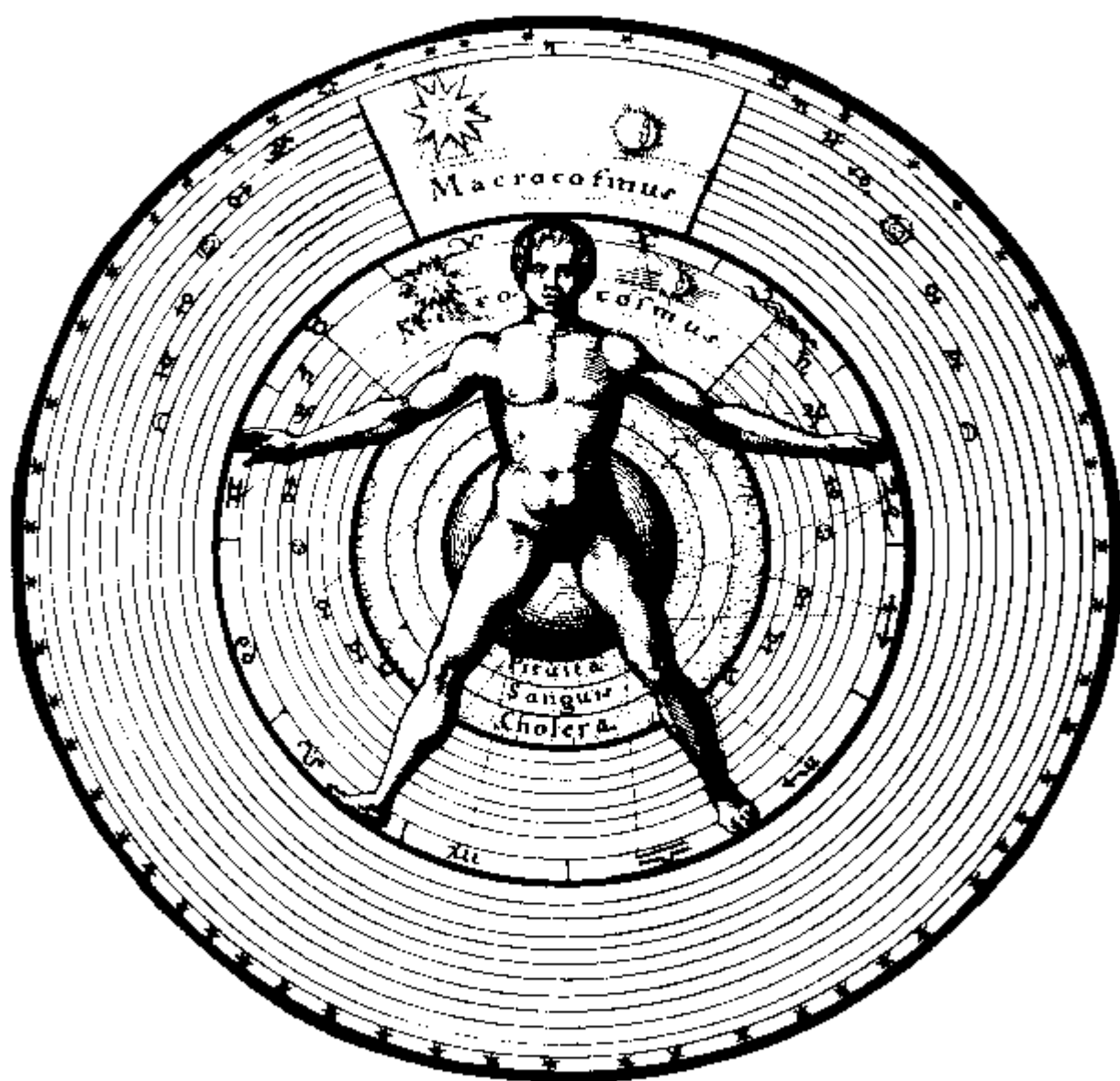


ESSAYS IN MEDICAL ASTROLOGY



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THE MARS-VENUS PRINCIPLE:

Pain Versus Pleasure

One of the first and most basic principles that every new student of medical astrology must quickly learn is that *no symbol - be it planet, sign or house - can be understood by itself. Everything in medical astrology is considered in terms of polarities.* One of nature's most basic principles in terms of maintaining good health is "balance." Finding the point where you are most comfortable or "at ease" between polar extremes - and this balance point varies from individual to individual. When this equilibrium is disturbed, the body is in a state of "dis-ease."

