

Retrograding into the Future

June 30, 2020

AN AQUARIAN ERA FOR SCORPIO | BY ERIC FRANCIS

Scorpio is made of durable stuff: of life itself. When Aleister Crowley and the Lady Frieda Harris designed the Thoth Tarot, they illustrated the card associated with your sign with the double helix shape of the DNA molecule, which, oddly, had not yet been officially discovered.

(The Thoth deck was conceived in the 1930s and developed and painted between 1938 and 1943. The double helix was discovered in 1953.) This is one little clue that so-called ‘occultists’ are often way ahead of science. If the authors had some kind of inside knowledge or connections to top molecular biologists in the years prior to the discovery we might wonder how exactly that happened. My assessment is that they figured it out and got it right, placing the image into one of the most ingenious cards in the whole 600ish-year history of the tarot endeavor.

Scorpio is the original sign of what is real, and sometimes even getting real about those very things. And rarely is this popular, accepted, welcomed or encouraged.

The story of Scorpio is also the story of human evolution, which includes the weaving of the genome down through seemingly infinite generations, and the tendency of all living things to want to survive, grow and reproduce themselves. The reproductive urge in humans extends into the creative urge, and the conscious seeking of pleasure and creation. It is fair to say that exploring, exercising and expressing your creativity is the one thing that stands between you and being a drone, or someone living robotically in the digital haze.

We humans also have the capacity for conscious spiritual and psychological growth. We can relate with some awareness to the notion of existence, nonexistence and death. Our need to connect with one another sexually is both biological and emotional. Scorpio covers all of these bottom-line matters that confront humanity, and each individual person, sooner or later.

You may have some advantage here in that the themes of your chart connect to these big questions. This is partly why Scorpio has the ‘spooky’ reputation that it does: it addresses all those matters that are often considered inappropriate for discussion in polite company. Scorpio is the original sign of what is real, and sometimes even getting real about those very things. And rarely is this popular, accepted, welcomed or encouraged.

By real, I mean what has manifested here on our little sub-plane of the cosmic physical plane, where physical existence meets consciousness meets the conscious drive to become something new, something different, something else.

It is your deepest instinct to remain an individual, living on your own evolutionary terms. Nobody defines your life and your purpose for you. If they do, that condition does not last long.

Biology, its Beauty, its Intelligence and its Wisdom

We are biological entities, a fact that has long been denied (Christendom is famous for this, since it teaches that we're all better off dead). The denial trip — that is, the denial of biological life, its beauty, its intelligence and its wisdom — is coming on stronger and faster every day. We are born with astonishingly beautiful natural qualities, the capacity to grow, to heal, and to raise our awareness.

And we are all being told there is a happy place in The Cloud waiting for us, along with all of our metadata, photos, likes, elaborate maps of digital friends and friends of friends and our location data. That is, our karma. And we are being told that we do not need our natural bodies, or our bodies in their natural form. Therefore, better to merge those bodies with The Cloud and eagerly await your own personal IP address. Here is how I mocked this in my [2021 April Fool's Day parody](#). You may notice my subversive nod to the power of Scorpio, and its distinctive themes:



MAGICKAL FUTURE

With a little help from our life-extending, perfect-health-inducing injectable nanoplasma, you can live for hundreds of years. Our latest platform, EXTENDO.22™ v. 4.9, crosses the blood-brain barrier more efficiently than ever, gets right into your cells, and comes complete with a Sensorium™ entertainment center. This will keep you from getting bored and offer you a rich inner life. You can add the Movies4U™ module which connects you directly to Amazon's PrimeSense™ Mind'sEye™ internal video monitor. You can also get the new AnalogAudio™ module, and hear brainwave simulations of all of your favorite LPs or even live music (crowd presence costs extra). You can take a simulated Disney vacation for just \$999, including imaginary meals. You can add the Telepathy™ app and communicate device-free with your friends. And for those who pass the morality test, you may add the Sexytime™ module and have all kinds of good, clean fun anywhere there is BlueTooth, WiFi or a satellite connection (we are offering a sale on orgasms this week, available for just \$159.95 each, sharable for \$259.95). *Please note that your psychosexual activity will be reviewed by our algorithm and if your thoughts are inappropriate, you will be denied gratification for anywhere from 30 days to one year. Repeat offenders may be banned from orgasm for life. So keep it clean.* Stevie, do you have anything to add?
Stevie: What you said, keep it clean. I know you're all a bunch of perverts. Get a grip.

