

During Aquarius season, we pass the mid-winter point (Candlemas), sensing the growing light as we move away from the winter solstice and towards the spring equinox. It's time to plant those seeds indoors and place them on the windowsill so they will be ready to flourish once the garden is tilled and ready to nurture them. This month's author, Tracy Marks, reminds us that in Aquarius, "we seek to be free to interact with a wide range of people, and to use our intuitive, inventive and abstract mental capabilities."

The challenge here is to foster those seedings that expand our friend groups – or reboot them. And what soft drumbeat is building within, telling us that there is something we are hoping to build, explore, create, or understand, something we are doing not to meet the expectations of anyone other than our inner spirit? The Sun in Aquarius is shining for you, and the highlighted aspect this month will help you to get cracking!

Wishing you all a star-studded month.

Sally

Highlighted Aspect

Mars

Mercury 16 degrees

Aquarius

TRINE

Mars 16 degrees Gemini

2-22-23

Mercury



The aspect I want to tickle your fancy with this month is Mercury in trine to Mars on February 22. While this would normally signify a fleeting moment of clarity or eloquence, Mercury and Mars have each made a long journey to reach this point of harmony. Mars has been kickboxing its way through Gemini since August of last year, going retrograde, then, in October, to rethink everything it had plotted and considered. Complicating the journey has been its ruler, peripatetic Mercury, flitting through signs and going retrograde not once but twice. Have you changed your mind a lot about a particular area of your life since October 30? It would truly be surprising if you have not. On January 12, Mars stationed direct, finally, but continues to rattle around in Gemini's house until March 24. Mercury, its ruler, stationed direct on January 18, leaving us to sort out our thoughts as we prepare to move forward.

Another complication is that Mercury in earth sign Capricorn went retrograde in December, while Mars was doing its retrograde backstroke in air sign Gemini. Their energies are not compatible and the signs are considered to be "in aversion" to each other. So we were being asked to do all this work in the mental sphere in our Gemini

house while at the same time tending to the practical physical challenges in our Capricorn house. A 10th house Gemini, for example, could have been a parent trying to generate a ton of charts and graphs and reports to please a demanding boss, while at the same time dealing with recalcitrant children in the Capricorn 5th house. Look to both these house in your chart to see if you have been pulled in two very different directions while both Mercury and Mars were retrograde.

Mercury, still the ruler of the Mars in Gemini, is moving on to the fresher and more compatible fields of air sign Aquarius on February 12. The long disconnect is over, and Mercury's first task will be to rush towards its houseguest Mars as they form a trine on February 22, thrilled for the opportunity to catch up. Both parties have been working though doubt, frustration, and false starts in their retrograde journeys, but have righted the course and are armed with information and insights. Adding to the power of their confab is Jupiter in Aries, Mars's sign, in sextile to Mars. Big plans can be made at this time.

So, on February 22, open your journal, send out that mailing, call for the meeting, take that journey, or just say thank you to the Universe for these moments when the stars align. Both Mercury and Mars need this time to give each other a boost and to have a beer together at the local bar as kind of a respite. Mercury takes on a heavy course of study when it meets Saturn on March 2, and Mars is tasked with challenging Neptune's wishful thinking – and dealing with the fallout – when it squares Neptune on March 14 for the third and last time. Together, Mercury and Mars will help us prepare to be ready for anything.

When Mercury Trines Mars

Mercury		Will bring new ideas, strategies and enhance:		Mars
1st House	Self-confidence, appearance		5th House	Children, creative projects
2nd House	Income, possessions		6th House	Work, Health, Service
3rd House	Communication		7th House	Partners
4th House	Home, Family		8th House	Joint resources, emotional needs
5th House	Children, creativity		9th House	Higher learning, travel
6th House	Work, Health, Service		10th House	Career, Status
7th House	Partners		11th House	Friends, Groups
8th House	Joint Resources, emotional needs		12th House	Seclusion, Unconscious
9th House	Higher learning, travel		1st House	Self-confidence, appearance
10th House	Career, status		2nd House	Income, possessions
11th House	Friends, Groups		3rd House	Communication
12th House	Seclusion, Unconscious		4th House	Home, Family

