

THE SKY WITHIN

Report for Robin Williams
An Interpretation of Your Birth Chart
by
Steven Forrest



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The Sky Within

Robin Williams
Jul 21, 1951
01:34:00 PM CDT +05:00
Chicago, IL
087W39'00" 41N51'00"

<u>Planet</u>	<u>Sign</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>House</u>	<u>House</u>
Sun	Cancer	28°Ca11'	09th	01 00°Sc55'
Moon	Pisces	08°Pi57'	05th	02 29°Sc07'
Mercury	Leo	22°Le04'	10th	03 01°Cp47'
Venus	Virgo	10°Vi11'	11th	04 07°Aq10'
Mars	Cancer	11°Ca54'	09th	05 10°Pi22'
Jupiter	Aries	13°Ar53'	06th	06 08°Ar17'
Saturn	Virgo	27°Vi51'	11th	07 00°Ta55'
Uranus	Cancer	10°Ca50'	09th	08 29°Ta07'
Neptune	Libra	16°Li54'	12th	09 01°Ca47'
Pluto	Leo	18°Le49'	10th	10 07°Le10'
Midheaven	Leo	07°Le10'	10th	11 10°Vi22'
Ascendant	Scorpio	00°Sc55'	01st	12 08°Li17'

Planets within orb of 1.5 degrees of the following house cusp are displayed and interpreted as being in that house, except the Ascendant which uses 3 degrees.

*Orb Conjunctions with Sun or Moon are 8 degrees.
All orbs are set according to Steven Forrest's methods.*

THE SKY WITHIN

by Steven Forrest

Using Your Birthchart as a Spiritual Guide

A woman has a baby and is blissful about it. Another one does the same, and spends the rest of her life dreaming about how she might have been a ballerina. The same choice: having a kid. But only one smiling woman.

Nobody has a generic formula for happiness, at least not one that does the trick for everyone. That's where astrology comes in.

The birthchart, stripped to bare bones, is simply a description of the happiest, most fulfilling life that's available to you... personally. It spells out a set of strategies you can use to avoid boring routines, bad choices, and dead ends. It lists your resources. And it talks about how your life looks when you're misusing the resources and distorting the strategies -- shooting yourself in the foot, in other words.

All from a map of the sky?

Hard to believe. But think for a minute...

"How can the planets possibly affect us? They're millions of miles away." Astrology's critics are fond of rolling out that argument. But it doesn't hold water. Go out and gaze at the moon. What's really happening? Incomprehensible energies are plunging across a quarter million miles of void, crashing through your eyeballs and creating electrochemical changes in your brain. We call the process "seeing the moon." Certainly the planets affect us. The question is where do we draw the boundaries around those effects?

Let's go a step further.

Open your eyes on a starry night. What do you see? A vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Now close your eyes so tight they ache. Where are you now? What do you see? Again, a vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Consciousness and cosmos are structured around the same laws, follow the same patterns, and even feel pretty much the same to our senses.

"As above, so below." Just as the starry night awes us with its vastness, there's something infinitely deep inside you, a place you go when you close your eyes, a place that's beyond being an Aries or a Gemini or even a specific gender. At the most profound level, a birthchart is a map back to that magical center. It describes a series of earthly experiences which, if you're brave and open enough, will

trigger certain states of consciousness in you -- states that operate like powerful spiritual catalysts, vaulting you into higher levels of being.

In the pages that follow, you'll tour your personal birthchart. But don't expect the usual "Scorpios are sexy" stuff. You are a mysterious being in a mysterious cosmos. You're here for just a little while, a blink of God's eye. You face a monumental task: figuring out what's going on! In that spiritual work, astrology is your ally. How will it help?

Certainly not by pigeon-holing you as a certain "type."

Astrology works by reminding you who you are, by warning you about the comforting lies we all tell ourselves, and by illuminating the experiences that trigger your most explosive leaps in awareness.

After that, the rest is up to you.