You may think that's a little ridiculous. No, I'm being friendly and optimistic about the future in that little joke. If you want realistic, just watch a couple of episodes of a program called *Black Mirror*, which only seems to be about the future. *Black Mirror* is about right now.

The persistent, all-pervading sales pitch and associated fear and futurism marketing campaigns just might not work with you, or not entirely. The idea of being a computer or anything like one is likely to be repulsive to you. You know you are a biological entity, and you like it that way. Though you as a water sign are sensitive to psychic pressure, you are also connected to something deeper than your personality. Your growth and survival now depend on noticing all the sly ways our biological reality is being stolen from us. This is slipping deep into social reality, as we enter the "Become Like Everyone Else or Else!" phase of the Aquarian Era.

There is a pseudo spirituality going around that basically says the only way you count, the only way you are actually a person, is to merge with the collective. This is not going to work for you.

It is your deepest instinct to remain an individual, living on your own evolutionary terms. Nobody defines your life and your purpose for you. If they do, that condition does not last long. Notice when other people try to do this to you. Make it your business to be yourself, in every situation, and to live your life on your terms. This is one of the most important focal points of existence on our planet. It is the purpose of consciousness itself.

There is a pseudo spirituality going around that basically says the only way you count, the only way you are actually a person, is to merge with the collective. This is not going to work for you. It never has, and it never will.

To the extent that the marketing and terror tactics are getting to you, the result is more likely to be conflict than total conformity. For many, conflict is a way of life. We are often born into it. It's the only thing many people know; and for some, the only thing that makes them feel alive. They know nothing else. You do. You know there is a better way. You know what a waste of time and energy conflict is, and you know this: you are here for a purpose, with limited time to achieve it.

I am writing this essay from the viewpoint that you want to do just that: attain your potential. I am not here to help you adapt to something you do not want, or to convince you that submitting to what feels wrong (or gives you a temporary high, or gets you into a concert) might be a good thing.

What is so interesting is that while Mars also rules Aries, in the style of Scorpio we get a couple of exciting twists.

The Mars Factor

This reading will take into account many astrological factors, though is based on how, in classical astrology, your sign is ruled by Mars. That is the planet of I AM. It is the planet of individuality, that is, of the defined and distinct self. What is so interesting is that while Mars also rules Aries, in the style of Scorpio we get a couple of exciting twists.

First, Scorpio is a feminine sign, though ruled by a masculine planet. (That one sentence contains the whole secret to Scorpio: you are self-fertilizing.) You contain every potential for the expression of sex, gender, sexual orientation and relational orientation within you — be they psychic or physical, and the place where these meet. It is true that everyone has this potential, though for you, this capacity is right at the front of your psyche and your relationship to your biology.

Second, Scorpio is relational. You are strongly inclined to take your self-fertilizing being and mix yourself up with others. This is instinctual for you, and irresistible to many who encounter you. It is the nature of the DNA that represents your sign to recombine and totally shuffle the deck from generation to generation and from encounter to encounter.

You do this within yourself, and you do it with, to and for others — whether you biologically procreate or not (i.e., choose to make babies). Your creative process is fertile, and it's driven by a force so powerful that it far exceeds necessity. You are driven by will, and are the happiest when you allow your will to flow freely.

Your ability to work with the collective is about being able to focus your individuality. I have referenced Alice Bailey many times on this matter: there is no collective without individuals to assemble into it.

While I will cover the movements of Saturn, Chiron, Pluto and Eris in detail (as I have done for every other sign), my approach in this reading is based on Mars and the Mars retrogrades between now and 2027. My intention is to explore some ways you can make it into the future with your soul and your power of decision intact. While there are critical themes that emerge in my discussion of how Pluto in Aquarius will influence you, please note this: your peace of mind, your growth, and your evolution depend on cultivating your personal sense of existence, will and desire — in the face of ever-mounting pressure to give these very things up.