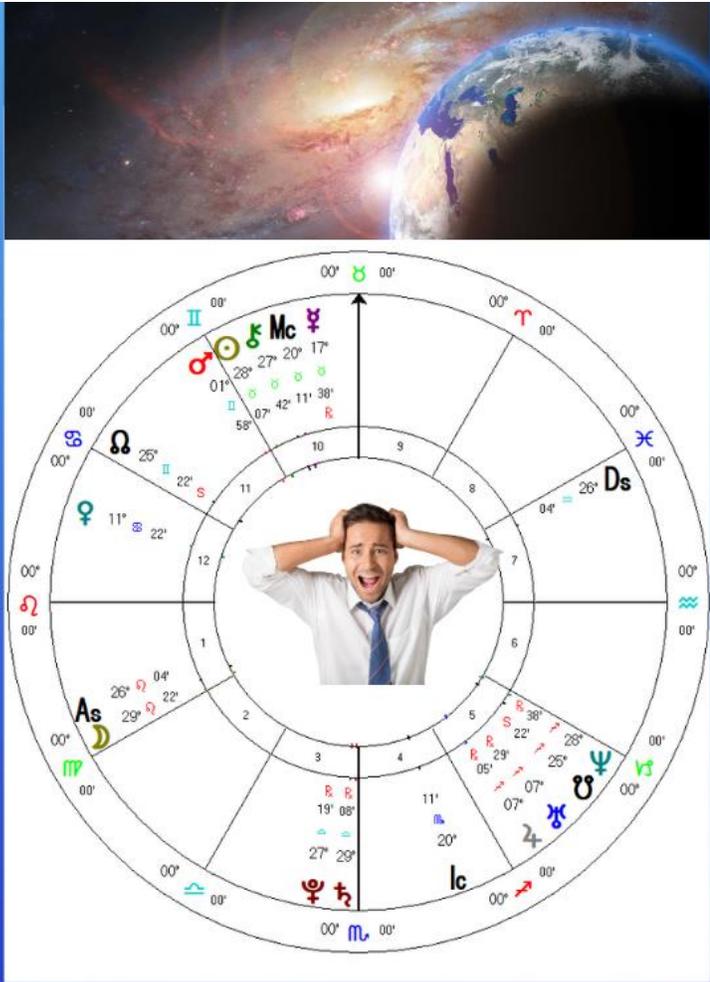


Highlighted Q and A

Dear Highlights,

I am very frustrated with my job right now. The commute is long and arduous, and the work is boring and routine. I am only pushing papers rather than doing the real problem solving I was trained to do. What are my prospects of finding a more stimulating job, with a more convenient commute? Soon, I hope!

One Very Frustrated Employee



Dear One Very Frustrated Employee:

I can certainly see your job frustration right now. Uranus is on a long transit through your 10th house of career, which is always a time when we want to shake things up and find a path which is more aligned with our interests and talents. Plus, we chafe against the restrictions of a 9-5 job and long for more freedom. Adding further stress is the square from Saturn in Aquarius, which is the energy all of us world-wide have been dealing with since early 2021. We long for freedom but are restricted by our responsibilities. Because Saturn is in your 7th house, the responsibilities towards a partner could be putting you in a position when you know you cannot quit without having another job lined up. The stress of your daily commute is also indicated by the heavy square of Pluto in Capricorn squaring your Saturn-Pluto conjunction in the 3rd house of how we move around in our environment. However, one bright sign from this late-degrees Pluto in Capricorn is its trine to your 10th house Sun, indicating that the work you are doing now is helping you to build the career you are seeking.