The horoscope is used by the medical astrologer as a tool in helping the client first, to understand this need for balance in symbolic terms, and second, to determine on a very individual basis where these balance points are. Once you have really understood and accepted this most basic concept, you have progressed a long way as a student of medical astrology - but, until you do, you are still a novice!

I cannot think of a better example to demonstrate how this principle of polarity works than to use the Mars-Venus polarity. Mars and Venus are both considered to be *personal planets*, and thus the things that they symbolize are the most easily understood.

In this lecture I am going to point out many examples of how the Mars-Venus principle works in terms of the physical functioning of our bodies. However, I am going to start with an example that every living organism understands, each in its own manner, depending upon how highly developed its nervous or sensory system. This is the principle of pain versus pleasure.

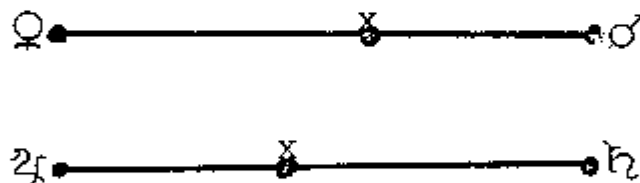
It is a basic Truth of life that every living organism seeks to minimize, or eliminate, pain, and maximize pleasure and well-being. Everyone wants "ease" and no one wants "dis-ease." It is natural for each of us to desire to be loved and not hated as human beings - right? Not necessarily so! Because in some of us, in the process of growing up, pain and pleasure somehow get twisted around.

On a pragmatic basis I think that most of us have reached a point in life where we have realized that pain and dis-ease cannot be totally eliminated from our life. We also realize that life is really not a continuing "bowl of cherries" and is not continually pleasurable. Somewhere along the line, either consciously or subconsciously, we have each personally reached a compromise point - a place where we feel most comfortable at the moment - where we personally determine that we will put up with a certain amount of pain (whatever that level is) in order to experience a compensatory amount of pleasure. This is a dynamic point - it shifts with time as our value system changes.

Let's take a very basic example of this principle. You see some item in the store that you just have to buy and make it your own. Should you buy it, or should you pass it up? Your buy-no buy decision will ultimately be determined by making a value judgement as to how much pleasure this item will give you in balance to the pain that it will also give you in trying to pay for it.

If you decide that the pleasure derived will be greater than the pain, then you'll buy it; if not, you'll pass it up. This may sound very simplistic, but that's how it works. This rather simple example provides us with some rather deep insight into the operation of two planetary polarity principles - Jupiter versus Saturn, and Venus versus Mars, and please note that they operate together. The Jupiter principle is the desire to make some external thing a part of ourself. The opposing Saturn principle is what it will cost us to do this. The Venus principle is the pleasure to be derived from possessing this thing. The Mars principle is the pain and worry that possessing this thing will cause us, both in getting it and then holding on to it. Recognizing this fact, it is no wonder that Jupiter and Venus are called *benefic*, and Mars and Saturn are called *malefic* in traditional astrological parlance.

Now, transferring these polarities into medical astrological terms, Jupiter represents growth (the expansion of the physical body) and Saturn represents aging (the contraction of the physical body). You eat food to grow, but in order to get food it costs you something - either monetarily, or in the expenditure of physical energy to grow it yourself. Eating, and growing, is a pleasurable (Venus) process; paying for the food is painful (especially in these days of our inflated economy). To attain a certain amount of pleasure, we must also be willing to experience a certain amount of pain.



We can visualize these principles in the diagram above. The two planetary polarities represent the extreme points between which we must constantly choose. Each "X" point - no matter where we choose to place it between these poles (and as we've said its position varies with time and circumstances) - represents where we are willing to place ourself in balancing these extremes.

Let's look at this *time factor* for a moment. Let us say that you get into a close personal relationship which promises to yield more pleasure than pain in maintaining it at some given moment in time. This is why people get married. Later, however the relationship does not work out as you have anticipated. It yields more pain and less pleasure than anticipated. At some later point in time, when you determine that the *cost* and the *pain* is greater than the *pleasure of possession* being derived, you sever this relationship. Marriage is a contract between two persons who both anticipate that the pleasure to be derived from entering into the contract, and its costs, outweigh the disadvantages and pain of doing so. Later, as conditions change, the contract can be abrogated - but to do this *also* costs us the loss of the anticipated pleasure, to say nothing of the costs of alimony and future support payments! Everything we do has its price. Just to move has its energy price!

