

The Vertex

Cosmic Appointments

by Janet Booth

Every so often, something strange happens in your life. You meet someone or you encounter a circumstance or event that heads you in a different direction. You end up thinking, "What would my life have been like if *that* hadn't happened?" Such a moment seems fated¹ or related to your destiny and represents a turning point in your life. This is the kind of occurrence where I look for an association with the Vertex. From the Latin *vertere*, "to turn," the Vertex is a secondary angle of the chart that brings us "cosmic appointments" and run-ins that seem beyond our control.

Voltaire said, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."² I think the same is true of the Vertex. So often, it explains events or adds to synastry in a way that no other part of the chart does. It makes me wonder how astrology existed for so many millennia without this point of fated connections!

Fortunately, in the first half of the 20th century, L. Edward Johndro "invented" the Vertex. He wasn't really searching for an indicator of fate. Rather, as an astrologer, mathematician, physicist, and radio engineer, he was seeking a scientific explanation for astrology by investigating electrodynamic field theory. He considered the Vertex and its counterpoint 180 degrees opposite, the Antivertex, to be "electrostatic release points."³ The four major angles of a chart with which we are most familiar (the Ascendant, Descendant, Midheaven, and IC) are formed by intersections of certain "great circles," but other intersections of great circles seemed to go unnoticed by astrology until that time. Actually, it's rather amazing that no one before Johndro attributed importance to the "prime vertical" as a significant indicator in our lives (see **Sidebar**, page 95).



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Johndro postulated that the Anti-vertex was like "an electric Ascendant," which suggests to me that it indicates experiences that tune us into *ourselves* and our purpose. We might then view the Vertex as a magnetic center that draws us together with *other people* or exterior events, perhaps for the purpose of self-knowledge. Johndro and Charles Jayne (who elaborated on Johndro's work) considered the Vertex to be the point in a chart that most directly shows things beyond one's conscious control.

When I first studied astrology and heard about the Vertex, I was intrigued. It was described as being a point of "fated relationships" and "inevitable meetings." As a Libra, I wanted to know more! But there wasn't much written about it. Still, I always looked at it in charts and made a stab at interpreting it in readings. I can't say I've done "scientific research" on the Vertex, but I will say that, anecdotally, it has shown itself worthy of attention. I hope this article will inspire you to look into the Vertex.

Fateful Encounters

When we throw the word *fate* into a discussion, we open a Pandora's box of philosophical debate about free will versus fate. This discussion has gone on for time immemorial, and I don't think we're going to resolve this in our lifetime. Maybe we're not even supposed to. Perhaps we understand it when we cross over to the afterlife. I believe that our lives probably reflect a mix between free will and fate.

The Vertex shows "cosmic meetings" — being in the right place at the right time or the wrong place at the wrong time (*right* and *wrong* are judgment calls, of course, but this means the place and time where something significant happens). By definition, the Vertex must always fall on the western side of the chart, the side that brings us in contact with others. The Descendant is the primary point of relationship, describing the type of partner sought or attracted, as well as how one behaves in relationships. Its influences are considered to be conscious and are affected, to some degree, by the exercise of free will. However, with the Vertex, interactions or connections do not seem to be of one's choosing, but rather appear to happen

in accordance with a force outside ourselves. The Vertex doesn't spell death or accidents, but it is sometimes involved in the charts of deaths or accidents. If you examine the Vertex in many charts and lives, you will no doubt see evidence of its "fated" workings.

Years ago, when I first investigated the Vertex, I did not find much in the astrological literature. Jan Popelka wrote a short article in a 1982 AFA journal, proposing that the Vertex is related to wish fulfillment (possibly in a perverse manner: "be careful what you wish for") and that its fated connection was karmic (the effect of choices). What about the opposite point? "It represents the personal desires and actions of the individual. You can think of the Anti-Vertex as the cause and the Vertex as the effect. In other words the personal desires and actions set up a chain that results in the event or effect usually through others at the Vertex point."⁴

Then came Maritha Pottenger's booklet, *The East Point and the Anti-vertex*, in which she explains the self/other interrelationship: "This potential of 'giving away' a part of who we are and unconsciously attracting other people to manifest that missing side contributes to what has been called the 'fated' quality of the Vertex ... we attract people from whom we can learn."⁵ She definitely has a point, especially regarding the relationship function of the Vertex. However, I've found that the Vertex also connects us to circumstances and events, often accidents, where we "meet our fate" by attracting situations that will be our teachers.

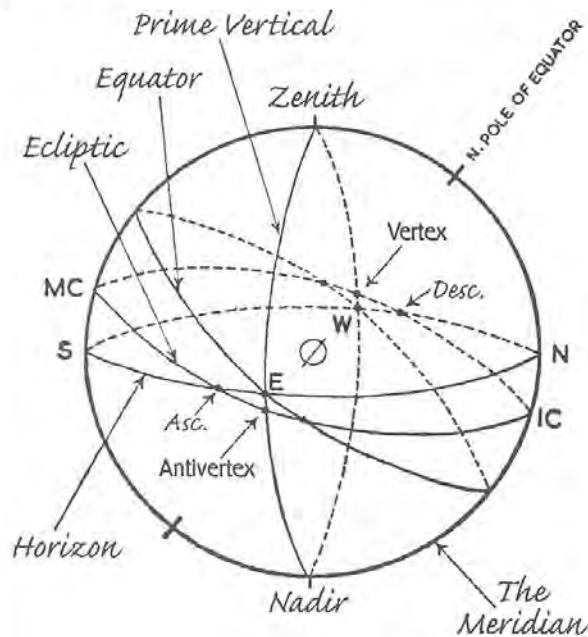
A more recent article presented a different slant on the Vertex. L. Blake Finley reviewed Jaen Sullivan's work in the mid 1980s and added his own findings; he concludes that the Vertex has a great deal to do with work, particularly daily work conditions and tasks and what is actually produced. Finley checks directions, progressions, and transits involving the Vertex for major changes in a person's work. (Personally, I believe that the emphasis on work may derive from the fact that quite a few people — perhaps more than 20% — have their Vertex in the 6th house.) In horary astrology, Sullivan and Finley look to the Vertex as "the likely outcome of a

question as a result of current conditions, i.e., if things continue as they are going now."⁶ (I have not investigated the Vertex in horary, but this concept intrigues me, so I'll train my eye on that next!) Finley agrees that there is a fated component involved with the Vertex: "What one might say in a philosophical sense is that the Vertex is an indicator of the paths we are likely to choose in terms of action that will very strongly affect our fate, destiny and karma."⁷

