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By Judi Thomases

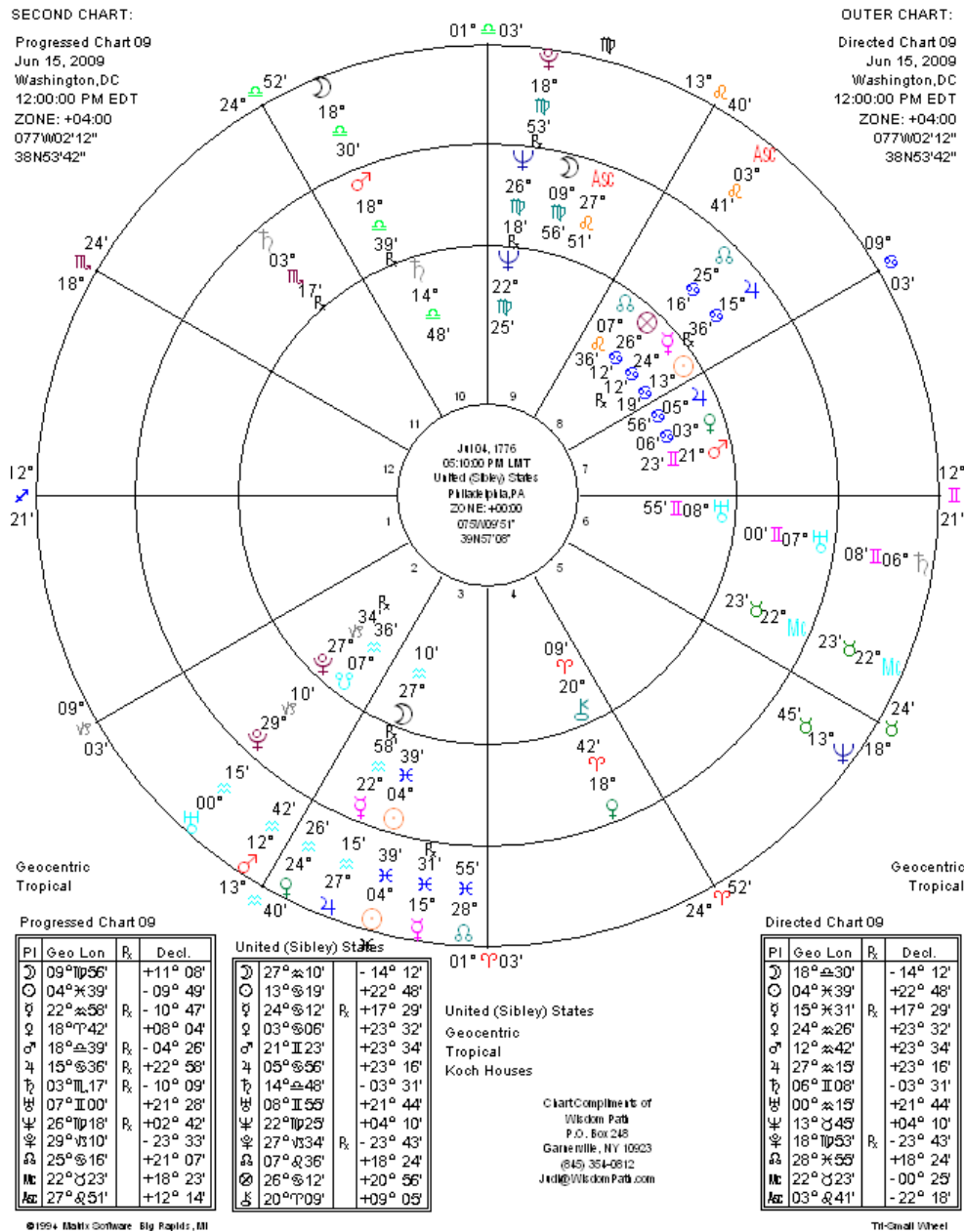
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In mid-June of 2009, an amazing pattern regarding the sign of Aquarius unfolds: Jupiter, which has been zooming through Aquarius all this while, stations retrograde at 27° Aquarius. Shortly before this, on May 28th, Neptune stationed retrograde at 26° Aquarius for the first time hitting this degree. Incredibly, both of these planets are joined by Chiron, also at 26° Aquarius. And this cosmic dance is taking place exactly conjunct the Moon of the Sibley United States chart, falling in Aquarius at 27° in the 3rd house. And as if this weren't enough, Solar Arc Jupiter is also at 27° Aquarius, having taken 233 years to get there!