YOUR TEN TEACHERS

Freud divided the human mind into three compartments: ego, id, and superego. Astrologers do the same thing, except that our model of the mind differs from Freud's in two fundamental ways. First, it's a lot more elaborate. Instead of three compartments, we have ten: Sun, Moon, and the eight planets we see from Earth. As we'll discover, each planet represents more than a "circuit" in your psyche. It also serves as a kind of "Teacher," guiding you into certain consciousness-triggering kinds of experience.

The second difference between astrology and psychology is that astrology's mind-map, unlike Freud's, is rooted in nature itself, just as we are.

The primary celestial teacher is the Sun. What does it teach? Selfhood. Vitality. How to keep the life-force strong in yourself. If the Sun grew dimmer, so would all the planets -- they shine by reflecting solar light. Similarly, if you fail to stoke the furnaces of your own inner Sun, then you'll simply be "out of gas." All your other planetary functions will suffer too.

How do we learn this teacher's lessons?

Start by realizing that when you were born the Sun was in Cancer.

Opening the inner eye, mapping the topography of consciousness, learning to express compassion -- these are Cancer's evolutionary aims. To assist in that work, Cosmic Intelligence has cranked up the volume on the Crab's ability to feel. No other sign is so sensitive -- nor so vulnerable. A certain amount of self-defense is appropriate here; after all, this world isn't exactly the Garden of Eden. Trouble is, legitimate self-defense can degenerate into shyness or a fear of making changes. You really do care about the hurts that other beings suffer. That's good news. You also have an instinctive ability to soothe those hurts, homing in on the source of the pain. More good news. The bad news is that you could choose to remain forever protected within the safe (and invisible!) role of the Healer, the Counselor, or the Wise One.

With the Sun in Cancer, you feed your solar vitality by finding a role in the world in which you address the hurt in the lives of other beings. You become a nurturer or a healer of some sort.

You also need to make sure that you have enough real intimacy and quiet, private time to "nurture the nurturer" -- yourself, in other words.

Those methods strengthen your sense of identity. They trigger higher states of awareness in you. If you don't express your soothing

wound-binding instincts, all the glories of the world would leave you feeling like an imposter in your own life. And without quiet time and naked intimate honesty, you'll quickly burn out on playing the role of everyone's psychotherapist.

Like the crab, you're a vulnerable creature who's evolved a shell. That's fine and necessary. But again like the crab, you must eventually shed your shell and grow a larger, more inclusive one, or you'll be awfully cramped.

We can take our analysis of your natal Sun a step further. When you were born, that solar light illuminated the Ninth house. What does that signify?

Start by realizing that Houses represent twelve basic arenas of life. There's a House of Marriage, for example, and a House of Career. Always, we find an element of "fate" in our House structures; the "Hand of God" continually presents us with existential and moral questions connected with our emphasized Houses. How we react and what we learn -- or fail to learn -- is our own business.

One brief technical note: Sometimes the Sun, the Moon, or a planet lies near the end of the House. We then say it's "conjunct the cusp" of the subsequent House, and interpret it as though it were a little further along... in the next House, in other words.

The House of Long Journeys over Water -- that's one old name for this part of the birthchart. Since you have energy focused here a fortune-teller would say, "I see travel in your stars." True enough, although a deeper way of expressing the same notion is that immersing yourself in cultures outside the one into which you were born is a pivotal spiritual catalyst for you.

There are other kinds of catalytic journeys. Getting a wide education, formally or informally, is one. So is anything that breaks up the normal routines of life and thought. Even learning to hang-glide.

Ultimately, in the Ninth House you weave a grand scheme of life's meaning and purpose, at least your own version of it. This is the House of Religion... provided we recognize that many major world religions have no churches or temples. Cynicism is one such religion. Existentialism, Materialism, and Science are others, not to mention Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and so on.

With the Sun in the Ninth House, you have to pack the experiences of two or three lifetimes into a single lifetime. That means being willing to say good-bye to safe havens, to avoid the human tendency to drift into routines. The motif of the Quest is strong in your destiny-pattern. It manifests as travel, but also as a search for knowledge and meaning. Trust yourself; don't be seduced by

"practicality"; above all, recognize that we're all just pilgrims in this world, here for a moment, then gone, carrying only what our souls have managed to digest.

