

I N T E O R

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*Free guide · The cycles of adult life*

# The doors of time

What 29, 42 and 50 ask of you

*INTEOR Method · astrology, developmental psychology and ritual*

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CONTENTS

What you will find here

1. Why some ages weigh more . . . . . 3

2. The clock of adult life . . . . . 4

3. 29: the Guardian returns . . . . . 5

4. 40: the Rebel comes face to face . . . . . 6

5. 50: the Wounded Healer returns . . . . . 7

6. The age your family has already lived . . . . . 8

7. Exercise: your timeline . . . . . 9

8. The crossing ritual . . . . . 10

9. The next step . . . . . 11

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”

— Søren Kierkegaard, Journals (1843)

## 1 · THE BIRTHDAY THAT WEIGHS

# Why some ages weigh more

Almost everyone has an age that weighed on them. The 29 when everything seemed to fall apart and rebuild itself. The early 40s when a life that felt settled suddenly felt too small. The 50 when an old pain came back, but with a different voice. We tend to treat these seasons as accidents. This guide invites you to see them as doors: predictable passages that ask specific things of whoever walks through them.

Three traditions, by different roads, speak of these doors:

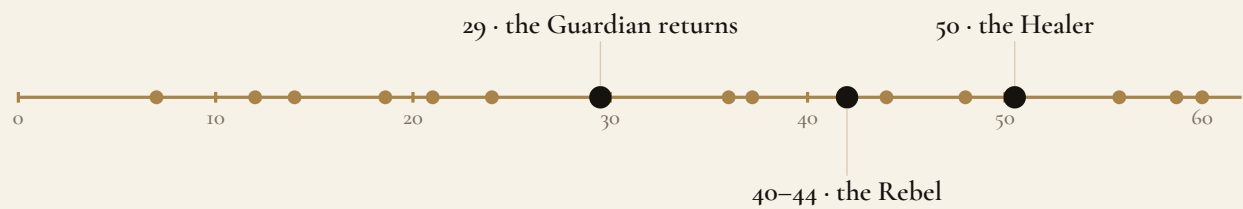
- Astrology observes that, after birth, some planets return to the same points of the chart at similar ages for everyone. In INTEOR, these planets are characters: *the Guardian* (Saturn) returns around 29, *the Rebel* (Uranus) comes face to face with itself between 38 and 44, *the Wounded Healer* (Chiron) completes its circle around 50.
- Developmental psychology describes adult life in seasons. Daniel Levinson (1978) called the period in which we review our first adult choices the *age-30 transition*. Erik Erikson described midlife as the time of choosing between *generativity* (caring for what will remain) and stagnation.
- The systemic view notes that certain ages weigh more because *someone in the family already lived something defining at that age*. The psychotherapist Anne Ancelin Schützenberger called this the anniversary syndrome.

An honest note. The markers in this guide are doors, not predictions. Controlled studies do not show that astrology predicts events, and research on the “midlife crisis” itself shows that it is not universal. Use these ages as a mirror: to look back and recognise patterns, and to look ahead with more awareness. Nothing here replaces professional support.

2 · THE CLOCK

# The clock of adult life

Large dots: the three great doors. Small dots: the doors of passage.



| Around                | Character                                   | What it tends to ask                                                               |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29 to 30 · 58 to 59   | The Guardian returns to its place of origin | the test of adult life: what is truly mine, and what am I only carrying?           |
| 38 to 44              | The Rebel face to face with itself          | breaking free from what has grown too small, without destroying what is still true |
| 50 to 51              | The Wounded Healer completes its circle     | the old wound returns as knowledge that can be taught                              |
| 7, 14, 21, 36, 44, 51 | the Guardian at points of adjustment        | responsibility, revising structures, maturing                                      |
| 12, 24, 36, 48, 60    | The Sage returns to its place of origin     | expansion, study, a new horizon                                                    |
| 18 to 19, 37, 56      | The Compass returns to its place of origin  | recalibrating the direction of life                                                |

The ages above are averages. In each person's chart, every door opens in a specific month and sometimes repeats three times over a year. Notice too that between 36 and 44 several doors open almost together: no wonder this is the most talked-about stretch of adult life.

