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WHERE OR WHEN:

Recurrence, A Key To Behavior And Prediction

By Michael Lutin

"Some things that happen for the first time, seem to be happening again, And so it seems that we have lived before, and laughed before and loved before, but who knows where or when?" - Lorenz Hart

Once upon time a long time ago, I used to think that song held some mysterious meaning about previous incarnations-just as the characters played by Emma Thompson and Ken Branagh in the film "Dead Again" met in past and future lives. But you don't have to go back to eleventh century France or the heyday of Atlantis to understand it in another, more useful, astrological way.

The method called recurrence is deceptively simple, but once you start using it, you see how textured, deep and practical it is. The best part is, it will never fail you. It always works. It provides you with an opportunity to observe yourself and others in predictable, repeated patterns of behavior. It can also show you exactly when you are likely to be revisited by a past you have almost forgotten.

We are all constantly being revisited by the past. When you study the past from the perspective of recurrence, you see that most of what happens to you is really old news. Are all being set up like bowling pins, and when the same old ball comes rolling down the alley, we're usually knocked down. "Uh-oh," we say. "Not again." That happens when we are conscious enough to see that we're back in situations we have faced over and over, dozens of times. We can pretend we are having a whole set of brand new experiences, freshly created for our merriment, the fact is, most of it is really old news. The trick is to see it. Once you do, you're moving forward on your path.

Although the method is deceptively simple, explaining it can be complicated. At this point we can more easily get to the heart of recurrence by studying some straightforward examples:

The Saturn Return

We usually think of this period as a time of great choices, when we get serious about our lives and begin working out all our issues. Despite all obstacles and setbacks, the Saturn return is the moment we humbly set out on our path toward success and accomplishment.

The Saturn Return is a lot more. It is a point at which you are being revisited by all the mixed messages and neurotic anxiety your parents put into you during your infancy, because of the ways in which current events of that time made them uneasy or insecure. It is, therefore, the recurrence of those surrounding events, usually dressed up in modern day garb, that rekindles the memories and fears within you, sensitizes you to your karmic needs, puts your teeth on edge and pushes you to grow up and make necessary changes.

Stations

If you were born at a station of Saturn, retrograde or direct, every single year of your life when transiting Saturn makes the station in the same direction indicated in the radix, retrograde or direct, you will be thrust unconsciously into the same mindset present at your birth.

This technique is especially valuable in clinical work with clients. While the client is unlikely to be able to recall or reconstruct with any objectivity events or circumstances occurring at or around his or her birth, the astrologer is able to observe, from current events and narratives related by the client, what deeper issues underlie the situations being presented currently in a client's life, mainly because the transit is an actual stirring of memories from the remote past.

The Solar Return

Everybody knows about that, except when it is used as a predictive tool for the year ahead, one fact is usually left out: as a major recurrence of the Sun's position at the moment of birth, it reaffirms the message you received at birth. This is your path. The Solar Return reminds you where you are strongest, what potentials you have to achieve mastery and fulfillment in this life. Its position by house and sign is a reminder of your goals and strengths and lets you move forward, no matter what other obstacles are presented. It recalls your ace in the hole and tells you never to forget what you are here to do.

The Lunar Return

The Lunar Return is used to predict the month ahead but, again, rarely valued as a method of recurrence. It is, however, one of the most profound methods of seeing into an individual's emotional responses and keys to all relationships. If you look at the last aspect the moon made before birth and the first one it made after birth, then calculate the time span (two hours per degree, of course), you will see how every month when the Moon makes that passage, you are reliving unconsciously, the experience of separation from your mother and your connection with the outside world. It's simple, obvious and, more often than not, missed as a key factor in all your emotional bonding and separations.

All the planetary and node returns, however, are recurrences of natal events that recall your highs and lows, comings and goings, strengths and weaknesses.

Natal returns are not the only means of utilizing the phenomenon of recurrence, however.

Secondary Progressions

Let's say that at age eight, your secondary progressed Saturn moved from 29° Gemini to 0° Cancer. We know that sign changes of outer planets are always significant, often troublesome periods in an individual's life, especially if those changes come early in life when children have little or no control over their destiny and are just forming a picture of what they think reality is supposed to be.

