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By Carol Rushman



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The Art of Predictive Astrology: Forecasting Your Life Events By Carol Rushman Bibliography

• Sales Rank: #64600 in Books

• Brand: Brand:

Published on: 2002-02-08Original language: English

• Number of items: 1

• Dimensions: 9.02" h x .60" w x 5.98" l, 1.02 pounds

• Binding: Paperback

• 288 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

President of the Wisconsin Astrological Association, Rushman has been a professional astrologer for 30 years, using astrology less for its strengths as a "psychological tool" and more for its day-to-day predictive power. Writing with anecdotes from her practice and her life, Rushman starts with the "natal chart" and works through the meanings of various sets of progressions, aspects and cusps.

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About the Author

Carol Rushman has been a professional astrologer?teaching, lecturing, and doing private consultations?for over thirty years. Her clients include television personalities, movie stars, politicians, musicians, and business people from all over the world, as well as many of her professional peers. Carol has taught and lectured extensively, serving on the faculty of several national conferences, and representing the United States at an international conference in Sydney, Australia.

She was a board member of the American Federation of Astrologers, the American Federation of Astrology Network, and the Wisconsin Astrological Society, and was also a member of the International Society of Astrologers and the National Council for Geocosmic Research. Carol has appeared on television and radio in New York, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Boston, Atlanta, and Chicago, as well as locally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she was featured in a documentary called "The Making of an Astrologer." In addition, she has had several of her own radio and television shows.

Carol currently resides in Bayside, Wisconsin, with her husband, Dr. Jay Meili.

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Chapter One Psychological Profiles

When I started in astrology years ago, I noticed that it was very hard for me to pinpoint timing in my predictions. People responded very differently to the exact same energy. Astrology is the study of how we deal with, experience, and respond to energy. Sometimes we experience the energy as an inner need or desire to make a change, take a chance, or do something new or different?this is stimulated by a conjunction. Sometimes the energy emerges as an obstacle, a blockage, a challenge, or an opportunity?this is demonstrated with a square aspect. With an opposition, it may be a crisis in a relationship or a learning experience through another person. The aspects, transits, progressions, lunations, and eclipses in a client's chart create energy, but we all respond to that energy very differently.

To better pinpoint when things were most likely to happen, I went back to the basics. By examining the elemental placements (fire, earth, air, and water) and the modality placements (cardinal, fixed, and mutable), and some of each client's predominant psychological patterns, I found I could refine my timing of predictions. From that point on, I started all my chart work by looking at these components. These two factors?modalities and elements?began to reveal a pattern of how each individual responds to a given situation.

The Four Elements

The four elements are fire, earth, air, and water. They tell an astrologer much about a client's temperament. An abundance or lack of an element will show how a personality manifests itself. Certainly the signs the Sun, Moon, and Ascendant are in lend prominence to each person's temperament or psychological makeup, but a stellium (group) of four planets in an element also has a very noticeable impact on a person's response to energy. The combination of elements in any chart defines the personality and nature of the individual. Fire Signs

Fire signs respond to energy very quickly and directly, with no holds barred. They can be impulsive, ardent, and spontaneous. They favor action and activity. They are also ready to go someplace, do something, create something, or be somebody. This is particularly true of Aries and Sagittarius, but even Leos, with their fixity, have a strong, adventurous spirit and, of course, the most confidence in the world. All fire signs are willing to take a risk, start something new, begin a new project, start their own business, or embark on a trip. Fire-sign people are also confident and have high self-esteem. They get involved, and they approach life with tremendous zest and enthusiasm.

Earth Signs

Earth signs are more cautious in their approach to energy. Earth-sign people are more practical than the other elements, more realistic, and more inclined to need solid footing before they can go forward. They take a more cautious, conservative, deliberate approach. Taureans dig in their heels and really ponder things. Virgos want to analyze. Capricorns, while they want to climb the ladder, do it with care. They need a vision, a plan, and an organized structure before starting their ascent. Earth signs need to be prepared. They are dependable, thorough, and solid.

Air Signs

Air signs approach energy mentally. They are people-oriented, social, and seek knowledge. They are always ready to start a new relationship or friendship, and they love learning situations. They bore easily and sometimes talk and think about things more than they actually do them. Geminis have great intellectual curiosity. They will enter into a learning situation at the drop of a hat, but their native duality is tricky. Anyone who lives with a Gemini will tell you that it's hard to know which one of the Gemini's many personalities is getting out of bed in the morning. Librans are partnership-driven. They need a relationship, love to be in love, and fall in love frequently. Nothing will stop an Aquarian when he or she has a cause or passion. Aquarians need to express their uniqueness. They need freedom, are very independent, and some feel they need to leave their mark on the world. Air signs are communicative, social, and into ideas and other people.

Water Signs

Water signs respond to energy almost unconsciously. They emotionally float into and out of situations. They respond to energy without even knowing they are doing it. I have a water-sign daughter who has seven planets in this element. When she was younger, I saw her emotionally drift into situations, relationships, and careers in a way that seemed to be without a lot of thought. As she matured, this became less apparent. Water signs move with whatever is going on. Cancers are motivated to nurture and be nurtured. They only really find out who they are when they have a home and someone to take care of. Cancers often have issues with getting pregnant and having children. They either get pregnant too easily or they can't get pregnant at all, or they get pregnant when they're not married, or when they are married they can't conceive. The Cancer astrologers I know are real caretakers. Katherine de Jersey, a Cancer, is one of the most concerned astrologers I have ever met.

Scorpios have intense vision. They don't look to the right or the left, but flow straight ahead with laserlike focus. Nothing stops a Scorpio when he or she wants something. When this happens, I warn my clients to get out of the way.

