

Mercury Retrograde

Three times a year - in the Element of Earth 2003-04



This year the retrograde periods are:

January 1 - January 21, 2003 Capricorn
April 26 - May 20, 2003 Taurus
August 28 - September 20, 2003 Virgo.
December 17, 2003 - January 6, 2004 Capricorn
(retrogrades into Sagittarius - fire)

The time frames when Mercury is in the element of earth are:

December 2, 2002 - February 12, 2003
April 5, 2003 - June 12, 2003
July 30, 2003 - October 6, 2003
December 2, 2003 - February 6, 2004

That is 208 days out of 365 days - 57% of the time. One circuit of Mercury is 400 days from 28° Capricorn (Jan 01,03) to 28° Capricorn (Feb 6, 04).

"Let no sleep fall upon thy eyes till thou hast thrice re- viewed the transactions of the past day. Where have I turned aside from rectitude? What have I been doing? What have I left undone, which I ought to have done? Begin thus from the first act, and proceed; and, in conclusion, at the ill which thou hast done, be troubled, and rejoice for the good." — Buddha

These periods have the main theme of mis-communications and misunderstandings, poorly planned purchases and contracts. It is the time to avoid making long-term decisions. It is a review time with bigger repercussions. Some cycles are great for moving ahead, this is not one of those; buyer beware or in carpentry terms measure thrice cut once. To draw attention to a quote from a higher source: ""Let no sleep fall upon thy eyes till thou hast thrice re- viewed the transactions of the past day. Where have I turned aside from rectitude? What have I been doing? What have I left undone, which I ought to have done? Begin thus from the first act, and proceed; and, in conclusion, at the ill which thou hast done, be troubled, and rejoice for the good." -- Buddha. I have appended a little write up for each individual sign at the end of this write-up.

Mercury is the busy-body planet of the zodiac, patience and caution are not his strong-suit, that really comes to the forefront during these three week periods that occur at 4-month intervals, during a typical year we experience three periods. Unless we take the time to plan and consider with care or even postpone things until a more opportune time, we invariably find ourselves re-doing, revising and revamping

The retrograde periods are good for any action that is preceded with the prefix re. That is to redo, rethink, revise, rewrite, realign, revamp, renovate, and my personal favourite repair (not a prefix word) especially things like cars, wiring and computer equipment. These are not good times for buying cars, computers or anything else with wiring. Neither are these good times for signing on the dotted line, as errors in thoughts, writing or plans will likely emerge. These are, however, excellent times for perfecting projects already in motion.

The day of the retrograde station (the first one) and the day preceding it are good for sending out promotional material, notices of sales to be launched with the direct station (the last day on the list). The day of the direct station is also good for mailing out advertising for increased results. The worry is that if material is prepared during the retrograde period, then it may come out with delightful typos, just make sure the monetary amounts at least are correct or you may be looking at a costly mistake.

Every astrologer repeats the same warnings, avoid signing documents don't buy equipment with wiring, and hey I would not book the electrician to rewire my electrical box during these times. Time to review work already done or half-finished, waiting for your attention. Is there anything to this? Here is a 'war-story'.

I bought a car with Mercury retrograde. The wiring on that sucker (it was a luxury car) caused no end of grief, when we had to drive it without knowing the speed, etc. operating it blind-folded was no fun. The bonus was that during that six month period the distance driven did not register, so we eventually sold it for more money than we paid for it. At work we bought a big rig when Mercury was retrograde, boy the amount of warranty work that truck has had in the past two years. We did, however, buy extended warranty for it.

We cannot stop living just because the planetary alignments or positions 'scream': "just take a holiday" - by the way this is not a good time to book tickets to travel either. The key is to stay flexible and prepared to change plans, i.e. don't carve it in stone. Signing important documents is not advisable either, we all make typos, right? Now more so than ever as we have the tendency to rush without paying attention to detail. Tested this one personally as well, to make a long story short, the partnership agreement never took off the ground, and destroyed a fledgling friendship. To add insult to injury both of us were astrologers.

These periods are great for writers, who can now go back and polish off written material. It is now easier improve the material with detachment when proofing, rewriting and revamping. This typically leads to a better result.

Fun things to do during this period is to watch newscasters on TV make fun blunders, clip out news items where the typos give the story a hilarious, new tone.

