

Ethics and the Search for Values

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

Your charts are bursting with energy. It's not like you're sitting on a volcano; it's more like you *are* one.

When you are holding or directing intense amounts or levels of energy, it's necessary to be precise, and to act with calculated intention. I recognize this is not popular. I am painfully aware that there are people who wear shoes that don't keep a grip on the ground, knowing they might slip, or trip and fall; you might say they are not using the energy of walking with intention.

You are working with much more energy than that.

Yet we live in reckless times, where actual, conscious caution is shunned. All of our over-caution about 'surfing safely' (the internet that is) is obviated by various risks taken while driving (I am figuring out that 'buzzed driving' is the norm, second only to texting while driving), leaving firearms in reach of children, toys left on staircases, the clutter next to the oil burner, wasting money, wasted opportunities and flirting with disaster. Surf safely!

Yes. You are packing a lot of power. You need to understand that power, and you need to learn how to control it. Moreover, it's essential that you direct your power creatively.

Consider your power in every form it takes: financial, sexual, persuasive, analytical, benevolent — and what activists call nuisance power: your ability to disrupt and to do damage. Part of why you want to bring consciousness to your power is that if you don't, you are inviting the shadow side to come in and take hold, which is rarely a productive thing.

Mars, the planet of raw power and desire, will be spending a lot of time in your sign this year. Mars also will be retrograde in your sign. Such does not happen often. Mars is retrograde every two years, but it's only happened in Scorpio four times since 1952.

On April 17, Mars will station retrograde in Sagittarius. Then on May 27 it will move into Scorpio and spend the rest of the retrograde there, remaining in your sign until Aug. 2.

Said in plain English, you will be having an extended, direct encounter with Mars, which is like a fully charged energy device (you decide what kind; it could range from sexual desire to a table saw).

This year you will also experience the merging of Scorpio and its adjoining sign Sagittarius. In solar astrology, Scorpio represents you, and Sagittarius represents your values.

If you are trying to understand what is going wrong with the world right now, and what would fix the world, it involves people and their relationship to their values. If you want to get a grasp

on how and why things are so unhinged, it mostly involves individuals — well-meaning ones — being detached from what they say is so important to them.

That can involve having spiritual views and positions that don't translate to action. It can involve blatantly violating what one knows is right. In between there are a lot of other possibilities; the world is loaded with them. Other people will pretend not to know what matters. Some others have morals, until their price is met, and often that price is low. Others know what is right but lack the conviction to stand up for what they believe in.

None of these options belong to you. Not now, not ever, even if they seemed to at some point in the past. You are too intelligent for any of this. You have too much insight into human nature for any of this. You are too clever, too resourceful, too devoted, to play the fool.

What I see this Mars retrograde doing is driving home the point that you must stand up not just for yourself and the people you care about, but for your community, for your world and for the future.

There is one other thing, which is deeply personal and which also exists on a global scale: self-esteem. I will develop this more fully in the next section on Saturn, though Sagittarius is the sign in your chart associated with the basis of and the degree of your respect for yourself. Mars here will call attention to that issue, and Mars retrograde will summon you back to a time when your faith in yourself was damaged, so that you may begin to put the elements of yourself back together.

The New Saturn Review

Saturn was in your sign from late 2012 (beginning right at the end of the Mayan calendar) through late 2014, then spent part of 2015 in Scorpio as well. Your relationship to reality is probably best described by this series of events, though there are many ways to relate to Saturn. For most people it's frustrating, and they experience setbacks. This can be true even for those people who have healthy boundaries and use their time consciously. Yet even then there are many ways to handle Saturn-related events.

A few can make enormous strides when Saturn is a major factor in their lives. This can come with unexpected changes, professional advancement and the miracle of coming to terms with who you are.

It's possible you experienced all of that and also went through a frustrating phase, and were subjected (as if from outside, or by forces beyond your control) to changes you would have preferred not to experience. You may, in time, decide those were really for the best, and not in the form of some spiritual euphemism, but actual improvements.

Saturn demands maturity, which is a scarce commodity in the world right now. In that case it will attempt to cultivate maturity anywhere it goes. The lack of maturity in our world is so blatant it seems many people have not heard of it. Among the many ways the world is currently

spiraling in the wrong direction are the ways marketing culture demands we amuse ourselves to death, and clutter our lives with petty drama, dependency and denial.

