

Pat's Solar Journey

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*As we let our own light shine,
We unconsciously give other people
Permission to do the same*

Nelson Mandela Inaugural speech, south Africa 1994
(from quote by Marianne Williamson)

As a psychological astrologer I see my main task as assisting individuals to follow their solar journey and be true to themselves. I encounter people at different stages of this journey and we explore together where they came from, what opportunities the gods are opening up for them in the next phase of their journey and what some of the obstacles might be. The solar journey is mythologized in most cultures of the world as the hero's journey or quest. Throughout the journey the hero or heroine has choices to make and difficulties to overcome in order to live out their solar purpose as fully as possible. Psychologically this entails leaving behind the pull of the womb, the familiar things which have embodied security and comfort for us, and our primal and often literal home. Not everyone embarks on this journey and many give up along the way blocked by fears and complexes or a lack of resources both inner and outer.

Pat's story describes how her early environment combined with her choices and courage enabled her to follow the heroine's journey throughout her life and live out her solar light in a creative and life-enhancing manner. In a world where people often despair or fear living out who they truly are Pat's story offers a powerful ray of hope as is so very apt for her Sun in Sagittarius in the third house.

Pat was born in a small town on the west coast of the USA with a parental heritage that was far from small. As a child her mother lived in golden gate park for a year and a half following the earthquake in San Francisco. She later developed polio, which led her to taking up ballet to aid her recovery from her illness. Ballet was to become her life's passion and she became known as the "petite Pavlova" at age 9. However following her marriage she reluctantly brought her successful ballet career to an abrupt end at the request of her husband who felt she should stay at home to be a housewife and mother.

Like many of the hero's in the myths Pat encountered tragedy and loss early in life. When she was a year old and her brother was aged 2 her father died suddenly leaving a widow with two young children and no money. I pointed out to Pat that by progression her sun made an exact quincunx to Uranus and Chiron at age 2 forming a Yod. Pat immediately related to the timing and told me that for a year after her father's death she continued to rock back and forth in her high chair as she had always done around the time he was due home waiting for him to pick her up and hold her. At age 2 she stopped rocking. For Pat it was at this age that she actually

experienced within her the loss of her father showing how progressions are individual shifts within us, which can be connected to but are often not in exact timing with an external event.

I have found Yods to be powerful configurations in an individual's chart and Pat has two of these to contend with. This first one involves her Sun thereby playing a crucial role in her solar journey. The loss of her father whom she loved was Pat's first introduction to her natal Uranus in the 8th in Taurus - the need to leave room for comings and goings in deep connections, to be unattached when close to someone as there are forces in life which are beyond one's control. The ability to let go of security and to live with beauty without grasping - not an easy lesson at age 2 yet something that Pat achieved masterfully throughout her life as you will see in the unfolding story.

Pat also encountered Chiron at age 2 through the wounding of her mother by collective circumstances rather than anyone's individual fault. In losing her father Pat also effectively lost her mother as she went back to work and told both children that she would be their dance teacher but could not be a regular mother.

Pat described her Yod clearly in the following "from an early age I learnt from my mother that there are certain things in life I should not expect and so I developed a sense of reality around what there is and what there isn't. There is always a tradeoff and my mother's teachings were the tradeoff for the lack of mothering. I learned the complexities and forgave the lack of mothering".

Despite the loss of her father Pat's mother was able as a teacher to provide a mirror for Pat's developing Sagittarian Sun in the third house, enabling Pat to go on a creative and life enhancing solar journey incorporating Uranus and Chiron as well as Pluto and Mars.

