

An Aquarian Era



Your 2021 – 2024 Annual Reading from Eric Francis

The Search for Values: Of Authority, and Inner Authority

December 31, 2020

An Aquarian Era for Capricorn, by Eric Francis

You might say that this is the evolutionary fine-tuning phase, which is designed to help you thread the needle of your true self-confidence. Very few people know what that feels like, so it's not personal when I say you may not either. Yet you have all the precursors, all the experience you need, and all the opportunities for learning that you need.

You have just been through quite a lot. So has the world, and most of what the world has experienced, and is still experiencing, is rooted in the sign Capricorn. So it's especially personal for you, as is the fact that planets are now moving out of Capricorn and into Aquarius.

It will probably be helpful to recap the past few years, when the Pluto in Capricorn era came to a peak as Pluto faced two conjunctions from both Saturn and then Jupiter. This is a culmination of astrology that began in 2008, and which opened a portal to much mischief that was based on a struggle with integrity related to Pluto moving through the sign associated with physical integrity (things like bones and skin), and that of society's institutions.

During this time, it would seem that some external force has shaped your life, and your destiny. There's a convincing case to be made for that, based on the current events of the world. It certainly seems like something external to us all. However, since long before 2020, there have been powerful internal forces shaping your consciousness, and the whole terrain of your life.

Collaborating with them, influenced by them, you have been rearranged from the inside out.

I suggest you weigh and balance the "change from within" perspective with "change was imposed on me" as you conduct your review of these years of your life. Where you end up in that discussion will determine your future as strongly as any astrological factor, and in truth, it's the central question of astrology. Are these aspects happening to me, or within me? Is my chart this thing out in space, or is it within my psyche?

The essential difference is whether you're ultimately responding to your inner authority or an external authority. By inner authority, I mean your inner teacher, who is you.

More than for any other sign, we need to establish an understanding of the past, so that you have a better grasp on what Jupiter, Saturn and Pluto in Aquarius are about. Let's take those starting with Pluto.

Pluto in Capricorn: The Momentum of Your Soul

We are entering one of the final years of Pluto in Capricorn, which began in what seems like another lifetime — in January 2008. In modern astrology, Pluto is widely known as representing the “evolutionary journey of the soul.” After decades of working with this idea, I would say that’s a fair description. It is useful, and it serves the purpose of internalizing Pluto rather than seeing it as something originating somewhere other than consciousness itself.

It’s never easy to have Pluto transit through your birth sign. It takes so long that it might seem to never end. When Pluto is in your sign or rising sign, you feel the pressure in a personal way, as it gradually reconstructs your concept of yourself and also fundamental elements of your consciousness: how you feel, how you think, who you imagine yourself to be, and even your physical appearance. Your health may have been impacted. Many other effects are possible, from this unstoppable force moving within you. The net effect is a fundamental reconstruction of self.

All your references have changed. Time is not what it used to be. The main effect has been on the structure of your consciousness, which has shifted everything. You may feel like a slug that someone has put salt on. You may feel there is no way to get a grip.

Now, the concept “soul” is controversial. What is it really? Is it the higher self, is it spirit, is it the holy spirit, is it the personality, is it God? What is the soul? My favorite explanation was provided by Monty Python, in the film *The Meaning of Life*, from the boardroom scene.

Chairman: [of the Very Big Corporation of America]... which brings us once again to the urgent realization of just how much there is still left to own. Item 6 on the Agenda, the Meaning of Life... Now Harry, you’ve had some thoughts on this...

Harry: That’s right, yeah. I’ve had a team working on this over the past few weeks, and what we’ve come up with can be reduced to two fundamental concepts... One... people are not wearing enough hats. Two... matter is energy; in the Universe there are many energy fields which we cannot normally perceive. Some energies have a spiritual source which act upon a person’s soul. However, this soul does not exist *ab initio* (from the beginning) as orthodox Christianity teaches; it has to be brought into existence by a process of guided self-observation. However, this is rarely achieved owing to man’s unique ability to be distracted from spiritual matters by everyday trivia.

Pause.

Max: What was that about hats again?

Harry: Er... people aren’t wearing enough.

Guided self-observation. A learning process, about oneself. The ability to focus inwardly and not be distracted from spiritual matters by trivia. Whether soul is “immortal” or “eternal” as taught by orthodox Christianity is irrelevant. Soul is about the purpose of your life as you are living it.

For most, it is about what they put off from the future (I’ll do the right thing once I have enough money). Soul is the gradual cultivation of inner awareness and inner authority. It’s about learning how to trust yourself, and at the same time, remaining in contact with your humanity.