Just to reel off this amount of energy at or near a singular degree, affecting our country in such a major way, would give pause to stop and think what it means (which this article will be about), planetary stations, of course, strengthening the power of the given sign. But it bears mention that the sign of Aquarius has been further dramatically emphasized leading up to this period by having lots of other important events connected to it. It's a regular Aquarian lalapaloosa!

On January 11th, a Mercury station retrograde fell at 7 ° Aquarius conjunct the Sibley South Node at 7° Aquarius, which was also the degree of the ensuing Solar Eclipse on January 26th at 6° Aquarius, and which was trine the progressed Sibley Uranus which was at 7° Gemini. (*By analogy to a play, the narrator begins the voice-over, and a new theater of action is born.*) In mid February, Mars transited those degrees of Aquarius, and of course Mercury went back over them. (*Continuing the analogy, the curtains are opened and the action begins.*) By late March, the transiting North Node reached that degree of Aquarius too. (*Important figures enter.*) And to complete this amazing Springtime picture, progressed Mercury of the Sibley chart is seen retrograde at 22° Aquarius in the 3rd house, having conjuncted Solar Arc Venus at 24° Aquarius in the 3rd house...Solar Arc Mars is at 12° Aquarius in the 2nd house (so there was a transiting Mars Return to Solar Arc Mars)...and Solar Arc Uranus, the ruler of Aquarius, has just entered its own sign (0° Aquarius) by Solar Arc direction. (*The production is now in full gear. Action!!*)

What is this all about?

THE AQUARIAN DYNAMIC

The astounding confluences of Aquarian energies are occurring in tandem with several key events: the historic election of an African-American to the Presidency, the burgeoning of blogging and social networking, and the economic crises that are propelling change. All of these factors are the introductory volley of The Age of Aquarius. And in this article, we'll look at what Aquarius means, what these phenomena are telling us, and how we can better understand and approach the incredible crises and opportunities of our age.

Let's get back to what Aquarius means. Some keywords for Aquarius are: forward-thinking, friendship, social networking, science and research, rebellion, individualism, genius, conservatism versus Bohemianism, intuition, shattering crystallized forms, brotherhood, humanitarianism, transition, originality and revolution. Because of the generally pleasant nature of the aspects, we know that the string of Aquarian events has the potential of producing positive news about technology and inventions that can offer a feeling of happiness, idealism, and buoyancy to the population. By June, at least some of the headlines will reflect good news. Jupiter conjunct Neptune on the U.S. Moon will be a real chance to read some of this good news, to send it around on the internet, and to be friendly in a detached cyber way with many people around the world.

The natal U.S. Moon in late Aquarius seeks to find its reflection in the phrase *E Pluribus Unum*, a global community of diverse peoples accepting each other if not tribally then at least cerebrally or intellectually, and if not lovingly then at least affably. After so much polarization during the presidential campaign, and after the long years of war, the time has come for the country to see itself again as one, as the *united* states. And many efforts have led to this point, efforts such as the Civil Rights, Women's Lib, and Gay Rights movements, efforts such as the integration of many immigrant communities, and even efforts such as comedians gently poking their own and everyone else's cultural oddities, to bind together an American identity. The time has come, in other words, for Americans to be friends.

THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

"Friends" is a particularly Aquarian word. Not lovers, just friends. Nowadays, you can't say the word "friends" without thinking of Facebook. Facebook has turned the word into a verb, as in "she friend-ed me". (That means, invited me to join her web-ring.) Social networking and blogging are a powerful part of creating global community. The internet has morphed into what is called "Web-2".

