

HOW TO WORK WITH

Mercury Retrograde

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MERCURY RETROGRADE HAS A BAD RAP.

"Oh, no, it's Mercury Retrograde again!" As an astrologer, my ears perk up when I hear this familiar refrain. I also used to recoil when I looked at my calendar to see Mercury Retro coming down the pike.

But I've learned, after surviving hundreds of Mercury Retrogrades in my lifetime, that there are gifts to this period as well as challenges.

Because don't kid yourself--Mercury Retrograde can and will mess with us, no matter how much we prepare for it. Trickster energy abounds. Plans go awry. Miscommunications happen. Productivity is thwarted. But Mercury Retro isn't just out to get us (although it can feel that way). In its backward dance, Mercury has wisdom to share with us, too.

FACT:

Mercury Retrograde happens three times a year, every 3.5 months, for roughly three + weeks each time.

Mercury Retrograde times force us to adapt. We can learn to go with the flow, or be continually frustrated.


For example, here's a true Mercury Retrograde story of my own.

After getting out of a hot shower one chilly October evening, I heard a commotion in the backyard. Worried that our outdoor cat (named Odin-- a.k.a. the god Mercury!) had gotten in a fight. I stepped out the back door to look for him. The minute I closed the door, I realized I had locked myself out. It was already dark. And my husband was out of town. And I was wearing a pink, fuzzy bathrobe.

Luckily, I had my phone in my robe pocket. So, I called the next-door neighbor. No answer. I called a locksmith, and after a couple tries, I was able to get a hold of one. He said he could get to me in an hour.

In the meantime, I sat in the backyard with the cat (who was fine) and called my dad to kill some time.

My dad and I had one of the best, funniest conversations we'd had in many months. He was sweet, saying he wanted to stay on the phone with me



until he knew I was safe. When the locksmith finally showed, he and I had a good laugh about my pink robe. "I've seen worse," he joked. And with that, I was back inside the house, grateful to be warm and safe.

What did I learn? Humor and flexibility go a long way toward making what could be a very unpleasant situation into a pleasant detour.

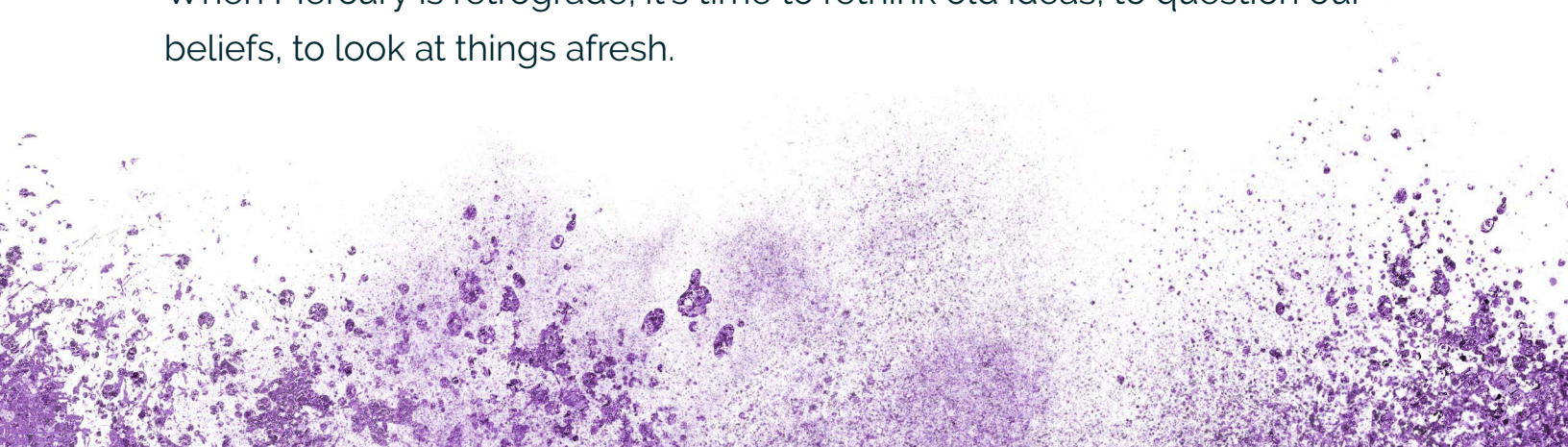
In order to take advantage of Mercury Retrograde, we can choose to reframe any obstacles that arise. Disruptions can become happy accidents, with a shift in perspective.

WHAT IS MERCURY'S MESSAGE?

A foundational premise of astrology is "as above, so below." The planets speak to us with their symbolic action. Mercury's pace appears to slow down and move backward from the Earth's perspective during its retrograde. *So what is Mercury's message for us during this backward trek?*

Mercury is the planet of mind. It rules communication, thoughts, ideas. Our thoughts create our very perception of life.

When Mercury is retrograde, it's time to rethink old ideas, to question our beliefs, to look at things afresh.



