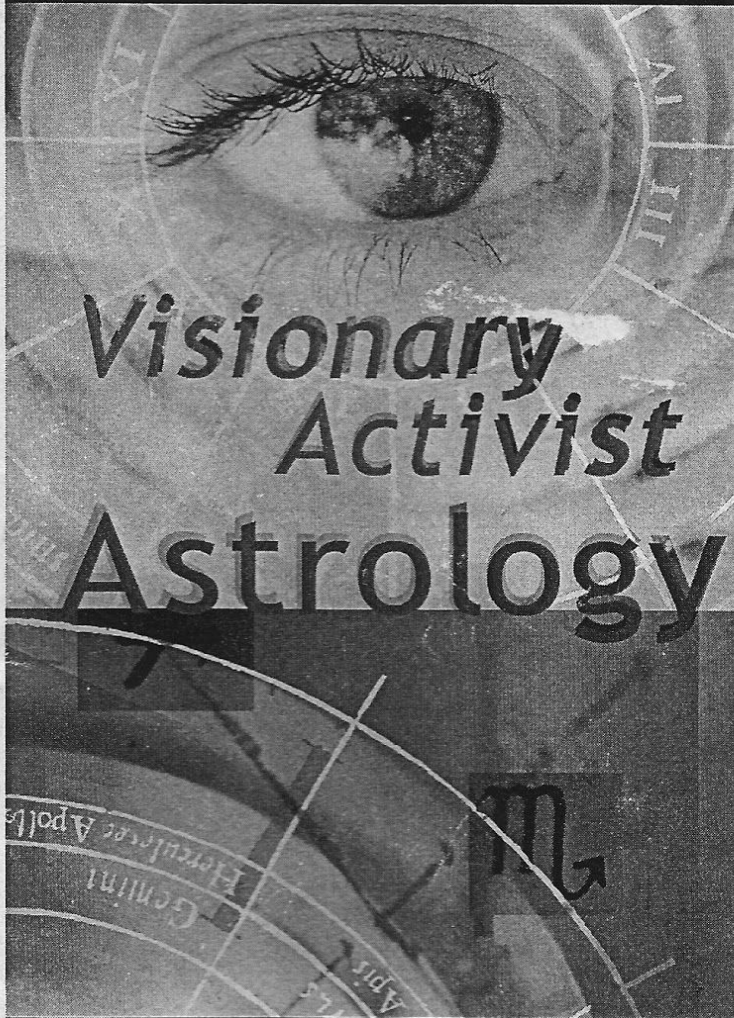


STUDY GUIDE



*Visionary*  
*Activist*  
Astrology

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## INTRODUCTION

Astrology invites us to enter a world of primordial intimacy, in which everything is telling its story constantly. The world is alive with narrative. Everything is written everywhere for those who can recognize patterns in time and space. This harkens back to the great medieval physician and astrologer, Paracelsus, who developed the “doctrine of signatures.” He noticed that plants that looked like ears healed ears, and so on. This also reminds us of the great botanist George Washington Carver, who said he learned everything he knew about plants by asking them, “What are you good for?”

If we approach the universe with an attitude of reverent inquiry, then the veil lifts and we are invited to participate in the party that has been going on all around us, but to which we were oblivious. Our view was obscured by the shroud of a narrow form of “scientific” superstition, which believed the universe to be dead. When we adopt the new, ancient model of reverent relating – entertaining the possibility that everything is alive – we are invited to dance, and to participate in evolution consciously.

Astrology would define the task of being consciously human as discerning the pattern of evolutionary intelligence (the most radically enlivening possibility inherent in a situation) and aligning with it. Noticing the dance, and joining in.

Astrology is at least threefold in its purpose and practice.

**One:** We can use it to describe the characteristics of a person, event, or time.

**Two:** It teaches us how to dance with the *qi* (life force) of the universe. Those who dance most intimately with the *qi* of the universe are safest and most effective. The language of astrology reminds us that the word “disaster” (in the original Latin) means literally “against the stars.” Disaster befalls us when we pit our small wills against the larger pulse of creation, which is described by the planetary movements. The opposite position – what it would be to dance in accordance with the stars – is revealed by the word “consider,” which means “with the stars.” Consider that to pause and reflect, to take counsel within, is to be in accord without.

And after we consider, we come to the third purpose and practice of astrology.

**Three:** Reverent celebration. Astrology tells us that we only truly possess the power of an insight when we can give it expression. And collectively, throughout time, celebration of celestial order has been what gave a community not only its calendar, but also its story, its cosmology – a sense of intimate place in the vast design.