According to Wikipedia, the term Web-2 describes:

"...the changing trends in the use of World Wide Web technology and web design that aim to enhance creativity, communications, secure information sharing, collaboration and functionality of the web. Web 2.0 concepts have led to the development and evolution of web-culture communities and hosted services, such as social-networking sites, video sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and folksonomies."

Social Networking is defined on Wikipedia as:

"...building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others."

Whereas many of us had gotten used to emailing each other on a daily basis, finding our in-boxes swamped with both trivia and important business stuff, now that has all been changing. Email is so last year! People are connecting through various social networking sites that allow you to put up a profile of important data about who you are (or, who you'd like others to think you are), at the same time you reach out to connect or invite your friends to join you in a web-ring and read about each other's lives. You can post photos or videos, and invite others to your events too. Examples of popular social networking sites are Facebook.com, LinkedIn.com (used primarily for business), MySpace.com (which started out for artists and singers), and Ning.com. Currently, the fastest growing site is Twitter.com.

Facebook works in two different ways: the younger generation uses it to simply keep each other updated on their activities, thoughts and relationships by posting pictures and videos continuously, like an interactive family album, while the older generation seems to use it more as a business platform and marketing tool. Twitter, on the other hand, has boiled everything down to the simplest form by having an extended network of interested colleagues (your connections) post only a sentence or two continuously about whatever they are up to in the moment. On Twitter especially, people can elect to *follow* you, and then your posted activities become an ongoing promotion-and-connection game. My daughter, an internet marketer, refers to her Twitter circle as her "Tweeps". Your Tweeps seem to have an endless fascination about what you're up to *right now*, and vice versa.

For the spiritually/holistically-minded like ourselves, there are specialized social networking sites such as DailyOm.com and PowerfulIntentions.com (the latter being targeted to believers in The Law of Attraction) that serve a similar function of creating web-rings of like-minded friends; furthermore, within these umbrella sites such as PowerfulIntentions, there are subgroups targeted to specific interests, such as The Secret, Wicca, Mermaids, Buddhism, Healers, and so forth.

This new phenomenon has the effect of people constantly talking to each other, revealing their inmost thoughts, showing what they are up to, being real and human, and yet not overly involved with the next guy. Social networking sites are the trend of the future; they are Aquarian in that people are becoming knitted together in a worldwide network while remaining relatively aloof.

And there will be other innovative attempts to socialize that underscore connectivity, technology and detachment. For instance, the New York Post on 2/7/09 featured an article

on the texting craze, quoting a tech entrepreneur as saying that "Texting is a much freer, more anonymous way to interact socially." The same article reported on an oddball (Aquarian) concept wherein many people gathered to dance in a club while wearing uniforms (Hazmat suits!), speaking very little, yet texting each other nonstop. "It's to make it more about what's on the inside," said one, probably reflective of the pendulum swinging away from the oversexed Pluto-in-Scorpio zeitgeist, while another said, "It becomes like Facebook in real time."

If this isn't Uranian, I don't know what is! But this is *just the beginning!*

The world is talking to itself frequently, often constantly, and seeing what each experience looks like. The world is beginning to see the reflection of oneself in the (diverse) other guy. Seeing Other as Self, in other words. (In the Wisdom System™ on my blog, this concept is a Level 3 component. You can explore the four levels by visiting www.wisdomsblog.com)

FREE SPEECH

So with the incredible emphasis on Aquarian energies, especially as shown in the Sibley chart, social networking had to happen so that Americans could become chatty, friendly, interconnected, technologically more innovative, and creatively explorative of the very notion of ideas, selfhood and communication.

As this is being written in early February 2009, transiting Mars has not yet contacted Solar Arc Directed Mars at 12° Aquarius in the Sibley chart, nor rushed on through early March to cross progressed Mercury at 22° and Solar Arc Venus at 24°, finally to reach the all-important degree of 27° Aquarius on March 12th. This is probably the Stimulus Package having a certain effect, and should bring a period of tremendous activity on the internet through networks such as blogs. ("Blog" is the shortened name for "web log". People post their thoughts on blogs, and other people comment on them.)