The Vertex is not in operation every day.⁸ Important events or developments often come along in a person's life without activation of the Vertex in the chart. In such instances, these events or developments, though important, may not be fated or "beyond one's control." Likewise, there could be a transit, progression, or direction to the Vertex in a chart without any corresponding activity in the person's life. This may be because fate is not at work, or perhaps because there is no natal aspect between the Vertex and the transiting, progressing, or directing chart factor, so there is no natal potential to be activated. The role of the Vertex is to put one in touch with people or situations to fulfill the potentials shown by its sign, house position, and aspects — at times when those potentials are due to unfold.

The Vertex is of great significance in synastry. Two people who seem to have a cosmic connection are likely to have inter-aspects between their charts, involving their Vertices. This does not mean you cannot have a good or meaningful relationship without Vertex aspects, but it might mean that the relationship does not have that fated quality.

The primary features to examine when interpreting the natal Vertex are its house position and any close aspects to planets or other important chart points. I believe that its sign is of lesser importance, because signs typically show ways of acting, and the Vertex is not a point of action — rather, it is more of a receptor.



The Great Circles

"Great circles" are imaginary circles around the Earth on the celestial sphere, which intersect the center of the Earth. Projections of Earth's longitudes, which are called **meridians**, are great circles that pass through the celestial north and south poles (projections of the Earth's poles). They also pass through the zenith, the point directly overhead, and the nadir, opposite the zenith, "underfoot" on the other side of the Earth. Projections of Earth's latitudes are not great circles because they do not pass around the center of the Earth (except for 0° latitude at the equator). Such circles surround the Earth in all directions, but we pay attention to those that line up with the four compass points: north, south, east, and west (see **diagram** below).

The **ecliptic** (the Sun's apparent path around the Earth, as seen from our orbit around the Sun) is another great circle, as is the **horizon**. *Note:* Your local ("topocentric") horizon, if you're not born at the equator, is not actually a great circle; what we use as the horizon in astrological calculations is the "geocentric" horizon, a great circle parallel to your topocentric horizon that passes through the equator. These are the most easily observed great circles; their intersections in the east and west form the axis of the Ascendant/Descendant.

Another great circle called the **prime vertical** passes overhead through the zenith and underfoot through the nadir (like a meridian) and also passes through the east-west axis for the location. Where the local longitude meridian intersects the ecliptic in the north and south forms the Midheaven (MC) and IC, respectively — intersections that have always been considered important in astrology. Where the prime vertical intersects the ecliptic in the west and east forms the Vertex/Antivertex axis; until Johndro, this was ignored in astrology.

horizon + ecliptic = Asc./Desc.

meridian + ecliptic = MC/IC

prime vertical + ecliptic = Vertex/Antivertex

Calculating the Vertex

Unfortunately, there is no easy "rule of thumb" for a mental estimation of the Vertex. Most people get the position from an astrological software program. If you know how to calculate house cusps using a Table of Houses, here's what you do: Subtract the birth latitude from 90° to arrive at what is called the "co-latitude." Offset the birth Sidereal Time (which is expressed in a 24-hour format) by 12 hours, i.e., if it's more than 12 hours, subtract 12; if it's less than 12 hours, add 12. Or, instead of adjusting the Sidereal Time, simply use the IC of the natal chart as an MC (the effect is the same).

Go to the Table of Houses and, using the adjusted Sidereal Time or the natal IC as an MC, find the co-latitude and interpolate as you would for an Ascendant; however, this will be the Vertex. The Antivertex is at the same degree of the opposite sign.

The Vertex

The Sign of the Vertex

I see the sign of the Vertex as offering another set of clues (besides those provided by the house position and any aspects) about the circumstances where one might experience a fated encounter. You can also think in terms of the personality characteristics of the Vertex sign; these indicate the traits of a person or people with whom you have "cosmic connections." (See **table** at right.)

House Position of the Vertex

The Vertex is always on the western side of a chart. In my work, using Placidus houses, I have found that, unless you are born close to the equator, the Vertex almost always falls somewhere between the 5th and 8th houses. The arena of your most fated relationships and run-ins is strongly associated with the affairs of the house containing the Vertex.

Exceptions to the Rule:

Vertex in the 4th or 9th House

I have seen only a few charts with the Vertex outside of the normal range (between the 5th and 8th houses). A

Aries	sporting events, competitions, military, construction, mechanical (auto and other), tools
Taurus	parks, gardens, natural settings, banks, beauty, art, music (especially singing) or dance
Gemini	neighborhood, grade schools, siblings, modes of local transportation, information
Cancer	home, family, food, boats, hotels, laundry, water
Leo	fun, entertainment, hobbies, children, lovers, risk-taking (gambling), creative endeavors
Virgo	health and medicine, animals, small objects, service professions, libraries, shops
Libra	art, beauty, networking, counselors/professionals, social gatherings, negotiation
Scorpio	lakes, people/things related to recycling or refuse, investigators, finance, death, sex
Sagittarius	outdoors, university, media, church, foreign lands/people, law
Capricorn	business, property, government; things related to age, cold, lime
Aquarius	air/flight, science, electricity, friends or associates, computer/technology, metaphysical
Pisces	ocean, church, charity, confinement, oil/gas, alcohol, the occult, retreats, shoes, music, arts

notable instance of the Vertex in the 4th house is found in the political dynasty of India. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter, Indira Gandhi, had the Vertex in the 4th house, interpreted as a fated connection to lineage, family, and homeland. Indira's son, Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded her as the third generation of the Nehru family to lead India, did not have his Vertex in the 4th house; instead, it was in the 9th house. He mar-

ried a foreign (Italian) woman, whom he met while away in England at university — classic 9th-house indications.