Pluto can push people to the edge, including to the edge of their fears, and this is where we happen to live at the moment.

Pluto can feel like a destructive process, which is necessary at times when what has been built obstructs what must come into being. Pluto almost always comes with a few collapses, and the demolition of something that exists. Depending on a person’s density level, Pluto can present crisis after crisis. Dealing with the aftermath results in the growth. Or, Pluto can present opportunities and what we call “lessons.” It can feel like what Patric Walker called enforced growth. It does not need to be a violent or destructive process. But most people experience it that way. You still have about two years of Pluto in your birth sign, which is enough time to do some very important cleanup work.

You have gone through what all of us have gone through, though for you, it’s been more personal. Since 2008, Pluto in Capricorn has been demolishing any semblance of tradition, order or structure of society. It is fair to say there is no longer any such thing as the “status quo.” Not for you, and not for the rest of us. Yet what has been acting on all of society — a demolition derby in Capricorn — has been eminently personal for you.

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Yet you remain intact, and you also have some reorganization work to do. It is essential that you re-establish some personal traditions, and also, a sense of family where you do not need to wonder whether you will be accepted if you present yourself as you are.

Jupiter and Saturn: From Capricorn to Aquarius

If you had any unfinished business related to Pluto in Capricorn, Jupiter and Saturn making conjunctions to Pluto this year revealed it. Much of this is likely to have involved family legacy. While many people have family dramas, Capricorn has a special relationship to such matters. The Capricorn’s dilemma related to family is the need to be approved of, therefore, the willingness to compromise who you are so you don’t get rejected by them. That sums up the whole opera: “I would love to be who I really am, but they won’t love me if I do that.”

This can then be generalized onto any group. During the past few years, Saturn in Capricorn has pushed you to adopt your inner authority. That is the whole message of Saturn: the authority you

take from within does not need to be pushed on you from the outside. The same is true of Pluto, though it's not as easy to see.

Your values are the reference points for all your other decisions and assessments. Your values are your basic calibration to existence.

There are many ways to describe this process. You might think of it as taking over for your parents. You might think of it as internalizing Saturn and all that it represents. You might think of it as being able to stand up for yourself, and not buying into various levels of threat (or belief in) being outcast. The crucial thing here is that you make your own choices, without the need to have them be shored up by peer support. Simply, this is about knowing what is right for you and what is not, and being willing to experiment.

As planets move from Capricorn to Aquarius, this matter of *taking over your life* becomes even more important to work with as a conscious daily act.

There are several pressure points in your chart where you can either allow your inner authority to be co-opted, or where it's fairly easy to do so if you're not paying attention.

One of them is Aquarius, your 2nd house if you're Capricorn rising, and your 2nd solar house if you're Capricorn Sun. The 2nd house is about your values, your sense of self worth, and your available resources. The house is described by the sign involved, and for you, that is Aquarius.

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The first thing about Aquarius is that it brings in many other people, who can influence you. The second thing is that Aquarius does not find it easy to shift its thinking once it gets to a point of certainty — though this is a flaw that I suggest you do everything in your power to avoid by being flexible and open-minded. You know you're being open-minded when you see and challenge your own perceptions.

Bear in mind, all the time, that you are deeply subject to peer pressure. That is, you are subject more than most people to others seeming to determine your values. This can manifest as a faux "I will sacrifice for the group" mentality that is taking over at the moment.

In reality, most people do not know why they believe what they believe; why they value what they value. You will be hard-pressed to hear anyone say, "I was told that so I believed it" or "I gave into pressure and I'm not challenging anyone."

You have the potential to be among the most independent of all people when it comes to asserting your true being and your actual values. You have so much energy in reserve here that it can be easily used against you. And there is always the lever, the threat, of being cast out of the tribe. At a certain point, your personal, verified truth must take precedence over what others seem to expect you to believe, and what you think they might do if you do not believe it. I am here to encourage you to make no compromises where this is concerned.

In effect, it's time to take the risk of doing so. In the end you will feel less lonely for being truthful to yourself than you will for being "accepted" and untruthful with yourself.

The presence of Jupiter and Saturn in Aquarius can be nothing but positive for you. If we take the 2nd house, for you Aquarius, on the most basic level, that is about available resources. Saturn here, in Aquarius, offers courage and discipline. Jupiter offers the ability to expand your base of resources, and together they are unstoppable.

Yet there is a juncture here: you can, if you want, proceed in a fashion that seems to be better for you financially but does not honor the truth of your values. This would be in the name of being practical, acceptable and not standing out.