Sir Isaac Newton stated this principle in scientific terms: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." Ralph Waldo Emerson also elucidated this idea in more poetic terms in his poem "Compensation" in which he points out that for everything we gain we lose something else. For example, everytime we add

something from the external environment to ourself we give up a part of our personal freedom. Only he who has nothing can lose nothing; the more we have, the more we can potentially lose. The Law of Karma and the Golden Rule also state this principle in slightly different terms - whatever we do, be it good or evil, has its ultimate reward in kind.

Let's look at the Venus-Mars principle now more in the terms that the medical astrologer sees it operating. Let us also observe that the Sign of Libra occurs halfway through the zodiac and is in fact the sign of the scales - of balance. Taurus is the opposite sign of Scorpio. Their rulers, Mars and Venus, also reflect this polarity. Aries is the opposite sign of Libra - their rulers again reflect this polarity.

Mars represents the acid balance of the body; Venus the alkaline balance of the body. When this balance gets out of whack, what do we have - dis-ease?

Venus represents the sensory nerves, that carry stimuli and impulses from the external environment to the brain. Mars represents the motor nerves, that cause the body to react in characteristic fashion (as shown in the horoscope) to these stimuli.

Venus represents the *process of growth*; Jupiter represents the end product of that process. Venus-Jupiter are tied together. The chemist refers to this process as *synthesis* - the combining of simple compounds into compounds that are more complex. Mars represents the *process of aging or breakdown*; Saturn represents the end product - the loss of physical function. The chemist refers to this process as *analysis* - the breakdown of complex compounds into simpler ones.

Venus represents sugars and carbohydrates - the source from which the body produces its energy. Mars represents the utilization and breakdown of sugars and carbohydrates in order to accomplish some form of work. To digest the sugars in and of itself requires a certain amount of energy. In the utilization of this energy the body derives (it is hoped) a certain amount of pleasure.

To alleviate pain (Mars) we use certain Venus-ruled substances (or Venus-ruled substitutes - substances ruled by Neptune - drugs). Sugar is often a constituent in poultices used to reduce inflammation (Mars). On the other hand, how do we relieve and release excessive stored energy (fat), the result of the Venus-Jupiter combination - through exercise (Mars) kept within reasonable limits (Saturn).

I hope that you are beginning to see through these examples that Venus-Jupiter is not all "good", and that Mars-Saturn is not all "bad". Each combination prevents the other from going to excess, and "balances" the other. For example, if it were not for the Mars-Saturn principle our bodies would starve! The process of digestion is ruled by Mars-Saturn. What is the purpose of digestion? To take complex food substances, break them down into simpler substances (analysis!), so that the body has the raw materials from which to build up (Venus-Jupiter, new and more complex substances) the substances it needs to continue to exist.

If one gets too fat (too much Venus-Jupiter), what is the cost? Sluggishness, and reduced physical activity (not enough Mars-Saturn). Somewhere, between these two polar extremes, we make a decision as to where we feel the most comfortable. Or, we consciously choose to sacrifice a bit of one for the other.

Jupiter represents the non-productive use of time - leisure-time activity. Saturn represents the productive use of time - work. Venus is the way we use leisure time for pleasure. Mars is the way we use productive time to create activity and energy. In the horoscope of the United States, Saturn is in its sign of exaltation - Libra. Thus, as a nation, we have more easily adopted the Puritan work ethic; "*the Devil finds work for the hands of the idle!*" As a nation we tend to measure success in terms of productivity. The more productive a person is, the more he has, and what he has becomes his badge of success. And, with its Sun in Cancer (July 4th), how well each of us is able to hold onto these symbols of success. But, how many of us question what it costs us to gain and maintain these symbols of success? It costs us energy, and it causes us tension (also ruled by Mars)!

This is why, as a nation, we are all so physically tense today, and why so many of us are dropping like flies from heart disease (from hypertension) - too much tension (too much Mars without sufficient Venus to balance it out). Our choice in many cases does not strike the proper Libra balance between Venus-Mars, Aries-Libra, Taurus-Scorpio, 1st-7th house, and 2nd-8th house. If you haven't got these elements in your own horoscope balanced out, you're asking for dis-ease, and health problems. In counseling my clients I have found that 90% of their medical problems can be found in imbalance, with resulting disease, in one or more of these polarities.