Your ability to work with the collective is about being able to focus your individuality. I have referenced Alice Bailey many times on this matter: there is no collective without individuals to assemble into it. A group is a group of self-actualized people, not the mass crowd at a football game, all cheering at the same time. A committee is a group of people who can think for themselves, and offer an individual viewpoint.

Self-actualization is a process, not a destination. The moment you are engaged with it, you start to tap into the benefits. I will be describing this with help from the Mars retrograde cycle, with help from Chiron and Salacia in Aries, and with help from Pluto in Aquarius. Let's work our way into the Mars retrograde topic and cover some of the deep background. Then we will look at the next three Mars retrogrades and see where you are doing your most important work in your self-actualization process.

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The Apollon Factor

The theme of false collectivism is currently driving society and driving it insane. It is being driven by sales and marketing, like many other things that have taken over Western society, though the condition of the world (described by the Aquarian Era astrology) is currently making it easy for vast influences/influencers to get control of large groups of people, mostly against their conscious will.

Your mission at this time is to define yourself as you are and as you want to be, and to meet the world face on, on your terms. Nobody gets to do this 100%. There are immovable facts of life, and conditions that influence us. However, it is one thing to state your proposition and another thing to pretend not to.

To assert your individuality may seem like an isolated or isolating journey. There is a campaign telling us how antisocial this is. To an extent, this is true: one of the costs of individuality is confronting the fundamental aloneness that it implies. Yet that is not the end or the destination. It is the point of true beginning. Right now, and for the long foreseeable future, you are the central point of gathering in your world. This will work whether you do it consciously or not; whether you want it or not.

There is no major planetary activity in Scorpio at the moment, so we must look to subtler and more obscure references to have a clue what is going on. One of those is a point called Apollon, which will be in your sign for another 45 years or so. It is an ultra-slow-mover, taking 576 years to go around the Sun. Apollon does not have a physical body. It is an idea that exists in the minds of a very few astrologers — really, to any who tap in.

The one thing you don't have to worry about is needing a place to fit in. You are that place. Or rather, you are as long as you tend to your basic psychic needs.

Apollon is the multiplier. It is about expansion, and spreading growth and increase. It is good for commerce and trade, for creating and spreading knowledge, and for drawing people together. You are embodying this factor on a level so deep that it seems to emerge from your cells and color your whole aura. It is why you want to have your spiritual house in order, and understand the ways that your state of mind influences the mode of gathering the people around you.

The one thing you don't have to worry about is needing a place to fit in. You are that place. Or rather, you are as long as you tend to your basic psychic needs, and work with others to heal yourself and release your fears. As you will see in the next section, this runs deep, and that is a commentary on the significance of this stage of your life. Each person on the planet holds a piece of the total evolution of the human race.

Factors surrounding Apollon in your sign, and its long square to Saturn, may be making you feel overburdened, with way too much activity in your life. You will need to mediate this, and keep a handle on the sensation of being overwhelmed. This is partly about how you organize your thoughts and respond to your sense of commitment and responsibility. It's also about seeking the assistance you need.

One factor of what we may call the Scorpio ego is about not wanting to be known as asking for help, especially emotional support and basic logistical support. You want to be known as the person who has a grip. You have Leo in your 10th place, and this amplifies the effect. Leo on the 10th is the original, "It's lonely at the top."

I am here to encourage you to get over yourself and to not worry so much about being perceived as strong. Part of being strong means knowing how to draw strength from those around you, including intelligence.

Most people want to feel safe and secure. They don't always make choices that support such a desire, though they would acknowledge the need if they could articulate it.

The Aquarius Factor

Note to my Readers: Please read the [introduction to the Cancer reading](#), which has a chapter called “Aquarian Era, Aquarian Age.” It also has some of the best descriptions of the 8th house I’ve ever written, which is a factor for you in my description of your Mars retrograde events.

The astrology of the Aquarian Era lands in one of the most sensitive angles of your chart, the 4th place (house, solar house, whole sign house). The 4th is sensitive in any chart, addressing matters of security and safety. It’s the feeling of whether the four walls and roof that protect you hold up in a storm, though now the turbulence is from within. It has been for a while.