Blogging is a form of free speech. It can be international. Blogging is the antithesis of controlled or limited communications as has previously been the norm whenever big corporations have controlled the publishing business or any government has controlled political opinions. Blogging is another form of freedom represented quite well by Aquarian energy. You can say that blogging is in natural antagonism to anything that represents a *gate*. (I think of Bill Gates!) A gate is Saturnian; it represents authority, limitation, or blockage to whatever is individualistic or eccentric.

With a Sagittarius ascendant, the keywords of which are "independence" and "free-spiritedness", America has been built on a foundation of free speech. It is our First Amendment. It is the people's voice. Freedom of speech, freedom of information, as seen on blogs and on cable TV, can sometimes be outrageous, rebellious, and even subversive. Saturn has a problem with this. Saturn is corporate-owned media and government controls. Saturn is the gate whereas Uranus is the exploding of crystallized form.

During this period of powerful emphasis in the sign of Aquarius, we are also under a long pattern of Uranus – Aquarius' ruler – locked in a struggle against Saturn. (And we can't forget that Saturn is the co-ruler of Aquarius.) Here is the new versus the old; here is freedom versus restriction. Uranus is a very strong player in the Sibley chart as it is within 4° of the 7th house cusp (i.e., a powerful Gauquelin zone degree), and because it has by Solar Arc Direction just entered its natal rulership, the sign of Aquarius, at 0°. Furthermore, as we will see, transiting Uranus will soon contact the Sibley 4th house cusp, another angular powerhouse degree (which is just minutes away from the 0° Aries world degree), and will square transiting Pluto still in early Capricorn.

All this spells tremendous tension. Even aside from that, we have Pluto's crazy dance. Pluto alone is acting as an agent of change, doing its typical action of rooting out corruption and abuse regarding the sign it has just entered: Capricorn, the sign of Big

Business, Big Banking, and Big Government. So, just to watch Pluto in early Capricorn opposing the U.S. Venus raises alarms about spending and financial pressures. In addition, over the coming years Pluto will also oppose the rest of our nation's Cancerian stellium (of Jupiter, Sun, progressed Jupiter, Mercury, progressed Node, and Fortuna). These effects have been, and will continue to be, very difficult; we are undergoing a great challenge and fear and anxiety are ruling the situation. People feel a lack, and are wondering how to find safety in scary times. Is it a coincidence that everything's happening simultaneously?

Our new President, Barack Obama, probably didn't have a clue as to what he was getting into when he fought for, and won, his historic office. But he will serve during an administration that will face these significant and difficult patterns in the world chart. The struggle between reform and tradition, between Saturn and Uranus, under which he begins his presidency, is actually reflected in his very chart. He has Saturn in Capricorn, and so is himself a disciplined authority figure who has a great respect for rules and regulation, yet he has his Saturn conjunct Jupiter at 0° Aquarius, a very progressive opportunity. Obama embodies the dilemma of our times within himself, and will, I believe, struggle with the choice of being the restrictor (Saturn in Capricorn), or the agent of change (Jupiter in Aquarius trine his Moon).

This choice will be further reflected during the course of the administration as Saturn in 2012 squares his own Saturn. Let's hope circumstances don't push him too far towards the Restrictor by then.

THE AGE OF AQUARIUS – THE REAL MEANING

So let's get back to the real meaning behind all this super-emphasis on Aquarius, and as it's playing out in real life.

Aquarius means groups and brotherhood; it means progress, care for the Earth and the environment, the Green movement. It represents a change in which the world's peoples are interrelating, in which people and the planet are interrelating, and during which, as Neptune finishes its transit through late Aquarius and Uranus finishes its transit through late Pisces, both in mutual reception, there has been a burgeoning of spiritual awakening propagated and disseminated in no small part by the internet.

Philosophically, the web is communications. In astrology, communications is air; it means spreading the word. Neptune is spirit; that is, spreading the spiritual word, spreading idealism. Yes, spreading confusion as well. But because of the mutual reception and the Jupiter transit, we have to look at the positive meanings. A network of cyber hubs has been built around the planet, and now another network of consciousness is being built. Some have called this *the noosphere*, a more refined material that surrounds the planet and exists as the next level or layer to which mankind can aspire. In other words, a web of consciousness. The higher realm can reach towards the material planet and its inhabitants through this grid or matrix of inspired interconnection, and there can be a breakthrough. A breakthrough of understanding and a breakthrough of intent.

