



SOLAR RETURNS: A Study

A study of tropical versus sidereal solar returns,
precessed versus nonprecessed tropical charts,
natal, residential and vacation solar return locations,
and single-chart versus double-chart techniques.

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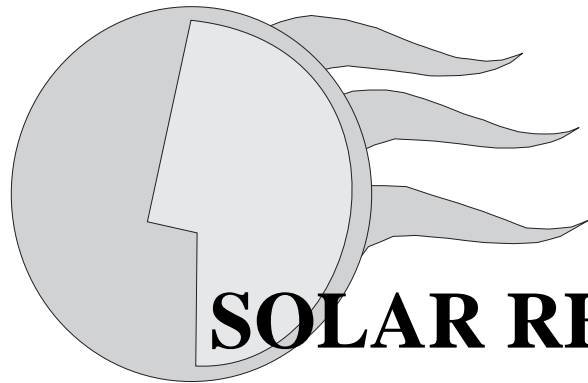
Please enjoy the information contained within. Learn from it and grow in your understanding of astrology. I have benefitted greatly from astrological teachings and I hope you do too.

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SOLAR RETURNS:

A study in the Sun's return to its natal position

A wealth of information can be gained from a solar return chart. They are easy to interpret and give valuable clues regarding major cycles of growth and transformation. Why then aren't they a more popular astrological tool? Why aren't they at least as popular as secondary progressions and transits?

I believe that the solar return's lack of astrological prominence is linked to the misunderstandings and controversies surrounding their calculation and interpretation. In this booklet, I would like to address these issues, and try to dispel the confusion they bring. Specifically, I would like to discuss these topics and dilemmas:

1. Tropical versus Sidereal

Should you calculate a tropical solar return chart or a sidereal one? What is the difference between the two and how would you interpret each kind.

2. Precession

What is precession and should you precess a tropical solar return chart?

3. Location

Which location do you use for calculating the chart? Place of birth? Residence? Present location? And what happens if you are traveling?

4. Single chart or double chart interpretation techniques

Do you interpret the solar return chart in reference to the natal chart or can it stand on its own? In using a two-chart technique, which chart goes in the center and which goes on the outside ring?

Once these and other questions concerning solar returns have been addressed, hopefully the reader will have a clearer understanding of the choices available when calculating and interpreting solar returns charts, and what each option is for. Clarity breeds insight and eventually solar returns will assume their rightful place as a very valuable astrological tool.

After addressing the issues mentioned above, I will demonstrate how I interpret solar returns and effectively integrate their information with insights provided by transits and progressions. I will not be giving broad interpretations outside of the charts that I am interpreting since space is limited. For further information, I refer the reader to Planets in Solar Returns: Yearly Cycles of Transformation and Growth: Revised edition, (Twin Stars Unlimited, 1999, ISBN 0-9626626-8-2), which I wrote. In this book are detailed interpretations of the various planetary house positions in the solar return and further information on how to interpret these charts. I cannot reproduce that information here and will limit my focus to the previously mentioned topics and goals.

Definition of a solar return chart

A solar return chart is a chart set for the exact time of the Sun's return to its natal position. At the moment of birth, the transiting Sun has a very specific zodiacal position which can be defined in terms of degrees, minutes and seconds of arc. Each year the Sun returns to this exact natal position and the time of the return can be calculated and known. This time is then used to calculate the solar return chart itself. (Calculations are difficult and for this reason, computer printouts are highly recommended. Age regression charts and logarithmic calculations do not work.) The time of the Sun's return is hardly ever the birth time and sometimes does not even occur on the birthday. The Sun may return a day or two before the birthday, the day of, or the day after. The yearly transit of the Sun through the zodiac is different from the 365 daily rotations (days) experienced on earth during a year. There is approximately a 6 hour difference between the two. In other words, a true solar year (Sun's yearly transiting time) is about 365.25 days long. We know this since it is the reason for February 29th, a leap day occurring every four years. The extra day corrects for this discrepancy. Because of the difference between the true solar year (Sun's transit) and the number of days in a year, the time of the Sun's return advances approximately 6 hours each year, while dropping back a day every four years.

Tropical or sidereal

When calculating solar returns, everything becomes a lot clearer if you remember not to mix apples and oranges. Astrology has been divided between the tropical and sidereal systems for a long time. The points of reference for these two systems are very different. Solar returns are subject to the confusion associated with these two systems since one has the option of either calculating a tropical or a sidereal solar return chart. But regardless of method of calculation chosen, each solar return chart needs to be handled and interpreted in a manner which is consistent with the originating system and its customary interpretation techniques.

Tropical astrology is based on the relationship between the Sun and the earth, and the Sun's apparent path projected on the earth's surface (ecliptic). Twice a year, the Sun's declination becomes zero as it crosses the equator. The northward crossing is called the Vernal Equinox, and is defined as the beginning of the zodiac or "0 degrees Aries." The southward passage marks the Autumnal Equinox and defines "0 degrees Libra." The maximum northern declination of the Sun is the Summer Solstice and "0 degrees Cancer,"

while the maximum southern declination of the Sun is the Winter Solstice and “0 degrees Capricorn.” Tropical systems are very earth-oriented and consistent with the change of seasons we experience. They have little to do with stellar placements and alignments, or the Precession of the Equinox (primarily a sidereal concern).

Sidereal astrology is star based. “0 degrees Aries” is always associated with the beginning of the Aries constellation formed by stars. Whenever the Sun is in this part of the stellar sky, in this constellation, it is in Aries, regardless of where the Sun falls in relationship to the equator or what time of year or season it is here on earth. Because of the wobbling of the earth on its axis and the resulting Precession of the Equinox (which is 26,000 years long), sidereal timing shifts slightly every year and the gulf between tropical “0 degrees Aries” and sidereal “0 degrees Aries” grows. Presently, the timing of the tropical Aries point differs from the timing of the sidereal Aries point by about a month.

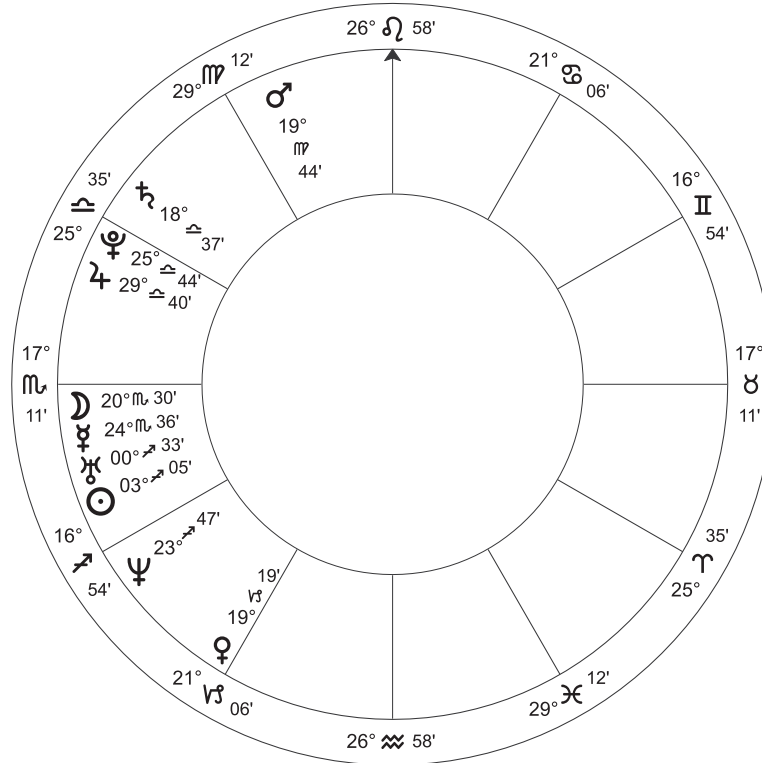
Because these two systems have such different points of reference, it seems logical to assume that tropical solar returns should be handled differently from sidereal ones. The solar return chart is basically like a temporary natal chart and can be treated as such. Therefore tropical solar returns could be interpreted like any other tropical chart, and all tropical techniques such as Sabian symbols, fixed stars, asteroids, house placements and aspects should apply. On the other hand, sidereal solar returns could be interpreted like any other sidereal chart, and all sidereal techniques would apply to them. The Universe is consistent and it makes sense that what works for one chart in a system will probably work for other charts within the same system, calculated in the same manner, and intended for a similar purpose.

