

Degrees as Years: A Surprisingly Simple "Time Lord" Technique

by Ray Grasse

Simply put, the horoscope could be described as a symbolic blueprint encoding the diverse potentials of someone's life. But not all of the potentials indicated in the chart activate at the same time during that person's life. So what determines when those different planetary energies "come alive"?

In the minds of most Western astrologers these days, the primary triggering mechanisms used for that purpose have generally been transits or progressions. For example, when Jupiter comes along and crosses over your Venus, your romantic or aesthetic urges will tend to be amplified. Or when Saturn first comes back around to where it was when you were born, during your late 20s, the potentials in that part of your horoscope will be activated in a significant way.

In ancient times, however, one of the most common triggering mechanisms was something known as the "time lord" technique, or what in the Vedic astrological tradition (both ancient and current) has been known as the *dasha* system. Whereas conventional transits are based more solidly on actual astronomical phenomena, time lord techniques tend to be more symbolic in nature.

For instance, a person's life may be divided into "chapters" based on certain assigned periods of time associated with different planets or houses. Consequently, in the Hellenistic system of "profections," every one of the twelve houses of the horoscope can be seen as relating to a successive year of one's life, such that the 1st house reveals clues about a person's first year, the 2nd house about their second year, and so on, all the way around the twelve houses (with the system repeating itself after age twelve, so that the 1st house then relates to age 13, the 2nd house to age 14, etc.).

One common time lord-type technique found in the Western tradition involves something referred to as the "planetary ages." The 20th-century mystic and philosopher, Rudolf Steiner, had his own version of this technique and viewed human development in terms of seven-year cycles, each one associated with the classical planets. According to that system, the first seven years of life are governed by the Moon; the second seven years (7–14) are governed by Mercury; the third seven years (14–21) by Venus; *the next three seven-year segments* (21–42) are governed by the Sun; the next seven years (42–49) are governed by Mars; the next seven years (49–56) are governed by Jupiter; and the "final" seven-year period (56–63) is governed by Saturn. Steiner himself didn't suggest any planetary rulerships for the years past 63, but other writers have suggested various possibilities, such as assigning Uranus to the years 63 to 70, Neptune to the years 70 to 77, and Pluto to the years 77 to 84.

In this article, I'd like to look briefly at one technique that has received relatively little attention but which I've found to be surprisingly accurate and astonishingly simple. It was related to me by my first astrology teacher, Maureen Cleary, who summed it up this way:

Look to the zodiacal degree a planet in your horoscope occupies, and that will tell you what year of your life that planet's energy will manifest in an especially important way for you.

Is your Venus located in 25°33" Aries? Then look to the period around your 26th year for something important to unfold relating to your Venus. (Remember, when a planet has actually entered the 25th degree, that means it's now *into* your 26th year. Is your Saturn several minutes into the 17th degree of its sign? Then it's likely that sometime during your 18th year, you had an important development pertaining to Saturnian lessons or challenges. Is Jupiter located somewhere in your 21st degree? Then look to what happened in your 22nd year—and so on.)

I've generally found that we can extend the orb of this influence a degree or so on either side, in terms of when that planet will reveal its influence. For example, if someone's Saturn is positioned within the 21st degree of a sign, one might see Saturnian influences strongly manifesting anytime between ages 20 and 22. However, in some cases I've been astonished to find that by looking even to the *actual minutes of arc*, one sometimes sees that influence climaxing during a *specific month or even week*. Say that your Jupiter is at 21°30" Scorpio. Jupiter may "activate" exactly six months into your 22nd year (since 30 minutes of arc represents one-half of a degree, and thus one-half of a year).

As for how this technique works *beyond* the age of 30, that's simple enough. As with Hellenistic profections, simply repeat the numbering sequence once you've reached the end of that cycle. For instance, suppose a person has their Sun at exactly 5°00" Cancer. That degree would activate not only near the 5th birthday, but again around the 35th birthday, the 65th birthday, and the 95th birthday.

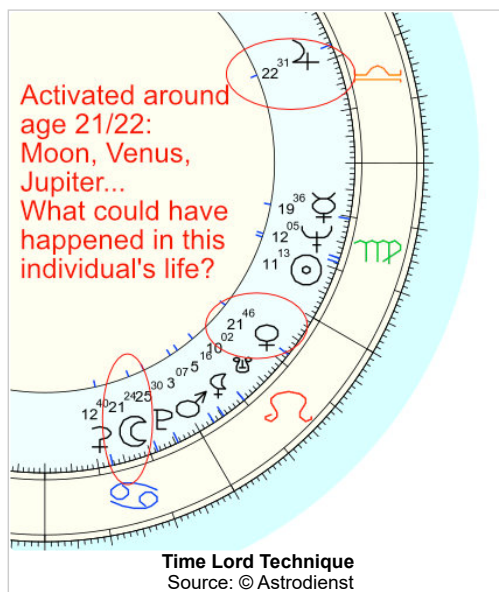
I distinctly remember that when I first heard of this technique, I was frankly skeptical since it seemed almost *too* simple. Yet the more I worked with it over time, the more surprised I was by its efficacy. Several years after learning the technique from Maureen, I asked another astrology teacher of mine, Goswami Kriyananda of Chicago, whether he had ever heard of the technique. Indeed, he had—and he added, seemingly almost as perplexed by its simplicity and power as I had been:

I find it frighteningly accurate.