The next step in our journey through your birthchart carries us to the Moon.

As you might expect, Luna resonates with the magical, emotional sides of your psyche. It represents your mood, averaged over a lifetime. As the heart's teacher, it tells you how to feel comfortable, how to meet your deepest needs. While the Sun lets you know what kinds of experiences and relationships help you feel sane, the Moon is concerned with another piece of the puzzle: feeling happy.

When you were born, the Moon was in Pisces.

Transcendence. Mysticism. Spirituality. That's Pisces at its best. In this part of your life, you've been given an instinctive sense of mystery and vastness. Something there seems automatically to think in terms of centuries, of high purposes, of divine interventions. Reflexively, when faced with life's vicissitudes, it asks, "What will this matter in five hundred years?"

That's the soul of spirituality. It's also dangerous. Transcendence can run amuck, leaving Pisces in an uncaring, drifting mode, "transcending" while its life descends into entropy. Along that road there are some sad waystations: forgetfulness, spaciness, then escapism -- perhaps into alcohol or drugs, perhaps into food, maybe into the television set.

Avoid those sorry journeys by feeding your Piscean circuitry exactly what it needs: meditative time, silence, a few minutes each day to sit in the infinite cathedral.

With your Moon in Pisces, you have an instinctive sense of the presence of Spirit, although you may give it other names and explanations: mystery, higher levels of consciousness, spaciousness. Call that experience what you will, if you are going to be comfortable in this world, you need to leave it every now and then, allowing yourself to enter a kind of trance... and that process too goes by many names: meditation, prayer, staring out the window. Sometimes people who enter it call themselves artists seeking creative inspiration. Other times, they're bird watchers waiting hours for a rare sighting. Or amateur astronomers gazing at the wispy arms of a faint galaxy. Or photographers waiting for the dawn light to be exactly right...

If you don't take care of your Moon, you'll find yourself slipping into a lackadaisical state in which nothing motivates you except maybe pain. That kind of uncaring laziness is not your true nature, but it is the major "occupational hazard" that goes along with this

lunar position.

Going farther, we see that your Moon lies in the Fifth house of your chart.

Pleasure -- that's Fifth House territory. It's as though God marched you off the end of the cosmic diving board with the words, "Go down there and try to have a good time!" That sounds pretty lightweight, but think about it: feeling good in this world isn't so easy! We've got global pollution, schizophrenics with AK-47s, ego-maniacs with nuclear warheads... not to mention disease, taxes, mosquitos, cars that won't start....

How do we feel real pleasure here on planet Earth? Alone, the "pleasures of the flesh" can't cut the mustard; money, alcohol, orgasms -- they help, but they're not enough... just look at the usual life-expectancy of a "purely physical relationship." Where to turn? To the pleasures of the mind, the heart, the soul! The joy of learning. The spiritual high of athletic excellence. The bliss of meditation. And, perhaps above all, the sheer pleasure of creative self-expression.

Astrological force is focused here in your birthchart. It offers joy - - and warns of the addictions that can overcome you if you miss that joy, or seek it all in one place.

With the Moon in the Fifth House, there's clearly a playful streak in your character, a desire to express yourself whimsically and creatively. Trouble is, it's fairly easily abashed. Your evolutionary challenge is to keep that "child within" alive and confident, despite the wounds of life's early years. You have a terrific imagination. You can build inner worlds before breakfast. Make sure you enjoy the bliss of expressing that fantasy-life. If you don't, you'll try to make up the pleasure deficit in less healthy ways: stupid self-indulgences, typically with food or sex.

There's a third critical piece in your astrological puzzle -- the Ascendant, or rising sign. Along with the Sun and Moon, it completes the "primal triad." What is it? What does it mean? Simple -- the Ascendant is the sign that was coming up over the eastern horizon at the instant of your birth. It's where the sun is at dawn, in other words. In exactly the same way, the Ascendant represents how you "dawn" on people -- that is, how you present yourself. It's your "style," or your "mask."