Astrology is a language of correlatedness. It is in fact a school of the psyche, and the basis of all participatory magic – for the individual and the community composed of individuals. It describes a harmony that runs throughout creation. For instance, re-igniting our capacity to think symbolically, astrology would ask us, “What kind of energy does it take to be born in spring in the northern hemisphere? To push up through the frozen crust of the earth?” This energy is called Aries, and is associated with the

planet Mars: emergent life force, the color red, hot peppers, cinnamon spices, and all that enlivens. This is the energy of passion and desire.

We have a seven-day week because of the seven visible planetary bodies. All calendars have devotion as the basis of their creation. Also, like the threefold purpose of astrology, a calendar describes the nature of a particular time. It instructs us in what we are meant to take care of during this time – both secularly (storing various grains, for example) and spiritually (internal sorting).

So, in our calendar of the week, Mars' day is Tuesday (Mardi in French). The essence of participatory magic would be to declare to ourselves and the universe that we, for instance, really intend to get something going. In this case, we might wear red on a Tuesday, light a red candle, drink spicy tea, engage in a passionately strenuous activity, and honor a desire. And this, of course, would be particularly potent in Mars' season – which begins with the vernal equinox. Or, as a corrective, on a cold, dark, rainy day (very Saturnian), we might balance ourselves with heat, fire, and spicy cinnamon tea.

The forces within us and outside us, represented by the planets, do not understand any spoken language. They understand ritual. We are ritual beings. A ritual might be defined as any physical action that we imbue with an invisible intention. These recordings and this booklet are humbly offered as a ritual starter kit. The goal is to help us engage the associative, creative part of our mind. As we do this, we begin to ecstatically blossom in our own unique ways. We offer our gifts to Creation, thereby consciously participating in the evolutionary dance.

## HOW TO READ AN ASTROLOGICAL CHART

An astrological chart is a literal astronomical map, represented in a stylized form. With some training and reference books, it can be calculated from the birth data of time, date, and place. A chart can also be calculated by computer, with astrological software. We can see a chart as a symbolic map of our contract with life – our briefing instructions.

We orient ourselves to the chart by understanding that the Earth is the central, inner circle. Think of the main horizontal line that cuts across the chart as the line of the horizon. An astrological chart differs from a conventional map in that East is on the left, and West is on the right. The horizon line on the left is called the *ascendant* or *rising sign*. It is simply that sign of the Zodiac rising due East at the moment of birth. The ascendent represents our style of doing things – like a stained-glass filter through which the rest of the chart shines.

The planets are real, and in this language they represent different kinds of intelligence; different parts of the psyche. It is our task to honor and feed each part of ourselves, as represented by the planets. When we do this, we bloom as individuals. If some part is neglected, it may begin to express itself in negative ways.

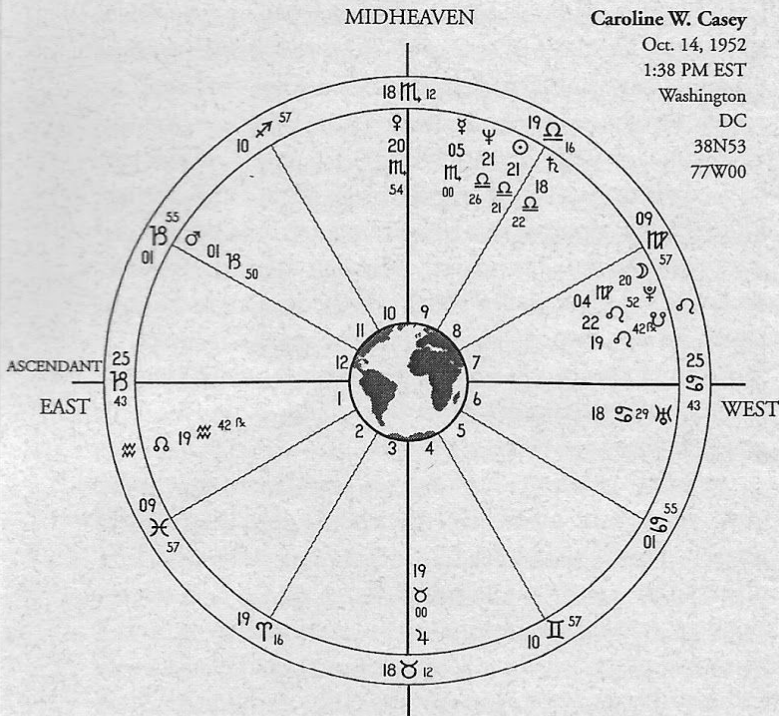
The planets move against the backdrop of the wheel of the Zodiac, which is the outer circle of the chart. The Zodiac gives the planets their flavoring, and tells us in what way they will express themselves in our lives. Each sign of the Zodiac comprises thirty degrees of the sky.