What does that mean? How can we learn to live differently during this wonderful opportunity, during our choice to be on the planet at this powerful and creative moment?

Let's talk about what Aquarius really is all about.

DELVING DEEPER INTO AQUARIUS

Aquarius is one of the four fixed signs. The fixed signs of the Zodiac hold the universe together; they *maintain* reality. They are: Taurus the Bull (representing man's appetites and animal nature), Leo the Lion (representing man's creative potential and vital life force), Scorpio the Eagle (representing man's ability to transform and be reborn into a new self), and Aquarius the Man, or sometimes called the Angel (representing perfected human form).

These four fixed signs are shown in the Tarot on two cards: the Wheel (which is the wheel of existence) and The World (which is the final card, the point of liberation). As man works his way on his long journey through lifetime after lifetime, through the wheel of existence (the cycle of incarnations), eventually realization (awakening) takes place on the inner level. A series of passages through lower states into more evolved consciousness ultimately brings the mind into connection with its highest self, a place in which it is always seen that the inner and the outer are not separate, but one. That, in fact, by perfecting one's wisdom (i.e., by controlling emotion, bringing self into alignment with peace and with the opened heart), an awakening occurs and the human overcomes illusion and sees itself not as in a subordinate relationship with the divine but as a co-creator of what is experienced as life, or the world. The person sees the world as the self.

This awakening – or unity of consciousness – has many names. Nirvana and Liberation are two of them. It is a blissful, serene and heart-based place to achieve, and represents man's capability of being in human form yet acting with the light, wisdom and capacity of an angel.

By humanity knowing itself as the world, a great transformation takes place in society and on the planet. The planet is seen as the self, to be loved and treated respectfully. And other people are seen as brothers and sisters, not as strangers or aliens, or the disregarded.

In order to achieve this stage, certain things are taking place in the background. There have been huge struggles regarding different culture's values, but one thing is certain: this type of relationship with other people and with the planet itself can only take place in a society where all people are equal. To rebalance the older system of male rule (patriarchy) an emerging philosophy regarding feminine energy has been on the rise. It is said that Yin is rising. Nations that cannot see their way clear to this spiritual mandate will resist. Such nations will represent The Old. The Aquarian energy will increase. It is the name of the Age. The Aquarian energy is individualistic, friendly, non-conformist, and democratic.

Once sufficient awakening takes place, the emphasis can be redirected into creating a new society, a society that is living "an intention experiment."

AN INTENTION EXPERIMENT

All the effort to learn *The Secret* underlies this new direction. Can we understand that the universe is benign as we live through our economic crisis? Do we invest our energy in fear or in faith? How do we create safety in a challenging world? And what does "trust in the universe" mean, and how do you do it?

Fear is an emotion. Sometimes it's based upon survival, and in that case it serves us. But fear can also lead to paralysis. Paralysis can be overcome on an inner basis. Stimulus is one way to tickle us out of paralysis, but the deeper and more powerful way is to work within our thoughts.

In order to trust in a benign universe, we have to understand what that means. We have to do some preliminary work to gain knowledge and learn specific techniques so that we can get a different perspective on what is really happening. Very importantly, we have to learn to shift from fear-based thoughts, regardless of what is happening, into more positive and creative possibilities.

There are specific techniques, some of which I teach and use in classes, and which I've put on my blog. Many people are teaching similar such techniques, which include meditation, Emotional Freedom Technique, The Work, The Options Process, and many others. I call mine The Wisdom System™ which is part of *The Four Levels of the Continuum of Awareness*. It is basically a technique or a system of shifting from a negative thought to a positive one within your self, establishing that positivity within your gut (the solar plexus),

and putting your value and beliefs into affirmative thinking and possibility. As you do so, you will find more thoughts able to be open to receive intuition and to weigh choices. If thoughts are drowned by negative emotion, that can't happen.