The ascendant means more than that. It symbolizes a way you can help yourself feel centered, at ease, comfortable with who you are. If you get its message, then something wonderful happens: your style hooks you into the world of experience in a way that feeds your spirit exactly the kinds of events and relationships you need. Your soul is charged with more enthusiasm for the life you're living -- and you feel vibrant, confident, and full of animal grace.

When you took your first breath, Scorpio was lifting over the eastern horizon of Chicago, IL. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Detective".

The Scorpion! A spooky image for a spooky sign. There's a scary side to life. People get terrible diseases. Kids get damaged. Old people are forgotten. Everybody dies. Socially we're conditioned to avoid mentioning those things, or to mention them only in ritual contexts -- like jokes or political speeches. For Scorpio, the evolutionary aim is to face those shadowy places. To make the unconscious conscious. To break taboos.

The Scorpio part of you is deep and penetrating. It has little patience with phoniness or hypocrisy. Trouble is, a little phoniness or hypocrisy often make life a lot easier for everyone! Be careful of becoming so "deep" that you lose perspective. In the Scorpion part of your life, you could slip into brooding and heaviness. So laugh a little! And find a few friends you can talk to. Do that, and you'll keep you balance well enough to find wisdom.

With Scorpio rising, we find something of an astrological paradox: the sign most concerned with penetrating the innermost reaches of the psyche is charged with the task of creating the exterior of the character! It's not a natural combination, but what happens is that your style tends toward intensity and probing. You make eye contact easily. A wall of energy radiates from you, carrying an unspoken message: "There will be no phoniness between us. Either tell the truth, or take a walk." Some people will choose to take the walk! But others will immediately find themselves overwhelmed with a desire to "confess" something to you. "I've never told anyone this before, but..."

To feel centered, you need to experience a lot of eye-to-eye intensity. There must be drama in your life; there must be truth; and there must be passion.

What have we learned so far? Quite a lot. Astrologers use the primal triad of Sun, Moon, and Ascendant in much the same way people who know just a little astrology use Sun signs. The difference is that while there are only twelve Sun signs, there are 1728 different combinations of all three factors. So when we say that you are a Cancer with the Moon in Pisces and Scorpio rising, that's a very specific statement.

Here's a way to make those words come even more alive. Traditionally, signs are connected with Bulls and Sea-Goats and Scorpions -- creatures we don't see every day. But we can translate those images into more modern archetypes.

We can say you are "The Healer", or "The Wise One", or "The

Invisible One". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Cancer.

We can say you have the soul of "The Mystic", or "The Poet", or "The Dreamer"... your Moon lies in Pisces, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Detective", or "The Sorcerer", or "The Hypnotist". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Scorpio.

You can combine those archetypes any way you want. And you can go further: Once you have a feel for the three basic signs in your primal triad, you can make up your own images to go with them. Whatever words you choose, those simple statements are your fundamental astrological signature. It's your skeleton. Our next step is to begin adding flesh and hair to that skeleton by considering the planets.

Unsurprisingly, planets can gain prominence in a birthchart through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant. These three are power brokers, and any linkage with them boosts a planet's influence.

Sometimes a planet gains prominence in a birthchart simply by sharing a House with the Sun. That's the case with you. Mars is bathing in solar light, occupying the Ninth House along with our central star.

Pale red Mars suggested blood to our ancestors, and they named it the War God. That's an effective metaphor -- Mars does represent violence. But today we go further. The red planet symbolizes the power of the Will. Assertiveness. Courage. Without it, there'd be no fire in life. No spark. Where your Mars lies, you are challenged to find the Spiritual Warrior inside yourself, the part of you that's brave and clear enough to claim your own path and follow it.

Mars is sleeping in Cancer. Your assertiveness is directed inward, toward the heart. Your internal life is vivid, full of heroic fantasy. Spiritually you are learning many lessons about the kind of courage it takes to be vulnerable -- to those you love and, even more, to your own personal history. The surest way to evoke the Warrior's rage in you is to attack your home, your family, or the sanctity of your own privacy.