So at age eight, Saturn moves from the end of Gemini to the beginning of Cancer. For the moment we will not attempt to describe the manifestations more specifically than to say that a major life-changing event took place in the family, which, for one reason or another, you, as a child, were forced to accept.

For the rest of your life, whenever Saturn, or even any major planet passed from 29° Gemini to 0° Cancer, you would have a recurrence, in the form of a memory, of that event, even if that recurrence is cleverly disguised in some current happening in your life.

Furthermore, every seven years, when Saturn went from 29 degrees of any sign to 0 degrees of the following sign, you would have yet another experience of that recurrence, mainly because the phenomenon of SATURN CHANGING SIGN would recreate the events somewhere in your mind or in your life.

From these few examples, you can derive all other methods of recurrence. All you need is an ephemeris to make explosive discoveries about how and why so many times you have come into contact or up against people, situations or events that seemed to have happened before, even if you cannot always explain "where or when".

If, for example at age 15, progressed Venus at 2° Aries opposed natal Pluto at 2° Libra, it is clear that at that time you had a significant turning point in your social and relationship life. Not only had Venus just emerged from Pisces, but then it ran smack into Pluto. What is meaningful here is that it occurred at fifteen years old, a period of adolescence when your sexuality and social skills should have been coming into full bloom.

With the aid of recurrence, you can reconstruct that period every time any major planets move across 2° Aries and Libra, or even the other cardinal signs, since memories of the Venus-Pluto aspect will no doubt be re-stimulated. Also, whenever Venus and Pluto occur in the heavens and form an opposition (like this year when Venus in Gemini opposed Pluto in Sagittarius), it will be another recurrence of the events that took place when you were fifteen.

You can work backwards as well. Take the current transit in 2006 of Venus opposition Pluto. Check back in your ephemeris. Did progressed Venus ever oppose Pluto? If so,

when? What happened? Were you old enough to remember it? Then watch the events this spring.

Try Mars in Gemini opposing Uranus, or Mars opposite Pluto, or Sun conjunct Saturn later this summer.

Or what about the Saturn-Pluto conjunction at 29 Libra back in '82-'83? Any time the Moon goes void at that point, here comes another recurrence. Or the Uranus-Pluto conjunction that took place back in the 60's, opposing Saturn and Chiron. Whenever any configuration occurs involving combinations of those planets, you've got the bug again - the memories, experiences, thoughts, ideas, urges and desires.

Did those events ever happen to you? If so, when? Watch the recurrences. Jupiter retrograde, Jupiter direct, Neptune stationary, Venus conjunct Jupiter, which will occur in the fall of 2006 - any aspect in fact.

And if you have had any planets in the teens to early twenties of fixed signs, then certainly the eclipse of August 1999 has presented memories already of that time period. Just look back to August 11, 1999 and you will see how it happened then, followed the next spring of 2000 by the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction. And if you were born with a grand fixed cross natively, then the events of the August 11, 1999 eclipse WERE your recurrence, and that time has had special significance in your life.

If you ever had any of these aspects, either natively or in secondaries, the events will come back to you (or rather, the memory of those events), during the transits listed above. So what's the purpose of it all? To haunt you and taunt you? Or is there a greater purpose to recurrence?

It is said that true madness can be defined as the act of repeating the same behavior over and over and expecting a different result. The goal of consciousness is to move us forward on our path. We can do that only when we change behavior.

Recurrences are presented to us to give us the opportunity to use the wisdom gained from past experiences in order to alter our responses, appreciate when we have and shape our futures. When events recur, you have the opportunity to increase the positive and eliminate the negative. They are there to remind you that you are not eight years old or fifteen or a neo-natal infant. You are an adult with the benefit of experience.

It's fun to do workshops on this material, mainly because so much comes up in a shared setting, and it is always liberating and refreshing, although sometimes a bit painful. You get to see where your blessings are as well, and the happy memories flood back just as readily.

This short introduction to recurrence should help you to interpret horoscopes in a more fruitful way. Just saying an aspect is happening may be astrologically correct and display a certain amount of astrological knowledge, but it is not wisdom. Awareness of

recurrences and their meanings will provide wisdom; because wisdom, after all, IS knowledge, fused with the pain of experience.

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