

VICES AND VIRTUES

Character Features and Flaws of the Zodiacal Types

VIRTUES

the greatest virtues are those which are most useful to other persons

- Aristotle

In a contemporary context the word *virtue* denotes a particular moral excellence, a commendable quality that raises one above the herd. There is a sense of valour and strength that is associated with the term; in fact the prefix *vir* suggests manliness, or perhaps when expressed in a genderless way it is the notion of heroism, that aspect of every human being capable of acting like a god. It implies action, the wisdom to discern between right and wrong and a conscious striving to act honourably. Virtue is the garment of character.



A Freemason depiction of the four virtues:

Temperance

Prudence

Fortitude

Justice

Throughout the ages what constitutes virtuous behaviour has changed and is portrayed in different ways depending upon what is deemed morally worthwhile at the time. To the Christians virtues were the fruits of the spirit and the most worthy was love. St. Paul defined the three theological virtues as love, hope and faith. To the Romans personal virtues like spiritual authority, dignity and truthfulness were the qualities of character to which citizens should aspire, while public virtues like mercy, harmony, justice and piety were the ethical goalposts erected in the community. Greek philosophers considered a quaternary known as the cardinal virtues to be the most meaningful. These were prudence, temperance, courage and justice. Dante's cardinal virtues were seven in number and were aligned to the seven visible planets:

Sun	Prudence
Moon	Understanding
Mercury	Wisdom
Venus	Knowledge
Mars	Fortitude
Jupiter	Justice
Saturn	Temperance

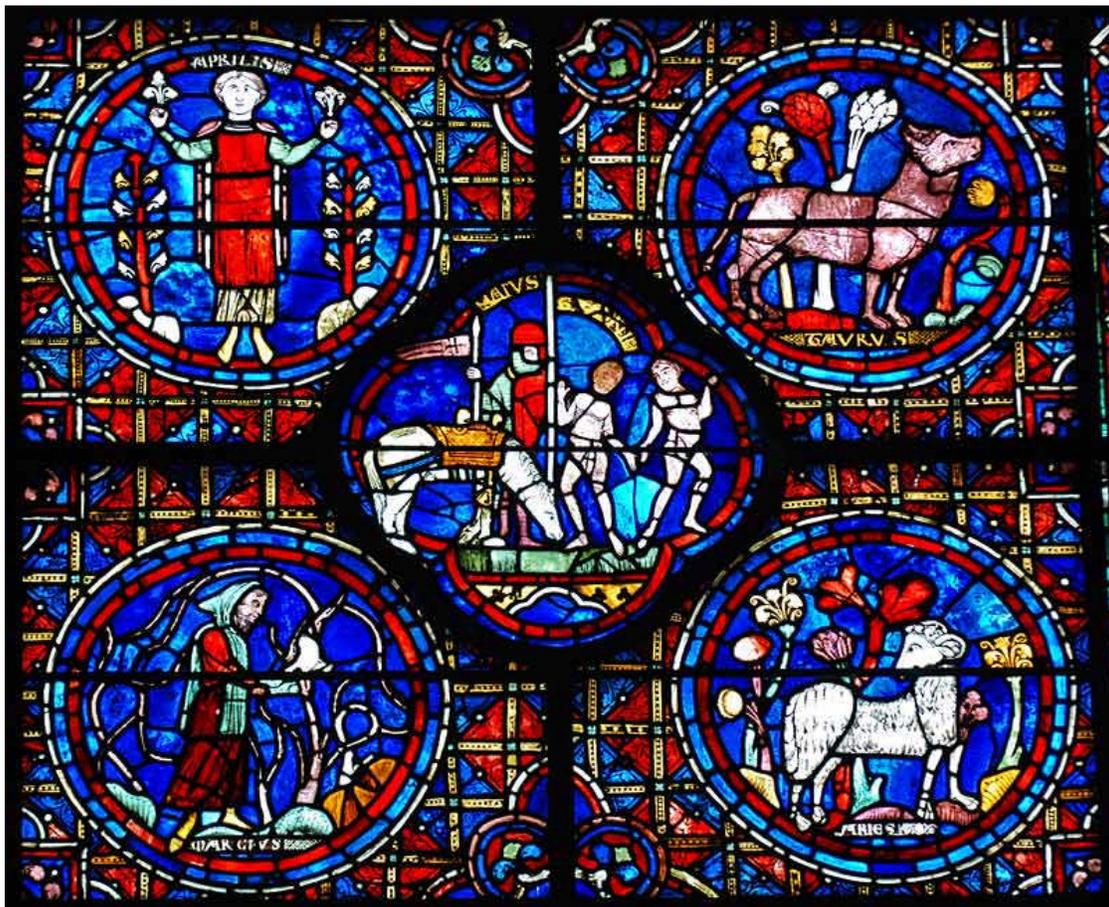
But to ancient Greeks virtues were also worshipped in a personified form. Their pantheon of deities included personifications of important concepts like love, peace, victory, harmony, justice, order, mercy and health. These concepts had such a powerful nature that they were seen as divine and became worshipped as gods. These god-like strengths were the earliest virtues, soul states that rendered one close to the realm of the immortals. Acting virtuously located the individual in the intermediary zone between being mortal and divine, the closest the soul could get to being godlike.

Similarly the twelve signs of the zodiac represent spiritual concepts and symbolise the instinct to act virtuously, each sign characterising qualities of the human spirit. Together the twelve signs form the course where the planets journey through the sky. To the ancients the path of the Sun in the sky was akin to the hero's journey and each sign designating a heroic labour.

Gods and goddesses were assigned to rule every sign as each of the twelve sectors of the sky contained a powerful initiation.

Astrologically we can present a case for twelve virtues based on the innate wisdom of each sign of the zodiac. Each one of the twelve signs represents a soul state. Therefore when we are in touch with the virtue underpinning the sign we become closer to its spiritual essence and feel closer to the divine. Psychologically this suggests a more soulful and meaningful experience of who we are.

Following are the twelve soul states or the fruits of the spirit that the wisdom of astrology reveals. While all the signs are part of each human character it is our Sun that strives to consciously embrace the spirit of the sign. The Sun is a symbol of the heroic part of the self and the sign it is in at birth is a guide to the values and virtues that shape and strengthen character.



At the Chartres Cathedral South Window

THE TWELVE VIRTUES OF THE ZODIAC

*Wisdom is knowing what to do next;
Virtue is doing it.*

-David Star Jordan

♈ ARIES: Courage

Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Soulful Qualities:

Assertiveness

Bravery

Enthusiasm

Independence

Initiative

Inspiration

Ralph Waldo Emerson could have been talking to a legion of Arians encouraging them to do what is natural and delve deep inside themselves to access their innate nerve and dauntlessness. For the Romans the virtue of courage was highly regarded; *virtus* was the amalgam of virility and valour with boldness and bravery that inspired a soldier to be heroic and take up arms against the enemy. Archetypally Aries represents the stamina to challenge what is not right but also the spirit to forge what is. Aries is the warrior; in a spiritual sense the one who has the courage to uphold his principles and the one who is the soldier of the true self. In Aries we find the courage of our convictions and the strength to sanction them.

Astrologers have likened the glyph of Aries to a fork in the road. In Aries there is a choice to be either pulled back into the collective undertow, as represented by its predecessor Pisces, or boldly take the path of self-determination summoning the hardiness from within the self. Inherent in the image of Aries is a trial, as courage implies the necessity to face the obstacles

and find something greater in ourselves to meet them. As T.S. Eliot suggested courage is not just one of the virtues 'but the form of every virtue at the testing'. What is honourable about Aries is the ability to challenge what is not right, to compete for what is and find the courage to face the confrontation. When Aries is in touch with its honour it is capable of summoning the strength to act with bravery and champion what is noble. Aries is invigorated when challenged and spiritually develops through withstanding the moral and ethical trials of life.

The spirit of Aries cherishes its independence and welcomes challenges. As the sign invested with the process of beginning it needs to inseminate creative projects, pioneer new experiments and explore uncharted territory. Being on the starting line Aries is animated by the spirit of adventure, brought to life by challenges and possibilities, and wide-eyed at the opportunities ahead. But being newborn implies a sense of innocence. This freedom from cunning and deceit imbues Aries with a clear conscience. Chivalry is not dead with the Arian knight who searches for the damsel to rescue or the tyrant to dispose. Naïveté is a helpful attribute of Aries as the disappointments and failures of any project are easily sidelined with the conception of another idea or by catching glimpse of another goalpost. But taking a chance, exploring new frontiers and risking the security of what is not known demand an act of courage. In Aries we discover this will in the alchemical amalgam of purity and bravery.

It is this combination of toughness and affection that allows Aries to be a firebrand on one hand and an idealist on the other. The compound of these two attitudes creates the advocate who champions the underdog, the conqueror who liberates the oppressed and the hero who scores the winning goal. In an etymological context courage is connected to the heart, since the ancient notion linked the force of will and character to the heart. Braveheart personifies the Arian gift of courage. Like the heart which pumps blood through the body, the spirit of Aries vitalises the soul in the world to be brave and claim what is rightfully yours. While mortal Arians bravely face the worries and burdens of everyday life their alter ego, Captain Courageous, is active in the world championing the oppressed and liberating the downtrodden. Virtuous Aries demonstrates the value of courage in our daily lives and inspires us with their ability to lead, even if it is dangerous.

♉ TAURUS: Patience

Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Soulful Qualities:

Loyalty

Perseverance

Persevering

Reliability

Steadfastness

Trustworthy

Patience is the asset parents and teachers would always remind us of when we were in a hurry. St. Augustine too reiterated that patience was highly commendable and that it was a close companion of wisdom. Yet in our modern-day, broadband, instant world the intelligence of patience seems as if it were a relic of a bygone era. There is simply no time for patience anymore. The pace of life is high-speed, everything needs to be available as quick as possible or else it has no value. As nature and her natural rhythms are replaced by technological and man-made cycles the understanding of the value of patience wanes in the culture. The echo of our parents' catchphrase 'Patience is a virtue!' has faded in the synthetic brightness of the computer screen.

Astrological wisdom has not forgotten the virtue of patience for it is deeply implanted in the earthy sign of Taurus and flowers regularly in that sphere of the zodiac. Taurus is the astrological sign most closely associated with the pace of nature and inherently knows its rhythms, its seasons of growth as well as its natural developmental cycles. Closest to Mother Nature, Taurus knows there is no sense pushing when it is time to hold on or move forward when the light is red. Taurus is endowed with the basic instinct of common sense, a faculty not so common in a high tech, artificial world. The bull innately knows when it is time to dig the heels in and wait for the right moment to charge. In the meantime there is a creative waiting period and this is accomplished through patience. There is a deep respect for quality and worth and what can be accomplished through perseverance. Taureans learn to treasure

their resources over time, and know that value is added in the long term, not the short. Therefore they are hardy investors in long term markets, real estate and any asset that will gradually appreciate over time suspicious of get rich quick incentives.