In order to do this, we need to take a step backward. This requires extra downtime. We might need to take time away from a project or go on a retreat. And we will likely need to take a few things off of our plate.

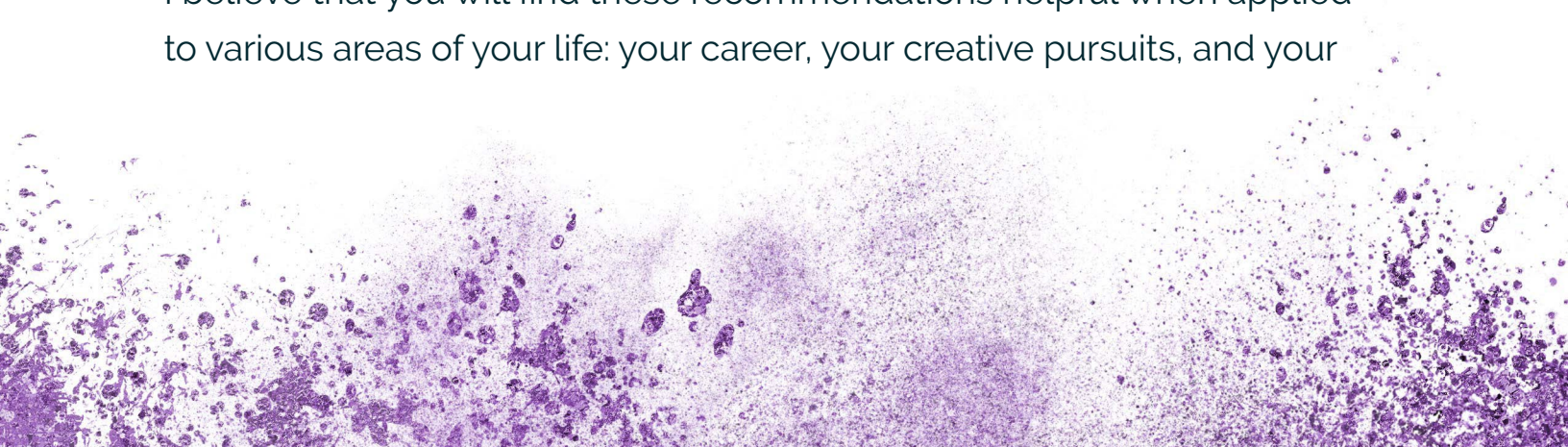
In doing so, we're able to listen to life. We're able to see things we haven't been able to see while hurtling forward through our busy lives at a breakneck pace. And we're able to integrate these insights so that we can take action upon them when Mercury returns to its forward motion.

Above all, it helps to have a sense of humor. Mercury isn't known as a Trickster God for nothing. So, befriend the Trickster. Merc Retro will give you plenty of situations in which you can either laugh or be grumpy about What Went Wrong. Your choice. But isn't it more fun to laugh?

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

As a self-employed Astrologer and writer, I've found my best practices for working with the energy of Mercury Retrograde over the years. I've boiled these down to four main strategies, which I'll share with you in the following pages.

I believe that you will find these recommendations helpful when applied to various areas of your life: your career, your creative pursuits, and your



relationships. My hope is that you'll actually look forward to Mercury Retrograde rather than dreading it.

Here's an overview of my four main strategies:

- * Listen: What's the message?
- * Slow Down
- * Rethink, Revisit, Review
- * Tend and Mend

You'll find details on each of these in the following pages:

Listen: What is Mercury Retrograde trying to tell you?

I believe that Mercury Retrograde has a specific message for each of us, if we slow down long enough to listen. The message for each retrograde is unique, as is its message for each individual.

In order to receive your message, be watchful of any things that don't go as planned. Look for the patterns. In what area of life are the snafus occurring? When things don't go as planned, we're forced to admit that we can't always control what happens. (Humans forget this sometimes.) Mercury



Retro is encouraging you to let go of your tight grip for a while, shrug your shoulders, and say: "Oh well." When you do so, you're able to get fresh perspective in the area of life that is most affected by the disruptions.

