

lunations: perfect timing

new and full moons

do the phases of the moon affect you?

The phases of the Moon affect the tides, affect the fish, affect the plants growing in the fields -- but do the phases of the Moon affect you? Scientific research has established time and again the link between life on Earth and the lunar cycles. In one such study, a biology professor at Northwestern University, Dr. Frank A. Brown, measured the metabolic activity of a number of life forms -- potatoes, carrots, salamanders, earthworms -- and discovered that each moved in rhythm with the Moon, seeming to know by its metabolic response, even under laboratory conditions, where the Moon was in its cycle.

Since the human body is largely made up of water, many believe we feel the Moon's gravitational pull as much as the ocean's tides do. Scientists are quick, however, to point out that a large body of water with plenty of exposed surface may be more easily affected by gravitation than one enclosed by skin such as ours. Nonetheless, there's strong belief in lunar influence. Hospitals tend to report more births at the New and Full Moons. Police Departments report more murders, thefts, arsons and assaults. Admissions at psychiatric hospitals can increase, particularly at the Full Moon. Physiological studies reveal a higher than average amount of electricity in the body at these times, as well as greater dream and muscle action during sleep, and a greater likelihood of excessive bleeding from cuts or surgeries.

An American scientist, Dr. E.M. Dewan, believed the female 29-day menstrual cycle was too close to the 29-day lunar cycle to be coincidental, but he was puzzled why so many women's cycles were irregular and not universally synchronized to the moon's phases. He theorized that artificial lighting and other electromagnetic irregularities in the environment might be interfering with the lunar connection. He tested his theory by asking 20 women with irregular menstrual cycles to leave a light on in their bedrooms at the onset of ovulation for three successive nights, hoping to interrupt the artificial cycle and restore the women to the lunar rhythm. The results were dramatic; every single woman in the study regularized her cycle!

There's an old Buddhist saying that the spoon can lie in the bowl a thousand years and never know the flavor of the soup. I wonder how many people are like that spoon -- living their whole lives under the Moon and never knowing its power. We're surrounded by computer terminals, artificial lights, electronic appliances, high tension wires. Are these the new deities? How much further out of step will we become? Having lost the lunar connection and racing headlong towards his and

this planet's destruction, civilized man has proven himself the single greatest danger to life on Earth.

So-called "primitive" man was far more advanced in understanding humanity's role as caretaker of this planet. We need to get back some of that sensitivity. The Moon can teach us. When we connect with the Moon, we connect with all living things on this planet. Ever wondered why the phases of the Moon are listed on so many calendars? It's a vestige from a time when man used to know what that meant! We used to know how and why to schedule our activities in synch with the Moon. Perhaps it's not too late to learn – even to innovate anew. We live in a different world than our ancestors, but it still has a Moon. Which contemporary activities might be optimized by coordination with the lunar cycle? Experiment and observe the results!

your lunation birthday

The New and Full Moons are generally the most potent times in the monthly lunar cycle, but each of us may reach an individual peak every month during the phase corresponding to our natal Moon -- which for you is at the **Balsamic** Moon. The days of the Balsamic Moon represent your monthly lunar birthday. Since your natal moon phase carries the combined energy of the Sun and Moon in your chart, it may represent one of your chart's most intimate expressions of your life purpose. Setting time aside during your monthly Moon birthday to meditate on your life purpose can be a powerful way to keep your life on track and full of meaning. You might also find that you can be more productive and creative at this time. You might access a feeling of being on your game plan, of stepping into your own power, as though some invisible doorway had opened into the cosmos and rushed some extra energy your way. Whatever it is you came here to do, you can probably count on doing more of it and doing it better at the Balsamic Moon.

(Actually, for many women, the increased fertility generally associated with the lunation birthday is often literally true. A surprising number of unexpected pregnancies can be traced to conception during the phase of a woman's birth Moon -- whether or not that was the normal time for ovulation during her cycle. A Czech psychiatrist, Dr. Eugen Jonas, established this fact with an 87% success rate!)

Ultimately, the experience of your lunar birthday will be a distinctly personal one. It's a time when a special vibration inside you rises to meet a similar and very powerful outer vibration emanating from the Moon. It's like two tuning forks resonating at the same tone. You should feel this one from the inside out. Depending on your level of sensitivity, this might initially be a subtle experience for you, but you can strengthen it with practice and attention. Notice how you feel at the Balsamic Moon over the next few months. Your own experience will be the best

teacher. I think you'll eventually consider these days a monthly cosmic gift you'll want to use for the rest of your life!

