

## Feeling Uncomfortably Passive ? Turn off the Air Conditioner

*Saturn's transit through earth sign Virgo is forcing us to make hard decisions in the areas of environment, nutrition and health*

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Every decade or so there is a shift in the collective consciousness. The shift is usually provoked by a series of events that herald the birth of a new paradigm. This month we look at how the collective focus is changing as transformational Pluto begins his 16-year journey through Capricorn (sign of business and government), while pragmatic Saturn in Virgo forces us to make hard decisions in the areas of environment, nutrition and health.

Astrologer Thomas Zimmer compares our current decade to the 1930s when the Allied Nations adopted a posture of neutrality and appeasement because they had no idea of the efforts they would have to face in the following decade with the Second World War. He labels this attitude 'uncomfortable passivity.'

We in the West are emerging from a long period of economic growth propped up by booming stock markets, a technological revolution, easy access to capital and rising house prices. The optimism, excitement and sense of anticipation in the lead up to the new millennium was tangible. Then came SARS, September 11th and international terrorism and we stopped feeling so safe. Then came global warming, Hurricane Katrina and Al Gore's film "An Inconvenient Truth" and we felt even less safe. Then our interest rates started to rise and we read about millions of people losing their homes in the USA. And somehow this was all our fault, because we drove cars, took overseas trips and bought flat screen TVs. Then India started buying our cricketers and not behaving like a third world country and we labelled them 'brash and unsportsmanlike' and the Chinese didn't want to be peasants anymore, but that was OK, because they were importing our steel to build their new cities, so even though that made global warming worse, it boosted our economy and we could still buy flat screen TVs....

Zimmer is right about uncomfortable passivity. In our heart of hearts, we know our current way of life is unsustainable - the Western Empire is crumbling. Resources are not unlimited as we once thought they were. Lakes and rivers can and do dry up. Over the past eighteen months, global warming has dominated political, economic and legal discourse. Climate change will alter workplaces, careers, business, management and government over the next decade. We cannot rely indefinitely on people in poorer countries to work long shifts on low wages so we Western Aristocrats can enjoy cheap holidays, goods and services. Many of us feel uneasy and anxious, even though on the surface not much about our way of life has changed.

The reason we avoid facing these impending catastrophes is because apart from being unpalatable, they seem beyond our control, plus our leaders cannot agree on what the problems are or how best to handle them. With Saturn in practical Virgo over the next two years, we all have the chance to clarify the core beliefs and priorities that will determine the path we choose. Later this year, radical Uranus will

oppose Saturn forcing us to develop new ways of thinking and being. Zimmer calls this a 'psychological weaning process'. The old ways simply don't work anymore and while we are rapidly losing faith in the traditional political, religious, academic and corporate voices of authority, we have not yet developed viable alternatives.

But 2008 is a year of new beginnings. Numerologically it is a 'one' year and the Chinese Year of the Rat marks the beginning of a new 12-year cycle. Pluto in Capricorn has already started to destroy our old school thinking in the world of business and government.

Gary Hamel writes in his book "The Future of Management" (Harvard Business School Press, 2007): "There seems to be something in modern organisations that depletes the natural resilience and creativity of human beings, something that literally leaches these qualities out of employees during daylight hours. The culprit? Management principles and processes that foster discipline, punctuality, economy, rationality, and order, yet place little value on artistry, nonconformity, originality, audacity and élan. To put it simply, most companies are only fractionally human because they make room for only a fraction of the qualities and capabilities that make us human."

In Australia, a recent shift in attitude has led to the repatriation of David Hicks; the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol; an apology for the past mistreatment of Aboriginal Australians and a move to abolish the unpopular Australian Workplace Agreements. Our new Prime Minister has four planets in Virgo, a sign of humility, service and practical achievement. All these decisions happened quickly and were motivated by a sense of fairness and justice rather than the desire to expand or make money. We can move quickly if we choose to, but the kind of creativity that generates change always breaks the rules. There is no need to be uncomfortably passive. And there is no need to wait for the government to act on our behalf. We can all start making practical changes now and be part of the solution.