Pisces are the trickiest to describe. Their energy is chameleonlike and absorbing. I advise my clients whose children have a lot of Pisces (or even sometimes a lot of mutable influences) to make sure their children have the most positive, constructive environment and friends possible because they will adapt or adjust to whatever they're exposed to. They need to be in an uplifting environment, because if they get in with the

wrong companions, they could follow the crowd. Pisces people, or those with strong Neptune influences, are often affected by the moods of others around them. My Sun is conjunct Neptune in Virgo. If my husband is negative or depressed about something, I slide from being happy to being in the pits. If I'm around someone who is in a bad mood, a sunny day can turn to gloom, and my parade is sure to be rained on. I have a girlfriend with the Sun in Pisces who has found that she cannot be around negative people. She confessed to me that she had to stop seeing a mutual friend of ours because every time she was with that person she was depressed afterwards. Pisceans have porous psyches. They pick up and take on the moods of other people and must be careful about who they spend time with. In general, all water signs are fluid and will go wherever their emotions take them.

Lack of an Element

A lack of any element in a chart creates challenges for the person and the way he or she reacts to energy. These people either struggle to compensate in order to have a balanced response to life, or they have no idea that something is missing from their personality. If fire is lacking, these people may have low self-esteem and little confidence. They may be pessimistic, easily depressed, and lack buoyancy of spirit. Those without earth in their chart may lack practicality and grounding. One of my friends who has no earth in his chart constantly struggles to keep his feet on the ground. He always says that he has money for all of the luxuries of life, but none of the necessities. He has been known to buy luxury items instead of paying his rent. People with a lack of air have trouble being objective and tend to internalize everything. They hunger for social interaction, but aren't very good at it. I have a friend who has no air and an annoying tendency to lecture. He wants his companion to sit and listen, isn't good at verbal chitchat, and has trouble with social repartee. He's most interested in his own point of view. People who lack water try to fill the emotional vacuum. It's hard for these people to stay in touch with and to express feelings. As a consequence, they tend to get involved with overly emotional people. I have a client who has no water in her chart. When I have a problem and try to talk to her about it, she says all of the wrong things. She cannot commiserate with me and only approaches problems objectively, yet she is a fabulous cook. She may lack compassion and empathy, but she can make me feel better with delights from her kitchen.

If a person lacks an element, he or she needs to develop the missing traits. Those who lack fire must develop self-confidence and an "up" approach to life, and find their own personal spirituality. People who lack earth need to develop practicality and do things to keep their feet on the ground. The remedy for a lack of air is to cultivate the ability to really listen to others and to learn objectivity by consciously putting themselves in the other person's shoes. A lack of water in the chart can be brought into balance by learning to touch, by consciously nuturing others rather than listening and solving problems only on a rational, analytical level, and by making a strong effort to really feel other people's pain.

The Three Modalities

After examining the elements, I look at the modalities?cardinal, fixed, and mutable. The modalities most clearly express how people respond to stimuli and especially how they act under tension. Will the individual initiate action? Or try to block, stop, resist, hold back, and not react? Or will he or she stew over things before doing something? The modalities give a clear picture of how each person will handle the energy, especially when there is an overflow of it.

Cardinal Signs

It is easiest to make predictions for cardinal people. If you see a cardinal T-Square or a stellium in a cardinal sign, you'll find a person for whom things are happening. Tell this client what to expect, and he or she will agree and probably say, "Yes, that's already going on" or, "I was thinking of doing that." Life is full of adventure and change for such people. They are the easiest to predict for because of the way they respond to tension. They welcome change and aren't afraid to initiate it. They also respond well to new ideas and are action-oriented. They thrive on crisis and need it to motivate them. If there isn't a crisis going on, they'll create one. One of my cardinal-sign friends says, "When I have a crisis a day, I'm happiest."

Fixed Signs

Those with a lot of fixity in their chart will go into denial during times of change. They will say, "Nothing is

going on. Nothing is happening." Pluto, Uranus, Saturn (all major forces) can be squaring everything in their chart, and they will still insist that nothing is happening.

This is an astrologer's nightmare. The astrologer tries to help clients see reality. But these clients believe that if they say something isn't happening, then it isn't. The astrologer sees the tension in their chart and the events that should be transpiring, but these clients feel that if they deny it long enough or strong enough, then their life will not have to change.

I sometimes notice this with myself because I have fixed signs on the cusps of the fourth and tenth houses. So I stay in the same career or the same job for years and resist moving even though I could be going to a far better place. I always find reasons not to be happy about it and drag my feet. Once I make the move, I adjust and adapt quickly, but the initial changes in those areas of my life are never easy.

People with fixed energy are very resistant to change, so they need to take time to prepare themselves for the inevitable change. There will always be some who dig in their heels and refuse to make the change or even acknowledge it for as long as possible. Of course, this ability to stay on track and focus is also a great strength. A cardinal sign will respond to the energy immediately, often with the first swing of a transit or the first trigger of a progression. However, a fixed sign may have many triggers, such as a transit, occurring three times, or the aspect can be way past normally accepted orbs before he or she will acknowledge it. Many things happen to these people, but it takes a lot of tension and pressure for them to react or admit it. I have a client who is a Taurus with Scorpio rising. He has fixed angles and a fixed T-Square in his chart. I have been reading for him for twenty years, and all of that time he has wanted to get a divorce. Ten years ago I told him, "If you're going to get a divorce, get it now or don't do it. You're going to make a lot of money in about three or four years and then a divorce is going to cost you twice as much." He did not divorce and now he says, "You were so right. I'm so sorry." He still comes in and talks about a divorce, but he's in his seventies and I told him I think it's best to talk of other things.