Following are the dates for the Balsamic Moon in the coming year. If you study the Moon's position in her cycle and the way she looks in the sky on these dates, you should eventually be able to know when it's your lunar birthday without consulting a calendar:

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| <i>April 8 - 12, 2002</i> |
| <i>May 8 - 12</i> |
| <i>June 6 - 10</i> |
| <i>July 6 - 10</i> |
| <i>August 4 - 8</i> |
| <i>September 3 - 6</i> |
| <i>October 2 - 6</i> |
| <i>November 1 - 4</i> |
| <i>November 30 - December 3</i> |
| <i>December 30, 2002 - January 2, 2003</i> |
| <i>January 28 - February 1, 2003</i> |
| <i>February 26 - March 2</i> |

the new and full moons

At each lunation birthday your inner sense of purpose is amplified. At the New and Full Moons each month you can also participate in the resonance of a much larger cycle. The New Moon is a powerful time for beginnings all over the planet; the Full Moon is a potent time for realizations.

new moon The days just prior to the New Moon are a good time for releasing old habits and for doing introspective, meditative work. If you've kept yourself in tune with the waning moon, you're likely more aware at this time of what has and hasn't been working in your life. Your motivation to clean house – physically or psychically may be especially keen. Listen to your intuitions about making personal changes. You can more easily discipline yourself now; you're less tempted to indulge in excesses or be distracted by others' demands. It's a good time for quiet preparation because once the New Moon arrives, you'll want to take advantage of the strong concentration of energy available for launching new projects or goals. Open yourself to new possibilities at the New Moon. Get ready: three to four days after the New Moon, it's an optimum

time to focus your aspirations into a clear goal. Know that you may need to face your fears and overcome your inertia. The two weeks from New Moon to Full new action is blessed. These are the days for actively building your project or dream into reality.

More is visible at the Full Moon; greater clarity is available. **full moon**
It's a good time to reckon the results of what you've been building, or to take stock in a particular area of your life. Pay attention to the messages you're receiving from those around you. The Full Moon represents a turning point in the cycle of development, because now the focus shifts from action to understanding. The weeks just after the Full Moon are best for mental effort, for uncovering the meaning in your work, or the reasons behind the results seen at the Full. When the Moon is Full, the Sun and Moon are in direct opposition to one another. It's high tide time emotionally. But the Full Moon is only a volatile time if you're out of touch with your emotional life; watch out for others who are!

developing your own rituals

Taking time out to honor the New and Full Moons each month is a highly rewarding practice. If your life tends to run at an unnatural pace, this effort will ground you. Whether you're bound by unnatural deadlines or trapped inside even well-intentioned routines -- or, at the opposite end, often found drifting in space with no clear direction or goal -- either way, tuning into the Moon will bring you into balance. By stopping twice a month to turn your eyes skyward, you will also bring your feet firmly onto the ground. This is Earth work as much as it is Moon work. And it is highly sacred work too. Join the rest of humanity committed to returning harmony and balance to the planet. Make a commitment to the Moon.

Create your own Moon ceremonies, with a friend or on your own. Build an altar. Burn candles. Design a personal mandala with your crystals and stones. Read from a spiritual book that has meaning for you. Write goals and affirmations. Throw your Rune stones. Whatever has meaning for you. I know one man who at every New Moon writes a check for what he'd like to receive that month and signs it from "the Universe." I know a woman who at every Full Moon prays for peace on the planet. It's not so important what you do as that you do it. The more personally meaningful, the better.

