

Mercury Direct

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I don't typically post about Mercury Retrogrades, in part because I've said pretty much all I want to say about them over the past 30 years, in part because they occur so frequently — three times a year, on average — and in part because their generic meanings (for the collective) can vary so dramatically from a given individual's experience of them (based on how a particular Mercury Retrograde interacts with that individual's natal chart). I'll make an exception here, though, as the seven-week Mercury Retrograde that's just now finishing its middle phase of retrogradation seems more noteworthy.

On Tuesday, June 22nd — the day I'm posting this commentary — Mercury goes stationary direct. That is to say, the parallax factor between the orbits around the Sun of the earth and Mercury that cause Mercury to appear from our earthly perspective to move backward in the heavens is over after its three-week run.

All Mercury Retrograde Loops are about seven weeks long. First, there's a two-week phase where Mercury is still moving forward, but slowing down. Then there's the three-week period of retrogradation as Mercury backtracks in the zodiac. Finally, there's another two-week phase as Mercury moves forward again and picks up speed, going over the area of the zodiac through which it just backed up. When Mercury again reaches the degree of the zodiac where it initially stopped and changed direction (its retrograde station), the entire three-phase loop is finished, and we're back into the normal flow of symbolic movement in the heavenly zeitgeist.

This current Merc Retro Loop began on May 15th when Mercury — still in direct motion but slowing down — passed $16^{\circ} 08'$ of the sign Gemini. Two weeks later, on May 29th, Mercury stopped in the heavens and went retrograde at $24^{\circ} 43'$ of Gemini. Today (June 22nd), Mercury goes stationary direct at $16^{\circ} 08'$ Gemini. In about two weeks, on July 7th, Mercury will be back up to speed in forward motion and pass that 25th degree of Gemini, and the loop will be finished.

What makes this particular Merc Retro Loop more significant than others is the fact that an annular solar eclipse occurred at $19^{\circ} 47'$ of Gemini on June 10th, during Mercury's middle retrograde phase. At the time, Mercury was only one degree away from the eclipse point. That's meaningful. Eclipses are wild-cards in astrology, symbolically intensifying whatever's happening around the time of

the eclipse. Since this Mercury Retrograde Loop will have occurred entirely in Gemini (Mercury's natural sign), the basic implications of what all Merc Retros mean are accentuated: higher-than-average instances of communication and travel glitches, schedule disruptions, misunderstandings, and mistakes of rational perception or logic. Add to the natural turning inward of thought that occurs with Merc Retro the intensifying wild-card of a solar eclipse, and the possibility is jacked up for misperceptions, disruptions, and delays to be even greater.

Mercury Retrograde is one of the few common astrological events that has penetrated into popular American culture. Even people who don't know much technical astrology may have heard of the Mercury Retrograde phenomenon. As with everything in the realm of popular astrology, that leads to all sorts of incorrect generalizations and sometimes even ridiculous presumptions. It's no wonder that people are skeptical about true believers, astrological or otherwise.

For instance, one of the exaggerated "rules" of Mercury Retrograde believed by some of those who know only little astrology is to completely refrain from making purchases of goods or services, especially any that are important or expensive, such as buying a car or a house. Also, Mercury Retrograde (or so this "rule" holds) is the worst possible time for scheduling any important or serious event, such as a wedding or a major surgery. At the very least, the scheduling will supposedly end up disrupted so that the event won't occur when planned, or, if it does come off as scheduled, the results will be lousy.

Most of that is bogus. It's not so much that the admonitions are symbolically wrong (although they are), but rather that they're dramatically overplayed. So, allow me to suggest a more reasonable and less didactic yardstick.

Let's say that you want to buy something — a new mattress, a crock pot, a leather chair, whatever. What could go wrong? Lots of things: Once unpacked, the mattress might be moldy or uncomfortable, the crock pot could arrive cracked, or the color of the chair turns out to be a different hue than in the store or online. Or maybe what you bought is never delivered. A million things could conceivably prevent your satisfaction with what you bought.

In a "normal" time (meaning when Mercury isn't in a Retrograde Loop, which is the case eight months of year), what are the odds that something will go wrong with your purchase? Let's say 10%. OK. That's just reality doing what it does. There's a one in ten chance that things won't work out. When Mercury is retrograde, those odds double to 20%. And when an eclipse conjoins Mercury during the retrograde, as happened this time, the odds triple to 30%. It doesn't mean that *everything* you think is wrong, or that *everything* you buy is screwed, or that *every* appointment you make gets cancelled. It just means that there's a higher chance than usual that reality may not conform to your plans, wishes, intentions, or expectations.

For instance, you might buy something that's perfect, and you're thrilled. But then something else happens that's not so wonderful. You get sick, or confused, or have a misunderstanding with a beloved. A meeting is canceled but no one tells you. Or one of your clients is a no-show. During the three-week retrograde phase or over the entire seven-week loop, some shit will happen. Who among us is ever so lucky as to go seven weeks without *anything* going wrong? Almost no one. But you needn't be concerned that *everything* will go wrong during a Mercury Retrograde, because that won't happen either, unless you die, in which case your demise is probably not linked with Mercury Retrograde anyway. Yes, it's theoretically possible that your particular chart reveals some sort of death correspondence with a particular Mercury Retro Loop, and the symbolism might manifest fatally, but the odds of that happening are very, very slim — literally, a million-to-one against. Your chances of being struck by lightning are higher. So, don't worry about it.

In fairness, I think it's sound astrological advice to delay or postpone scheduling major surgery during a Mercury Retrograde. That qualifies as Cosmic Common Sense. But if you need to have the surgery immediately or don't have a choice, go ahead. The odds will still be in your favor. Merc Retro is not the kiss of death (except in the one-in-a-million example above...).

Basically, what I'm saying here is that the primary challenges of any Mercury Retrograde Loop include slowing down, exercising patience, and keeping one's feet on the ground. Don't go crazy. Sure, try not to act out impulsively, and don't be careless, but don't get frustrated over every little thing, either. If you notice yourself becoming fearful or insecure, see what that can tell you about yourself.

I find it interesting that Amazon scheduled their annual two-day sale for Prime members right when Mercury is going stationary direct. Amazon hopes to make 15 billion dollars in sales over June 21st and 22nd, and both of those days are astrologically ripe for buying something after waiting awhile. Makes me wonder if Jeff Bezos (or, more likely, some high-level exec) might consult an astrologer.

Keep in mind that Mercury's ending its retrograde phase today doesn't mean that the whole loop is over. That's still two weeks away. Mercury transits in an individual chart are normally one-day events. Just momentary blips on the radar. During a retrograde loop, however, the same transits are six weeks in duration, usually starting before Mercury goes retrograde and extending well beyond its resumption of direct motion. So, for those of us who are undergoing potent Mercury transits during this Retro Loop, remember that we're not out of the woods yet. School is still in session. Continue to pay attention and exercise patience or forbearance. Less is more. Slow and steady wins the race.

The prize is not a life where nothing goes wrong. The payoff is self-awareness.