

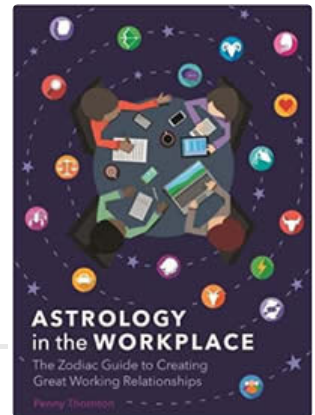
Astrology in the Workplace - The Zodiac Guide to Creating Great Working Relationships

by Penny Thornton

I wrote *Astrology in the Workplace* with the intention of appealing both to the astrologer and the general reader. Indeed, if I have a mission in life, it is to make astrology accessible to everyone without compromising its integrity.

Most of us have jobs, and most of us must therefore interact with people who share our working space. So, the benefit of knowing how we all tick, what to watch out for and how to make the best of our working relationships cannot be underestimated. In the bargain, you get to see how the elements flow through life as vibrantly today as they did in the time of Empedocles.

*To the elements it came from,
Everything will return,
Our bodies to earth,
Our blood to water.
Heat to fire,
Breath to air
(Empedocles on Etna, by Matthew Arnold)*



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The following extracts give you an impression of what to expect from Penny's book. It is divided into four main chapters: the elements Fire, Earth, Air, Water. Each chapter is divided into subchapters, covering the general nature of the element and the three zodiac signs belonging to it, as well as Inter-relationships between the elements and signs. Each sign, in turn, covers a specific 'Curriculum Vitae', 'The (sign) boss', and 'The (sign) employee'.

Aries in the Workplace

20 March-19 April

Element: Fire

Modality: Cardinal

Ruling planet: Mars

Curriculum Vitae



At the vernal equinox on 21 March, the Sun enters Aries, and during the following 12 months works its way through the remaining 11 signs. Aries is thus the first sign of the zodiac, and in keeping with its pole position breeds a bunch of people who like to be first in the queue, individuals who like to win and believe they are the leaders of the pack.

All fire signs are spontaneous, creative and sociable, but Aries is a Cardinal⁽¹⁾ sign and the Cardinals are self-motivated and fiercely ambitious. It is this combination of fire and Cardinality that makes members of team Aries high-flyers and certainly contenders.

All well and good so far.

The downside to this sign is a serious shortfall in patience and persistence and a degree of pig-headedness and wilfulness that often results in a failure to reach the heights of their expectations.

Arians are the sprinters of the zodiac, not the marathon runners.

Aries is ruled by Mars, the Greek god of war, which explains its assertive and fearless nature – the Martians can be a tad scary at times, and they're always ready for a fight. This is a physically strong sign – often athletically built and blessed with good muscle tone – and all Arians require an outlet for their energy. An Aries who has gone to seed and become a couch potato is one who is dealing with a catalogue of failure.

Aries rules the head, which means this part of the body is both the weak spot and its strong point: a weakness because Arians are prone to headaches and migraine (usually a response to stress), dental issues and facial damage and a strength because they can have great hair, a strong jawline, firm chin and an innate ability to put mind over matter.

Virgo in the Workplace

The Virgo Boss

Bosses come in all shapes and sizes and all signs of the zodiac but, by and large, Virgo is not comfortable in the hot seat and much happier left of centre. He or she is not cut out to issue orders and arouse fear and dread in the staff. Virgos lead by example; they prefer a cooperative to a conglomerate. They keep things simple. Warren Buffett is an outstanding example of the Virgo CEO: still residing in the same Omaha house that he bought in 1958, his style of management has been described as 'hands off' and his advice to those following in his footsteps is 'Admit mistakes and stay humble.' Humility may be a Virgo attribute, but the ability to admit mistakes does not come easily to this sign. Virgos do everything to the absolute best of their ability; they are beyond criticism. Please understand this. If you're working for a Virgo boss, don't even think about pointing out an error in his or her thinking. Given time and more research – and Virgo bosses are a diligent bunch – they'll soon discover their own mistakes.

Your Virgo boss will not employ you on your winning personality: your CV will be carefully dissected; references will be followed up and background checks performed. (You'd better not have embellished your employment history.) Then, and only then, will you be considered. You will be expected to live up to the company's high standards. These bosses have reached the top by painstaking effort and they'll assume you will do the same. If you fail in your endeavours Mr or Ms Virgo won't shout and scream at you and hurl paperweights across the room: a pregnant silence before a small verbal jab delivered with precision to your jugular is more in style.

Virgos could give masterclasses in sarcasm and passive aggression.

