

THE SKY WITHIN

Report for Franklin D. Roosevelt
An Interpretation of Your Birth Chart
by
Steven Forrest



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Your Chart Data

Franklin D. Roosevelt
 Jan 30, 1882
 08:45:00 PM LMT
 Hyde Park, NY
 073W56'01", 41N47'05"

Planet	Sign	Position	House	House Cusps
Sun	Aquarius	11°Aq08'	05th	01 23°Vi16'
Moon	Cancer	06°Ca15'	10th	02 22°Li40'
Mercury	Aquarius	27°Aq12'	06th	03 21°Sc47'
Venus	Aquarius	06°Aq03'	05th	04 22°Sg08'
Mars	Gemini	27°Ge00' R	10th	05 24°Cp45'
Jupiter	Taurus	16°Ta56'	08th	06 24°Aq01'
Saturn	Taurus	06°Ta05'	08th	07 23°Pi16'
Uranus	Virgo	17°Vi55' R	12th	08 22°Ar40'
Neptune	Taurus	13°Ta47'	08th	09 21°Ta47'
Pluto	Taurus	27°Ta22' R	09th	10 22°Ge08'
Midheaven	Gemini	22°Ge08'		11 24°Ca45'
Ascendant	Virgo	23°Vi16'		12 24°Le01'

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 Aquarius.

Aquarius is the sign of geniuses -- and criminals. It represents Individuation, which is a five-dollar word meaning the process of being yourself. Set against your individuation are all the social forces of conformity. Buy a necktie! Shave your legs! Get hungry at noon! Outwardly, they show up as peer pressures. Inwardly, those forces are more subtle but even more formidable: all the internalized scripts that go with having once been a very little kid learning how to be human from mom, dad, and the television set.

The Aquarian part of you is odd somehow. It doesn't fit into the social environment, at least not without betraying itself. In this part of your life, the more centered you get, the weirder you'll seem -- to Ann Landers and her crowd. Go for it, and pay the price of alienation or ostracism. It's high... but not as high as the price of living a life that's not your own.

With your Sun in Aquarius, the experiences that feed your solar vitality happen to be ones that most people will think are strange. There's nothing spiritually dead about "normalcy;" it just happens that you've come to a point in the soul's journey in which the path wanders through the cultural and social fringes. Don't let that stop you! Be yourself, even if doing that annoys every figure of authority for miles around.

Society will try to coerce you into living a life that's more mainstream than what's good for you. It will bribe, threaten, cajole, and intimidate you. As though that weren't enough, it will send spies inside your fortress-walls: people who love you saying, "Please compromise on this! It tears me up to think what'll happen to you if you don't!" They're sincere, but don't let them sway you. Be yourself. You're sailing in the thin, high atmosphere of true individuality. And one of the prices you pay is that, sadly, you'll have to hurt some people to do it.

We can take our analysis of your natal Sun a step further. When you were born, that solar light illuminated the Fifth 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.

Pleasure -- that's Fifth House territory. It's as though God marched you off the end of the cosmic diving board with the words, "Go down there and try to have a good time!" That sounds pretty lightweight, but think about it: feeling good in this world isn't so easy! We've got global pollution, schizophrenics with AK-47s, ego-maniacs with nuclear warheads... not to mention disease, taxes, mosquitos, cars that won't start....

How do we feel real pleasure here on planet Earth? Alone, the "pleasures of the flesh" can't cut the mustard; money, alcohol, orgasms -- they help, but they're not enough... just look at the usual life-expectancy of a "purely physical relationship." Where to turn? To the pleasures of the mind, the heart, the soul! The joy of learning. The spiritual high of athletic excellence. The bliss of meditation. And, perhaps above all, the sheer pleasure of creative self-expression.

Astrological force is focused here in your birthchart. It offers joy -- and warns of the addictions that can overcome you if you miss that joy, or seek it all in one place.

With the Sun in the Fifth House, you're full of charisma and creative drive. Express those qualities, cultivate them, and you'll feel right on target. You're also learning some complicated lessons about the human need for peak experiences. Old-fashioned astrologers would say that you tend toward excesses. That can be true, but those kinds of problems -- with food, drugs, sex, whatever -- arise only when you've forgotten to fully enjoy the bliss of your enormous creative energies.

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 Cancer.

Opening the inner eye, mapping the topography of consciousness, learning to express compassion -- these are Cancer's evolutionary aims. To assist in that work, Cosmic Intelligence has cranked up the volume on the Crab's ability to feel. No other sign is so sensitive -- nor so vulnerable. A certain amount of self-defense is appropriate here; after all, this world isn't exactly the Garden of Eden. Trouble is, legitimate self-defense can degenerate into shyness or a fear of making changes. You really do care about the hurts that other beings suffer. That's good news. You also have an instinctive ability to soothe those hurts, homing in on the source of the pain. More good news. The bad news is that you could choose to remain forever protected within the safe (and invisible!) role of the Healer, the Counselor, or the Wise One.