The planets also land in houses – pie-slice divisions of the sky, numbered one through twelve. The houses answer the question, “Where will the action of the planet take place? In what part of life will it manifest?”

The final part of this language is the aspects, which are key angular relationships between the planets. I recommend hand-drawing your chart, or at least vivifying your computer printout with colored markers. When the aspects are drawn in with color, the design of the chart comes alive. You can just gaze at it, without even being concerned about what it all means. Think of it as a map of your spiritual nervous system. Draw a yellow circle around any planets that are *conjunct* (right next to each other). Draw a red line between any planets that are *square* (90 degrees apart). Red can also be used for the variations on the square: 45 and 135 degrees. I like to draw a purple line between planets that are *opposed* (on opposite sides of the chart). Dividing the circle by three, we get 120 degrees (called *trine*), which we color in blue, to represent an easy relationship between the planets. A variation of the trine is a *sextile* (60 degrees), which shows a more creative planetary relationship. Color in sextiles with green, to show creativity.

As we are coloring in the aspects, it is natural to wonder how exact our measurements should be. Astrologers usually allow between 5 and 8 degrees on either side of a planet to be counted as an aspect. For example, a 93-degree angle is considered a square, because it is within the allowable range. This range of measurement is called *orb*, and is a matter astrologers love to quibble about. It’s best to play and develop our own thoughts on this matter.

When the colored lines are drawn in, gaze at the chart and think of yellow, red, and purple lines as the places where you are feisty – and assigned the task of harmonizing seemingly contradictory planets and principles. For instance, in my own chart (depicted below) the Sun (basic self) is snugly between Neptune (principle of idealistic imagination) and Saturn (pragmatism, “realism,” and discipline). They are all in the ninth house, which represents





uniqueness come from the wedding of paradox. We embrace the invitation to dance with the challenging aspects.

With the trines and sextiles, we enjoy the grace of ease. I think of these as places where we bartered with the gods before we were born, à là, “OK, I’ll parachute down to this beautiful planet in its time of great need, and I’ll be born into that family – which will teach me in microcosm about everything that needs healing in the world – but I want certain things guaranteed.” It is those things the gods guaranteed us that are represented by the trines and sextiles. For instance, I have Venus (artistry, relationship, intimacy) in Scorpio (intense transformation) in the tenth house (profession). This is trine Uranus (inventive rebellion) in the sixth house (work, viewed as healing). So, I am professionally intimate, and I wanted a guarantee that I could meet other extraordinary teammates, change agents, and inventive healers. Like yourselves.

*Now that you have a sense of how we approach an astrological chart, you can begin to interpret your own chart as you follow the audio series.*

## THE ASTROLOGICAL GLYPHS

PLANETS	SIGNS	ASPECTS
☉ Sun	♈ Aries	△ Trine
☾ Moon	♉ Taurus	✳ Sextile
☿ Mercury	♊ Gemini	◻ Square
♀ Venus	♋ Cancer	♁ Opposition
♂ Mars	♌ Leo	♊ Conjunction
♃ Jupiter	♍ Virgo	
♄ Saturn	♎ Libra	
♅ Uranus	♏ Scorpio	
♆ Neptune	♐ Sagittarius	
♇ Pluto	♑ Capricorn	
♊ North Node of the Moon	♒ Aquarius	
♋ South Node of the Moon	♓ Pisces	

## PLANET: *Neptune* SIGN: *Pisces*

**Glyph:** ♆

**Key Words and Qualities:** Dreams; vision; imagination – which lays the tracks for the reality train (Saturn). Any art form that inspires yearning and reminds us of the reality of our mystical kinship with all beings. Transcendental beauty. The ocean.

**Color:** Magenta; all diaphanous or iridescent shades of color

**Metal:** Anodized metals that gleam with iridescent teal and purple

**Physical Body Affinity:** Feet

**Day:** Every day; or any day spent at the beach

**Way of Honoring:** Experiencing vast spaces; reverie; staring out the window; being at the ocean; ecstatic self-loss.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** What happens to a culture, family, or individual when there is no guiding, living vision. That culture, family, or individual gets “hooked” on Neptune’s trident. Dangers include addiction to substances, or to romantic melancholy, passivity, disappointment, glamour, or bad, loud music.