Overall, these three week periods are great for getting caught up with paperwork, and mundane, routine chores. Return phone calls from months ago, etc. Chances are that you get to leave a message rather than communicate in person. Should you opt to buy something with wiring then keep the receipts handy or buy adequate replacement insurance. Patience is required to navigate through these small hindrances that truly only have nuisance value. We need to speak and listen with more care, so we don't allow misunderstanding to enter the equation.

The major themes behind the bigger cycles

We typically read that these three periods last approx. three weeks each. What we may not notice is that Mercury spends approx. 200 days a year in one element, the one that the retrogrades occur in. (On January 1, 03 Mercury is at 28° Capricorn and by February 6, 2004 he is at that same degree once again.) So one circuit is 400 days, out of which Mercury spends half in one element out of four! This makes Mercury more significant than we give him credit for, extended exposure two consecutive years at 7 year intervals. Check out the PDF format table of Mercury retrograde periods for 1972-2027, to see how it works and repeats in elements. We know about the tricks of Mercury but do we acknowledge the bigger themes at work.

There is a bigger theme at work behind these cycles, we get six in a row over a two year period and the elements switch backwards, Air preceded Earth 2001-2002, Fire will follow in 2005-06, and the fourth element Water will start in 2007, and round and round we go.

These time frames, which continue in the practical, result-oriented earth element in 2004 as well, are excellent for reviewing and researching how to give practical form to high, lofty ideas. The best inventions and boldest career moves all start with a notion, a day dream. Creative effort on any scale is 5% inspiration and 95% work, sweat and tears. Now is the time to focus on that 95% and how to accomplish it. Time to get real or learn to walk the talk.

The three earth signs are Capricorn, Taurus and Virgo - their main theme **practical effort and application**. This sequence started with Capricorn. For just over two months we were coerced to become more practical with Saturn type issues. Capricorn is a Saturn ruled sign. Saturn is the character in our lives play that teaches us to do without, to learn responsibility and to take our time at getting to our destination. It can stagnate, maintain status quo, impose limitations, and make us acutely aware of what we lack. It can reflect times in our lives when work or the thought of work feels repressive. In 2001-02 we experienced Mercury retrograde in Air, and we were filled ideas, notions, dreams and inspiration, the sky was the limit.

Perhaps the first Capricorn phase (Dec. 2, 2002 - Feb., 2003) was excellent for researching practical form for realizable dreams and visions, and if we didn't get there then - there is a repeat at the end of the year continuing into 2004. The Universe is kind in repeating the themes until we here on Earth get it. The second starting in December 2003 will incorporate inspiration, and drive into the mix.

Mercury in Capricorn sticks to facts, and talks about what is rather than what could be. The retrograde period in any sign means that the planet spends a longer time in the same area. Longer exposure typically means that we have the luxury of time to notice things more up front, close and personal. Capricorn is about status and career, now is not the time to rock the boat, but play a patient 'wait and see' game.

Earth is a practical and result-oriented element. Saturn, ruling planet of Capricorn, represents obstacles on our path and the hard work needed to overcome these. Saturn is about patience and caution, it is a planet that proceeds and prompts us to proceed only when we have all the facts in hand. The initial feel of a shift into Capricorn can be extremely immobilizing, we can feel extremely happy doing nothing. Capricorn, however, is the antidote of laziness, inertia and lack of direction. At first we may be overwhelmed by the organized chaos around us, the lack of focus and the feeling of being unmotivated. But this will lift as Mercury tackles some Saturnine tasks, showing us where our obligations lie. This is why astrologers talk about old work, and unfinished projects coming back for reworking, improving or perfecting. Or we might have to do our old job in addition to our current, new job. **Sometimes we just have to go back to learn to do things properly.**

Those of us with strong workaholic tendencies will feel this shift most acutely. What a motionless ride with incredible revelations! I am working on a manuscript for astrology a primer that encompasses both contemporary astrology and traditional astrology and I figure that if I can't put this drive to give material form to my brain child in the course of the next two years then I am not making the most of the energy at my disposal.

What are you working on, and how can you best utilize the stellar influences to help you give structure and form to your ideas? Timing, timing, timing is the credo of astrology. These two years are perfect for cultivating a concrete product. Our thoughts can and do manifest, now is the time to buckle down to do the work. The same theme continues next year so take this time to review and revise those types of plans, and once again we are talking 400 days out of a possible 731! (2004 is a leap year.)

