

PLANETARY CYCLES

Five Cycles That Change Your Life

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INTRODUCTION

This treatise is designed to be a valuable tool to guide you through the "Seasons of Your Life". Each chapter in this book describes an important Planetary Cycle that makes a profound difference in your life.

Cycles, by definition, are repetitive in nature, so it is the return of one of five planets that I describe in each of the chapters. I explain the nature of each of five Planetary Cycles, its significance in your life, and I provide examples from the lives of well-known people in history and contemporary life to demonstrate each cycle's life-changing influence.

What you learn here will enable you to look back and see how these Planetary Cycles have already affected your life. You will also learn to look ahead and foresee dramatic turning points in your life that await you in the future. You don't have to be an astrologer to use this information. You don't even need to have anyone's birthchart, including your own, in order to observe the influence of these amazingly accurate Planetary Cycles.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRENATAL ECLIPSE CYCLE

The first Planetary Cycle began before you were even born. I'm talking about your Prenatal Eclipse--the last Solar Eclipse that took place before your birth. The Prenatal Eclipse has a strong influence on you throughout your life. Some even suggest that this Eclipse propelled your soul into its present incarnation. Whether this is so or not, the house in your birthchart where the Prenatal Eclipse fell represents an important area of your life, even if there are no planets in that house.

Solar Eclipses have a cycle of approximately nineteen years. When you are about nineteen years old there is usually a Solar Eclipse at approximately the same degree of the zodiac as your Prenatal Eclipse. I say "usually" because Solar Eclipses occur in a series called "Metonic Returns". This series of 19-year intervals consists of an eclipse at almost the same degree of the zodiac at the same date every nineteen years. A Metonic series, however, can end at any time; so you would not necessarily experience a return of your actual Prenatal Eclipse. There would, however, be a New Moon that year at approximately the same degree, which explains why almost everyone experiences a life-altering event at the age of nineteen.

The return of your Prenatal Eclipse almost always causes a dramatic turning point in your life. For instance, you might move out of your parents' home and go away to college at that age, or become engaged to be married, or actually marry. You could have a child, or you may meet someone who leads you down a whole new path in life. You could begin an exciting new job at this time. The return of your Prenatal Eclipse represents anything you undertake under its influence that changes the course of your life.

I began to seriously examine the significance of Prenatal Eclipses when I realized how many people I knew and whom I had read about whose life course had been dramatically altered at the age of nineteen and I wondered why. Examples: my mother gave birth to me when she was nineteen years old; I left home to go to college and also became engaged at age nineteen. Eleanor Roosevelt was engaged to Franklin Delano Roosevelt when she was nineteen years old; Barbara Bush was married to former President George Bush when she was nineteen; Princess Diana was engaged to Prince Charles at that same age.

Remember: The Prenatal Eclipse Cycle returns again nineteen years later--at age thirty-eight. It was at his second Prenatal Eclipse Return that John F. Kennedy, Jr. lost his life in a tragic plane accident. There were many contributing astrological factors in effect at the time of his death, but this was an instance which indicated that the Prenatal Eclipse Cycle had completed its work. Apparently. John F.

Kennedy, Jr. had accomplished his mission here on the Earth plane by the second return of his Prenatal Eclipse.

What significant event stands out in your life--or the life of someone you know, at the age of nineteen, thirty-eight, or fifty-seven? One thing I'm sure of: something important happened at those ages that undoubtedly changed the direction of your life (or that of someone you know). Can you identify what that event was?

CHAPTER TWO

THE JUPITER CYCLE

The planet Jupiter teaches you about expansion--it enables you to move outside your self-described boundaries and reach for more of whatever you consider valuable. Astrologically, Jupiter rules education, the law, travel, and spiritual matters--what I call your "philosophy of life".

With respect to Jupiter's spiritual significance, I recall a comment a minister made in a Sunday School class when I was young: "Many girls go through a phase of wanting to become nuns around the age of twelve." This seemed such a curious observation to me that I must've mentally tucked it away for future reference. But it wasn't until I began to study astrology many years later that I understood for the first time the significance of what he had said.

Jupiter returns every twelve years to the place in your birthchart where it was when you were born. Twelve-year old girls often dream of becoming nuns because their spirituality is being awakened at that time! Young boys, I'm sure, are similarly awakening to their own spiritual and philosophical sensibilities at that time and beginning to define them more clearly.

