

THE SKY WITHIN

Report for Robert Downey Jr.
An Interpretation of Your Birth Chart
by
Steven Forrest



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The Sky Within

Robert Downey Jr.
Apr 04, 1965
01:10:00 PM EST +05:00
Manhattan, NY
073W59'00" 40N46'00"

Planet	Sign	Position	House	House Cusps
Sun	Aries	14°Ar45'	09th	01 13°Le51'
Moon	Taurus	19°Ta11'	10th	02 10°Vi17'
Mercury	Aries	21°Ar12' R	09th	03 07°Li01'
Venus	Aries	12°Ar51'	09th	04 03°Sc36'
Mars	Virgo	10°Vi12' R	02nd	05 16°Sg15'
Jupiter	Taurus	26°Ta12'	10th	06 16°Cp58'
Saturn	Pisces	11°Pi59'	08th	07 13°Aq51'
Uranus	Virgo	11°Vi30' R	02nd	08 10°Pi17'
Neptune	Scorpio	19°Sc31' R	04th	09 07°Ar01'
Pluto	Virgo	14°Vi17' R	02nd	10 03°Ta36'
Midheaven	Taurus	03°Ta36'		11 16°Ge15'
Ascendant	Leo	13°Le51'		12 16°Ca58'

*Planets within orb of 1.5 degrees of the following
house cusp are displayed and interpreted as being in
that house, except the Ascendant which uses 3 degrees.*

*Orb Conjunctions with Sun or Moon are 8 degrees.
All orbs are set according to Steven Forrest's methods.*

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THE SKY WITHIN

by Steven Forrest

Using Your Birthchart as a Spiritual Guide

A woman has a baby and is blissful about it. Another one does the same, and spends the rest of her life dreaming about how she might have been a ballerina. The same choice: having a kid. But only one smiling woman.

Nobody has a generic formula for happiness, at least not one that does the trick for everyone. That's where astrology comes in.

The birthchart, stripped to bare bones, is simply a description of the happiest, most fulfilling life that's available to you... personally. It spells out a set of strategies you can use to avoid boring routines, bad choices, and dead ends. It lists your resources. And it talks about how your life looks when you're misusing the resources and distorting the strategies -- shooting yourself in the foot, in other words.

All from a map of the sky?

Hard to believe. But think for a minute...

"How can the planets possibly affect us? They're millions of miles away." Astrology's critics are fond of rolling out that argument. But it doesn't hold water. Go out and gaze at the moon. What's really happening? Incomprehensible energies are plunging across a quarter million miles of void, crashing through your eyeballs and creating electrochemical changes in your brain. We call the process "seeing the moon." Certainly the planets affect us. The question is where do we draw the boundaries around those effects?

Let's go a step further.

Open your eyes on a starry night. What do you see? A vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Now close your eyes so tight they ache. Where are you now? What do you see? Again, a vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Consciousness and cosmos are structured around the same laws, follow the same patterns, and even feel pretty much the same to our senses.

"As above, so below." Just as the starry night awes us with its vastness, there's something infinitely deep inside you, a place you go when you close your eyes, a place that's beyond being an Aries or a Gemini or even a specific gender. At the most profound level, a birthchart is a map back to that magical center. It describes a series of earthly experiences which, if you're brave and open enough, will trigger certain states of consciousness in you -- states that operate like powerful spiritual catalysts, vaulting you into higher levels of being.

In the pages that follow, you'll tour your personal birthchart. But don't expect the usual

"Scorpios are sexy" stuff. You are a mysterious being in a mysterious cosmos. You're here for just a little while, a blink of God's eye. You face a monumental task: figuring out what's going on! In that spiritual work, astrology is your ally. How will it help?

Certainly not by pigeon-holing you as a certain "type."

Astrology works by reminding you who you are, by warning you about the comforting lies we all tell ourselves, and by illuminating the experiences that trigger your most explosive leaps in awareness.

After that, the rest is up to you.

