

The Sixth House

Every chart contains a 6th house. The core issues on the 6th/12th house axis are centered around the dynamics and attitudes towards being of service -- service to ourselves, to our environment, to the structures and institutions touching our lives, to those close to us, and to those far, far away. Services (things we do to help ourselves and others) that are meant to take care of practical needs in ordinary everyday life are associated with the 6th house. For example, selecting the best education (or car, or can-opener, or ...) within our budget, or walking the dog, or keeping current with our bills to avoid money being squandered on late fees.

Services we offer anonymously, or in extremely non-personal environments, are associated with the 12th house. Perhaps working in a prison or hospital where people are associated with a case number rather than a name. Perhaps simply doing what we know to be right and necessary, without any fanfare or need for personal credit, in which case we are the ones without the name.

In order to be of service we need to develop habits and routines to support our intended efforts. This generally means adjusting existing habits to meet the task at hand. When we attempt to change habit patterns, astrologically we seek guidance from the 6th house. The following situations clearly demand changing habit patterns.

- We find ourselves frequently snapping at those close to us -- children, coworkers, friends. We don't want to be hurtful and damaging, but it keeps happening. Why is this happening to us? Is it a genetic predisposition beyond any possible personal effort? How can we change this automatic behavior?
- We are always there for family and friends when a need arises. We care for neighbor's pets, handle family emergencies, and volunteer to run the Girl Scout cookie drive. We feel that we are pitching in and doing our fair share. Others take us for granted and treat us like less expensive alternatives to paid services. We want to be recognized and respected for our contribution -- instead of being thought of as part of the scenery. What should we do?
- My knees really hurt. Walking down steps is the worst. The physical therapist gave me a set of exercises to do each day. But somehow I never do them -- or not all of them -- or not all the repetitions. And my knees hurt. I hate exercise. But I need to do it. So why can't I do it? Change what habit?? (Life is complicated.)

Changing a habit, any habit, is very difficult to accomplish. It requires a well-defined image of the new behavior, a clear appreciation and desire for the end result, perseverance, gentleness with our selves when things go wrong, sufficient energy to remain consciously aware of what we are doing, and endless patience. (As an experiment, try brushing your teeth while holding the toothbrush with the opposite hand for 1 week. No cheating.) This, dear reader, is 6th house territory.

It is my personal opinion that a slightly playful attitude is helpful during any attempt to permanently change a habit pattern, no matter the astrological sign or planets that might appear in the 6th house. That said, let's look for more clues that we can keep in mind when we examine our own 6th house.

Aries / Mars -- in the 6th house

This is an energy that prompts us to DO, and keep on DOING. Alas, things keep getting in the way of what we plan to do. These side-issues are often met with resistance and resentment and impatience. The key word here is IMPATIENCE. Changing a habit requires repetition and patience. With Aries energy in the 6th house try spending a little extra time practicing patience -- with self as well as with others. This is a great way to smooth the transition from same-old, same-old, habits to new, more satisfying life style choices.

Taurus / Venus -- in the 6th house

Taurus (strength and steadfastness) is a formidable support to lean on in this house of natural earth energy. Beware of feelings of passive-aggressive anger -- self-sabotage can happen -- and the wanted habit change is just a bygone memory. Make a plan when trying to update a habit. Keep each step small, and complete each step before the next is begun. Notice any feelings of resistance to change as you move forward. If, and when, these feelings arise, take a brief time out to reorient yourself. (Sometimes a few deep breaths can help.) And then renew the task at hand.

Gemini / Mercury -- in the 6th house

Changing a habit is hard work. We wish for a positive result, hopefully without feelings of repetitiousness or drudgery along the way. However changing a habit requires time and repetition. Visualize bouncing back, with alertness and good

humor, each time frustration strikes. Focus on making one very small change at a time, until the revised behavior becomes almost automatic. Then move on to the next very small change. Beware of frittering away energy on multitasking that leaves a trail of loose ends. The 6th house teaches that results are built upon previously achieved results. Thus success.

Cancer / Moon -- in the 6th house

This energy prompts us to want to feel in control, and also to want to understand and visualize and experience a final result through deep emotion. Identifying a series of little steps to be accomplished, each of which builds up to the desired final result, may seem an onerous task. But a necessary task. Be gentle, stay gentle. Identify all the necessary steps, arrange them in a reasonable order, and finish the current step before attempting the next step. In general, it is always a good idea to try to use the strengths of the opposing sign (Capricorn's methodical approach in this case) when trying to work on changing a habitual way of doing something.