With the War-God occupying your Ninth House, you have a fiery enthusiasm for life itself. Passionately, restlessly, you seem to be searching... for what? Answers, maybe, although that's a pale word. Instinctively you form a "religion" whose nucleus is the notion that mortal existence is not for the faint-hearted, that without courage, faith, and a willingness to live life to the fullest, we are nothing -- and deserve less.

Your Ninth House is crowded. Also found here is Uranus.

If Uranus were the only planet in the sky, we'd all be so independent we'd still be Neanderthals throwing rocks at each other. There would be no language, no culture, no law. On the other hand, if Uranus did not exist, we'd all still be hauling rocks for Pharaoh. All individuality would be suppressed. This is the planet of individuation... the process whereby we separate out who we are from what everybody else wants us to be. Always it indicates an area of our lives in which, to be true to ourselves, we must "break the rules" -- that is, overcome the forces of socialization and peer pressure. In that part of our experience, what feeds our souls tends to annoy mom and dad... and all the "moms" and "dads" who lay down the law of the tribe.

With Uranus in Cancer, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Inner Eye. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own Uranian identity through two kinds of exploration. One is the stimulation and investigation of your own fertile creative imagination. The other revolves around a sensitive, probing consideration of the way the "myth" of your family has shaped -- and limited -- the development of your character.

House of Journeys -- that's the old name for the Ninth House, where your Uranus lies. The issues are broader; not just travel, but the whole process of extending our experiential frontiers. Uranus is your Teacher here and the lessons can be summarized this way: to find your true individuality, you must undertake a quest. That quest probably contains an element of travel -- the mythical journey "to seek your fortune." But it also involves a broad process of learning and stretching your philosophical views.

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Tenth House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Mercury and Pluto in that area of your life, it is charged with activity, soul lessons, and opportunities for personal development. Before we even consider the planets separately, our first step is to explore this piece of existential real estate in broad terms.

Community -- that's the key to the Tenth House. How do you fit into your local branch of civilization? What role do you play there? "He's an anesthesiologist." That's a Tenth House statement. But so is, "She's into the women's movement." Even though she doesn't make a dime being a feminist, it still says something about the hat she wears in the community.

Planetary Teachers in this House do two things for you. They outline your "cosmic job description." That is, they tip you off about the role you were born to play in your community. Unfortunately, they don't do that very well; there are a billion roles and only ten planets, so the descriptions they provide are of necessity rather vague. At best, they're rough guidelines.

Tenth House Teachers do better with their second task. They point out parts of your own character that need to be developed to a radical degree before your mission coalesces before your eyes. Accept their suggestions, act on them, and you'll leave a lasting stamp of your vision upon the myths and symbols of your community.

Mercury buzzes around the Sun in eighty-eight days, making it the fastest of the planets. It buzzes around your head in exactly the same way: frantically. It's the part of you that never rests -- the endless firing of your synapses as your intelligence struggles to organize a picture of the world. Mercury represents thinking and speaking,

learning and wondering. It is the great observer, always curious. It represents your senses themselves and all the raw, undigested data that pours through them.

Mercury is roaring in Leo. That combination links your mental functions to the self-expressive, dramatic logic of the Lion. Your intelligence is hungry for an audience and knows how to attract attention. Spiritually you are learning about the importance of being heard -- and about the trap of sacrificing honest but threatening content for the sake of mere showmanship.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is Communicator or Teacher. That means that you were born with something significant to say to the human family. You may write it. You may broadcast it. You may announce it from a soapbox. But before you can pull it off, you'll need to unravel a riddle Life has set before your spirit: How to find your true voice?