**PLANET:** *Pluto* **SIGN:** *Scorpio*

**Glyph:** ♄

**Key Words and Qualities:** Death; rebirth; transformation. The alchemy of desire. All initiations of descent into the Underworld. All things that are unseen: death, sex, spirits, ancestors. All that was sacred in the ancient world, and that has become taboo in the modern.

**Color:** Intense blue-green

**Metal:** Plutonium

**Physical Body Affinity:** Sexual organs

**Day:** Every day that the ground opens up before us as we are strolling through a field.

**Way of Honoring:** Being brought to our knees. Saying to the invisible, "Not my will, but thine." Releasing control. Feeling comfortable with not knowing, like Zen students after twenty years of practice. Remembering that anyone who was anyone in the ancient, mythological world had to make an initiatory descent to the Underworld. Reading those myths provides reassuring road maps to the modern psyche, which might otherwise fall prey to the nonuseful diagnosis of "mental breakdown." Restoring to sacredness that which was sacred and has now become taboo.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** Exploring the taboo, but forgetting to restore it to sacredness. Forgetting that mere intensity does not necessarily make something or someone interesting. Obsession.

## PLANET: *Uranus* SIGN: *Aquarius*

**Glyph:** ☽

**Key Words and Qualities:** Nature's raw, experimental drive; intuition (which clues us in to the dance); an accurate sense of potential inherent in a person or situation. Awakening. Lightning that strikes the circle of habit and turns it into a spiral. Freedom through loss of the nonessential (of course Uranus often has a different idea than we do of what's essential).

**Color:** Electric blue

**Metal:** Uranium

**Physical Body Affinity:** Traditionally, the ankles. Imagine wings at your ankles, and things feel better. This refers to Uranus' designation as the "higher octave" of Mercury. We are all wing-ankled messengers of life. Also, our body's electrical energy field; the humming circuitry of our body's force field, sometimes called the "etheric" body or aura.

**Day:** Every day

**Way of Honoring:** Experiment, experiment, experiment. Since Uranus is nature's experimental, evolutionary drive within us, like nature, it is the part of us that isn't limited by an over concern for what people might think. Nor does it have a category of failure vs. success. Uranus feels that life is in the attempt. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "Failure is the first step towards success."

The festival is the social form of honoring Uranus. Uranus breaks us open, to begin the initiation process, but then it's left to Neptune to fill us with devotion.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** Uranus unrelated to Saturn (responsibility to self and others) tends toward erratic

rebellion and procrastination; hence angst without outcome. But Uranus wedded to Saturn produces the desirable effect of disciplined wildness.

When Uranus is not wedded to Neptune (devotional compassion), “spiritual” techniques blast us open, but leave us with an anxious buzz. Inventiveness produces technological brilliance without heart.

Uranus represents anxiety, as well as intuition. Anxiety is the inner gauge that tells us when we are not in touch with our intuition, or that something is not authentic. It tells us we should pay heed, and interview ourselves to find out what we know.

**PLANET: *Saturn***  
**SIGNS: *Capricorn; Aquarius***

**Glyph:** ♄

**Key Words and Qualities:** Form; structure; “author”-ity; focus; boundaries; discipline (being a disciple); responsibility (our capacity to respond appropriately to time’s demands).

**Color:** Indigo

**Metal:** Lead

**Day of the Week:** Saturday (“Saturn’s day”)

**Physical Body Affinities:** Spine; bones; teeth; the structure of the body; the body’s center of gravity (the will center), located right below the navel.

**Festival:** Winter solstice (also called “Saturnalia”)

**Way of Honoring:** Get a job – or rather, create a job. Saturn says, “He who hesitates gets bossed.” Either we work with our Saturn, or someone else will. Also, we can honor Saturn through introspection. Solitude is the cure for loneliness.

Saturn asks the question, “Whose movie am I in?” then reminds us to inhale our authority back from the world.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** Depression; inertia; fear; claustrophobia.

When Saturn has us down, and it feels like we’re doing resistance training in life, Saturn says, “Literalize it by lifting weights.” If we’re off rhythm, we can go to the other end of Saturn’s spectrum, and literally drum our own rhythms. We can also make use of deep, rhythmic breathing as a way of finding our center.