Most people want to feel safe and secure. They don’t always make choices that support such a desire, though they would acknowledge the need if they could articulate it. Many of the things people do surround being safe, and this is marketed to us heavily: think of all the safety seals you crack open every day, all of which are a reminder that someone might be trying to kill you. We could ask whether the goal is safety, or danger — it is danger that is sold to us around the clock, and then many of our choices are made to avoid it, or to protect ourselves from it.

The 4th place is about safety, and suddenly everything is not only changing: everything we’re being exposed to, talking about and worrying about is now suddenly related to an alleged threat of some kind, and how we must respond to it. This has been going on for a long time, though in the past few years, especially since 2020, this has surpassed the events of any recent generation. Does anyone actually feel safe?

In a sense, the world we know as adults takes shape around the patterns formed within us as children. This includes social patterns. You’re especially sensitive to this, as Aquarius plays an important role as the sign associated with one’s social existence.

Many people do; the question you have in the Aquarian Era is how to create that; how to actually feel like you belong on the planet, and have some grounding here. Yet much of this depends on how safety is defined — that is to say, how society defines it, and how you define it, which (once you get your bearings) are likely to be two different scenarios.

Family matters dominate this region of your chart, at all times — and especially now, with Saturn here through early 2023, and Jupiter dancing back and forth between Aquarius and Pisces into 2022. Aquarius is about groups, and the first group any child experiences is the family of origin. Whatever happens here tends to be the pattern, and the feeling, that we take with us from those hazy days of early childhood throughout the rest of our lives.

The 4th place (of its own, regardless of sign placement) is about one’s roots, something for which nearly everyone is hungering right now. Roots in the style of the 4th means the family, often the father’s side. (Note that in any chart where matters of family are a question, it’s wise to examine the 4th and the 10th as well to cover more possibilities, and we will get there).

In a sense, the world we know as adults takes shape around the patterns formed within us as children. This includes social patterns. You're especially sensitive to this, as Aquarius plays an important role as the sign associated with one's social existence.

We are told that Aquarius is about inclusiveness. But it's also about being excluded, and who is excluded, and who is forced to comply with what would seem to be the consensus.

Our worlds are filled with various figures who stand in for parents, siblings, grandparents, and other relatives. They show up as bosses, colleagues, friends, enemies, frenemies, and of course as partners. The drama of the wider society is played out as an 'unconscious' family soap opera that goes on and on. People seem to know this and not notice it at the same time. It would be powerful knowledge, if we paid attention to it. The 4th is one of those houses that can act subliminally, with its themes dropping below the surface of awareness and then popping back up at various times (and now is one of them).

We are told that Aquarius is about inclusiveness. But it's also about being excluded, and who is excluded, and who is forced to comply with what would seem to be the consensus. Few ask where that consensus came from. Once the pressure is on, few would seem to care. But the source matters.

Aquarius can have an in-group feeling (typical of families). The nightmare scenario of the family or tribe is to be excluded: left at an orphanage, shunned, disowned, disinherited, banned from the family gathering, treated as an outcast, judged harshly, loved conditionally, or loved not at all. You do not need to look far to see these scenarios being played out, in some way, in the lives of nearly every person.

Most of the pressure to conform is rooted in your own fears. Saturn is your best opportunity in a while to confront those fears in a focused and organized way.

Saturn in Aquarius, Through Early 2023

The truth of Aquarius is that it's the line in consciousness where the individual meets the collective. It's not merely about groups (as is so often said), nor is it merely about quirky people who want to be seen as unique. Rather, it signifies the mysterious process where people draw and create relationships between themselves and their social environment.

This is a deeply internal state of affairs, as people in society are little cauldrons where many issues bubble: how do I see myself? What do I identify with? Do I have any value beyond what seems larger than me? Do I have the strength to stand up to the pressure I am under? Do I know enough about myself to do so? We could go on.