When Saturn cuts through that as if plowing through so much snow, it can be painful. When we cooperate with the process and resolve to make any necessary changes called for in the process of growing up, Saturn is a welcome and necessary presence.

On this side of your Saturn transit, you know you danced to the cosmic music if you like the work you come back to every day; if you know you're in the right relationship, or no relationship if that's what you prefer; if your association with your family is healthy, productive and made up of adult-to-adult relationships; and if you can identify several areas of your life where you've taken actual growth steps.

If you don't recognize this as a description of yourself, you now have the option to complete the work of Saturn on your own — or to wait for some other transit to inform you that you have another opportunity as scheduled by the planets. Because we live in a world where we're so generously supported in our dysfunctions, taking command and responsibility for our own lives is very much an option.

For example, if a person is pre-diabetic and knows they have to get control of their diet to prevent progression of the illness, they also have the option of medication solving for them what they could not do on their own. Then they have to deal with the inconvenience and pain of disease progression plus the inconvenience, expense and side effects of the drugs.

There are many, many ways this basic equation works. If someone doesn't reign in their speeding, they get tickets, their insurance goes up and they can hurt someone, or get hurt, in an accident. Alcohol forestalls addressing emotional issues, but then they get buried deeper. The alcohol is always available. The list of these things could fill a large disk drive.

There is always a tradeoff, always some cost to inaction, though in truth it's easier to get a grip on your own. So, I suggest you do a careful review of the events of the past three years and see how you have really fared. Determine whether you've risen to the challenges, and ask yourself honestly whether you have any incomplete work to wrap up. I don't mean in life, I mean specifically associated with things that emerged the past three years.

Now Saturn is in Sagittarius. This is a complex transit due to Saturn's square to Neptune in Pisces, directly associated with it. Saturn in Scorpio lacked any of that compounding material; it was, for the most part, eased along by those planets in Pisces (Chiron and Neptune among them). Now, Saturn is about to meet them at right angles.

The way I read this transit, it is a second opportunity to either do what you needed to do the past three years, or to take that work to another level.

What Saturn in Sagittarius is most likely to push is your self-esteem. That is the core issue, if there is one — and there is, and this is the one. Sagittarius is your 2nd solar house. The 2nd house started off as being about one's farm and cow. It evolved into being about one's personal

resources, and from there as psychological astrology emerged, self-value and how one feels about oneself.

The benefit of having Sagittarius here is that you can be the eternal optimist about yourself. Despite rumors of the dark disposition of Scorpios, you can have an unsinkable quality. This is a critical element of the tough-as-nails reputation you have; Sagittarius on the 2nd pumps you with a psychologically sturdy quality that is essentially tapping into various spiritual sources. There's nothing superficial about this, either.

Yet the combination of Saturn in this sign, and the Mars retrograde beginning here, are demanding additional focus and depth. We could call this a quest for self-esteem, or we could call it an intense search for your values.

Your eternally optimistic sense of who you are can also cast you into the role of someone who feels their values are never really compromised. I would submit that this is a theory Saturn in your sign will test. Saturn can indeed seem to throw doubt or a damper on anything it touches, though there is always a purpose.

Per Saturn, the level to which you must take your journey is an absolute understanding of your values. Values are ideas about life you possess at the very core of your strength. A scant few people are actually in touch with their values; many have a clue, some are entirely detached and unaware. The place I think this Saturn transit is taking you is to the intrinsic essence of your necessary guiding principles.

They are what you will do when the chips are all down; when you have but a moment left to live; what you would spend your last dollar on. We are not talking about working to pay the rent; we are talking about what you would do under the most extraordinary circumstances, but which you can make contact with and allow to inform and motivate you all the time.

It's as if your deepest values are being pressed through your entire being by Saturn's pressure and focus, making sure you proceed in life on a mission for authentic consistency. This is not outer behavior but rather the result of conduct motivated from within.

