

Dreams vs Actions; Neptune moves into Aries, Mars conjoins Pluto

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January 29, 2026

Like all planets, the energy Neptune reflects depends on the sign it's in. Neptune in Pisces brings a transcendental sense of drifting in the fog, of not feeling your individual nature so much but that you are part of the larger whole. Ever stand on the beach and just watch the waves rolling endlessly towards the shore? Whenever I do, I feel this profound sense of peace and connection to the rest of the Cosmos, to the water, the nature around me, the other people, dogs and birds on the beach. That feels like Neptune in Pisces to me.

Pisces is also the last sign of the Zodiac. It represents the unending return from a cycle of action into a quiet dissolution of the individual into the collective whole. Highly introspective, Pisces gives planets time for dreaming, for quiet introspection. By contrast, the first sign of the Zodiac, Aries is like the Big Bang Theory made manifest. All that dreamy collective energy becomes channeled one again into something individual, into the action of *becoming*.

Since Aries is a Mars ruled sign, the drive to satisfy individual will with action feels incredibly strong. That channeling of energy is often spontaneous, creative, even powerful. The early degrees of Aries, while so incredibly dynamic, don't always have the endgame mapped out. If something is to be created, what form should it take at maturity? Aries doesn't always know the answer, yet. We can track the cycle of a planet through the progressive signs of the Zodiac and discover the answer to what we (or the planet, or the energy) are becoming. Think about the instant that a seed germinates. The divine energy that drives a seed to germinate does not yet know what type of tree will grow into maturity, only that life will develop, and grow into some other form.

Neptune moved into Aries on January 26th. Representing spirituality, Neptune draws our attention to the higher vibrations of consciousness. But it also dissolves and blurs the edges of reality. The borders and edges of things that once thought themselves solid tend to dissolve into the formless under Neptune's influence. Neptune and Aries are an interesting pairing. Aries wants to become and Neptune would rather stay timeless and formless. Neptune drifts while Aries directs energy and matter into action. While Aries calls us to develop our individual will, Neptune calls us to remember that the lines between individuals can be blurred.

Neptune's time in the sign of Aries will shine through the lens of Mars and the Sun. Aries is one of the home temples of Mars, and it is the sign of Exaltation of the Sun. Both planets

are highly dignified here, and their influence is felt strongly by any transiting planet. You might ask; what is Mars up to these days? He has to be traveling around the Zodiac somewhere, right?

On January 26th, Mars met Pluto in the sign of Aquarius at the same time that Neptune moved into Aquarius as we previously mentioned. The timing of both events, occurring at almost the same time, feels significant. As we spoke of before, the nature of Aquarius is to consider the status quo and how the ideal version might look different. Also, to ask whether that's progress towards an imagined future or a return to an idealized past. Mars is neutral in Aquarius, in that he does not have any particular dignity or strength, but also does not face any debility or detriment. So Mars just gets to be himself in the sign of Aquarius; no super powers but he doesn't have to dance with his hands tied behind his back either. In order to understand Mars, whether he is in the sign of Aquarius or elsewhere, we have to talk about his nature as the God of War.

In the ancient world, the archetype of Mars governed over some pretty intense emotions and circumstances in the lives of mankind. Mars rules over all things related to combat, aggression, and martial forces such as armies. Mars rules competitions, from friendly wagers and backyard flag football games to intense athletic competitions of individuals or teams against one another. Since Mars separates things by cutting them into their component pieces, processes that involve cutting such as surgeries are ruled over by this planet. Therefore, Mars also rules discourse, the circumstances that separate us by action or ideology.

Let's not assume Mars is a bad guy. By contrast, Mars is also the knight championing the cause of those who cannot defend themselves. Mars can show up in a person's birth chart representing their "mama bear" side, in someone of either gender, in how they defend and care for the things they love, such as their children or pets. Mars is the advocate for those who don't have a voice.

Mars meeting Pluto in Aquarius is going to highlight what is beneath the surface, such as our thoughts, feelings and motivations. The energy of Mars can strengthen what we believe in, and how that belief also separates us from one another. It can cause us to feel empowered to fight on behalf of what we believe in. It creates more division, when we forget that the other side of any argument or view is also a human being, with their own thoughts, feelings, personal history, etc. on the subject.

If you think you're not subject to the will of Mars, just consider how many ways martial influences are present in our everyday lives. Violent video games-well I don't play those. Road rage because someone cut me off in traffic-I don't react, I just let them drive on by

unaffected. One more spam call on my phone after 5pm. I don't pick up the phone and scream at the representative for bothering me. I support the fight against cancer and animal abuse and poverty, I wage war on drugs, and I gasp in horror at how "winter's blast shakes the northeast with its icy grip". These are all recent headlines.

Oh look, 12 missed notifications on Facebook and Instagram. I'll spend the next hour doomscrolling in algorithms designed to keep me entertained with confirmation bias as they only show me the perspective that strengthens the beliefs it picked up on based on my habits. Algorithms that just continue to show me how terrible that natural disaster was and let me watch that drone strike on a military target from 3 different angles. Never mind that the so-called targets were other living beings. I have no way to know whether they deserved to die or not, but I can watch it in high definition.

I can become so enraged at watching videos of the clashes of protestors with government officials, and it does not matter whether I'm on the side of the protestors or the government. I can find plenty of ammunition for my arguments about why they were justified on either side. Can you understand how I feel that we've become almost disassociated with violence in our lives, and how that has given us permission to become even more polarized, even more sure that we are right? That just makes someone else, some other side, even more wrong. Mars and Pluto energy can really help us to find 'our tribe', whether that's a group that supports a cause, a sports team, a religious or spiritual community or a political party. Don't misunderstand me; groups aren't bad. It's how we hold the tension of belonging to one if others belong to the opposite that can present a challenge.

Since Neptune's ingress into Aries has happened, we are presently in the dreaming time of asking "what will we become"? This is a topic we will consider in our discussion on February 4th, as well as how the presence of Saturn will change the dynamic. Can Saturn provide structure, if Neptune dreams big dreams? We will also discuss the rare event of a solar eclipse that happens in Aquarius just prior to the meeting of Saturn and Neptune in Aries. It feels redundant for me to mention that these influences seem reflected in our collective experience at this time. We hope to offer some tools for how to best navigate them.

In gratitude & with love,

Rachel