The second period in April-May 2003

...and the rerun in 2004, just like on TV the inner planetary themes go into syndication. Taurus is about our values and assets, the hard work of Capricorn now has to yield monetary or alike rewards. Not status but something that will feed us and our sense of self. Taurus deals with material, such as money, food, and the good things in life. Taurus is about growing things, providing nourishment so that what has been sown can flourish. Taurus is steady progress whatever is cultivated with this energy needs to be rewarding, satisfying and worthwhile.

The 2004 Taurus period involves the element of fire. Fire, of course, is associated with inspiration, taking action and getting excited about new opportunities.

Mercury in Virgo bigger themes

July 30, 2003 - October 6, 2003, with a rerun in August-October 2004. Now we are looking at Virgo, which is a natural home for Mercury. The third period is for improving and perfecting the creative vision you have had for the past couple of years, and once again this repeats in 2004. The current time frame (2003) co-insides with Mars retrograde in Pisces. So during this 67-day period two personal planets are wreaking 'change'. Virgo is known to be orderly, analytical, organized and discerning. This particular cycle looks to be the most challenging in terms of creating a workable, organized and 'perfect' practical creation from our dreams and visions. It is also about organizing practical affairs in order to avoid the agonizing. This sign has common sense, it is about learning skills and practicing things until we learn to do these by rote. This cycle marks a continuous shift in how we deal with the practical, mundane side of life. As kids we learn to tie our shoe-laces and to open a can, as we enter the adult world we tackle income and expenses trying to make sure that the latter does not exceed the former, and so on. **Now is a good time to learn more coping skills, and get tips on handling the so called routine side of life with better tools.**

During the that time Uranus will be in Pisces, which for one thing could be a medical breakthrough or more likely several. We all saw the headlines in 2002 - the first cloned human baby born. Fact or fiction, maybe in this time frame we will find out that fact is indeed stranger than fiction.

The challenge with Mercury opposite Mars both in a position of being up close, and extremely personal is to think before speaking and acting. Avoid being overly critical and trying not to insist on helping those that do not want to be helped. Many a 'good Samaritan' has had a lawsuit slapped on them for trying to help out.

Aries

The houses with an earth sign on the cusp for the fire signs (Aries, Leo and Sagittarius Sun or Rising Sign) are the 2nd, 6th and 10th houses. These are the material houses, where we earn our money, do our work and create concrete foundations in order to have our basic needs met, i.e., food, shelter and security.

April 6 - June 14: The issues of the 2nd house, which is about our money and possessions as well as our ability to look after ourselves and others under our care, is under careful consideration. On an issue level we have to tend to our perceived value both on the material and emotional level. Time belongs to this segment of the chart, and with the earth emphasis we can no longer afford to fritter our time away, but we need to make the days and months count in order to produce emotional and financial sense of security.

July 30-October 7: During this time frame the issues pertaining to the 6th house, which is associated with work, chores and health, as well as acquiring and honing practical skills and learning to cope with the practical side of life, are the issues that need to be addressed. In order to survive we need to have a set of skills, to cook in order to feed ourselves or at least know how to provide nourishment to ourselves. We need to know how to pay our bills, secure services we need and all kinds of practical mundane skills - common sense can go a long way, but in order to cultivate that sensibility we need to have learned basic coping skills. Co-workers are defined by this house, and while the influence is in this area of our lives it may be the time to learn to understand your co-workers and accept the things that cannot be changed and learn to take practical steps in order to work toward solutions with these relationships that can be improved.

December 2, 2003 - February 6, 2004 The issues belonging to the 10th house come under both internal and external impetus for improvement. The 10th house is where we deal with authority figures starting with the parents, and continuing through bosses and governmental bodies. It is also the house of career and status. This astrologically speaking, represents the best we can be in terms of contribution to our family, community, country or the world. This is the house that

astrologers view with care to determine our worldly success, our climb on the corporate ladder or the ladder of life experiences. Taurus is a steady climber, preserving status quo and desiring results and rewards in the fullness of time. During this time frame we need to learn how to improve what we have accomplished, work solidly toward attaining new rewards and goals, and putting our best foot forward. Naturally enough this can also be a time frame where the dissatisfaction that has built up over time demands that we instigate changes so that we can have a career/status or avocation that feeds our inner goals. Taurus, however, does not make impulsive changes, but explores and contemplates its options with more care.