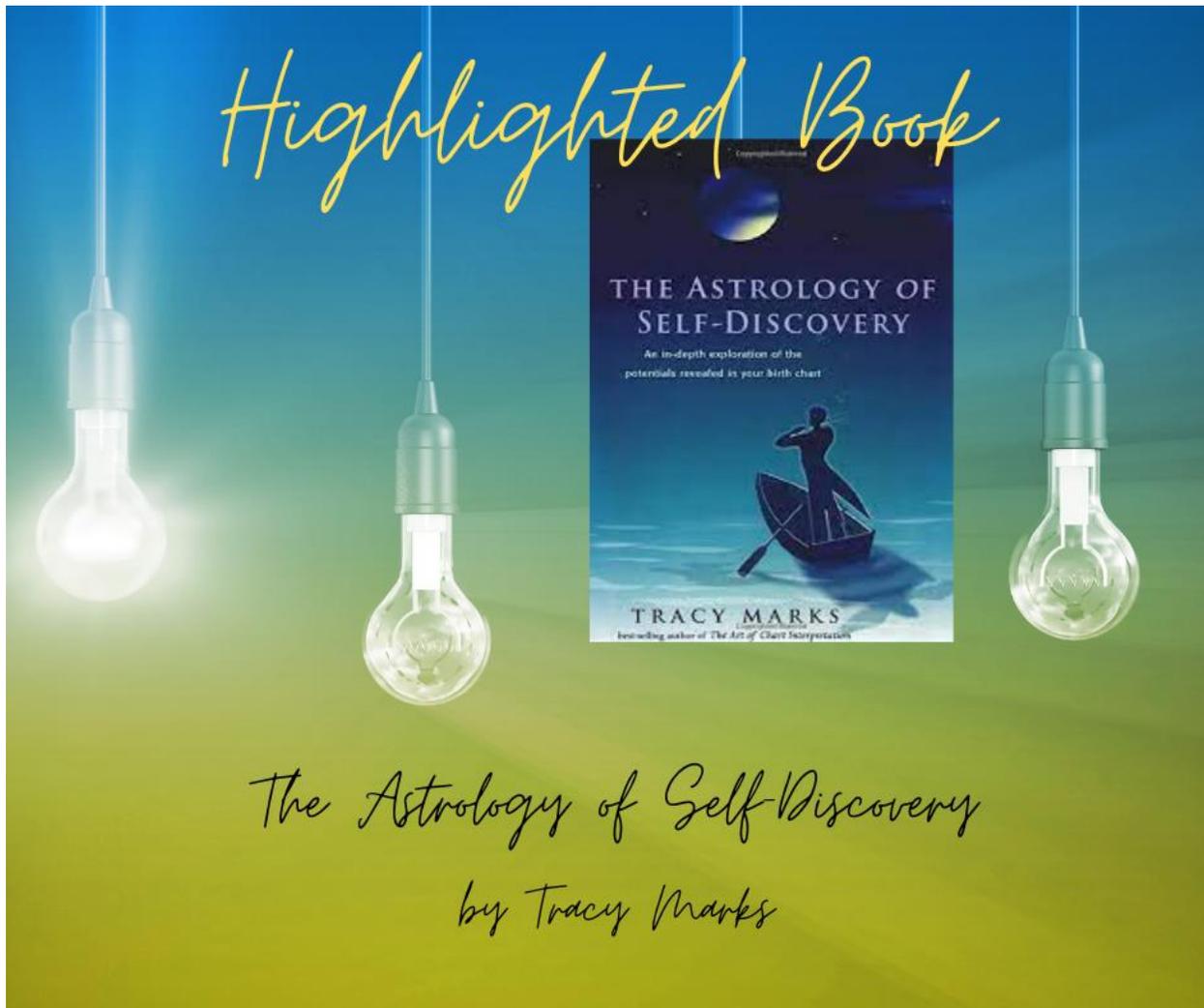
While Uranus will first be crossing your Midheaven in May-June 2023, a possible indication of a job change, I am not very confident that all the other planets are aligned to give Uranus an assist. Saturn is the planet we have to watch because it rules your 6th house of the job itself. Saturn in Aquarius is currently (February 2023) squaring your Sun, and will be in the early degrees of Pisces by the spring, squaring your Mars in Gemini, creating a block towards what you want to accomplish. A Saturn-Mars aspect tells us that we want to hit the gas and the brake pedals at the same time – and Saturn will be squaring that Mars two more times as we move through 2023.

Jupiter, however, will be entering your 10th house on May 17, suggesting an improvement of your work situation, making a sextile to your Venus in Cancer, which rules your house of career. This might possibly be a time when policies ease up so that you may be able to work more from home, with Venus in the sign of the home.