Astrologers have been trained to look at the 6th-12th house polarities as being most meaningful in the diagnosis and anticipation of medical problems in our lifetime. And, this is okay, providing you also realize that this polarity of houses is indicative only of the potential source of medical problems. Not their manifestation. The problems manifest through improper or ill-use of the polarities mentioned above. If you want to find out how medical problems are likely to manifest, look to the 6th-12th house polarity. But, if you want to get to the real cause and figure out why they come into being and consciousness in the first place, look to the polarities of Aries-Libra, Taurus-Scorpio, and Mars-Venus!

If tension, then, is such a potential trouble-maker and killer, how then can we relieve it? First, we must understand the cause of this tension. It is revealed astrologically through the house position of Mars primarily, with contributory causes coming from the houses that contain planets in hard aspect to Mars. To relieve this tension, concentrate on the activities of the house that contains your natal Venus, and secondarily upon the house activities that contain planets that are in easy aspect to Venus - or Mars. If both Venus and Mars occupy the same house, the source of your difficulty and its release lie in the same area of life. You have but to discover the proper and most comfortable way to do this, and any "cookbook" descriptions I might give here would do no more than provide general guidelines for doing this. You have to find a way that is individual to your own life style for doing this.

If Mars brings too much pain into your life at present, you must seek out a point of balance that provides you with more pleasure than pain. True, society specifies certain ways of doing this that are acceptable, and those that are not, and we have to either live within these limitations, or seek to change them, for to violate these limits brings on nothing but more pain.

Have you noticed how astrological guidelines really seem rather simple, but to put them to work seems so complex, if not impossible? Well, you are most certainly not alone here. And, this principle is not as simple, or as easy, as it appears in my telling of it. Yet, this principle IS a basic truth that all can test out for themselves.

One of the complications in doing just this is that, as human beings, we sometimes mistake pain for pleasure - Venus for Mars - or vice versa. What are some ways in which this manifests?

Some of us have been taught through religious training that those things in life that bring us pleasure are evil, and those things that bring us pain are good! "Waste not; want not." "A penny saved, is a penny earned". "A workman is worthy of his hire." Certainly, these and other aphorisms and sayings contain within them a kernel of Truth, but they also disguise a certain pragmatic polarity. Those who do not waste sometimes DO want. A penny saved is not necessarily a penny earned. And all workmen are not necessarily paid what they are truly worth. Our universal creator, by whatever name you call this entity, gave us a mind to use for ourselves - if we choose to do so, for we can also choose NOT to do so and accept trite sayings that others - religious, scientific, philosophical, and ethical authorities - foist upon us as being Truth when we have not tested their rules in the light of our own experience.

Only you can choose between the polar opposites of Mars-Venus and Saturn-Jupiter. You CAN study how others have chosen to make this compromise, but THEIR compromise is not necessarily YOUR most comfortable compromise position. Only YOU can determine this position for yourself. If you want to eat a lot of acid, junk foods - fine. You've made the choice, and anything that I might say here will probably not dissuade you in your choice. But, you've got to eventually pay the fiddler for the dance. You may not want to think about (Saturn's) price, but whether you think about it or not, you've still got to pay it! Saturn says, symbolically, everything has its price. You can ignore it, as we all do at times, but it does not go away!

Another trap that many of us fall into at times is to mistake pleasure for pain. The alcoholic sees alcohol as giving immediate pleasure, which he/she mistakes for eventual pain. The drug addict, likewise. The sadist and the masochist somehow, through a mental quirk of mind, derives pleasure from pain, either self-inflicted or inflicted by another. Often, this is reflected in the horoscope by mutual reception between Mars and Venus - Mars in the sign of Venus, and Venus in the sign of Mars. It also is prevalent when Mars is in the sign of Neptune, and Venus is in the sign of Scorpio. With Venus in Capricorn we often find the "workaholic" - work being the source of greatest pleasure. Or, with Mars in Sagittarius, unless work is fun it is not worth the effort. Given a couple of hard aspects to Venus or Mars in these signs, we have a classical example of the client who comes to the astrologer seeking a more comfortable means of livelihood.