A fixed man who is very much in love may need to be given an ultimatum to get him to walk down the aisle. Not only does the woman have to take a firm stand, but she also may have to leave him. Fixity can't stand change, so such a drastic measure may produce the desired result. While this strategy works for some, it doesn't work for everybody. Nonetheless, the thought of a change is difficult at best for any fixed sign. If these clients are forced to decide between two changes?should they go it alone and start all over (which they really hate) or make the commitment, they will often opt for making the commitment.

Not only are the fixed signs slow to move or change, but they also tend to be late. Taureans are just slow, Scorpios use tardiness as a subtle power struggle, Leos enjoy making an entrance, and Aquarians want things on their own terms. Even though fixed signs are often late for dates, once they get there, they stay forever. A good friend of mine is an example of this. He'll say, "I'll be over in the morning." At two in the afternoon he shows up, and then he'll stay all night. If you're on the phone with him, you can't get off. He is slow to get going and slow to move or change, because fixity is so prominent in his chart.

It's important to note how energy works when progressions are in fixed signs. I am not a fixed person, but I have some fixity in my chart. When I had a progression in fixed signs, I noticed that for the first two years, when it was applying and exact, very little was happening. At first I said, "It isn't working." Then when it was 2 after the progression, the events of that progression took place. I had a fixed progression that worked 2 late, and did it ever work! With the progressed Sun in the ninth house of legal matters squaring Saturn, my chart ruler in the first house, in fixed signs, I became embroiled in a two-year legal battle through the federal courts to get the laws about astrology changed. At the same time, my husband's partner died, which caused him a great deal of anguish and financial pressure. There was also a bitter one-year legal fight with his partner's widow. It was a very difficult time, and the progression was 2 past when all of this began. On the positive side, this was also the time when I took stock of my body, lost twenty pounds, and started a disciplined exercise program. I also got into a new business with vitamins and became very health-conscious. In my case, as in those of my clients, I have found that events happen later when there's a progression in fixed signs.

Mutable Signs

I think the most interesting modality is the mutable. Much of what happens to mutable people is in the head. So many times things are going on mentally rather than in tangible form. Clients with many mutable aspects are often influenced by what's going on in the rest of the chart. They adjust and adapt to other influences. Because they work on a mental level, those with a lot of mutability may react to an aspect by making a list. When the list is done, they think the project is done. With negative tension, much of what happens involves fear, paranoia, agitation, and panic attacks. A client of mine with a mutable T-Square says that when he's exposed to a lot of tension, he becomes almost paralyzed and afraid to go forward or backward, afraid to make a decision. Mutable signs stew and fret endlessly and really suffer in the process. While they experience actual events, the hardest part of the process is the psychological anguish they experience. I'm extremely careful when telling something negative or difficult to clients with a lot of mutability, because when they leave, they only remember the bad things I say, never the good. I can say twenty good things and one negative thing, and guess what they take with them?

Drivers

In addition to the elements and modalities, there is always an additional component that really motivates people. For lack of a better term, I call this the client's driver. It is what fires up their engine and gets them going. It is a strong part of what propels these people and gives them their life focus. Some powerful drivers are T-Squares, strong applying squares, stelliums, conjunctions, and oppositions. Sometimes I do a lecture that I call "The Ten Deadliest Aspects." As I was writing it, I found that our hardest aspects are also our strongest, most positive driving forces. When I counsel a client, I usually say, "This is the best thing in your chart and the most difficult thing at the same time."

T-Squares as Drivers

T-Squares certainly are drivers. I once did a research project and found that a large percentage of successful people have T-Squares. Here's how they work in the different modalities:

The cardinal T-Square creates a feeling that comes up from deep inside and says, "I have to take action. I have to lead. I have to be somebody. I have to do something." It is a deep motivation, and I consider clients with this aspect to be the born entrepreneurs of the zodiac. They are the trendsetters, the action takers, and this is what drives them. If I see a cardinal T-Square in someone's chart, I always talk to them about having their own business. Often they already do, are thinking about it, did it, or want to. There's always something entrepreneurial in their spirit. Many of them say to me, "Oh, I started my own business when I was ten years old with my first lemonade stand, and I never quit." That's how people with cardinal T-Squares work. If they don't have their own business, they will take on a leadership role somewhere else in their life. Many times they will stay in a corporate structure only if they are authority figures and are moving up the ladder. Because they are natural self-starters, cardinal people do well in sales. Again, even though they work for someone else, they feel like they are in a leadership role, because they call the shots and have the freedom to make most major decisions.

People with fixed T-Squares are the focusers of the zodiac. They are people who finish what they start. For instance, if they start college, they often won't quit until they have an advanced degree. They focus on accomplishing their goals, and if the goals are good ones, they will be successful. Whenever I counsel a person with a fixed T-Square, I always say, "You can do or be anything if you focus on it. Set a goal, because you will have the grit and the fortitude to accomplish it. And you will work your way through difficulties because you learned early in life that there are obstacles, stumbling blocks, and challenges. But you also learned how to keep going." I saw this with my stepson, who has a massive fixed T-Square. Pluto was setting it off and I was quite concerned. I thought, "What's going to happen to him?" He already had his undergraduate degree and was working in the banking field, but he decided to go back to school. He got an MBA and then went on to law school. He worked extremely hard and ended up in the top 2 percent of his class.