Unfortunately in the history of solar returns, this is not what happened. Until recently, there has been very little information available on solar return charts and the few books that have been published were written almost exclusively by siderealists. However, the majority of astrologers in this country are tropical astrologers. It was easy to make the mistake of applying sidereal techniques to tropical charts. To a certain extent this would work. The emphasis placed on foreground and background planets (proposed in these books) is not totally foreign to tropical astrology, but its use is primarily emphasized in horary astrology, or in regards to planetary strength based on whether a planet was angular, succedent, or cadent. For the most part, popular tropical astrology has traditionally dealt with the whole chart, all the planets, houses, signs, and aspects. Therefore, at first glance, it seems logical to look at the whole chart when interpreting a tropical solar return. We do not need to stand on our heads to interpret these charts or deviate from what we already know. Within this approach, the background 12th House planets would be every bit as important as the foreground 1st House planets. Equal weight and interpretation would be given to each of the planets in each of these houses.

The same is true of sidereal solar returns. They should be interpreted with sidereal techniques which may include, but are not limited to foreground-background interpretations and demi-solar returns. Please keep in mind that these sidereal techniques may not work well with tropical solar return charts, and tropical techniques may not suit sidereal solar returns.

I will readily admit that I am not familiar with sidereal techniques. I am a tropical astrologer. When I first started studying solar returns back in the 1970's, I ran into the problems facing many astrologers today. It was at that time that I played with both tropical and sidereal charts. I ultimately connected with the

tropical solar return and saw many correlations between what my clients were telling me and what I was seeing in the solar return chart itself. Some interpretations were so blatant, they could not be denied.



Debbie - Solar Return - Chart 1

For example, here is the solar return chart for a newly divorced woman named Debbie. She had been married for at least ten years. During most of her marriage, she was very overweight and appeared unattractive since she did not care how she looked. She spent her time raising her children and rarely went out. Finances changed and the family needed more money. Debbie was forced to go out and get a part-time job at a local supermarket. She had felt very restricted by her husband for most of her marriage, and once she was out working, she made friends quickly. Slowly the weight began to come down. As Debbie began to care for her appearance, a beautiful woman emerged. Her husband was very threatened by these changes in his wife and sought to control her even more. But by then she would have none of it and resisted all limitations. Fighting broke out and Debbie eventually asked her husband to leave the house, then filed for a divorce. This solar return starts just as the divorce is final. Debbie is on her own raising two children. Being alone and independent is a new experience for her since she wed right out of high school and went from her parent's home to her marriage.

As we look at the chart, the planetary placements seem very obvious. Note the emphasis on the 1st House and the need to do something "on your own, for yourself, and by yourself." Both the Sun and the Moon are in the 1st House lending importance to this house. When both of the lights are in the same house in a solar return chart, this indicates that a new beginning is taking place according to that house position. In this case, there certainly was a new beginning for Debbie. When the Sun and the Moon are in the same

house, but in different signs this indicates that the conscious urges and needs are different from the unconscious urges and needs. The individual may experience two very different sides of his or her personality.

On one level, Debbie loved her freedom and wanted no limitations whatsoever. She was enjoying herself and frequently went out with friends from work. Her personality bloomed as she learned to have fun, and her appearance continued to improve throughout the year until she became quite striking.

But on another level, Debbie's needs and urges were different. Her Moon was in Scorpio conjunct Mercury in the 1st House and she had discovered sex. For the first time in her life, she was orgasmic. She said, "I never knew it could be like this!" She loved sex and she already had a steady lover named Joe. The security and stability of this affair comforted her. But her steady lover wanted to marry Debbie and tie her down again. Joe had also recently left a marriage and was looking seriously for a new mate. Debbie was torn. She knew if she did not settle down Joe would move on. She loved Joe and she loved sex with him, but she also loved her freedom and would not compromise. For most of the year, she was able to juggle both.

Other placements in the chart are also very apparent to even the novice eye. Finances, normally associated with the 2nd House were very "iffy." Debbie only had a part-time job, and though she was trying to move to full-time employment at the supermarket, she was placed on a waiting list for this change. To compensate for the delay and reduced hours, she worked extra hard (Mars in the 10th House) and applied for all the extra hours she could get. Her employers saw her as a very energetic and willing worker. She did her best to please the management even when decisions seemed arbitrary to her.

Goals had to be completely redefined (Saturn in the 11th House). In light of her circumstances, Debbie had to be very practical and plan for the future. The move to full-time employment might not come during the year. This is especially true with Saturn in the 11th House of promotions. In fact, it did not, but Debbie was able to manage by picking up extra hours her co-workers did not need or want.

And what about the only two cadent planets? Jupiter in the 12th House indicates an inner enthusiasm for a life that keeps you going. For those who are religious, it is like having a Guardian Angel watching over you. Debbie radiated hope and enthusiasm. Pluto in the 12th House indicates the possibility of psychological deception. With this placement, one's personal problems can easily be attributed to others. Personal responsibility is dismissed and your problems are not your own. It was easy for Debbie to see the psychological problems her husband and lover had, but she was blind to her own idiosyncrasies. While Pluto is in the 12th House of the solar return chart, it is more difficult to see yourself and be introspective, but also more important to do so.

Planets in signs

An important distinction needs to be made here regarding the interpretation of tropical solar return charts. You cannot treat them totally like a temporal natal chart since the house position of a solar return planet is much more important than the sign. This simplifies solar return interpretation greatly making these charts even easier to interpret than natal charts. There are logical reasons why signs are not particularly important.

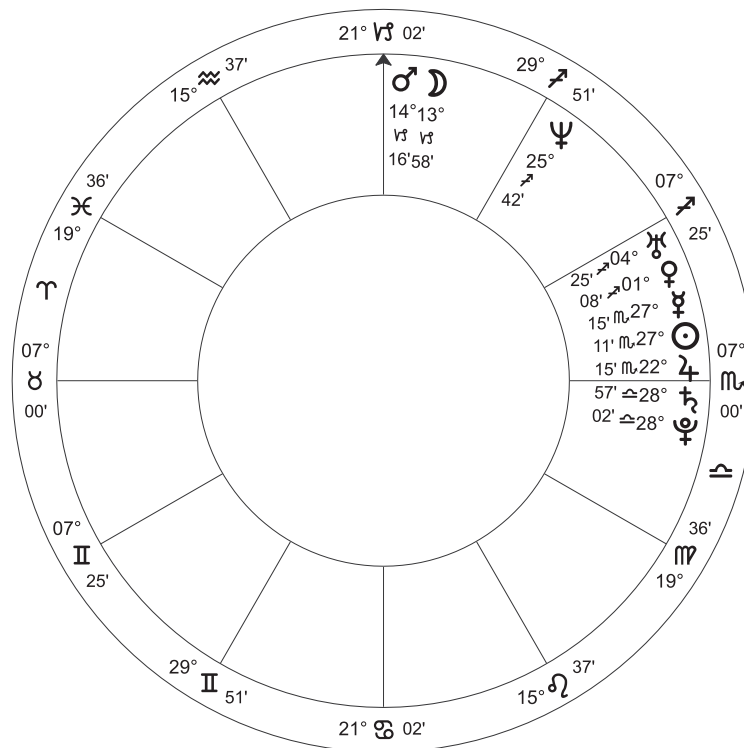
1. The Sun is always the same and never changes sign or position.

2. Mercury can only be plus or minus one sign from the Sun and therefore has limited movement.
3. Venus routinely has eight different solar return placements. After eight years, the placements begin to repeat themselves as a new cycle begins. You can tell a lot about your love life by ascertaining what these 8 positions are.
4. Jupiter changes sign each year and consistently goes from one sign to the next.
5. Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto will probably stay in the same sign for everyone during the year and it is unlikely that the sign will greatly influence the interpretation.
6. And finally, the Moon also has a limited number of placements since it is involved in a nineteen year eclipse cycle with the Sun. Once the cycle is completed, the 19 positions are repeated.