Taurus

The Earth houses for the Earth signs (Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn Sun or Rising Sign) are 1st house of self and physical body, 5th house of romance, creativity and children and the 9th house of higher learning, travel and philosophy. These houses collectively are to do with creation and recreation. Our physical appearance changes over time, some of the changes we implement ourselves and others are due to time and our environment. Our attitude toward romance, children and our creative side also goes through adjustment as we keep on recreating our attitude. In the 9th our views, opinions and convictions go through big changes of time, looking back we seldom even resonate with who we were. Time to recreate yourself, become inspired and taking that inspiration to a heightened level and becoming more aware of the fire that fuels our life.

April 6 - June 14: It is about you, your attitude and physical body now as the 1st house and your Sun are influenced. The Sun, astrologically speaking, defines your life force, ego, energy, who you are becoming and defines the process of becoming self-aware in the course of this life time. The earth signs, are all connected the material world through the five senses - you are sensual and the importance of enjoying good food, satisfying hobbies and pursuits, nature's visual and nourishing bounty is part of your innate make-up. Time to get that physical body in shape, put yourself first for a change and revamp your attitude and appearance. This is an excellent time to start a healthier regimen. You know exercise, diet and relaxation time. A healthier you becomes a more vibrant you. This is one of those vibrant areas of life, the fire that fuels your entire being.

July 30-October 7: The affairs of the 5th astrological house come into focus now. This place in the chart houses our children, whose affairs can become of concern for you, both positive and negative. The duality of life does extend beyond black and white. Your role may be to dole out practical sound advise for them in order to teach them lovingly to handle life's ups and downs in a more matter of fact fashion, rather than simply allow events to control their lives. Creativity lives here as well, it is the off spring of our mind - whether you have always desired to paint, write or create 'masterpieces' with your hands out of wood, metal or cultivate that perfect garden or even a scrap book - now is the time to apply the skills of your hands and mind to make something creative that gives you a sense of satisfaction. This is also the area of life where we need and desire to have fun and to PLAY. We need to balance all facets of our lives in order to feel content. This is the time to create contentment in your life.

December 2, 2003 -February 6, 2004: The affairs and issues of the 9th house become focal. This is the house of higher knowledge, foreign travel and our views on life. This house represents the area of our lives where we philosophize about life and life's mysteries. Religion is the domain of this house, the intent is to learn about comparative religion in order to grow our own convictions and ideas. This is the house where expand our horizons venture out there to learn something new about the part of life that does not exist in the familiar neighbourhood of our daily existence. In this house we question our existence and seek knowledge. This is not faith for the sake of faith, or because that is what the doctrine states; this is where we develop our belief system, it is the 12th house and the sign of Pisces that represents surrender. Politics are firmly held opinions thus belong to this area of our lives. This is where make our initial connection with the world at large, the stage where we share that connection is the 10th house. So many inter-weaving cycles, and now is the time to learn to connect some of those dots, remove those proverbial 'blindness' and review and revise our views.

Gemini

For the Air signs (Gemini, Libra and Aquarius Sun or Rising Sign) the houses with an earth sign on the cusp are the 4th house of home and emotional security, the 8th house of death, taxes and commitment, and the 12th house of the subconscious, faith and insecurities. Collectively these are the emotional houses of the zodiac, and the houses of endings. The issues that are part and parcel of these three areas of life, are where we experience family, death and our insecurities. This where we experience domestic bliss, complete surrender to another and surrender to the unknown. During these periods of heightened focus April 6 - June 14, July 30-October 7 and December 2, 2003 -February 6, 2004 these areas of life come under scrutiny and corrective action, the subtler theme continues until the end of 2004.

April 6 - June 14

The 12th house is a private, and intimately personal area of life. This is the house where our baggage from the past has relatively free reign. This is where we face or ignore our fears, become intimately acquainted with our insecurities and often fail to recognize our innate strengths. This is the astrological area that represents isolation, solace and respite from the hectic pace of our lives. The subconscious mind and our dream world belongs here, and when the cycles activate this area of our lives we need to address some of these issues. It is also the segment in the annual cycle that defines the process of ending a period so we can launch a new year starting with our birthday about a month away. The energy of Taurus is practical, no nonsense and filled with strength. The normal month long cycle does not apply this year nor next; now you need to do deeper level work on the issues described by the 12th segment of the chart, as listed or illustrated in this paragraph. Might as well get out the notebook in order to record your dreams, the next step, of course, is to get a dream dictionary or a book of symbols. Our collective set of symbols varies little between cultures, but the essence of symbols remains about the same. When we dream of cooking we are creating sustenance, and a nurturing atmosphere. When we dream of the Ocean it is to do with emotions. Learn about your own nature and coping mechanisms by paying attention to your dreams.