People with mutable T-Squares also have the energy to achieve, but many times it is through conscientiousness. These are the people who dot their i's and cross their t's. They're highly creative and flexible. I have noted that many times they are adult children of alcoholics, or there is some issue around

drugs, addiction, or weight management in their environment (often connected to a parent or sibling). The mutable-T-Square child many times is the hero-child of a dysfunctional family. Often these children come from single-parent homes where they had to take on a lot of responsibility as a young child.

Parents with a mutable child should express extra concern for their child's friends and be aware of any negative influences. Mutable children often become what they are exposed to. They are chameleons who absorb energy and reflect it back. On the plus side, mutable T-Squares can often create a drive for perfection, enormous creativity, and great versatility. It is important to remember that all T-Squares are distinct drivers either for the good or for the bad.

Squares as Drivers

The Sun square Saturn, the Moon square Saturn, Mars square Saturn, and Venus square Saturn are a few aspects among many others that drive a person or are a focus of the chart. They are also drivers that motivate a person to achieve, to accomplish, and to go wherever he or she wants to go. People with many Saturn squares are often highly disciplined. They have learned that if they don't do it all right, they'll get into deep trouble, so they usually try to do things the right way. They are achievers, accomplishers, and are very structured. They do what they say they are going to do and are dependable, ambitious, and driven. They set high standards for themselves and for others. The problem is that they cannot or should not expect people to work or function at the same level of perfection at which they function. They can be their own worst enemy and harshest critic by being unrealistic about what they and others can accomplish.

We've seen a lot of this with the superwoman generation. Many women drive themselves with overly high expectations, which can lead to sadness and depression. They must learn to appreciate their achievements, and they need to stop and pat themselves on the back and luxuriate in a job well done. Also, they must not be so controlling. The need to control comes from a place where they feel that everything must be done perfectly. Even when I predict for them, their first response is, "No, that's not right." They want to be in control. Being a superwoman can be difficult in relationships. I have a client who is an incredibly accomplished and successful businesswoman, but cannot find a man to measure up (this also applies to her employees and friends). She has her Sun, Mars, and Saturn conjunct in Aquarius. She is very pretty? five foot seven and a size four. She earns a lot of money, but cannot find a man nor keep an employee, and has very few friends who measure up to her rigid standards. Her quest for perfection interferes with her happiness. She, like many other superwomen, forgot that once you become a goddess, it's very hard to find a god. Not every person is willing to work and perform at as high a level as these women do.

A person with the Sun square Saturn and Mars square Saturn has a driving force that comes up from deep inside and says, "I've got to go out there and do it. I've got to be more and have more. I must accomplish. I have to achieve." If this aspect manifests itself in the second house, the emphasis will be financial. Such clients never have enough money to really feel secure. If the aspect shows itself in the tenth house, they never have enough status to feel worthy. If it's in the seventh house, their partners never quite measure up. Because the Sun is involved, often they want to prove something to themselves or to their fathers.

A client of mine, whose Sun and Venus square his Saturn, got the message from his father that whatever he did was never good enough. This man worked his way through college and graduated from engineering school. It took him five years to do it, because he had to work full-time and go to school full-time. He and his wife had three children before he graduated. After his graduation, his father said, "Engineers are a dime a dozen. You should have been a teacher." Whatever this client did was never good enough to satisfy his father. Unfortunately, this man modeled himself after his father, so he does and says the same things to his children.

A person with the Moon square Saturn often has issues with his or her mother or nurturing parent. Clients with this aspect may not have had the unconditional love they needed from their mother, so they feel they must earn love. They must measure up, and love will come to them only when they live up to mother's standards and expectations. As children, these people heard phrases like "I'll love you if you get all A's on your report card" or "I will be very unhappy with if you don't keep your room clean." They are often compared in a negative way to other people's children. Enough is never good enough. Because of this basic

insecurity, they think they must work hard to prove themselves.

Both the Sun square Saturn and the Moon square Saturn also create control issues. The person with the Sun square Saturn had control issues with his or her father, and someone with the Moon square Saturn many times had control issues with his or her mother. Often the client's parents were cold, judgmental, and controlling. Clients with these aspects often incorporate this energy into themselves. They tend to model or to parrot their parents' behavior. The challenge for these people (as it is for anyone with hard aspects) is to work the energy constructively, and not to repeat the negative expression of it, but instead to use it at a higher level. A person who's evolving will recognize it and work hard to avoid it. It can be helpful to say to clients, "You're going to slip into this behavior unconsciously. The key to growth is to know when you're doing it and then stop yourself."

When Venus squares Saturn in a client's chart, issues around love, money, and self-worth usually arise. The individual often felt rejected as a child, so he or she feels inadequate, unacceptable, unlovable, and not perfect enough. Many times the source of these feelings was a real lack of love from one or both parents. As a result, these clients are always looking for proof of their worth and have a hard time accepting love. Sometimes they have a difficult time charging enough for what they do or they cannot attract enough love or money to satisfy themselves. At this point, the astrologer should go back to the basics. Venus is the love nature and Saturn can be cold, so the love nature can be cool and there is difficulty in expressing love or affection. Walls go up and the coolness these people project can make it hard for others to approach them. Once they feel others can be trusted or have passed the test, then they often relax and allow people to come closer.

The Venus-square-Saturn person is almost always bitterly disappointed in love. Even someone with soft aspects of Venus/Saturn can experience delay or restriction in love. I have Venus trine Saturn and I married my true love at age fifty. Any Venus/Saturn aspect will bring into the life at least one deep disillusionment in love. I usually tell clients, "There will be disappointment in your love life, and it can manifest with love coming late in your lifetime. Saturn does not deny love, it delays it. If you work through your Venus/Saturn issues, you will find love." Unfortunately, I have heard other astrologers say to clients, "You will never find love in this lifetime." That is not true. Love could be delayed or there may be disappointments to work through. The client must learn to modify his or her behavior. Once that is done, the walls will come down and love can happen. Free will enters the picture here. These clients are not bound by destiny, they are challenged by it. In counseling, my underlying theme is always this: You can be challenged by destiny, but you are not controlled by it.