"Life's a bitch. Then you die." Go to any boutique from coast to coast; you'll find those words on a coffee mug. Meaninglessness. Like most truly frightening ideas, we make a joke of it. That's Plutonian territory: the realm of all that terrifies us so badly we need to hide from it. Death. Disease. Our personal shame. Sexuality, to some extent. Initially, Pluto asks us to face our own wounds, squarely and honestly. Then, if we succeed, it offers us a way to create an unshakable sense of meaning in our lives. How? Methods vary according to the Signs and Houses involved, but always they have one point in common: the high Plutonian path invariably involves accepting some trans-personal purpose in your life.

One more point: Pluto moves so slowly that it remains in a given Sign for many years. As result, its Sign position in your birthchart refers not only to you but also to your generation. The House position, however, is much more personal in its relevance.

Pluto was journeying slowly through the sign Leo. Thus the shadow material you are called upon to face has to do with the dark side of the Performer archetype: an obsession with being noticed. In what part of your life or personal history have you chosen style over substance, glitz over moral excellence? (If your answer is "Nowhere!" then congratulations... you're Enlightened... or not looking hard enough.)

At the moment of your birth, Pluto gleamed in the Tenth House -- the part of the natal chart that helps clarify your "cosmic job description." You were born with a mission, and your sense of meaning in life depends on fulfilling it. What is the mission? We can't say precisely, but we can narrow it down. First, it involves blowing the whistle on lies. Second, it involves countering the force that has

historically been called Evil, and healing its effects. Third, it depends totally upon your courage to speak out at the level of moral principle.

Your birthchart shows still another area where planets congregate: the Eleventh. By combining forces, Venus and Saturn emphasize that department of your life almost as powerfully as the Sun or Moon would.

What do you want out of life? What are your priorities? What kind of old person are you in the process of becoming? Those are core Eleventh House issues. The challenge here is to accomplish something many people talk about but few actually do--lead a life; that is, create your future according to your deepest interests and values.

The planetary forces focused in this segment of your birthchart are Teachers dedicated to helping you find the threads of your destiny. They describe what you were born to become -- and warn you of how you look when you're off course.

"House of Friends" is the old name for this part of the birthchart, although "House of Acquaintances" is perhaps more accurate. Intimacy isn't the issue here; teamwork and networking are. But clear priorities must come first, or all those talking faces serve no purpose. They just tie you up in pointless social interactions.

Venus is the part of your mental circuitry that's concerned with releasing tension and maintaining harmony. Its focus is always peace, inwardly and outwardly. As such, it represents your aesthetic functions -- your taste in colors, sounds, and forms. Why? Because the perception of beauty soothes the human heart. Venus is also tied to your affiliative functions -- your romantic instincts, your sense of courtesy or diplomacy, your taste in friends. Invariably, this planet has one goal: sustaining your serenity in the face of life's onslaughts.

Venus was passing through Virgo. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the keen-eyed discrimination of the Virgin. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for quality, for precise execution, for technical virtuosity. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate people with a no-nonsense air of competence and realism, people who assess themselves with searing honesty, then get on with the business of working on themselves.

With Venus in the Eleventh House, as you mature, your Venusian energies figure more prominently in your character and situation. That suggests a trend toward more prosperity, more comfort, and better fortunes in the world of intimacy as the years go by. There is an artist in you, but it's a late-bloomer... even if that truth is veiled by lesser successes earlier in life. Is all that guaranteed? Yes... provided you don't cancel it by slipping under the thumb of the dark Venus,

descending into laziness, self-indulgence, and escapism.

Look at a NASA photo of Saturn. The icy elegance of the planet's rings, the pale understatement of the cloud bands... both hint at the clarity and precision which characterize Saturn's astrological spirit. Part of the human psyche must be cold and calculating, cunning enough to survive in the physical world. Part of us thrives on self-discipline, seeks excellence, pays the price of devotion. Somewhere in our lives there's a region where nothing but the best of what we are is enough to satisfy us. That's the high realm of Saturn. In its low realm, we take one glance at those challenges and our hearts turn to ice. We freeze in fear, and despair claims us.