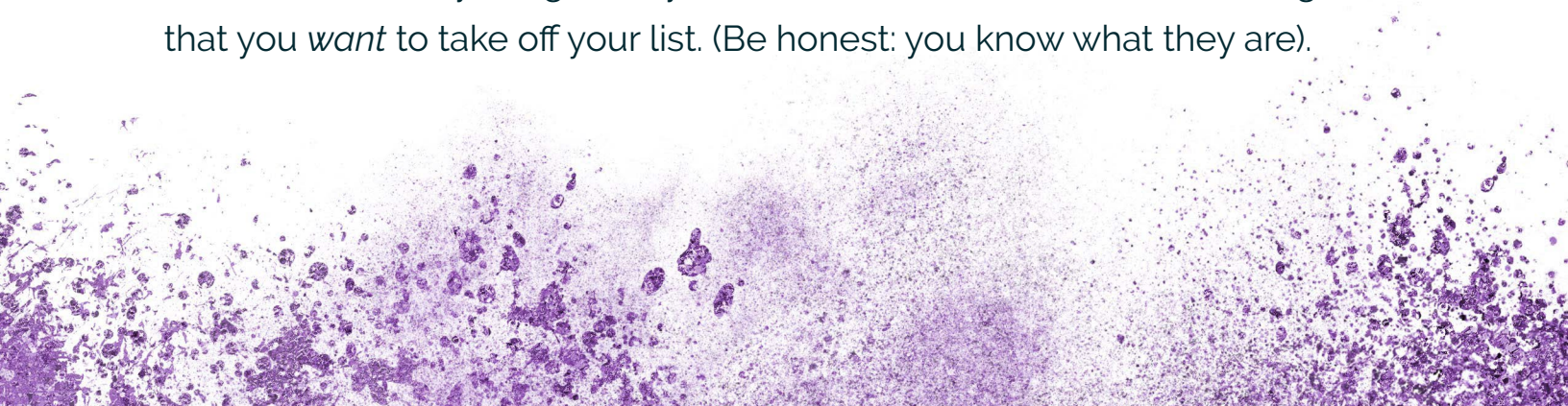
Mercury is also associated with the Magician archetype. Life can take on a magical hue during this time. Welcome in strange coincidences (synchronicities), omens, and signs. You may see an animal in an odd place or time, and have the sense that it has a message for you. You may have a wild night-time dream loaded with symbols. You may bump into someone at the grocery store you were just thinking about. Let go of your rational mind and use your intuition to read the meanings of these events for you.

Slow Down: Rest, Retreat, Receive

You have permission to slow the pace during Mercury Retrograde. In fact, it would be better if you did. The "Retrograde Unpleasantness" usually occurs when we are trying to rush things, trying to do too many things, or trying to make things happen that should wait. You know this. So, just relax already.

Easier said than done, you say. I've got Lots To Do.

But there are likely things that you could take off that To-Do List. Things that you *want* to take off your list. (Be honest: you know what they are).



This is a great time to pare down your schedule. Let there be more breathing room in your life.

Going forward all the time is not sustainable. In our productivity-obsessed culture, it's easy to forget this. We need times of rest, reflection, and retreat. It's just as important to take a pause sometimes as it is to push ahead. Mercury Retro encourages us to stop, look, and listen rather than go, go, go.

When we practice a passive approach to life during Mercury Retro, we become more receptive. We are able to allow good things to come into our life in ways that we could not have anticipated.

If you are a creative person, this downtime allows time for brainstorming, noodling, and daydreaming. And from these activities, inspiration flows.

Rethink, Revisit, Review

Sometimes we need to get a fresh perspective. In order to do that, we need to stop moving forward. Merc Retro is a great time to get a clearer vision of where you want to go, but first you have to take a step back. That includes slowing down (see previous tip). But you might even need to stop and do something else for a while, something that seems tangential to what you are working on.



You've heard the anecdote of a person who is struggling with a problem, decides to "sleep on it," then wakes in the morning with the solution in their mind. Mercury Retrograde is like a long period in which we benefit from allowing the conscious mind to figuratively "go to sleep" so that our problems work themselves out. When we keep worrying about an issue, keep trying to solve it with the conscious mind, it just gets worse. But if we leave the problem alone for a while, we find at the end of this time that things have magically resolved. Or perhaps that what we thought was a problem is not actually a problem at all.

If you're a creative person, this is the part of the process in which you can benefit from reading or researching in order to gather inspiration. In a creative practice, you might need an "artist's date" to refill the well. In a business, you can go to a workshop or a retreat to get some new ideas.

Tend and Mend

If you have slowed down and gotten a fresh perspective, you will be in a good position to fix things that need fixing. Observe what isn't working: in your creative project, around your home, in your business. Consider what needs to be mended. Then set aside the time during Merc Retro to mend it. Otherwise, Mercury might mess with you by actually breaking stuff in order to get your attention. So, be proactive here.

This sounds straightforward enough. But we tend to resist taking the time



to fix things as much as we resist slowing down. That's because it feels like we're taking time away from productivity. But we can't be very productive when the machinery (literal or figurative) is not working.

In any creative practice, you can consider what needs to be "revised." Does that painting need an additional tree in the landscape? Do you need to make edits to your second draft of a novel? In a business, there might be actual equipment that needs repair or replacement. In the end, you'll be more able to produce the results you want.

LET'S REVIEW.

Mercury Retrograde isn't bad. It isn't out to get you. And now that you know how to use its backward, slow-grooving energy, it can even be your friend.

I hope you've enjoyed my tips for working with Mercury Retrograde!

You can find the dates and placements of any current or upcoming Mercury Retrogrades here:

www.denadecastro.com/mercury-retrogrades

For more about astrology and me, you can find me at:

www.denadecastro.com

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