

I think midlife is when the universe gently places her hands upon your shoulders, pulls you close, and whispers in your ear: I'm not screwing around. It's time. All of this pretending and performing – these coping mechanisms that you've developed to protect yourself from feeling inadequate and getting hurt – has to go. Your armor is preventing you from growing into your gifts. I understand that you needed these protections when you were small. I understand that you believed your armor could help you secure all of the things you needed to feel worthy of love and belonging, but you're still searching and you're more lost than ever.

**The Midlife Cycle:** The so-called Midlife crisis of the late thirties to mid forties is a crucible for much change and growth, because the astrological picture at midlife includes a series of outer-planet aspects by transit to their own natal positions. Transiting Uranus makes an opposition to its natal position in the chart, transiting Neptune squares natal Neptune, and transiting Pluto squares natal Pluto.

In the process, the transiting outer planets trigger all the aspects that the outer planets form in the birth chart, giving us the chance to learn how to use those aspects better and to fulfill more of their innate potential. (The exact ages when these aspects occur vary from generation to generation, because the orbits of these three planets around the Sun are not as regular as the orbits of the inner planets.)

The energies of the outer planets are not as accessible to our consciousness as the inner ones, nor are they easy to express; instead, they require a great deal of maturity to handle well. This sort of meandering through life and having a variety of experiences seems to be a necessary part of growth and evolution — as though the life journey were a long pilgrimage through a wilderness.

It's easy to lose our way with the outer planets; where these planets are located in our charts, we often do so repeatedly — learning much from our mistakes as we stumble and fall on our faces. It is usually at midlife, when all the natal aspects to an outer planet are also set off by transit, that we bottom out on the less-productive uses of these energies and are impelled, if we are blessed with sufficient maturity, to work toward more uplifting expressions.

Quite simply...all of the transits of midlife can be a time of chaos. Astrologically, there are three midlife transits. They occur very close together, from late 30s to early 40s. How each of these midlife phases manifests is unique to each individual. You can end up feeling as though your existence and accomplishments up to now are worth nothing. You are faced with questioning yourself and working through things an emerging with a new spiritual connection - or you could escape reality buy delving into obsessions and addictions with sex, drugs, alcohol or lying. During mid-life transits, where you have been playing around and not being serious can come to ashes around you and you will need to rebuild.

The mid-life transits can be very challenging, difficult and often painful. We may suffer from depression, repressed anger and physical illnesses due to the heavy responsibilities we are carrying in life - family relationships, work situations or attempts to pursue an authentic life. The 'Mid-life' time period is like a teacher and the best way to be successful with this time period is to be a willing student by evaluating and making necessary changes in our lives.

Remember that midlife is about YOU. It may mean you must leave a dead marriage (divorces are common at this time), end a high-stress job and take up a profession that pays less but has more satisfaction, or you may choose to get married for the first time and have a child.

Beyond the chaos and crisis in mid-life is opportunity to cleanse our souls, and strengthen our minds and bodies. If we are willing students, we will emerge into new transformed persons- similar to the process of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

Phase One of midlife: The 'Neptune square Neptune' phase is a sensitive time when you are asked to soften into more spirituality and creativity. Meaning and purpose become more important than success and achievement. Energy levels can be low as your focus shifts inwards to discover what is meaningful for you at this stage of life. Long-term foundations or structures (relationships, careers) can be washed away to give you empty time and space to simply be.

Phase Two of midlife: The 'Uranus opposition' represents the process of individuation. This chaotic and unpredictable period helps shake you free from limiting structures. Freedom is the essence of Uranus and following an authentic life path becomes a personal mission impossible. Others may consider your choices radical, as you experiment with experiences you have long wanted to explore but never dared. Uranus is about rebellion and any area of life in which you have experienced restraint or limitation will be the area(s) in which you break away unexpectedly.

The thing about unexpected things that happen in our lives is that they sometimes shake us awake from a deep slumber we needed to wake up from. Because we may have been missing out on some aspect of life that is meant to be ours, but we've been too comfortable and complacent to go after it.

Phase Three of Midlife: The 'Saturn opposition' is a time of limitations, restrictions, discipline, facing reality and resistance from others. It is a time to evaluate the last 14 years and what changes need to be made in your current reality.

It's OK to question things. It's OK to be confused and wondering what to do or what is next. Sometimes you need that time of reflection to bring about the best kind of transformation. Life changes. You change. Embrace it and soon you will know what step to take, what direction to move forward in.

Breathe in...Exhale and listen to your inner voice show you the way...