Saturn here is doing at least two things. One, it's defining this area of life as a basic necessity: where goes Saturn, you need to bring your awareness and establish some priorities. Saturn can also point to what you're afraid of. In this situation, you might be scared or made nervous by your own need to differentiate yourself. Remember: this comes back to family, and patterns established by your family of origin. You may still identify very strongly with your original clan, and your values can still be 'dictated' by them unless you assert yourself boldly

(or what seems to be boldly; the truth is, fewer people care about what you do than you may recognize).

Most of the pressure to conform is rooted in your own fears. Saturn is your best opportunity in a while to confront those fears in a focused and organized way. There are many ways to do this, including reading, by which I mean books. Part of why people are so easily swayed right now is that most people are swimming in the internet, where anything can be “proven” and “disproven” and where the truth has been reduced to toxic anarchy.

To be yourself — your physical self, including your body-centered awareness, is now an act of rebellion, even insurrection. To do this is to stand up against everyone who would say you have no right to be yourself.

Part of what we are living with is a world where social reality has been pushed 99% onto the internet. Most people are living in their “second life” rather than their actual life. To find yourself, and to connect with your true being, and to face your fears, you must be in your actual life rather than any secondary expression of yourself. Who you actually are knows what you want and need. Your digital expression has no clue and is subject to being manipulated, coopted and sold to Cambridge Analytica.

Yet to be yourself — your physical self, including your body-centered awareness, is now an act of rebellion, even insurrection. To do this is to stand up against everyone who would say you have no right to be yourself. You might ask where they got the right to say that, though the assertion, the very notion, is meaningless without your cooperation.

Remember: You have access to who and what you need. You are seen as important enough, helpful enough, meaningful enough — whatever — by the people you need. As famed New York Daily News columnist, the late Jimmy Breslin, said to reporters: when you see a crowd, go the other way. Go somewhere else. That is where the real stuff is. If you encounter a crowd or mob scene and feel compelled to check it out, observe from well above or well beyond.

You can create your own scene, if you stay out of the false influences coming to you through a degree of peer pressure that can rightly be described as cult-like, toxic and absurd. Whatever it is, it’s not you. You are too strong to allow others to define your life for you, on their terms.

It’s easy to say “keep a positive focus” and not so easy to do if your mind and emotions are delivering what does not feel good. Part of maintaining your humanity is about honoring your healing process and monitoring your thoughts carefully.

Pluto in Aquarius, After Pluto in Capricorn

Pluto is making its way through late Capricorn, a transit that began in 2008. For various reasons, the themes of this transit reinforce much of what I’ve said above: Capricorn has strong family connections, and Pluto drives independence, self-sufficiency, growth and self-awareness. It can also seem to create various high-pressure situations, some of which end in

disaster or collapse of various kinds. Pluto also drives your growth, in such a way that you will miss when it is gone.

You are not new to this process of distinguishing yourself from others, and from the influences of the past. Regarding Pluto in Capricorn, I could say much, and would encourage you to read both the Cancer and Capricorn readings for many general assessments you will find useful.

However: there are two specifics for you that may prove beneficial. One is, the mental structures of the past have largely been demolished. There are new structures emerging, and it will be helpful if you take a creative approach here. The influence of the past is not so strong as it once was, though you must account for its existence. You have been through enough that you have wisdom available — by which I mean wisdom from the ancestors.

Apropos of Capricorn, one last thing: you need to lighten up your outlook. Your frame of mind frames your whole reality, since you perceive reality with your mind. There are many, many mean influences running around, and they strive to tap into our deepest insecurities, our negative memories, and our negative expectations. You might say we are in a free-for-all of negativity right now, and it's up to you to step aside from that in any way that you can, particularly using your influence over your own state of mind. Yes, it's easy to say "keep a positive focus" and not so easy to do if your mind and emotions are delivering what does not feel good. Part of maintaining your humanity is about honoring your healing process and monitoring your thoughts carefully.

Much has been written about healing family trauma. The first and best thing you can do is to be aware of it.

Pluto in Aquarius (2023-2044) has the potential to help you assert your independence and autonomy from whatever has distracted you in the past. It is not here yet, though it's on its way. Pluto through the 4th place (where you have Aquarius) is about growing deep roots, and also about cutting off from what does not serve you, what is not positive, what is not helpful, what is not liberating to you. Pluto can present itself as if you are powerless, or as if you have the power, and ultimately this is a choice.

