

My Solar Return Year
Personal Reflections

Reflections on Your Solar Return horoscope



Barbara Howard, *Sun Pillar*

A solar return horoscope is much more than a forecast for the coming year; it reveals a *patterning through time* that can provide ways to reflect on our re-commitment and re-connection to Self each year.

Solar Returns are dynamic, not static – they are embedded with symbolic imprints of the unfolding potentialities of our soul contract – brought to light each year as the Sun returns Following are some ways of thinking about your Solar Return horoscopes

Many Happy Returns,
Brian Clark

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Homecoming

Take note of the time of your solar return, as this marks the homecoming of the Sun. However we might imagine this, it is an anniversary of the moment of your birth, the incarnate moment.

Year: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

This moment is a memorial of your incarnation - the crossing of the threshold between the spiritual and the corporal worlds, between dark and light, of night and day, unconsciousness and consciousness. I encourage you to reflect on what happened around the time of your solar return - what were you doing, where were you, why were you there, who were you with? When this moment is spontaneous and natural, it is soulful.

If your return happens during the night, be aware of any dreams, times of waking, reveries, fantasies, visions.

In reflecting on this time, what symbols, stories, images, thoughts arise - reflect on these symbols in light of the coming year.

Your Solar Return (SR) chart is an invitation to pause and reflect on your life experience through the symbolic lens of your annual birthday horoscope, the time the Sun returns to its zodiacal home in the heavens.

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The Horizon of the Year

What Rises around Me: The Solar Return (SR) Ascendant

As the Ascendant is what rises on the ecliptic at the time of the Sun's return, it is a soulful symbol of not only how your year begins and renews itself, but what qualities come to the fore this year.

What are your first impressions as you reflect on the Solar Return Ascendant?

What natal house does your SR Ascendant occupy? How might this environment, habitat and condition of your life come to the forefront this year?

What element is on the SR Ascendant? How does the quality of your natal Ascendant interrelate with this year's Ascendant? Reflect on how you are being invited to enter the year, to explore and experience new qualities of your personality.

What Sets from My Perspective: The Solar Return Descendant

As the Descendant is what sets on the ecliptic this year, reflect on what qualities and conditions are being encouraged to become more integrated and known in the interiority and silence of the Self. How might this way of being be reflected in your felt experiences in relationship this year?

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The Meridian of the Year

What Culminates in my World: The Solar Return Midheaven

As the Midheaven is what is the highest point on the ecliptic in your Solar Return, it is a significant symbol that helps you to reflect on the goals for this year. What wants to become more visible; where might you focus your creative energies this year? What would you like to achieve?

What are your first impressions as you reflect on the Solar Return Midheaven?

What natal house does your Solar Return Midheaven occupy? How might this environment, habitat and condition of your life be important to consider? How might this be a pinnacle of the year?

What element is on the Solar Return Midheaven? How does the quality of your natal Midheaven interrelate with this year's Midheaven? Reflect on what other qualities, values and conditions need acknowledgment during the year. How are you becoming more conscious of your purpose and vocation?

What Settles in the Self: The Solar Return IC

As the IC is what is the lowest point on the ecliptic in your Solar Return, it is your ballast for this year, your support and stability. Where is homebase this year? What sustains you?

What are your first impressions as you reflect on the Solar Return IC?

What natal house does your Solar Return IC occupy? How might this environment, habitat and condition of your life support you during the year?

What element is on the Solar Return IC? How does the quality of your natal IC interrelate with this year's? Reflect on how you envision home this year and. How are you becoming more conscious of your purpose and vocation?

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Archetypal Influences on This Year's Direction

Honoring the Deities: Angular Planets in Your Solar Return

A planet on Solar Return angle is a prominent energy during the year and like all archetypal forces invites us to be more conscious and participatory with its power and momentum. What god/s are inviting you to be more aware of their presence on the horizon or meridian of your life? How might they affect, inspire, challenge or guide your path

To begin to imagine the sanctuary of the deity for this coming year, first demarcate the territory. I use a 10-degree orb, but use what is comfortable for you. Remember that the cadent side of the angle is where the planet has just risen (Ascendant), culminated (Midheaven), set (Descendant) or ended (IC), which is powerful image for the year. The cardinal side of the angle is where it approaches it change.