Stepping stones in life

Source: Background [Gerd Altmann, Pixabay](#)



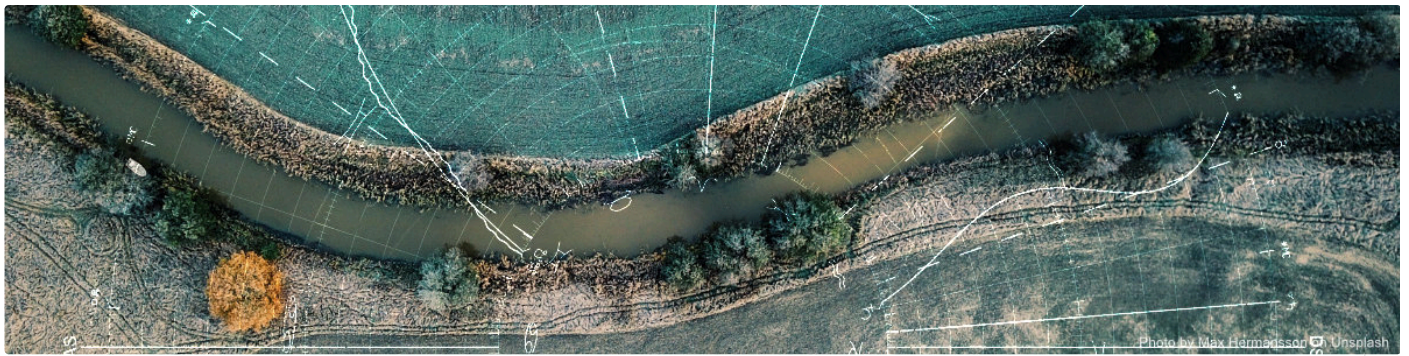


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Long-Term Perspectives

Your personal perspectives for the next six years, by Liz Greene

What I'd like to do here is present a handful of examples to illustrate this technique in action, and I'll begin with my own horoscope.

First, let's take the placement of my Sun, which was at 13° Gemini when I was born. The period around (and following) my 13th birthday was perhaps the most significant turning point of my young life, one I often look back on as my key "creative awakening." Besides discovering books about spirituality and "alternative" topics, this was a time when my mind was opening to a host of new subjects, ranging from lost civilizations and paranormal phenomena to musical influences like Bob Dylan and Claude Debussy. That was the year I started painting in oils (which led to my attending art college several years later). It's also when I met a famous movie actor (and solar figure), Vincent Price—which, for a childhood movie fan like myself, was somewhat akin to meeting Jesus Christ himself.

Now, add 30 years to *that* in order to find the next activation of my Sun degree, and you arrive at my 43rd year of life. What happened between my 43rd and 44th birthdays? This was when my first book, *The Waking Dream*, was published—a truly Geminiian manifestation.

My Venus is at 7° Gemini, and while I have no memory of what happened during my seventh year (other than some dabbling in watercolors), when I add 30 years to that date, I come up with age 37, which is the year I got married.

My natal Neptune is positioned in the 19th degree of Libra, and the period between my 19th and 20th birthdays was another pivotal time of my life. Among other things, this was not only a key period for me in my experiments with hallucinogens, but it was also when I started studying mysticism more intensively and began attending classes with yogi/mystic Goswami Kriyananda. I was a sophomore in art college at the time and was heavily involved in filmmaking, which led to an eventful trip to California with two fellow students and one of our film instructors that year. The trip was ostensibly for the purpose of shooting footage by the ocean, but it also proved to yield two life-changing LSD trips in the Big Sur region—all obvious Neptunian symbols. On the more negative side, unfortunately, it was a romantically disillusioning year for me as well—a pattern that repeated 30 years later at age 49 when, as a then-divorced bachelor, I discovered that a powerful new love interest went up in smoke.