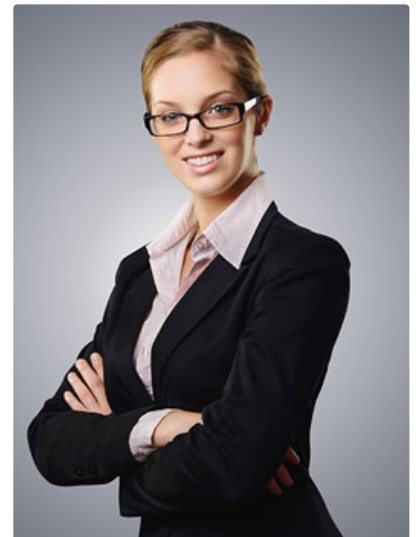
Do not expect the Virgo boss to be a cheerleader either. Virgos believe their staff should be self-motivated enough to get the job done without constant encouragement and promises of rewards. The satisfaction of a job well done is enough for them and it should be enough for you, the employee, too.

Strangely enough, the office of your Virgo boss may not be as pin neat as his or her astrological CV would have you believe. Virgos know where everything is and they are very fond of labels and codes, but organized chaos is more often what you'll find. Don't make a comment, though. Make a note.

Virgos are natural-born caretakers. They flock like lemmings into the health and healing industries, the social services and human resources. But unlike their opposite number, the celestial Fish, Virgos do not mollycoddle. If you're in trouble the Virgo boss will listen carefully to your tale of woe, then point you in the direction of your salvation.

While Pisces will feed you fish, Virgos teach you how to fish.

Something you will not know from the appearance of your Virgo boss is that he or she is a dreadful worrier. Behind that *Mona Lisa* smile is a febrile imagination. Virgos are permanently tuned to the voice of their fears, which can get out of hand because they do not like to share their concerns. Top of the list of worries is invariably health. A small rash, an indefinable ache and a general feeling of malaise will have them consulting Dr Google and realizing things are even worse than they thought. Always have a hand sanitizer on your person, some painkillers and tubes of fizzy vitamin C. Your boss will sense a kindred spirit. Your stock will rise.



The Virgo CEO will welcome ideas and suggestions (provided they cannot be interpreted as criticisms). This is a Mutable sign and the receiving and dispersing of information is as necessary as breathing. However, your boss will want any ideas backed up with evidence and accompanied by a detailed plan of action, which he or she can then nip and tuck and generally improve.

Your Virgo boss may not be the cuddliest creature on planet workplace nor the most adventurous and dynamic, but gradually, gradually you will come to respect his or her quiet, thoughtful ways. You will come to understand that while she (or he) is not constantly inquiring after your health and happiness, she is keeping a check on your well-being.

Virgo bosses may not share, but they care.

Aquarius in the Workplace

The Aquarius Employee

Aquarians are neither leaders nor followers. They are individuals, but not loners. They enjoy company and working as a team. All right, that's their old PR machine kicking in: in reality Aquarians can be very awkward to work with since they have a unique take on things, and with their Fixed natures they can dig their heels in and become remarkably high-handed when others do not share their opinion. Fortunately, since Aquarians have ideas light years ahead of most people they are a positive boon to any company aiming to become a market leader. When the Aquarius employee has an idea, people listen.

As I explained in the section on the Aquarian boss, there are two types of Water Bearers: those who resonate with Saturn and those with Uranus. The former will be able to tolerate a nine-to-five existence, although at some point (probably around the age of 42 and the Uranus opposition) they will throw up their safe and secure job in order to follow their dream of being their own boss or becoming the screenwriter they always wanted to be. The Uranian will struggle with routine and is far better suited to self-employment or working for organizations which allow for flexitime. Yet whichever Aquarian you have working for you, a degree of independence will ensure you get the best out of him or her.



Aquarius is the sign of science and technology, which is why so many Aquarians find their niche in these industries. And even if they opt for a career in academia or hospitality or the Civil Service, they embrace new technology with élan and are the first to have the new iPhone or some such gadget. If you have an employee who is a tad nerdy, a bit of an oddball, he or she will almost certainly have Aquarius in the chart. And if you think this makes the Water Bearer uncharismatic, think of Lisbeth Salander (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*) or Indiana Jones who tick all the Aquarius boxes.

Your Aquarius employee has intelligence and intuition. He or she need not have gone to university, but it is a sign that likes to have letters after its name and credentials from an esteemed body. To this end many Aquarian employees will study in their own time to acquire qualifications or simply to slake their thirst for knowledge. When you employ an Aquarian, you're getting a first-class mind.

Water Bearers are the fount of all knowledge in the workplace.

And in keeping with their high-minded natures, Aquarians would opt for a poorly paid but prestigious position rather than a highly paid job offering little or no kudos. The Water Bearer is not mercenary and cannot be tempted to sacrifice his or her principles on the altar of Mammon.