Mars is the only planet which is erratic and changes signs regularly and freely, therefore this might be the only planet for which sign is important. So when interpreting a solar return chart, it is more important to emphasize the house position than to focus on a planet's sign.

Precession

From our previous discussion of tropical and sidereal astrology it is evident that precession is a sidereal concept that has little to do with the tropical system. Some astrologers feel that a solar return chart should be precessed or advanced to make allowances for the gradual shift in the Precession of the Equinox. This may be very true for sidereal solar return charts, but there is no theoretical basis for precessing a tropical solar return. Precession, by its very nature indicates stellar influences. There are no stellar, sidereal, or precessional influences innately important to the tropical system.



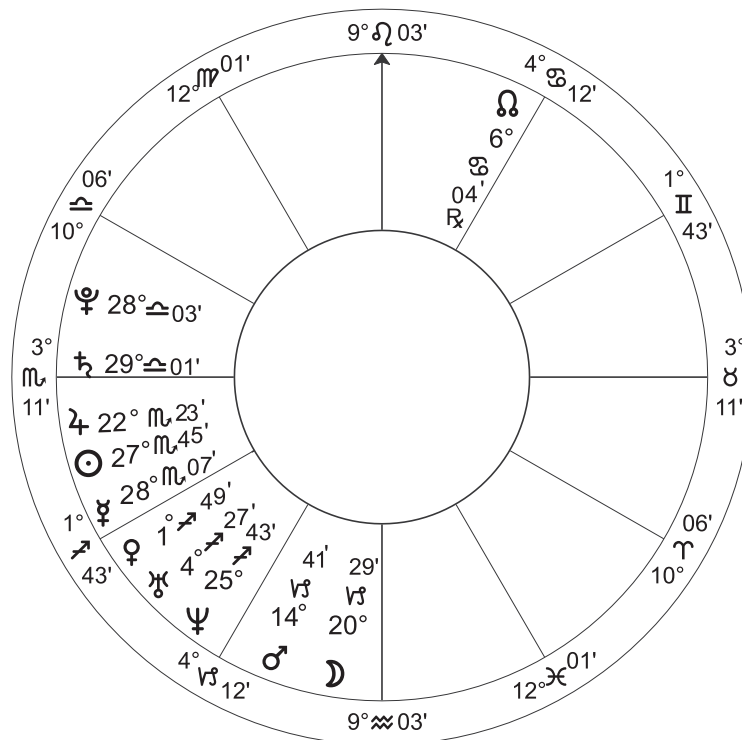
Patty - Non-Precessed Tropical Solar Return - Chart 2

In all things astrological, we must look at the theoretical basis for what we are doing and stay within the theoretical system. If the theory cannot hold water, then we must be very careful about what we research.

In my studies of solar return charts, I originally looked at precessed and non-precessed tropical and sidereal solar returns. I eventually settled on a tropical non-precessed chart. My interpretations are very psychologically oriented and the tropical chart seemed to fit what I was seeing in my clients. I ultimately studied tropical non-precessed solar returns for ten years, carefully noting the comments and situations of others in regards to their solar return placements.

For me, precessed tropical charts do not work and make no theoretical sense. They did not work for me back in the 1970's and they do not work for me now. While writing this article, I reviewed my opinion on tropical precessed solar return charts by looking at some new charts. My opinion is unchanged. A classic example of the differences between a non-precessed tropical solar return (chart 2) and a precessed one (chart #3) is given.

This is the tropical non-precessed solar return chart for Patty as she begins a hot new romance. She falls head over heels in love and gives everything she has for this relationship. She sells the family farm and moves to another state to be with her lover. She leaves her old job and old life behind. Any time there are four or more planets in a solar return house, the focus tends to be overwhelming. Other areas of life may be neglected as attention narrows. This was particularly true in Patty's case and there was no doubt what she was interested in.



Patty - Precessed Tropical Solar Return - Chart 3

Now look at the precessed tropical solar return. The emphasis is very much on the 1st House. The interpretation is more likely to indicate that Patty was living alone and on her own. Instead she was in the process of moving in with someone and having one of the most significant relationships in her life.

If there are astrologers out there who believe in or use precessed tropical solar return charts, please publish your findings and show us how you would interpret one of these charts.

Location for the solar return chart

There has been a great deal of debate over the location you should use for a solar return chart. Some astrologers believe that the solar return should be calculated using the natal location. Others believe that the solar return should be calculated for your residence or for where you will spend most of your time during the year. Still others believe that your location at the moment of the Sun's return is the one of greatest importance. It seems that all of these charts work, but there is a difference in how we would understand them.

The solar return for the natal residence is a solar return that you are born with. Like a secondary progression for the natal location, you cannot change these charts and they are set in motion the moment you are born. This natal location solar return chart is valid and has good information to offer, but it seems to be more internalized like a secondary progression chart itself. When it is impossible to know where an individual was for the Sun's return, use this chart and it will provide you with some insight into the year.

The resident solar return chart is set up for where you live. This chart appears more accurate than the natal solar return chart since it reflects some of the changes that have affected you since you were born. However, it does not reflect any free-willed decisions you might make to handle issues in a manner different from the one shown in the natal solar return chart. You can change your orientation by relocating for the Sun's return. These decisions and adjustments only appear in the solar return calculated for your exact location at the time of the Sun's return.

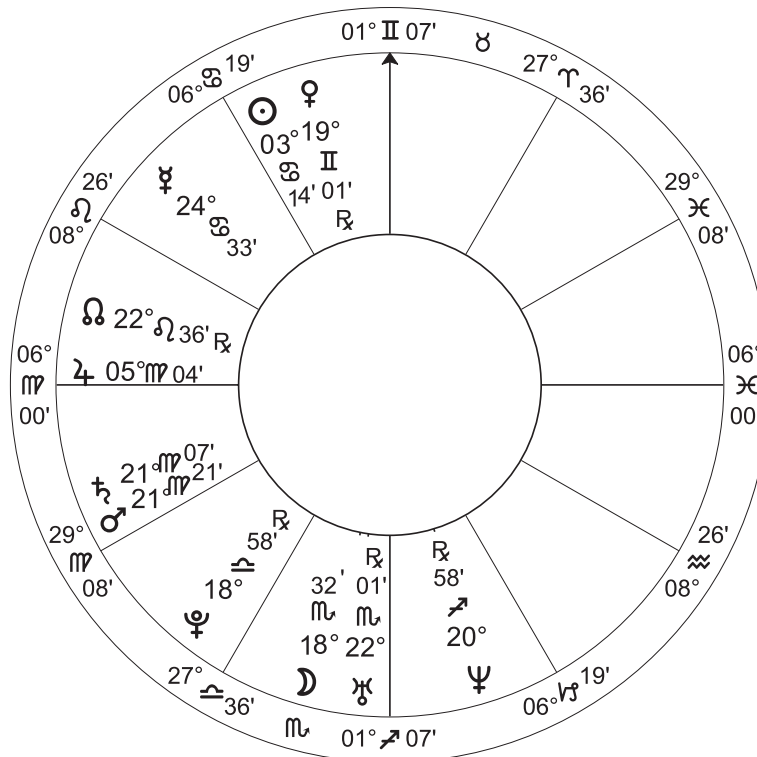
I believe that the solar return chart set for your location at the exact time of the Sun's return is the most accurate. The other charts are valid, but this one seems to be the most true. The aspects are the same no matter where you go. Configurations (T-squares, Grand Trines and Grand Crosses) remain. The degrees and minutes of the planets' positions will not change if you travel. This is because the GMT time of the Sun's return stays the same no matter where you go, but the Ascendent, Midheaven, and the orientation of the planets in the solar return wheel will slowly rotate as you move east or west. By relocating or traveling for your solar return, you can adjust your focus of attention and the house placements for the planets.

For example, say you have a difficult T-square in your residential solar return which falls in the cadent houses. You might be concerned about your health if the opposition falls from the 12th to the 6th House. Perhaps you are planning to move cross country during the year and you decide that since you are already anticipating major career and home changes, you might as well place this opposition in the 10th and 4th Houses and deal with problems this way. You adjust the orientation of the T-square by traveling to another part of the country for your Sun's return.