The Taurean attachment to the long term also applies to friends and family, being fiercely loyal and trustworthy in relationship. Bull people have a penchant for being able to appreciate your time and effort in helping you out and respond in kind. A generous heart beats under the hide of the bull. They are slow to get to know but forge deep bonds over the course of time. Once formed the bonds are almost indelible. It is your Taurean friends, who have the patience to listen to your trials, sit with you through a challenging period or make a cup of tea when you're exhausted. These are your workmates who suggest a break when you've been working too hard, massage your shoulders when you feel stressed and place a flower from their garden on your desk in the morning. The Taurean quality includes the patience to handle the most difficult child, the most demanding client or the most annoying neighbour. Unruffled they are able to remain calm and present in most situations, not backing down or giving in, but allowing the problematical situation to pass.

Surrounded by the hectic tempo of modernity Taurus creates a pasture of peace in the midst of all the chaos. Their screensaver image is a meadow of beautiful spring flowers, a waterfall, a palm tree or a peaceful natural setting. They bring life into an over-crowded office space with exotic plants or they adorn their apartment building with pots of colourful flowers. For Taurus it is important to have nature around to remind them of the natural environment and what they value.

Eventually it is this Taurean pace of being able to slow down, stop and smell the roses that supports them to be successful. There's no rush as internally they ultimately know that they need to build one layer at a time. Their building plan is from the ground up, a floor at a time, season by season. It is this gathering of strength over time that becomes their powerful ally and contributes to their resourcefulness. Prosperity and Taurus are astrologically aligned and the secret to wealth accumulation is the Taurean steadfast pace and its innate virtue of patience.

II GEMINI: Adaptability

Adaptability is not imitation. It means power of resistance and assimilation.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Soulful Qualities:

Eloquent Flexibility
Friendly Perceptive
Versatile Witty

No doubt Gemini has the ability to mimic, probably better than any other sign of the zodiac. Its wit, quickness of mood, intonation, accent and facial contortions all combine to amuse and make us laugh. But perhaps as Mahatma Gandhi suggests there is also strength in this innate ability. Gemini's versatility helps to defend themselves against unwanted overtures, but also is useful in getting them accepted into the group. Adaptability is Gemini's forte and a great asset as it opens doors permitting them into a much wider world to explore areas where others never have the opportunity to venture. With the artful dodge Gemini is able to deflect the uninvited sarcasm, dodge the unfair criticism and deflate the ungrounded accolades. Fast-footed Mercury is their guide and with this god on side Geminians are able to adjust and adapt to many situations, allowing them access to new ideas and adventures which develops their intellectual strength and moral fibre.

In theory the skills of versatility and adaptability are innate to Gemini, impressed into their DNA. It is usually in the early relationship with siblings, cousins, child care chums and playground pals that these behaviours are first recognised. Being able to duck a speeding ball, sidestep an out-of-control tricycle, crawl through the tiniest space or wiggle out from underneath a pile of kids is a childhood preview of their amazing flexibility and their ability to dance (and skip) through any moment with agility and light heartedness. Later this adaptability develops into the useful ability to solve puzzles, open locked doors, expand ideas, write, teach, and widen their social circles. However it is this adaptability with others that allows them to see past the differences and embrace each individual for who they truly are.

Gemini has an open friendliness that draws people into their orbit, lightens their load and animates their mood. They have that knack of knowing the right person for you to meet,

which book would be just right for your week away or what courses would be helpful. Geminians are friendly folk and meet you on your level. Whether in Russia, Greece or Thailand they've learned to say hello, please, thank you, and goodbye in the local dialect, which is a good metaphor for how they greet each individual by respecting their language and customs.

Psychologically speaking this versatility in human interactions has been borne out of a deep-seated quest to discover what is complementary to their nature. Something is missing and this drives them forward into life searching for what will balance their restless nature. Gemini's totem is the twin. In this archetypal icon is the image of a copy of one self, a double, a soul mate, a reflection. Therefore the world often seems either like a large mirror reflecting back their movements or the place where they will find the missing other. In this search for what feels lost Gemini experiences the connectedness to others and the vastness of the human experiences. But sooner or later Gemini realises that the quest for what is absent is an inner calling and that the pairing they seek is an internal arrangement. With this knowledge Gemini becomes the wise one, able to guide, direct and teach others to understand the cues and to read the map of life.

Duality is a great bonus for. Capable of commandeering a host of tasks at one time Gemini accomplishes more in a short space of time than most people. This versatility comes in handy in a fast-paced world where dual, treble, even quadruple roles at one time are more the norm than the exception. When centred in themselves ♊ is capable of also being a double for others. Whether coaching, teaching, tutoring or training Geminians have the great skill of being able to read others and communicate what they've studied. Through their speech or body language they are very astute at helping others understand themselves better. Gemini's versatility has drawn the maps to help us get from A to B along the best possible route, written the manuals to teach us how-to better and created diagrams to increase our understanding of how things work. The twins' adaptabilities have shaped an outer world that is easier to navigate. On an inner dimension ♊ is the conscious awakening of the urge to make friends with the internal other, whether that be a rival, an enemy or a companion. Whichever one they encounter be sure they will be adaptable!

♋ CANCER: Kindness

*Three things in life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind.
And the third is to be kind.*

- Henry James

Soulful Qualities:

Caring
Helpfulness
Maternal
Protective
Sympathetic
Tender

While kindness may not be exclusively Cancer's domain, the virtue is shaped by the bonds of kinship first experienced in the home. Family values such as doing good rather than harm, being friendly, compassionate and helpful are the tender-hearted acts that promote the virtue of kindness. As a gentle and benevolent act of consideration, kindness promotes goodwill and warmth towards others embracing a wider sphere beyond the family. Over the years our usage of the word has changed to reflect social rather than familial values. Yet according to the etymological dictionary the word originally developed from the Old English meaning natural or innate, referring to the feelings that relatives have for one another. Kindness invites others into the family circle, is sympathetic, unselfish and pure of heart, all innate qualities of home-loving Cancer. Robert Ingersoll remarked that kindness 'is the sunshine in which virtues grow', a metaphor for the love and care that Cancer provides.

To be kind we must feel safe, and this is the zodiacal state represented by Cancer, the Crab. Its shell is its shelter ('shell-ter') from harm and adversity, symbolising the safe haven that Cancer provides. The firm grip of its claws represents the strength of its attachment, emblematic of the feeling of being held closely and securely. The psychological process of attachment occurs in Cancer where we are held tightly enough to know we are secure, yet when danger subsides the grip is loose enough to safely explore the surrounding territory. Not only does the crab protect itself from danger but it lives in sync with its natural environment, accustomed to the daily cycle of tides. Like its totem, Cancer represents the maternal instinct that offers shelter

from harm, the umbilical cord that bonds one to the secure object yet can be severed when necessary, and the wisdom of the tidal feelings of family life.

Like the creatures that dwell on the threshold of the sea Cancer is sensitised to the shape shifting seas and its tidal cycle. It secures its home regardless of the fluctuation in fortunes and the alternating tides. In human understanding this is experienced as the ability to find stability within the daily rhythm of the feelings which swell, ebb, flood and retract. Cancer builds a secure place on the edge of life's upheavals, living in the world without being swept away by emotional complexity. Cancer's glyph is bi-polar representing the high and low tide, the two extremes of feeling first experienced in the sanctuary of the home. When contained in the protective environs of Cancer, the poles of feeling, the emotional highs and lows, and the slights and hurts are natural processes of family life. Through the initiation of Cancer we build a strong enough shell to contain the complexity of feeling, so that all feelings are able to be held safely without harm. Hence, the Cancerian paradoxes like 'tough love' and 'you need to be cruel to be kind'.

When feeling safe and protected Cancer emerges from its shell to demonstrate its caring, affection, warmth and kindness. As the first of the water signs it is vulnerable and tender, slow to trust and warm, but when it feels securely attached then its heart opens to care and nurture others. Psychologically Cancer is the instinct that protects the vulnerable aspects of the self, shelters the disenfranchised facets of the psyche and cares for the sensitive sides of the nature. Also sensitive to others, the citizens of Cancer are finely attuned to what others need. Moved by the plight of those less fortunate, those in need or people who feel hurt or rejected, Cancer reveals its kindness and compassion. It houses the maternal archetype whose natural instinct is to nurture, protect, shelter and foster those who are vulnerable.

Cancer's heart is tender and opens to be merciful and charitable. Charity begins at home, in Cancer's domain, as does kindness. Donald Winnicott reminded us that home is where we start from and a secure enough base allows us to wander into the world with the legacy of a sympathetic ear and a tender heart. Therefore it is not surprising that random acts of kindness are carried out by Cancerians every day throughout the world.

♌ LEO: Fidelity

If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life.

- Oscar Wilde

Soulful Qualities:

Affectionate

Creativity

Generosity

Joyfulness

Loyal

Optimistic

The second fire sign of the zodiac belongs to the fixed modality, which are the quaternity of signs that share the traits of being constant, enduring and long-lasting. Fixed fire conjures up the image of a fire-place, a location where the power of fire can be contained. Whether raging in a hearth or softly twinkling on a candle, the fixed fire of Leo emanates warmth, personality and charisma. When the fires of Leo are fixed the passionate feelings are tempered and enclosed, radiating warmth and devotion. Under the guardianship of a lion an individual is not only protected, but adored, basking in the radiant reflection of the Leo's fiery glow. In the human experience these are the fires of affection, tenderness and hospitality. In Leo we encounter the generosity of the human soul and that amiable ability to engender the spirit of well being in others privileged to be in their circle.

One of the attributes of the lion is its intense protection of the young. In human experience this translates into a fierce loyalty and defence of those they love. One of the great virtues of Leo is their allegiance to those they befriend and a fidelity to those they feel affection for. Astrologically Leo is associated with the heart, a central focus in the body, and the Sun, the pivotal point of the solar system. Leo is the focus of the system they are in, the heart light that radiates energy and sustenance for others in the same system. Anias Nin suggested that when she cast her own warmth around her it was reflected in others, a great truism for Leo.

As the archetypal father, king of the pride or queen of the parade you'll often find the Lion at the centre, on the seat of power. It may be a throne, but more likely it's the teacher's seat at the head of the class, the director's stool in front of the action or the psychiatrist's chair opposite his or her client. Sitting on it is the leader who inspires us to become our true self, encouraging us to be creative and playful. Leo can embody both the serious professional and the playful child. Ironically the Leoine authority, who is dignified and powerful, also has a healthy inner child who balances the serious sides of life with bemusement and frivolity. For it is the lionhearted, who best know how to play, find amusement in the humourless and irreverence in formality. Whenever the audience became too solemn, a well known and well respected Leo psychology professor would always do something quite extraordinary. One day when a large crowd was anxiously awaiting his words of wisdom he paused for a long time, reached below the podium and threw a large brightly coloured beach ball into the very sober audience. The staid were shocked, but he had their attention! Wisdom without humour, truth without wit or status without integrity is antithetical to Leo.

The affectionate fire of Leo that warms others is constantly rekindled by their generosity of heart and loyalty. But in their own heart they know that they cannot remain true to others without first being true to themselves. They instinctually know that being true and constant to others begins by begins with the difficult task of creating an honest relationship with the self. This often means they need to be candid about their vulnerabilities, sincere about their fears and straightforward about their motives. Hence Leo's honour in being genuine allows them to shine. In the developmental process of the zodiac Leo is the stage where we first experience individuation from the family, and in psychological terms this suggests the initiation of commencing the quest for the self. The heroic journey begins in Leo with acts of self disclosure, a vulnerable act that softens the heart to express love easily and authentically.