Aquarians are never yes-men. They are not afraid to buck the trend or to argue against the prevailing wisdom. They can, of course, hold some extremely unorthodox opinions, but out of ten ideas, nine of which will never gain traction, one will turn out to be sheer genius.

Your Aquarius employee is likely to have a rebellious streak. It may not emerge in the early days of employment but, at some point, something will strike the Water Bearer as unreasonable or non-PC or against human rights and, unless he or she can be accommodated, your Aquarian will walk. These are

some of the most altruistic and idealistic folk in the zodiac. And you will be wasting your time trying to impress Water Bearers with your status or, worse, pull rank on them – you will be treated with silent indifference.

Aquarians do not take well to authority.

They do, however, like to be the authorities on this and that. And if you want your Aquarian employees to perform to the max, feed their intellectual egos. They are your to-go place for knowledge and consultation.

Aquarius is the sign of brotherhood, and its members set great store by their friendships. They may love working for you, but don't get between them and their comrades. They will prioritize events with friends and drop everything, even that uber-important assignment, to go to their aid. If you employ an Aquarian, you'll be taking on a team. And they can be addicted to social media. Yet in any workplace you'll probably find opinion divided as to who likes Mr and Ms Aquarius and who does not. And strangely enough, the Aquarian is often completely oblivious to the fact that someone does not like him.

As employees, Water Bearers take a little work, but once you've understood how to work with them, once you have accepted their little quirks and shown respect for their wisdom, hardly a day will go by when you won't have some reason to thank providence you employed them. They're like having a little wizard in the workplace, ready to rustle up a little bit of magic just when you need it.

Water Inter-relationships in the Workplace

Water–water

Water signs have a natural affinity for one another. They're coming from the same place. They feel on home territory – feel being the operative word. As long as there is consensus and communion, there is no better team than team water, but when storm clouds gather a water ship heads for the rocks, and it takes a devilishly long time to get it re-floated.

You can recognize a workplace with a preponderance of water signs: it will be very quiet; a haven of silent industry; each person will be working in their own space at their own pace. Occasionally someone will head to the refreshment zone, bringing back something for everyone – water signs always know who prefers what – which inspires a gentle murmur of approval. Sometimes, however, that pleasant quiet turns into an uncomfortable silence – someone got offended and no one wants to talk about it.

Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces are sensitive, creative, thoughtful, considerate, hard-working and a tad paranoid. Lots of water signs in a business team can support and inspire one another but they also feed each other's fears and insecurities, compromising production. And when one of them takes offence and emotionally shuts down, it can be very difficult to get the team back into balance and production. Likewise, if one water sign pours cold water on an idea, the others quickly lose confidence. Scorpio and Cancer have the power and tenacity to get people back on board but all too often they will have taken some kind of personal stance on the issue and dug their pincers in.

Members of the same water sign bring out each other's best and worst qualities. On the one hand, Crabs become more creative and, on the other, more cranky; Scorpions kill it (in both senses) while Pisceans together can work miracles or go round in ever-decreasing circles.

Different water signs make a better mix and of all three combinations, Pisces with Cancer or Scorpio is best. Pisces has the capacity to drift away from conflict, so differences of opinion soon get resolved. Scorpio/Cancer combos can mutually self-destruct; they're both ambitious and defensive and competition between them can be fierce. Also, both Crabs and Scorpions tend to hang on to the past, which means that even when an impasse between them is bridged, they never forget it. It comes back to haunt them.

The issue with a predominantly water workplace is that emotions drive everything. On a good day you couldn't find a happier and more effective bunch but on a bad day, you might as well shut up shop.

Water–earth

Water nourishes earth, enabling it to become fruitful, while earth holds water and prevents it from running all over the place. Both the fire signs and the water signs bring creativity and inspiration into the workplace, but while Aries, Leo and Sagittarius run rampant over earth's need for structure, discipline and caution, Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces encourage the earth signs to go beyond the boundaries of their imagination. They bring out the best in them.



Earth's stability and dependability is a perfect foil for water's insecurity and vulnerability. The earth signs rarely feel hot and bothered as they do in fire's company, nor ruffled and confused as in air's vicinity. Water responds instinctively and undemandingly to earth while earth to them represents strength and steadfastness.

The exchange between earth and water signs is pleasant and rewarding. There's a nice little hum in the office. They like to sit near each other and hang out together at the coffee station. Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces are not the types to insist on their own way at all costs, although Scorpio can be bloody-minded at times, and they welcome Capricorn's leadership, Taurus's commitment and Virgo's pragmatism.

The best earth/water combinations are those that involve signs that are 60 degrees apart: this is an angle of harmony and positive diversity. This is why Taurus's best workmates are Cancer and Pisces; Virgo's are Cancer and Scorpio and Capricorn's are Scorpio and Pisces.