July 30-October 7: The 4th house is our home, family and our roots. It represents our need for security in terms other than money - what is it you need in order to feel safe? The people of your home are those with whom you share an emotional bond, where your love is as close to unconditional as we can get. On a mundane level this can be a period of renovations, moving or big shifts and changes within family. Children may leave the nest or move back in. This is the area of life where we look after those we consider family. Now it is time to stand on your own two feet and make practical choices in order to move forward in life. At this time you may find yourself contemplating your view of yourself as opposed to how you think others see you. At the minimal this is the time when you spend more time in family type activities than normal, maybe even the time you think of starting one.

December 2, 2003 -February 6, 2004: The 8th house is the area of life where we encounter commitment to others, inevitable issues of life - death, taxes and elimination. We change dramatically in the course of our lives in this area. The shifting cycles periodically bring this portion of our life into the forefoot. This is the house of joint resources and property, inheritance and insurance. Now that the practical Taurus energy enters this stage in your life's play it is time to get practical about these issues. Let's look at the elimination process as an example. If your septic field has ceased to function, calling the tanker guys in each monthly is a band aid solution, the existing field needs to be removed and a new one put in its place. The human body is the same, we can only apply band aids for so long. When something has ceased to be of value or importance, it is no longer mutually inclusive - then it needs to be gutted and redone. Committed relationships fall here as well, time to renovate, rejuvenate and to stay completely honest and open. House of secrets perhaps, but some of these we cannot afford to keep. It is also the time to ensure that financial matters are in order, wills and insurance is up to snuff and that you continue to grow your shared assets and resources.

Cancer

For the water signs (Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces Sun or Rising Sign) the houses involved are the 3rd, 7th and the 11th houses. This group of houses collectively are our relationship houses. In the 3rd we venture out into our neighbourhood and commence our basic learning. The 7th are our relationships in general, the spouse in particular, this is the astrological area we look at to determine how you relate and with whom and how you form partnerships. The 11th house is where we venture into groups and associations, what kind of acquaintances we choose and what types of people do we share our ideals with.

April 6 - June 14: You get to tackle groups and friends first in the course of this cycle. Now it is time to enter the big world, restart networking, make connections with people who share your interests and passion for making a difference. It is time to meet new people, and to form long-lasting bonds. This represents the area of life, but we address our long-term goals, our deepest desires and aspirations - those five-year plans or in this instance 7 year ones. Time to roll up the sleeves and bring some of these into concrete reality by giving ideas form and a chance to mature into something worth owning or taking pride in.

July 30-October 7: The third house is our neighbourhood, siblings, cousins and our daily life. This is where we collect information, data and perceptions about our environment. This describes a naturally busy environment, and it now became even busier. Going to school is a third house activity as is shooting the breeze with the neighbour, or chatting on the phone or these days on-line. This house represents how we communicate and get from A to B. So now the issues that need to be addressed with a no-nonsense hands on approach could be as simple as sprucing up the car or as complex as starting in a new educational institution. Before we can start anything we do need to analyze it, research the pros and cons and then make an informed decision. A good time to mend any broken or strained relationships with sisters, brothers or similar individuals who used to be part of your daily life.

December 2, 2003 -February 6, 2004: The all-encompassing word OTHERS is what astrology actually assigns to this 7th house of relationships. It is about partnerships at all levels not just about a marriage partner, but who we might choose to pick as our lawyer, accountant, grocer or business partner. What is interesting about our relationships is that from a metaphysical or philosophical point of view - people we encounter and associate with are a reflection of both our strengths and weaknesses. When we vehemently hate a characteristic in someone else, it is ultimately about ourselves and we have yet to own that trait, or have failed to let that part of our nature go. Conversely when we idolize a trait in someone else we have yet to claim that characteristic as our own. Others are a mirror which reflects our own image back to us. That is a difficult concept to own, your short comings are my short comings. So now is the time to address these issues and your relationships with others in general. Easy to put into words, sometimes tougher to live through.

