

HOW TO INTERPRET RETROGRADES

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By Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

[ABSTRACT: Are you liberal and future oriented or conservative and rooted in the status quo? Or are you actually in the present, in the here and the now... and by how much? Retrogrades tell this story and can be measured planet by planet. The technique is easy. Find out how to use it.]

A quick and accurate way to get a fix on a chart, whether of a person or an event, is to check out the retrogrades, whether the planets are moving backward or forward in the zodiac, in which direction, and how far from the conjunction with the Sun or opposition point for that planet. While retrograde phenomenon may appear complex, it is really quite easy to understand. Here is how to look at them:

The planets move around the sun in large almost circular orbits, always moving forward. But from Earth's perspective embedded deep within the solar system the planets appears at certain times in the year to come to a standstill in the sky, move backward for a while, come to another standstill, after which they resume their forward motion. This is called the "retrograde loop" and is something like "two steps forward and one step back," and the planet continues to move into fresh zodiac territory with each retrograde loop. Despite the apparent backward motion from Earth's view, the planet actually in the solar system (heliocentrically) is always moving forward.

From Earth's view any given planet is either moving backward and forward over zodiac ground it has been recently on before (on the most recent pass or loop) or forging ahead into a new part of the zodiac it has not been on since the last full 360-degree go-around. In other words planets are moving through the past (either forward or backward in the zodiac) or forging ahead into the future, again moving forward or backward in that area, as well.

And the center of the retrograde loop for any planet crisscrosses over the point of conjunction with the earth/sun (and/or its opposition point) because it is the Earth/Sun that defines the retrograde loop . As mentioned earlier each planet is either re-crossing zodiac degrees recently travelled on or forging on ahead into fresh zodiac space. In other words, a planet is either in the past (zodiacally speaking) or in the future and so are we. The point where the planet and Sun are in conjunction or opposition can be defined as the "Present." That is the actual zodiac degree the planet is in as seen from the solar system (sun centered) and the zodiac degree Earth sees it at are the same – no difference. At all other times there is a difference between these two views and it is this difference we are discussing here and how to interpret it.

When a planet on its retrograde loop is far from its conjunction/opposition with the Sun, it is said to have a high burn rate. That is when the difference between the planet's zodiac position as seen from Earth and the true position in the zodiac the planet is in the solar system is at its maximum. In other words, interpretively it takes a lot to bring those two positions together and thus the term "high burn rate" for planets at their stations or stopping points. For example, my standard geocentric Mars is in Aries in the Tropical Zodiac, but in Aquarius heliocentrically. In other words, Mars was in Aquarius in relation to its center the Sun when I was born and from Earth's view of it (from closer to the Sun than Mars), it only appeared to be in Aries. Appearances can be deceiving and at least should be understand and interpreted.

When a planet is close to the Sun opposition/conjunction point, it is said to have a low burn rate. As pointed out, at these times there is little to no difference in zodiac position between the planet as seen from the Sun or from the earth. Planets with a lower burn rate are thus “clearer” or more straight-forward in their activity, while those with a high burn rate are more obscure and require time and effort to resolve when it comes to meaning or making that difference real in life.

In summary, we can say that when a planet is deep in the past when it is traveling in the zodiac where it has already been. And we can say a planet is far in the future when it is traveling in fresh zodiac territory that (from Earth’s perspective) is ahead of where the planet is in relation to the sun and the solar system.

So we have past, present, and future and we have direct and retrograde motion. And it is important to know whether the planet is on its first pass through a particular section of the zodiac, its second pass through the same section while retrograding (moving backward), or its third and final pass for that cycle when it finally goes direct. The difference is in experience, but it is a big difference and can be interpreted.

Not let’s talk about how to interpret all of this and I wrote on this some 35 years ago, but never got much feedback from my peers. Let me try again here. For any planet you can instantly determine which of the following areas of the chart they are in by looking. It only takes a second. These are in sequential order starting after the Conjunction/Opposition point:

- (1) In the Future and Direct
- (2) In the Future, Stationary, and Turning Retrograde
- (3) In the Future but Retrograding back
- (4) Retrograde at Conjunction/Opposition Point
- (5) In the Past and Retrograding
- (6) In the Past, Stationary, and Turning Direct
- (7) In the Past and Moving Direct
- (8) Direct at the Conjunction/Opposition Point

If you want to study all of this please see my free book “Burn Rate: Retrogrades in Astrology” at:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig>

If you browse the various diagrams here I will attempt to give you at least some idea of how to interpret retrogrades. The key thought to keep in mind is that a high burn rate (big difference between geo and helio planet position) means somehow we have to combine, merge, and pull that difference together into our single life experience. In other words, a high burn rate means a great amount of change on your part in relation to the particular planet and its functioning in your life. It won’t be dull.

On the other hand, a low burn rate suggests clear and straight-forward functioning for that planet, no great shakes or earthquakes. You can count on it working and you don’t have a giant learning curve. Obviously, both high and low burn rate types have their advantages and disadvantages. Check yours out. I will have a program that make this easy for you to do as part of our new Matrix Web Service, but it will not be for a month or so. Until then, this will have to do.

[Burn Rate: The Astrology of Retrogrades](#) (14 photos)

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