundreds of years after it was written.

Jupiter through Taurus and your 9th place is one of those natural invitations to travel — not as a tourist but as a pilgrim, seeker, explorer or archeologist. The difference would be travel that is not about luxury or entertainment but rather about learning and experience. You can read all the books you want, but ultimately, you don't know till you get someplace and connect with what you see and feel on the ground. For this purpose, I strongly favor traveling alone, or with one person who is entirely on your wavelength — but not a group, a tour or some kind of class format. You are entirely too curious and nonconformist to be limited by a group mind of any kind.

I heartily suggest that your travel experiences be your solo missions into the world, for the purpose of learning about yourself. I know that not many people like to up and go somewhere alone. I have, in my career as an astrological counselor, found very few women who have the confidence to do this. It is all the more reason to.

Venus Retrograde in Leo

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

Let's end with a truly introspective transit that will help you light your inner fire. That would be Venus retrograde in Leo. Venus is retrograde the least of all the planets, and it comes to any sign only rarely.

The last time Venus was retrograde in Leo was in 2015. Prior to that was late 2007. Prior to that was late 1999. And prior to that was late 1991. Prior to that was 1983. That works out to about once per eight years or so. (These retrogrades are not evenly distributed, but that is a topic better suited for a scholarly article).

Leo holds special value for you because it is, in a sense, your secret self. Leo is your 12th place or house, the location in the chart where you cannot necessarily see yourself clearly. It is the place where people and things disappear into oblivion. Yet you have one of the most powerful signs of the zodiac here — the sign associated with the Sun, Leo.

This represents a powerful force of heat and light radiating within you; an energy source that animates all of life, and lights up the whole world and all of the planets. We could describe this as an inner "star quality" — genuine charisma. We could describe it as a creative core that could really do anything. Yet your Virgo exterior tends to favor modesty, and a studious presentation of yourself rather than that of any kind of celebrity.

By my reckoning, you don't really want to be so visible or well known, but you do want to make a creative contribution to your world. Leo in the 12th favors privacy, but contains a

vast amount of radiant power that is your home and your primary spiritual resource. In some ways, being a Virgo is like hiding your light under a bushel.

Now, Venus is going to be making an extended and extremely rare visit to this region of your chart. This is like being given access to a secret vault of your most valuable personal gifts. Inside this vault are all of your talents, your abundant spiritual bank account, the gifts that you have inherited from your ancestors, and much else. Remember that Venus is the planet that represents your spiritual quest, as you have Taurus covering your 9th house.

So the purpose of this tour, this opportunity for inner exploration, is really the ability to see, feel, experience and inventory all that you have to offer the world. The keynote of Virgo really is service. Like Aquarius is an air sign that offers water to the world, yours is an earthy sign that offers the fire of your spirit to the world. You will soon see how much you have to give, which is the only way to discover what you truly have.

With love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Francis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.