Clients with a Mars/Saturn aspect are usually very focused, disciplined, and prepared. They work hard to achieve their goals and overcome obstacles. Those with a fixed square have a particularly strong focus. Early on they learned that whatever they did had to be done right. But there is also a stop-go energy at work here. They will work hard for two or three days on a project, and then the fourth day they will have to stay in bed because they are so worn out. Many times there is an inconsistency present with their energy. They are very competitive and work well under pressure, so they do their best work in competition. In most cases they will triumph.

Clients with a link between Pluto and a personal planet are attracted to power (as is the case with any Pluto aspect). They can be ruthless, obsessed, or have a single-focus ambition that rules their lives. They have a great fear of being controlled and so have to guard against being controlling.

If a client does not have the particular aspects mentioned here, his or her driver may be another square. Often it is the tightest square that becomes the driver. The Moon square Sun is one driver that creates conflict between the ego and the emotions. Over the years I have noticed that Sun-square-Moon children feel the need to bond with only one parent at a time. Sometimes they don't know which parent to please. Famed astrologer Isabel Hickey once told me that the Sun-square-Moon person was many times the child who was born of an inharmonious conception, so the person is out of sync. I have not seen that to be true all the time. I know a very happy couple who have two children with the Sun square Moon in their natal charts. In this case, however, the parents have reversed roles. The mother is the authority figure and big breadwinner and

the father is the nurturer.

While Saturn squares are about ambition and self-worth, Venus/Mars squares often work more in personal relationships. Unfortunately, what fulfills these people emotionally does not necessarily fulfill them sexually, or vice versa. They always yearn for more and think the grass is greener somewhere else. They can be quite promiscuous if other such indications are present in the chart. I have a client who has Venus square Mars, and while her husband tremendously fulfills her emotionally, there is not a good physical side to their marriage. They live like brother and sister, and he is her best friend. I have other clients who have a great sex life with their partner, but with no emotional fulfillment. They feel they just can't have it all. Conjunctions and Stelliums as Drivers

The reason conjunctions, particularly stelliums (three or more planets in one sign or house), are so powerful is because more than one planet in conjunction (even a wide one) will emphasize and exaggerate the qualities of that sign. Many clients have their Sun in one sign and a stellium in another, and because of this they present themselves much more as the sign of the stellium.

Conjunctions and stelliums have an enormous impact on defining the person. A person with a stellium of planets in the first house or in Aries will express energy differently than a person with a stellium in Taurus or in the second house. Stelliums or conjunctions indicate focused, directed energy that manifests through the sign and house in which they fall.

Strong cardinal aspects (Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn) or first, fourth, seventh, and tenth-house stelliums will respond quickly to the energy with initiative, excitement, and a desire for action. As an astrologer, you must integrate not only the sign the stellium is in, but also the house. The following are some examples of how you must blend the influences. Note that in this section I am not implying that every Sagittarius has a wide breadth of knowledge or that every Gemini is sharp, witty, outgoing, and social. I am simply describing the most obvious characteristics of each concentration of energy.

A stellium in Aries or in the first house will express itself by being a pioneer, a trendsetter with incredible energy. These people will come into a room and say, "Let's do this. Let's do that. Let's get going." Their energy is contagious and stimulates others to do and act. They are most comfortable working on their own and being independent. They often make great salespeople, as they are very self-actualizing and just don't take no for an answer.

A stellium in Cancer or the fourth house normally exaggerates the emotional nurturing qualities and is overly sensitive. Clients with either of these aspects have great perception and understanding of other people and the ability to lead by having intuitive insight of others. The Cancer boss comes into the room and says, "How do you feel today? How's your family? Did you get over that cold you had yesterday? I thought it would be a good idea if we did this and that. This might be a good project for today." When the boss leaves, the worker feels that he or she thought up the project, but actually the Cancer boss led him or her to it.

A stellium in Libra or the seventh house usually bestows tremendous tact and diplomacy. The truth is that most Libras lead by manipulation, but astrologers don't say that. Libras actually lead by seeing both sides of a question, considering all the angles, and looking at the ups and downs of every situation. Libras have the ability to get along with people, and most people think that they are a Libra's best friend. Often I will be at a party and the conversation will drift to politics. A Libra will say, "Oh yeah, yeah. You are right. The Democrats this and the Democrats that. They're humanitarian. They give to causes." Ten minutes later I will hear that person talking to someone else and saying, "Those Republicans have their heads on straight. They are good for this and that." They will take the absolute opposite position and agree with both sides. They are not two-faced, they just see both sides of any issue.

A stellium in Capricorn or the tenth house inclines a person to be the boss, the one naturally in charge. A Capricorn leads just by being called a leader. Give a Capricorn a title or a presidency of anything, and he or she will be happy. Capricorns lead by climbing the ladder, getting to the top. They need status, position, and respect. They eventually become the president of most organizations to which they belong.

Strong fixed (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius) or second, fifth, eighth, and eleventh-house stelliums will be resistant to change, more cautious and hesitant, and will respond to energy more slowly and with

trepidation.

A stellium in Taurus or the second house usually gives a client a strong material drive. More than any other sign, these people need to accumulate beautiful things and associate with beautiful people. They are committed to beauty, expensive possessions, and sensuous things such as good food, massages, and nice clothes. When a Taurus client of mine got his first luxury car, a Cadillac, he got behind the wheel and told me later, "It was almost as good as having sex," which is also a priority for Taurus.