YOUR TEN TEACHERS

Freud divided the human mind into three compartments: ego, id, and superego. Astrologers do the same thing, except that our model of the mind differs from Freud's in two fundamental ways. First, it's a lot more elaborate. Instead of three compartments, we have ten: Sun, Moon, and the eight planets we see from Earth. As we'll discover, each planet represents more than a "circuit" in your psyche. It also serves as a kind of "Teacher," guiding you into certain consciousness-triggering kinds of experience.

The second difference between astrology and psychology is that astrology's mind-map, unlike Freud's, is rooted in nature itself, just as we are.

The primary celestial teacher is the Sun. What does it teach? Selfhood. Vitality. How to keep the life-force strong in yourself. If the Sun grew dimmer, so would all the planets -- they shine by reflecting solar light. Similarly, if you fail to stoke the furnaces of your own inner Sun, then you'll simply be "out of gas." All your other planetary functions will suffer too.

How do we learn this teacher's lessons?

Start by realizing that when you were born the Sun was in Aries.

Courage! That's what Aries is all about. Traditionally this sign is represented as the Ram -- a fierce, frightening creature. That's a pretty good description of how this energy looks from the outside. Inside, it's different. Not the Ram, but the newborn robin, two days old, just hatched from its shell, living in a world full of creatures who think of it as breakfast. Does it cower? No -- the little bird flaps its stubby wings and squawks its head off, demanding its right to exist. That's Aries: the raw primal urge to survive. Existential courage.

Courage is a funny virtue -- it has to be scared into a person. In the evolutionary scheme of life, Aries energy has a disconcerting property: it draws stress to itself. You can choose a life of risk and adventure. Or you can choose a life of one damn thing after another. Refuse the first, you'll get the second.

With the Sun in Aries, there's a hidden spiritual agenda behind the dramatic tone of your life: you're getting braver. Every month, every year, you attract a set of challenges. As you've probably noticed, you're a magnet for stress. Sounds terrible, right? Don't

worry: you've have a choice. There are two kinds of stress: the kind we hate and the kind we like. The kind we like we generally call by other names, like exhilaration and adventure... which, for you, is the path of destiny.

Accept it. Live the gambler's life. Risk the lows for the sake of the highs. Do it, or all that fire inside you will turn sour, emerging as tension, argumentativeness, and pointless trouble.

We can take our analysis of your natal Sun a step further. When you were born, that solar light illuminated the Ninth house. What does that signify?

Start by realizing that Houses represent twelve basic arenas of life. There's a House of Marriage, for example, and a House of Career. Always, we find an element of "fate" in our House structures; the "Hand of God" continually presents us with existential and moral questions connected with our emphasized Houses. How we react and what we learn -- or fail to learn -- is our own business.

One brief technical note: Sometimes the Sun, the Moon, or a planet lies near the end of the House. We then say it's "conjunct the cusp" of the subsequent House, and interpret it as though it were a little further along... in the next House, in other words.

The House of Long Journeys over Water -- that's one old name for this part of the birthchart. Since you have energy focused here a fortune-teller would say, "I see travel in your stars." True enough, although a deeper way of expressing the same notion is that immersing yourself in cultures outside the one into which you were born is a pivotal spiritual catalyst for you.

There are other kinds of catalytic journeys. Getting a wide education, formally or informally, is one. So is anything that breaks up the normal routines of life and thought. Even learning to hang-glide.

Ultimately, in the Ninth House you weave a grand scheme of life's meaning and purpose, at least your own version of it. This is the House of Religion... provided we recognize that many major world religions have no churches or temples. Cynicism is one such religion. Existentialism, Materialism, and Science are others, not to mention Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and so on.

With the Sun in the Ninth House, you have to pack the experiences of two or three lifetimes into a single lifetime. That means being willing to say good-bye to safe havens, to avoid the human tendency to drift into routines. The motif of the Quest is strong in your destiny-pattern. It manifests as travel, but also as a search for knowledge and meaning. Trust yourself; don't be seduced by "practicality"; above all, recognize that we're all just pilgrims in this world, here for a moment, then gone, carrying only what our souls have managed to digest.