Again Anias Nin described this Leo truth when she remarked that when you possess light within you will be able to see it externally. The possession of the heart light is the great gift of Leo but its great virtue is keeping it alight through acts of loyalty and fidelity.

♍ VIRGO: Health

The greatest wealth is health

- Virgil

Soulful Qualities:

Cleanliness

Diligence

Moderation

Orderliness

Self-discipline

Service

Health was a concept personified by the ancient Greeks in the image of their goddess Hygieia. Her cult rose to prominence at the same time Hippocratic doctors began to practice a more naturalistic rational medicine, as the need to honour the divine nature of healing was important. An awareness and respect of the divine was such an integral part of the everyday experience for the ancient Greeks, and the cult of Hygieia suggested how important the virtue of health was in the classical world. In contemporary astrology Virgo is associated with the sacred acts of an everyday life, which promote a healthy lifestyle. Virgo takes a holistic approach, aware of the need for moderation in the holy trinity of body, mind and soul.

Even before the Greeks worshipped their goddess Hygieia, the image of the harvest maiden was projected onto the constellations where the early relics of health are still visible. As a goddess associated with the harvest of grain and corn, Virgo became aligned with the image of the bread, an important metaphor for the sustenance of body. The image of Virgo was pure, chaste and good, fertile and fruitful, all early metaphors to express a state of well being. While health is not generally categorised as a virtue its sisterly qualities of cleanliness, purity and orderliness are. Zodiacally we recognise the Virgoan virtue as health. As an archetype it represents the instinct for wholeness embedded in every human soul. This manifests as the need to be healthy and well and to achieve a beneficial balance of spirit and body in the chaos of an everyday life.

To Virgo health is maintained through the systematic ordering of everyday life. Ritual is the cohesive element that orders the daily tasks and gives structure and coherence to life. The Zen

of daily living is experienced in washing the dishes, feeding the cat, sweeping stairs and cleaning the kitchen. In a daily routine Virgo is able to experience the security of continuity and the contentment of centeredness. In a busy world this repetitiveness and simplicity of domestic tasks is a mantra for stabilising the spirit. In the completion of simple tasks Virgo is able to find a sense of fulfilment and well being. While meditation, yoga, walking the dog or reading the paper may be the poetics of an everyday life, other routines like paying the bills, cleaning the kids' room or mopping the floors are monotonous. The virtue of Virgo is to find the synthesis between the extremes so the cadence of the everyday life is free of stress and illness.

The practicality of Virgo needs to order systematic health rituals to promote their sense of well being. It is imperative to be health conscious. As an earth sign Virgo has great respect for the body and is able to apply its wisdom through a healthy diet and lifestyle, regular exercise and work. The Virgo ability to concentrate, focus on detail, follow instruction and be consciously involved with repetitive tasks combines to make them astute at handicrafts and detailed work. Work is an important aspect of Virgoan ritual and the wisdom of this sign understands that work, no matter how mundane, is an opportunity to express soul in the world. Virgo has the great capacity to find fulfilment in the routines of work. Kahil Gibran in *The Prophet* expressed work as poetry: 'When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music'. If work turns to music then we certainly are stress free and healthy.

Two millenniums ago Cicero suggested that diseases of the soul are more dangerous and more numerous than those of the body. Instinctually Virgo already knows the truth of holism and honours the quest for purity of mind and soul. The psychology of Virgo suggests that this may be achieved through discrimination, analysis and orderliness. Hence Virgo respects these qualities and tries to revere them in their own life. The power of discrimination allows them to know what they are able to digest and to reject what is unhealthy. Analysis contributes to improving their world through identifying what works and what doesn't. And orderliness is very important, as a tidy environment promotes a state of calm and reflects the inner need for order and organisation. In a contemporary way Hygieia is still being worshipped every time we strive for self-improvement and honour Health.

♎ LIBRA: Peace

If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other

- Mother Teresa

Soulful Qualities:

Cooperation	Diplomacy
Gentleness	Idealism
Peacefulness	Tact

As the seventh of twelve signs, Libra is at the mid point of the zodiac. When the Sun enters Libra it marks the launch of spring in the Southern Hemisphere, while in the Northern Hemisphere it heralds the beginning of autumn. At these equinoxes the day and night forces are delicately balanced on the celestial scales. Balancing, weighing, judging and reflecting are all attributes that the sign has become known for in astrological symbolism, the scales epitomising the longing to experience balance. The Libran urge to bring opposing factions into a peaceful alignment is sought through mediating disagreements and arbitrating disputes. It envisions a peaceful world free of conflict. No wonder so many of its citizens follow their vision of world peace by enlisting in the Peace Corps or becoming skilled in mediation.

This quest for peace is deeply embedded in the human psyche. It was so important to the ancient Greeks that they personified the virtue of peace as their goddess Eirēnē. The image of peace was so advantageous to the city that an altar was erected to the goddess as a memorial of reconciliation. The altar of peace like the contemporary war memorials reminded citizens of the contrast between devastation and death in wartime and preservation and fertility during times of peace. In a well-known statue of the goddess she holds the child Wealth in her arms, an apt metaphor for the affluence that peacetime brings. Libra instinctually knows this gratifying feeling of amity and peace.

Devoted to the quest for peace the Libran is familiar with the truth of the hymn 'Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me'. Their altars of peace are erected internally through inner images of peace, having an innate ability to see the goodness in both the world at large and the individual. Pursuing peace for Libra begins in their childhood relationships with their siblings, schoolmates, team members and friends. The Libran is the middle child fated with

the task of appeasing the aggressor and comforting the victim. In victory they sympathise with the team that has lost and in defeat they boost the sagging spirit of their team members. They have the grace of being able to see past the faults in others into their potential, allowing them to be kind to those who have been offensive, and supportive to those who have been discouraging. They give confidence to the underdog, hearten the loser, and make friends with the unpopular. Libra is blessed with the innate skill to be able to bring opposing factions into alignment and include outsiders. Motivated by a pure heart the Libran consistently attempts to bring serenity into its world through reconciliation.

Part of Libra's strategy for peace is to create an attractive environment so that the outer landscape inspires inner thoughts and feelings of beauty. By creating picturesque surroundings Libra is optimistic about the individual feeling uplifted and prosperous. Libra is hopeful that if conditions are harmonious, unsettled and angry feelings will be calmed and peaceful thoughts will be restored. A Libran ecosystem is where the shapes and contours of the environment are symmetrical and the sounds and vibrations in its atmosphere are melodious. Naturally Libra yearns for the pastel-coloured place that inspires them to feel at peace, attempting to create this in their home and workplace as well as reflect this is their personality.

The last addition to the zodiac as we know it today was the scales, the only inanimate object in the pictorial zodiac. As the final sign to be fashioned Libra represents the search for a civilised life dedicated to the pursuit of culture and the love of beauty. The Libran initiation is in understanding that being civilised is not reflected in the action but in the being. The museums of civilisation, like the art galleries, theatres and opera houses accommodate the icons of a culture. However appreciating these works of art or acquiring them not necessarily suggests that one is civilised. This comes from within, having an innate respect for humanity and empathy for every individual. Libra strives for what is more refined and developed, not through conquering or chastising, but by revealing a better option. To Libra this option is peace, the inclusion of all, harmony and understanding. Libra knows that a civilised world begins with harmony and that their fate is to be the architects of the peace proposal.

♏ SCORPIO: Integrity

Character is much easier kept than recovered

- Thomas Paine

Soulful Qualities:

Honesty

Intuitive

Resourceful

Trust

Trustworthiness

Truthfulness

The eighth sign of the zodiac is the most enigmatic of all and has a reputation for being mysterious and powerful. In northern hemisphere folklore, when the Sun passed through the constellation of the Scorpion, it marked the time of Samhain when the ghosts from the past could appear through the crevice created between the worlds. It was the bending of the year when yellowing leaves withered and fell from the trees, wild animals prepared for the harshness of winter, birds migrated southward towards the warmth and the temperature turned frosty cold. Scorpio heralded the ending of the year and the sign became associated with fermentation and decay, as death stalked the countryside announcing that the time for withdrawal had begun. And so over time the astrological meaning of Scorpio was shaped by this ambiance inheriting the ominous feeling that hovers over it.

Astrologically this realm locates the deepest layers of the human psyche, the forge where character is fired and integrity is shaped through self-analysis. It is the place where we learn to trust our instincts and emotionally differentiate between truth and falseness. Like its totem, Scorpio is that realm in every human being that will attack when its nature has been violated and sting with the poisons that instinctually are part of its defence mechanism. In Scorpio we engage in a feeling realm of great depth, which demands respect and sanctity for its terrain. In the human experience Scorpio is the urge to be respected and accepted on all levels. It is the power of love that inspires two equals to share everything together as totally as is humanly possible. On an initiatory level Scorpio learns to accept, respect and defend the sanctity of the feeling life

In a psychological sense Scorpio suggests the stage of self-mastery as the time for deeper understanding and reflection is at hand. In this sign we encounter the hidden and unexpressed aspects of the self as well as the negative impulses that we must learn to control and direct. Here we summon the psychological strength to contain the compulsion and create space for unwanted feelings. What needs to be renounced or transformed can be made conscious in the shadows of the individual's experience as the task to manage the destructive urges becomes apparent. Scorpio has the emotional capacity to contain these impulses and the integrity to act honestly and authentically.

Times when the atmosphere turns dark, when loss is on the horizon, or when overwhelmed with feelings of devastation or violation, the power of the scorpion becomes most evident. They have an innate capacity to summon inner strength in the face of emotional adversity and loss, unafraid to acknowledge the reality of their feelings, mourn for what has past or grieve for what cannot be. Their emotional integrity is therapeutic and transformational, helping others to heal and move forwards through the dark. Inhabitants of Scorpio have a powerful gift of being able to confront the most difficult truths in themselves, feeling unashamed of their humanness. This allows them to be therapists and healers for others, combining the complex amalgam of love and honesty in their life work.

Integrity is a virtue of Scorpio. It is the ability to be painfully honest with those we love, to disclose our vulnerability and face the truth about what we have done. It is the emotional courage to face the disappointments and anger of others. Yet it is also the capacity to trust in oneself, to know that when others let us down we can forgive them and to contain what is most private in ourselves. It is this integrity of Scorpio that permits them to know the depth of intimacy and the power of love. Knowing how to be trustworthy, they are able to contain the fears and vulnerabilities of others. As a water sign they know how to navigate the emotional landscape and as the interpersonal water sign they know the depth of the emotional bonds that is possible between two equals. Scorpio's integrity inspires others to be honest and open. Through this open exchange trust can be built. At the end when the light is dimming Scorpio's integrity has been the key to self-mastery and a clear conscience.