**PLANET: *Jupiter***  
**SIGNS: *Sagittarius; Pisces***

**Glyph: ♃**

**Key Words and Qualities:** Passionate curiosity. "The intelligence of desirous quest." Jupiter is that part of ourselves that makes meaning out of information. It is therefore associated with philosophy, principles, laws, and story-telling as primary ways that we, as humans, make meaning out of data.

**Color:** Violet

**Metal:** Tin

**Physical Body Affinities:** The circulatory system; the liver (in its assimilative function, making meaning out of nutrient information).

**Day of the Week:** Thursday ("Thor's day" – the Norse Jupiter)

**Festival:** Any journey viewed as a pilgrimage is Jupiter's moveable feast, especially in the Sagittarian season of Advent (from late November to the winter solstice – around December 21st). Also during the inward-journeying time of Pisces, from late February to the vernal equinox (around March 21st). This is a time (from Mardi Gras through Lent to spring) for stories and theater. This is also the traditional time for cleansing the circulatory system and liver with fasting and bitter herbs.

**Way of Honoring:** Questing; learning; traveling; feasting; expanding. Jupiter is the expansive guardian of the crossroads. We supplicate Jupiter through generous offerings,

and by praying, "Open my path before me, and grant me the opportunity to be of maximum good in the world."

Jupiter represents enthusiasm, which means literally (in the original Greek "en thusos") "the god within." We feed our enthusiasms when we encounter that which makes the god within us dance.

Standing at the top of the Grand Canyon or Continental Divide (or some similarly exalted vista) reveals an outer geography that corresponds to an inner geography, and feeds an inner sense of vast possibilities. Jupiter is a sky god who likes mountain tops, lightning, and big, swirling clouds.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** Excess; the gorge theory of pleasure; inflation. "My will is God's will."

**PLANET:** *Venus* **SIGNS:** *Taurus; Libra*

**Glyph:** ♀

**Key Words or Qualities:** What we love; the manner in which we love. How we love the world by creating art and beauty. Our affinities reveal to us that for which we are an ambassador in the court of the human world.

**Color:** Emerald green

**Metal:** Copper

**Physical Body Affinities:** Kidneys, and all fleshy, curvy, luscious parts of the body.

**Day of the Week:** Friday (“Freya’s day” – the Norse Venus)

**Festivals:** Beltane (May 1st – “May Day”), the cross-quarter holiday in which love and our sensual kinship with the physical world of nature are honored and expressed. Autumnal equinox – which marks the beginning of Libra, and the world of more complex social relationships that arises in the fall.

**Way of Honoring:** Making things beautiful. Remembering that the opposite of “aesthetic” is “anesthetic.” There is no solution to anything unless Venus is involved – unless beauty and love are present. Remembering that whatever we love, we are its ambassador to the human world. We view our affinities as clues in the spiritual detective novel of our life, and as such we accord them respect by cultivating and indulging them. We surround ourselves with things we love.

Venus is the part of us that is passionately pantheistic. Venus sees life in, and relates to, everything; it talks to the plant, the cat, the car, the cup. Venus makes love to the world and is willing to return the embrace of life, viewing life itself as a loving ally. Venus wants us to engage in

whatever activity that reminds us of this part of ourselves. Venus is the essence of culture. Matthew Arnold said that to be cultured “is to be acquainted with the highest possibilities of the human spirit throughout time.” When the world appears bleak, spend time with some historical ally who has made something truly beautiful.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** Vanity and indolence. Indolence does not mean not being busy – in fact, being busy can be the perfect cover for procrastinating about doing the one loving thing that we need to do for ourselves.

Like its metal, copper (which is wonderful and conducts electricity), Venus can be wonderful and work to conduct social electricity – or it can gossip and begin quoting others in an unloving way. Like copper, which will bend until suddenly it snaps, Venus will accommodate, overaccommodate, then abruptly become toxic.

## PLANET: *Mars* SIGNS: *Aries; Scorpio*

**Glyph:** ♂

**Key Words and Qualities:** Desire; energy; eros. The path of desire, which says, "All desires are pure, if we distill them back to their original intention." The gods did not place desires in our psyche for them to be thwarted or disappointed, but rather as an incentive to growth. Desires are our instructional blueprints of the possible.