Vertex in the 5th House

Fated circumstances or encounters are likely to involve creative pursuits, pleasures and hobbies, children, love affairs, or risk-taking. A child or lover is likely to be one of the pivotal people in your life.

Vertex in the 6th House

A significant "fated" relationship is probable with someone you meet either through work or some service performed, or in connection with health matters. You may have a special destiny with your work, or the work spurs you in a karmic direction.

Vertex in the 7th House

Some of the most important people in your life are those met through contacts with other people, through networking or introductions. At some point (at least once), you are destined to have a profound, deep, one-on-one relationship. A marital or business partner may be a pivotal factor in your life.

Vertex in the 8th House

People who have a strong influence on you or a special connection to you are likely to be encountered through matters related to finances (investments, tax, insurance, credit, inheritance), "life and death" situations, transformation- or death-related circumstances, or shared beliefs and ceremonies.

Aspects Involving the Vertex

In an article of this length, we won't be able to examine all possible aspects, but the sample charts will provide some hints about how Vertex aspects operate. As I previously mentioned regarding signs, the Vertex is not a point that spurs our actions, like the planets do, so I don't look for personality characteristics with Vertex aspects. As a point of connection outside oneself, its aspects show something of the nature of that connection, such as the types of people, circumstances, or events where fate steps into one's life.

Certainly, the most potent aspects are the conjunction, opposition, and square. (An opposition to the Vertex is a conjunction to the Antivertex, and vice versa; both sides of the axis respond to the jolt of a square.) Minor aspects won't always be active, but they can play an important role if they also aspect other parts of the chart, especially in an aspect pattern. T-squares, grand trines, and grand crosses are easy to spot and have a major impact, but you can also look for the minor patterns, too, such as two

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sesquiquadrates joined by a square; two semi-squares joined by a square; two quincunxes joined by a sextile (the yod, or "Finger of God"); and two quintiles joined by a bi-quintile (showing a pattern of talents or important choices). I believe that, to a large extent, how people experience an aspect has a lot to do with their own input or spin on the situation. One person can ruin the good opportunities of a trine, whereas someone else capitalizes on a square. So, I prefer to look at the aspects as an energy channel that we experience either positively, neutrally, or negatively. In the course of a person's life, an aspect may be used positively at times and less so at other times. And remember that the Vertex cannot be accessed by conscious command.

Orbs

Naturally, the tighter the orb, the stronger the influence. In a natal chart, I like to see an aspect within 1°-2°, but I will look in the 3°-5° range without discomfort. With a conjunction, I might go wider, maybe 8°. The real test of an orb is: Does the aspect manifest? If so, it's in orb.

When there is a natal aspect to the Vertex, be on the lookout for times when progressions, directions, or transits turn the single aspect into an aspect pattern or when the aspect is stimulated by an eclipse. A square becomes potent when activated into a t-square. A plain sextile acts more powerfully when turned into a yod.

Aspects with the Sun

Your "fated appointment" may be with children, your father, leaders, creative people, or a creative project (your own "brain child"). You may be destined for a creative endeavor or a leadership role. You could have run-ins with others that involve your ego, pride, will, or vitality.

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Aspects with the Moon

It's likely that you have a special relationship with your mother or another woman who is like a mother to you. At some point, you will probably have an important experience connecting to your own inner feminine side, your nurturing nature, or your need for nurture. You may have a food fetish.

Aspects with Mercury

Your "fated appointment" could be with an idea, a book, or an educational experience. You could be destined to be a spokesperson for a cause or a group. You may have a fated relationship with a sibling or a neighbor.

Aspects with Venus

You may have special connections with artists or people with a strong creative or aesthetic side, perhaps in a beauty-related field. Or you may have a special talent yourself in the arts or in social skills, diplomacy, or negotiating. A major, "cosmic" romance is on your agenda.

Aspects with Mars

Men, or at least one man, may play a very important role in your life. You may be destined to engage in some form of competition. Be careful with fire, heat, weapons, sharp objects, speed, or impulsiveness. Exercise caution when participating in sports. You are likely to meet someone who will challenge you to stand up for yourself or assert your independence, possibly in a physical confrontation.

Aspects with Jupiter

Your "cosmic appointment" could be with the press, courts, universities, foreigners, or foreign lands. You may be excessive in some area of life or do something in a larger-than-life manner. You might be lucky or fortunate in some way.

Aspects with Saturn

You're likely to have a very positive and special connection with a mature

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person or an authority figure (leader, boss, father, etc.), possibly with karmic overtones. You may find yourself in situations where you enforce the rules. Or you might be up against someone in a position of authority.

Aspects with Chiron

A relationship or situation involving some kind of pain or wound (psychological or physical) is likely to arise at some point in your life, but this will probably be a turning point to lead you to some sort of healing. It is part of the process of becoming stronger in the long run. You could be a teacher or healer as a result of your growth from painful experiences.

Aspects with Uranus

Your "cosmic appointment" could be with inventions, science, technology, metaphysics, or your individuality. You may have run-ins with rebellious types or people butting heads with tradition, or you may be the rebel yourself.

Aspects with Neptune

Your relationship to spirituality or creativity and the arts is likely to be strong or unusual in some manner. You could have an intense "soul mate" experience or find yourself in magical circumstances in a relationship. You may have problems with substance abuse or fears.

Aspects with Pluto

Your cosmic connections could involve power, sex, money, secrets, death, psychological complexes, or research. You might have a fated appointment to deal with your own "dark side" or undergo a total transformation at some point.

*The Vertex won't be
a "lone gunman," but
it's certainly at the scene
of the crime.*

Aspects with the Ascendant/ Descendant (Horizon) Axis

Relationships are the arena for your cosmic appointments, and a soul-mate connection is very likely at some point in your life. You might also have an epiphany about some aspect of your personality, your experiences, or your health.