Leo

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Libra

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July 30-October 7: The 12th house is a private, and intimately personal area of life. This is the house where our baggage from the past has relatively free reign. This is where we face or ignore our fears, become intimately acquainted with our insecurities and often fail to recognize our innate strengths. This is the astrological area that represents isolation, solace and respite from the hectic pace of our lives. The subconscious mind and our dream world belongs here, and when the cycles activate this area of our lives we need to address some of these issues. It is also the segment in the annual

cycle that defines the process of ending a period so we can launch a new year starting with our birthday about a month away. The energy of Taurus is practical, no nonsense and filled with strength. The normal month long cycle does not apply this year nor next; now you need to do deeper level work on the issues described by the 12th segment of the chart, as listed or illustrated in this paragraph. Might as well get out the notebook in order to record your dreams, the next step, of course, is to get a dream dictionary or a book of symbols. Our collective set of symbols varies little between cultures, but the essence of symbols remains about the same. When we dream of cooking we are creating sustenance, and a nurturing atmosphere. When we dream of the Ocean it is to do with emotions. Learn about your own nature and coping mechanisms by paying attention to your dreams.

December 2, 2003 -February 6, 2004: The 4th house is our home, family and our roots. It represents our need for security in terms other than money - what is it you need in order to feel safe? The people of your home are those with whom you share an emotional bond, where your love is as close to unconditional as we can get. On a mundane level this can be a period of renovations, moving or big shifts and changes within family. Children may leave the nest or move back in. This is the area of life where we look after those we consider family. Now it is time to stand on your own two feet and make practical choices in order to move forward in life. At this time you may find yourself contemplating your view of yourself as opposed to how you think others see you. At the minimal this is the time when you spend more time in family type activities than normal, maybe even the time you think of starting one.

Scorpio

For the water signs (Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces Sun or Rising Sign) the houses involved are the 3rd, 7th and the 11th houses. This group of houses collectively are our relationship houses. In the 3rd we venture out into our neighbourhood and commence our basic learning. The 7th are our relationships in general, the spouse in particular, this is the astrological area we look at to determine how you relate and with whom and how you form partnerships. The 11th house is where we venture into groups and associations, what kind of acquaintances we choose and what types of people do we share our ideals with.

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July 30-October 7: You get to tackle groups and friends second in the course of this cycle. Now it is time to enter the big world, re-start networking, make connections with people who share your interests and passion for making a difference. It is time to meet new people, and to form long-lasting bonds. This represents the area of life where we address our long-term goals, our deepest desires and aspirations - those five-year plans or in this instance 7 year ones. Time to roll up the sleeves and bring some of these into reality by giving ideas form and a chance to mature into something worth owning or taking pride in.

December 2, 2003 - February 6, 2004: The third house is our neighbourhood, siblings, cousins and our daily life. This is where we collect information, data and perceptions about our environment. This describes a naturally busy environment, and it now became even busier. Going to school is a third house activity as is shooting the breeze with the neighbour, or chatting on the phone or these days on-line. This house represents how we communicate and get from A to B. So

now the issues that need to be addressed with a no-nonsense hands on approach could be as simple as sprucing up the car or as complex as starting in a new educational institution. Before we can start anything we do need to analyze it, research the pros and cons and then make an informed decision. A good time to mend any broken or strained relationships with sisters, brothers or similar individuals who used to be part of your daily life.

Sagittarius

The houses with an earth sign on the cusp for the fire signs (Aries, Leo and Sagittarius Sun or Rising Sign) are the 2nd, 6th and 10th house. These are the material houses, where we earn our money, do our work and create concrete foundations in order to have our basic needs met, i.e., food, shelter and security. During these periods of heightened focus April 6 - June 14, July 30-October 7 and December 2, 2003 -February 6, 2004 these areas of life come under scrutiny and corrective action, the subtler theme continues until the end of 2004.

April 6 - June 14: During this time frame the issues pertaining to the 6th house, which is associated with work, chores and health, as well as acquiring and honing practical skills and learning to cope with the practical side of life, is what needs to be addressed. In order to survive we need to have a set of skills, to cook in order to feed ourselves or at least know how to provide nourishment to ourselves. We need to know how to pay our bills, secure services we need and all kinds of practical mundane skills - common sense can go a long way, but in order to cultivate that sensibility we need to have learned basic coping skills. Co-workers are defined by this house, and while the influence is in this area of our lives it may be the time to learn to understand your co-workers and accept the things that cannot be changed and learn to take practical steps in order to work toward solutions with these relationships that can be improved.