The next step in our journey through your birthchart carries us to the Moon.

As you might expect, Luna resonates with the magical, emotional sides of your psyche. It represents your mood, averaged over a lifetime. As the heart's teacher, it tells you how to feel comfortable, how to meet your deepest needs. While the Sun lets you

know what kinds of experiences and relationships help you feel sane, the Moon is concerned with another piece of the puzzle: feeling happy.

When you were born, the Moon was in Taurus.

Ease, calm, naturalness -- those are the spiritual goals of the Bull. Silence too. But not just the kind that comes from keeping your mouth closed. The Bull's silence is deeper: it's a quiet heart. Feel the wind in your hair. Feel the efficiency of your body, the rightness of its rhythms, the easy intelligence of your cells and muscles. That's Taurus. The part of you that's learning the lessons of the Bull is getting more grounded, more present, more receptive to immediate reality. As a result, it has a physical orientation and a practical feeling. It's not so interested in abstract flights of speculation. It avoids the metaphysical Disneylands that seem to fascinate so many people. It specializes in the wordless mysticism of ordinary life.

Feed your Taurean side with hands-on work: gardening, crafting wood or cloth, communing with animals. Soothe it with music. Restore and renew it with time spent close to nature -- in the forest, in the mountain valley, by the ocean. Dress it in blue jeans and flannel. And never, ever, ask it to go to a cocktail party!

With your Moon in Taurus, you have the heart of the nature-spirit. That is to say, your instincts are quiet, earthy, practical. At the evolutionary level, you are teaching your heart to feel peace -- the kind that comes from accepting our bodies, our personalities, the "wise monkey" inside us. There is a silence about your innermost self; however articulate you may be outwardly, there is something about your subjective life that simply doesn't translate very well into words. Anyone with whom you'll feel comfortable in the long run is someone who can easily sit wordlessly with you for twenty minutes watching a spider spin her web or the tide wash over a sand castle.

Be careful of getting so earthy you forget about wonder and magic, the miraculous, unexpected parts of life. To stay healthy, you need to cultivate spontaneity and learn the art of occasionally tossing a monkey wrench into your efficient routines.

Going farther, we see that your Moon lies in the Tenth house of your chart.

Community -- that's the key to the Tenth House. How do you fit into your local branch of civilization? What role do you play there? "He's an anesthesiologist." That's a Tenth House statement. But so is, "She's into the women's movement." Even though she doesn't make a dime being a feminist, it still says something about the hat she wears in the community.

Planetary Teachers in this House do two things for you. They outline your "cosmic job description." That is, they tip you off about the role you were born to play in your community. Unfortunately, they don't do that very well; there are a billion roles and only ten planets, so the descriptions they provide are of necessity rather vague. At best, they're rough guidelines.

Tenth House Teachers do better with their second task. They point out parts of your own character that need to be developed to a radical degree before your mission coalesces before your eyes. Accept their suggestions, act on them, and you'll leave a lasting stamp

of your vision upon the myths and symbols of your community.

With the Moon in the Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is lunar in tone; that is, you were born to play the role of healer, nurturer, or imaginer in the human family. Counselor, physician, massage therapist -- they're all on the right track. But there's more to heal than the mind or body; you might also heal the soul of the community. Ministers may well have this configuration; also the poets, playwrights, and novelists who inspire us.

There's a third critical piece in your astrological puzzle -- the Ascendant, or rising sign. Along with the Sun and Moon, it completes the "primal triad." What is it? What does it mean? Simple -- the Ascendant is the sign that was coming up over the eastern horizon at the instant of your birth. It's where the sun is at dawn, in other words. In exactly the same way, the Ascendant represents how you "dawn" on people -- that is, how you present yourself. It's your "style," or your "mask."