Or you can proceed in a way that honors who and what is true about you, stand up for yourself, and take a chance. This will involve, or may seem to involve, pushing people — but you're not pushing them to do anything but to accept the fact that you are being real in their presence. This is too much for most people, who tend to cower under their own strength. I am not suggesting that you be defiant or disrespectful, or even ask anything of anyone: only that you resolve to be yourself at all times.

Pluto in Aquarius, 2023-2044

Jupiter and Saturn in Aquarius offer you opportunities, possibilities, greater potential and the need to stand up for yourself. Make the most of that. Pluto in Aquarius is a very different matter. There are two sides to Aquarius: the inclusive, collegial side, and the tyranny of mind and technology side. Aquarius is not about peace and love. It is about patterns. The Age of Aquarius is not about peace and love. It is about humanity's struggle to stand up to technology and what is called *transhumanism*: the merging of humans with computers, meaning nanotechnology and the "internet of things."

We also face the possibility of robots among us, something acknowledged by Alan Turing, one of the inventors of the computer, who devised the Imitation Game or Turing Test way back in 1950. This was the test used by a natural person on a device to see if they could distinguish whether it was a person or a robot. *This was 70 years ago, when computers were so big that each needed a building to house it!*

You are likely to experience Pluto in Aquarius as the pressure to conform. This will most likely come with some monetary issue or reward, as we are talking about the second house. That is, you may be told to do something since your paycheck requires it. This is where you will need to bring the most integrity.

We already are confronted by the tyranny of the iPhone and Android: our location is tracked everywhere we bring the thing. It tracks some biometrics — as much as we let it. It can be turned on remotely and monitor your conversation. If you keep your banking information in the thing, that opens up a potential security breach. The whole thing is a giant gap in your personal privacy

and any notion of boundaries — and that’s just a phone. Yet the deeper risk of the phone and the computing environment is that we become like it.

In *Conversations with God* by Neale Donald Walsch, there is a part that I think of as the Atlantis passage. “As I have said, this isn’t the first time your civilization has been at this brink,” God says to Walsch at one point in their dialogue. “I want to repeat this, because it is vital that you hear this. Once before on your planet, the technology you developed was far greater than your ability to use it responsibly. You are approaching the same point in human history again. It is vitally important that you understand this. Your present technology is threatening to outstrip your ability to use it wisely. Your society is on the verge of becoming a product of your technology rather than your technology being a product of your society. When a society becomes a product of its own technology, it destroys itself.”

Pluto in Aquarius is going to push humanity ever closer to that brink, and we will in truth not know when we have passed the point of no return.

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What is your price? Do you have one? What are your own ethics worth to you? The pressure may be intense at times. You may also not know when you’re succumbing. For example, if you are planning on getting a vaccine, what do you know about exactly what is in it, and how it works? The time to stop and question is any time an action you take is irreversible. This applies to any and every medical decision for you and your children.

You Must Become Your Own Authority

Much of the world these days lives on the “appeal to authority” fallacy. Living as we do alongside or right inside the Information Superhighway, there’s so much to figure out. So most of the time we rely on: that dude in a suit said so, and I believe it. Still, after all this time.

Well, he seems like a good guy.

What a nice tie! Look, look, no collar gap! Perfect lapels!

He’s from out of town! He’s got a Ph.D.! He charges \$750 an hour! He must be right! He’s been in his job since 1982, he must know what he’s doing.

Such an honest face.

This is what I would call dangerous. These thoughts are all the stock-in-trade of con artists. And we live with them every day, and must be onto their games and ward them off. Flip on the TV and you will see these people all the time: pundits and public officials and maybe people you know, whose distinction largely consists of credentials, the gift of gab, and pessimism.

The “authority is always correct” approach was determined to be dangerous somewhere around 400 years ago, when the world began shifting to evidence-based thinking rather than merely accepting fiat from the Pope or the King as the bottom line of truth. Somewhere back there, there was a big discussion about whether the Earth was the center of the universe. A Polack figured out that it wasn’t, using mathematics, observation and logic.

Yet the appeal to authority marches on. This is largely a family drama: one seemingly endless episode of *Father Knows Best*. Today we accept the fiat of “science” like people previously accepted those of the church patriarchs. They cannot be questioned. Anyone who does so is a heretic and is against the church and therefore against God. Today, in the 21st century.

Then as now, it’s becoming illegal to take a look through a telescope for yourself. To review the data for yourself. To challenge the superintendent of the school district on a personal medical issue. To think for yourself. We all say we want to. But it’s risky: somebody might throw a rock at you, call you a name, or try to kick your kid out of school. More likely, you will fear judgment before it ever comes to you, and that’s the true point of your hesitation.