To make adjustments, you pick your location carefully making sure your destination has the qualities you are looking for. Through solar return relocation, an individual can make a conscious choice to grow and face issues in a certain way or through a certain venue. Since energy follows thought, this commitment to a new orientation will occur. You cannot avoid issues by changing your location, you can only choose how you wish to handle things.

There are certain things traveling for your solar return cannot do. You cannot negate influences seen in transits, progressions, and solar arcs. Problems or challenges seen in all of these charts will need to be faced and handled even if you have sought to negate them from the solar return chart through relocation. Traveling will not change this. Solar return relocation is only a channeling process. You channel or direct your attention to handle matters in a certain way by making a conscious choice. You decide how you would like to experience the changes in consciousness that need to occur and in which area of your life you wish to experience them. You cannot decide to completely hide or avoid. Keep in mind that although we are free-willed beings, there is only so much latitude we can experience. Some events or experiences are necessary for the soul growth.

Perhaps an example of these three types of solar return charts would be appropriate here. Chart #4 is the natal location solar return for Joann. She wants to quit her job, but is afraid to do so. Notice the Sun and Venus in the 10th House of career and the possibility of her doing really well on her own. It is common for an individual to become self-employed while the Sun is in the 10th. The 10th House is also the house of destiny path changes and important decisions are made while the Sun is here.

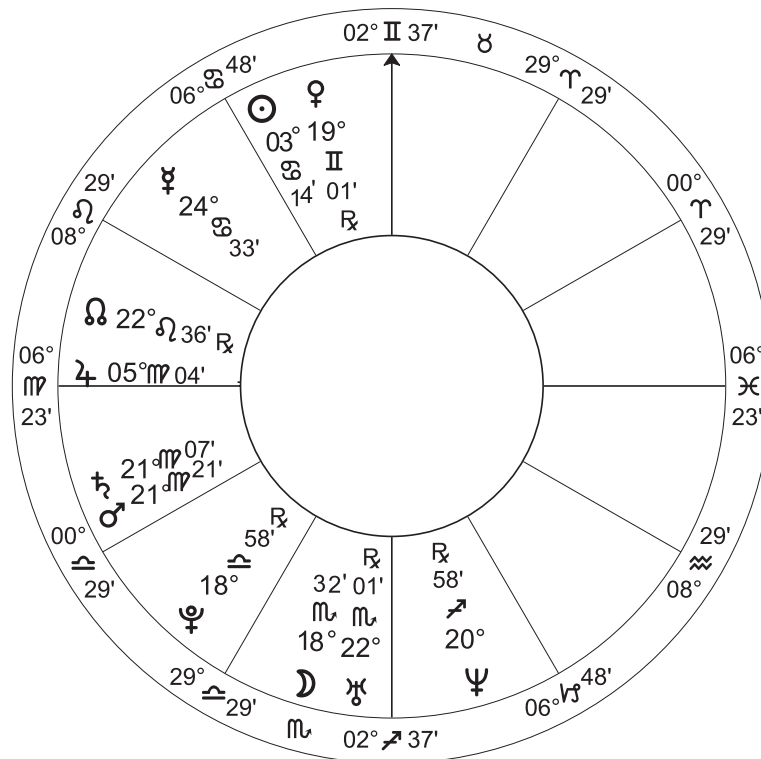


Joann - Natal Location Solar Return - Chart 4

The Sun is sextiled by Jupiter which is poised to cross the ascendent. Because it is within two degrees of the house cusp, Jupiter can be interpreted and read for both the 1st and the 12th Houses. Be aware that eventually Jupiter will cross into the 1st House by transit. Transits to solar return chart angles are significant and can be used for timing. Jupiter in the 1st House indicates a self-made opportunity or a position of great benefit that you create for yourself. But you must be the one to create it since it will not be handed to you ready made. For example, you start your own business or invent a new product.

With Saturn and Mars conjunct in the 1st House, much discipline and effort will be required if Joann is to get what she wants. Since natal Saturn is in the 1st House of Joann's birth chart, she is equal to the task. Pluto in the 2nd House shows a dramatic change in income. Salaries either go way up or way down. Since Mercury in the 11th House of long-term goals squares Pluto, Joann can expect money to decrease as she initiates long-term changes while still handling bills with short-term finances. Security is a little uncertain since Neptune opposes Venus from the 4th House.

There is a major problem with this chart. Joann has been thinking of quitting her job for years and has always been unable to do so. The Moon and Uranus are intercepted in Scorpio in the 3rd House. Interceptions indicate limitations and for this reason it will again be difficult for Joann to make the decision and to say the words, "I quit."

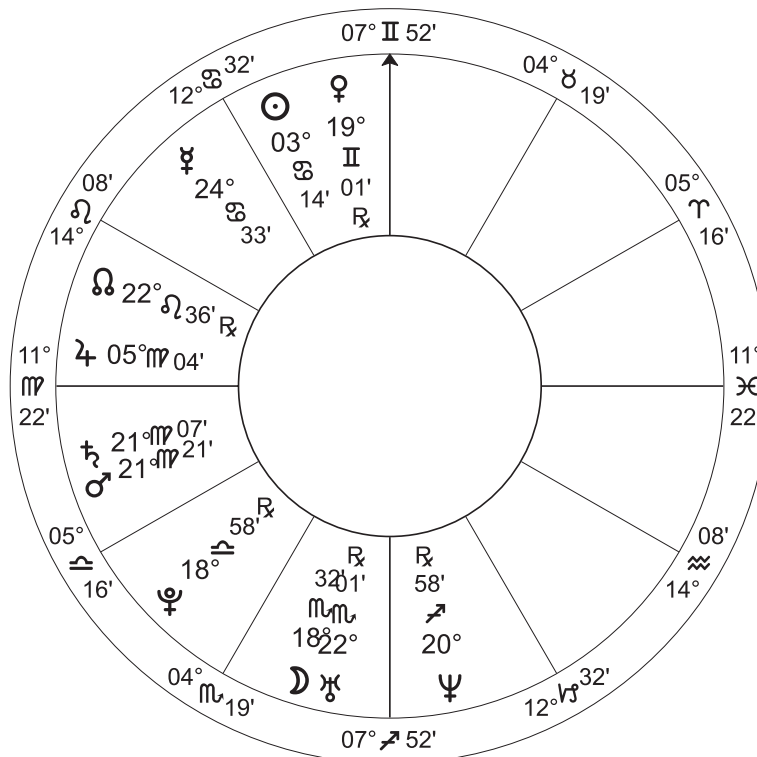


Joann - Resident Location Solar Return - Chart 5

Joann does not live in her birth town anymore. She has moved south, but there is very little change in the residential solar return (chart 5). Notice that it has the same planetary placements and 3rd House interception. This solar return is essentially the same as the natal location solar return.

To illustrate further, look at the exact location solar return (chart 6). Joann was not at home for her Sun's return. She had decided to travel to Boston to free up the interception in the 3rd House. This was a conscious and willful decision. With this act, she was stating her intention to quit. Notice the 3rd House cusp in the exact location solar return chart. It is now in Scorpio and Joann's house of decision and speech is no longer intercepted.

As it turned out, Joann did not have to quit. She was fired. The afternoon she was to depart for Boston, she had a run-in with the boss. When Joann returned to her office, she began to bad-mouth the executive loudly. She was really sounding off and using strong words. One of her co-workers activated the public address system and sent her conversation all through the building. Her boss heard everything she said and immediately terminated her employment. This turned out to be very fortuitous for Joann. She was able to collect unemployment while setting up her own business. Though money was tight, she managed and within a year's time became a successful business woman running her own one-person show.



Joann - Vacation Solar Return - Chart 6

I know from my lectures that many astrologers have very strong opinions about which location is the most important one to use for solar returns. To me all of them are valid and I do not discount any of them, though I prefer the exact location. You, yourself may use which ever one you please to calculate your solar returns. I suggest you play with the three and form your own opinion. There are no wrongs in this matter, only preferences. See which one works for you.

Single and double chart techniques

Astrologers have tried reading solar returns as a single chart and have also tried to read them in relationship to the natal. Many believe that the solar return chart can only be read in reference to the natal and cannot stand alone. In fact, in the study guidelines for the NCGR examination for professional astrologers this is stated very clearly. "Solar and lunar returns are meaningless unless compared to the natal chart."