3 · THE FIRST GREAT DOOR

## 29: the Guardian returns

*The inventory of the house: what is foundation and what is borrowed furniture.*

Picture a building inspector, serious, clipboard in hand, knocking on the wall to hear whether it is hollow. That is how the Guardian arrives around the age of 29. It does not come to punish: it comes to ask whether what you built in your first adult decade has foundations, or whether it was assembled from other people's expectations.

In psychology, Levinson described this period as the first great review of adult life: the career chosen by inertia, the relationship that began too early, the city you stayed in out of fear. It is common to feel that everything has become heavier and more serious. It is also common to feel, for the first time, that you are truly choosing.

### Signs that this door is open

- a role-playing tiredness: the feeling of performing your own life
- break-ups and changes of career, country or home that seem to happen all at once
- the question “is this mine, or what they expected of me?” returning uninvited
- a new longing for structure: routine, organised money, commitments that are kept

Question · What have I built so far that is truly mine? And what do I hold up only out of duty, or fear of disappointing someone?

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Question · If I removed from my life everything chosen by someone else, what would still be standing?

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The gesture of this door. Make an inventory in two columns: *what I chose* and *what I inherited without choosing*. Pick one item from the second column to return, renegotiate or truly take on as your own over the next four weeks.

4 · THE SECOND GREAT DOOR

# 40: the Rebel comes face to face

*The window that suddenly will not open, and the urge to break the glass.*

Between 38 and 44, depending on your generation, the Rebel reaches the point opposite to where it stood when you were born. The image is a tidy house where, on an ordinary morning, the air turns stale. Everything works, and still there is no air. The Rebel does not ask whether life is right: it asks whether it is still *alive*.

The term “midlife crisis” was coined by the psychoanalyst Elliott Jaques in 1965. Since then, research has added important nuance: large well-being studies, such as those by David Blanchflower and Andrew Oswald, find a U-shaped curve, with a dip in life satisfaction in the 40s and a rise afterwards. Other researchers show that dramatic rupture is not the rule. What seems universal is the review, not the catastrophe.

## Signs that this door is open

- restlessness without an object: wanting to change everything without knowing exactly what
- a body that starts sending warnings, and a new awareness that time is finite
- desires kept for years coming back with force: to study, travel, create, leave, begin again
- impatience with roles that once felt natural

Question · What in my life has grown too small? What is still true and deserves to be protected through the change?

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Question · Which part of me did I lock away to fit into the life I built?

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The gesture of this door. Open a window before knocking down a wall. Choose one experiment in freedom with a time limit (a course, a short trip, a side project, a postponed conversation) and live it for ninety days before making irreversible decisions.

## 5 · THE THIRD GREAT DOOR

# 50: the Wounded Healer returns

*The scar that, touched so many times, became a map.*

Around the age of 50, the Wounded Healer completes its first full circle around your chart. It is the character of pain that becomes knowledge: the wound that never fully closed, but taught you to recognise the same pain in others. When it returns, the old wound often reappears, not to knock you down again, but to ask what you learned from it.

Erikson called the mature stage of adult life the time of generativity: the wish to care for what will remain, to teach, to leave something for those who come next. In INTEOR, this is the door where your story stops being only yours and begins to serve.

### Signs that this door is open

- an old pain returning with a different texture: less despair, more understanding
- younger people seeking your advice on exactly what hurt you most
- a wish to teach, write, mentor, pass something on
- less patience for pretending you do not know what you know

Question · What is my oldest wound? What did it teach me that I would not have learned any other way?

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Question · Who might my story help, if I had the courage to tell it?

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The gesture of this door. Write a letter to yourself at the age the wound happened. Tell that younger you what you know today. Then choose one person to whom you can offer this knowledge, expecting nothing in return.