The ascendant means more than that. It symbolizes a way you can help yourself feel centered, at ease, comfortable with who you are. If you get its message, then something wonderful happens: your style hooks you into the world of experience in a way that feeds your spirit exactly the kinds of events and relationships you need. Your soul is charged with more enthusiasm for the life you're living -- and you feel vibrant, confident, and full of animal grace.

When you took your first breath, Leo was lifting over the eastern horizon of Manhattan, NY. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Performer".

When we hear "Lion," we think "fierce." But that's misleading. Go to the zoo and have a look at the "King of the Beasts." He's lying there, one eye open, looking regal. He knows he's the king. He doesn't need to make a fuss about it. The lion, like Leo at its best, radiates quiet confidence. A happy, creative, comfortable participation in the human family -- that's what Leo the Lion is all about.

The evolutionary method is deceptively simple: creative self-expression. As we offer evidence of our internal processes to the world, we feel more at home, more accepted, more spontaneous -- provided the world claps its hands for us! That's the catch. Leo needs an appreciative audience. That audience can be a thousand people cheering or one person saying "I love you." Either way, it's applause, and for the Lion, that's evolutionary rocket fuel.

Toughing it out, not letting oneself be affected by a lack of support or understanding, may well be an important spiritual lesson -- but not for Leo. Here the evolutionary problem comes down to lack of real, ultimate trust in other people. The cure isn't toughness; it's building a pattern of joyful give-and-take. So perform! And if no one claps, go somewhere else and perform again.

With Leo on the ascendant, you radiate calm assurance into the world. Your outer self seems to announce, "I'm doing perfectly well, thank you." That's true, even if you've just stepped into a bear trap, contracted a social disease, and annoyed Muamar Gaddafi! The

Leo mask is tough to penetrate; even when you bend over backwards to be self-revealing, people still imagine you to be a thousand times more in control than you feel.

To maintain a sense of well-being, it's pivotally important that you have some kind of creative outlet. It may be an art form. Or it may be something less formal, like telling stories or jokes or putting some flair into an organization. Whatever the pattern, throw yourself into it wholeheartedly, and make sure there are some people to appreciate it.

What have we learned so far? Quite a lot. Astrologers use the primal triad of Sun, Moon, and Ascendant in much the same way people who know just a little astrology use Sun signs. The difference is that while there are only twelve Sun signs, there are 1728 different combinations of all three factors. So when we say that you are a Aries with the Moon in Taurus and Leo rising, that's a very specific statement.

Here's a way to make those words come even more alive. Traditionally, signs are connected with Bulls and Sea-Goats and Scorpions -- creatures we don't see every day. But we can translate those images into more modern archetypes.

We can say you are "The Warrior", or "The Survivor", or "The Daredevil". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Aries.

We can say you have the soul of "The Naturalist", or "The Elf", or "The Silent One"... your Moon lies in Taurus, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Performer", or "The Aristocrat", or "The Clown". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Leo.

You can combine those archetypes any way you want. And you can go further: Once you have a feel for the three basic signs in your primal triad, you can make up your own images to go with them. Whatever words you choose, those simple statements are your fundamental astrological signature. It's your skeleton. Our next step is to begin adding flesh and hair to that skeleton by considering the planets.

Unsurprisingly, planets can gain prominence in a birthchart through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant. These three are power brokers, and any linkage with them boosts a planet's influence.

Your own birthchart is complicated by the fact that, at your birth, Venus was aligned with the Sun... or "conjunct" the Sun, to use the proper astrological term. Thus, the energy and spirit of that planet is fused with your solar identity. In a sense, you are an "incarnation" of Venus."

What can that mean? Start by understanding the significance of the planet.

Venus is the part of your mental circuitry that's concerned with releasing tension and maintaining harmony. Its focus is always peace, inwardly and outwardly. As such, it represents your aesthetic functions -- your taste in colors, sounds, and forms. Why? Because the perception of beauty soothes the human heart. Venus is also tied to your affiliative functions -- your romantic instincts, your sense of courtesy or diplomacy, your taste in friends. Invariably, this planet has one goal: sustaining your serenity in the face of life's onslaughts.