Do not fear, however. The promise of a true change in your job and career path is waiting for you in 2024. Jupiter and Uranus conjoin at 21 degrees of Taurus in April of 2024, on your Midheaven, indicating an expansion of career opportunities through change. An added bonus is that Saturn, ruling your 6th house of the job itself, will be in Pisces in trine to your Midheaven ruler, Venus in Cancer. Because of its placement in Cancer in the 12th house, I would not be surprised if the job would involve eventually working from home, or at least, very near home. Pluto will be back and forth in its square to your 3rd house Saturn-Pluto conjunction, but by the end of 2024, it will be securely into Aquarius – and in trine to your 11th house Mars in Gemini, bringing you the commute you are hoping for.

Hang in there, Frustrated Employee. Saturn-Uranus transits try our patience to the utmost, but things usually shake out the way we want them to. Keep us posted!

Send your questions to me for future consideration in a Highlights issue at sallyjducharme@gmail.com. Charts are always published anonymously.



The Astrology of Self-Discovery
by Tracy Marks

In *The Astrology of Self-Discovery*, the wonderful psychological astrologer Tracy Marks opens our perspective of the astrological chart as map of who we are becoming. Too often, we tend to think of our planets and aspects locking us into place as we go through life labeled by our astrological signs. “Our birth charts are not maps of who we are but rather mandalas indicating potentials for energy transformation, suggesting the dynamic potentials we were born with and which we can unfold in cooperation with the energy continually available to us from the universe,” Marks writes. Processed correctly, so-called “difficult” placements or transits become a means of shedding inhibitors to our growth and welcoming a more vital and fulfilling life path.

In her book, Marks first focuses on our Moon signs, and how we can tap into their best essence to grow and mature emotionally. I wrote about Marks’ Moon sign analysis in my blog, which you can tap into here:

<https://www.sallyducharme.com/post/the-tasks-of-our-moon-signs>

Marks then gives a rich description of the lunar nodes, and how the path to discovery of their power is to integrate what is familiar and comfortable at the South Node with the more challenging realms of the North Node. I write about how Mother Teresa, Ghandi, Maya Angelou and other enlightened human beings lived through the power of their lunar nodes, and you can find my essay here:

<https://www.sallyducharme.com/post/learning-from-our-lunar-nodes>

The transits of Neptune, which often seem baffling and discouraging, can be times of rich spiritual enlightenment, Marks tells us, or they can be times when we long to escape the pain of our lives. I looked at the transits of Neptune to the chart of Lisa Marie Presley, who sadly passed away while grieving for her son. But we can also have times of great creativity, as we find with the Neptunian transits in Lin-Manuel Miranda's chart as he was composing *Hamilton*. We can also desire to serve – or save – the world, as we see in the chart of Bill Gates, or it can be a time of sensing a great one-ness with the Universe, as we find with Ram Dass's Neptunian transits. I write about these charts here:

<https://www.sallyducharme.com/post/experiencing-neptune-with-a-guide>

Marks also explores the darker and deeply compelling transits of Pluto. We can come out of a Pluto transit possessing nothing but our essential being, and from that, we need to build a world anew. I explored the chart of Bill W., a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, to track how his Plutonian journey took him to the brink of death before he found the serenity which became the foundation of his new life and life mission. You can find my essay here:

<https://www.sallyducharme.com/post/experiencing-neptune-with-a-guide>

I have much gratitude to Tracy Marks for bringing her insights to the astrology community. We can never look to our chart and despair over what is or what is coming once we integrate Tracy's message that consciousness of our planets and their transits will set us free to rise above what once seemed to be our fate.



On my YouTube channel this month, I explored the charts of several newsmakers, wondering what their planets could tell us about the events which had brought them to prominence. Will Jeremy Renner, crushed by his own snowplow, be able to channel his inner superhero to recover? And will George Santos, caught in a web of lies, survive politically, and more important, will he evolve into a more ethical human being? What impact will Prince Harry's memoir have on Meghan? And how will Priscilla Presley survive the tragic loss of her grandson and daughter? And, finally, will Nikki Haley be the next President of the United States?

Check out these videos at <https://www.youtube.com/@sallyducharme4376/videos>