Yet in whatever context we are speaking, the inner strength you must summon is that of a child differentiating herself or himself from their family environment and culture. Remember, you are not a child. Pay attention in any situation where you feel like one: where you feel insecure, or less than a whole person, or inferior to others. Do not take this feeling for granted. It is not you: it is what was done to you.

Much has been written about healing family trauma. The first and best thing you can do is to be aware of it. I have not found a better book about this than [*A General Theory of Love*](#). Once you understand what happened, and how it happened, and how it influences you, you will find it much easier to get a handle on your thoughts and emotions, and in turn, your choices.

Remember that Pluto is one of your planetary signifiers. Therefore, Pluto moving through your 4th house and Aquarius is an image of you asserting yourself against your environment, and finding yourself and your presence amidst others who might prefer not to have you do so. Yet always remember that Pluto is the unstoppable force. Your growth, your evolution, your

transformation — that is, you — will prevail in this process. This is your journey. Take ownership and make your own way.

What you do must reflect you honestly and accurately. What you do must help you feel good about yourself. Your innate being wants to serve, to be useful, and to grow in the process.

Chiron and Salacia in Aries

We are now back in Mars-ruled territory, where we will conclude. Aries is your 6th place. This is one of the truly beautiful placements in your chart (whether solar chart, natal chart, or whole-sign chart in any form). Where we have Aries, we seek wholeness, and a sense of presence. Aries is the big invitation to create and define yourself, and helps you see where to seek your full presence in the world. The 6th place is that of service, work and wellbeing.

Your work is important to you.

What you do is important to you.

What you do must reflect you honestly and accurately. What you do must help you feel good about yourself. Your innate being wants to serve, to be useful, and to grow in the process.

You simply must be productive in a way that satisfies you.

This is now being greatly amplified by Chiron, which is one of the defining transits of the Aquarian Era. Chiron is about purpose, wellness and something that will help you greatly: the power to stand out and stand apart from others. The areas of life where you do this are service, work and wellness. In anything to do with one of those three concepts, which are all related, you have added power to distinguish and define yourself.

In the healing process, many people seek answers. I would say that seeking helpful questions is the way to go.

This includes your mental health, your sexual health and where the two intersect. Scorpio is one of the signs that we look to for concepts and experiences of sex and sexuality in nearly any person and many kinds of charts. As someone who embodies this sign, the Chiron-Salacia conjunction is urging you to seek the healing and the wholeness that you need. We have lived through many long, public dramas where we found out how many people need help and support in this area. Yet there is no discussion of where to get that help, or what sexual healing actually means.

If you are in a position where you need attention, care, healing and growth, admit that and start to figure out how to take care of yourself. Remember that you bring a vulnerability to the discussion: a pattern of being hurt in the past. This can enter the healing process. While I do not advise ‘going it alone’, you need to gain sufficient knowledge of your situation to be able to conduct a conversation. An essential part of healing is connecting feelings to words. This is an activity that will lead you to transgress your previous boundaries, and that requires special awareness, and special handling.

In the healing process, many people seek answers. I would say that seeking helpful questions is the way to go. Once you have a good question, about anything, really, stop there. Hold the space open. Do not rush and strive to answer it. 'Why?' is not a good question. 'Why?' is really a statement of *what is*. It is not a probe. 'Why did you do that?' really means, 'You did that'.

Yes, it's important to know history, though the reference point is always who you are, where you are, and how you feel now. That is the point from which you can make your decisions.

The most important questions are things like, 'How do I feel?', 'What am I doing here?', 'What is this person doing in my life?', and others that lead you to admit exactly what your immediate experience is. Stick to the facts as you know them and discover them. Notice what you express through your Chiron: your identity as an injured person, your identity as one who seeks healing, and seeks to assist others.

There are powerful influences that would drag you back into the past. Many presumed healing methods do the same thing. Yes, it's important to know history, though the reference point is always who you are, where you are, and how you feel now. That is the point from which you can make your decisions.

