

Mercury Retrograde

Even people who don't know much about astrology seem to have heard about Mercury retrograde, even if they don't understand what it means. So let's take a look at what it does mean.

This phenomenon happens approximately three times a year. All planets have a retrograde motion, except the Sun and Moon. But what exactly does retrograde mean? Retrograde is the apparent backward motion of a planet. Of course none of the heavenly bodies actually stop and go backwards. The retrograde motion is based on the observation of the planets in the sky. If you should go outside at night and watch the planets in the sky, you will notice that they move a little each night towards the east. But every once in a while they appear to stop and then start a trek towards the west. This optical illusion is created by the fact that planets speed up and slow down in their orbits. The Earth also does this, and when she does it sometimes overtakes another planet - this causes the apparent retrograde motion.

What is actually happening is, as the earth passes the planet in question, that planet seems to slow down, then it appears as if it stops, and goes backward. This motion continues until the Earth slows down or the planet in question speeds up and once again overtakes the earth in her orbit.

Now that we have an understanding of what retrograde is on an astronomical level, let's look at what it means astrologically. Since Astrology is the reading of energy we need to think about what the energy of an apparent backwards motion would mean. The most obvious would be what the characteristics of a planet is, but in a backward motion. In the case of Mercury, the planet of communications, the news media, educational matters, as well as the planet of travel and how we get where we need to go. Mercury was the messenger of the Gods, so he also rules the mail deliveries, anything in writing, or anything written. It's also how we think and the direction our mind goes. When Mercury is retrograde these things seem to be backwards or not running smoothly, such as the mail getting lost, contracts changed, or communication misinterpreted, to name a few.

It's also important to look at the sign Mercury is in and what the energy of that sign is. Following are some keywords that would give a clue to what Mercury's influence is in each sign.

Mercury in Aries----- Quick and forceful
Mercury in Taurus---- Thoughtful and careful
Mercury in Gemini-- Curious and ability to multitask
Mercury in Cancer--- Emotional and sensitive
Mercury in Leo----- Inspiring and self assured
Mercury in Virgo----- Careful and detailed
Mercury in Libra----- Balanced and intellectual
Mercury in Scorpio- Intense and forceful
Mercury in Sagittarius Theoretical and inspiring
Mercury in Capricorn Practical and sensible
Mercury in Aquarius-- Ingenious and different
Mercury in Pisces--- Intuitive and sensitive

When Mercury goes retrograde in a sign we know to expect delays, slow downs, and reversals in the areas of communications, travel, the written word, the news media, messages we receive, as well as things we learn or learn about. When we take the quality of the sign that Mercury goes retrograde in, it gives us more of an idea of what to expect. When Mercury goes retrograde in the sign of Aries, we may hear information that seems time sensitive - something we need to take care of right away, which turns out to be unimportant, or when retrograde in Virgo we might hear about how someone or something has made an awful mistake that will affect everyone, we worry about it and fear the worst, then find out what we heard is not true.

An understanding of this energy can help us make choices and decisions in our life more fully informed. I know many in Astrology think we should put things off while Mercury is retrograde, or we should not buy things because we may need to return them. I am not sure I agree with this as I think we need to live our lives, just live them in an aware way. If you are going to buy a new car and you know Mercury is retrograde in Gemini, the sign that rules travel, do all your homework

before signing the papers make sure you understand everything. Use the going back over energy to go back over your contract and make sure it's what you think it is and what you want before you sign the papers. Better yet do all the footwork during Mercury retrograde, then you can live your life to its fullest during a Mercury retrograde period - just make sure you are careful.

Mercy's retrograde periods 2008

January 28, 2008--- March 10, 2008 in Aquarius

May 26, 2008----- July 4, 2008 in Gemini

September 24, 2008--- Oct 31, 2008 in Libra