

Vocational Angst for the Pluto-Uranus in Virgo Generation—
Midlife Blues and Slash/Careers
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A recent story in *USA Today* detailed a study by two economists who analyzed data from over two million people in 80 countries on depression, anxiety, mental well-being, happiness and life satisfaction¹. People in their 40s were more likely to be depressed and weren't as happy as other ages. For both sexes, the probability of depression was greatest around age 44. Midlife was such a low point for wellbeing that it fell at the bottom of a U-shaped curve that indicated greater happiness among the young and old. The study's co-author, Andrew Oswald, concluded:

"It's something deep, beyond all the controls in our equation. It's a developing midlife low. It doesn't just happen one year and go away another. My best conjecture is that people eventually learn to quell infeasible aspirations. They manage to get their expectations into line with what they can actually achieve."

Their findings match astrological teachings about the midlife series of transits in which Uranus opposes natal Uranus, Pluto squares natal Pluto, Neptune squares natal Neptune, and Saturn opposes natal Saturn. I've witnessed midlife years of astrology clients born in the 1930s to 1960s, but by far the most difficult transition has been for the group born in the 1960s with Uranus and Pluto conjunct in Virgo as part of a complex pattern of aspects. As we'll see, the transiting Uranus-Saturn opposition that is forming will add new elements to the mix.

You'd Be Depressed, Too! What's Troubling Them?

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, people born during the tumultuous 1960s make up the largest percentage of the labor force (about 28%) and include an estimated 41 million workers between 40 and 49.² The issue of *Right Livelihood* is an important dimension in the collective psychology of those with the Virgo conjunction prominent—that is, when it's joined by additional Virgo planets, appears on the angles, or makes many aspects—and especially when it falls in the vocational houses. Their

¹ Jason, Sharon, "Midlife Slump Finds People in Their 40s Down in the Dumps—A Study of More Than 2 Million People Provides Evidence of Midlife Crisis." *USA Today*, Jan. 29, 2008. The study by Andrew Oswald and David Blanchflower was published in the March, 2008 issue of the journal, *Social Science & Medicine*. Abstracts available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com>

² These figures estimated from data on page 2, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2000-2001 Edition, published by the United States Department of Labor, VGM Career Books, Chicago, IL. Up-to-date vocational information is available from this source through their website, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>.

sense of purpose and self-worth, their hopes and expectations are shaped by it. When they are not fulfilled in work, their joy of living is greatly diminished.

In its positive expressions, this remarkably gifted combination is well-suited to contribute solutions to today's daunting social, medical, and economic problems. To understand why work is so important to them, let's look at some qualities you might see if Pluto and Uranus were placed in the vocational houses and well-aspected.

<u>Pluto:</u>	<u>Uranus:</u>	<u>Virgo:</u>
Insightful	Socially-Conscious	Eager To Serve
Analytical	Visionary	Practical
Focused	Innovative	Attentive To Detail
Deep, Probing	Detached	Sensible, Level Headed
Passionate Concern	Idealistic	Meticulous
Persistent	Independent	Hard-Working
Healer	Humanitarian	Skilled And Capable
Transformation	Revolution	Steady Improvement

If your line of work is devoted to improving our world and making life better for those who are struggling, wouldn't you want these sterling individuals working for you? Vast changes in the workplace in recent decades make career satisfaction a major challenge for this subgeneration. Especially during and immediately after the midlife cycle, many contend with disillusionment and despair.

Virgo, on the whole, is a sign with integrity and a strong distaste for dirty tactics. Unfortunately, the corporate world is increasingly corrupt, and the bottom line, rather than service to consumers, determines most workplace policies and practices. Virgo has high standards, yet living up to them has become nearly impossible. Shoddy workmanship offends them, and with today's heavy workloads, quality is sacrificed for profit. Many of this generation are stuck in jobs where they feel like cogs in a machine that has long since lost its humanity and honor. These trends became more and more prevalent during their thirties and forties, prime time in anyone's career.

Slash/Careers--A Subgeneration's Solution?