You experience Jupiter Returns at the ages of 12, 24, 36, 48, 60, and so on. Let's look at age twenty-four. Many professional people have received their college degrees by that time and are taking their first idealistic steps along their career path. Others are returning to college to work towards advanced degrees. I happen to have Jupiter in my 5th House of children. When I was 24, experiencing my second Jupiter Return, I became pregnant. Talk about expansion!

At age thirty-six you experience your third Jupiter Return. You're perhaps actively engaged in your chosen calling--whether that's a career or a homemaker and parent--or, these days, possibly both! Since the 5th House also symbolizes creativity, during my third Jupiter Return at the age of 36, I took steps leading to a career as a freelance writer. My daughter-in-law, who, on the other hand, was already a successful career woman, became pregnant with her first child during her third Jupiter Return.

But wait! Jupiter, as I mentioned, is the planet that teaches us about expansion, and sometimes it goes too far! So far, in fact, that it becomes a negative force in our life. For example, Marilyn Monroe, who had achieved spectacular success in films by the time of her third Jupiter Return, chose to pit herself against studio authorities and demand more control over the direction of her career. Based on the extraordinary success she had already achieved, she simply over-extended herself, demanding more authority than studio moguls were willing to grant, and was immediately fired from the film she was working on. Marilyn, whose ego was

very fragile in spite of all her success, died tragically at the age of thirty-six on her third Jupiter Return.

Princess Diana also died at the age of thirty-six after over-reaching herself. By the time of her Jupiter Return, Diana had acquired an admirable reputation as an advocate for charitable causes and appeared, at least on the surface, to be reveling in an exhilarating new sense of freedom--a very Jupitarian feeling, by the way. Jupiter loves freedom. Diana secretly collaborated with those who wrote books about her, revealing the private goings-on behind palace walls. But when she granted a TV interview in which she attacked not only Prince Charles but the royal family itself, it was the beginning of her downfall. She'd taken her newfound Jupitarian exuberance too far. I felt certain that the Queen would have to react decisively in order to preserve the monarchy's reputation, and indeed she did, granting permission for Charles and Diana to divorce, which, ironically, was the beginning of the process that led to Diana's untimely death.

Remember: the planetary energies don't cause the events in your life; they offer you opportunities for growth and the choices you make create the events in your life. In both of the examples I've cited, Marilyn Monroe and Princess Diana could have made different choices. Both women were presented with huge opportunities and both might have gone on to achieve even greater success had they made different choices. As it happens, they both had Jupiter strongly aspected in their birthcharts, and both became icons after their death, and so they are still revered by the public. Remember although we die, our charts live on! The point I want to make is that with each successive Jupiter Return you presumably have attained a higher level of wisdom and understanding and therefore have the ability to accomplish even more of what you came here to do. What do you recall about your own progress at your last Jupiter Return? No matter where you are now in Jupiter's twelve-year Cycle, you can use your understanding of its potential to help you set goals for your future development. Do you feel ready to use your next Jupiter Return to expand your influence in the world for the good of all? That would be the ideal decision, but the choice is yours to make.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SATURN CYCLE

In Chapter Two I discussed how the planet Jupiter teaches you about expansion, enabling you to move outside your self-described boundaries and reach for more of whatever you deem worthy of having, doing or being. Saturn's job, on the other hand, astrologically speaking, is to teach you how to set limits that allow you to actualize your potential--your Jupiterian vision.

My belief is that Saturn's position in your birthchart shows the promise you made to Spirit before coming into this incarnation about what you intended to create with your life that would leave the world a better place for your having been here. Imagine Saturn as a block of marble out of which you are to carve a masterpiece. Granted, creating a masterpiece is hard work; it takes time, effort and dedication. But when you think about it, what else are you here for?

Nonetheless, ancient astrologers took an entirely different stance regarding Saturn's influence. They thought it was "malefic", depicting Saturn as a negative energy, and difficult to deal with. They also thought of the planet Jupiter as "benefic", bestowing only blessings. Well, in the lesson on Jupiter, I trust I dispelled that myth, by demonstrating that Jupiter is not always so benefic! Similarly, I intend to demonstrate that Saturn is not always so malefic. I tend to think of Saturn as the walls that define a room. Without walls, you wouldn't have a room; you'd have open space. By teaching you to define your boundaries, Saturn helps you create reality and actualize your potential.