Aspects with the MC/IC (Meridian) Axis

You're likely to meet someone through your profession with whom you'll have a profound relationship, which will leave you with lasting impressions and lessons. This might be a mentor of some sort or a boss who spurs you on in your field. Your relationship with one or both of your parents, with a boss, or with your career or reputation may seem fated.

Aspects with the Moon's North and South Nodes

Some of your associations with others will seem to have a fated quality. Certain people or circumstances you encounter will turn your head in a new direction or put you more squarely on your path, showing you where you're coming from and going to. Your dealings with these people or circumstances may be rather challenging and a good test of your mettle.

The Vertex in Action

5th-House Example

No one wishes a tragic accident on anybody, and especially not a gorgeous actor who has portrayed Superman! Yet, for Christopher Reeve, his misfortune has had the positive result of bringing attention to spinal cord injuries as no one has before. So, his accident has served a greater purpose for the world at large. On a personal level, it has forced him to find new and different outlets for his creativity and to elicit a healing capacity he would not otherwise have known that he had. Reeve's natal Vertex at 7°27' Capricorn in the 5th house (indicative of the recreational hobby where the accident occurred) is tightly conjunct his Chiron, signifier both of wounds and of healing (see **Chart 1**, opposite). Chiron and the Vertex are

in a troublesome triangle, both sesquiquadrate Jupiter (20°35' Taurus) and Pluto (22°26' Leo), which are in a tight square. This shows the potential for tremendous change and transformation from some major — and probably unpleasant — event.

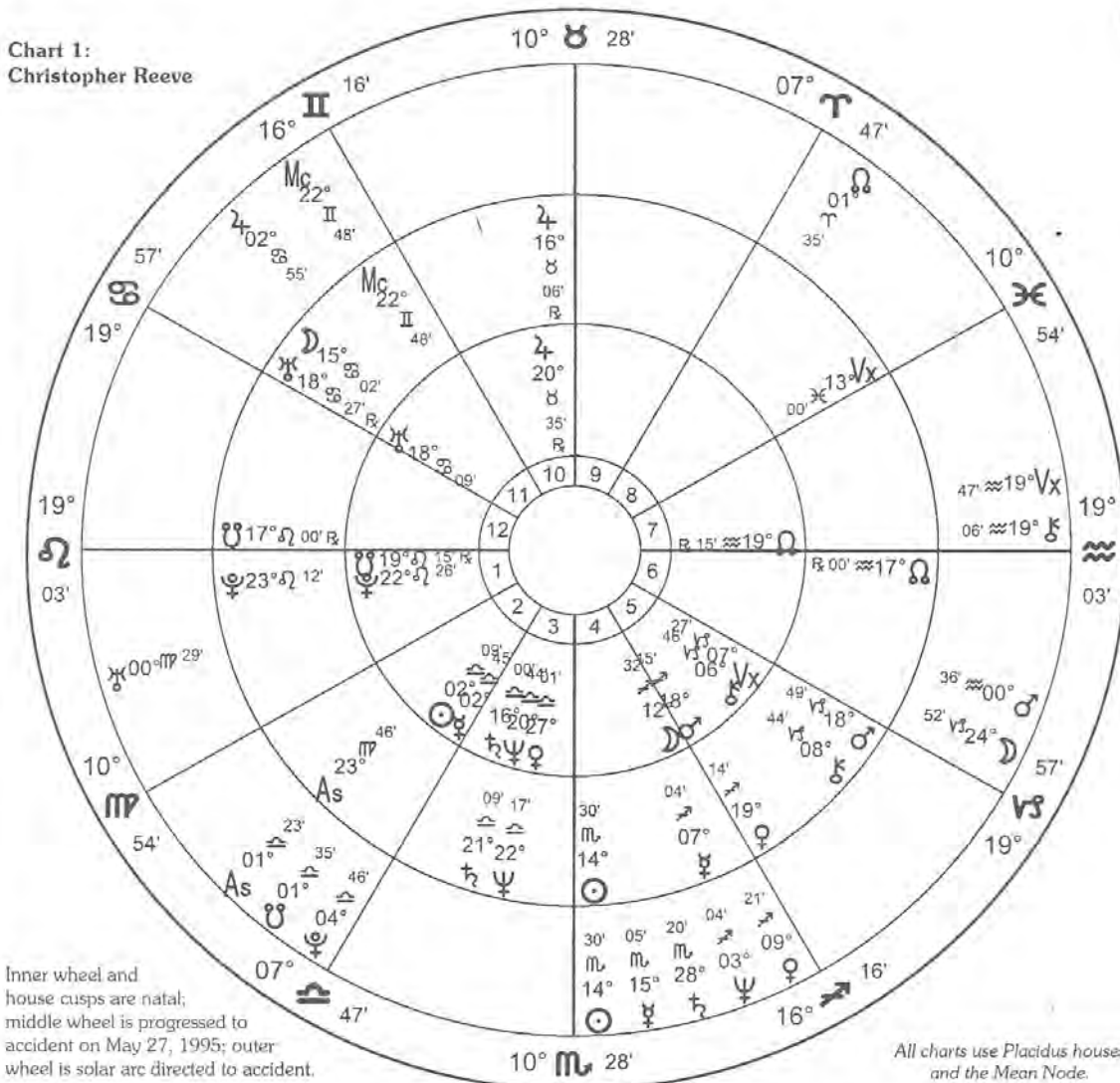
When Reeve fell from his horse on May 27, 1995, his natal Chiron-Vertex conjunction was highlighted by a semi-sextile from progressed Mercury at 7°04' Sagittarius. Natal Mercury at 2°45' Libra is square the conjunction, so even a minor aspect like a semi-sextile would

be important as a setup by progression. Would we consider horseback riding a form of "local transportation" for the Mercury connection? Transiting Mercury was retrograde at 18° Gemini, opposite Reeve's Mars at 18°15' Sagittarius in the 5th house. Without checking the Vertex, you might have blamed that opposition for his accident, and indeed it does figure in, especially since there was a conjunction to natal Mars from progressed Venus (supposedly a benefic). But Venus does not aspect Mars or the Chiron-Vertex conjunction natively, so I

wouldn't point to its progressed aspect as the setup of a natal potential.