After honoring the New and Full Moons in various ways for the past ten years, I've come to believe that the simplest rituals are quietly beautiful and often the most meaningful. At each New Moon I symbolically renew my life by replacing the kitchen sponge; I renew my garden by fertilizing my roses. At the Full Moon I sit and watch the moonrise from my backyard. What's most important is to make yourself available to the Moon's inspiration. Be creative and courageous enough to stick with this practice until it's an integral part of your life. The next section will

provide added focus for your next twelve months of ceremonies, by identifying the significant astrological focal points for you each month.

your monthly lunar focus

On the next page, you'll find a copy of your astrological chart. Notice that it's divided into twelve sections (called "houses"). Each house signifies a particular aspect of your life, such as your relationships, your finances, your family, your career, etc. The question most frequently asked astrologers is about the seemingly empty slices of the pie -- "If my relationship house is empty, does that mean I won't have any relationships?" Not at all! Actually, no house is ever empty -- there's a sign on each house and a planet somewhere in your chart influencing every single slice. If you've ever read a book of Sun sign descriptions and found that you identified with each one, that's because you do have all twelve signs somewhere in your chart! So, even if you see a slice of the pie that looks empty, it does not mean that area of life is empty for you. It's just that houses with planets in them generally signify areas of greater emphasis or intensity.

Every year brings twelve to thirteen New Moons, cycling through the zodiac, highlighting a different area of your chart each month. This will sometimes overlap, energizing the same house for two successive New Moons. But basically, over the course of a year, the New Moons will circle around your chart and concentrate energy into each of the houses it touches. Each New Moon, then, is an opportunity for you to focus on a particular area of your life -- to transform, strengthen, revise, or dream there -- whatever is most appropriate given your current life circumstances. For example, when the New Moon occurs in your relationship house, it's time to clarify what you want to give and receive in all your relationships, whether you're currently involved in a romantic one or not (and if you're not, and want to be, it's a good time to ask the Universe to bring that to you!). At the Full Moon two weeks later, you'll see the results of your intentions and will also gain new insights or new direction in that facet of your life.

Over the next year the New Moons will take you around the full wheel of your chart. In each house where the New Moon falls, there will be opportunities for growth. They may not necessarily coincide with dramatic events in your life, though events often do occur where your mental focus lies. To get the most from each New Moon, go beyond the descriptions in each paragraph and connect the words to what is actually happening in your life each month. The more observant and involved you are, the more meaning each New and Full Moon will have for you. New or Full Moons that fall in houses where you have planets may have deeper significance for you.

Aries is the sign of the pioneer. It rules both adventure and identity. Putting the two together, the Aries New Moon on **April 12** energizes that peculiarly individual

adventure of you being you. What new experiences are you reaching for? And just who are you these days anyway! Aries is the sign of new beginnings, making this a great time for energizing any facets of yourself that have lain dormant for awhile. The Aries New Moon occurs in your **Fourth House** of emotional roots and nourishment. This might especially bring your home and family into focus, two significant emotional support systems. Take a look at the place you're living in -- are you taking enough care of it so that it takes care of you? Do something to renew your home environment so that it feels even cozier and more nurturing. "Family" does not have to mean just your family of origin; you might take some time this month to honor whatever circle of people you consider your support. The Fourth is also the house of beginnings and endings; if something ends this month, something new must surely be around the corner. The Full Moon on **April 26** may reveal a deeper layer to your nature, one that has perhaps been previously hidden. Your relationships may provide the mirror to show you this deeper side of yourself. *Since this New Moon occurs close to the **Fifth House** cusp, the Sun will also be travelling through your Fifth House of creativity this month, which might evoke issues of children, romance or creative expression as well.*

The **Taurus** New Moon on **May 12** highlights your sense of value -- both the worth that's inside of you as well as the outer worth you can measure by your possessions. This is a good time for building greater security into your life, by increasing either your inner or outer worth. This is the sign of pleasure and self-indulgence, so be on the lookout for opportunities for sensual enjoyment this month too. The Taurus New Moon highlights your **Sixth House** of work, health and daily routines. It's a good time to look at how you're spending your days, literally. Are you engaged in work that you enjoy? Are you getting enough rest and exercise to keep your body feeling vibrant and energized. It's a good time to launch new habits if you need to. The Sixth House brings you into the present moment -- to examine what you *do* day-to-day and how that makes you feel. Your health and energy level are often a reflection of how you feel about your daily work and how self nourishing are your routines. One of the secrets of the sixth house is attention to the little things in life -- this is the monthly cycle to renew your joy in the perfection of small things. The Full Moon on **May 26** can bring you a deeper understanding of whatever emotional issues you're currently facing. The Full Moon's potential for clarity is best realized when you go "underground" in some respects. Try to get underneath the surface of what's happening now. Look for root causes in your own psychological make-up.