So in the Age of Aquarius, connections are your wealth and thoughts are your currency. What can you figure out in your mind first that might allow some possibilities? How can you talk to yourself about what has happened in a way that reframes it out of a negative and into a positive? How can you make a connection in your deepest self with the higher self that is offering you intuitive wisdom? How can you find others who share your beliefs and will help you create good results? These are the steps to look into and learn, and to play with during this experiment of being alive in challenging times.

A GOOD TECHNIQUE

One of the greatest of the wisdom techniques is the concept of expectation, setting forth an intention and then giving the universe a little bit of time to rearrange itself and then bring that intention to fruition for you. This period of time during which inner effort waits to see its reflection as an outcome in the outer life, is seen very clearly in the Tarot card of The Hanged Man.

The Hanged Man is suspended from, not just a tree, but a *chai* (the Hebrew symbol of life), and has a *glory* (radiance) around his head because he's enlightened. He's wise enough to know that the enlightened self waits for the universe to fulfill the expectation, and *does not abort prematurely*. The awakened self knows that the positive creative possibility – as long as it's realistic within the framework of that life and of the universe's potential during that time-frame – has already happened! It's already "ahead" or "in the future". The Hanged Man is content to trust in the universe. One of the slogans for this Tarot Key is "Go with the Flow". Also, "Rest in the Lord" and "Let Go and Let God."

For the newbie, the earliest acknowledgement of such inner work is in small synchronicities that occur as validation after a new intention is developed. Look for these. Create possibility. Stay with hope and trust – not blind faith, but secure expectation – and you will find yourself becoming the flow. You will realize that things just happen, that you can stay in positive thoughts and become a co-creator of reality. It's all about the words you tell yourself. How encouraging to realize that your very inner thoughts can co-create constructive outcomes, and see them reflected eventually as good news for the group! Is this not the meaning of Neptune and Jupiter stationing conjunct in an air sign?

THE HIDDEN PURPOSE BEHIND OUR TIMES

The hidden purpose behind our times – the squeeze, the tribulations, the period leading up to 2012 (sometimes called The End Times) – is that humanity doesn't evolve quickly unless it's put under pressure. We are being asked – no, forced! – to change our value system rapidly, to widen our perspective broadly, and to raise the planetary vibration as quickly as possible. It is during this period in which America is deeply challenged that our true destiny is coming forward. Nostradamus pinpointed it as when (in Century II, Quatrain 87):

"...the great lady subordinated, in her time no long adored..."

This can be easily interpreted as Lady Liberty (America) suffering. What does one who has been hurt and suffered, after overcoming, naturally do? That one teaches, leads, and mentors others. That one is Chiron, the wounded healer. That one is now conjunct Jupiter and Neptune on the U.S. Moon. This is the hidden purpose behind the squeeze. Good things come out of this type of challenge. Right now, there is less greed; people are saving more; compassion and brotherhood are expanding; society's ills, including that of

government, are being cleansed of corruption and abuse; and minds are opening up in their quest for answers.

Perhaps the media (newspapers, TV anchors, bloggers, talk shows) will get the message. Its role should not be to increase fear. In the past, media lived by the slogan, "If it bleeds, it leads." Perhaps its true role is to report good news, to emphasize positivity, to help the effort towards positive creation and beneficial change. The media has a tremendous role to play, and will accomplish it. For example, there is now a television network devoted to powerful intentions: The Elelevision Network (www.elelevision.com). Isn't that a great name?!

The media certainly needs to keep the lines of communication open, to not be gated or restricted. Quoting from my own blog:

I'm not negating the overarching pattern of pain and suffering that's been going on, and will continue to bug us for quite awhile. But Americans just need a little bit of optimism and the floodgates will open up again. That in itself can get the ball rolling, and help people in hard economic straits. As I said earlier, "It's a perception thing." If we believe it, we will build it and then they will come. One of the great messages of the Age of Aquarius is that we are the co-creators of our reality. To see what part ideas and communications play in any outcome is a wondrous new concept. I think we are learning this en masse, and the media will really start to see its role.