Venus was passing through Aries. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the direct, primal spirit of the Warrior. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for the elemental and primitive... no frilly fru-fru need apply. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate honesty, a willingness to roar, and a simple dedication to basics, such as loyalty and plain speech.

"House of Long Journeys" -- that was one ancient label for the Ninth House. With Venus, the "Goddess of Love," there in your birthchart, an ancient fortune-teller would announce that you were destined to "marry someone from a foreign land." Here's the translation: Your natural soulmates are people considerably different from yourself... that is, people who bring to your attention certain alien points of view and surprising, mind-stretching experiences. Trust them; they have a gift for you.

While a fairly large number of people have Venus in that sign and house, the fact that it lies conjunct your Sun gives it special emphasis. By pushing the strengths it suggests toward their limits, you charge your solar vitality, approach your destiny, and set the stage for fulfilling your spiritual purpose.

The plot thickens. Also conjunct your Sun is Mercury.

Mercury buzzes around the Sun in eighty-eight days, making it the fastest of the planets. It buzzes around your head in exactly the same way: frantically. It's the part of you that never rests -- the endless firing of your synapses as your intelligence struggles to organize a picture of the world. Mercury represents thinking and speaking, learning and wondering. It is the great observer, always curious. It represents your senses themselves and all the raw, undigested data that pours through them.

Mercury is percolating in Aries. That combination links your mental functions with the energetic logic of the Warrior archetype. The result is that your mind is sharp, penetrating... and combative. Instinctively you think in terms of pros and cons, letting them do battle with each other. Spiritually you are learning a lot about uncompromising honesty... and about its costs.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Ninth House, you have the mind of the eternal student, always learning, always eager to stretch a little further. It's important that you blow out the mental cobwebs periodically by taking a trip into another culture -- or by enrolling in a stimulating class or workshop.

The lunar dimensions of your astrological signature are deepened by planetary overtones. At the instant your independent physical life began, the planet Jupiter was conjunct the Moon -- aligned with it, in other words. As a result, we cannot discuss your emotions and instincts without including the notion that your Soul is charged with the spirit of Jupiter, as though that ancient "god" lived inside you.

Our first step, of course, is to get acquainted with this new element in the puzzle.

Take all the planets, all the meteors, moons, asteroids, and comets. Roll them up in a big ball of cosmic mush. They still wouldn't equal the mass of the "King of the Gods" -- Jupiter. Exactly that same bigness pervades the planet's astrological spirit. Jupiter is the

symbol of buoyancy and generosity, of opportunity and joy. At the deepest level, it represents faith... faith in life, that is, rather than faith in anybody's theological position papers.

Jupiter stands in Taurus. This is an important piece of information -- maybe a pivotal one. Being human is tough sometimes. When you need to boost your elemental faith in life, your answer lies in following the Way of the Earth Spirit. In other words, you need to go recharge your batteries by sitting quietly in the woods or digging in your garden or curling up with your cat. Anything earthy and simple will do.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Tenth House -- traditionally the "House of Honor." In the old days, this meant "power, glory, and riches." Better said, your whole life will be a long meditation on the true meaning of the word "success." Red carpets will be rolled out for you, but not all of them lead to joy or meaning. Behind the glitz, you are learning some hard-edged lessons about discrimination, and about the ephemeral nature of worldly glory. Ultimately, your "cosmic job description" suggests one overriding principle: you were born to play the role of the Wise Clown; that is, the one who inspires us with hope, faith, and pie-eyed joy.

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Second House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Mars, Uranus and Pluto in that area of your life, it is charged with activity, soul lessons, and opportunities for personal development. Before we even consider the planets separately, our first step is to explore this piece of existential real estate in broad terms.

Traditionally, the Second House is the House of Money. That's true, but the issues here are much broader. This is the House of Resources, and resources aren't always financial. If you're lost in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, at two in the morning, you'll probably feel pretty insecure. If you have a thousand dollars in your pocket, that'll help; you'll feel more legitimate. The money is a resource, and it produces the classic Second House effect: helping you feel more confident. But speaking fluent Serbo-Croatian would do the same; knowing the language is a terrific resource, even though no one will give you a nickel for it.