What angle/s host a planetary archetype? Which direction is being influenced and shaped by this archetype? Reflect on the angle as the sacred sanctuary of this deity during the year and how we best tend and attend to this place in our being.

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What planet/s are angular? How might you honor the planetary archetype this year? What support and dedication to these archetypal qualities of my being are necessary during the year.



For each angular planet create a mantra, a mandala, an image *or* choose a quote, a poem, a picture *or* write an affirmation, a hymn, a dedication to honor the energy. Revisit this each month during the year.

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My Self-Care Agenda

Nutrients and Nourishment: The Solar Return Moon

The lunar archetype is a soulful symbol of your emotional and psychological wellbeing. As you mature you are more mindful of what is needed for your comfort, security and safety, as well as your response and sensitivity to past discomfort, harm and hurt. Using the astrological images of the Solar Return Moon can offer you new ways to self-care and reflect upon your past.

What are your feelings and impulses as you reflect on the Solar Return Moon?

The SR Moon has a 19-year cycle. Reflect back 19 years when the SR Moon was at a similar position? And again 19 years before that? What feelings emerge? What felt experiences are you aware of? How have you emotionally matured?

What element is the Solar Return Moon? Does this feel compatible with your natal Moon? If in a different element, how might the qualities of the SR Moon enhance your felt experiences and ability to self-care? How might this new sign or element for the SR Moon encourage you to be more tolerant and accepting of your own moods and feelings?

Has the Moon changed elements from last year's SR or has it continued onto the next sign of that element? Reflecting back on last year and the year before how has the SR return Moon reflected new emotional vistas and experiences?

What house does the Solar Return Moon occupy this year? How might this environment offer you more security and safety this year? Where do I need to become more mindful of my own needs and how can I become more at home in this area?

What are the major aspects to the SR Moon? How might you encounter these archetypes on the emotional landscape of the year? How might you participate with these energies to understand more in-depth aspects of your psychological and emotional being? What might this signify as far as your home and domestic life? Your family? Your emotional attachments? Your sense of safety?

Are there any major aspects from your natal planets to the SR Moon? If so, this natal energy is being invited to be more mindful and considerate of your needs during the year. Consider the symbolic impact.

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Salutations to the Sun

Renaissance: The Solar Return Sun

The Sun is central to the solar return chart: its house position and aspects are images of how we might feel more vital and mindful of our sense of identity and intentionality during the year.

What are your first impressions as you reflect on the SR Sun? As the Sun is the heart of the SR, how does its position reflect self-development, vitality, and the growing sense of Self during the year? Each year of life has its own chapter in the book of our life: why the SR Sun is important to honor and acknowledge. How can its symbol inspire us to participate with our authentic individuation process this year?

What quadrant does the Sun occupy during this year? Has it come to an angle? Reflect on this position, whether above or below the horizon, east or west of the meridian. What images come to mind? What might this quadrant of life suggest for you in the subsequent year?

What house does the Sun reside in your Solar Return? How might this be reflective of the areas of life that you need to consider throughout this year – to recognize and identify what needs to be accepted and fostered. Who is signified by this house? (i.e. 3/a sibling; 4/a workmate; 5/a child; 6/a workmate etc.) How might you be more acknowledged or recognized in this area of your life and/or by the people of this environs?

What aspects does the Sun make in your Solar Return? If in a major aspect to an outer planet, then this transit will occur over a succession of SR charts. How can this year's Solar Return help you differentiate the areas (houses) of change? If in a major aspect to Jupiter and Saturn, reflect on what social and communal concerns are being identified during the year. If in aspect to an inner planet, reflect on their archetypal and mythic relationship for illumination and insight.