I do not know about lunar returns, but it is my considered opinion and experience that solar return charts can stand alone and be read as single charts. Ninety percent of the necessary information can come from the solar return chart itself. The information gleaned from the relationship between the solar return chart and the natal is generally a reiteration of what is already seen in the solar return chart itself alone. Although the added information is nice and provides further insight, it is generally not necessary.

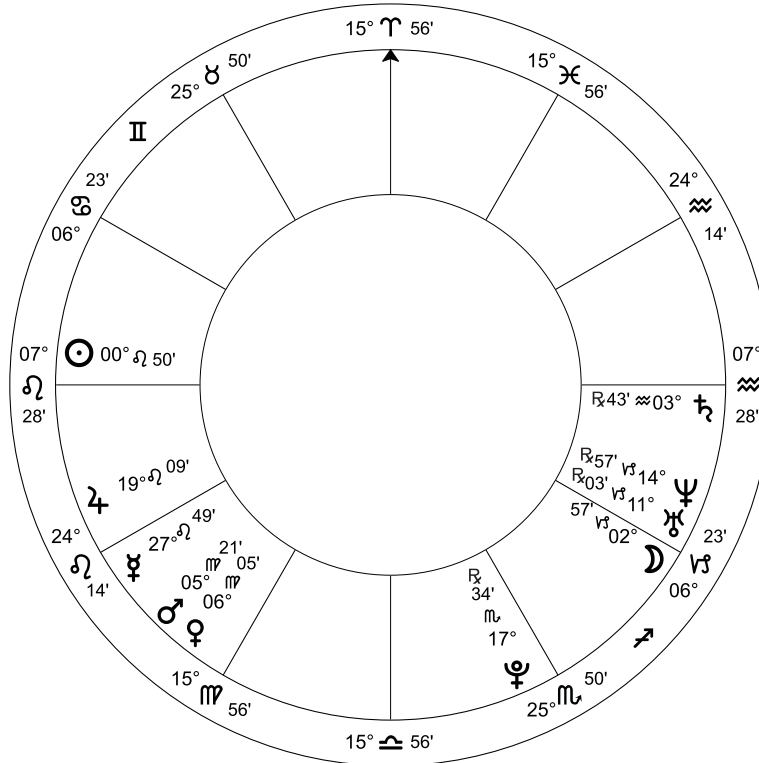
If you are intending to look at the solar return chart in relationship to the natal chart, use a two chart technique and place the solar return on the inside wheel. This preserves the integrity of the solar return houses, and the placement and orientation of the planets. When the solar return chart is placed outside of the natal chart, it becomes very difficult to get a gestalt of what the year will be like and your interpretation will suffer greatly. You cannot treat a solar return like a secondary progressed chart. It is a birth chart for the new cycle of growth and should be respected in its entire presentation. Let us look at some charts which demonstrate these ideas. The visual element brings ideas into focus, making them more understandable.

Jane is a middle-aged woman who is dissatisfied with her present occupation and is looking to switch careers. She wishes to study massage and open a small healing practice. Money is not a problem for her. She is married and her husband earns a good salary. She can easily drop out and pursue her studies.

But Jane is a very intuitive person and is troubled by the messages she is getting. She thinks she is being told to leave her husband to pursue a spiritual path. She loves her husband and does not understand the meaning of the symbols she perceives. The confusion makes her very anxious and fearful. She does not know how she can support herself on her own and study at the same time. She also does not wish to end a good relationship.

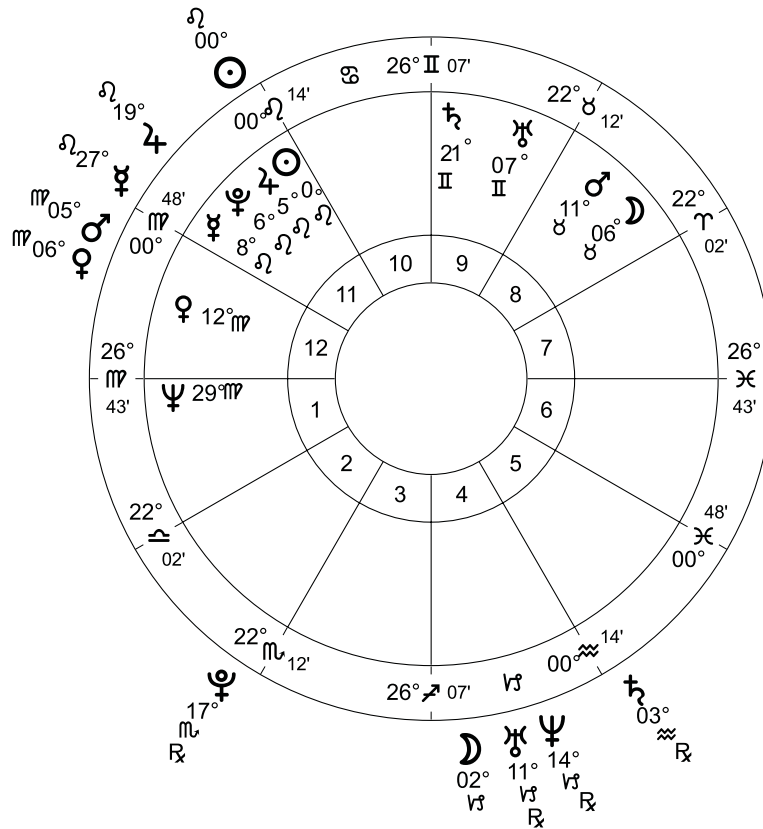
It is very common for an aspirant to misinterpret symbols and overestimate the level of sacrifice needed for spiritual growth. The Universe is actually a very gentle and loving place. On questioning, Jane revealed more information about her relationship with her husband. They had always done things together and she had followed his lead for many years. But as she got older, Jane hungered more and more for the intuitive and spiritual. Her husband, ever the rationalist, remained very left brain. He was not interested in massage, healing, or anything esoteric. Jane felt uneasy breaking away mentally and was slow to get on with her studies. Her Higher Self began to send her the message "to go off on her own" and "leave her husband behind." Jane took these messages to heart and understood them to mean she must physically leave. In

actuality, she needed to think for herself, and study what she was interested in regardless of her husband's interests.



Jane's Solar Return - Chart 7

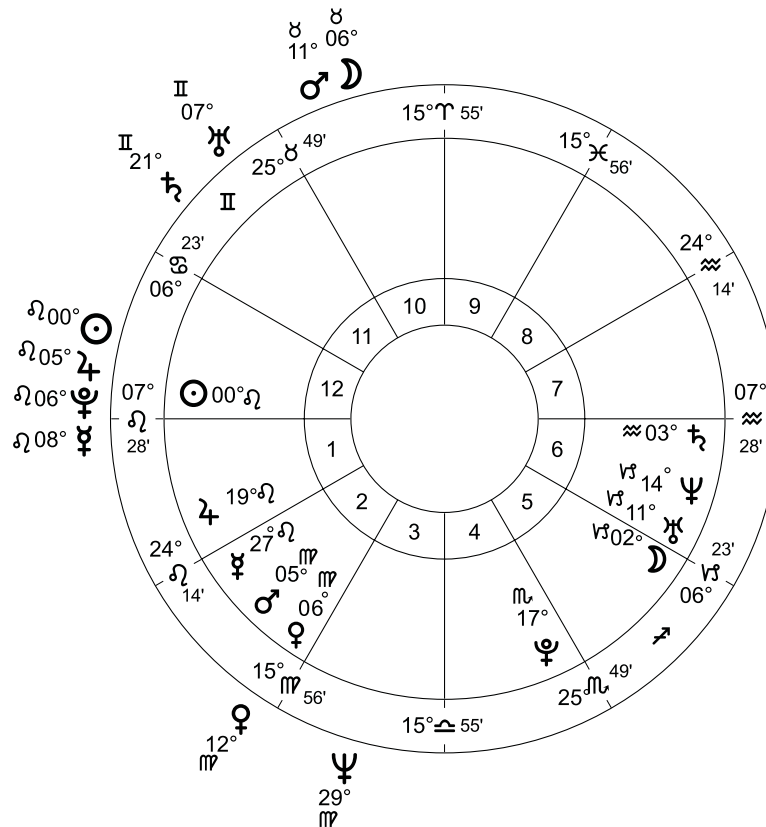
When we look at the solar return, we notice the Sun in the 12th House. This can be both a sign of spiritual development and a sign of emotional anxiety. Saturn so close to the 7th cusp confirms Jane's sense of separation from her husband. She will need to follow her own path. Saturn opposes the Sun from the 6th House indicating the need to work from the spiritual realm to the physical. The three outer planets in the 6th House show an interest in health, nutrition, and healing techniques. Dietary changes and improving health habits are likely during the year. Jane may lose weight or cut back on certain foods (Saturn in the 6th). Chronic health problems (Saturn), physical sensitivities or allergies to certain foods may arise (Neptune in the 6th). Meditation and quiet times will help her relax and alleviate nervous tension (Uranus in the 6th). Mars is in the 2nd indicating that the more Jane hustles the more she will earn. If she decides to cut back on her hours or quit, her salary will be cut. And if she finishes school and takes on many clients, her salary will increase. She will have many money-making ideas with Mercury in the 2nd and she will always be comfortable with the amount of money her has to spend (Venus). The 2nd House Virgo planets are trine to the Capricorn planets showing a positive connection between Jane's personal health studies or healing and her ability to make money. What she does for herself, she can use to help others. During the year, Jane and her husband sold their second home. Notice Pluto in the 4th. Since the summer cottage was in England, the sale was complicated. Jupiter in the 1st again indicates that self-made opportunity. This is a wonderful time for Jane to do her own thing.