America just isn't a poor country; in fact, it's a lucky nation with some lucky aspects ahead, like progressed Sun about to trine natal Jupiter, and others. We're the role model to the world. We have to show the way (of right action). Wisdom about the material world will happen here first.

During the trials and tribulations, there is a wonderful inspiring thought to keep: it is that America's true destiny is to be the platform upon which The Great Intention Experiment is created and manifested. We are the ones we've been waiting for, as Obama proclaimed. We are the people who, by facing great difficulties, will design and innovate the blessings and possibilities of the human race. And it all starts now.

THE AQUARIAN PHENOMENON FOR EACH SIGN

Here are merely some suggestions to use the astonishing Aquarian emphasis for your sign:

AQUARIUS (in your solar first house, or your rising sign): (Perfect!) Reinvent yourself to bring out your inner iconoclast! Break the mold. Spearhead remarkable changes in society. Expand your natural quirky potential. Get jiggy! Merge astrology, science, technology, and spirituality in a completely original way.

PISCES (in your solar twelfth house, or your rising sign): Contact your guides, or let them open your auric field. Try using a crystal ball, biofeedback, or get a gemstone chakra cleansing. Volunteer to do compassionate service in a local hospital or clinic. Devote yourself to raising the planetary frequencies.

ARIES (in your solar eleventh house, or your rising sign): (What a great fit!) Start a bold new trend in a new age group or non-profit organization. Be first with your friends to innovate an earth-friendly movement. Exude confidence and stand out in a crowd by wearing lots of red, especially for a good cause.

TAURUS (in your solar tenth house, or your rising sign): (Brilliant!) Profit from an unusual tech application. Persevere in making a name for yourself selling energy efficient items.

Save up for the luxury of indulging in solar panels. Treat your friend to dinner at a fusion food restaurant.

GEMINI (in your solar ninth house, or your rising sign): Take an online course in astrology. Write about your meditations while traveling. Volunteer as a school aide for the immigrant community. Talk to your friends non-stop using your cell phone/blackberry/iPhone/Kindle while finding new and unusual ways to socialize. Write to your Congressman to make a real change in government.

CANCER (in your solar eighth house, or your rising sign): Invest in worthy causes that benefit families. Befriend and feed the needy in a spiritual center. Nurture your younger lover. Pay it forward. Discover a cure for a childhood ailment. Try tantric sex.

LEO (in your solar seventh house, or your rising sign): Star in a drama about our current social trends. Visualize your team winning because of your contribution. Idealize your best buddy. Fantasize being a mystical superhero who saves the planet.

VIRGO (in your solar sixth house, or your rising sign): Analyze the best alternative health provider for your type. Do a job search in a future-oriented industry. Donate effort to take care of unwanted dogs and cats. Clean out old computer files.

LIBRA (in your solar fifth house, or your rising sign): Share a romantic adventure to an interesting new locale. Take an online decorating or graphic design course. Be the peacemaker amongst your friends. Promote a musical event to boost kids' self-esteem through affordable fashion.

SCORPIO (in your solar fourth house, or your rising sign): Disentangle from dysfunctional family routines. Renovate an unused nook for a meditation corner. Do a healing on your parents. Plunge into your psyche while trusting your wise spiritual guides. Sell high, buy low. Find a backer for a medical breakthrough.

SAGITTARIUS (in your third first house, or your rising sign): Teach a better philosophy to your neighbors. Restore your spirit during a long drive in the country. Read about technological advances in the local library's magazine rack. Drive a mobile book giveaway van for community outreach.

CAPRICORN (in your solar second house, or your rising sign): Capitalize on an internet business opportunity to increase your income. Organize fund-raising for a holistic organization. Take financial responsibility to save the planet!

Well, you get the picture! I'm just stringing together keywords for each sign and mixing them with the Aquarian keywords from the beginning of this article. Actually, it's fun! Just remember to include the concepts of **expansion, spirituality, healing, brotherhood, and originality**. Why not write back and tell us your concoctions (or your true experiences) in Letters to the Editor, or on Facebook or Twitter? All this energy is *yours* to create with! Be inspired. You are the world! And now's the time.

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