From Saturn to Pisces: What You Express

My teacher Joe Trusso has a teaching I find useful in my own life and working with others: the opposite of depression is expression. Many people experience depression, as they live with no means of expression immediately available. Or it's there but goes unused, or is left to atrophy. At the same time we have all noticed how extreme duress has a way of inspiring the best art, music, poetry and literature.

Creating is a transformational process — deeply rooted expression changes not just the person expressing it, but also those around her or him, and the shape of the world. This is not about talent so much as it is about necessity. Yet by necessity I mean a natural metabolic process of the soul. Too much is made of talent and not enough of learning and exploration. What is expressed is usually the result of the latter, not the former.

Saturn in Sagittarius will be leaning into Neptune in Pisces for the next year. Saturn is making a square to Neptune, which means a 90-degree angle. You might say Neptune is getting juiced by Saturn. This is less crude than it may seem. It's an expression of potential. Part of why this is true involves the sublime nature of both Sagittarius and Pisces, and how intimately they are woven into the cloth of your solar chart.

Sagittarius represents values, personal resources and self-esteem; Pisces represents these same things as you express them, or as you experience them in lived reality, translating them into productive, creative experience. You might say the 5th house of expression and taking risks (for you, Pisces) is where you demonstrate your values to yourself, and where you experiment with them.

The experimental and experiential nature of the 5th house are its two most important properties. The pleasure and thrill associated with this house are specifically associated with direct engagement with life. You are being called to do this in different ways than you ever have — to dare to express yourself as never before. You may or may not have seen the benefit of this; you may have seen it and then forgotten it.

The relationship between these two energies is complex and more than that, it's essential. Saturn and Neptune standing apart can each have an inert quality. Together they can blend into many marvelous creative substances, as well as caustic ones. The more intention you bring, the less toxic. Your intention does not need to be 'being an artist' as much as it does 'being a participant in experience'; that is, a participant in the ways you were previously an observer.

It is possible this arrangement of planets is pointing to something you already know about. The sheer volume of planetary material in Pisces and your 5th house is saying you really do have something to say. You have something to express, even if that something is the result of a process currently in motion.

The way you'll know you're there is by the sensation of daring or risk. There may be the sense of doing something you cannot undo. That's the feeling you want. When you have the feeling you cannot undo something, that's one way to know you've really done it. Of course this alone would prevent most people from acting, but I suggest you not let it stop you from doing what you need to do in order to feel good, and to be whole.

The 5th and Sexual Experience

Scorpio represents many mysterious, shadowy processes (bonding, transformation, surrender). Five signs away — where you express your sexuality with others (that is, your 5th solar house, Pisces) — the energy is lighter. Sex is expressed as play, as experimentation, as something creative to do that simply feels good (and which opens up a sense of connection, or which develops one further).

For some odd reason (such as society's overdose on religion, and the American puritan work ethic), the 5th represents one of the most taboo dimensions of sex, for adults — fun as somehow offensive. It can also seem to just go away. There are way too many reasons why the fun is

intentionally subtracted from sex to get into all of them here, but the kinds of sex that the 5th generally does NOT represent give you a clue.

Those include sex for commitment, out of duty, for pay, because you're allegedly or theoretically someone's property, or sex you feel weird about and think you must keep secret. Those are generally things you do over in the 8th house, an intriguing place.

The 5th house is more like let's do it on the art studio couch, during the day!

It's interesting and extra vivid — you probably don't live there, it's not in a bed, there's the energy of other people (art studio couches can be a bit grimy), among others. It's also fun because it's different, though part of the fun is that it's in a place where art is made.

The 5th would also count for getting it on in the restrooms of a club or bar, anywhere off to the side where it's possible to get caught, a dressing room in a theater, or the dressing room in a clothing store (famous for masturbation).

This is all described by Pisces in your solar chart, and the metaphor certainly fits — Pisces and the 5th in the same place is lavishly creative and pleasurable as such. My take from the mandala of the zodiac is that you dig this world of eroticism even if you can't always get there easily. Your 'conservative' thinking can get in the way. I do suggest you give a voice to your best, most personal desires, if only in a diary.

The 5th house jumps off the diary page and into the hologram of existence. Pisces digs fantasy and is a place you might describe where reality and the imagination get slippery and start to mingle. It also happens that there's a rather lively, diverse collection of planets in Pisces.

