

VENUS AND MARS
The Relationship Planets
By Amanda Owen

Sometimes it seems like members of the opposite sex are not even from the same galaxy - let alone the same solar system. As society continues to discuss the differences between men and women and how we can better understand each other, astrology offers a beautiful perspective on how we can understand and honor ourselves and therefore better understand and respect members of the opposite sex.

Just as everyone has a Sun sign, everybody also has a Venus sign and a Mars sign. If a planet existed in our solar system when you were born, then it is in your astrological birth chart. Each planet in the chart symbolizes a different aspect or part of the personality.

Mars is the planet that represents how we go after what we want, how we take action, how we put things into motion. Venus is the planet that represents how we relate to ourselves and others. It symbolizes self-worth - how we value ourselves and therefore others.

Traditionally, people who have written about astrology have said that Venus represents women and Mars represents men. That means that in a man's astrological chart Venus represents his idea or ideal of women and that in a woman's astrological chart Mars represents her ideal of men. This concept is easy to understand when we look at our culture.

Since Mars represents how you go after things, to fully utilize this planet you have to live a life that allows you to put plans into action. What happens if you are a woman and your family or culture does not support or allow you to express yourself in this way? For many women this has meant that their own need to take action has been lived through the men in their lives, their husbands, sons, and brothers.

Venus represents relating. To fully utilize this energy you have to live a life that supports and encourages you to relate to and value others. What happens if you are a man and your family or culture does not allow or support this expression in men? For many men this has meant that their own need to be sensitive to the needs of others, to relate in a way that demonstrates the others' value, has been lived out through the women in their lives, their mothers, wives, and sisters.

In America, these ideas and roles are beginning to change. We now have women who are the presidents of companies and men who are home taking care of children. Our ideas about who men and women are and how we should be relating to each other are beginning to change. But - and this is an important point - we were all raised by women and men, mothers and fathers, who taught us by their own example about the old ways of relating. As we try to understand the opposite sex, learn how to negotiate a relationship, and figure out what feels right and wrong for us, we are doing all of this having been born and raised under a set of rules that do not completely apply anymore.

In the "old" world, the men did the "doing" (Mars) by going out in the world and becoming providers and the women did the feeling and relating (Venus) by staying home and taking care of the kids. We now live in a society that is moving in a direction where more opportunities, roles, and ways of thinking about ourselves are possible for both sexes. This means that both men and women can experience the full potential of both Mars and Venus. However, to do this, it helps to understand that many if not most of us are learning from scratch. Our mothers and fathers could not teach us to experience both Mars and Venus because they did not grow up in a world where that was possible. You can't teach what you don't know.

Let's say you were born into a society that never let you see or mingle with the opposite sex. Your entire life was spent in the company of the people who were the same sex you were. That means that both your Venus and Mars would be wholly symbolic of your own expression. Venus would not belong to women and Mars would not belong to men. Both would belong to each person.

Let's say that you lived in a society where everybody was treated equally. Both sexes had equal chances at all opportunities and jobs. And that was O.K. with everybody. That would mean that both Venus and Mars would be wholly symbolic of your own expression. Venus would belong to both men and women and Mars would belong to both women and men.

It is only when a family or society does not allow a particular trait or expression that it is lived out through others. For women this has meant that there is not support for being a go-getter. For men this has meant that he has difficulty expressing his feelings, sensitivity, and compassion.

So what is a feisty Aries woman or a sensitive Pisces man to do? A happy supported Aries woman is out leading the masses in some adventure. A happy supported Pisces man is creating a beautiful piece of music or out feeding the homeless. He is certainly comfortable expressing his feelings. A frustrated Aries woman is arguing with everyone or trying to control some one else' life. An unhappy Pisces man is tuning out the world and escaping his feelings through isolating himself from others.

Our ideas about who a woman is supposed to be and who a man is colors our relationships and interferes with allowing ourselves to be truly who we are instead of some one else' idea of who we should be.

This is how astrology traditionally associated the outgoing principle of Mars with men and the receptive, relating principle of Venus with women. What happens if we re-examine Mars and Venus and let one person express both?

How To Read The Venus-Mars Chart (below)

Let's look at the positive and negative expressions of each sign and see how they are expressed by Mars and Venus. We will use the phrase "I act" for Mars and "I relate" for Venus.

If your mate is behaving in a way that you see in the negative column, then check your own behavior and make sure you are behaving in a way that is from the positive column. Let's use an example.

If you are a woman and have your Mars in Aries and your mate is impatient and argumentative (from the negative column), then check your own behavior to see if you are comfortable being spontaneous and assertive (from the positive column). If you don't know how to assert yourself comfortably, then you might want to get a book that teaches you how to be assertive or you may want to talk to people who know how to assert themselves comfortably.

If you are a man with your Venus in Cancer and your mate is often moody (from the negative column), then check your own behavior and see if you are comfortable with being sensitive and compassionate (from the positive column). If you don't know how to express your feelings comfortably, then talk to others about ways to get more in touch with your feelings. You may want to consult with a therapist.

The goal here is to make sure you are in touch with the most positive expressions and qualities of your Venus and Mars. If you are out of touch with those qualities then you are very likely to be in a relationship with someone who is expressing the most negative side of your Venus and Mars.

*** THE VENUS - MARS CHART ***

If comfortable with myself, I act (Mars) or relate (Venus) in a way that is:

If uncomfortable, I act (Mars) or relate (Venus) in a way that is:

	Positive	Negative
Aries	spontaneous assertive adventurous	impatient argumentative combative
Taurus	reliable affectionate loyal	stubborn lazy
Gemini	communicative versatile playful	possessive superficial scattered
Cancer	sensitive compassionate nurturing	flighty cranky moody evasive

Leo	dignified generous confident	arrogant selfish bossy
Virgo	kind perceptive helpful	critical finicky subservient
Libra	cooperative fair friendly	indecisive dependent inauthentic
Scorpio	sensitive passionate powerful	domineering secretive manipulative
Sagittarius	honest enthusiastic philosophical	irresponsible self-righteous tactless
Capricorn	responsible serious respectful	inhibited pessimistic rigid
Aquarius	independent original inventive	rebellious inflexible non-committal
Pisces	empathetic imaginative affectionate	unreliable inconsistent gullible

When we respect and honor ourselves in relationship, which is symbolized by expressing the positive expressions of our Venus and Mars, we are attracted to people who are also respectful of us.

As you cultivate awareness of the positive and negative expressions of your Venus and Mars, see if you can shift your emotions, attitudes and behavior to their happiest and healthiest expressions. You will reap the benefits in your relationship with yourself and with those close to you.