Jane - Inner Wheel Natal - Outer Wheel Solar Return - Chart 8

Chart 8 shows the natal chart with the solar return chart around the outside. Notice that the solar return chart has lost all definition. Though there is an emphasis on goals (11th House), we are not sure what these goals will be about. We have no sense of working with the body and the physical. We do know there will be a financial change since the solar return Pluto falls in the 2nd natal House, squaring solar return Jupiter and the natal 11th House planets. The sale of the foreign small cottage is reflected in the Capricorn solar return planets falling into the 4th House.

Now look at the solar return chart with the natal around the outside (chart #9). This double chart is the reverse of the one you have just seen. Within this set up, Jane's fear becomes very blatant. Natal Pluto with Jupiter and Mercury conjuncts the solar return Ascendent. A natal planet that conjuncts a solar return angle has a special significance. When the natal planet conjuncts the Ascendent, it generally relates to an underlying motivation which fuels the activity of the coming year. Jane was afraid to go off on her own and natal Pluto conjunct the solar return Ascendent confirms this fear. But Pluto is also the planet associated with aloneness and isolation. The motivational desire for Jane was to be free to study whatever she was interested in, and to walk her own path. This freedom was easily given. Jane's husband had no intention of limiting her interest. He actually encouraged it, but did not wish to come along. Natal Mars and Moon square the solar return Ascendent from the 10th House of destiny path and career choices. Stepping out on her own intellectually was a very big step for Jane.



Jane - Inner Wheel - Solar Return - Outer Wheel - Natal Chart - Chart 9

For those of you who might be wondering, Buckingham, England is not Jane's primary residence. She spends most of her time in the states, but had to be overseas on this birthday for the sale of the cottage. Soon afterwards she returned to this country for good.

The unique characteristics of solar return charts

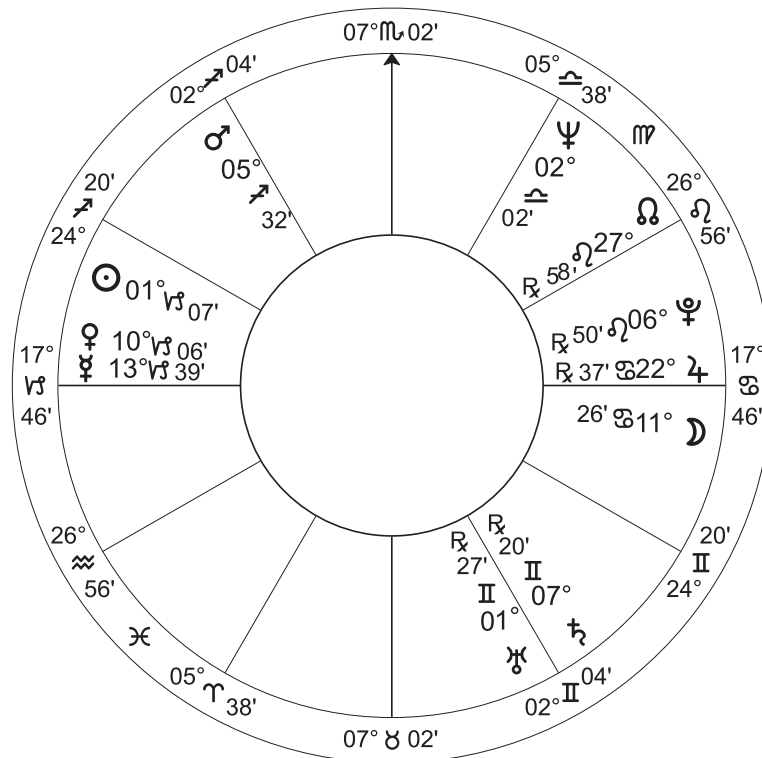
Solar returns are very different from other trends techniques such as transits, solar arcs, and secondary progressions for the following reasons.

1. You are looking at an integrate whole, not isolated aspects occurring one after another or for only a short time. A solar return chart presents a complete picture that will be in effect for the year and all of the planets will mean something. There is a wholeness and staying power to this technique that is not so apparent with other astrological methods. You have time to live with the chart and come to know the meaning of each planet and house. Lessons are well-defined and you have time to work on them.

2. Solar returns have a natural and understandable cycle from year to year. Because the time of the Sun's return changes approximately 6 hours each year, the Sun rotates in a predictable pattern for those individuals who remain in the same location. The Sun moves clockwise three houses each year. This movement produces a knowable cycle fostering understanding and growth. For example, an angular solar return Sun will tend to rotate from one angular house to another. The movement can be from the 4th House to the

1st House to the 10th to the 7th. After spending approximately ten years rotating through angular houses, the Sun will begin to rotate through succedent houses. After approximately ten more years, the Sun will begin to rotate through cadent houses. In thirty-three years, the solar return Sun will return to natal Sun's house placement, and the solar return angles will return to natal angles for those living in their birthplace. Where your Sun is in your solar return is dependent on what house it is in in your natal chart, how old you are, and where you are for the Sun's return. When the Sun is in the process of flipping from one type of house (angular, succedent or cadent) to another, crossovers occur. Extreme northern and southern latitudes, and signs of long or short ascension also cause distortions.

Lets look at a series of four solar returns for Gloria. We will start with her 1989 solar return and finish with the 1992 chart. I do not use solar returns as a technique isolated from other astrological methods, but in conjunction with them. So while interpreting these solar return charts, I will also discuss transits, secondary progressions and solar arcs, integrating all the information with the solar return. For this reason, both the natal (chart #10) and the solar return (chart #11) will sometimes be presented. The reader will be asked to visualize transits, and secondary progression and solar arc placements since those charts will be discussed, but not presented here. Timing will be given when important.