♐ SAGITTARIUS: Faith

Faith is the bird that sings when the dawn is still dark

- Rabindranth Tagore

Soulful Qualities:

Enthusiasm Idealism

Justice

Optimism Temperance

In the ninth sign of the zodiac we encounter the human virtue of faith that encourages each soul to know the continuity of life through its darkest moments. Sagittarius is the vision that soothes the troubled spirit, the wisdom that guides the weary traveller and the truth that sets us free. Its zodiacal emissary is an archer, the Centaur, whose bow is taut, ready to release an arrow towards the heart of the galaxy.

Arrows are multi-faceted symbols, but the iconographical representation in the constellation of Sagittarius suggests the power of perception and the ability to penetrate to the heart of the matter. In Sagittarius we experience the virtues of high-mindedness and the urge to act according to the highest values and principles possible. This is necessary in order to penetrate the primal and uneducated aspects of the self that keep us bound to the meaningless repetition of an unexamined life. Sagittarius flees from futility by focusing its arrows on a faraway target, one that is preferably unknown. The arrow being directed upwards signifies the intercommunication that Sagittarius seeks between the higher realms of Heaven and the mundane world below. The poetry of the sign endeavours to synthesise heavenly principles with earthly ones through integrating spiritual concepts with a mortal life.

In human experience Sagittarius indicates the religious instinct or the urge to spiritually develop and to civilise the primitive. To reach its goal Sagittarius must ascribe meaning to the world around itself. To do this Sagittarius invests its existence with the numinous, searching for the holy grail of truth, the elixir of life and the answers to metaphysical questions. Naturally far sighted its vision extends beyond what the naked eye can see. Using its third eye Sagittarius is able to see possibilities on a faraway horizon which others are unable to spot. It is intuitively orientated, following its instinct and inner sensitivity in the face of scepticism and statistics, trusting in the reality of internal perceptions. Buoyed by its faith Sagittarius is

confident in the power of positive thinking and spiritual insight. Conviction is Sagittarius' empowerment and the certainty of its beliefs allows a buoyant attitude even through the most difficult of times. Protected by an armada of affirmations the Sagittarian is always optimistically orientated even at the darkest hour.

William Wordsworth defined faith as 'a passionate imagination', as it is an act of lovingly engaging with the divine. Faith is key that opens the door to the spiritual realms and in many ways it functions as a spiritualised imagination. It is the ability to conceive of a more worthy life, to know the existence of something greater than just what is visible, and the urge to search for a higher purpose in life. To have faith requires a courageous spirit, an open mind and a need to explore beyond the known. In Sagittarius we meet the need to explore cross-culturally and journey beyond the safety of what is familiar. Therefore the inhabitants of this sign are highly motivated by adventures into the unknown whether it is through physical travel, intellectual discoveries or educational opportunities.

The confidence of the third fire sign of the zodiac has been developed through its dedication to what is moral and right. Sagittarius lives by a code of ethics that aspires to always do what is noble, non-discriminatory, honourable and just. They seek temperance, moderation and balance to find the middle path and discern between right and wrong. For Sag right action is not imposed by an external moral code but spontaneously springs from its inner respect for all of life. When it acts ethically Sagittarius feels closer to the divine and therefore the goal of life.

In Sagittarius the individual is initiated into his or her capacity to search for meaning and establish their own belief system, free from the prejudices and opinions of others. But one of the greatest initiations is the experience of having faith in the process of life. Armed with a reason Sagittarius can face anything. But forearmed with the map of life they can know what to expect. Sagittarius instinctively knows the map and recognises when life's highway twists and turns, or goes up and down or when they have come to a dead end. And at any of these times the Sagittarian calls on their faith to face the obstacles in their path and dream their impossible dreams.

♄ CAPRICORN: Responsibility

Responsibility is the price of greatness.

- Winston Churchill

Soulful Qualities:

Commitment

Efficiency

Practicality

Reliability

Respect

Work

From the beginning of life Capricorn feels responsible, not just for themselves, but for the people and environment around them. Hence many Capricorns have a heightened sense of what is right and wrong as well as an over-developed sense of guilt. As a goat their gaze focuses on the pinnacle of the mountain. To Capricorn this peak represents the summit of excellence instinctually striving to reach the highest point in themselves. Being so acutely aware of what should be done and what constitutes an offence, Capricorn endeavours to always do the right thing, often feeling inadequate or ill-equipped to succeed. Nothing could be further from the truth, but this is unable to be known at the time. Over the course of time the truth is revealed through hard work, dedication and commitment.

Most present-day portrayals of Capricorn suggest they play by the rule book. And this is true to a certain degree. Ultimately the rule book that Capricorn wants to adhere to is their own, yet the fate of many a Capricorn is to end up in a corrupt system with a weak authority figure steering the organisation in an impossible direction. One of the designs that often show up in the tapestry of a Capricorn's life is woven by a string of unskilled or inefficient authority figures- teachers, bosses, managers, even paid professionals! So often the destiny of Capricorn is to be more proficient with a higher level of comprehension of the job than their boss or service provider. Why would this motif be so common to Capricorn? I suspect that it is a cosmic conspiracy to challenge the Capricornian to become their own boss and strive for excellence without the impediment of a system that does not share similar values. Yet this takes time to figure out. The ruler of Capricorn is Saturn, and it takes at least one complete cycle of

this planet to be confident enough to consider self management. By the end of the third decade of life Saturn has returned to its natal position and this is when the personality is more equipped to challenge authority and develop autonomy. After this point, the internalisation of authority can earnestly begin without the individual feeling entrapped by weaker authority figures.

The ancientness of Capricorn is often seen as old rather than wise, as we seem to have lost respect for things Capricornian – time, quality, excellence, distinction. Yet this sign suggests an ancient feminine wisdom which knows how to preserve and contain. Along with the other water and earth signs Capricorn belongs to the feminine polarity suggesting a more receptive and inner initiation takes place in this sphere of the zodiac. In fact many of our keywords for Capricorn (discipline, commitment, regulation) are initially feminine but have become sterner through the course of patrilineal time. For instance responsibility, the great virtue of Capricorn, suggests response-ability or the ability to respond. In other words Capricorn's virtue is to support itself authentically from within, becoming the authority or author of its own life script, not living out of someone else's program. Capricorn is old in its wisdom, but youthful as well, since it has the time to grow into itself.

The honourable traits of Capricorn such as commitment, dedication and perseverance help to support the individual in gaining their autonomy from the system they feel bound to. Capricorn has a strong work ethic and integrity based on their innate responsibility to whatever they are doing or whomever they are with. Therefore they are never free of a system, but hopefully free from the systems that no longer support or acknowledge them. In this way Capricorn is freer to pursue its own vocational paths and not one already earmarked for him or her. It is important for Capricorn to be self-reliant but not exclusively so, as they also need to be responsible to something in the world, be it a project, a task, a baby, a book! Therefore it is not uncommon for Capricorn to find themselves as the managing director of their corporation, the president of their golf club, the principal of the school or at the top of the ladder. But their satisfaction comes not from being the supervisor of others but the boss of themselves. Having learnt the lesson of inner authority and personal responsibility Capricorn can be liberated enough to feel acknowledged within the system.

♊ AQUARIUS: Freedom

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent.

- John Donne

Soulful Qualities:

Altruism

Broadmindedness

Detachment

Friendliness

Humanitarianism

Originality

In contemporary astrology the zodiacal image of Aquarius has been transformed from its ancient counterpart through the discovery of Uranus, the first planet sighted beyond the seven classical ones of antiquity. As Uranus replaced Saturn as the modern ruler it brought the collective values of parity, liberality, consensus and social equality to the zodiacal territory of Aquarius. In 1781 when the planet was sighted the *ancien regime* of the French monarchy was on the verge of being overthrown and the values of *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* were due to rise up. The collective voice of freedom was ready to shout out the revolutionary slogan of freedom for the masses which epitomised the Uranian spirit of Aquarius. The eleventh sign is the celebration of collective unity and egalitarianism and the vision of world peace and love. When the stage production of *Hair* opened in the 60's its leading anthem was called Aquarius, a revolutionary ode to world peace. In this airy sign we sense the winds of change that revolutionises any outdated regime and blows in the new spirit of freedom.

Equality for all was not just a modern vision, but perhaps became more widespread with the discovery of Uranus. Twenty five centuries ago Aesop suggested that 'in union there is strength'. The community is stronger than the individual, yet each individual is of equal importance in the tapestry of the collective. Out of this perception the Greeks forged a new age through their ideal of democracy. The Romans also knew the value of public virtues like *pax* (peace), *libertas* (freedom) and *aequitas* (equity). Aquarius is the archetypal essence that reminds us that world peace and equal opportunity are not only ideals, but human values that can be achieved. It is the poignant image of the children of every race, colour and creed

holding hands and stretching around the globe to celebrate unity and reconciliation. Or Lennon's soulful ode to the end of war - 'give peace a chance!'

To me the Aquarian virtue of freedom is not only the urge for unity in our external environment but the inner experience of independence that inspires us to strive for the rights and liberty of others. Freedom is the Aquarian spirit that perceives a world vision through intuiting its own unique essence and individuality. It is the freedom of spirit that strengthens one to be liberated from the herd, to make one's own choices, create an unconventional lifestyle, assess a situation independently, evaluate freely and be politically incorrect.

In Aquarius we encounter feats of humanitarianism that lessens mass suffering, improves living conditions and aids in time of crisis and catastrophe. Here we commemorate the communal spirit that forges trustworthy communities and establishes dependable organisations. The Aquarian system embraces the individuality of each person but exists for the good of the whole. Brotherhood and Sisterhood is an Aquarian ideal and it is here where we encounter our spiritual siblings; they are our friends, allies and colleagues, kindred spirits who share the inner spirit of freedom and individuality. The freedom of expression for the shared passions and enthusiasm is the Aquarian link to our friends and colleagues. Friendship and the experience of being accepted for just being who we are is like returning home to a sense of congeniality and the enjoyment of the shared spirit of life. In the sphere of Aquarius we find the sense of belonging to a larger family acknowledging our individuality while still belonging to a larger collective.

In Aquarius we learn the value of inner freedom, no longer enslaved to wanting what others have or feeling the need to be like others. Aquarius is the initiatory phase of embracing our individuality and differences, being valued as an equal individual within the group. Equality is not having the same as everyone else or being like everyone else, but embracing our individual needs, desires and tastes. Freedom to be outside the herd, to broaden our perceptions and admire our own uniqueness is the gift of Aquarius. When we act from this space we respect the rights and opinions of others demonstrating the Aquarian virtue of freedom for others, secure in the freedom of our own beliefs and opinions.