**Color:** Red

**Metal:** Iron

**Day of the Week:** Tuesday (Mardi in French)

**Physical Body Affinity:** Sexual Organs

**Festivals:** Vernal equinox, Halloween (the autumn's version of May Day)

**Way of Honoring:** By honoring desire. We honor Mars by answering the question, "What do we desire?" By working with desire, we begin to understand the interrelatedness of all things. We cannot pluck a strand of Creation without causing the whole to resonate. All desire must take into account the well-being of the whole.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** Anger; violence; heartless sex; war. Jung said, "Fanaticism is always shouted-down doubt." This reminds us that if we violently suppress our desires or doubts (which are merely counter-desires), we will become externally violent. Thus we mistakenly fling ourselves out of accord with the erotic pulse of life, missing the whole point and all the fun. But it's never too late to find the beat.

**PLANET: Mercury**  
**SIGNS: Gemini; Virgo**

**Glyph:** ☿

**Key Words and Qualities:** Voice; communication; what we think; how we express. The part of us that is the Messenger/Magician. The invocative power of language. Whatever we think or say, we are invoking (“invoke” means literally “to call in” or “to give voice”). Mercury is witty, quick, expressive, and clever. It asks the question, “What are you a voice for?”

**Color:** Yellow

**Metal:** Mercury; quicksilver

**Day of the Week:** Wednesday (Mercredi in French)

**Physical Body Affinities:** Lungs; arms; hands (which are Gemini affinities); intestines and liver (in Mercury’s analytical, digestive, assimilative Virgo mode).

**Way of Honoring:** Connecting with the mercurial element of air; taking an air bath; walking in windy places; breathing deeply. Lightening up. Feeling like a trickster. Remembering to be in love with words. Witty repartee.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** Being superficial, glib, hyperactive, or unreflectively provocative. Believing that talking about something is the same as having done it. To the afflicted Mercury, we’d say, “Talk less, say more.” Remember the dictum of 19th-century magician Eliphas Levi: “To know, to dare, to will, and to keep silent.” Often when talking about an idea, we can expend the same amount of energy as would be necessary to complete it. When we really want to get something done we introvert our Mercury. We “keep silent,” letting our inner Mercury-Messenger connect us to the means necessary for the plan’s realization.

## PLANET: *Moon* SIGN: *Cancer*

**Glyph:** ☾

**Key Words and Qualities:** “Intelligence of interrelatedness.” Our inner, emotional life that flows like a river or tributary into an ocean of collective memory. The water element. Moods as messengers from our tradition to our selves. Our capacity to feel what is needed, and respond appropriately. What we nourish or cultivate. Our capacity to feel safe and protected.

**Color:** Silver

**Metal:** Silver

**Day of the Week:** Monday (Moon day)

**Physical body Affinity:** Stomach; breasts.

**Festival:** Summer solstice (around June 21st) – the beginning of Cancer

**Way of Honoring:** Moods are messengers from some deep part of ourselves. Thinking or feeling the mood does no good. The only way a mood can deliver its message is if we give it expression by writing, painting, or dancing it. When a mood arises (or hulks around), interview it and give it its voice. When we look up from that act of creative concentration, the mood is gone. But look at what it has left behind: some crucial piece of information.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** “Tantrum Yoga”; pouting; sulking; fuming. In the modern world we often say, “Oh, a bad mood. I will function in spite of this mood.” We push it down, attributing it – whatever our sex – to hormones, and attempt to carry on “normally.” The Moon wants to be expressed.

## PLANET: *Sun* SIGN: *Leo*

**Glyph:** ☉

**Key Words and Qualities:** Essence; radiance; expressiveness; magnanimity; confidence; fruitfulness; creativity; central self. The regenerated personality, identified with the source.

**Color:** Gold

**Metal:** Gold

**Physical Body Affinity:** Heart

**Day of the Week:** Sunday

**Festivals:** Winter solstice, “the Return of the Sun”; and Lammas (August 2nd), one of the four cross-quarter holidays – the Festival of Harvest.

**Way of Honoring:** Heat or fire. Try inhaling golden energy from the six directions: Above, Below, East, West, North, and South. Then exhale golden light and bless all creatures in turn, in each direction, without the slightest sense of effort or depletion. Or, we can honor the Sun by simply sitting and watching the sunrise and sunset.

**Shadow, when Not Honored:** Narcissism (“Enough about me, what do you think about me?”). The word “illusion” comes from the Latin *in ludo*, which means literally “in the game”; as opposed to “delusion,” (from *de ludo*) which means “out of the game.” The Sun (and Leo) reminds us that when we playfully or ritually express ourselves – in other words, create theater – we are at least in the game. The Sun says, “create theater or live melodrama.” When we are living melodrama, we are deluded, or “out of the game.”



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