A stellium in Leo or the fifth house gives the client a theatrical, dramatic flair with a strong inclination towards enjoyment. Leos love to be on stage. They like attention, need to shine, and want to be the dramatic figure. If it means dancing on a tabletop or buying everybody drinks, they will do it. I have a Leo client who says he gets upset when he goes to a funeral because the corpse gets all the attention. When I go out to lunch with a Leo, I let them pick up the check because it makes them feel good. They are generous, warm, and romantic.

A stellium in Scorpio or the eighth house gives the client intensity and magnetism. Strong Scorpio influences create some of the most focused people you will ever meet. They have tunnel vision about their goals. I always say, "If a Scorpio is going somewhere or doing something, get out of the way. They will do it. They will get there." They have incredible drive. I have tactfully told Scorpios, "You can be kind of ruthless." They have answered, "Kind of? I am ruthless."

A stellium in Aquarius or the eleventh house is often expressed as having a tremendous need for freedom and independence. Typically, Aquarians are unique, individualistic, cause-oriented, and friendly, but they tend to be loners. Many times clients with stelliums in this sign are geniuses in a given field or may just have what other people consider to be weird ideas. They can be ahead of or behind the times. Many Aquarians collect antiques. Whatever they do, they do not want to be like anyone else. Two of the most insulting things you can say to an Aquarian are "You remind me of so and so" or "You look just like a friend of mine." The mutable signs (Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and Pisces) or third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth house stelliums will react to energy on a mental level. Under tension, they may become paralyzed or caught up in mental stewing.

A stellium in Gemini or the third house can give a client great mental agility and vast intellectual curiosity. I have seen many clients with this placement who have a great facility for foreign languages. These people are alert, quick, witty, and have many different ideas. They are fun to be around and are so clever with words that laughter seems to follow them. The downside is that their personalities can change on a dime.

A stellium in Virgo or the sixth house can make the person a workaholic, someone who must do and serve. These people feel fulfilled only when they are productive. They are fastidious, good with details, analytical, and precise. Virgos can be feisty, witty, and clever wordsmiths. They can also be very earthy and lusty, especially if something in the stellium falls at 7 Virgo, the promiscuous degree.

A stellium in Sagittarius or the ninth house can make a person idealistic and a seeker of knowledge and the truth. These people are lucky, optimistic, confident, buoyant, joyful, expansive, and have lots of energy. Gemini, the opposite sign, is an information gatherer and likes little bits and pieces of information and gossip about many things. Sagittarians want the entire picture. They want an advanced degree in everything they study, along with great depth and wisdom.

A stellium in Pisces or the twelfth house makes a client creative, sensitive, and intuitive. These people can, however, also become martyrs and sacrificial victims. They often feel sorry for themselves and can pull others around them down. They have to guard against being taken advantage of and giving and doing too much for others when it is no longer warranted. Pisceans are tuned in and psychic.

In addition to noting the placement of the stellium, it is extremely important to note which planets are in the stellium and what their effect may be. If Saturn is one of the planets in the stellium, it will seem to hold jurisdiction over the others and to temper or restrain the expression of the stellium. I was very surprised to have a client with a stellium in Aquarius who had no friends. When I looked at her chart, I saw that Saturn was part of that stellium. Usually, Aquarians love people and people love Aquarians, but if Saturn is involved it tones down the effect of the sign. It modifies, cools, restricts, and restrains the expression of the

sign. An exception to this rule is the sign of Capricorn, where a stellium that includes Saturn only makes the person more of a Capricorn.

An Aquarian stellium with Saturn will limit the free spirit that is characteristic of Aquarius, so the client may be less unconventional. Aquarians usually dress with a lot of flair, but if Saturn is present they often dress like a yuppie and wear Ralph Lauren or Brooks Brothers. A Sun/Venus/Saturn stellium in Leo will not be overly generous. Sun/Venus/Saturn in Taurus could make a client extremely practical and thrifty and not very affectionate. Most people experience Geminis as outgoing and talkative, but with Saturn involved they can be uncharacteristically reserved.

Other planets can also modify a stellium. For instance, Uranus can alter a Capricorn stellium by making it a bit unconventional or at least less traditional. Neptune usually diffuses Virgo, making it less precise. Pluto intensifies the energy of any stellium it is in, making it more powerful.

Stelliums contribute more energy than conjunctions because they are simply expanded conjunctions. As such, they can be strong drivers. A client with four planets in Virgo will be driven toward order, and concentrate on work and productivity. A stellium anywhere is a strong driving force. An example is Mozart, who had four planets in Aquarius, three of them in his fifth house. He was inspired to express himself musically in a unique way. I have a client who was a famous baseball pitcher with five planets in Aquarius in the fifth house, the house of sports and entertainment. Baseball Hall of Famer Robin Yount, who has four or five planets in Virgo, was always described as someone who worked very hard to achieve his goals?he was a perfectionist.

People with four planets in Taurus in the second house are almost obsessive-compulsive about money. A person with four planets in the eighth house could have a preoccupation with the psychological meaning of life. This stellium is often seen in astrologers' and psychologists' charts.

More on Conjunctions

The Sun conjunct Saturn, the Moon conjunct Saturn, and Mars conjunct Saturn are all strong drivers that push a person to achieve. Conjunctions work very personally. Squares often indicate outer forces or influences, whereas conjunctions show inner ones. Squares can often just be dealt with from the outside and concern things we draw to ourselves from the outer world. Conjunctions force us to look at ourselves. For example, my Sun conjuncts Neptune exactly. As a result, I have to look at my susceptibility towards self-delusion. For many years I was not very clear on who I was. I was vague about my self-worth. Now, I have resolved this because the aspects to my Sun are good and have helped me throughout my life. As I became more constructive and productive and used my Virgo energy to become more successful, my self-image improved.