There is also another astrological principle that we often overlook; that is, that the closer a planet is located to the natal Sun in the horoscope the more aware we are of its energy and its operation in our life. This is, however, demonstrated in two ways in delineation - through the principle of the planet in "oriental appearance", and through the principle of "retrogradation."

The planet in oriental appearance is the planet that rises in the East just be-

fore the Sun. It serves as the translator between the outside world and the interior world of the Self. It shows how one can best approach you in order to get you to do what they want you to do. It is your hot button! It is your prime motivator. In many charts this planet is Venus. In these cases it is pleasure and happiness, and the search for them, that is the prime motivator and mover. The messages that you get from your environment, and the messages that you transmit, are interpreted in terms of, and measured in terms of, the pleasure to be derived. If you want me to do something, or buy something, be sure to emphasize how much pleasure will be derived from doing so. At the same time, the awareness of the cost (the process of expending energy in accomplishing this thing) will be in direct proportion to how close Mars is to the Sun. The farther the distance, the less awareness of cost.

In far fewer cases, Mars is the planet in oriental appearance. For these individuals the prime motivator is competition - demonstrating that you are better than the next fellow. That you are stronger, better, and have more stamina and endurance. That you can stand more pain and are willing to fight for what you want. In music, Venus symbolizes the melody and harmony; Mars symbolizes the rhythm. In body terms, Venus symbolizes the physical beauty and symmetry of line and form; Mars represents its rhythm and coordination. Venus is the surface beauty while Mars is the underlying muscular formation that supports this surface beauty. Persons with Mars in oriental appearance have, as a personality characteristic, the desire to change the rhythm by which things are done. They are also more aware of rhythm and the aesthetics of beauty in motion, as contrasted to the person with Venus in oriental appearance who is more aware of beauty at rest.

When it comes to the principle of retrogradation we also can learn more about the Venus-Mars polarity. While both planets have their retrograde periods, they are different in character and nature. Venus is never more than two signs distant from the Sun, but Mars can be as far away as 180° . When the distance between Mars and the Sun exceeds about 123° its apparent motion, as viewed from the Earth, turns retrograde. When Mars, by aspect is sesquiquadrate, biquintile, inconjunct, or opposed to the Sun it is always retrograde. This applies to all of the outer planets - from Jupiter to Pluto as well - except that when Jupiter through Pluto are trine the Sun they are always retrograde as well. This is just an astronomical fact, but this fact certainly has implications astrologically in how we delineate these aspects.

When a planet is retrograde in the chart, our awareness of the energy that it represents goes underground. We use and respond to this energy characteristically on a less than conscious level because this energy is so far removed from the Sun, the center of our consciousness. In terms of the pleasure-pain principle, when Mars is retrograde we are typically less than totally aware of all that Mars symbolizes in our life style. We are less willing to consider consciously pain and what things cost us in terms of their energy requirements. We are less aware of tension, and less analytical - even when the natal Sun is in Virgo.

When Venus is retrograde natally, we are less aware of those things that provide us with pleasure and aesthetic satisfaction. Venus symbolizes pleasure within the bounds of what society permits the individual to do in order to obtain it. Venus retrograde makes one less aware of societies limitations and more inclined to seek pleasure in less societally accepted ways.

The pleasure-pain principle of Venus-Mars also manifests in the delineation of the horoscope when one of these planets is brought into focal prominence, as Marc Edmund Jones has termed this phenomenon. How does this occur? It occurs when one of these planets becomes the focal point of a T-Cross, the focal point of a Yod or Kite configuration, or the leading (cutting) planet in a well defined planetary pattern. (For more information on these phenomena, please refer to my books "INTERPRETING THE ASPECTS" and "PLANETARY PATTERNS"). With Venus focally prominent, pleasure becomes a prime motivator. With Mars focally prominent, competition and physical prowess become dominant motivating facts. In these cases, there is a greater inclination toward imbalance in the Venus-Mars principle in favor of the planet that is emphasized.

For example, with Venus emphasized, the individual will put up with an awful lot of physical discomfort, "dis-ease", and pain in order to become more beautiful and aesthetically pleasing to others. Typical of this is the model who will literally starve him/herself to remain youthful and beautiful. By contrast, with Mars emphasized, pleasure is derived through competitive activity. A "black eye" to this person is beautiful in its emphasis as a badge of physical prowess and besting an opponent.