The indefatigable, insatiable terrain of Virgo offers a region of profound spiritual challenge for you, as Saturn was passing through that sign at your birth. You must learn to steel yourself in the face of the Virgin's shadow side: worry and self-doubt. Will yourself toward accomplishment, but temper that journey with self-forgiveness and periods of respite. That's particularly pertinent in regard to the affairs of Saturn's House in your birthchart. Which House was that?

The Eleventh! The arena of life where we establish the framework of priorities that governs the shape of our futures... and where we link up with the network of allies who help us attain our goals. With Saturn here, you were born to accomplish some Great Work... but not until the second half of your life. Until then, you are becoming the kind of person who can fill those shoes -- developing clear moral or aesthetic values, learning self-discipline and concentration... and seeking out a sober, supportive community of friends.

In the final analysis, all planets are important. Each one plays a unique role in your developmental pattern, and failure to feed any one of them results in a diminution of your life. Just because the following planets aren't "having breakfast with the President" through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant doesn't mean we can ignore them.

You're lying in your bed, going to sleep. Suddenly a jolt runs through your body. You just "caught yourself falling asleep." Where were you two seconds before the jolt? What were you? Astrologically, the answer lies with Neptune. This is the planet of trance, of meditation, of dreams. It represents your doorway into the "Not-Self." Based on the sign the planet occupies, we identify a particularly critical spiritual catalyst for you... although we need to remember that Neptune remains in a Sign for an average of a little over thirteen years, so its Sign position actually describes not only you, but your whole generation. Its House position, however, is more uniquely your own.

Neptune was passing through Libra. Thus, to trigger higher states

of consciousness in yourself and to stimulate your psychic development, you may choose to follow the Path of the Lover... that is consciously, intentionally to seek life partners who'll hold the mirror of the soul before you. Without the purifying, soul-bleaching effects of dialog with these soulmates, you tend to drift away from Spirit, losing yourself in the mazes of daily life. But remember: finding them usually isn't the challenge. The challenge lies in hanging in there with them, listening and learning, even when you don't like what's reflected in the "soul mirror."

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Twelfth House of your birthchart, where its mystical feelings are naturally linked to questions of spirituality and the larger framework within which life -- and consciousness -- operate. You were born with a terrific, and somewhat dangerous, gift: the ability to be your own spiritual teacher. You have sound instincts about the path to higher levels of being. Use them! Or your sensitivities will sooner or later overwhelm you, leaving you vulnerable to addictive behaviors.

Take all the planets, all the meteors, moons, asteroids, and comets. Roll them up in a big ball of cosmic mush. They still wouldn't equal the mass of the "King of the Gods" -- Jupiter. Exactly that same bigness pervades the planet's astrological spirit. Jupiter is the symbol of buoyancy and generosity, of opportunity and joy. At the deepest level, it represents faith... faith in life, that is, rather than faith in anybody's theological position papers.

Jupiter stands in Aries. This is an important piece of information -- maybe a pivotal one. Being human is tough sometimes. When you need to boost your elemental faith in life, your answer lies in following the Way of the Warrior. What this means is that in dark times you need to recharge yourself by pushing toward the limits of your courage... even if that action has nothing to do directly with the problems you're facing. Take a rock-climbing class, go trekking in Nepal--feel the "edge." Mysterious, but it will always restore you.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Sixth House -- traditionally the "House of Servants." Jupiter expands things, and here it's expanding your work and responsibilities. That's not as bad as it sounds! If you're unhappy with your job or your duties, ask yourself this: "How have I been underestimating myself?" Spiritually, you are learning to have enough faith in yourself, enough self-worth, to go out and find the kinds of work that fill you with a sense of meaningfulness, prosperity, and joy.

Your Lunar Nodes

The soul's journey

Here's a jolly baby. Here's a serious one. An alert one. A dull one. A wise one. Those are common nursery room observations, but they raise a fascinating question: How did that person get in there?