Your circumstances call upon you to bring your whole mind to the equation of your life: all of your knowledge, experience, and information from your senses. This, combined with your determination to make your own choices and choose your own way, can fairly be called inner authority. And to be sure, this is controversial to all who are determined merely to do what they are told.

Clear Thinking Means Knowing When You Don’t Know

You have Pisces in your third house, which lends itself to intuition, creativity and being able to accept multiple perspectives — though not to logical thinking or organizing your thoughts.

Neptune is making a long visit to this house; it will be there for years. And that is not helping you gain any clarity. So you will need to tap into the resources of logic elsewhere — though in any event, using language will help.

When you find that you’re denying basic facts, or that you don’t know, it’s important to stop and consider your situation. Yet this is always the challenge of awareness and self-awareness. The problem with acknowledging not knowing is first the void that it creates, and second, if you pause in your assumption-making, you are going to find out something you don’t know.

While there are many ways to communicate, nothing serves so well as written language. This includes your communication with yourself. Learn some of the rules of cold logic, and apply them, in writing. Logic goes either from the general to the specific, or the specific to the general; know at all times which way you are proceeding.

Neptune can act like a fog, in this case making your own thought process opaque to you. By its nature, it’s difficult to see when this is happening, and one of the ways to do so is to put things in

writing. This includes reading carefully, annotating and taking notes — and being able to track the process to any conclusion. While some would say that Neptune in Pisces in the 3rd house can give you a touch of clairvoyance and intuition, this is something to guard against, not take for granted.

Your Security System is Knowing When You're in Denial

Neptune in this position is a fantastic recipe for denial, which is another form of saying lying to yourself. There are ways to safeguard against this, though only one that actually works: loving the truth and nothing else. Not what you want to be true, but the truth itself. This begins with curiosity, and that must be sustained by commitment.

This is directly related to *knowing when you do not know*. It's also related to knowing when people are deceiving you. Most people who claim to have been fooled by someone have been deceived willingly: that is, they allowed something to bypass their filters, for whatever reason. So you need a tight sieve. You need to use your filters and make sure you understand the basis of your decisions.

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Capricorn to Aries: The Meeting of Pluto and Eris

The dance of your chart since 2018 has been the meeting of planets in Aries with those in your sign, Capricorn. Aries is your 4th house, which describes your security center, your emotional center and an element of your self-confidence. This is mostly where the identity material with your family comes from, as the 4th is one of the places where we experience the most concentrated early-childhood influence, particularly around one's sense of belonging.

There are many influences connecting Aries and your sign, which seem to be drawing you out of your shell. This always comes with a feeling of vulnerability. Chiron's presence in this area, for example, may often have an awkward feeling, like you're a teenager in a room full of adults. It is that person who is being provoked to grow up and find your own voice, and your sense of your own presence. If you persist and stick with this process, you will see that you slowly overcome your insecurities, and your confidence gradually rises up from your core center to your outward personality.

This is now focused on the two slowest-moving planets used by most astrologers, Pluto (248 year orbit) and Eris (558 year orbit). These planets are making a long 90-degree aspect, which has had a warm-up and will have a cool-down — though the peak is 2020 and 2021. So it is still at full strength. Many other connections between Aries and Capricorn exist, [which I have covered elsewhere](#). But the precise contact, and therefore the special learning goal, is now between Pluto — a planet that drives growth — and Eris, a planet that has taken apart the psyche of humanity and left it out on the floor. The growth, if it happens, will be about putting the

collective psyche back together and figuring out how humans can express themselves as whole people again. It would be an excellent start even to recognize the possibility of doing so. For you this is about the awareness of your emotional body, meaning your presence as a being who feels, and whose energy moves within you but is also contained within you.

You might say that this is the evolutionary fine-tuning phase, which is designed to help you thread the needle of your true self-confidence. Very few people know what that feels like, so it's not personal when I say you may not either. Yet you have all the precursors, all the experience you need, and all the opportunities for learning that you need.

This aspect, Pluto square Eris, deserves a full article and I will write one soon. You may think of it this way. To actually grow, you must push gently into the chaos of the universe. That is the unknown, the unfamiliar and the unpredictable. We must always remember that we are living in an age of disintegration, called the Kali Yuga. In this time, when so much is falling apart, you must get to know yourself especially well. And you must have a relationship to the end of all things, and to the end of time.

As Pluto works its way past the square to Eris and through the final degrees of your sign, this sensation and urgency will become more palpable. It is, as we are seeing, all too easy for people to deaden themselves, withdraw, and give up. For you, who want to live, create and thrive, that will not work for you. It never has. Yet the alternative demands that you show up fully, with courage — meaning love in your heart — and confront the unknown that is your own existence.