The solar arc directions show the timing for this "accident" very clearly. The Chiron-Vertex conjunction (directed to 19°06' and 19°47' Aquarius) was conjunct Reeve's natal Descendant (19°03' Aquarius) and opposite his Ascendant, showing that his body and his health would be affected by the potential accident. (This means, of course, that his solar arc Antivertex was conjunct his Ascendant, indicating a special appointment with his own

Chart 1:
Christopher Reeve



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self-development.) His Ascendant is in Leo, which rules the back, and his Descendant is in Aquarius, which rules the nerves associated with the spinal cord. The Chiron-Vertex combo entering Reeve's 7th house for a long stay by solar arc shows that his partner would become a key ingredient in his healing, and indeed his wife has been just that. As I intimated, the Vertex won't be a "lone gunman," but it's certainly at the scene of the crime.

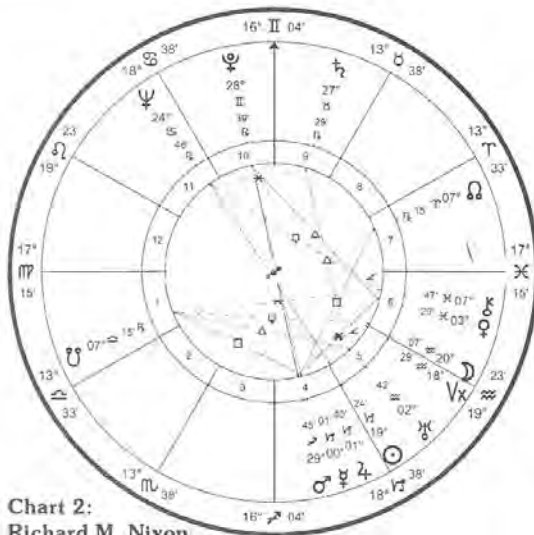


Chart 2:
Richard M. Nixon

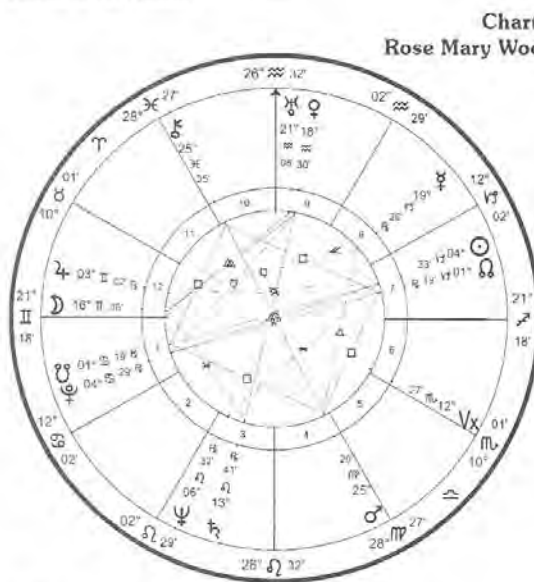


Chart 3:
Rose Mary Woods

As I was writing this article, in mid September 2002, the startling news had just come out that Reeve was experiencing a return of sensation and a small amount of mobility — the first documented case of partial reversal after years of paralysis. Doctors had previously thought that any recovery in such a case would most likely be within the first six months, but certainly not after two years. In early November 2000, more than five years after Reeve's accident, sensation first returned to his fingers — and then his wrists and legs. He then underwent a course of therapies unusual for paralysis patients, such as electrical stimulation of muscles to re-educate the nerves in his spine to carry signals. Reeve is gaining in strength, sensation, and mobility. Astrologically, we see that he is at his Chiron return. A solar eclipse occurred at 4°14' Capricorn on Christmas 2000, only 2°32' from his Chiron. Even though this was the month after the sensations began to return, I believe it is still related because eclipse degrees are so sensitive. The June 24, 2002 lunar eclipse preceded this big news, occurring at 3°11' Capricorn (part of the same "Moon family" as the 2000 solar eclipse), conjunct transiting Chiron at 6°21', only 25' from Reeve's Chiron. Furthermore, on September 7, within one week of the announcement, transiting Chiron stationed direct at 3°13' Capricorn, only 2' from the latest eclipse. This makes a very strong case for the healing power of Chiron! The question for doctors is: Can other people have a similar recovery? (Reeve has been able to afford the very best medical care.) The question for astrologers remains: Can others, even with similar help from Chiron, have such a recovery? Or did the Vertex involvement in Reeve's case mean that he's exceptional?

6th-House Example

The natal Vertex in the 6th house often means a cosmic connection with a co-worker or someone who performs a service for you, or vice versa. It can also mean a karmic encounter with your own work. Former U.S. President Richard M. Nixon and his long-time executive secretary, Rose Mary Woods, are a case in point. She began working for him in 1951, early in his career as a Senator, and continued as his personal assistant until he resigned from office in 1974. During the investigation of the cover-up of the Watergate break-in, she "accidentally erased" a key 18-1/2 minute segment of the infamous tapes of Nixon's conversations with his advisors, which constituted important testimony. Even after her retirement in the '90s, she never breached confidentiality. That's loyalty!

Nixon's Vertex is at the cusp of his 6th house and conjunct his Moon, which rules his 11th house (see Chart 2, left). This can be interpreted as a special relationship with a female co-worker who is also a friend. At 18°29' Aquarius, Nixon's Vertex could hardly be closer to Rose Mary Woods's Venus at 18°30' Aquarius — within 1' of arc! Benefic Venus indicates that Woods is beneficial to him (see Chart 3). We

The natal Vertex in the 6th house often means a cosmic connection with a co-worker or someone who performs a service for you.

might surmise that she had a great deal of positive regard for her boss, too. Her 6th-house Vertex also shows a potential for a fated interaction with someone on the job and in her work. It squares her Saturn (1°+ orb) and her Neptune (6° orb) in her 3rd house, helping her to be tight-lipped about hidden information. And her Vertex at 12°27' Scorpio is conjunct Nixon's 3rd-house cusp at 13°38' — another indication of a cosmic connection between Woods and Nixon, indicating her important role in his 3rd-house (communication) matters.