Traditionally, the Moon is said to be the "ruler" of Cancer. What that means in plain English is simply that the Moon and Cancer are fond of each other; the combination is a very strong

one. The Moon represents emotion; so does the Crab. You've linked the two in your birthchart. The effect is that the subjective, creative, feeling side of your life is extremely alive. The same can be said for your vulnerability. If this world were always a gentle, supportive place, you'd naturally express a lot of sentiment. But it's not! The world is dangerous, full of treachery and pain sometimes. As a result, you've learned to defend yourself. That's fine. But a big piece of your evolutionary work in this lifetime revolves around learning to trust people. To give them a chance to love you. To let them see your humanness. Avoid the trap of withdrawing utterly into your inner labyrinths. Avoid also the more subtle trap of always being the one who understands and forgives, never revealing your own pain.

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, Virgo was lifting over the eastern horizon of Hyde Park, NY. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of

"The Perfectionist".

Virginty isn't the point. That's just a kind of inexperience, and in the long run no one learns much from avoiding experience. Virgo means purity. Perfection. Getting everything exactly right. That's a tall order. Perfection is a harsh master. It drives the Virgoan part of you, haunting you with a sense of what could be, a sense of the ideal. It also holds a flawless mirror before you, revealing all the imperfections and shortfalls in your character. The combination is powerful. It fills your spirit with hunger and divine discontent, imbueing you with restlessness, as though you'd taken out an insurance policy against complacency. Be careful, though: Virgo energies can self-destruct, slipping into a crippling hyper-awareness regarding all the flaws and shortfalls inherent in people, oneself, our possessions, our prospects -- everything. And nothing kills our climb toward perfection faster than that.

With Virgo rising, your style is precise and analytical. You radiate intelligence, sometimes rather intimidatingly. Something in your aura seems to be studying everything -- and everyone! -- searching for errors and weaknesses. And of course, you usually find them. That's fine, but you may need to cultivate a little diplomacy in the way you express what you've discovered.

To feel centered, you need to feel as though you're good at something. Technical skill bolsters your confidence and your general feeling of well-being immeasurably. That skill can be in any category, from figure-skating to neurosurgery. Similarly, you'll feel best when you're working and when the work you're doing is clearly helping someone in a practical way.

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 Aquarius with the Moon in Cancer and Virgo 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 Genius", or "The Truth-Sayer", or "The Exile". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Aquarius.

We can say you have the soul of "The Healer", or "The Wise One", or "The Invisible One"... your Moon lies in Cancer, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Perfectionist", or "The Analyst", or "The Servant". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Virgo.

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 Aquarius. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the innovative, rule-smashing spirit of the Exile. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for the unexpected, for the shocking -- and a corresponding contempt for hackneyed themes. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate independent individuals with spunk and novel perspectives, people who are willing to let you be yourself without fear of knee-jerk criticism.

With Venus in the Fifth House, there's an aura of convivial refinement that radiates from you in any social situation. You have the delightful capacity of helping people feel good about themselves, and therefore more spontaneous, natural, and forthcoming. It's deeply important that you find some kind of avenue for the expression of your considerable aesthetic sensibilities -- dancing, playing the flute, painting.

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.

A planet can gain authority by sharing a House with the Moon. We find that situation in your chart. Mars is bathing in moonlight, occupying the Tenth House along with Luna.

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 vibrating in Gemini. When circumstances contrive to rob you of variety and mental stimulation, the Warrior inside you rises up and starts throwing Molotov cocktails. When you're

bored, you're mean, in other words. Spiritually you're learning how to engineer -- forcefully, if necessary -- a fascinating, varied life, full of encounters with amazing strangers and astounding experiences.

With the War-God occupying your Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is Crusader. You were born to stand for some principle in the community, to protect something worth saving against forces that would steamroller it. This implies that if you do what you were born to do, you'll have enemies... not that you have to hate them! To rise to this challenge, you'll need to spend some time learning public courage, assertiveness, and confidence... and life may provide the school by supplying you with tyrants, bullies, and a societal deck that's stacked against you somehow.

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Eighth House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune 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.

In the Eighth House you experience three basic human instincts in a radically heightened way. The first instinct is sexual -- not simply having intercourse, but also allowing yourself to bond fully with a partner, letting the primal sexual "program" in your deep psyche manifest, riding the roller coaster, trusting it, even though no one can completely understand it.

Death is the second Eighth House instinct. Again, we let ourselves flow with something deep within us, learning consciously something that our cells know automatically -- that death, like sex, is just another biological roller coaster, spooky maybe, but worthy of trust... which leads directly to the third instinct: our sense of immortality. Something deep and trans-rational in us knows there is a realm beyond death. Life has an "occult" dimension -- that is, a hidden one. Without an acceptance of that intuitive feeling, we live forever under a shadow of futility and foreboding.