In closing this lecture, let us finally direct our attention to how we can bring this Venus-Mars principle into balance when it has gotten out of balance. Especially in the physical terms of the body.

If you're overly tense and nervous (Mars), take time to smell the flowers (Venus). Periods of activity must be followed with equivalent periods for rest and relaxation.

If you've gotten too fat, indulged yourself in too many sweets and junk foods (Venus), you need more exercise (Mars). On the other hand, if you indulged yourself in the ingestion of too many acid-forming foods, like too much meat, add some more fruit (Venus) to your diet. What does your doctor advise you to do when you have an infection or a fever (Mars); drink larger amounts of fruit juice (Venus).

Have you had a fight with someone (Mars)? Take time to either make up to that person, or tell someone else how much you love them (Venus).

If your muscles ache (Mars), get a massage (Venus). If you're "up tight", do something pleasurable. If you're tired (Mars), get some rest (Venus). If you are planning revenge upon someone for the wrong he has done you (Mars), try doing something nice for this person (Venus) and watch how you confuse him!

Conversely, if you've gotten too Venus, or too Mars, don't make it worse by adding more fuel to the fire. There is still a theory rampant in society that one treats a problem by adding more of the same - the theory of sympathy - that by adding like to like one improves upon the situation. "If your enemy smites you upon one cheek, turn the other to him also." This is a nice theory, but in astrological practice, it doesn't work! It militates against every known astrological principle. One treats an imbalance by antipathy - adding weight to the opposite side of the scale, not to the same side that already weighs heaviest. There are times when you have to stand up and fight for a principle that you believe in. Even Christ used force to drive the money changers from his temple!

I'm sorry if what I've just said offends my more religious readers, but everything that nature teaches us militates against this precept. In pragmatic terms, *martyrdom does not pay!* It is a wasteful and useless sacrifice of our most precious gift from our creator - life! I believe that each of us has re-incarnated into this life to accomplish some useful purpose(s), and we cannot accomplish this purpose if we are dead!

SUMMARY

Why did I select the Venus-Mars polarity for a lecture on the principles of medical astrology? First, I did so in order to convince you that our comprehension of basic life principles is best understood in terms of opposites - *antipathy*. We cannot understand what "good" is if we cannot comprehend its opposite number - "evil." We could not comprehend what "pain" is if we had to live with it all the time and never knew what it is like to live without its absence. How many of us can comprehend what it would be like in realistic terms to live in a 0-gravity environment. Only our astronauts can, because only they have had the opportunity to experience what it is like.

I also selected this topic to demonstrate to you all that health is, in its most realistic terms, a matter of balancing opposing forces in a manner that is most comfortable and "easy" for each individual. When you are out of balance, you are in a position of "dis-ease", and to restore this balance is to restore "ease". Where this point of greatest ease is, is a matter of individual decision and a function of the fourth dimension - time. What represents ease today may represent dis-ease tomorrow. What motivates many of us is the promise of greater ease through some action that we take; the payoff may, or may not, live up to our expectations in the fourth dimension of time. But, this decision is not unalterable. It CAN be changed when the payoff is reduced, IF we choose to make a compensatory change. And the longer we postpone making such change, the more painful maintaining that position becomes. Pain is one of nature's strongest motivating factors in causing change. It forces us to move from a point of dis-ease to one of greater ease.

The natal horoscope, when used as a psychological diagnostic tool, shows us where we can find this point of greatest ease - through (first) the location of Mars by sign and house, (second) by the sign and house location of Venus, and (third) by the aspects of ease from other planets that favorably aspect both Venus and Mars natively. You can consult a professional astrologer in order to determine this information, or you can study your own horoscope for yourself to determine how to ease your own tension and add more pleasure, contentment, and satisfaction to your life style. How you characteristically handle the pleasure-pain principle in your own life (as symbolized in your personal horoscope) depends upon how Venus and Mars are related by aspect in your chart directly - one to the other.

Certain planetary conditions and aspects cause certain of us to confuse what is painful from what is pleasurable. For some of us, pain = pleasure; for others, pleasure = pain. But, by learning to really understand your horoscope, you can remove this confusion. If you are objective enough to read and understand your horoscope, you can do this for yourself. If not, then it is probably best that you consult with another individual who can discern this difference, and counsel you accordingly.