On the May 26 Full Moon there's a Lunar Eclipse. On the June 10 New Moon there's a Solar Eclipse. On the June 24 Full Moon there's a Lunar Eclipse. Eclipses can bring unexpected, even disruptive events. If the eclipse brings a crisis to the houses affected in your chart, understand that this is, in some way, meant to be a "house cleaning," a clearing away of something you no longer need. The best

way to prepare for a coming eclipse is to minimize your commitments, keeping your schedule loose and flexible, so you'll have the necessary time and energy to deal with anything unexpected that occurs. Eclipses don't have to be disruptive experiences. One way to think of the coming eclipse is as a doorway; you'll be passing through this doorway to something new, leaving something old behind you. Is there something you need to leave behind or clear out of your life?

What have you been most curious about lately? The **Gemini** New Moon on **June 10** is a great time for learning something new, and for increasing your connections throughout the community. Talk, read, network, listen. If the Taurus lunar cycle has left you feeling a bit rigid or inflexible about something, Gemini can bring you a greater ability to adapt. The Gemini New Moon energizes your **Seventh House**. You may learn the most this month from partners -- all those one-to-one relationships, whether romantic or business (including clients, counselors and teachers). Get curious about the people around you and see what they have to teach you. It's also a good month to consider all those closely involved in your life as mirrors, consciously or unconsciously bringing to your attention something about you that you may not be recognizing. If this lunation brings positive acknowledgement, take that in! If it shows you some areas that need improvement, be willing to face that too. The Full Moon on **June 24** may require that you refocus those energies that have become too scattered. If too much is going on around you, review your social commitments and the list of activities you're responsible to and decide what you are most willing to be responsible to. Draw a mandala and place within only what nourishes your higher spirit. The Climb to higher ground, so to speak, and get a better perspective on what's important and what's not.

In general, the **Cancer** cycle asks you to consider how nurturing are the people and routines you've currently built into your life; it asks you to consider the child within, and whether you're taking care of that child lovingly and wisely, or abandoning that vulnerable part of yourself to the vicissitudes of your relationships. And more specifically to this year's growth, Cancer asks you to nurture whatever seeds you've been planting this year. What projects have been your focus? This is the month to cultivate them with special care. The **July 10** New Moon focuses energy into your **Eighth House** of transformation. This house holds the past and other keys to psychological exploration. If any relationship issues surfaced last month, this month may bring new awarenesses of old relating patterns. Because the Eighth House is the house of transformation, subjects you investigate and nurture now can change you on a very deep level. Favored are metaphysics, the occult, and psychology -- subjects that dig beneath the surface of life. The Eighth House is also about passion, what -- or who -- can you get passionate about this month?! *This New Moon occurs near your natal **Mars**, also energizing "Martian" themes in your life: vitality, competition, self-assertion, anger, and/or desire. Look for messages from the archetypal Warrior. If you're feeling any anger these days, how*

can you transmute this fiery energy into a constructive force in your life? The Full Moon on **July 24** is a good time to celebrate your mothering energy. Honor those things you've chosen to nurture -- whether it's the relationships around you, those ideas and projects important to your heart, or most important, the child within you. If you're feeling cranky, it could be that inner child feeling neglected!

Happy Birthday, Moon Lover! **Leo** is the sign of the leader, the actor, the lover, and the child. As a Fire sign, it's warm, spontaneous, and creative. This month's New Moon on **August 8** is a good time for you to boldly bring some of Leo's positive energy into your life. Leo the lion's spirit highlights your **Ninth House** of Higher Mind. This is the house of the "quest" -- that which draws your spirit beyond your present situation and into new adventures. It's good to give yourself some extra space when you're in the Ninth House -- to help open up your thinking and awaken the inner wanderer. So take a trip this month, either literally or figuratively -- get away, read a book, open yourself up to some new vistas. With new perspectives, you can draw in the new wisdoms your Higher Mind is holding for you. *This New Moon is also conjunct your natal **Pluto**, which could bring psychological transformations, or power struggles. Look underneath the surface this month. Pluto may ask: What are you trying to control – or what, if anything, are you letting control you? Control is generally the ego's attempt to exert power – but true power belongs to the universe and is yours for the taking when you align yourself towards the universe's values.* The Full Moon on **August 22** is a good time to stand on center stage and acknowledge what you see. Can you admit what's special and worth admiring about yourself? Don't wait for others to speak up first; what you appreciate in yourself can radiate as magnetic confidence to others. Now's not the time to be harsh or self-critical (wait for Virgo to do that!). Most of us could do with a little applause now and then. And if you've got any appreciation left over, there's probably someone around you who could use a few positive strokes as well.