♆ PISCES: Imagination

Imagination is the eye of the soul

- Joseph Joubert

Soulful Qualities:

Compassion

Forgiveness

Sacrifice

Sympathy

Thankfulness

Understanding

Piscean virtues are numerous as the sign is attuned to the spiritual realm; in fact, in an astrological context Pisces is closest to the Divine. Therefore it is familiar with heavenly qualities like compassion, sympathy and thankfulness. During the last two millenniums humanity has experienced an era strongly influenced by the constellation of Pisces. During this epoch, known as the Piscean Age, the mythological motifs dominating western theology were forgiveness and sacrifice. To turn the other cheek, and to feel blessed to give rather than receive are the great selfless acts of Pisces. While we may become enraged at being 'ripped off', Pisces accepts it as the way it was meant to be. Certainly, as Mahatma Gandhi suggested, forgiveness is an attribute of the strong, not the weak. Forgiveness is one of many soul states identified with the last sign of the zodiac and perhaps why so many of its inhabitants are mystics, healers and prophets. Yet without imagination it is difficult to access the many moral qualities of Pisces, as imagining is the soulful experience that makes contact with our divine intention. To me it is the Piscean faculty of imagination that inspires the inner life and therefore the distinctive virtue of the sign.

To the alchemists imagination was the super celestial or 'subtle body' where the conception of the spiritual act or the transmutation of matter could take place. Imagination was also corporeal as the outer world, or the substance they were trying to alter, could be transformed through the power of imagination. In a personal way imagination is what allows us to access the soul and give meaning to our lives. When there is no room for the imaginative process then everything that is mysterious or unknown becomes projected onto matter and begins to

happen outside us, rendering the inner world barren and lifeless. In a culture where imagination is undervalued an epidemic of depression and meaninglessness is predictable. Imagination allows the soul to breathe and brings the individual back in touch with their own mysteries and unconscious processes, restoring meaning to life. Pisces is fluent in the language of the imagination which speaks through images, dreams, symbols, signs, omens, oracles, hunches and feeling responses and is also the saviour and medium through which the spiritual realms are made accessible. The language of Pisces is allegorical for the great mysteries are encoded in mythic and symbolic script.

Psychology labelled the Piscean realm as the unconscious. But to Pisces it is the phantasmagoria where the colours, shades and sensory experiences are alive with meaning. It is the sign that most easily navigates the journeys to the other world to be reinvigorated by contact with the spirit world. It is the arena of the artist who seeks expression on a canvas, in a song, through movement or in a sonnet. For the artistic Pisces, the imagination allows the soul to manifest through their creativity. In a Piscean work of art the transcendent is apparent and one is moved, inspired and enriched by being in contact with the creativity. An impressionistic atmosphere pervades and the individual is able to escape from the banality of the ego-driven life to feel encompassed by something much greater. For all Pisceans their imagination is the gear that takes them higher. Surrender is an act of Pisces that allows the fusion between the physical and the spiritual world to take place.

For all Pisceans the imagination is the transmitter of meaning. Without imagination Pisces is a fish out of water and life becomes soulless, dull and meaningless. Pisces has the ability to re-inspire their life through an act of compassion or creativity. Whether they are expressing the music of their soul through helping others, volunteering at the local hospital, dancing in the dark or journaling their dreams there is a great necessity for Pisces to be actively engaged with the imagination. The great gift of Pisces is the ability to lift the veil of illusion through activating their imagination and allowing the compassionate act of serving others to legitimately flow out of them. Through imagination Pisces is able to enter the soulful place to serve creative possibilities in themselves and others.



VICES

It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare

-Mark Twain

The term character flaw is essentially misleading as it implies a defect in the character, something broken and definitely not worthwhile, which is generally not the case. Some character flaws can become compulsive without conscious development. Essentially character flaws are embedded in the personality, an aspect of each individual that makes them individual and interesting. Trying to 'correct' or change the flaw is futile as it is a crucial component of our makeup. However being totally unconscious of its nature and affect on others and the environment is even more foolhardy, as left unattended it may fall into shadow and become troublesome, rather than just a quirky side of our nature. Character flaws are part of our fate that we need to acknowledge, accept and integrate into the overall personality. Disenfranchised they morph into eccentric and autonomous aspects of the self that dominate the personality and frighten others.

What better way to look at our character flaws than through the lens of our zodiacal type, the Sun Sign. The Sun symbolises our identity. As it shines through each particular sign it reveals the facets of our character, including the flaws. The Sun sign is not the totality of who we are but it's a good start. Often the sign before or after our Sun sign is also relevant as we may be born on the cusp or have Mercury or Venus in that sign. Since Mercury and Venus are always close to the Sun in our horoscope they often fall in the signs near the Sun. Other signs too may be relevant as we may have other significant astrological placements there.

Above all let's have some fun looking at ours, friends' and family's character flaws without being judgemental or critical. It's just the way we are! Ancient wisdom always implied we could change our personality but not our character. It is character that is destiny and any quirks of character ultimately make us unique.

Joseph Addison, a 17th century essayist, wrote the title quotes that are used for each sign. Even back then our ancestors were fascinated by the zodiacal quirks of character.

ARIES

*Who works from morn to set of Sun,
And never likes to be outdone?
Whose walk is almost a run?
Who? Aries*

The setting is the supermarket near the checkout stand where all the lollies are child height. 'No' says mother to the forceful child and grabs the lollies out of her hand. 'I want it now' screams the child. 'Give it back'. Frustrated and embarrassed the mother grits her teeth and puts the lollies back on the shelf. Meanwhile shoppers are dispersing knowing there's a confrontation on the way. Suddenly there's a piercing scream and a loud crash. The child has thrown herself into the lolly display and is sobbing uncontrollably. Meanwhile, ignoring the child's antics, mother is checking out her groceries. She calls to her daughter to hurry up so they can get to the park. Picking herself up off the floor the young girl runs to her mum having forgotten all about the lollies. Last seen both were pushing the trolley out the door laughing and being affectionate with one another.

If you recognise that scenario you've raised an Aries or are in relationship with one. They want immediate gratification. If not then they become enraged. But after they've expressed the anger amnesia sets in. The desire that prompted the anger is not only forgotten it has disappeared. One moment they can be enraged with you and then minutes later want to know why you're so upset. Aries express their emotions in the here and now. Their emotions are vented and released with little time for reflection. When they are hurt they let you know immediately and if they are upset you cop it. Not like Cancer who holds onto the hurt and may finally bring it up years later: 'remember when you hurt me in 1988...' When Aries wants something they want it now, yesterday if possible, but certainly no later.

Always living on the starting block makes it hard for Aries to be fully committed. The fire in their blood is always near boiling and they constantly need to have adventures and take risks. Ironically they are loyal and romantic but easily bored and therefore the issue in relationship is usually their restlessness and inability to settle down. Just when life with Aries begins to

stabilise is the moment that another challenge takes hold and they're off once again. They are always ready for adventure, there's another fire to fight or cause to support or animal to rescue. They can't help themselves. It started in childhood. They were always looking for a challenge and no matter how much you said if you play with fire you will get burnt, they still needed to push the boundaries and test the premise.

Aries has only one other speed and that's faster! First off the starting blocks Aries represents birth and beginnings. They need to live on the front lines, which mean they may get shot at a lot. That, and the fact they are always taking leaps of faith, means they are usually battle-scarred from fearlessly throwing themselves into the deep end. For all their bravado and gusto Aries has the naiveté of a newborn and is so fascinated by life they can't see when danger is around the corner or sense when something is wrong. Hence they are vulnerable and at times fragile although it would not be wise to point this out. If you do they will overcompensate by taking on ever-bigger challenges. So often the bluster of Aries is directly proportional to their insecurity. Similarly the more vulnerable they feel the more demanding they become.

No guessing with Aries; what you see is what you get. They're often transparent and find it difficult to lie even if they try. The other extreme is that they are frighteningly direct and honest as a child would be. No holding back. When you first meet them their bluntness may be uncomfortable. While you may find it rude when they point out you've been putting on weight or your lipstick is on your teeth and upper lip it's just matter-of-fact to Aries. Why be polite when you can be direct.

Some Arians adventure in their mind and never get around to the big adventure. But they will, one day! Be careful here as then the frustration may leak out into misguided campaigns based on petty principles. Better to keep moving and if you don't succeed move on.

TAURUS

*Who smiles through life – except when crossed?
Who knows, or thinks he knows, the most?
Who loves good things: baked, boiled or roast?
Oh, Taurus*

In the ancient Mediterranean cultures bulls were prized possessions representing power, sensuality and wealth. Today this is still what motivates the bull-people. As citizens of the first earth sign Taureans are the most embodied of all the zodiacal personalities and their fixity anchors them to the spot where they are. They are not going to budge unless it's worth it. Payoffs, chocolate cake, bonus schemes and tax incentives can get them going. But if there's no reward what's the point in moving? They might as well just relax. And relax they do. Creature comforts are a basic Taurean need. Jacuzzis, saunas, Tim Tams and Obsession (the perfume) were all created with Taureans in mind. As James Thurber once said 'it is better to have loafed and lost than never to have loafed at all!'

Taurus types have their own timing and methodology, which might seem a tad archaic to you but to them it is the way it has always been done. Their logic is why change when you can stay the same. Try to get them to change or speed up and they dig their heels in. If you keep pushing they will start to snort, and if you keep on pushing for change they will charge. They don't get angry they get inflamed! Taureans only have one other speed and that's slower so it is best to let sleeping bulls lie. Rather than wave the red flag of change show them how they can make more money doing it your way and you will have their attention.

Permanency is more attractive than excitement and planning is certainly better than spontaneity. Don't leave it to chance with a Taurus or you may never find out what could have happened. Bovines are so security minded that they get attached to anything that provides them with the feeling of safety and security. No such thing as a transitional object as Taurus holds onto anything that is a security symbol. Daniel's parents were troubled as he still kept the shredded pieces of his first baby blanket underneath his pillow at night. I was a bit concerned as well; Daniel *was* 16. But being so Taurean I suggested to his parents that

when he had something more stimulating to put under his pillow at night the raggedy blanket would probably disappear. And it did – when Jenny arrived in Daniel’s life as a permanent fixture the worn out fabric was relocated. The oak tree in my front yard is dubbed the Taurus tree as each year it hangs onto its dead leaves all through winter refusing to drop them. Through gusty gales and torrential rain the Taurus tree holds onto its leaves. And it’s only in the spring when the new buds come through and push the dead leaves off the branch that the old ones are finally dropped. Never rush a Taurus. They have their own timing.

Analytic astrologers blame the Taurean inability to let go on unsatisfactory toilet training. However the truth is all Taureans are inclined to hold on. Comes from innately knowing that to ride the bull you hang on tightly.

It’s so easy to be attracted to the beauty, charm and talent of Taurus. Whether it’s the Audrey Hepburn chic or the Katherine Hepburn flair, the Uma Thurman sex appeal or the Cher whatever Taurus is loaded with skills and resources. But reports from the partners of Taureans are quite different. They usually complain about their lack of incentive, their addiction to the telly or their unwillingness to do anything. So true. Once you’re in relationship with a bull you may find they don’t want to budge.

The main prejudice against Taurus is generally aimed at their possessiveness and materialism. Because they look after their antique furniture better than they look after you or spend more on their car than you, does that make them materialistic? Are they possessive because they want to know how much money you spent at dinner with your friend? Yes. But what a talent they have at making things grow, whether that is the bank account, the garden, or the waistline. Inherently their preoccupation with the material world is all about their own issues of worth and value that they are working out. In the meantime rub shoulders with a few more bulls to see if their prosperity (The Midas Touch) rubs off on you.