Pat started dancing ballet under the guidance of her mother at age 3 when transiting Neptune was almost exactly on her ascendant. It is as if Neptune moved out from her ancestral past waking up her Libra ascendant and her Jupiter in Pisces opening up a way of being, of beauty, of meaning and a quest for joy through a watery creative imaginative medium. Pat's Neptune in the 12th describes an ancestry where there were issues of suffering and redemption. Being in the 12th house Pat ideally needs to mediate the collective unconscious without being overtaken by it and become a scapegoat for addictions and mental health issues from her ancestry. Through the exacting demands of her mother who wanted her to be her star ballet pupil, Pat was offered a solid creative container for these energies. Although Pat did not make a career from dancing because it opened up for her the world of music and art, which she used throughout her life to communicate to the collective a sense of meaning. Pat described it aptly when she said "to make anything transcendent you have to know your craft and let it all go and let the process come through you - be the receiver and the giver". Like the hero in the mythic tales it is often through the painful unfair deprivation of what they think they would really love to do that the real road to their purpose opens up. As James Hollis aptly describes "Such a path is seldom if ever the path of ego gratification, creature comforts, vacillation and flight." [1]

When pat was 8 years old she started playing the piano and at age 12 with her Jupiter return, she was handed the oboe and told to learn it as they needed someone to play in the orchestra. This was the instrument that Pat continued to play for much of her life in various symphony

orchestras. Once more fate played its part in assisting Pat to develop what she needed most in her chart. With transiting Chiron squaring her Libra ascendant (the only air in her chart), Pat's ascendant was awoken with her need to develop the missing element of air. Being a woodwind instrument Pat described playing it as "riding the air" and said that she struggled with the challenge of using the air stream and riding on it all of her life as she was never a natural at it. However she added " I found it empowering as I had to make it happen". Pat also described music as "sound waves in the air". This clearly described the struggle and gratifying effort of developing a missing element.

It was also at age 12 that Pat first discovered her talent and enjoyment of cooking for others. This continued throughout her life as a passion and as a career. Tr Uranus had reached her MC in cancer at this time and was approaching her Chiron setting off the Yod and awakening the Chironian wound on another level pushing her to understand and integrate it into her life in a new way. Saturn was also squaring her Chiron demanding that something concrete be made from the pain. In developing her cooking skills Pat found a way to help her heal her own personal wounded lack of nurturing and feeling unloved as well as contributing toward healing the collective sense of feeling unloved and unlovable.

Pat's second Yod has Saturn in the 7th at the apex in quincunx to Moon/Mercury and Neptune. She spoke of feeling borderline suicidal at times because she felt she was incapable of dealing with what she needed to "It felt like a huge tsunami of emotional upset that was overwhelming, lack of any worthiness frequent. I learned to deal with it as a recurrent tsunami, a part of my make up which I was always aware of and don't question". This clearly describes Pat's experience of the Yod with enormous pressure on her Saturn in Aries, which feels impotent with no right to exist, from her Neptunian collective and ancestral unconscious as well as from her Scorpionic lunar need for deep emotional passion and connection. With a lack of air this aptly called tsunami of emotions pushes powerfully against a Saturn, which struggles to feel safe in the realm of relationships, as it is terrified of losing control for fear of humiliation and rejection.

Pat said she got some of her fear from her mother. " You keep that self so you can't be wiped out. Underneath it there is a terrified child that you need to protect". Pat described the real fear she experienced as a child during world war two when the town expected to be bombed and the children were warned about the Japanese army coming through with bayonets in their little town or hiding under the desk if the atomic bomb exploded. She described her inner fear as an extension of these childhood fears but more primal. Moon in Scorpio is an emotional way of being that resides in Hades realm. It is fearful because it is aware at a visceral level from birth that its survival is at stake and it must protect itself at all costs as no one else will do it. Finding emotional comfort is not easy.

For Pat her need to communicate this Plutonian realm is a talent and a need with Mercury conjunct her moon in the second house. Her participation in orchestras enabled her to mediate through music the Neptunian realms of the collective unconscious' desire for redemption as well as her personal Scorpionic pain.

Pat described the orchestra as "a combination of all this ego strength and weakness at the same time and having to learn how to balance it as well as learning about art and making great friends

and dealing and expressing all of their pain. Pat spoke of the beauty and the pain and how one cannot be created without the other. That is the stuff we are made of"

Pat told me that she has had successful long term loving relationships showing that the drive for expression from Neptune and the moon/mercury managed to push beyond Saturn's defences. However, this is not an easy arena and Pat spoke of how she is protective of parts of herself "keep that one thing to yourself because you are afraid of letting go of that because you think that is saving you, one little light rod we protect, maybe what we didn't get and we think we needed it and we keep the wind away".