The **Virgo** cycle asks you to analyze and reassess your progress thus far this year, making any necessary adjustments in your current routines, or perfecting those techniques most useful in your daily life. This New Moon on **September 6** continues to activate your **Ninth House**, which along with exploration, is also about higher education and philosophical beliefs. Though we often associate the philosophical ideas of the Ninth House with formal schooling and higher education, surprisingly, what you really believe in often stems from the intuitive understandings of the child within. Nurture your truth this month. Teach your truth to others. From your Ninth House, you light the way. Again, do something new to expand your horizons; travel, study, create in a new way. The Full Moon on **September 21** may be a great time to take action on your thoughts. Don't forget to call on your inner faith and sense of trust in the universe to carry you forward. The days just prior to this Full Moon are excellent for spiritual realignment. Meditate, let go, dream a little, and then go!

The **Libra** cycle may bring new choices or new relationships into your life that ask you to realign your priorities or make some new decisions. The key words for Libra are "harmony" and "balance" -- are you doing too much of some things and not enough of others? Be sensitive at this time to any imbalances in your life. Strive for more harmony. The New Moon on **October 6** energizes your **Tenth House** of career and public reputation. The Tenth House represents your image in a social context, the role society has asked you to play (which typically, though not always, is defined by your chosen profession). So, what sort of beacon are you, shining out to the world at large? What are you known for? This may be a good time for acknowledging your achievements, or for making those changes that will bring you future honors. The Tenth House may also bring up issues with parents or authority figures, and on the other side of that coin, reveal your reputation, how you're perceived by those in authority. If you'd like to make any changes in that direction, now is the time. *This New Moon is also conjunct your natal **Neptune**, planet of poetry, divinity, wine and the sea. Soften the hard edges of reality – allow yourself unstructured time to drift in the realm of fantasy and spirit. If you find yourself being a space cadet this month (such as driving past your exit on the freeway, or opening the refrigerator door and forgetting what you were after), it may be because you haven't given Neptune his due.* At the Full Moon on **October 20** you can harvest the rewards of your efforts. At this time of year farmers traditionally reap their last harvests and begin their preparations for the Winter months. It may be the time for you as well to turn inward and prepare for the months ahead.

Scorpio is the sign of transformation and regeneration. Its energy is intense and passionate. But one of the keys to its power is the ability to let go -- of things, people, or attitudes that are no longer appropriate to the new you being born. In the waxing days of this cycle, you may want to consider whether you're currently holding on to something that you need to let go of -- in order to make room for a new birth. The New Moon occurs on **November 4** and occurs in your **Eleventh House** of groups and organizations. This may be a good month for you to evaluate the role you play in any organizations you belong to, or more broadly, how you want to fit in the human community at large. If the Tenth House is the "noun," how your role is named in society, then the Eleventh House is the "verb," how you actually maneuver in your social tribe. Who you maneuver with is also important this month, as friendships are also highlighted. Are you attracting the kinds of friends you really want? If so, this would be a fine time to honor those positive connections (Don't wait for Hallmark to create a national Friends Day!). If not, see what you can do to reach out and make new connections (this, of course, is the networking house!). The Eleventh House is also a visionary house of future hopes and dreams. The Full Moon on **November 19** should be a time of centering into your own inner power. Connect to your inner fire, your passion, just as the red and gold leaves of autumn around you preserve the passion of the summer sun. Consolidate your strength.

On the November 19 Full Moon there's a Lunar Eclipse. On the December 3 New Moon there's a Solar Eclipse. Remember that eclipses can indicate abrupt change. Check your expectations. Acknowledge whatever occurs as something that has been in the shadows that is now ready to be revealed. If you'd like to minimize your risks, spend the weeks ahead of the eclipse season doing some "space clearing." Where in your home or office has the most clutter collected? Clutter is often the physical expression of unconscious holding on. The act of clearing these areas may free up the eclipse energy to move in more positive directions. And that's the other side of the eclipse coin – energy is available for change. Where would you like to move? Take whatever shows up as feedback on this goal!