Saturn has a 28-year Cycle. It takes Saturn approximately 28 years to return to its place in your birthchart. I say approximately because due to Saturn's retrograde periods, it can take a little longer for you to have your Saturn Return so that you don't experience it until the age of about twenty-nine. At any rate, Saturn's first return to its place in your birthchart is what makes you a different person after the age of thirty. You may have thought of yourself as all grown up at age twenty-one, certainly by age twenty-five, but you're not really grown up until your first Saturn Return. The reason for this is that as Saturn, the "Schoolmaster of the Zodiac", transits your birthchart, he gives you pop quizzes along the way, and these determine your level of maturity.

The Cycle of Saturn creates the Seven-Year Cycles (which are segments of its 28-year Cycle) that are instrumental in moving you along your path in life. To begin with, at approximately age seven Saturn comes to a square (a 90-degree angle) to Saturn in your birthchart, giving you your first big test. Consequently, often something significant occurs in your life at the age of seven that feels rather turbulent. Perhaps you move to a new town with your parents, a younger sibling

may be born, or you suffer the loss of one of your parents, or they divorce. Something memorable often occurs at that time.

Then, at about the age of fourteen, Saturn opposes your Natal Saturn. You may have felt that you were suddenly being "opposed" at that time; certainly most of us felt opposed by our parents at that age. They suddenly appeared arbitrarily "restrictive", insisting on setting limits, which we definitely did not want! What's actually happening at that age is Saturn pointing out that it's time for you to begin to set limits for yourself... another valuable lesson along life's path.

At twenty-one, as Saturn again squares itself in your birthchart, it begins testing you with regard to what you want to do with your life. Are you on the right track? See how Saturn gives you reality checks all along the way? These are some of the pop quizzes he gives at around the age of twenty-one: Do you want to change course in your education? Are you prepared to launch your career? Are you planning to marry? Are you ready to start a family?

When you reach the age of twenty-eight or twenty-nine, it's final exam time. Everything that you've been doing up until that time is up for review. Are you in the right relationship; the right job? How do you wish to be seen in the public eye? Are you in the right part of the world? If the answer to all of these questions is "yes", you pass Saturn's exam with flying colors. You might find a publisher for the book you've been working on, marry your soul mate, have that long-awaited baby, or be promoted in your job. On the other hand, if you're not on the right path or have been content to just drift, you're in for some pretty discouraging setbacks at your first Saturn Return. These can take the form of broken relationships, a divorce, lost jobs, a serious illness, even death.

Saturn continues its journey, triggering responses from you in seven-year increments, until you experience your second Saturn Return when you're about fifty-eight or-nine. If you've been keeping your agreement with Spirit to help make the world a better place, you can expect to be handsomely rewarded at your second Saturn Return. I think of the writer John Updike, who on his first Saturn Return published his very successful book "Rabbit, Run" and later followed it with others in a series. On his second Saturn Return Updike received the Pulitzer Prize for Literature for his "Rabbit" series.

Alternatively, if you've been abusing power, you'll no doubt suffer the consequences at this time. Richard Nixon's second Saturn Return occurred at the time of the Watergate break-in, which subsequently led to his downfall. Interestingly, Nixon had Saturn in the 10th house of his birthchart, which often depicts a slow, steady climb to the top of one's profession, followed by a precipitous fall from power if one has taken shortcuts along the way, which unfortunately, Nixon had done.

Saturn Returns, moreover, are also related to an event that occurred about thirty years prior to them. For example, thirty years after the death of President John F. Kennedy, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis contracted cancer and died within the year. On the Saturn Return of the tragic event of President Kennedy's untimely death we were bombarded with its memories on television. I sincerely believe that the memories of that atrocious event proved toxic to Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE URANUS CYCLE

Whereas the Jupiter Cycle symbolizes your enthusiasm and pursuit of happiness, and the Saturn Cycle shepherds you through "The Seasons of Your Life" imbuing you with a sense of accountability about what is actually possible, the Uranus Cycle represents how you surpass both of these familiar concepts and move out into entirely new realms.

Uranus offers you the opportunity to step outside of your conception of what is possible and what is probable, and enables you to venture into the sphere of what can only be described as the unforeseen. The energy of Uranus has a magical, electric quality about it. Uranus represents genius, non-conformity--what I like to think of as your willingness to surpass even your wildest dreams of what you are capable of accomplishing. Its energy is revolutionary in scope and positively exhilarating!

This is not at all surprising given that Uranus, whose orbit is outside that of Saturn's--the last planet visible from Earth without using a telescope--is unique among the planets that we are aware of, simply because it revolves in reverse motion to the other planets. So as you might expect, its influence is similarly quixotic, and if the truth be known, not everyone welcomes, or is able to embody its energy, which is why they sometimes experience Uranus's energy as an unfortunate event in their lives.