Sun/Neptune conjunctions are also powerful and magnetic, as are Sun/Uranus and Sun/Pluto conjunctions. People with strong Neptune energy, just as with strong Pisces energy, often want to save others. A woman with this energy may want to help an alcoholic lover or friend give up drinking. I had a client with her Sun square Neptune who drew in every loser in the world. She would always say, "I can go to a party with twenty-nine wonderful men and one loser, and guess what? I pick the loser." I call it "Loser Radar." Aspects involving the Sun and Neptune also give a person charisma, psychic intuition, and the ability to weave people into their spell. These aspects create an elusive, hard-to-define energy. I always say to my students, "Whenever you are dealing with Neptune, don't be too definitive. Because of the nature of the planet, you don't know all the ways in which it works."

Those who have the Sun conjunct Saturn are self-disciplined and self-motivated. At an early age, they learn that if they make a mistake they will pay for it. With the Sun square Saturn, the effect usually involves the client's father. It can indicate a father who never acted like one, a father who traveled all the time, a father who just was not there, or one who had no place in the home. It could indicate a father who told the child that whatever the child did was never enough or never good enough. No matter how it is experienced, as the conjunction, square, or opposition, the end result with the Sun/Saturn connection is the same. People with these aspects push themselves to perform, to achieve, and to do things the right way.

The Moon conjunct Saturn can indicate that a client's mother was controlling and had very high expectations

for the child. A client of mine has this aspect. She was brought up in a harsh religious atmosphere and still deals with those issues many years later. She had a profound fear of death and had anxiety attacks when she encountered those feelings. These were all instilled by strict religious teachings. In addition to a fear of death, Saturn can create personal fear, guilt, and anxiety.

In every conjunction it is important to go back to the basics and think through the implications of the planetary combinations. The planets in a conjunction work as a blended unit.

Oppositions as Drivers

Oppositions most often pit an individual against another person. With the Sun opposite Saturn, many times it involves the father. Either he is absent in some way or is harsh and not emotionally expressive. The father often fails as a role model for the child, and other authority figures often teach the child that if he or she does not do things right, then the child is inadequate or unworthy. An example of this is a child whose father was absent. The role of the authority figure was filled by the collective teachers at her very strict church school. It was a severe education experience in which the child learned to be ultraprepared in order to avoid humiliation in the classroom.

Oppositions tend to manifest in relationships because they indicate friction between a person and someone else. There is always that polarity. I find that with the Sun opposite Pluto, many times these people become successful because they are competitive with other people and they need to prove something. The Sun/Pluto square forces people to struggle and push, while the Sun/Pluto conjunction simply puts an enormous, intense, driving force into their lives.

Squares generate a great deal of activity. Usually it is an outside influence that forces a person to respond to the energy. The push actually comes from within, but it is triggered by someone or something from the outside. As an example, let's say that one of your client's tenants moves out without paying the rent. In a square aspect, your client will probably have to renovate the place because the tenant has also damaged it. With an opposition, there could have been some negotiating.

Clients whose charts are without squares usually lead contented lives up to a point, but when a square is formed by a transit or progression, they have a more difficult time of it because they haven't had the experience of dealing with that type of influence. Obstacles and blockages are new to them. Their squares are much more intense, much heavier, and the results more potent. People without squares often feel that the world owes them something and are not as inclined to go after what they want in the proper way. They look for someone to take care of them, someone to do it for them, or someone on whose coattails they can ride. Clients whose charts are without oppositions, however, have a difficult time learning from their mistakes. This is also the case with a void-of-course Moon (a Moon that makes no aspects before it leaves its sign.) Without oppositions, the individual also is likely to have relationship problems (certainly while they're young). They make the same mistakes over and over. Because an opposition mirrors everything back, the client can learn from his or her mistakes. On the negative side, the client may also project his or her own shortcomings onto others. If a client lacks oppositions, he or she must learn to walk in someone else's moccasins. A transiting planet opposite the Sun or a progression forming an opposition will integrate these lessons and principles within this client, and he or she can resolve this issue at this time.

To predict for a client, you must first look for the chart driver. Find out what makes this person tick. What is their motivating force? It could be a tight square or a T-Square, or perhaps a conjunction or a stellium. It will be something different in every chart. It is extremely important and you should remember it because when that driver is triggered, your client's life is going to change and things are going to happen. You have to be prepared for it in order to make an accurate prediction. Over the years, I have learned that all psychological patterns can influence a chart, but the drivers are the most important.

Yods as Drivers

A student once asked me if a yod wasn't a driver. I told him that I do not feel it is so much a driver as it is the universe pointing its finger at you and saying, "You are at a turning point and your life is going to change." I look at yods positively. I equate them to someone who is an understudy for a famous actress or actor and who fills in for the star one night and becomes an overnight sensation. That is how a yod operates. I have one

and that is how it has worked in my life. When I was a new astrologer, my yod was being set off and my life changed. I spoke on my view of eclipses at an American Federation of Astrologers (AFA) convention. Up to that point, few astrologers had lectured on them. I worked hard on my lecture, and fifty people attended the first one. At the next lecture I drew a hundred and fifty people. By the third lecture I had five hundred people in attendance. I was described as an up-and-coming astrologer in some publications and was appointed to the AFA board of directors. My career has flourished ever since.