While every New Moon is a good time to think of future goals, at the **Sagittarius** New Moon on **December 3**, it's an especially good time for refueling your aspirations. Look ahead. What can you do to broaden your horizons? What new experiences can you cultivate that will bring you greater knowledge and wisdom? What's inside to help -- or hinder -- you in creating a brighter future? The New Moon highlights your **Twelfth House** of dreams and spirituality. This month's cycle suggests putting more energy into contacting your creative source, on doing what you need to do to balance the inner you. Make some time to retreat from the demands of the outer world so you can contact the spirits within. Listen to your dreams, meditate, relax and renew your soul. This is a good month to build or find a sanctuary just for you -- someplace where you can be at peace and uninterrupted by the stresses of the outer world. At the Full Moon on **December 19**, reflect on the best ways to nurture your dreams. What have you learned since the New Moon? What new horizons are beckoning? *Since this New Moon occurs close to the Ascendant, the Sun will also be travelling through your First House of attitude and identity this month. This may put added focus on your relating style and the image you project to others, as well as the general point of view with which you approach the world.*

The **Capricorn** New Moon on **January 2** asks you to consider what you are responsible to. Capricorn is about work and the achievements that come through effort. It's about taking authority over your life, your Capricorn house in particular. Until you're ready to claim this authority, you may find the shadow side of Capricorn here -- pessimism, self-doubt, inadequacy. Which side of Capricorn are you expressing this month? Hard work and a realistic approach are favored now. This New Moon occurs in your **Second House** of finances and personal resources. It's a good time to take stock of your net worth and consider how well you're managing it -- and what you can do to increase it if you'd like! Your special talents are resources too -- are you making use of all your gifts and abilities? If there's a particular talent of yours you've neglected for a while, now is the time to enjoy and exercise it again. Ultimately the Second House is about values -- about valuing yourself, and prioritizing what you value most in the outside world. Tally up both

and see if your lifestyle is consistent with your sense of self worth and your dearest beliefs. The Full Moon on **January 18** is a good time to evaluate the societal roles you are playing. What kind of example do you set for those around you? How well do the structures in your life serve your needs for authority?

Aquarius is the sign of the independent thinker, the iconoclast, the rebel. It's also the sign of progress and invention. At the Aquarius New Moon on **February 1**, what sort of new inspiration or innovation can you draw into your life? Your Aquarius House where you're meant to be a nonconformist, to do things a little differently from the crowd, where you can receive -- and give out -- higher inspiration. This New Moon continues to highlight your **Second House**, so any projects involving personal resources initiated last month may continue to be important now. Ultimately the Second House is about values -- about valuing yourself, and prioritizing what you value most in the outside world. Tally up both and see if your lifestyle is consistent with your sense of self worth and your dearest beliefs. The Full Moon on **February 16** is a good time to reality check, and see how well you've integrated your other worldly ideas into earth space, so that they can ultimately serve and advance the good of the group. The world needs different drummers to keep us moving into future realms.

The **Pisces** New Moon on **March 2** highlights the world of dreams, your imagination, and your spiritual ability to trust in things you cannot see. Where Pisces falls in your chart, you may have a tendency to be idealistic, compassionate and self-sacrificing -- or subject to disillusionment, escapism, or martyrdom. The Pisces New Moon is a good time to consider where you're placing your faith these days, and to renew your faith or question it if necessary. This lunation energizes your **Third House** of communication, schooling, neighbors or siblings, and short distance travels. That's a wide range of themes, isn't it! But basically, the Third House is the "thought" house. Check to see what you're thinking these days. Are you speaking your mind when you need to? Is there something new you'd like to learn? Perhaps a short trip might help to clear your mind and lead the way to new doorways of thought. The Third House is often busy with activity, so you might find the pace of your life increases somewhat this month. Enjoy it -- but watch your stress level too! The Full Moon on **March 18** can bring you greater enlightenment - - either by reaching a peak of spiritual awareness, or simply lightening up! This can be also a good time for creative expression -- honor this Full Moon with by letting your imagination and inspiration dance into form. Do something -- a poem, a drawing -- for fun and for free.