You have lessons here. Let's consider them.

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 Eighth House -- traditionally the "House of Death," although mating and sexuality are actually more central to the symbolism. To

maintain your faith in life, you must seek a living sexual bond, full of eye-contact and soul-contact, with an open, enthusiastic partner. If you lack such a connection in your life, then it's especially critical that you contact the primal forces of nature in other ways. Walk in the wind. Meditate on a mountaintop at midnight. Stand on a dune with your heart open to the gale-driven waves.

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 earthy terrain of Taurus 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 Bull's shadow side: spirit-numbing predictability. Will yourself toward openness! Throw a monkey wrench into your efficient systems! This is especially healing -- and challenging -- in the context of 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 Taurus. Thus, to trigger higher states of consciousness in yourself and to stimulate your psychic development, you may choose to follow the Path of the Elf... that is, consciously, intentionally to seek the silent wisdom of the forest, the flowing brook, the changing seasons. Without the purifying, soul-bleaching effects of intimacy with nature, you tend to drift away from Spirit, losing yourself in the mazes of daily life.

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Eighth House of your birthchart, where

mystical dimensions permeate your experience of the instinctive realms of consciousness. There is a powerful "occult" element in your psychic matrix. That doesn't mean witchcraft, at least not in the evil sense. Rather, it indicates a native capacity for healing, for working with symbols, and for interpreting dreams. To trigger these skills fully, you benefit enormously from establishing a sexual relationship with someone who understands sex as more than pleasure and affection....

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.

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 chafing in Aquarius. This combination links your mental functions with the rebellious, authority-questioning logic of the Exile archetype. Reflexively, your intelligence rebels against conformity, against the blind stupidity of the herd. Spiritually you are learning about the electric shock of genius -- and about its loneliness.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Sixth House, you're happiest when you're "talking for a living," although "thinking for a living" is a close second. Any kind of work or responsibilities that don't leave plenty of room for innovative thought fail to feed your Mercury... and then you get Mercury "diseases" like nervousness and chatter -- or compulsive job-changing.

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 Troubles -- that's the old name for the Twelfth House, where your Uranus lies. Fortunately, the issues are broader; this part of the natal chart is the House of Spirituality... unless we resist it--then we see the "Troubles." Uranus is your Teacher here, and the lessons can be summarized this way: your inner guru doesn't believe in gurus! You have reached a place on the path where there is much emphasis upon learning to think for yourself, independently of any collective spiritual position papers. In a nutshell, to be true to your spirit, you must assert your individuality, choosing an inner path that involves some outward social costs.

"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.

Pluto was journeying slowly through the sign Taurus. Thus the shadow material you are called upon to face has to do with the dark side of the Bull archetype: materialism. In what part of your life or personal history have you lapsed into possessiveness -- or passively accepted crippling limitations because you couldn't get up the steam to provide for yourself? (If your answer is "Nowhere!" then congratulations... you're Enlightened... or not looking hard enough.)

At the moment of your birth, Pluto gleamed in the Ninth House... a part of the natal chart concerned with expansive adventures, and with philosophy. It is essential that you make contact, however brief or long term, with "foreign" cultures. Through the act of committing yourself to such a quest, a transformation occurs in your being -- and the capacity to fulfill your transpersonal mission arises. What is that mission? To forcefully encourage people to consider their lives from the viewpoint of meaning and purpose. This is the Path of the Preacher; follow it, but be wary of the pitfalls of self-righteousness and certainty.

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 Gemini, the sign of the Storyteller. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed the results of lifetimes spent sharpening the senses, honing your capacity for instantaneous reaction and adaptation. Many incarnations in which you lived by your wits have made you quick and fluid, hungry for fresh experience, eager to share ideas. But triumph for yourself -- that's the only cure. The triumph may be huge -- like getting your Ph.D. -- or it may be a little daily thing, like actually getting around to cleaning out the closet.

That nascent ability to come to terms with the intuitive, faithful side of your own psyche is symbolized by the North Node of the Moon, which lies in Sagittarius -- the sign of the Gypsy. 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 Sagittarian spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome your addiction to the sharpness of your own formidable intelligence, intentionally placing yourself in situations which you do not comprehend and to which you must therefore respond from your gut rather than from your head.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Ninth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you stretched beyond the limitations and confinements of your society, living some kind of "quest." This has given you a deep spiritual faith, a willingness to live life as though each moment counted... and a vulnerability to preaching, or at least to tying everything up in neat little boxes.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Third House, you must act to

counterbalance some of those old certainties... 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 cast off the burden of understanding and return to the fundamental mystery of each moment. Curiously, as you lose your attachment to belief, you enter the deepest Third House duty: accepting the roll of Teacher... the one who raises questions and sows the seeds of creative doubt.

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.