Of Chiron and Neptune you know, and these two energies directly compliment one another. Neptune soaks consciousness in fantasy, and Chiron burns with curiosity and craving experience. There could hardly be a hotter, wetter, more complimentary mix between vivid, lucid dreaming and the need to make it real.

Chiron's presence indicates a healing project or process of some kind. Nobody in our culture is wholly free of sexual shadow, such as some blend of guilt, shame or anxiety. Some have more, some have less, some consciously process theirs, some less so, and some blatantly resist. Chiron is like a mobile processing lab for shadow material, providing a space to get the process going.

Yet to get there you have to go there — in the direction of what needs to be addressed, rather than stashed away or eluded. Chiron in the 5th can represent any aspect of erotic healing. Yet the way this expresses is as a daring and pleasurable process. There are other forms of sexual healing (the all-women's therapy group, the survivors group, etc.), though the one typically left off the menu is the one where a certain kind of hot, healing fun happens. I'm certain you've experienced this one or more times.

It might (or might not) amaze you to know how many people have no positive, pleasurable or creative associations with sex; or if they do, they forgot them long ago. The claiming or

reclaiming of sex as a pleasurable, loving, freedom-seeking experience is vital to sexual healing. There may be grief and pain to process, but the journey is not exactly somber.

There are a few hints that this goes deeper than I'm suggesting. With Nessus in Pisces, it's time to bring to light any experiences of violation, disease or fear of disease, and address them. Nessus describes one's sense of consequences, though the real counsel is to take responsibility — therefore taking charge of something rather than letting it run you.

Borasisi, which is close to Chiron and will be for a while, describes the function of belief in your eroticism and creative life. It has interesting properties like addressing the lies of science and the truth of religion. Borasisi can contain contradictory thoughts and also be a tool for unraveling and resolving them. You might play with the ideas of how your healing process relates to what you believe, falsely or otherwise, and how beliefs can have a way of running your life (which can be annoying when they are not based in reality). Borasisi says figure out what you believe and what you know, and pay attention to the difference. That is the first vital step. It would be excellent to recall that knowledge is modified by additional knowledge and is as such a work in progress. But that bit about telling the difference between knowing and believing — it will be your Swiss army knife.

Meanwhile, if you can start to identify beliefs that are not reality-based, you can start to unravel them. They may have been sticking to you for a while.

One question might be, what do you do with your romantic ideals if your Vaseline-coated glasses are shattered? Um, you will love it — well, tell me if you do — the world of what is so. As Pennell Rock has written, only truth is erotic.

Mars, Pluto and the Fire Signs

As if what I've described isn't intriguing enough, the cosmic pattern of Scorpio this year includes what I will call fiery features. This begins with the conjunction of Mars and Pluto in Capricorn. Your mind is on fire. This is making you feel a little different right now, such as being the only one who notices anything, everything, something, whatever. I would imagine this aspect in the chart of an Agatha Christie, though I don't know her chart.

[I'll check, brb. Ok... Agatha has Neptune conjunct Pluto, in Gemini — retrograde — utter originality and mystical, transformative power of words. Her Mars is in Sagittarius on the Galactic Core.]

For you Capricorn is the zone of writing — your 3rd solar house — and that's one heck of a fire you've got burning there. You could write a novel people would actually want to read. Or more like be compelled. If that's true, I have a hunch the sensation of being compelled to speak up is right with you all the time. This may go beyond personal issues and extend into some institutional framework, like local government.

Keep your pencil sharp and a stack of paper on the desk. You won't just need them, you'll love them.

Meanwhile the fire signs are a freaky scene. There are two elements I can't believe are even in the same chart, though they are. One is the Uranus-Eris conjunction; yours is one of a number of charts that has the distinct expression of this aspect with godmother Ceres in the picture.

The Uranus-Eris alignment has been building for years and it will last for years, but 2016 is the peak of the action. Think of it as a vortex in time extending out seven years in all directions. I can tell you this arrangement, taking place in Aries, describes you as the Tasmanian Devil of getting shit done. Keep an eye on your speedometer and bring others into the conspiracy of achievement.