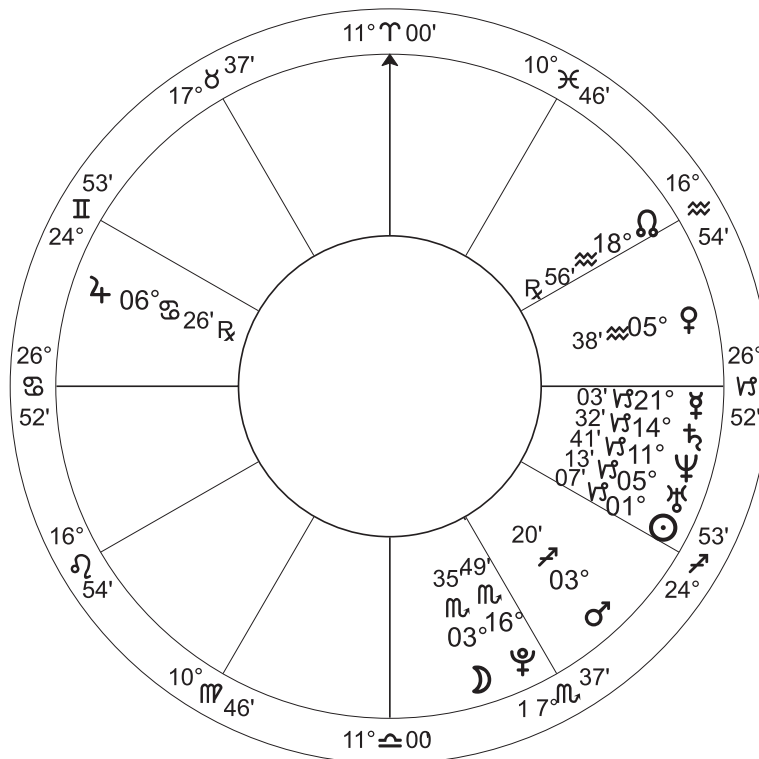
Gloria - Natal Chart - Chart 10

One of the first things we notice about this solar return is the number of planets in the 6th House. Gloria did not have any health problems this year though she was concerned with her diet and exercise routine. She worked as an executive assistant to the owner of a software company and was beginning to do some private new-age work on the side. During the solar return year, she became very interested in buying a seafood restaurant and owning her own business. The possibility of her taking on such a large endeavor

came about through her personal and professional relationship with Larry. As we investigate the solar return, transits, progressions and solar arcs further, we can see how important relationships would be in the events of the year.

Gloria had been living with George for fifteen years. During this time, George had numerous affairs. While Neptune transited conjunct Gloria's natal Venus and opposite her natal Moon, George became heavily involved with a woman he refused to give up. Gloria was not happy. From the solar return (chart 11) we can see that Venus in the 7th House of relationships is squared by the Moon in the 4th. There is a conflict between Gloria's intimacy needs and her homelife. She felt that she was only placating George and they did not have a real relationship. He did not treat her well and she wanted to leave. But Gloria lived with George rent free and this gave her natal Cancer Moon a great deal of emotional and financial security. She was deeply in debt and feared having to fend for herself. The likelihood of a difficult or protracted move is shown by solar return Pluto in the 4th. Financial repercussions might be indicated by this Pluto square to the node in the solar return 8th.

The transits, secondary progressions and solar arcs Gloria had in the spring, summer and fall of 1990 fill in the rest of the picture. Relationships would be in total fluctuation during this time. All four of the outer planets contacted either Venus or the Ascendant and there were progressions and solar arcs involving Venus too. With Neptune transiting Mercury also, Gloria's thinking might not be clear either.



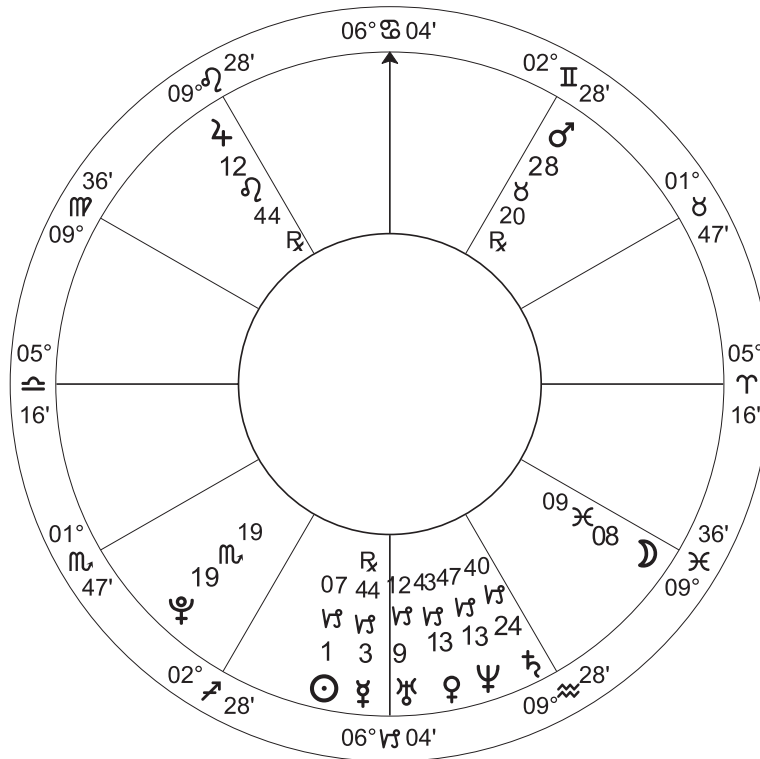
Gloria - 1989 Solar Return - Chart 11



Gloria met Larry as Jupiter crossed her natal Ascendent in mid-June 1990. She married him as Jupiter crossed her solar return Ascendent in early August. It was a whirlwind romance. The sexual relationship was wonderful (Mars in the 5th solar return House sextile to Venus) and Larry claimed to have a lot of money which would wipe out Gloria's debt. They planned to buy a business together and applied to borrow \$18,000,000 to purchase a restaurant. They also put money down on two houses under construction, one to live in and the other to rent out. Gloria had always hoped to live in a particular small town in New Jersey and now her dream was coming true.

Transits	Secondary Progressions	Solar Arcs
Pluto sextile Asc Neptune stat conj Asc Neptune conj Mercury Uranus stat conj Venus Uranus sextile MC Saturn conj Asc	Prog MC tr prog node Prog Ven sex prog Mars Prog Venus sex Venus	Venus arc opp node

Table 1



Gloria - 1990 Solar Return - Chart 12

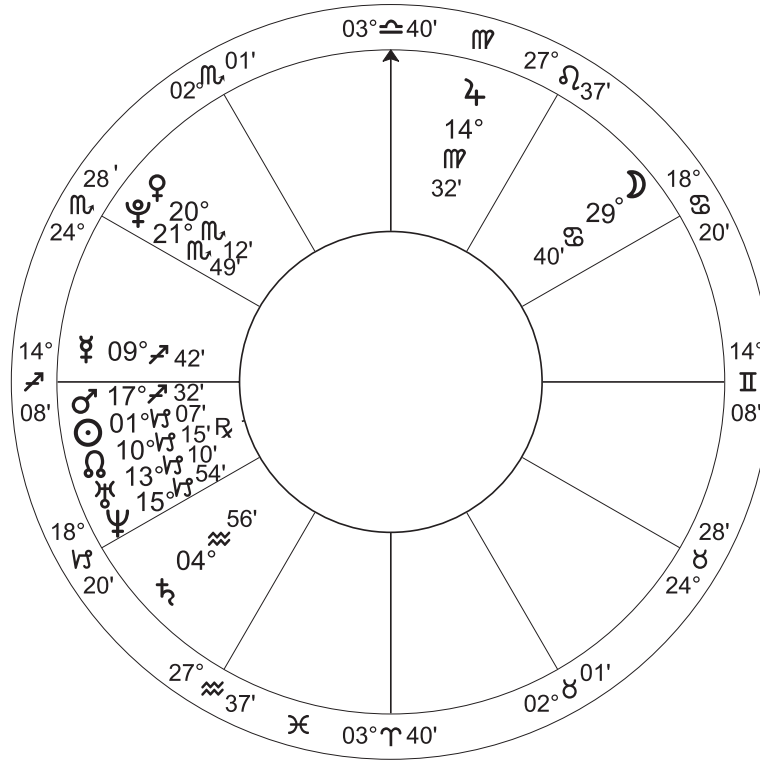
But all was not well as you can imagine from Gloria's transits, progressions, and arcs. As Gloria's solar arc Moon entered Virgo in mid-September and transiting Mercury turned direct while aspecting her natal Moon and Venus, Gloria started to wake up. Checks were bouncing everywhere. Larry did not have any of the money he claimed to have. Not only was he broke, but he was using an alias. Gloria confronted Larry with her realizations in early October. Larry admitted everything. By the beginning of November, Larry had moved out and Gloria had filed for an annulment which was granted in December 1990.