GEMINI

*Who's fond of life and jest and pleasure
Who vacillates and changes ever?
Who loves attention without measure?
Why, Gemini*

If you're socially astute you'll tell your Geminian friends to show up about ½ hour after everyone else has arrived at the party. Why? Because they will breeze into the party and in the space of seven minutes have had a conversation with everyone in the room. And those are just the introverted Geminis; the extraverted ones have exchanged business cards, arranged to meet for dinner next week, shared the intricate details of their childhood and recommended homoeopathic remedies for anyone who may innocently mentioned not feeling well. Contact has been made and the conversation has begun. Wordsmiths and masters of conversation Geminis have so much to say it breaks records. Bob Dylan's *Like A Rolling Stone* went on for twice as long as any other single of its day. Colleen McCullough writes epics not novels. Walter Lippman once quipped 'many a time I have wanted to stop talking and find out what I truly believed.' For Gemini it is hard to turn off the talk tap.

Who Gemini is in the morning may not be who they are in the evening. They have changed their mind many times since then. That's their prerogative. But for you it may be highly frustrating. They've made a date, then changed their minds and changed their minds back again. This morning they were vegetarian but by the afternoon they are carnivore and you're trying to decide what to serve them for dinner! Consummate Gemini Kylie Minogue is able to change her image faster than a Melbourne weather forecast. One of her videos has her duplicated once, twice up to four times I think. Gemini loves the culture of the copy. Everything can be duplicated and certainly can be mimicked. Kylie's first hit *Locomotion* was a copy and Nicole won the Oscar by a nose for her look alike portrayal of Virginia Woolf.

Trickster Gemini sometimes gets caught in their own mischievousness. Mimicking, caricaturing others and telling jokes can sometimes be hurtful to others. Total oblivious to the

whole situation they can't understand how someone's feelings got hurt through an innocent prank. When Gemini is at the helm the light may be quickly engulfed by the dark and laughter may suddenly turn to tears.

Gemini's totem of the Twins is more fact than fancy. Sure lots of twins like the Olsen Twins and Steve and Mark are natural Geminis but what about the rest. Well Kylie has Danni and Nicole has Antonia, but they're not twins. They're sisters! For Gemini the sibling is often a figure in their lives whom they become entwined (sometimes en-twinned) with. Ask Gemini Venus Williams. Research now tells us that nearly one out of every eight conceptions are twins and one vanishes! Vanishing Twin Syndrome. Gemini knows this truth. That's why they're always searching, asking, talking, texting, looking for what they feel is missing. High strung, they are usually more excitable than a gaggle of drag queens. But now there's a scientific explanation. One half of them vanished along the way and they are on its trail.

Curious, gossip loving and innovative they tell a great story. Whether it's about Aunt Rose's ordeal with the vice squad or their friend's rendezvous with the rich and famous they keep us mesmerised with the details. Names, dates, places, facts are all part of the narrative. It is probably all fiction but we are entertained as they detail the private lives of their friends and family.

But Gemini's tragic flaw is what the Jungians diagnose as the *Puer Aeternas*, The Eternal Boy. Peter Pan. Charming, attractive, witty, erudite but unavailable and instable. Neurotic not erotic. They are the life of the party but never are available for a repeat performance. When it comes to commitment they flee. One whiff of responsibility or settling down and Gemini is off, speeding away as fast as possible. Growing up is never part of the Geminian equation that's why it comes as a great shock when the inevitable begins to happen and it's not so easy to change directions or reinvent the image. Hopefully by this time they've found their missing twin!

CANCER

*Who changes like a changeable season;
Holds fast and lets go without reason?
Who is there can give adhesion
To Cancer?*

Emotionally letting go is not Cancer's forte. Instead they are inclined to hold on to the bitter end. More of a habitual response than something that is conscious. So when you are trying to break up with them they get even clingier, firmly clutching onto both your ankles as you try and walk out the door. Their theme song is 'If you leave me can I come to?' It always comes as a shock when their daughter comes home on a motorcycle with her boyfriend who's helmeted, wearing dark glasses and leather pants and announces that she is leaving home to live with Rocky. How else is the girl going to get away?

Cancerians have a hard time letting go of anything that reminds them of the past when their children were young and love was innocent. Security blankets, teddy bears and Milo before bedtime are life long reminders of the familial past. Their homes are like museums filled with memories, family photos and junk! But it's not junk to Cancer; it was Dad's tool box, even though it is rusty and useless, or Mom's favourite saucer, even though she got it free in 1956 with her clothes washing detergent. Jim's first drawing is still on the fridge - he's fifty-two now, but it still has the same emotional impact. And Jane's first ballet shoes are still hanging in the bedroom even though she hasn't done a pirouette for forty-some years. What a memory Cancer has if it is about the emotional landmarks of the family or anniversaries and birthdays. But remembering to dust the mantelpiece or fold the washing is another matter. Letting go is the issue and they'll even collect old jars, take away containers, plastic bags rather than be reminded that the time has come to separate.

I remember clearly a Cancerian friend who planned to spend the weekend at the beach with her family. Motel was booked, car was packed, and both daughters and two grandchildren were in the car. On the express lane she remembered she had forgotten something- her husband. Cancer loves fussing over the family but often forgets they are in a relationship.

Truth is, on the priority list, the partner does come after the kids, the grand kids, even the pets! They need care and attention and somehow you don't.

Attachment is a necessary process for Cancer. But new generations of Cancerians are shifting their attachments from family to career. In the post bra-burning era Cancer and other nurturing types have been liberated from the obligatory parenthood of their ancestors. Without new-borns to nurture or innocents to protect Cancerians find their need to attach through career. Whether in hospitality, hospitals or hospices Cancers find themselves absorbed in their work 24-7. Being a Cancer is like being a mother - it's a full-time job and it has to get done as no one else is about to do it for you.

So sensitive is Cancer. If you don't call everyday then something's wrong. And if you say nothing is wrong, you've been busy, they still don't believe you. By the end of the conversation your frustration levels have risen and you probably have been offensive or short. 'See', says Cancer 'I knew something was wrong'. Cancerians always make excuses for other's shortcomings, but 'she's trying her best' or 'he's having a difficult time' does not excuse theft and deceit! They can forgive the worst behaviour so easily.

But there's one thing that does not let Cancer down. And that's food. Especially cream-filled, doughy substances that act as comfort food. For most Cancers it's not the doughnuts or milk shakes that pack on the stones but the heavy weight of their emotions. Water retention is holding onto the feelings that have a hard time being relinquished. But as Edna O'Brien said, 'There is something about holding on to things that I find therapeutic.'

LEO

*Who praises all his kindred do:
Expects his friends to praise them too –
And cannot see their senseless view?
Ah Leo*

A common complaint about living with a Leo is that you inevitably become the producer of their show, not the co-star. Even though the firmament is filled with bright stars there is room for only one on stage. And that's Leo.

Controlling a Leo is easy. All you need to do is compliment them. They may be highly annoyed or agitated and all you need to say is 'you look even more attractive when you're angry' or 'that colour you're wearing really suits you' and their mood brightens, like the Sun emerging out of a cloud. 'You mean that' says Leo. Whether you do or don't is not an issue, it is imperative to say 'Of course I do!' But be warned that once you have their attention it may be insatiable and need backing up by further adoration. Once the spotlight is turned on them they bask in its light. Disarmed by compliments and adulation they blush and become vulnerable, and like a cat may even roll over so you can scratch their tummy. For someone so regal and proud they can behave quite silly when the attention they seek is focused on them.

For Leo identity and creativity are intertwined. Creativity for the lion is about self-expression and putting their own mark, name, or fingerprint on the product. They are the product and the recognition of their name is as important as the product itself. Lucille Ball was a pioneer in the creative realm of television and in true Leo fashion we know her as I Love Lucy. Coco Chanel stamped her name on the perfume bottle insuring creative immortality. And business entrepreneur Bob Ansett has a name we won't forget even if we do forget what business he started.

Leo rules children and symbolises the inner child which is a major aspect of Leo. Therefore it is important to acknowledge their creative output as a parent admires their child's. Stick their works of art on the fridge, at least give them a central place of honour. From an early age it is

important to continually support the creative growth of the Lion. Let them use the garage for staging neighbourhood concerts and plays. It pays off. Madonna can attest to that. If their creative force is left to wither then the attention seeker emerges, fuelled by envy upstaging the star and attacking the supporting cast with their sardonic wit.

Child. Hero. Narcissist and Idealist. These are all facets of the lovable lion and depending on the laboratory conditions each Leo may display a different mixture at different times. But at all times they are usually larger than life using their environment as a theatre. Where they stand right now is the stage. Therefore it is often difficult to know when they are acting or not. Truth is they are the character they are playing but have just glamorised the script a bit. Everything is always wonderful and grand with Leo even if it isn't. A Leo cousin was telling me about the special invitation she had received to a formal and grand banquet for some very special organisation that is highly regarded worldwide. Truth was it was a BYO buffet at the neighbourhood house to raise money for local tree planting! Then there's the dark side of Leo when the Sun goes down which is far from wonderful. Be sure you are not on their hit list or in their bad books when the other side emerges. Leo is fixed and they never forget a slight, a snub or being overlooked. If they've been left feeling unimportant or sidelined then their dignity has been severely bruised and that scar is not going to go away too easily.

But for all their grandiosity, childlike tantrums and mirror gazing there is really a simple rule to follow with Leo. Compliment, support and adore them always and they will be your most loyal friend and enduring helpmate. However if you can't be their attendant, producer, and cheerleader or simply not support their narcissism then it will be a bumpy ride.

Playing with the neighbour's children the other day I said to both the young girls to pretend they were princesses. The Leo youngster said 'no, I'm the princess'. Then pointing at her sister the young lioness said 'she's the lady-in-waiting!'

VIRGO

*Who criticizes all she sees:
Yes, e'en would analyze a sneeze?
Who hugs and loves her own disease?
Humpf, Virgo*

Desperate Housewife Bree Van De Kamp has that Virgo thing of needing to be ordered or she just can't cope. That's why colour coding the bathroom towels, alphabetising the library books, ironing the lawn, serving perfect meals and ensuring her family are immaculately lint-free becomes of paramount importance or Bree feels trapped inside a nightmare. For all her obsession though she has integrity and conviction but we rarely get to see that until there is a crisis; too much time spent focusing on the free range, natural, fat free, organic side of life!

Truth is most Virgos need order and coherence. Ironically this need doesn't seem to permeate every corner. The laundry may be daily Domestosed but take a peek inside the broom closet which is probably a mess. The kitchen may be Homes and Gardens but in the back of the cupboards are use-by-dates way past their use by dates. Check the garage - it probably is glistening, but chances are it's also a tip! I've known a few Virgo Straight Guys who are in desperate need of the Queer Eye makeover. But their minds are brilliant and their thinking impeccable! No one better to systematise the data or organise the office but they may forget to organise themselves.

Germes are the enemy. So in the Virgo game plan they often mistake sanitation for holism. Regimens of vitamins, pranic breathing and colonic cleansing often inflame the dis-ease they are intent on healing. No sense commenting on it, it needs to run its course. This perfectionist streak is the attempt to order the chaos of life but best done through the simple rituals of life without the idealistic overlay.