Let's look now to a couple of famous examples. John Lennon was born with his Uranus at 25° Taurus. Since he was born on October 9, 1940, this means that 25 years after his birth, we would need to focus on the twelve-month period between October 9, 1965 and 1966. Did anything innovative, radical, media-related, or even disruptive occur for him during that period? Aside from the brilliantly innovative musical work he was doing with the Beatles at that point (both the *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver* albums came out during that period), this turned out to be one of the most disruptive times of his life. In the course of an interview during the spring of 1966, Lennon infamously remarked,

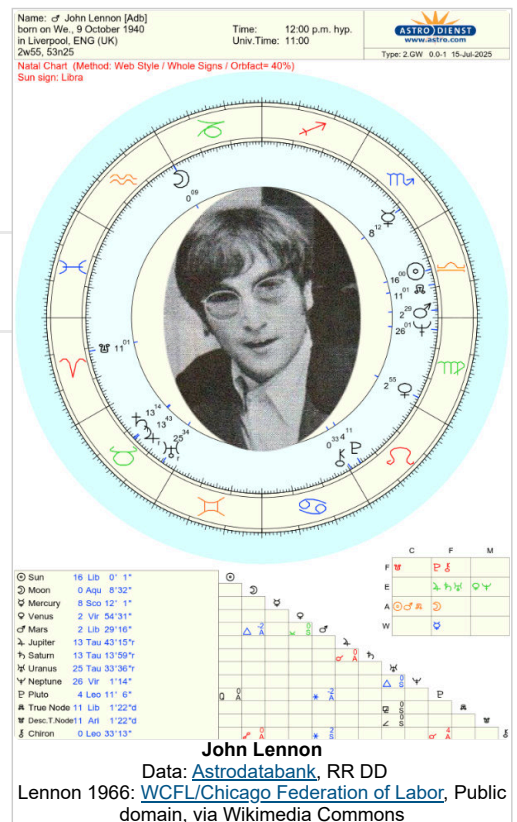
Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink ... We're (the Beatles) more popular than Jesus now ...

In the ensuing months, that single remark circulated through the media and ignited a firestorm of controversy around the world, leading to the burning of Beatles' records by religious fundamentalists and even threats against Lennon's life.

Or let's take one of Lennon's early idols, Elvis Presley. Born on January 8, 1935, Elvis had his Jupiter at 18° Scorpio. His 18th year was in 1953. Did anything important or "expansive" happen for him that year? As it turned out, in August 1953 Elvis walked into the offices of Sun Records and made his first-ever record, a two-sided disc with "My Happiness" on the one side and "That's When Your Heartaches Begin" on the other. Though he wasn't formally signed to a record contract until a short while later, that first acetate signaled the beginning of his recording career and brought him to the attention of producer Sam Phillips.

Finally, let's consider the case of singer Bob Dylan, who was born on May 25, 1941. As I wrote about in chapter four ("Decoding the Most Elevated Planet in the Horoscope"), Dylan's Neptune is a particularly prominent feature of his chart, since it's the most elevated planet. It's positioned at 24°56" Virgo—which would place the Neptunian period in question somewhere between 1965 and 1966. So, what happened then? In the minds of many, it led to the most brilliant songwriting efforts of his career, with the extraordinary release of his albums *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Highway 61*, and *Blonde on Blonde*, all within a relatively short time.

Dylan's Sun is at 3°33" Gemini, and while we don't know what happened for him at age 3, if we simply add 30 degrees to that, it brings us up to a point midway through his 34th year—which would have been the 1974–75 period. What happened then? After being famously reclusive for a number of years following his fabled motor-cycle accident, he suddenly exploded back onto the music scene with a much-heralded world tour, backed up by The Band, while also recording his masterpiece album *Blood on the Tracks*, released in early 1975 and widely considered his finest



work since the mid- 1960s. (*Rolling Stone* magazine ranks it #16 on its list of the 100 Greatest Albums.) Dylan also wrote and recorded his celebrated song “Hurricane” during that period (mid-1975), and last but not least, he initiated his extraordinary touring ensemble, the “Rolling Thunder Revue,” which hit the road from late 1975 into 1976.

Let’s fast-forward to the next major activation of Dylan’s Sun in Gemini. If we add another 30 years to his 3° Gemini Sun, this brings us to his 63rd year, which would have been between 2004 and 2005. Did anything of consequence happen for him during that period? Indeed—that’s when he published his much-awaited autobiography, *Chronicles: Volume One*.

Dylan’s chart points up an interesting aspect of this technique, namely, that when you find two or more planets occupying the same (or similar) degrees, even if in different signs, it seems to amplify the importance of those corresponding years even more dramatically. For example, Dylan’s Mercury is at 23° while his Neptune is at 24°; those two years of his life were an exceptionally creative time for him (but also a problematic one, in terms of stress and substance abuse).

An even more dramatic example of this principle is that of my client whose chart showed an exact square between Saturn and Venus at 17° of their respective signs, with Pluto also being positioned at 17° of another sign. Three planets in the exact same degree, in other words. Did anything significant happen for her romantically around age 17, I asked? When she heard that question, her eyes widened considerably, as she solemnly went on to tell me about a sexual assault she experienced at 17, which left her traumatized for years. On the other hand, I have another client who was born with a near-exact conjunction between Jupiter, Venus, and the Moon in the 22nd degree of Scorpio (in the 5th house of pleasure, no less), who told me that in her 22nd year she experienced the most profound sexual awakening of her life.

These are just a few examples that illustrate this technique at work. But I strongly encourage readers to put it to the test with their own charts, as well as their clients’ charts, and see for themselves what it has to offer.