July 30-October 7: The issues belonging to the 10th house come under both internal and external impetus for improvement. The 10th house is where we deal with authority figures starting with the parents, and continuing through bosses and governmental bodies. It is also the house of career and status. This astrologically speaking, represents the best we can be in terms of contribution to our family, community, country or the world. This is the house that astrologers view with care to determine our worldly success, our climb on the corporate ladder or the ladder of life experiences. Taurus is a steady climber, preserving status quo and desiring results and rewards in the fullness of time. During this time frame we need to learn how to improve what we have accomplished, work solidly toward attaining new rewards and goals, and putting our best foot forward. Naturally enough this can also be a time frame where the dissatisfaction that has built up over time demands that we instigate changes so that we can have a career/status or avocation that feeds our inner goals. Taurus, however, does not make impulsive changes, but explores and contemplates its options with more care.

December 2, 2003 - February 6, 2004: The issues of the 2nd house, which is about our money and possessions as well as our ability to look after ourselves and others under our care, is under careful consideration. On an issue level we have to tend to our perceived worth both on the material and emotional level. Time belongs to this segment of the chart, and with the earth emphasis we can no longer afford to fritter our time away, but we need to make the days and months count in order to produce emotional and financial sense of security.

Capricorn

The Earth houses for the Earth signs (Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn Sun or Rising Sign) are 1st house of self and physical body, 5th house of romance, creativity and children and the 9th house of higher learning, travel and philosophy. These houses collectively are to do with creation and recreation. Our physical appearance changes over time, some of the changes we implement ourselves and others are due to time and our environment. Our attitude towards romance, children and our creative side also goes through adjustment as we keep on recreating our attitude. In the 9th our views, opinions and convictions go through big changes of time, looking back we seldom even resonate with who we were. Time to recreate yourself, become inspired and taking that inspiration to a heightened level and becoming more aware of the fire that fuels our

life.

April 6 - June 14: The affairs of the 5th astrological house come into focus now. This place in the chart houses our children, whose affairs can become of concern for you, both positive and negative. The duality of life does extend beyond black and white. Your role may be to dole out practical sound advice for them in order to teach them lovingly to handle life's ups and downs a more matter of fact fashion, rather than simply allow events to control their lives. Creativity lives here as well, it is the offspring of our mind - whether you have always desired to paint, write or create 'masterpieces' with your hands out of wood, metal or cultivate that perfect garden or even a scrap book - now is the time to apply the skills of your hands and mind to make something creative that gives you a sense of satisfaction. This is also the area of life where we need and desire to have fun and to PLAY. We need to balance all facets of our lives in order to feel content. This is the time to create contentment in your life.

July 30-October 7: The affairs and issues of the 9th house become focal. This is the house of higher knowledge, foreign travel and our views on life. This house represents the area of our lives where we philosophize about life and life's mysteries. Religion is the domain of this house, the intent is to learn about comparative religion in order to grow our own convictions and ideas. This is the house where expand our horizons venture out there to learn something new about the part of life that does not exist in the familiar neighbourhood of our daily existence. In this house we question our existence and seek knowledge. This is not faith for the sake of faith, or because that is what the doctrine states; this is where we develop our belief system, it is the 12th house and the sign of Pisces that represents surrender. Politics are firmly held opinions thus belong to this area of our lives. This is where make our initial connection with the world at large, the stage where we share that connection is the 10th house. So many inter-weaving cycles, and now is the time to learn to connect some of those dots, remove those proverbial 'blindness' and review and revise our views.

December 2, 2003 -February 6, 2004 It is about you, your attitude and physical body now as the 1st house and your Sun are influenced. The Sun, astrologically speaking, defines your life force, ego, energy, who you are becoming and defines the process of becoming self-aware in the course of this life time. The earth signs, are all connected the material world through the five senses - you are sensual and the importance of enjoying good food, satisfying hobbies and pursuits, nature's visual and nourishing bounty is part of your innate make-up. Time to get that physical body in shape, put yourself first for a change and revamp your attitude and appearance. This is an excellent time to start a healthier regimen, you know exercise, diet and relaxation time. A healthier you becomes a more vibrant you. This is one of those vibrant areas of life, the fire that fuels your entire being.

Aquarius

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Pisces

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The tables of Mercury Cycles:

<http://www.astrologicallyspeaking.com/PDF/FullcycleofMercuryRetrograde.pdf>

Last cycle in Air: <http://www.astrologicallyspeaking.com/Mercuryretro2002.htm>