Pat's described her relationship with her mother as challenging throughout her life. Like many of the heroes gone before her the archetype of the mother is very strong in Pat's chart. Pat described to me the incredible transformation that took place in her mother when she performed as a dancer "she became a commander". This in turn roused Pat's own passions and yet as long as Pluto remained hooked onto her mother Pat would struggle to own it fully for herself. Pat described a potent experience she had after her mother's death, "I felt my mother place the beautiful opera cape she used to wear on my shoulders as she told me - this is yours now, take it and go. I took all the best of her and let go of the other stuff". The archetype was removed from her mother enabling Pat to more fully enjoy the benefits of the Pluto and forgive her mother who had been restored to the role of human rather than a devouring overpowering Plutonian creature.

Throughout her richly creative life Pat explored a variety of artistic and expressive mediums in her Solar journey of communication. Her introduction to theatre was at 18 when she left her small hometown and went to college to study psychology and music becoming involved with the visual arts and theatre. . This was also the end of her formal dance training and an acceptance that she would never be the ballerina her mother wanted her to be because "I did not look like her. I took after the farmer's side of the family". This freed her up in many ways to explore other mediums and to use the creative arts as a tool to fulfil her Sagittarian solar journey of enlightening people. Transiting Saturn was conjunct her Sun and square her Mars pushing Pat to work on her solar self. Pluto was sq her moon/mercury describing a transformation/ending with mother and with the north node conj her moon/mercury she was pushed into a new way of using her lunar and mercurial talents. It is a visible depiction of the hero leaving the safety of home and mother for wider horizons.

In 1973 when transiting Neptune approached her moon/mercury conjunction Pat embarked on creating masks for pleasure as well as and doing therapeutic mask making workshops with groups. Pluto was also conjunct Neptune and approaching her ascendant at the time and Chiron was sq Chiron. A time to recreate herself and awaken a new way of expressing herself in the world and communicating about pain and depth.

I had the privilege of speaking to Pat for the first time, a week after she had left her most recent employers where she had been working as a chef and food consultant. She described herself as being at a crossroads once more as she had been many times in her life. She had decided to leave her current job, as she wanted some space and time to write a book and to work with young people who are lost and have nowhere to go. "If there is one thing we have to do in the world is figure out a way to communicate through this symbolism or we will lose this generation".

A new phase of her solar journey was opening up and although she was somewhat fearful re financial security she was excited at the possibilities ahead of her. Pat described "the crossroads is familiar and it's the wonderful part of being a human being, half wants to go in and half fighting off, understanding that what happens at that crossroads, that can be the moment of creation and I know I am right there and I feel I have the courage to deal with it whatever it means. I am going to put everything out on the table and see what I want to pick up - it's all there on this incredible table and it's up to me to put it together".

This aptly describes the final ending of transiting Pluto to her sun which has just gone out of orb and will of course conjunct her IC in a few years' time. It is however squaring the Neptune/Jupiter opposition pushing Pat to once more reevaluate her sense of meaning. Transiting Mars is also square to Pluto awakening a new level of individual power in the world.

There are two things I want to leave you with as Pat continues on her solar journey. The first is Pat's recipe for a good life, which she wrote when leaving her last job, and kindly allowed me to reproduce:

*one cup of classic small town education
a few modicums of talent
one or two good parents and some healthy ancestors
three cups of Chutzpah
several dashes of humor
years of hard work
more than a pinch of rejection humility and forgiveness
some failed and one great relationship and that's optional
a little bit of luck
mix well and bake
please do not half bake*

The second is the following quote from Pat as I think it epitomizes so clearly her powerful spirit and her Sun in Sagittarius in the third.

we need to understand how everyone is so fragile and so strong and we have to connect to each other in a way that makes the totality stronger

Thank you Pat and good luck on the rest of your journey

Margaret Gray

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Birth chart: Pat

Dob dec 9 1939

Time of birth: 1.15am

Place of birth: Quincey, California

[1] James Hollis "Creating a Life: Finding your Individual Path" Inner City Books pg 69