Leo / Sun -- in the 6th house

The need to be recognized, and if possible applauded, can motivate amazing actions. Unfortunately, when trying to update a habit this need can definitely get in the way. The trick is to learn how to enjoy our own company and our own space -- without guilt, without falling asleep, and without disappearing into a daydream or some other distraction. Pick a time and space that is yours alone, away from all interruptions. Focus on gently noticing whatever is near or crosses your path. Start with 5 or 10 minutes a day. After being refreshed in this way, return to the task of modifying your chosen habit pattern.

Virgo / Mercury -- in the 6th house

Accepting delayed gratification is a major challenge for many people. Earth energy in general, and Virgo energy in particular, is more aware of the cycles in nature -- things happen in their proper time. But when we are working hard, we need pick-me-ups along the way. So, dear reader, if this is part of your chart, allow yourself little treats as you make consistent efforts to modify a habit. In other words, don't wait for the outside world to recognize your success (or mini successes along the way), but do that part yourself. (The hardest changes are those that demand that we show vulnerability. Go slow, but don't give up.)

Libra / Venus -- in the 6th house

Libra energy prompts us to create harmony and smooth human interactions wherever we go. The threat of another person overtly disliking us can zap lots of our energy. Changing a habit of any type requires ongoing vigilance. When too much of the available energy is diverted to scanning for possible non-admirers, it makes our task (changing a habit) extremely difficult. If there is also a tendency to softly step around obstacles instead of confronting them head-on, accept help from Libra's polar opposite -- Aries' refusal to avoid confrontation.

Scorpio / Pluto -- in the 6th house

Scorpio energy gives us stealth and concentrated focus in abundance. But what of playfulness -- a sense of fun? Changing a habit takes time, and a lot of bouncing back. Any tension that we create over and above the demands of the task itself (changing the designated habit) will either burn us out or act like a dead weight that we continually drag around, making our efforts less efficient rather than more efficient. We cannot instruct ourselves to have fun, but we can allow ourselves to experience doing things with a lighter touch. Be gentle, stay gentle -- and stick to the task at hand.

Sagittarius / Jupiter -- in the 6th house

Gemini energy gathers information and preserves the important stories through the generations. Sagittarius energy uses these human insights to build the pillars of civilization after civilization. Sagittarius energy in the 6th house helps us to stay aware of what might work best in a particular time and place, and how that habit pattern might be revised to meet the needs of a new time and place. Keep what already works. Keep fine-tuning the habit being worked with, as the ever-changing environment presents new demands and new opportunities. The journey is the thing -- the end result simply happens. Have fun along the way.

Capricorn / Saturn -- in the 6th house

We are conditioned to think in pairs of opposites: this vs. that, night vs. day, good vs. bad, right vs. wrong. But there is more to reality than the negation of something else. With Capricorn energy in the 6th house, the challenge is to get to the bottom of what is real, as opposed to what we consider to be real, because we have memorized a list of opposites. In

other words, what is the basis for our choosing to make this particular change to this particular habit? Capricorn energy supports strong direction, strong and detailed strategies, and steady progress, making our task easier. Less easy is the feeling that life equals work. We are returning to the land of delayed gratification. So, once again, we need to recognize and honor our own accomplishments along the way.

Aquarius / Uranus -- in the 6th house

Aquarius energy can help us to step outside of our comfort zone -- an absolute must when working on any habit change. This energy adds a touch of a desire to be creative and independent and competent to solve problems that others have not even verbalized. The danger is to fall in love with uniqueness for its own sake -- a kind of super-man thing. Different may be better, but it is not the definition of better. When trying to change a habit, stick to what works, even if it is mundane and boring.

Pisces / Neptune -- in the 6th house

In theory Pisces energy helps us to slip into and out from a new US at will. 'Who shall we be this morning?' is a pleasant Pisces wake-up call. (That's why Pisces is so closely associated with the theater.) But habits endure, and habits are rooted well below the whims of imagination. So changing a habit is equally difficult with this energy in the 6th house. The challenge here is to keep the reason for working on a specific habit change in conscious awareness for a long-enough time to make something happen.

Changing any habit is hard to do. Just because it happens, as though by itself. Sometimes extreme outside circumstances change a habit for us. For example, a tornado that touches down and demolishes a row of houses can change myriad habits for the people who have lost their homes. However, the intention of this article is to help those of us who desire to make a specific habit change, and want to take that effort beyond the planning stages. There are many energies (as described above) offered to support us, but these energies become effective only if we use them in a purposeful way.

The 6th house is the house of personal habit patterns -- often as evidenced by their consequences. We need to maintain the property, trim the shrubs, and keep dirty dishes away from our insect friends. Be playful, be gentle, act with alertness and intention, and enjoy all of the hidden passageways in your 6th house home.

Ruth Finizio
finizior@yahoo.com
860-680-1860
6/4/15