Virgo is Pisces' opposite number in the zodiac and both belong to the Mutable family, so they share certain preferences, behaviours and each other's vices and virtues. Virgo and Pisces can go round and round in circles, sometimes losing the end game completely, and they both have passive-aggressive tendencies, but when they work well together, they're a brilliant team. They will, incidentally, be the supplier of pills and potions to the office population and the members of staff guaranteed to know the source of your sore thumb.

Capricorn is Cancer's polar opposite, and there is a mutual give and take to this working relationship. Taurus and Scorpio, by contrast, tend to bring out one another's worst points, although if there is one team guaranteed to go down with the ship it's going to be this one.

If there is a problem with an earth/water relationship it lies in their both being too cautious and pessimistic. While the earth signs maintain they're only being realistic, water signs cannot explain their reservations: they just feel something is not going to work, and they just know in their bones they're right. Thus, as a working couple they compound their mutual negativity, and this can slow down progress and ruin the normally warm and cooperative atmosphere.

But, by and large, earth signs and water signs make a great team.

Water–fire

What happens when you pour water on fire? It goes out. And what happens when fire heats up water? It evaporates. Then again, steam heat is a force to be reckoned with. And where would we be without central heating? This is not an irredeemable combination, but it takes a lot of work.

In the same way that fire and earth are elemental mismatches, so are fire and water. While both fire signs and water signs are driven by their emotions and instincts, there is a tremendous difference in their basic temperaments. Fire signs are initiators; they don't need a lot of prodding and coaxing to bring their talents into the workplace; water signs, on the other hand, require nurture, encouragement and sensitive handling.

Aries, Leo and Sagittarius can be a tad too pushy and insensitive for Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces. When things go wrong, fire signs move onward and upward, working on the principle that eventually everyone will get over it and the next big thing will be the best big thing ever; water signs sulk and brood and silently plan payback. Thus, fiery folk are always shaken to the gills when the water sign they had considered no threat gets the promotion or rights a wrong for which the powers that be are forever in his or her debt.

Still waters run a little too deep for fire signs.

The way to get the best out of your water/fire team is to hold weekly in-house meetings to discuss issues and 'share'. (This might be irritating in the extreme for the fire signs, but it will work wonders for better office relations.) The sharing session should be held after an alcohol-free lunch. Fire gets animated on alcohol; water gets wistful.

Not all fire/water combinations are equal, however. Signs that are 90 degrees apart belong to the same modality, which tends to make for even more tension between them. Aries and Cancer, Leo and Scorpio and Sagittarius and Pisces have to work even harder on their relationship. Then again, the rewards are even greater.

Water–air



Think of a breeze wafting over a lake. See that gentle ripple? Then imagine a hurricane striking a body of water... As in nature, so with the elements air and water. These are essentially antithetical energies. While air is at home in the realm of the mind and experiences great discomfort in the world of feelings, water belongs to the realm of emotions and has difficulty living in a rational world.

Air is detached from its feelings; water is consumed by them.

In an office space, air and water signs should keep a safe distance from each other. In principle both have much to offer one other but, in reality, the two just don't belong in the same room. Gemini, Libra and Aquarius are continually frustrated by the water signs' need to check how they feel about something before they can move on it. They become exasperated by the water signs' mood swings and their tendency to take everything personally. If only they had a degree of detachment, all would be well...

For their part, Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces feel the air signs lack depth, patience and emotional intelligence. They see them as cold and lacking in compassion and empathy. In response, the water signs shut down and play passive-aggressive games. Admittedly, Libra can relate to another person's sensibilities and do a good job of demonstrating empathy, but even Librans can only stomach so much mollycoddling. As for Gemini and Aquarius: are they bothered? No.

In the early days of an air/water relationship – both in the workplace and the bedroom – there will be a deep fascination between the two. Air will be drawn to the mystery of the water signs, their ambiguity and inconsistencies, while Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces will be impressed by the air signs' brilliance and eloquence.

Of all the air/water combinations those that belong to the same modality are the most difficult yet have the most potential to achieve great things: Gemini and Pisces, Libra and Cancer, Aquarius and Scorpio.

As always, how well these two elements get on in the workplace depends on other factors in their charts. An air sign with, say, the Moon in Cancer, Scorpio or Pisces, will have an affinity with a water sign that can allow an extremely good working relationship to develop and, vice versa, a water sign with the Moon in Gemini, Libra or Aquarius will find common ground with an air sign. Air signs bring coherence to water's concepts and water signs bring depth, meaning and texture to air's theories.

But without such chart connections, air and water are always going to have a bumpy ride.

Endnote:

(1) Cardinal is one of three modalities: see the section on How Astrology Works.