Obsessive-compulsive? Workaholic? Why so much focus on getting it perfect? Because something dreadful will happen if the course of life is not tidied up. And it will - the laundry

won't get done and the bills won't be paid. Virgo finds it difficult to let go of something till its perfect therefore there's not a lot of time to relax. They're the last ones to turn off the lights in their workplace and the first ones to get their tax returns in. Masterful at worry Virgo is anxious about what could happen. Focusing on what is missing means Virgo overlooks what is there. So the petrol tank is half empty not half full, they obsess over their debt rather than tallying up their assets and are always putting the finishing touches on their creativity! Work in progress rather than the finished product is Virgo.

Pursed lips and a furrowed brow with a headmistress attitude have characterised the Virgo woman in contemporary times. But not so. The Virgo woman is an enigma synthesising the wildness and beauty of nature with aloofness and distance. "I want to be alone" became Great Garbo's trademark line. Her enigmatic persona characterised the feminine paradox of being alluring yet unavailable in one curt sentence. As a Virgo she intimately knew this. Screen siren Lauren Bacall also captured this Virgoan incongruity with her seductive screen line "If you want me, just whistle....." while the title of her autobiography *Lauren Bacall by Myself* epitomised her Virgo aloneness. Unmarried yet rumoured to have had many affairs Virgoan Queen Elizabeth I was dubbed the Virgin Queen. Something remains unknowable or untouchable about Virgo.

The author of the navel-gazing book *Notes to Myself* wrote 'the trouble is I analyse life rather than live it' and that sums up the flip side of Virgo. Caught in the never-ending complex of self-improvement leaves little space or time to calm the frayed nerves. Dissection is Virgo's skill. But if that leads to indigestion then something's not working.

LIBRA

*Who puts you all off with promise gay,
And keeps you waiting half the day?
Who compromises all the way?
Sweet Libra*

What does a Libran appointment diary look like? Probably something like this: **10 am** Manicure; **10:45 am** Hair, streaks and perm; **12:30 pm** Brazilian Wax; **2:15 pm** Lunch at Bondi; **4:30 pm** Private Trainer; **6:00 pm** Dance lesson. Note at bottom of page says “ Book facial and exfoliating massage for next week.” And that’s just the guys! The female of the Libra species is even more dedicated to the beauty game. But it’s paid off for a line of classic Libran beauties like Brigitte Bardot, Carole Lombard and Rita Hayworth. Mature Libran Susan Sarandon is still plugging Revlon beauty products on the telly. Retail therapy is another of Libra’s great self-improvement pursuits! Nothing strenuous or too taxing though for Libra. But underneath the anti-wrinkle creams lurks the haunting feeling that they’re not really attractive enough, slim enough, or good enough! Therefore they strive to make up for it in charm, pleasing others and partnering, often becoming a serial spouse.

For all their grace and sensitivity Librans can be fairly rude when they are not getting their own way. Their sweetness may be masking a sticky situation or manipulating the scenario. While they may be very obliging and compromising you are often being conned; ‘whatever you want dear’ or ‘you first’ may really mean ‘I am directing this production’. They have a penchant for instinctively reacting or feeling obliged to take an opposite point of view even if they don’t agree or support it. If everything is calm they are disruptive; if the atmosphere is stormy they are calm. If someone is behaving horribly they appear the doyen of virtue and paragon of manners; yet if all is civil they become beasts!

Contrary is Libra. And how difficult it is for the species to confront an unpleasant situation. They have all the classic break-up lines: ‘it’s not you, it’s me’, which really means ‘I can’t face

telling you what I really think'. The worst is that they befriend their enemies and often estrange their loved ones. Libra finds it hard to confront any distasteful situation. While they tend to think they are being altruistic, they are really acting passive aggressively. Their way of dealing with anger is to forget your name, show up late, if at all, bag you to your friends or avoid you. How can the sweetest sign be so ruthless? This inability to confront unpleasant emotional truths leaves them speaking in riddles when something important needs to be said. Eloquent and lucid, they say a lot without saying anything at all. Like Tweedledum they pride themselves in being logical, without having gone anywhere near feeling!

'if it was so, it might be;
and, if it were so, it would be;
but as it ain't, it ain't.
That's logic.'

Astro-logically the truth is most Librans have planets in Scorpio or a strong Pluto, which they tend to deny in the first half of their lives, suppressing the powerful urges to be brutally honest. The further down they stuff their Scorpionic side the more vile it becomes. No wonder they fear the monster within. Libra's roots go back to the time before the Romans identified the constellation as the scales. Previously it used to be the known as the Claws of the Scorpion, a fitting relic for Libra. Still today lovely Libra has its archaic legacy gripped by the claws of the scorpion. Trying to balance themselves and avoid confrontation they dip into the murky repression!

A lot of Libra's antics stem from their compulsive need to be liked and have a high approval rating. Libra does not know how to handle it when someone is not engaged with their charm or impressed by their presence. In most cases it derails them exposing their nasty side, the side they spend so much time avoiding! Such irony, for deep down Libra is truly idealistic and romantic. Libran spokesman John Lennon perhaps summed up the ideal side best in the lyrics of the song *Imagine* that longed for a peaceful world free of conflict and opposition. Unfortunately the reality was otherwise.

SCORPIO

*Who keeps an arrow in his bow,
And if you prod, he lets is go?
A fervent friend, a subtle foe –
Scorpio*

Scorpio's famous sting or stare is a bit like one of the Scud's lightning-fast on-target serves. It's served up fast and direct and hard to return. It always gets the point! Mark Philippoussis knows how to play the sexy Scorpio on and off the court. Like all citizens of his sign it is important he remembers a crucial Scorpionic principle: 'if you fool around you're gonna get caught'. Scorpions never forget. I bet Delta still remembers even though we've all forgotten. So be careful if you're in relationship with a Scorpion. They're serious when they say they want all of you! Till 'Death do us part' stuff.

Characterising her sign Delta has experienced the archaeology of Scorpio from its most primal layer to its transcendent level. It's the fate of Scorpio: diagnosis, descent, darkness, recovery and triumph with no shortcuts. Without the darkness there's no triumph. True to type she's been publicly cherished by her fans, yet also named 'the most hated woman in Britain'. Hating Alison Ashley her first movie sums up the Scorpionic dichotomy of love-hate. No half measures for this type. They love so intensely that's why they hate so intensely. All this intensity can be exhausting.

Revenge is as natural to Scorpio as sarcasm is to Libra! In Astrology 101 you always learn that Scorpio never gets mad, it just gets even. The pay back depends on the depth of betrayal. While all Scorpions have a fervent fantasy life not all are inclined to act out their rage. Scorpions are private and contained and know the power of the evil eye, binding spells and curses. Therefore they are just as inclined to privately cast a few spells to exact revenge. However, sometimes the fury explodes. A Scorpio client who had contracted STD (Sexually Transmitted Debt) from her husband was on the verge of losing everything. Trusting in her husband she had signed all the papers without question. However the investments were dodgy and next

thing she knew she was losing her beautiful home, private health club membership and her season pass at the ballet. She was livid. Her husband had moved out into a townhouse in a trendy part of town. Confused, seething and with a few vodkas to spur her on she drove her bright blue BMW through the front door of his new townhouse. She felt ever so much better.

But there's other ways to exact revenge and Scorpio often does it by rising out of the ashes of destruction and becoming mega successful. My client went on to become enormously successful trading on the stock market. When it comes to \$, especially other people's money, Scorpio can be very prosperous. How much more money does mega-rich Scorpio Bill Gates need? However Scorpio's wealthy triumph often accompanies grief and loss, for this sign contains the mysterious amalgam of riches and death. Its modern ruler Pluto is the god of death but the ancients knew him as Plutus, the rich man or the wealthy one. Ted Turner is another Scorpio mogul whose amassed a fortune but underneath the cash lurks the shadow of his father's suicide and loss of his only sister to lupus. Scorpion heiress Barbara Hutton lost her mother at the age of 4 but gained the Woolworth fortune. Her main expense became alimony payments for her seven husbands. When she married Capricorn star Cary Grant the Hollywood press dubbed the couple 'Cash and Cary'. It is this strange fusion of life and death that penetrates the destiny of Scorpio from their moment of birth. Often near the birth of Scorpio a death in the family or close social circle occurs echoing the ghostly truth.

Sylvia Plath played out the puzzling blend of death and success. 'Dying is an art', she passionately wrote. But at the height of her success after her acclaimed *Bell Jar* was published she committed suicide. No stranger to the underground, its dark corners and desolate landscape Scorpio is accustomed to death. But Scorpions know that it is this very knowledge that empowers them to live in the moment. And while it may look like it's all about sex or money, it's really about the power and passion to live and express the depths of self. However Scorpio assumes everyone else feels this intensely expecting others to anoint their wounds, appease their angst and tend the pain. At least know what they're feeling. Hello! No wonder Scorpio feels so alone.

SAGITTARIUS

*Who loves the dim religious light:
Who always keeps a star in sight?
An optimist both gay and bright –
Sagittarius*

Sassy Diva Bette Midler embodies the raunchy side of her sign and in true Sag gusto can tell the bawdiest joke in the funniest of ways. Even Nuns, Virgos and Bruce Ruxton can't help but laugh at Bette's crudity. True to type she embodies the exuberance of life and easily navigates between the absurdity and pathos of human experience. A common trait of Sagittarians is to also be fairly blunt and outspoken. They don't hold back their opinions even when you haven't asked for it. Most times they're not that interested in yours, in fact, a Sagittarian truism is 'when I want your opinion I'll give it to you'. On Bette's last tour to Australia she lambasted fellow Sagittarian citizen Britney Spears in her indomitable way: 'does she ever call and say thank you? I opened the door for trashy singers with big tits!' Understatements are never part of a Sagittarian's vocabulary; they prefer generalisations and sweeping statements. And refinement, what's that!

Knowledge and the search for truth are hallmarks of the Sagittarian character. The downside is that they know everything and have answers to every question even those unasked. And if they are humble enough to not know the answer then be sure they will have a comment or a response of some sort. Holding back does not occur to this type. Some Sags are fountains of wisdom and others drone on about the details of some esoteric technique that bores you silly. On and on in a monotone voice they platitudinise to anyone who will listen until the room has cleared. For a Sag the quest for meaning is a priority as important as sticky date pudding to a Taurus or a mobile phone to a Gemini. Therefore their adventures take them to exotic locales on the other side of town or remote places that are unpronounceable. They love everything foreign; food, movies, lovers! They seek out the gurus, life coaches and philosophy professors to learn more about the meaning of life and concoct their own metaphysical views which they

are more than happy to tell you about. Truth known it's more like a sermon. Sagittarians love to preach and pontificate but don't point it out or you'll get a blast.