Looking further at Nixon's chart and life, at the time of the Watergate break-in (June 17, 1972) that would ultimately lead to his political demise, we find that his progressed Vertex at 28°48' Gemini was conjunct his natal and progressed Pluto in his 10th house (progressions not shown). Pluto there points to Nixon's obsession with power as well as to secrets and criminal activities that could affect his position and reputation. Two years later, at his resignation on August 8, 1974, his progressed Vertex was at 0° Cancer, a degree that (according to Uranian astrology) indicates making big news and activity that affects the world at large. But even more interesting is that Nixon's progressed MC/IC axis was at 18°18' Leo/Aquarius, lined up on his natal Antivertex/Vertex axis. His fated appointment (or perhaps just the karmic result of his actions) had the greatest possible impact on his status.

7th-House Example

Our 7th-house example also involves a tarnished ex-President of the U.S., Bill Clinton. His Vertex in his 7th house at 19°51' Aries tightly opposes his Chiron at 18°52' Libra in his 1st house, pointing to the potential of fated relationships harming him personally (see **Chart 4**). Chiron is sandwiched between Venus and Jupiter; their midpoint at 17°10' is close enough to the Chiron-Vertex opposition for me to say that Bill's tendency to go too far with romantic encounters plays into this pattern strongly — an understatement! Monica Lewinsky's Chiron in her 7th house at 20°54' Aries is conjunct her Mars at 20°09' (wounds through or to the male partner), conjunct Bill's Vertex, and opposite his Chiron (see **Chart 5**). Monica's Vertex is at 12°59' Taurus in her 7th house, conjunct her Moon at 9°01', showing fated connections to women (think of Linda Tripp, as well as the example of Monica's mother dating men of influence).

In terms of dealing Bill a personal blow, his affair with Monica was the worst — but not the first. He nearly failed to receive the presidential nomination in 1992 because of his longstanding affair with Gennifer Flowers. Her Moon at 21°27' Aries conjuncts his Vertex and opposes her Neptune at 17°21' Libra, conjunct his Chiron (see **Chart 6**). She has the Vertex at 17°19' Sagittarius conjunct Chiron at 18°18', also aspecting Bill's Vertex-Chiron opposition, and forming a kite pattern (a grand trine with an opposition) with her Aries Moon and Pluto at 17°18' Leo. Note that Bill's South Node is at 17°16' Sagittarius. The South Node is a point of strong connections between

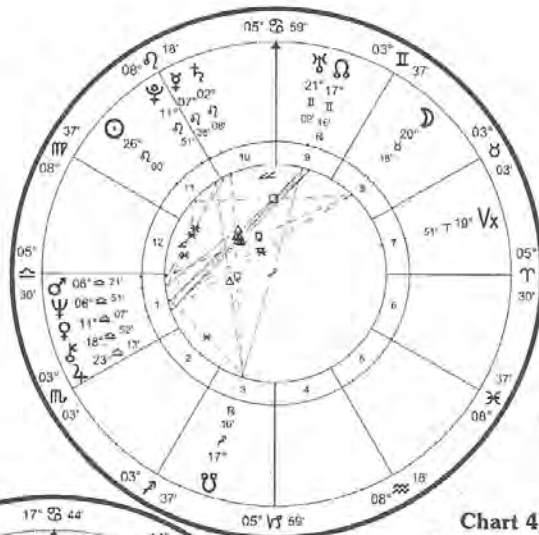


Chart 4:
Bill Clinton

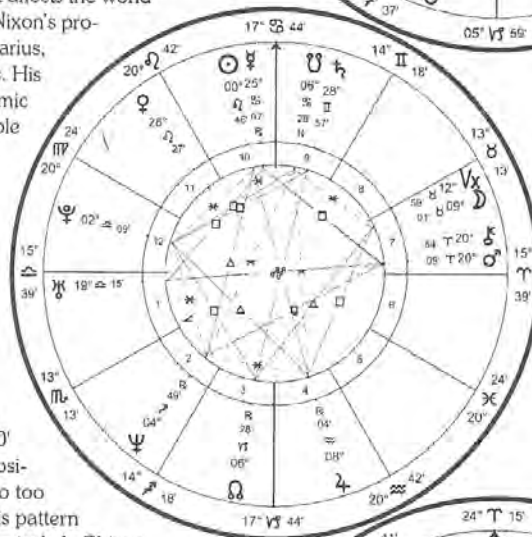


Chart 5:
Monica Lewinsky

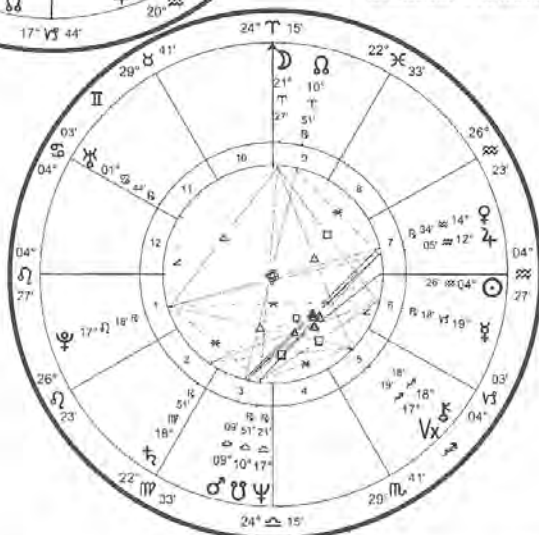


Chart 6:
Gennifer Flowers

The Vertex

people and thought to indicate past-life relationships. Could their relationship be a repeat of something that occurred before? Jennifer also has her Mercury and Saturn in the 17°–19° range, meaning that more than half her chart is in aspect to his "sore spot" (Chiron-Vertex opposition).

