

Moon and Ceres - Archetypes of Attachment and Nurture

by Rebecca M. Farrar

Every Full Moon phase we have an opportunity to invite more self-awareness and emotional wisdom through balancing our inner world of emotions with our outer world of identity - aka our Moon and Sun. When the Moon has its own space in the sky it can be an ideal time to focus on feeling what needs to be felt and attuning to our unique lunar state and attachment patterning.

In psychology, nurture relates to our attachment and ability to attune and connect with others. Unfortunately, many of us didn't grow up with parents who were responsive and attuned to our needs or emotions and therefore causing a rift in our relationship to our inner individual nurturer and the collective Great Mother. These differing responses to nurturing during our early development culminate in various attachment styles that become the basis of how we build relationships, cultivate intimacy with ourselves and others.

The word "attachment" gets thrown around a lot, often in reference to attachment styles. However, its roots are much deeper than categorizing ourselves or others through perceived availability. John Bowlby first coined "attachment theory" as "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings." His theory evolved through the work of many including Mary Ainsworth during the 1960s and 1970s. Research in the field identified attachment patterns that are created early on between caregivers and children and centered around food as well as behavioral motivations such as fear and wanting comfort. It was Ainsworth whose famous "Strange Situation" study that developed the three major styles of attachment we discuss today as *secure*, *anxious-insecure* (or *anxious*), and *avoidance-insecure*. Though it wasn't until later in 1980s that Main and Solomon's research also added *disorganized-insecure* attachment.

Core aspects of attachment theory centers around emotional attunement and nourishment - archetypes I associate with the Moon and Ceres, respectively. This is where the chart comes in as giving us clues to our soul's patterning that feel most natural to us and how we can evolve and heal through these archetypes. For the purposes of exploring complexity, I'm not going to focus on the main attachment styles as I see them intertwined with several combinations of the birth chart. Rather I want to offer an approach that honors various parts of the natal chart that may feel at odds with each other.

Also of note, I see close relationships of any kind - whether it be family, friends, or romantic partners - as potential trigger or healing for working with our attachment.

MOON: Emotional Attunement and Avoidance

In psychology, the term *emotional attunement* refers to our ability to be present with someone else's experience and our own. Psychotherapist R. G. Erskine defines emotional attunement as

...going beyond empathy to create a two-person experience of unbroken feeling connectedness by providing a reciprocal effect and/or resonating response.

In astrology, the Moon represents many aspects of our being such as the unconscious, our emotional field and needs, embodiment, our home, and often the way we were nurtured or cared for. It also connects us to the way we were parented and our conscious and unconscious needs that were or weren't met and our ability to empathize. Familiarizing ourselves with our natal Moon, major aspects, and house placement helps us understand our emotional process and unconscious drives that can be the hidden forces of our ability to be present to our feelings and those of others.

The Moon by sign and aspect also speak of the ways we avoid feeling or deny our inner world - aka how we protect ourselves or attune to our own feelings. Knowing and consistently deepening our knowledge of our natal Moon allows us to open more into the often unconscious parts of ourselves where we can struggle the most in close relating.

The emotional defenses we build and create are healthy and normal, and serve a purpose to protect the tender parts, though they can also impact our ability to stay connected to ourselves and move through difficulty with more ease. *Defense mechanisms* were identified by Sigmund Freud and are behaviors people use to separate themselves from unpleasant thoughts or feelings. It's a way of creating distance through avoidance of discomfort. One of the core ideas of attachment is how we deal with this in relationship to our main caregivers when we were young.

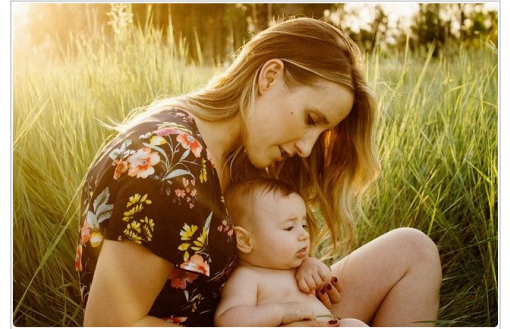
We may avoid, because we don't want to be uncomfortable or we aren't in a phase where it is necessarily helpful to slow-down and feel things. By the nature of defenses they are mostly unconscious and therefore associated with the Moon, though show up often in conjunction with our ego defenses as the Sun. I notice these by element of Moon sign, as well as more in-depth with the sign and archetypal combination. Understanding the complexity of your lunar self involves also knowing the "flavors" the planetary aspects offer as well, something my own archetypal astrology lineage tends to focus on the most. Below are the most common defense mechanisms according to Freud and emotional avoidance tendencies that contribute to our ability to attune to ourselves and others.