Outside the ashram or classroom you'll find Sagittarians on the running tracks, in the swimming pools and on the polo field competing. They're sporty, obsessively so. And if they're not out on the field they are in the stands cheering furiously for their footy team. But for all their skill on the sports field they are so uncoordinated and clumsy. Even sober they are well known for walking into glass walls, disappearing down drainage holes and falling down stairs. At dinner the other night a waitress tripped over a small step between two levels of the restaurant and like dominos her tray of New Zealand Oysters toppled to the ground alongside my table. Helping her retrieve the mischievous molluscs I curiously asked 'are you born in December?' Embarrassed enough she looked at me puzzlingly and in a moment of recognition smiled and said 'yes I'm a Sagittarian'. Obviously she was used to public displays of awkwardness. But Sag can turn their embarrassment into an art form like Woody Allen has.

Reality is not their strong suit. Possibility is. Never point out to a Sagittarian the pitfalls or the reasons why not as they will have a million reasons why so. Sags flees from negativity as if it were a curse that needs to be exorcised. No sense being uncertain either, as to them everything is possible, and if not, then it wasn't meant to be. Driving their abundant optimism is generally an underlying dread or insecurity that keeps them moving and philosophising so the feelings of loss can never catch up to them. The fiery spirit of Sagittarius fuels the mobile crowd of gypsies, itinerants, road scholars, travelling salesmen, interpreters and guides.

It's this optimism, bravado and heretical or plain zany philosophy of life that keeps them youthful - good example Tina Turner. Since they believe in the hereafter and eternity, then they'll still be humming Sagittarian Sinatra's hymn 'I did it my way' in the grave. For sure Sag does it their way, if only we could understand what that way was!

CAPRICORN

*Who climbs and schemes for wealth and place,
And mourns his brother's fall from grace -
But takes what's due in any case -
Safe Capricorn*

Goats manoeuvre the tiniest trails with grace and aplomb but hardly anyone notices as they are so high up in the mountains. And when you're that high up the path gets narrower and more concentration is needed to stay on course. Like their totem Capricorns are often high up, removed from the everyday walkways of life, and so focused on the path in front of them they have not noticed what passed them by. Ironically much of the stamina that propels them up the mountain is fuelled by the need to be loved and lauded but they've gotten so far out of range no one notices them. Alone at the peak is a common Capricorn complaint. There may be others in their rarefied atmosphere but they also feel the same way and anyway it isn't their approval they are seeking.

Climbing down the mountain may be trickier than its ascension. But down is not part of Capricorn's vocabulary unless it refers to melancholia, which is as much a part of them as fidgeting is to a Gemini or exaggeration is to a Sagittarian. Terribly serious and austere Capricorn takes the sensible route to the top of the mountain avoiding any short cuts, sight seeing or time off. Recently a Capricorn acquaintance was speaking about a musical performance he had been to. One of the best shows they had ever seen. I was fascinated at who it might be. 'The Stylistics' they replied. 'Oh!' I said politely, somewhat perplexed, having expected someone more contemporary, certainly not a has-been from the far distant past of his youth. But then I realised this Capricorn had spent all those years focused on his path with no detours, concerts or discos. Finally on the cusp of retiring he was going to shows. This was his new course and ironically he was enjoying the music of the past more than he ever could have back then. True to type Capricorns are often old when young but get younger as they age.

Unfortunately the doctrine of many a Capricorn is to do it the hard way. And that hardship may be imposed on their loved ones for their own good. Deprivation is often the conscious

attempt to stave off the fear of indulgence or the belief that there will never be enough. Many a Capricorn has a deprivation complex or lacks the imagination to do things differently. Unable to see what might be, Capricorn casts a shadow over their own potentialities critiquing their capabilities and criticising their achievements.

Control is ultimately important. Routine and discipline are also highly prized. Partners and children of Capricorns often complain of being reigned in or overly controlled. Capricorns need to feel in control of their environment and if you are part of their atmosphere then that need also applies to you: too many rules and too many chores for your liking. But in the Capricorn psyche security and control are woven together and for them to feel safe they need to be in the driver's seat. Therefore they are often inclined to confuse love and duty, or care and responsibility, feeling rejected when they've provided everything but their partners are still not feeling happy in the relationship! Their destiny seems to entail unwinding the entanglement between responsibility and acceptance. Until they do Capricorn is inclined to be self-reliant. How could they let someone else do anything for them if they are not going to be able to do it right? High standards and expectations leave them feeling isolated. Then they find themselves humming the Simon and Garfunkle tune *I Am a Rock* unconsciously identifying with the lyrics: 'I've built walls, a fortress deep and mighty, that none can penetrate...'

Perfectionist Capricorn feels a deep need to get it right. There is a standard that they measure their performance by and that is usually in the top percentile. Not happy with a good performance they seek the perfect one dedicating hours and years and decades to excelling. Capricorn takes on responsibilities like Aries takes on a challenge often feeling burdened and weighed down and certainly unacknowledged.

For Capricorn accomplishment is identity. But if that's achieved at the expense of familial support, intimacy and friendship then it's freezing at the peak and a long way back down to where it's warm.

AQUARIUS

*Who gives to all a helping hand,
But bows his head to no command –
And higher laws doth understand?
Investor, Genius, Superman –
Aquarius*

If Aquarius has a choice of two roads they will always choose the one less travelled. Its more adventurous, exciting and against tradition. Aquarians cannot bear being in the herd and will do anything to balk conformity. Their great need to rebel against the status quo can make them just plain contrary. If you offer them herbal tea, they want regular tea. If you say the sky is a beautiful blue, they say no it's a plain aquamarine. The fear of being like everyone else is so great they will rebel or contradict in order to seem different. On their quest to be unique individuals they often confuse their need for space and independence with disengagement and separateness, leaving them marginalised and on the fringe.

Germaine Greer is true to her sign. Over the years she has confronted us with her intellect, shocked us with her sexuality and rebelled against rigid moral strictures and codes. Recently she stirred the pot again with her sensual idealisation of young boys. In the current climate it was ethically insensitive and politically incorrect. But true to character she echoed the ancient myth of Ganymede, the cupbearer portrayed in the constellation of Aquarius. He was a handsome young boy desired by the gods and hence put amongst the stars to eternally remind us of brotherly love. And it is this love of all humanity that Aquarius is on about. But as Albert Camus pointed out you can only love all of humanity 'with a vast and somewhat abstract love' which is part of the Aquarian character flaw.

To Aquarius love is vast and abstract. They love the car mechanic, the girls at work, the footy team, the pizza man, the whole world and you. No wonder you're confused if you're in relationship with an Aquarian. You get the sense that love is an ideal rather than an emotion and if any feeling does come up then it quickly is converted into a concept. Conceptually feelings are growth-orientated relics of the psyche that one contends with. Recently a friend lost her mother and I expressed my sympathies. In an instant she had replied 'But I know it

will be good for my growth'. Emotions are not something Aquarius easily feels or understands so when you finally decide to break up the relationship s/he will often say 'If that's what you want but can we still be close friends?' Scorpios and pretty well all other signs become enraged! What they often think is separateness is actually a lack of feeling. So when you really need a friend they can easily reply 'I hear what you are saying but there is nothing I can do for you at this moment'. More rage. Aquarians are often perplexed why everyone is angry with them.

Relationships are much easier in chat rooms on the Internet where Aquarius can be as provocative and intimate as they want without having to commit. Freedom to relate without needs, expectations or emotions is liberating. Hence Aquarians have taken to the Internet like Taureans to the property market. Aquarians are commitment phobic and at the hint of any attachment flee, faint or push away. Their relationship vows begin with 'I do my thing and you do your thing.' Once they are free of any attachment and have their own space they start idealising about relationship again. And the whole approach-avoidance dance of relationship starts over again.

To Aquarius the world is a synchronous experience where things just happen. It's magic. They just happened to meet you at the most propitious time or the Tarot said they would meet a green-eyed stranger in the supermarket and here you are. You can't help but get caught up in their cosmological world view until of course the excitement wears off and they are out of there.

Aquarians are oxymoronic. They fight for peace and have liberal dogmas. Life is full of surprises with Aquarius. They show up when least expected and never are around when you do want them. But life is never dull. If you seek the bizarre then seek the citizens of this sign, as they know what and where that is.

PISCES

*Who prays and serves, and prays and serves some more;
And feeds the beggar at the door –
And weeps o'er love lost long before?
Poor Pisces*

Being the last sign on the wheel Pisces often gets ascribed with all the things that didn't get projected onto the other signs. Perhaps this is why astrologer Vivian Robson called Pisces 'the dustbin of the zodiac'. Or why its natives feel burdened and blamed, victimised and persecuted or just plain invisible, feeling like the target for indiscriminate projections. Poor Pisces.

Being last they are in that awkward position of seeing and feeling everything but not being seen themselves. Lost in the crowd they forge their identity from those around them and are acutely aware of what others are feeling and sensing yet don't know how to separate these impressions from their own feelings. They unconsciously take on the role of being the emotional barometers for the system they are in. They are creative and happy when those in the system are secure and connected, but become depressed when the atmosphere turns dark and those in their tribe are feeling insecure and unhappy. Uncannily they may also become ill or depressed when others stuff unexpressed feelings down. Trouble is that Pisces has a hard time knowing where they end and someone else begins. Their boundaries are fluid and since they identify with what is around them they flow into their surrounds without question. Characteristically Pisces becomes enmeshed with its surrounds, participating in its atmosphere and obligated to its service. Wise of Pisces to become more discriminate about where and with whom they chose to be.

This is a double-edged sword for Pisces. It is a great gift to be able to sense undercurrents, feel the nuances of feelings brewing below the surface and express the subtler energies of life. But it is also a curse when Pisces feels they are drowning in a collective pool of emotions, helpless to help the individual who needs help the most but won't accept it and ill because they are too involved with others. There are two ways Pisces can direct their sensitivity: one is through

helping, probably best in a professional setting where professionalism becomes the boundary that prevents them from merging with the other, and secondly through the creative arts. Born helpers, they can't help helping therefore it is important that there is adequate boundaries between them and their patients or they feel all the aches and pains along with those they try to heal. Pisces are natural muses, poets, musicians, dancers and artists and a long list attests to this: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Caruso, Chopin, Handel, Michelangelo, Nijinski, Nureyev, and Renoir to name only a few.

Until they are able to channel their super sensitivity they are often vulnerable to everything in the atmosphere from colds to bad moods. Susceptible to wanting to please and merge with others they often find themselves in a co-dependant or co-addictive relationship with someone who compulsively promises to stop (drinking, cheating, abusing...) while they compulsively forgive. Pisces do turn the other cheek but that one usually gets slapped too. So they need to toughen up. And once they start martial arts training, fencing or self defence watch out! When Pisces realises they have been volunteers, not victims, they shape shift from being meek to ferocious. Shape shifting is an underused Piscean talent.

All Piscean troubles stem from the same source. They long for the divine, they urge to transcend and they crave to escape. They are not earthly creatures and create another world in the world they inhabit, spending most of their time inhabiting the other world. Dreams and fantasies are the language of that world and hard to translate in the real world. The bank manager and the boss inhabit the real world and therein lies the dilemma. To Pisces dreams and money may be made of the same substance but unfortunately the bank's employees are not instructed to take dreams.

Reality is such a harsh experience for Pisces therefore their idealism masks the loss and their dreaminess numbs the futility. But that's their mission in this life: to bear reality enough to be able to let their magic thrive.