8th-House Example

Another larger-than-life and tragic figure is our 8th-house Vertex representative, Princess Diana, formerly the Princess of Wales. This shy girl was thrust into the public eye in a major way at the tender age of 19 when she wed the world's most famous bachelor, Prince Charles, in what was basically an arranged marriage, not necessarily a romantic relationship. What her partnership may have lacked in intimacy, it more than made up for in money; she was instantly fabulously wealthy. Sound like the 8th house? Her Vertex there at 4°18' Leo is in a t-square, opposite her 5°06' Aquarius Jupiter in her 2nd house and square her 8°38' Scorpio Neptune in her 10th (see **Chart 7**, below). Neptune and Jupiter point to the fairy-tale quality of her life, but the t-square hints

that the ending will not be "happily ever after." Neptune and Jupiter also show the glamour and image that appealed to the media and how Diana alternately hid from the paparazzi or used them to her advantage to publicize her charitable works.

The synastry between Diana and Charles shows her Jupiter-Vertex opposition tightly conjunct his Ascendant/Descendant at 5°25' Leo/Aquarius (see **Chart 8**). His Vertex at 22°53' Sagittarius semi-squares her Neptune and also plays into her t-square involving the Vertex, Jupiter, and Neptune. On the day they were married (July 29, 1981), the transiting Sun at 5° Leo set off these planets and points! Transiting Saturn at 5° Libra at their marriage and at 7° Aries at their divorce (June 28, 1996) also aspected these degrees. Also, at the time of their marriage, Diana's solar arc-directed Vertex (23°27' Leo) was tightly conjunct her natal Uranus (23°20' Leo), also located in her 8th house. This was an extraordinary financial event, but it may also have portended the eventual divorce.

Diana's 8th-house Vertex not only indicated her "cosmic appointment" with marital wealth, but it factored into her fatal accident as well. In her 8th house, Mars at 1°39' Virgo is quite close to the midpoint (2°53' Virgo) of Pluto and the North Node — a vola-

tile combination that suggests meeting a fast and violent end. And where was her progressed Vertex at the time of her accident on August 31, 1997? At 1°41' Virgo, just 2' from her Mars! By solar arc direction, her Vertex-Jupiter opposition (8°50' Virgo – 9°38' Pisces) was in close aspect (by sextile and trine) to her natal Neptune; all three of these are in a t-square natively. Of course, there were other factors present — there always are, at important life events — but these send a loud message that something quite beyond her control was going on.

Not Only for the Rich and Famous

The previous charts are those of characters whose life experiences are almost archetypes. Perhaps the level of their karma or fated connections is on a grander scale than in the lives of everyday folks — they provide us with dramatic examples. But even on a smaller stage, I've seen the Vertex working in undeniably potent ways.

Take, for instance, a happier story about my friends, whom I'll call "Hank" and "Betty" (charts not shown). They were introduced by a mutual acquaintance and soon afterward began running into each other — a lot. Both worked in sales and were often on the road, and both are big coffee-drinkers, so it's not surprising to learn that, when

Chart 7:
Princess Diana

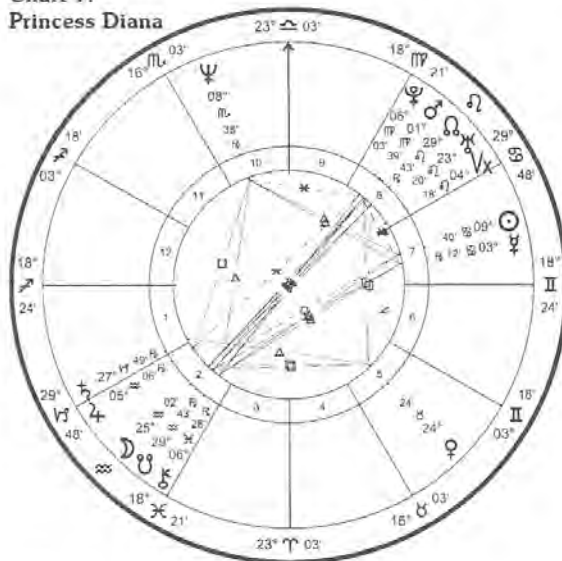
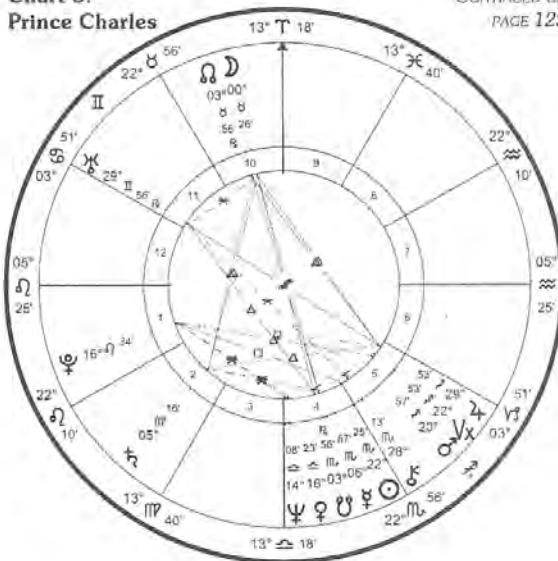


Chart 8:
Prince Charles



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The Vertex

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their paths crossed, it was in coffee shops. But these were in different towns all around their local area. It seemed to be more than mere coincidence. Their strong attraction can be explained by some good synastry, including a tight conjunction between their Suns (they were born a day and a year apart), her Uranus (2°29' Cancer) conjunct his Venus (1°25'), her Mars (29°32' Gemini) conjunct his Descendant (25°51' Gemini), his Mars (19°45' Libra) conjunct her South Node (20°43'), and a composite Sun-Venus conjunction. Sounds like there's some past-life karma going on here. But the "accidental meetings" are much more in line with their Vertices being in a tight opposition (his at 7°37' Leo, hers at 7°35' Aquarius) — as though some force were trying, over and over, to bring them together. They got the message and have been friends and off-and-on lovers (mostly on) for more than 20 years. Their children (from previous relationships) are close friends, too — all fitting well with the Leo/Aquarius associations of their strong Vertex connection.