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Messages from Mercury

Communion with the Self: The Solar Return Mercury

Mercury's agility propels us into many different locales and situations to learn, to interrelate, to connect. As messenger of the Gods, we might think of him in the SR chart as soulful communiqués, dispatched through ideas, images, senses or intuitions that breach consciousness this year.

What are your first thoughts as you reflect on the SR Mercury? Mercury has its own pace, so reflect on the pathways it took you down last year and the changes and the continuity it brings this year. Has it returned to its own sign or is it in an adjacent sign? What quality of thinking and discernment is being schooled this year?

What house is being occupied? Where might your curiosity lead you? What area may be intellectually interesting or challenging this year. Where do I need to gather or share more information?

Has Mercury returned to its natal place - this will happen at age 33 and 66, but you may also find it close to its natal position at other ages such as 13, 20, 46 and 53. Mercury returning is a symbol of returning to a natural intellectual inclination, an important year in the development of one's instinctual way of connecting.

Throughout the year Mercury will be retrograde three times, marking out the trimesters of the year. Take note of this pattern in both your natal and SR chart.

Is Mercury direct or retrograde in the SR? As it will be retrograde about every 5 – 6 years, it highlights a different approach to knowing. Note if it is retrograde two years. Reflect on how this is experienced during the year – if you have Mercury direct natively, do you sense a difference in the way you are taking in information and communicating. If you have natal Mercury Retrograde, does this year feel more natural??

Focus on the aspects to Mercury in the SR chart. Are any natal planets within an orb of 5 degrees? Reflect on how these interconnects may impact your nervous energy, your relationships, learning and communicating.

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A Return to Beauty

Value Adding: The Solar Return Venus

Venus is our bright star, our sensual self, flirting with life, love and pleasure. What gifts and resources does She offer this year? What talents and rewards does She desire? What donations does She require?

What do you value about this year's SR Venus? Imagine an altar to Her – what votive offering would you bring Her this year? What silent prayer would you offer? What request would you make?

Venus loves symmetry and beauty. In the SR horoscopes she will only have eight possible positions, although these will be affected by her retrogradation. What are the eight positions of your SR Venus? Reflect back 8 years ago when your Venus was in the same position – what images arise? If your age is a multiple of 8, then Venus has returned this year and marks a return to your instinctual sense of personal values and tastes.

Being close to the Sun, Mercury and Venus will move through the quadrants clockwise year after year- what house does Venus occupy this year? What one of five possible signs does She occupy. Imagine the house like the place that Venus wants to decorate, value-add, appreciate and beautify. How might that happen? The sign helps to qualify this during the year – when was it in this sign last time in the SR? When was it in this house?

Generally Venus will be retrograde once in these eight years. The years it is retrograde marks a different approach or development in relating and relationship, as well as new ways to appreciate and pleasure self. Reflect on how Venus Retrograde can add to your ways of being valued, more focused on your own creative pursuits and relational desires. If you have a natal Venus retrograde, feel the affinity to your special ways of valuing and loving life.

What planet/s forge strong aspects with Venus in the SR chart. Imagine how they might regard Venus this year. What natal planets make a significant aspect to SR Venus – what transition might this suggest during the year in context of the natal energies that seeks to align with Venus's resources, refinement and grace.

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My Annual Exercise Program

Firing Ourselves Up: The Solar Return Mars

Mars is our internal warrior during the year and its constellation in the Solar Return reveals where it is helpful to assert our intentions, take action, stand up for our ourselves and direct our energy. Imagine Mars as an annual coach or personal trainer helping you achieve your goals – how might you motivate yourself this year; where do you need to be single-minded and focused.

Independent Mars is not consistent in solar return horoscopes, except for its tracking the elements through the zodiac. What element is Mars in this year? Is it the same as last year? Is this element compatible with your natal Mars?