Spiritually, the value of the equation looks like this — some people, one of whom is likely you, figure out that their work really needs to nourish people rather than deplete them, and somewhat spontaneously set about to do just that. This work is in some way revolutionary.

Personally speaking, food and diet are essential to your health. Plan this well and get a few opinions, remembering that with diet the proof is in the living.

Now for what's going on up in Leo. This aspect is so wild it looks like something out of a hypothetical chart. The one real distinction is that Varuna is in Leo for the first time since its discovery in 2000. One of the pivotal discoveries of the Kuiper Belt, Varuna has been trekking across Cancer for all of the 15 years we've known about it.

This is historic, though for you it's also personal — Leo is the mighty 10th house of your solar chart. The 10th is that of reputation, achievement, honor, responsibility and accountability. Varuna entering this house describes a once-in-a-lifetime distinction. It might be immediate; it could be a gradual threshold into another stage of your relationship to the world. Varuna remains in Leo into 2042; you might call this something that's changing for the foreseeable future.

Varuna is the equalizer. This placement says in some way, you're an equal among the great. On the day the Sun enters your sign, Vesta is conjunct Varuna, something that will happen about every four years — though it's happening with Varuna gleaming new in this sign, to be blessed by the goddess of fire herself. And impossibly but very much in truth, the Moon is there, in the first moments of Leo.

This looks like some kind of sacred contract with society. It's a heck of a beautiful and exciting aspect. Hillary Clinton is one of your Scorpio sisters, by the way, and this whole alignment looks boldly meaningful in light of her governmental aspirations. The good and ominous thing about any alignment with Varuna in the picture must tend toward justice, and the keeping of promises. Honor can be bestowed or removed.

One is neither high nor mighty in the presence of Varuna; there is work to be done, and Vesta is a great companion in all matters of productivity, or where it's a needed quality.

To this arrangement, the Moon grants illumination, feeling, passion and visibility. I have no idea what you've got going on, but I expect to be able to see it from my roof at night.

What Venus is Reminding You

Among the many factors in your 2nd house of self-esteem, values and resources is Venus. This is a good friend to have in this placement, adding to an already rich story.

One way to sum up your most important transits, in total, is that they describe your quest for what is right — that is, what is right for you, and what also feels right in some larger context. Part of this involves bringing your true inner reality into the world as your only reality.

To do this it's vital you have your values straight. Remember this takes constant review as well as persistence. You need to know what — and who — you align with and why, at the essence of the idea. From there it's possible to stand strongly in your ethics, which are merely the expression of your values. When you see people who make no sense, or when you find yourself acting in ways that are irrational and self-destructive, check in on the values level.

In order to be true to your values, you must seek for what is wrong and untrue as much as you seek for what is right and true. Then the question is one of emphasis; of what side of the equation you feed.

We live in a time of false morality. You might say morality has been weaponized by the criminally insane, who use it to shoot back criticism at their sociopathic behavior. It's how war criminals enhance their image by allegedly being against abortion. It's how so many hypocrites thrive. Hypocrisy is the mark of our times, and — be aware — it is a drug.

Once people start getting away with a double standard, where you are bound by one guideline and they are bound by another, this becomes an addictive pattern. Hypocrisy is a serial crime more than an individual case.

Do everything you do for the love of what is right. Ask whether something is right for the love asking, and for finding out. There are other factors in your chart, which I will go over in your recorded reading, that work in your favor when you err on the side of truth and justice. Planets (particularly Jupiter) are moving in the direction of Libra, and this will fill in a missing piece for you — the one that contains the question of why the truth even matters in this world.

There is no logical or rational explanation necessary for that. It's not enough to say that the truth is one version of the story or some kind of intellectual construct. In the context of your life, the truth — what you know to be true, because you feel it in your heart, you perceive it with your mind, and you've tested it through hard-won experience — matters.

And it also matters that you have an even hand and apply a consistent principle to the people in the world around you. You must be a fair judge, and because you're in the position of being the judge of your own cause, be fair with yourself. By fair, I mean accountable in all things. You know you're really being fair and just with others when you have some objective standard to hold yourself to, even if you don't have to.

What you will thrive on, and find peace in, is being driven by the love of what is meaningful and true — for no other reason than because it is.