What career path might work for members of this subgeneration who find the mainstream workplace distasteful and dehumanizing? There are people with the Pluto-Uranus conjunction who love their jobs and who awake each day eager to get to their desks, but many of these fortunate individuals are self-employed, not part of a corporate machine.

Independent Uranus in the career houses natively or by transit often indicates self-employment in your own business or as a consultant of some kind, a growing segment of the labor force. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, workers age 45 and older represented 38% of the workforce in total in 2002, but they made up 54% of the self-employed (in unincorporated businesses only)³.

³ "Self-employment among older U.S. workers." Lynn A. Karoly and Julie Zissimopoulos, Monthly Labor Review Online, July 2004, Vol. 127, No. 7.
<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2004/07/art3exc.htm>.

People with strong Uranus aspects have the capacity to periodically reinvent themselves in ways that appeal to the collective. To survive in today's fast-paced, ever-changing economy, the capacity to stay on top of new trends and develop leading-edge products and services is a distinct asset. Another increasingly popular tactic to survive market fluctuations—and career stagnation—is to diversify by pursuing several vocational tracks at once. Since Virgo is both a mutable and an earth sign, Virgo placements often grant a plethora of practical skills and the capacity to transfer such assets from one type of enterprise to another. Always seeking to improve their performance, the best Virgoans constantly refine their skills and so have more and more to offer as they mature.

Perhaps self-employment plus diversification is the solution for many in the 1960s group. An online columnist for the New York Times, Marci Alboher coined the term “slash careers” to describe this growing phenomenon. Herself an author/journalist/speaker/life coach author/journalist/speaker/life coach, she has developed strategies for making diverse career passions work together. Her helpful book, *One Person/Multiple Careers: a New Model for Work/Life Success*, explains how to make the Slash Effect work⁴. For this subgeneration, Pluto's capacity to rise from its own ashes and Uranus's inventiveness can make the Slash Career approach a successful tactic for economic survival over the long haul.

Regaining the Vision: Remembering Why They're Here

As important as family is in shaping our nature, we're also affected in important ways by the climate of our times. That includes major social and economic conditions and historical events like a widespread depression, famine, or a major war. It also includes times of expansion and hope like a prolonged economic boom or the pioneer days of the Old West. The times we grow up in teach us what the world is like and shape expectations and beliefs about what is possible, for better or worse. The signs of the slow-moving outer planets define the general mood and specific areas of life that are undergoing major change.

The most striking changes and events occur when two or more outer planets form hard aspects like the conjunction, square, or opposition, but that the conjunction is strongest of all. Individuals with an outer planet combination strong natively are personally and directly impacted by their birth era. Events and conditions of their earliest years become a motivating—or limiting—force that gives them a sense of identity and purpose, of meshing with the group destiny by partaking in it.⁵

⁴ Alboher, Marci. *One Person/Multiple Careers: A New Model for Work/Life Success. How the Slash Effect Can Work for You*. Paperback. NY: Warner Books, 2007.

⁵ My book, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, volume 3*, analyzes the characteristics associated with various outer-planet aspects and the history and climate of their times. Available from www.moonmavenpublications.com.

What was it about the 1960s that shaped their commitment to making the world a better place through their work? The *War on Poverty* and plentiful educational opportunities had made a good education and a good career possible for many disadvantaged students. The Sixties was also a memorable era of protests, demonstrations, consciousness raising groups, and social movements aimed at ending injustice and discrimination based on race, gender, and economic status. It was a crucible of change that has impacted the evolution of society ever since. Working with this subgeneration over the years, I've come to believe that many are advanced souls with exceptional abilities who were drawn into incarnation precisely because of the hope they saw for advancement and equality for women, minorities, and those who are different from the mainstream.

The Transiting Uranus-Saturn Opposition—Echoes of 1964-67

The current opposition is within an 8° range from September, 2008 to April, 2009, from August to December, 2009, and from March to December, 2010. The opposition—an aspect of polarization—is first exact at 18° 58' Virgo-Pisces during election week, 2008, including November 4th. Other exact oppositions are on February 5, 2009 at 20°39' Virgo-Pisces; September 15, 2009 at 24°43' Virgo-Pisces; and April 26, 2010 at 28°46' Virgo-Pisces. The heated battle between liberal and conservative forces is likely to come to a head on Election Day, but you already knew that!