My suggestion is to go by sign and then go through and look at all aspects to the natal Moon to see what resonates most. I have listed a few asteroids as well that I work with, feel free to ignore them if you don't know their placement.

Moon in Fire Signs: Tendency towards avoiding through distraction, minimizing emotions, or denial

- **Aries Moon or Moon in aspect to Mars** // Staying busy, compulsive decision making, minimizing or denying feelings, because they aren't inspiring or uplifting
- **Leo Moon or Moon in aspect to Sun** // Creating drama or avoiding through joking or dismissing, focusing on what people think instead of how you feel, or reaction formation where we tend to react in overly positive way (similar to spiritual bypassing)
- **Sagittarius Moon or Moon in aspect to Jupiter** // Being righteous about the truth of a situation, being dismissive about someone's experience or your own, or being overly optimistic

Moon in Earth Signs: Susceptibility with suppression, dismissal, or pleasure seeking



Attachment and Nurture
Source: [Pexels](#) from [Pixabay](#).



Avoidance
Source: [Jerzy Górecki](#) from [Pixabay](#).

- **Taurus Moon or Moon in aspect to Venus** // Shopping or focusing on material things, pleasure seeking through sugar or other indulgences, attention seeking or vanity
- **Virgo Moon or Moon in aspect to Mercury** // Overthinking instead of feeling, over rationalizing the emotions and their "facts," focus or controlling around day-to-day life
- **Capricorn Moon or Moon in aspect to Saturn** // Armoring up and going into solitude; judging, condescending, or being authoritative about the self and emotions, advice giving instead of being vulnerable

Moon in Air Signs: Disposition with overthinking, joking, or dismissal

- **Gemini Moon or Moon in aspect to Mercury or asteroid Pallas Athene** // Over-thinking or intellectualizing, compartmentalizing or splitting the emotions off from identity, or head in the clouds disassociation
- **Libra Moon or Moon in aspect to Venus or asteroid Astraea** // Displacement of emotions onto unrelated situations out of not wanting to disrupt peace, co-dependency and deferring emotional response to someone else, self-abandoning and avoiding expression by hiding how we feel
- **Aquarius Moon or Moon in aspect to Uranus** // Wanting to get away or do something new and exciting, believing no one else has ever had the experience before and can't relate, focusing instead on manifesting and trying to get rid of your unconscious or "lower vibration"

Moon in Water Signs: Lean towards disassociation, addiction, or obsession

- **Cancer Moon or Moon in aspect to Ceres** // Overeating, especially comfort foods, or eating disorders; nurturing or helping others instead of naming needs; or clinging to comforts or security to feel better
- **Scorpio Moon or Moon in aspect to Pluto** // Repression, control, and containment of intense feelings; shadow projection as a way to avoid shame or guilt; intensely triggered by others and into attack mode (often a sign of shadow projection)
- **Pisces Moon or Moon in aspect to Neptune** // Going into victimhood mode, projecting feelings onto someone else, addictions or other forms of disassociation

CERES: Self-Parenting & Nourishment

In psychology, self-parenting could be described as how we inhabit the paradox of being both our own parent and child. While self-care has often been oversimplified, when we look more deeply, it encompasses a holistic approach to becoming our own best caregiver. This ability to tend to ourselves while naming our needs integrates attunement and nourishment in our attachment systems.

In psychology, Jung's idea of individuation is the process by which we become whole unto ourselves separate from identifying with our families or anyone else. To me, this is Ceres' domain as in Greek mythology - Demeter in Roman mythology. Her over identification with her daughter ultimately brought her more into her own wholeness, just as Proserpina – Greek Persephone – became more herself after leaving her mother and spending time in the underworld.