Your Second House energies feel awkward, as if everyone is staring at them. Dignity and self-esteem are the issues here. The solution isn't some "We all God's chillin'" formula for uncritical self-love. Instead, it's a process of recognizing your deficiencies objectively and seeking to correct them: proving yourself to yourself, in other words.

Pale red Mars suggested blood to our ancestors, and they named it the War God. That's an effective metaphor -- Mars does represent violence. But today we go further. The red planet symbolizes the power of the Will. Assertiveness. Courage. Without it, there'd be no fire in life. No spark. Where your Mars lies, you are challenged to find the Spiritual Warrior inside yourself, the part of you that's brave and clear enough to claim your own path and follow it.

Mars is steaming in the searching, questioning, restless field of energy we call Virgo. The Warrior inside you is bent on one target: seeking out flaws, weaknesses, errors. Like a magnetic compass, you unerringly home in on the fracture zones in any monolith -- be

it an argument, an idea, a strategy... or a person. Spiritually you're learning two lessons here. One is how to be scrupulously honest in naming problems. The other, which makes the first enduring, is forgiveness.

With the War-God occupying your Second House, you prove yourself to yourself through the rituals of adventure and assertiveness. You need to develop confidence in the legitimacy and prowess of the Warrior within you. Maybe you need a karate class. Maybe you need to start your own business. Maybe it's time to hike across Crete -- or to tell a domineering friend to back off.

If Uranus were the only planet in the sky, we'd all be so independent we'd still be Neanderthals throwing rocks at each other. There would be no language, no culture, no law. On the other hand, if Uranus did not exist, we'd all still be hauling rocks for Pharaoh. All individuality would be suppressed. This is the planet of individuation... the process whereby we separate out who we are from what everybody else wants us to be. Always it indicates an area of our lives in which, to be true to ourselves, we must "break the rules" - that is, overcome the forces of socialization and peer pressure. In that part of our experience, what feeds our souls tends to annoy mom and dad... and all the "moms" and "dads" who lay down the law of the tribe.

With Uranus in Virgo, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Artisan. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own Uranian identity through cultivating and polishing your innate hunger for the attainment of consummate skill. At what? Almost anything, so long as it requires effort, self-discipline, and practice. Without such a craft, you're likely to befuddle yourself with a love-hate, approach-avoidance attitude toward your daily responsibilities.

House of Money -- that's the old name for the Second House, where your Uranus lies. The issues are broader; not just money, but the whole basis for your self-confidence and sense of personal legitimacy. Uranus is your Teacher here, and the lesson can be summarized this way: what other people think of you is none of your business. That which "normally" gives people a sense of being "okay" -- lots of social approval and a middle-of-the-road position -- fails you utterly. You hear a different drummer. Trust your ears!

"Life's a bitch. Then you die." Go to any boutique from coast to coast; you'll find those words on a coffee mug. Meaninglessness. Like most truly frightening ideas, we make a joke of it. That's Plutonian territory: the realm of all that terrifies us so badly we need to hide from it. Death. Disease. Our personal shame. Sexuality, to some extent. Initially, Pluto asks us to face our own wounds, squarely and honestly. Then, if we succeed, it offers us a way to create an unshakable sense of meaning in our lives. How? Methods vary according to the Signs and Houses involved, but always they have one point in common: the high Plutonian path invariably involves accepting some trans-personal purpose in your life.

One more point: Pluto moves so slowly that it remains in a given Sign for many years. As result, its Sign position in your birthchart refers not only to you but also to your generation. The House position, however, is much more personal in its relevance.

Pluto was journeying slowly through the sign Virgo. Thus the shadow material you are called upon to face has to do with the dark side of the Perfectionist archetype: surrendering to cynicism and defeat. In what part of your life or personal history have you chosen to take refuge in bitterness over the pain of continuing your journey? (If your answer is "Nowhere!" then congratulations... you're Enlightened... or not looking hard enough.)