Since Uranus doesn't return to its place in your birthchart for eighty-four years, it takes virtually an entire lifetime to actualize, or incorporate, its full potential into your personality. Have you ever noticed with what delightful abandon senior citizens--I mean really senior citizens--those gentle people in their eighties, express themselves? They're finally free to be exactly who they are. I think of Grandma Moses, who, I understand, didn't even begin her fabulous career as an artist until she was in her eighties. She ultimately laid down the commonplace tasks of a woman of her generation and broke through the barriers of Saturn into the unforeseen province of Uranus. The rest, as they say, is history. Her Uranus Return was a real doozie! It was then that she achieved recognition for her wonderful art. Would that we might all emulate her style, bravado and success! But it's at the halfway point of the Uranus Cycle that you begin to get the first glimmer of what's actually possible for you as an individual. At about the ages of thirty-nine to forty Uranus comes to its first opposition to its place in your birthchart. This is when you start to wonder whether what you've been doing with your life up until that time is what you really intended to do. Does your life, as you review it, express your individuality, or do you feel somehow confined, suppressed, and incomplete? "Is this all there is?" you may ask at that time, and if the answer is a resounding "No!" then the Uranus opposition kicks into gear

and offers the tantalizing possibility of breaking free of your past constraints, inviting you to outrageously step out into the unknown and make a new beginning. This condition, friends, is familiarly known as "the midlife crisis"! How many marriages have you known that dissolved at that time? How many careers have your loved ones, friends and acquaintances left behind at that age to pursue a completely different career or lifestyle? And how about you? What new ventures did you undertake at that age? If you have not yet reached that age, be forewarned: you will either be contemplating change in some part of your life, or Uranus will be stalking you!

Sometimes, you see, Uranian energy strikes from outside in the form of an unfortunate event at about the ages of thirty-nine or forty and at age eighty-four, as well. When this happens, it's usually because you are unable or unwilling to review your own priorities and options honestly, and so Uranus feels obliged to step in and set priorities for you. Uranus's opposition to its place in your birthchart has the capability of pressing you to make decisions that you otherwise might not make. How? Well, it might create a situation so unpleasant in your home, relationship, or professional life that it launches you into a dramatic sea change which is, to all appearances, against your will.

I think of Michael Kennedy, the son of Robert and Ethel Kennedy, who, at the age of forty was discovered to have been carrying on an affair with his babysitter. This led, not surprisingly, to a dissolution of his marriage. Not long thereafter he died suddenly in a skiing accident during an ill-advised football game on skis. As deplorable as the loss of his young life was, it's difficult to conceive of a more vivid metaphor for the Uranus opposition: flying down a mountainside with reckless abandon, utterly out of control, caught up in the delicious sense of unrestraint so often associated with the energy of Uranus. Sometimes you make it all the way down the hill, safe and sound, breathless with the joy of having accomplished the seemingly impossible, and sometimes--like Michael Kennedy--you simply don't. Once more, it's all up to you. The stars are not your fate; your choices are.

So how about you? Where are you in your Uranus Cycle? What climactic events occurred when you were thirty-nine or forty? Were the results positive or negative? I feel certain that you experienced something unique at about that time. If you haven't reached your Uranus opposition yet, you might wish to begin planning for it.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHIRON CYCLE

Do you know about Chiron? Chiron is a tiny planet that was discovered orbiting our Sun just outside the orbit of Saturn in November 1977. Chiron is so small, in fact, that it is still considered by some to be not a planet but a comet. However diminutive it may be, Chiron's influence is anything but insignificant.

Named for Chiron, the Wounded Healer of Greek Myth, it symbolizes not only the self-healing process that the mythical Centaur went through but also the teacher/student relationship he developed with other gods thereafter. So, astrologically embodying the archetype of "the wounded healer", Chiron stresses the importance of going within to find a *cura* or answer - and then sharing it with others.

Because its discovery is so recent, astrologers haven't yet assigned any sign rulership to Chiron. They're still debating between Sagittarius and Virgo. I feel the energy is definitely more like Sagittarius. In its two influences of healing and teaching, Chiron unites the body and mind. We clearly see this philosophy now emerging with the advent of holistic health.

Although Chiron's orbit is very erratic, it returns to its place in your birthchart at about the age of fifty. This Return usually precipitates a crisis of meaning because Chiron's role is to lead you toward enlightenment on an inner and outer level. Therefore, your Chiron Return often necessitates a psychological reevaluation on your part.