Some years diverge from this elemental parade. This uniformity of elemental patterning is disturbed in the years before and after Mars appears retrograde in the solar return chart. Mars retrograde is infrequent; therefore when Mars is retrograde in a solar return it is as if there is a pause in the action to consider and re-evaluate where physical and psychological energies might need redirection.

What sign is Mars in this year? Do you feel this is compatible with your natal Mars - your ability to respond to and activate what needs to be done. As Mars responds to physical energy, what activities, sports or exercises do you feel may be helpful during the year? What house does Mars fall in the SR? What sphere of your life may need attention, be activated or challenged? Where may you need to be more assertive or courageous? In what areas may you need to compete or take command?

Aspects to Mars in the SR are helpful images of what energies are supporting and challenging your efforts during the year. How can these planetary energies cooperate in meeting your goals and assist in initiating projects. Natal planets that form a major aspect with Mars this year could be considered as forces that can help back you up this year, help you get back on track.

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Considering my Getaways and my Responsibilities for the Year

Social Concerns: The Solar Return Jupiter & Saturn

Jupiter indicates outreach; therefore it suggests where we might develop opportunities, reach beyond our comfort zone and expand our possibilities during the year. It is the archetype that reflects learning beyond our familial patterns therefore also speaks about education, travel, cross-cultural experiences and exploration. Jupiter represents our authentic beliefs and during the year might indicate what we can learn and develop to help us understand more of who we are and have faith and optimism in the world we inhabit.

In reflecting on Jupiter in your Solar Return and its transits to your natal chart, how might Jupiter invite a deeper understanding of yourself, your beliefs and your urge to explore and educate yourself during the coming year? What images come to mind?



Saturn's tasks concern providing appropriate limits and boundaries to help contain and secure what is important and meaningful to us. Therefore in this year Saturn reflects what is important to acknowledge, where to focus our efforts where we need to work hard. Traditionally Saturn is often equated with trials; however in the Solar Return we might identify it more as prioritizing what is important, taking authority in certain areas of our life and maturing and taking responsibility where needed. Boundaries are not barriers and Saturn helps us to know the difference between what needs respect and what is not authentic.

In reflecting on Saturn in your Solar Return and its transits to your natal chart, how might Saturn invite you to become more autonomous, more in control of your own life, as well as the responsibilities and boundaries needed to help contain and accomplish your goals during the year. What images come to mind?



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The Transpersonal and the Personal

Navigating the Energies beyond my Control: The Solar Return Uranus, Neptune, Pluto & Chiron

Each one of the outer planets in the solar return moves slowly symbolising the way we integrate these into our lives - gradually and with respect. Bit by bit we get to become more aware of energies greater than us. Therefore each year we have a new opportunity to assimilate these planets. Reflect on each planetary archetype in the context of the year and what votive offerings and ways of being you may bring to this deity's altar this year?

Uranus represents our individuation process and each year symbolises the changes, the challenges, the unexpected and the sudden shifts that alert us to become more independent. Uranus is the spirit force in the year that calls us to our own individuality and exploration.

Neptune is the annual muse that inspires our soul and lifts our spirits. But it also brings levels of uncertainty, illusion and dissolution to the horizon of the year. Therefore by house and aspect it helps us to orient where there might be ambiguities and confusion during the year, yet helps us to find creative outlets that help to ease the tension through the authentic expression of the poetry, music and image of the feelings.

Pluto helps us to dig beneath the surface to find the treasure. During the year Pluto and its aspects symbolize what might be decaying and in need of refurbishment or completion. What mourning processes are necessary? Where are we confronted with the truth, especially the truth we don't want to face. As the underworld archetype and the God of transformations, Pluto becomes a powerful ally when we accept what has gone and cede control when necessary.

Chiron might suggest where we feel off center, on the margins, or in the wilderness during the year. It focuses on where we might need to be more accepting and embracing of our weaknesses. As the guide on the healing journey, Chiron suggests areas where both wounding and healing are more prevalent during the year through the power of acceptance, rather than the urge to fix it, resolve it or change it .