At the moment of your birth, Pluto stood in the Second House... the part of the birthchart that addresses the question of resources and feeling of legitimacy that comes from having them. Spirit has given you uncanny instincts regarding weaknesses in other people's dignity -- where their shame lies. To create a sense of meaning in your life, you need to find a role to play in the world in which you address those wounds in others, helping them find a basis for deeper confidence. Maybe it's helping someone balance his checkbook. Maybe it's about encouraging another kind of resource, such as teaching a ghetto kid to read.

In the final analysis, all planets are important. Each one plays a unique role in your developmental pattern, and failure to feed any one of them results in a diminution of your life. Just because the following planets aren't "having breakfast with the President" through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant doesn't mean we can ignore them.

Look at a NASA photo of Saturn. The icy elegance of the planet's rings, the pale understatement of the cloud bands... both hint at the clarity and precision which characterize Saturn's astrological spirit. Part of the human psyche must be cold and calculating, cunning enough to survive in the physical world. Part of us thrives on self-discipline, seeks excellence, pays the price of devotion. Somewhere in our lives there's a region where nothing but the best of what we are is enough to satisfy us. That's the high realm of Saturn. In its low realm, we take one glance at those challenges and our hearts turn to ice. We freeze in fear, and despair claims us.

The fantastical terrain of Pisces offers a region of profound spiritual challenge for you, as Saturn was passing through that sign at your birth. You must learn to steel yourself in the face of the Fishes' shadow side: escapism, perhaps even addiction in any of its ten thousand forms. Make your dreams real! That's your high road. And support that journey in practical, Saturnian terms by fortifying yourself with concrete skills and strategies -- especially ones pertinent to Saturn's House in your birthchart. Which House was that?

The Eighth! The arena of life where you face the Unconscious, and all the half-taboo energies that lie there: your sexuality, your sense of mortality, and your instincts about "other dimensions." With Saturn here, your Eighth House passions are so strong they probably frighten you a bit. Concentrate on conquering that fear and extending yourself step by step into those mysterious realms. Otherwise, your intimate life will be frustrating, death will haunt you, and there will be a big hole in your life where magic should be.

You're lying in your bed, going to sleep. Suddenly a jolt runs through your body. You just "caught yourself falling asleep." Where were you two seconds before the jolt? What were you? Astrologically, the answer lies with Neptune. This is the planet of trance, of

meditation, of dreams. It represents your doorway into the "Not-Self." Based on the sign the planet occupies, we identify a particularly critical spiritual catalyst for you... although we need to remember that Neptune remains in a Sign for an average of a little over thirteen years, so its Sign position actually describes not only you, but your whole generation. Its House position, however, is more uniquely your own.

Neptune was passing through Scorpio. Thus, to trigger higher states of consciousness in yourself and to stimulate your psychic development, you may choose to follow the Path of the Sorcerer... that is consciously, intentionally to seek access to the power aspects of the Great Mystery, perhaps through the mastery of healing techniques, or a study of shamanistic traditions, or the use of divinatory methods such as astrology or the tarot cards. Without exposure to the purifying, soul-bleaching effects of what we could broadly call "magic," you tend to drift away from Spirit, losing yourself in the mazes of daily life.

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Fourth House of your birthchart, where its mystical feelings are linked to questions of your innermost life and intimate personal history. Peel away the layers of your psychological onion and, deep down, dead center, we find the soul of the mystic. There is something inside you that just watches the show, watches your "personality" do its dance in the world. Careful you don't starve that spirit. Watching the world go by isn't always enough; you need a few relationships and a few outward experiences which engage, enlighten, and surprise that Wise Old Being you keep so well hidden.

Your Lunar Nodes

The soul's journey

Here's a jolly baby. Here's a serious one. An alert one. A dull one. A wise one. Those are common nursery room observations, but they raise a fascinating question: How did that person get in there?