A yod can also be negative. People with yods seem to have more than their share of health problems, but they also seem to have the ability to regenerate themselves. I always have little things wrong with me, but by the time I get to the doctor, they are usually gone. Something life-altering always happens when my yod is activated. When I was diagnosed with cancer, my yod was set off. When I went through a divorce, my yod was set off. It happened again when I met a certain someone who changed my life in a profound way, and again when I got married. Yods are configurations that change your life, but they do not drive you. My life often goes to extremes, but as a person who has two yods, I see it more as being in the right place at the right time and having something very exciting happen. It's that weird sense of fate or kismet. So, while I do not consider a yod to be a driver per se, it certainly is important.

Ease in the Chart

When assessing someone's natal promise, astrologers should also look for things that make a client's life pleasant and easy. I once had an astrologer tell me, "Wherever Jupiter is placed, you will have abundance. Wherever you have Venus, you will have ease." But the flip side to this can be overindulgence and laziness. My antenna goes up when I see a chart that has Venus trine Jupiter. These people are often lucky, but they can make mistakes. Fortunately for them, when they do make mistakes they often come out smelling like a rose. Even Venus square Jupiter can be lucky. People with this aspect will land on their feet and not face the same lessons that a Sun-square-Saturn person will face. The same thing is true with a Grand Trine. The Grand Trine (three planets in elemental harmony) is certainly a karmic gift. It involves a lot of ease, but without a lot of reinforcing tension it will often result in people who won't "go for the gold." They sit back, relax, and let life come to them.

I have the Moon trine Venus in my natal chart, and this aspect has always has been very good to me. When I walk into a hall to lecture, people are more inclined to like me than to dislike me. There is a certain public appeal that the Moon trine Venus gives me. With this aspect, the negative side is to make sure that you prepare well for the task at hand since acceptance can be unusually easy.

Easy aspects are not as important as squares, but when they are triggered, something nice will usually happen to your client. I recently did a research project on lottery winners. It was not a big undertaking, but I did find that winners had a Venus/Jupiter aspect natally. This is something I address in chapter 2 on the natal promise. If the promise is not there natally, it's probably not going to happen. I don't have that kind of luck promised in my chart, so I quit buying lottery tickets a long time ago. However, Jupiter was stationing trine my angles when I was on a cruise and I won eight jackpots playing video poker. I also won at bingo, and I am someone who rarely wins. So even unlucky people can have good things happen when the heavens produce the right aspects. But I will not count on ever being a big winner.

Clients who have charts with many easy aspects often lack drive. They will settle for whatever comes along, such as staying in the same old job forever. These clients also stay in the same marriage even if it is bad, and will tend to stay stuck forever if there is not a stimulus such as a square to motivate them to break out and change their life. They'll need a lot of tension from progressions and transits to bring about positive change, otherwise they won't make a shift.

When I began practicing astrology, I learned that a Grand Trine is a wonderful gift. It can indicate real talent and very special abilities. When I started out in private practice, I found that people with Grand Water Trines had artistic ability, but sometimes did nothing with it. I was shocked when I encountered people with Grand Earth Trines who were on welfare. They did not feel that they had to work. I also see it with women who marry successful men who take care of them. I had a client with a Grand Air Trine who got into terrible trouble. All his life he could talk his way in and out of anything. He thought he could do it one more time,

but he ended up in jail.

Of all the Grand Trines, I do find the Grand Fire Trine to be the most beneficial because it seems to endow the person with courage. These people are risk takers and have a lot of fun. But even with the Grand Trine, they won't reach their greatest potential without reinforcing squares. They have an abundance of energy and keep themselves very busy. They're warm and charming, and people respond to them positively, but they are also used to having everything fall into their laps. They take for granted what other people have to work very hard for. They just assume that life is easy for everybody. They don't understand why someone may hesitate or analyze before stepping forward, because they're used to taking risks and coming out on top. They simply won't achieve their greatest potential without reinforcing squares. Often they don't recognize their limits, so they burn out.

I have seen people with Grand Earth Trines go bankrupt. Money comes to them so easily that they become careless or don't take the proper precautions to protect their finances. I had clients who were investment brokers who thought they were going to profit forever and didn't.

People with Grand Water Trines have an emotional self-contentment, and many times their creativity tends to be more internal rather than something they put into tangible form and share with the world. They have enormous creativity, but use it only for their own enjoyment. They can be emotionally fulfilled within themselves and may end up being loners. They often are content living alone because they are self-contained and emotionally self-sufficient.

The Grand Air Trine denotes an able communicator who can process information easily and comfortably, but I've also seen many people with this aspect who attend school forever and never do anything in the real world. They get hooked on the learning process. They can reach age fifty without ever really working a job. I have a client with a Ph.D. who did postdoctoral work, but has never worked. He enjoys learning more than utilizing the information. He lives frugally on a small inheritance. People with Grand Air Trines have great intellectual ability, sometimes lack common sense, and often neglect their physical well-being. They know a lot about many different things. They study and read voraciously, but they are not doers. They don't know how to get out of their minds and manifest their work in the material world.

Those with a Grand Fire Trine can be too rash and take too many chances, like a fireman who rushes back into a burning building at great personal risk. They feel they have nine lives. They can be impulsive, but sometimes can survive things that other people cannot. I had a client who lived through a German concentration camp and then went back to Hungary. His Grand Fire Trine and the help of a good astrologer later got him to safety when he needed to escape from the Communists. He also had good reinforcing squares. He then came to the United States and started a business that became very successful. People with Grand Trines are very lucky, but they also need a driver, such as a T-Square, to push them along to greatness.

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