The 6th asks that you define space, time and process for healing. It must be something you come back to regularly, and preferably in an established place, until you establish your method and come to trust your ability to learn and grow.

There are many ways to describe retrogrades. One is a kind of retrieval or recovery process. The energy of the planet is turned inward, and manifests as a feature of the psyche rather than as an action in the external world. Wherever Mars is retrograde, imagine you are seeking that thing within yourself.

Mars Retrogrades from 2022 through 2027

Mars retrogrades are fairly rare. Mars is retrograde about 11% of the time, as compared to Mercury (23% of the time) or Pluto (more than 40% of the time). They are all unusual in their own way, and have deep impact on society and on you personally. Note that the process extends before and after the dates given.

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Retrogrades are also review phases. Mars is about desire, and the retrograde of Mars is a kind of exploration and reevaluation of what you want.

Mars represents anger. When there is a retrograde of Mars, this is the time to heal anger in whatever form it manifests. Retrograde Mars can feel like resentment, guilt, suppressed rage, shame, frustration, and disconnection from what you want.

In each of these events, first and foremost, you are seeking your deepest desire and, related to that, your actual and bona fide needs. Remember that once you know the transit is going to happen at some point in the future, it becomes an active feature in your astrology, and therefore, something you can work on, and work with.

These events work as a process, which will gradually bring you into the public eye over the next five years. This is not your preferred place to hang out, but you will do it if you have to. We start with some exceedingly personal, private and intimate matters of the 8th place, and end up in the public world of the 11th place.

In the time ahead of this transit, you have one assignment: conduct your exchanges with people with whom you share mutual values. Whether people agree on their most fundamental principles and ethics is what determines the stability and quality of our relationships, whether business or personal.

Mars retrograde in Gemini, Oct. 30, 2022 — Jan. 12, 2023.

This takes place entirely in your 8th place (house, solar house, whole sign house), which is the one where you conduct your exchanges with other people. This is one of the houses of the deepest exchange with the world around you, and particularly people close to you.

You have Gemini here. The extent to which you seek the mirror in your deep exchanges is something to pay attention to. Most people seek mirroring and affirmation in their relationships, though Gemini raises this to a transcendent experience of self-knowledge. This retrograde will compel you to reevaluate your relationship with yourself, which will in turn extend into a reevaluation of your relationships with others.

This will be an important time for sorting your finances, and you can set that up now by keeping good accounts, and making a commitment to resolve longterm financial concerns. With love, devotion and commitment, these problems can be easier to solve than you may imagine. The thing to do now is to spot problems before they manifest, and take evasive action — long in advance. If, for example, you are in a relationship you know is not right for you, you want to be out of it long before this event takes place. It will be easy to avoid, and then you may find yourself in a real entanglement.

As far as what you get into, be cautious in any exchange where sex and money are both factors. (This is my definition of marriage.)

In the time ahead of this transit, you have one assignment: conduct your exchanges with people with whom you share mutual values. Whether people agree on their most fundamental principles and ethics is what determines the stability and quality of our relationships, whether business or personal. Placements and events in the 8th house describe this, and this Mars retrograde is calling for a review.

The theme of this transit is: be your own best friend. Do not mistake the needs or intentions of others with your own.

This must start with what you know about your own values. What often happens is that people get together in relationships they plan as permanent, not recognizing they have fundamental differences. Then the relationship becomes a way to find out about those deep differences that somehow went unnoticed.

With the 8th, we are also talking about sexual expression. With Gemini on the 8th, you are unlikely to be strictly monogamous, strictly heterosexual, strictly homosexual or strictly anything. You always see options, and you need the freedom to explore them. This is not about morality. It's about expressing your basic vitality and curiosity. Once you sort that out, you will feel better. Gemini has a curiously amoral quality. But that does not spare you any lingering guilt or resentment that may be left over from previous events in your life. You must be careful approaching and during this transit that you stay out of your own way. The theme of this transit is: be your own best friend. Do not mistake the needs or intentions of others with your own. And know when your values are in fidelity.

In times of rapid and radical change, your vision for yourself is more important.

Mars retrograde in Leo and Cancer, Dec. 6, 2024 — Feb. 23, 2025.