Most of our psychological theory, either technically or in folklore, is developmental theory... abuse a child and he'll grow up to be a child-abuser, for example. But in the eyes of the newborn infant, there is already character. How can that be? One might say it's heredity, and that's certainly at least part of the answer. A large part of the world's population would call it reincarnation -- that baby, for better or worse, represents the culmination of centuries of soul-development in many different bodies. A Fundamentalist might simply announce, "That's how God made the baby." Who's to say? But all three explanations hold one point in common: They all agree that we cannot account for what we observe in a baby's eyes without acknowledging the impact of events occurring before the child's birth.

In astrology, the South Node of the Moon refers to events occurring before your birth, helping us to see what was in your eyes ten seconds after you were born... however we imagine it got in there! The Moon's North Node, always opposite the South Node, refers to your evolutionary future. It's a subtle point, but arguably the most important symbol in

astrology. The North Node represents an alien state of consciousness and an unaccustomed set of circumstances. If you open your heart and mind to them, you put maximum tension on the deadening hold of the past.

As we consider the Nodes of the Moon in your birthchart, we'll be using the language of reincarnation. Whether that notion fits your own spiritual beliefs is of course your own business. If it doesn't work for you, please translate the ideas into ancestral hereditary terms. After all, it makes little practical difference whether we speak of a certain farmer weeding his beans a thousand years before the Caesars as your great, great, mega-great grandfather... or as you yourself in a previous incarnation. Either way, he's someone who lived way back there in history who sort of is you, sort of isn't, and lives on inside you-- influencing but not ultimately defining you.

At your birth, the South Node of the Moon lay in Sagittarius, the sign of the Explorer. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed the results of lifetimes spent stretching beyond established frontiers: robustness, enthusiasm, expansiveness. In previous incarnations, you've had experiences in which you were sustained by little more than radical faith -- an absolute, unquestioning devotion to a dream or principle. Now, like a recovering Fundamentalist, you must learn a new lesson: how to let go of "clarity" and certainty, and see the astounding, fertile confusion that lies before your eyes.

That nascent ability to tolerate not knowing is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Gemini -- the sign of the Witness. As we saw earlier, the North Node can be seen as the most significant point in the entire birthchart. Why? Because it represents your evolutionary future... the ultimate reason you're alive, in other words. How can you accomplish this Geminian spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome your tendency to jump to grand philosophical cosmologies, and consciously seek the unintegrated details and loose ends that are always the clues to yet deeper levels of understanding.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Fifth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you lived out the notion that "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." There has developed in your spirit a spontaneous immediacy... creative and joyful, but vulnerable to the life-derailing effects of whimsy and self-indulgence.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Eleventh House, you must act to counterbalance those whimsical, self-indulgent tendencies... not so much because they're "bad" as because you've already learned everything you can from them. The time has come for you to take authority over the shape of your own life, establishing your own goals and priorities, determining in advance what kind of elderly person you'll become. Finish what you start!

And that's your birth chart.

Trust it; the symbols are Spirit's message to you. In the course of a lifetime, you'll make a billion choices. Any one of them could potentially hurt you terribly, sending you down a barren road. How can you steer a true course? The answer is so profound that it

circles around and sounds trivial: listen to your heart, be true to your soul. Noble words and accurate ones, but tough to follow.

The Universe, in its primal intelligence, seems to understand that difficulty. It supplies us with many external supports: Inspiring religions and philosophies. Dear friends who hold the mirror of truth before us. Omens of a thousand kinds. And, above all, the sky itself, which weaves its cryptic message above each newborn infant.

In these pages, you've experienced one reading of that celestial message as it pertains to you. There are others. You may want to consider sitting with a real astrologer ... micro-chips are fine, but a human heart can still express nuances of meaning that no computer can grasp. You may want to order other reports, ones that illuminate your current astrological "weather," or that analyze important relationships. Best of all, you may choose to learn this ancient language yourself, and begin unraveling your own message in your own words.

Whatever your course, we thank you for your time and attention, and wish you grace for your journey.