Clients who are struggling most with career stress now seem to be those born in the years 1964-7. The Pluto-Uranus conjunction was closest at that point, with the added complication of oppositions from Saturn and Chiron in Pisces. The spring months of 1965 were even more intense, in that Mars was also conjunct Uranus and Pluto and opposite Saturn and Chiron in Pisces for an exceptionally long time, from March 7 to June 7, 1965. It's hard to tease out the individual effects of so many aspects, but the Mars-Uranus aspect contributed to the prevailing mood of agitation and massive demonstrations over the Vietnam War, civil rights, and women's rights.

This year and next will be a peak period of challenge for this group, since the current opposition of Uranus in Pisces to Saturn in Virgo opposition touches upon and echoes their own natal opposition of Uranus in Virgo to Saturn in Pisces, but with the signs reversed. As a practicing astrologer, I've noticed that many of the clients who crowd into my consultation room when transits like the current opposition form in the sky are people who themselves have a strong major aspect between those two planets in the birth chart. (The particular angle doesn't have to be the same, although it is here.) The transiting aspect seems to stir up related dynamics and issues for people with those two planets in aspect natively.

The major discord in the lives of the mid-1960s bunch collectively is the tension between practical, workplace realities (Virgo) and their desire to fulfill their creative and spiritual nature and serve humanity in some way (Pisces). Finding a way to integrate and balance the two poles in a time of economic downturn is a complex issue that will occupy them for several years.

How are the natal and the transiting oppositions different? Natal Saturn in Pisces gave a sense of sacrificing one's dreams to meeting one's responsibilities and to practical

realities like the need to earn a paycheck. The flip-flopped opposition with Saturn in Virgo can mean that they've finally paid their dues, gotten a credible track record, amassed marketable skills, and raised their kids to the place where they'll be leaving home.

In short, they've earned the right to go for their dreams, though it may mean a temporary pay cut, hard work, and many sacrifices. Under an opposition, people often feel torn, here between the security of a job they find constraining and depressing, on one hand, and the unsure path and finances of striking out for a new and fulfilling career. Uranus in Pisces is wilder and freer than it was in Virgo, far more willing to cut loose and explore exciting new territory. Who could blame them if they did—if they don't go for their dreams now, when will they?

The Coming Year—A Call to Action for the Pluto-Uranus Collective

There's no question that we're in a difficult economy that impacts the careers of many in this generation. There have been daunting setbacks over the past decade as federal funding cuts scaled back Affirmative Action programs and educational opportunities for the disadvantaged. However, we're also seeing exciting breakthroughs that are long-term effects of progress made since the 1960s. As the transiting Uranus-Saturn opposition forms, we're seeing a presidential race featuring an African-American and a female candidate—a pinnacle of progress for the same two groups who were in the forefront of the rights movements of that era.

Many feel that Chiron, the physically challenged centaur, rules Virgo, and Chiron was an integral part of the network of aspects in the Mid-1960s. In recent years, role models for the disabled have achieved amazing feats, and each breakthrough awakens other disabled or disadvantaged individuals to stunning new possibilities. In the wake of the Spitzer scandal, New York now has a governor who is both African-American and legally blind. A new documentary features a group of blind teenagers who climbed Mount Everest under the guidance of two blind adult mountain climbers.

This transit is a pivotal moment, one that can reverse the social and economic trends that are so disempowering. It can catalyze the efforts of the Pluto-Uranus generation to take action to preserve the freedoms their parents fought so hard for. If you're one of them, and have felt hopeless or apathetic about your power, as an individual, to make a difference in the world, this is a time to rekindle the social activism that was the climate of your birth era. The fact that the opposition is exact in election week means that this election is a moment in history for us collectively to speak out. Don't let this opportunity pass you by.

Note: This article is an excerpt from the 2008 Edition of The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume One: The Outer Planets as Career Indicators, available at <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

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