Ceres in our natal chart points to the nurturing we wanted and are able to give ourselves and others - in many ways to the healing, to our attachment and missing emotional attunement. This splitting creates myriad issues that can include confusion about what one wants, detachment from emotions and body, and self-abandonment. Its placement teaches us where we easily provide nurturance and care to ourselves and what we need to feel our best physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Without an understanding of our natal Ceres, we may struggle a lot with unmet needs or confusion over how to be the best parents to our own internal children. However, with deeper exploration, this asteroid reveals our needs and greatest self-parenting priorities.

Over the first week of September 2022, Ceres dances in opposition with retrograde motion Saturn, while squaring the Lunar Nodes, perhaps offering a window to stabilize our attachment system. Though we can work with Ceres through our Ceres return, major transits to our natal Ceres, or Ceres retrograde cycles.

The beauty of Ceres is that once we know how to nourish ourselves, we are able to nurture others with the same skills. A shadow side of Ceres can be intense identification with a parent or caregiver or the demand that others meet all of our needs rather than the balance of what care we also provide ourselves. While the Moon in our charts showcases needs and emotional balancing, Ceres focuses on the ways we can nurture ourselves. Our Ceres placement by sign unveils how we can best tend to our inner child:

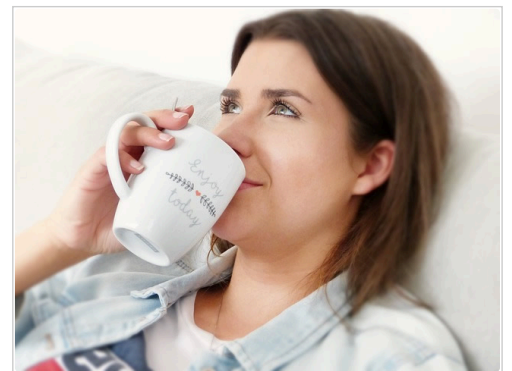
- **Ceres in Fire Signs:** *Nurturing and nourishment through movement (Aries), exploration (Sagittarius), and self-expression (Leo).* *Make time for having mini-adventures, or celebrating your need for independence and dominance through traveling or starting your own side business.
- **Ceres in Earth Signs:** *Feels cared for with sensuality (Taurus), stability (Virgo), and commitment (Capricorn).* *Connect with nature by taking a guided nature walk, learning more about the native plants or animals where you live, or spending time outside barefoot.
- **Ceres in Air Signs:** *Communication (Gemini), cooperation (Libra), and individuality (Aquarius) are places to foster nurturance.* *Educate yourself on social justice and equality through taking classes or participating in activist groups, or explore art and design.
- **Ceres in Water Signs:** *Offer yourself and others nurturance by appreciating your need for feeling loved (Cancer), deep emotional bonding (Scorpio), or connection to spirit (Pisces).* *Make time for seeing a therapist or being in groups where vulnerability and emotional expression is honored. Or volunteer your time doing something connects you to compassion for others.

Ultimately integrating our natal Moon and Ceres helps us recognize the needs we can ask for in others and where we can meet them for ourselves. We can then acknowledge what is self-parenting versus what we may heal in relationship to others. In every relationship we have choices around needs, but Ceres asks us specifically to share these gifts with ourselves before we are able to nurture others. When we don't know our needs fully, we rely on others to fulfill them, we perpetuate a cycle of feeling that something is missing. With the Moon and Ceres working together we are more able to cultivate healthier attachment patterns to attune to ourselves, while noticing emotional avoidance tendencies and how to better self-parent. We can recognize when we have something to give others versus when we need to dig deeper into our self-care toolbox.

Author:



Rebecca M. Farrar, M.A. offers astrology sessions for individuals, couples, and groups. Before studying archetypal astrology, she was a huge skeptic of astrology. Though now sees it as an incredible tool for enchantment and appreciating complexity. In 2013, she completed her M.A. at the California Institute of Integral Studies in the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness (PCC) program. She studied with archetypal astrologer Rick Tarnas, cosmologist Brian Swimme, activist Joanna Macy, and psychotherapist Stan Grof. Other influences include C.G. Jung, Owen Barfield, Bill Plotkin, Marianne Woodman, Thomas Berry, and Clarissa Pinkola Estes. Her website is: <https://www.wildwitchwest.com/>



Self-care
Source: [Silvia](#) from [Pixabay](#)