Notice that the Sun has rotated to the next cadent house in the 1990 solar return. Notice also that it is very close to the 4th House cusp and Gloria may be crossing over into angular houses soon. From this chart we can see problems with the homelife. Saturn, Uranus and Neptune in the solar return 4th House indicate numerous and sometimes difficult domestic changes. Gloria had left George, asked Larry to leave, and was presently living alone in a new house she could not afford and did not own. The builders were very kind, but since Larry's deposit check had bounced they could not settle on the house and Gloria was forced to move as quickly as possible. She had always feared living on her own and being financially responsible for herself. Now she had no choice. She must look for an apartment. Unfortunately, she was carrying an even greater debt. Larry had borrowed thousands of dollars from her until his "ship came in." In the solar return, Pluto is in the 2nd House of money showing a dramatic financial change. Gloria had to totally re-establish herself. She charge everything on credit cards in order to survive. She went to estate sales and purchased a lot of furniture at cut-rate prices. She had none of her own furniture since she had lived at George's for so long. She found an apartment in a senior citizens complex where she felt safe since her neighbors were home most of the day and watched out for each other. This was her first year living alone and she felt uneasy. She always ate out and was seldom home. The discomfort with the home environment is seen in the solar return 4th House. Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune in the 4th tend to indicate restlessness. One doesn't feel at home when at home.

Mars in the 8th House shows the possibility of conflict over shared resources. Gloria had to write all the creditors and disavow all her husband's bills and charges. Fortunately, she had never let Larry near any charge cards that were in her name. Gloria eventually recovered the money she gave to Larry, and the \$18,000,000 loan was approved. This is difficult to believe given his credit record, but it's true. The restaurant deal fell through however because the owner refused to sell to someone with Larry's reputation.

The the 1991 Solar Return, the Sun has now crossed over into the 1st House. Gloria has only herself to rely on. Although she is dating, there is no one special in her life. She finds that she has the ability to handle life on her own. She receives a substantial raise from her employer which lifts her above the financial restrictions she has been living with. Notice the Pluto-Venus conjunction in the solar return 11th House of promotions and pay raises. She also begins to restructure her finances and save money to return to the small New Jersey town and purchase a home. Saturn in the solar return 2nd indicates the ability to live on less. Many times the individual does not have to live on a budget, but chooses to do so to save money for a major purchase. This was Gloria's case.

Gloria has been dating Tom off and on when she discovers he is mentally unstable. The Moon in the solar return 8th House can indicate emotional involvement with someone who needs counseling. Tom has a very dark side which he keeps hidden most, but not all of the time. As this year begins, Gloria becomes aware that "all is not well" and ends the relationship immediately.



Gloria - 1991 Solar Return - Chart 13

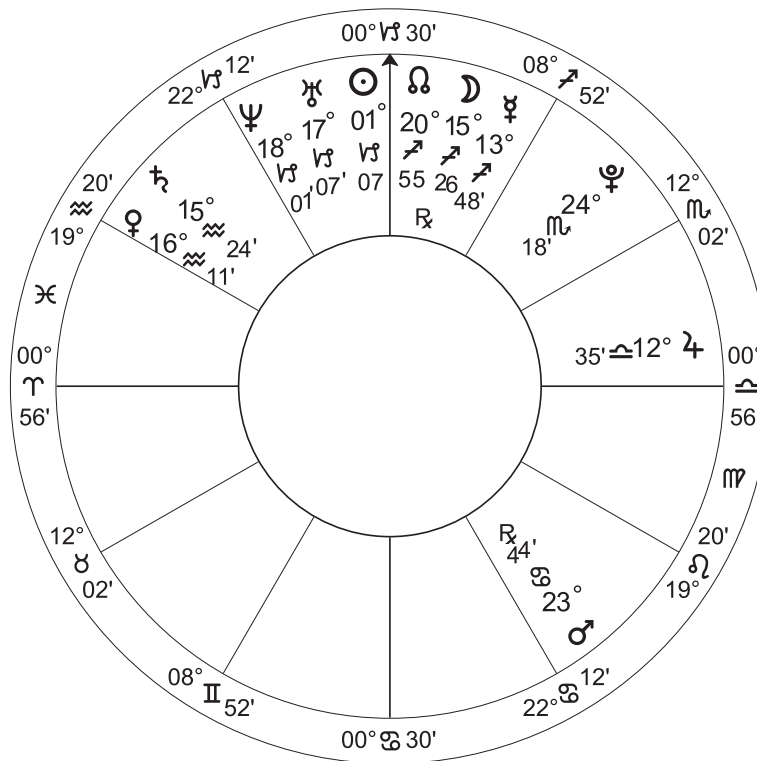
Transits	Secondary Progressions	Solar Arcs
Neptune conj Asc Uranus conj Asc	MC trine node	Venus sextile Sun Uranus conj Jup Venus square Uranus

Table 2

Next she begins to date John, someone possessive and smothering. Gloria finds this difficult to deal with. Remember all those solar return 1st House planets? She decides to tell her new friend that she must travel a lot for work and cannot see him all the time. John jumps to the conclusion that Gloria works for the CIA. Since this gives Gloria a perfect out, she continues the deception most of the year. (One of the less evolved interpretations for Neptune in the solar return 1st House). Talk about intrigue! Notice Gloria's transits with both Neptune and Uranus conjunct her Ascendant and her solar arc Venus square natal Uranus! (See Table 2) There is a strong desire for freedom couple with a confusing identity.

The Moon in the solar return 8th House can also indicate a strong connection to a woman. In this case the woman is the deceased wife of the man, John, who Gloria begins to date. Laura died before Gloria met her or her widowed husband. Laura is the same size as Gloria and John passes on a lot of Laura's clothes for her to wear. Gloria hears many stories about Laura and has much respect for her. Gloria attributes a

monetary windfall she receives from John to Laura's money management. After Gloria and John stopped dating, they remained friends. One day John gave Gloria \$35,000 in a paper bag. This is a very small portion of the money Laura saved while she was living. It was her money-managing ability which made her family well off and gave John the option of helping Gloria financially when she wished to buy a house late in the solar return year. Gloria wanted to be independent (four planets in the solar return 1st House) and she wanted to live in her own house. John and Laura helped to make this possible. Notice the solar arc Venus square Uranus and the solar arc Uranus conjunct Jupiter in the natal 7th House. Surprise benefits from others. Gloria returned to the small town and moved into her new home. The cash was received and the house purchased very late in the solar return year. For this reason, it is important to look at the next solar return since its significance is already beginning even though the old return is still in effect. A new solar return can be significant as soon as three months before your birthday and an old solar return can last as long as three months after your birthday.



Gloria - 1992 Solar Return - Chart 14

The financial support she received from John and Laura is shown by Pluto in the 8th House of shared finances and Jupiter in the 7th House. Jupiter in the 7th indicates, "Ask and you shall receive." This is a time when you can benefit either directly or indirectly through another person. Gloria benefitted through another's generosity. She could not have purchased the house without the extra capital.

Jupiter in the 7th House also indicates that relationships were improving. After Gloria's trial with George, disaster with Larry, difficulty with Tom, and smothering by John, she met someone new who was

very nice to her. After a period of time, she asked him to move into her new home and live with her. This relationship had a wonderful effect on Gloria. She stopped eating out, became a home body, and started to cook and entertain again.

The Sun is now conjunct the Midheaven and Gloria has the option of choosing a new destiny path for herself. She is starting a new life with a new home and man. She also wants to change jobs during the year and it is likely that she will do so with Uranus and Neptune in the solar return 10th House. Her present employer is erratic and moody.

The Moon in the 9th House indicates that Gloria is reassessing her beliefs concerning relationships. Practical down-to-earth techniques are needed if she is to make this relationship work. Beliefs cannot be too pie-in-the-sky, but must work on a practical everyday level. Consistency and stability in relationships is important since the Moon sextiles Venus conjunct Saturn.

Conclusion

Solar returns are just like a temporary natal and can be very easy to read. The placements should be interpreted in a straight forward manner which is consistent with common astrological methods. With charts as easy to understand as the ones I have presented here, it does make one wonder why solar return charts aren't a more popular astrological tool. Why aren't they at least as popular as secondary progressions and transits?