## 6 · THE ROOT

# The age your family has already lived

*Sometimes a door weighs because someone in the family got stuck in it.*

Anne Ancelin Schützenberger, a French psychotherapist and pioneer of psychogenealogy, noticed in her practice that many people fell ill, separated or lost everything at ages or on dates that echoed defining events in their family. She called this the anniversary syndrome. It is a clinical observation, not a scientific law, but it opens a powerful question.

When you reach the age at which your mother was widowed, your father went bankrupt, your grandmother emigrated or lost a child, something in you may recognise the place, like walking into a room where something once happened. It is not fate: it is memory. And what is remembered consciously loses its power to repeat.

Question · What happened to my mother, my father or my grandparents at the age I am now?

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Question · At what age did someone in my family “stop” (give up, fall ill, go silent, leave)? How do I feel as I approach that age?

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*I see what happened to you at this age. I honour it. And I walk through this door  
in my own way.*

7 · EXERCISE

# Your timeline

*Looking back to recognise your own rhythm.*

Fill in what you remember near each age. It does not need to be exact: a change of school, a first loss, a move, a job, a break-up, an illness, a discovery. Then look for repetitions: the same theme returning every seven years, every twelve, at the great doors.

| Age      | What happened | What changed in me |
|----------|---------------|--------------------|
| 7        |               |                    |
| 12       |               |                    |
| 14 to 15 |               |                    |
| 18 to 19 |               |                    |
| 21 to 22 |               |                    |
| 24       |               |                    |
| 29 to 30 |               |                    |
| 36 to 37 |               |                    |
| 38 to 44 |               |                    |
| 48       |               |                    |
| 50 to 51 |               |                    |
| 56 to 60 |               |                    |

*Tip: print this page. Leave room; some memories only arrive days later.*

## 8 · THE RITUAL

# The crossing ritual

*Every door has three parts: this side, the threshold and the other side.*

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In 1909, the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep showed that, across very different cultures, rites of passage follow the same three phases: separation, threshold and incorporation. Older cultures marked these crossings with ceremony. Modern life leaves us to cross alone and without ritual, which is why so many doors feel like crises. Here is a simple ritual in three movements, for anyone standing at one of the doors in this guide, or approaching it.

## 1 · Separation (one week)

Choose a fixed place and a fixed hour. For seven days, write about what is ending: roles, beliefs, relationships, versions of you. On the last day, choose an object that represents this season and put it away with respect, out of sight.

## 2 · Threshold (as long as it takes)

This is the doorframe: you have left and not yet arrived. The temptation is to fill the emptiness with hurried decisions. Instead, practise the discipline of waiting: a daily walk without headphones, three long breaths before every important decision, and one question each night: *what do I not know yet?*

## 3 · Incorporation (one day)

When something new becomes clear, mark the arrival: a meal prepared with care, a new piece of clothing, a letter to yourself seven years from now. Say out loud: *"I have crossed. I carry with me what I learned. I enter."*

## 9 · THE NEXT STEP

# When you want to know which door you are in

The ages in this guide are averages. In your chart, each door has its own date, opens in a specific room of your house and speaks with the characters who live there. It is the difference between knowing that 29 tends to be intense and understanding why your 29 shook your money, or your love life, or your family.

In the INTEOR Method, the ages are calculated from your chart and crossed with your family story and with practices of body and ritual. Everything is delivered in writing and as a recorded audio, in your own time, with no live session.

- Complete Map. The whole house, with the *clock of your life*: the exact ages at which each theme tends to move in your chart, looking back and looking ahead.
- Area Map. One area of your life opened drawer by drawer, with the age markers that touch its two rooms.
- The House Guide. The dictionary of rooms, signs and characters, including the full page of age markers.
- Questions. For one urgent question right now: a Tarot or Lenormand reading for one or three questions, with audio and a three-day exercise.

carolinischmidt.com · Consultations

If you are walking through one of these doors right now, tell me which one. That is the first line of your reading.

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*With care,*

Carolini Schmidt  
INTEOR Method

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*The soul is the territory; the method is the compass.*