

*astrological-cultural-spiritual-political
views & commentary...*

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THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



Thoughts, dates, & reminders about our lives as members of the craziest species on this lovely planet. Like a message in a bottle washing up on the sandy shores of consciousness...

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Dear friends,

Since September of 2005, I've written 14 commentaries in what I call "The Uranus-Pluto Newsletter Series." Technically, this series is about more than just that particular cycle, since it includes numerous outer-planet alignments that illuminate the history and conditions leading up to the critical decade of the 2010s. This month's commentary is the 15th essay in the series. Though less obviously astrological than the others, the subject is especially relevant to the challenges ahead.

—Bill Herbst

PREPARING FOR THE 2010s

Since I began writing about the coming Uranus-Pluto alignment and the decade of the 2010s, numerous readers have emailed me to ask what they can do to best prepare for the turbulent times ahead. That's a difficult question to answer pragmatically, since everyone has a custom-tailored set of interior and exterior circumstances. What might work for one person as preparation could be unworkable for another.

Also, the range of possible preparations is quite vast. Should I advise us all to stop shopping at the grocery store, learn to garden, and grow our own food? Should I suggest that we get off the electrical grid, sell our cars, liquidate our homes, and move to solar-powered cabins in the woods? Precious few of us would be able to make such major changes in our lives at this point, nor are survivalist extremes the best option for most of us anyway. Collectively, what's coming is not about heading for the hills, but rediscovering each other in humane ways that revivify our lost sense of community.

Well, then what about less sweeping changes in lifestyle? You know, replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents, or simply buying more organic food at a co-op? How about buying less of everything in general, especially consumer toys, and purchasing what we feel we truly need from local merchants rather than megacorporate big-box retailers? Or driving less and flying only when absolutely necessary? Or spending less computer time on the internet pursuing fake cyber-communities and more time finding real social groups in our own local communities?

All those are good choices, but I don't feel that it's my place to tell others how to live. With regard to making changes, I would be the pot calling the kettle black if I waxed evangelical and puritanically proscriptive about what we should and shouldn't do, especially given that my own life is barely held together with spit and bailing wire. While I am passionate about collective change and reasonably expert about the astrology of what's coming, I prefer to leave to each individual the specific choices of how to implement adaptive changes, as a matter of personal conscience and situational feasibility.

My concern in this series of commentaries is about our psychological preparation for the shocks that await us in the next decade. Along with many others, I am storming the Bastille of consciousness rather than the imprisonment of lifestyle. Think back to America in 1928. How many people foresaw and were prepared for the Great Depression of the 1930s? If you had been a tenant farmer in Oklahoma, could you have prevented the Dust Bowl, loss of your farm, and migration to California? If you had a stock portfolio in 1928, would you have pulled your money out of the markets before the Crash? Probably not.

A more recent scenario would be 1958. Sure, there were the Beats—Kerouac and Ginsberg trumpeting about alienation, conformity, and howling “Moloch!” Ike would soon to warn us about the dangers of an emergent military-industrial complex, and the initial rumblings of the civil rights movement were already underway—but the great bulk of middle-class, white Americans were concerned mainly with good jobs, decent schools for their kids, and the mortgage on that new tract house in Levittown. How many people in 1958 could have foreseen the amazing events of the 1960s that waited just around the corner? Darned few.

Both those periods—1928 and 1958—were on the cusps of Uranus-Pluto shocks, surprises, and upheavals that defined the 1930s and 1960s. And now here we are again, sitting in 2007 on the verge of another visitation by those archetypes of radical change. This time, however, we can see the storm clouds on the horizon. This time, we have a better chance to prepare psychologically for the shocks.

So, in light of all that, I have four questions to ask each of us. Two are about power, and two are about love. Two are about the past, and two are about future.

Now, here's the tricky part: **Don't Answer the Questions.** Ask them, but don't answer. I do not mean to be arch, clever, or mystical with this instruction. I offer it up front so as not to take anyone by surprise.

Here are the questions:

1. Where, how, and with whom am I *already* **powerful**?
2. Where, how, and with whom will I *want or need to become* **powerful** in the years ahead?
3. Where, how, and with whom am I *already* **loving**?
4. Where, how, and with whom will I *need or want to become* **loving** in the years ahead?

In the ways I use those terms, **Power** is the ability to willfully manipulate an environment, to reshape our worlds toward greater perfection or harmony. **Love** is the ability to see and feel the beauty that lies at the heart of all our interconnections with others and with life in us and around us.

Power and Love are aspects of the Tao, seemingly opposite and exclusive, but mutually interdependent. One without the other is not only incomplete, but ineffective and perverse.

Power without sufficient Love produces *chaos*—we can change anything, but we don't know what to change it into. Look at the war in Iraq for an example. All wars are power without love, destruction without harmony. To say that wars are justified is to close one's heart and embrace chaos. That's also why the past 200 years of the Industrial and Technological Revolutions have backfired so disastrously, because we used our power headlong without the guidance of love to provide a vision of harmony.

Love without sufficient Power results in *suffering*—we sense and feel a vision of perfection but cannot manifest it in real life. Look at any unrequited romance for an example of love without power. Or think of a beloved with a terminal illness, where we must stand by helplessly. We don't possess the medicine (power) to restore health (harmony), so we suffer.

When love and power are balanced, we know what to do, what not to do, and why. Taking the long view, we impact our environments only when doing so will enhance their perfection, and then only in ways that result in greater harmony. The politicians, planners, and engineers who dammed all the major rivers in America during the 20th century had the power to do so and thought they were benefitting human beings, but they didn't feel sufficient love to understand that they were destroying not only the beauty but also the functioning of nature's ecological life-systems. As a result, short-term benefits backfired into long-term chaos.

Mere balance, however, is not the only criterion for love and power. We know that power corrupts, and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Too much power concentrated in too few hands is not a good thing for human beings. And love? Well, many people love their own families and friends very deeply, but don't give a damn about what happens to you and yours. So power needs restraint, and love needs breadth. The tragedy of modern civilization lies in unrestrained power and narrowness of love. To be effective, power must be widely distributed and love must be broadly empathic. Otherwise, we inadvertently create chaos and suffering.

Consider again the four questions. Rather than addressing those questions with your conscious mind, let them hover in the larger field of your sentience, rather like jelly fish in the ocean: bell-shaped, translucent, pulsating, and softly luminous.

This is not about "intention" or "focusing the will." Instead, we're asking for grace, like sending a telegram to Cosmic Central, or emailing an in-house memo to the Board of Directors of our Higher Selves. The questions are not a quiz, but a mantra, like asking just before going to sleep to receive information in a dream. Toss the questions into the ocean with the outgoing tide and let them go, then be watchful for any responses that may later wash up on the beach with the return of the incoming tide.

For all our seeming stupidity, we are smarter than we have realized. Our conscious minds are just the boats that bob up and down on the surface of a deeper, more mysterious intelligence. In the decade ahead, we will need to plumb the depths of that profound intelligence to refine our power and expand our love.



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