If you experience difficulties during your Uranus opposition at about the age of forty--in other words, if you are not willing to take bold steps beyond your limitations at that time, then the Chiron Return will understandably be perceived as rather difficult. In my observation its negative manifestation often involves a health crisis--even death. Interestingly, many health problems are triggered by one's unwillingness to confront his or her feelings, and so these feelings are "stuffed", as the person adopts an attitude much like Scarlett O'Hara's: "I'll think about that tomorrow."

Be assured, tomorrow always comes! Similarly, your Chiron Return is precisely the time when you simply must come to terms with your purpose here on the Earth plane. Let's face it; some people would rather become sick and die than engage in the hard work necessary to implement their life's purpose. The age of fifty is the time when you are required to align yourself with your purpose if you are to rise to the heights you aspire to during your second Saturn Return at the age of sixty.

Chiron's place in your birthchart describes where you may be considered a maverick. The house in your birthchart containing Chiron is the part of you that is most unique. On Chiron's Return this part of your life is reactivated in a way similar to the manner in which it was activated during your youth. Therefore, your Chiron Return can be a time for reviewing early wounds that you sustained within your birth family. You can decide to heal those wounds and simply release them. If you're willing to do that--to heal yourself, as Chiron did, then this can also be a time when you experience the joy of embracing your uniqueness. You then have the opportunity to teach others what you have learned. You may not necessarily do this in a formal setting; it could simply be through the example of your own life. We are always teaching others whether we know it or not!

Often the parts of ourselves that are the most unusual, unique or odd, are the very things that cause us the most pain. They make us feel "separate" until we come to terms with these differences and learn to honor ourselves for them rather than reproach ourselves. Remember the fairy tale of the Ugly Duckling? Whenever you learn to honor your idiosyncrasies--whether that is before, during or after your Chiron Return, you will find yourself releasing the Ugly Duckling mindset and magically turning into a beautiful swan!

Some examples of those who turned into swans at the time of their Chiron Return are: Harold Carter, who opened the tomb of Tutankhamen; Henry Ford, who introduced the assembly line into his factory; Henry Kissinger, who became Secretary of State and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; William Faulkner, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

What about you? Where are you in the Chiron Cycle? What climactic events occurred when you were fifty? Were the results positive or negative? If you haven't yet reached your Chiron Return, it's time for you to start planning how you would like to experience it.

CHAPTER SIX

I hope you've enjoyed learning about these five meaningful Planetary Cycles. I've certainly enjoyed sharing my views about them with you. As so often happens in the process of teaching, I've learned some things myself.

For instance, it occurred to me during the writing of this book that each decade of life has its own personal planetary supervisor, so to speak: an overseer that helps kick off the next stage of your development in the "Seasons of Your Life". For instance:

- ◆ The first Jupiter Return at about the age of twelve could be called the Cycle of Spiritual Awakening.
- ◆ The Prenatal Eclipse Return launching you into your twenties might be labeled the Cycle of Destiny.
- ◆ The Saturn Return that insists you grow up at age thirty is, of course, the Cycle of Karma.
- ◆ The Uranus Opposition that jolts you out of your complacency as you enter your forties is the Cycle of Awakening.
- ◆ Chiron's Return at around fifty is the Cycle of Healing.
- ◆ As you enter your sixties you've experienced your second Saturn Return, and are revisited by the Cycle of Karma.
- ◆ At seventy-two you enjoy your sixth Jupiter Return--the Cycle of Mindfulness
- ◆ At eighty-four your first Uranus Return might be dubbed the Cycle of Re-Awakening!
- ◆ Just before your ninetieth birthday your last Saturn Return ushers in the third...and last Cycle of Karma.
- ◆ And finally, at age 100 your only Pluto Return prepares you for your departure to another plane.

You've no doubt noticed that some of these Planetary Cycles or their increments, coincide. For instance the Jupiter Return and Saturn Return both occur at approximately the age of sixty. When you experience more than one of these Planetary Returns at once, you can obviously anticipate an even more powerful thrust into new territory.

As an exercise, from now on whenever you are reading a biography, a magazine or newspaper article, or watching television newscasts, I invite you to make a point of observing the dramatic frequency of an important event happening to the subject when s/he was at the appropriate age to experience one of these five life-changing cycles. The more often you do this, the clearer it will become to you how vitally important a role these cycles play in everyone's life.

No matter which "Season of Your Life" you are currently in, I wish you the joys of transformation all along your life's path.