Let's start with having Leo on the 10th house. This can have a bossy reputation that it does not deserve. Much like Aries on the 6th, Leo on the 10 strives to serve, as this Sun-ruled sign's main job is to hold the solar system together, and to provide heat and light to all the planets. This transit is about a personal review of your professional activities, intentions and desires. Yes it's a long way off, though you have Chiron in Aries spurring you to take action and get into alignment with the service that you provide.

If you are in a position of corporate or professional leadership, this will be a time of reevaluating your role, and potentially reducing your responsibilities. Make sure you manage your professional commitments well. We are in times of radically changing work environments, where it is nearly impossible to predict a year in the future. So the question, "Where do you see yourself in five years" (or in this case, three to four years) may have less meaning — though it may have a lot more.

In times of rapid and radical change, your vision for yourself is more important. There are no longer "career paths" in most fields, and fewer people are interested. For some, this will open up your options, as there will be plenty of vacant space in professions that need qualified individuals who are willing to make unpopular commitments (but that works for you).

Honoring the family of humanity is just about all you need as your spiritual path. You do not need theory, theology, or any form of high scholarship. A gathering of your fellow humans with no purpose other than to share food would be quite enough of a meaningful and soul-feeding event for you.

This retrograde moves from the 10th to the 9th place. When we consider the 9th in the context of the 10th, we are talking about the ethical considerations that are associated with success and power. This is a part of life that is often overlooked. Many people jump from the

8th place (wanting money) to the 10th place (aspiring to success, usually financial) without considering the many spiritual implications of the 9th.

For you, this is lush territory. Your 9th place is covered by the sign Cancer. Honoring the family of humanity is just about all you need as your spiritual path. You do not need theory, theology, or any form of high scholarship. A gathering of your fellow humans with no purpose other than to share food would be quite enough of a meaningful and soul-feeding event for you. Now you can expand this concept to a wider scale. This idea can influence all of your spiritual seeking and travel.

There is one thing to be aware of, which is that the 9th place in your solar chart has a double connection to mother: the 9th is her hidden legacy; the sign Cancer is maternal in nature. Be mindful of your relationship with her, resolve what you can, and if she is no longer in-body, do what you can to honor her life and her gift of life to you.

Your chart pattern tells me that you value public existence not for its own sake but rather when you have some kind of job to do.

Mars retrograde in Virgo and Leo, Jan. 10, 2027 — April 1, 2027.

Under the influence of the internet, the highly visible and public 11th place (house, whole sign house, solar house) has become a different world. We are all suddenly thrust into public life in some form or fashion, and you simply may not be interested. Your chart pattern tells me that you value public existence not for its own sake but rather when you have some kind of job to do.

Then, you are willing to be known and have your face and/or name out there, but for you it's a tool, or the result of a duty you must fulfill, rather than liking to be well known. Instead, you are more someone to thrive on professional respect than any form of notoriety or celebrity.

Sure, there are plenty of Scorpio celebs, but think of Neil Young, who we hear from in the form of an occasional album. Or, in the case of certain other Scorpio celebs who shall remain unnamed so that I don't harsh my own mellow, they are just terrible at it and would be better off working the phone or sticking to cocktail parties. The red carpet is not your style.

It's vital to maintain your reputation in this world, and realistically that means being conscious of appearances in such a way that does not compromise your integrity.

Still, during this particular Mars retrograde, you may find yourself to be unusually visible, even in the spotlight of some kind. This may not be wholly willing on your part, but rather based on values and commitments made previously. You will do what you need to do and do it well.

That said, it's vital to maintain your reputation in this world, and realistically that means being conscious of appearances in such a way that does not compromise your integrity. A certain conservatism is called for, so that you may save yourself for when you need to

manifest in some public form and go to bat for something you deeply value, or are concerned about.

While this quality is not in any astrology book I've read, it is my observation that this approach to life is deeply encrypted into your being. You are on Earth for a purpose, and even though you may not have 'figured out' what that is, you are probably living it right now in relevant and important ways — ways that are sure to develop: that is, as long as your honor and your integrity remain your most prized possessions.