Betty can't remember the exact day they met, but she narrowed it down to either November 2 or 3, 1981. At that time, Betty's solar arc-directed Vertex had moved up from her 5th house to 8°33' Pisces, conjunct her Descendant at 8°41', setting up the potential for a "cosmic appointment" with a lover/partner. Transiting Mars (which often indicates a male presence) at about 7° Virgo was at her solar arc Antivertex and natal Ascendant, indicating the potential for meeting a man and showing that the experience would have personal significance for her self-development. Another way this has manifested is that Hank is a great help to her as a handyman around the house (Virgo), even though they maintain separate households.

When they met, things were happening with Hank's Vertex, too. His solar arc-directed Uranus had moved from its natal position in his 7th house, conjunct his Venus, to 6°45' Leo, closing in on his natal Vertex. And on July

31, 1981, the closest solar eclipse prior to their meeting occurred at 7°51' Leo, conjunct Hank's Vertex within 14'. He had two additional solar arc aspects that could take some of the credit for the relationship potential. Solar arc Mars at 19°45' Scorpio was closely conjunct his natal Moon at 19°52' on his 11th-house cusp, and solar arc Venus (1°24' Leo) was conjunct his natal Sun in his 7th (0°27' Leo). As I've said before, usually more than one influence is at work when something major happens, but I still like to give the Vertex some of the glory, especially in a situation rife with uncanny chance meetings.

I've become a Vertex addict, and I hope that, after this taste, you've developed an appetite for the Vertex, too.

Chart Data and Sources (in order of appearance)

Jawaharlal Nehru, November 14, 1889; 11:36 p.m. LMT; Allahabad, India (25°N27', 81°E51'); A: Letter from Nehru's secretary.

Indira Gandhi, November 19, 1917; 11:11 p.m. IST; Allahabad, India (25°N27', 81°E51'); A: Robert Jansky quotes her private secretary.

Rajiv Gandhi, August 20, 1944; 8:11 a.m. IDT; Bombay, India (18°N58', 72°E40'); AA: Copy of birth record in hand from Frank C. Clifford.

Christopher Reeve, September 25, 1952; 3:12 a.m. EDT; Manhattan, NY (40°N46', 73°W59'); A: From Reeve by letter to Linda Clark; biography in AstroDatabank provides date of accident.

Richard M. Nixon, January 9, 1913; 9:35 p.m. PST; Whittier, CA (33°N58', 118°W01'); AA: T. Pat Davis in *Mercury Hour* (April 1977) quotes a photo reproduction of birth certificate; Watergate break-in date from HoustonChronicle.com; resignation date from luminet.net

Rose Mary Woods, December 26, 1917; 3:00 p.m. CST; Sebring, OH (40°N55', 81°W01'); AA: From *Contemporary American Horoscopes* (which uses birth records).

Bill Clinton, August 19, 1946; 8:51 a.m. CST; Hope, AR (33°N40', 93°W35'); A: Letter from Clinton's mother, Virginia Kelly, to Shelley Ackerman.

Monica Lewinsky, July 23, 1973; 12:21 p.m. PDT; San Francisco, CA (37°N47', 122°W25'); AA: Jack Fertig quotes birth certificate from Hall of Records.

Gennifer Flowers, January 24, 1950; 5:45 p.m. CST; Oklahoma City, OK (35°N03', 97°W30'); A: From Flowers to Bruce Marshall.

Princess Diana (formerly Princess of Wales), July 1, 1961; 7:45 p.m. BST; Sandringham, England (52°N50', 00°E30'); A: Clifford file

on Solar Fire 4.17 states from Diana and her mother. The same time is quoted by her mother to astrologer Charles Harvey. Clifford file also provides marriage and divorce dates. Accident date from WashingtonPost.com

Charles, Prince of Wales, November 14, 1948; 9:14 p.m. GMT; Buckingham Palace, England (41°N30', 00°W08'); AA: From birth announcement.

"Hank" and "Betty": Birth data are confidential, but the sources are (Hank) A: mother's memory; and (Betty) AA: birth certificate.

References and Notes

1. I define "fated" as something beyond one's control and not by choice.
2. Voltaire (François Marie Arouet), "Épître à l'Auteur du Livre des Trois Imposteurs," as quoted in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 15th Edition, 1980, p. 344.
3. L. Blake Finley, "The Vertex as a Functional Chart Point," The Uranian Institute Web site (<http://finblake.home.mindspring.com/UranBeacon.htm>), 1999. Enter "Vertex" in the search field.
4. Jan Popelka, PMAFA, "The Critical Vertex," in *Today's Astrologer*, Vol. 44, No. 11, Nov. 15, 1982, American Federation of Astrologers, Inc., p. 347.
5. Maritha Pottenger, *The East Point and the Antivertex*, San Diego, CA: Astro Communications Services, Inc., *All About Astrology* booklet series, 1984, p. 10.
6. Finley, "The Vertex as a Functional Chart Point," p. 2.
7. *Ibid.*
8. It is my view that the Vertex is unlike the other factors of a chart, which represent voices within us that we can access at any time. The potentials of the Vertex, however, cannot be summoned upon command; progressions and transits to the Vertex do not always show a manifestation.
9. A "Moon family" is a series of four lunar phases, each approximately nine months apart, at nearly the same degree of the same sign, forming a related pattern — a concept developed by Dietrich J. Pessin. See her book, *Lunar Shadows: The Lost Key to the Timing of Eclipses*, Boston, MA: Galactic Press, 1998, p. 41.

Further Reading

Henson, Donna. "Vertex: The Third Angle," Online College of Astrology (www.astrocollege.com), 2002.

Meridian, Bill. "Johndro's Astrology," in *The Mountain Astrologer*, June/July 2001, pp. 85-92.

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