Most of our psychological theory, either technically or in folklore, is developmental theory... abuse a child and he'll grow up to be a child-abuser, for example. But in the eyes of the newborn infant, there is already character. How can that be? One might say it's heredity, and that's certainly at least part of the answer. A large part of the world's population would call it reincarnation -- that baby, for better or worse, represents the culmination of centuries of soul-development in many different bodies. A Fundamentalist might simply announce, "That's how God made the baby." Who's to say? But all three explanations hold one point in common: They all agree that we cannot account for what we observe in a baby's eyes without acknowledging the impact of events occurring before the child's birth.

In astrology, the South Node of the Moon refers to events occurring before your birth, helping us to see what was in your eyes ten seconds after you were born... however we imagine it got in there! The Moon's North Node, always opposite the South Node, refers to your evolutionary future. It's a subtle point, but arguably the most important symbol in astrology. The North Node represents an alien state of consciousness and an unaccustomed set of circumstances. If you open your heart and mind to them, you put maximum tension on the deadening hold of the past.

As we consider the Nodes of the Moon in your birthchart, we'll be using the language of reincarnation. Whether that notion fits your own spiritual beliefs is of course your own business. If it doesn't work for you, please translate the ideas into ancestral hereditary terms. After all, it makes little practical difference whether we speak of a certain farmer weeding his beans a thousand years before the Caesars as your great, great, mega-great grandfather... or as you yourself in a previous incarnation. Either way, he's someone who lived way back there in history who sort of is you, sort of isn't, and lives on inside you--influencing but not ultimately defining you.

At your birth, the South Node of the Moon lay in Virgo, the sign of the Servant. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed the results of lifetimes spent learning the virtues of artistry: attention to detail, devotion to perfection, respect for method. In previous incarnations, you've attained excellence at some skill which other people valued. Through logging so many

hours exercising that skill, you became radically and narrowly identified with it. Now, like a baker who's seen one too many loaves of bread, you must learn a new lesson: how to relax, stop "earning love," and simply open your easy heart.

That nascent ability to simply accept love is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Pisces -- the sign of the Mystic. As we saw earlier, the North Node can be seen as the most significant point in the entire birthchart. Why? Because it represents your evolutionary future... the ultimate reason you're alive, in other words. How can you accomplish this Piscean spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome your dutiful, methodical, somewhat self-critical instincts and consciously, through meditation, open yourself to a love so infinite and unconditional that nothing you can do can effect it at all. You might practice by letting others offer you kindness without succumbing to an ancient little voice inside you that says, "Oh damn, now I owe them one!"

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Eleventh House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you often operated as a focal point for the energies of the "tribe," keeping your people's attention riveted on their goals. You thereby enhanced your evolving spirit with a sense of unwavering purpose and strategic sensibility... but sacrificed some of your flexibility and, perhaps more importantly, some of your ability to just kick back and enjoy yourself.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Fifth House, you must act to counterbalance some of that focus on the future... not so much because it's "wrong" as because you've already learned everything you can from it. The time has come for you to concentrate on the present moment, accepting a spirit of playfulness and creativity in your life, releasing some of your attachment to "getting things done."

And that's your birth chart.

Trust it; the symbols are Spirit's message to you. In the course of a lifetime, you'll make a billion choices. Any one of them could potentially hurt you terribly, sending you down a barren road. How can you steer a true course? The answer is so profound that it circles around and sounds trivial: listen to your heart, be true to your soul. Noble words and accurate ones, but tough to follow.

The Universe, in its primal intelligence, seems to understand that difficulty. It supplies us with many external supports: Inspiring religions and philosophies. Dear friends who hold the mirror of truth before us. Omens of a thousand kinds. And, above all, the sky itself, which weaves its cryptic message above each newborn infant.

In these pages, you've experienced one reading of that celestial message as it pertains to you. There are others. You may want to consider sitting with a real astrologer ... micro-chips are fine, but a human heart can still express nuances of meaning that no computer can grasp. You may want to order other reports, ones that illuminate your current astrological "weather," or that analyze important relationships. Best of all, you may choose to learn this ancient language yourself, and begin unraveling your own message in your own words.

Whatever your course, we thank you for your time and attention, and wish you grace for your journey.