

*Astrological
Choices -
A Potpourri*

**By
Marilyn J. Muir**

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Published by: Marilyn J. Muir



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My work is dedicated to my personal giants, upon whose shoulders I stand:

Margaret Baker, Teacher

Rev. Pearl Fernandez

Rev. Kathryn (Roz) Hall

Rev. Harriett Smiley

Rev. Kay Stillman

Rev. Pearl van Aalst

Thank you to the authors of numerous books who have helped me learn my craft.

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through workshops and living examples, and through thousands of
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Astrological Choices – A Potpourri

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You will find a couple of the chapters in this book in others of my books as well, particularly background material because the concepts apply to other astrological applications. I cannot depend on a reader encountering the material in a separate book, so some repetition of concept is necessary for clarity within each book. Hopefully I did enough but not too much.

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Introduction to Astrological Choices – A Potpourri

Astrology is a very rich, broad-based study of human experience. There is so much to study, to learn, to practice and to experience that a lifetime of involvement would not be long enough. Similar to doctors, scientists or lawyers who have so much to study and incorporate, astrologers tend to become specialists. An astrologer may be very good at one application. But due to the living of life, time and effort requirements or lack of interest, they might just not get involved in other applications. Other astrologers study a wider scope of material for the purpose of teaching or researching. That is the path I have chosen to pursue. Thus, I do know how daunting the task is of trying to learn everything there is to know astrologically. While I am making progress, I am still in school. I know of no one person who has had the opportunity to learn all of it and neither have I. As a budding astrologer, each student has a smorgasbord of opportunity to learn and to develop – there are lots of choices.

As the student gets deeper into their practice of astrology, they will discover that they have been making choices, possibly unconscious and uninformed, which could affect their studies, their practice and their readings. Perhaps if they had been aware of such choices before the fact, they may have chosen differently. Not to worry. Becoming aware of possibility will not hurt anyone because ignorance is never our friend. It is better to know than not to know. Since we are creatures of habit, it would take only a couple of days of growing pains to correct any choices with which a student may be dissatisfied. It is as simple as changing a habit... consciously do the new trick a few times and it will become a new, but at least informed and consciously chosen habit.

I thought it would be useful to examine the unconscious choices made astrologically, so I wrote a series of articles to address each issue individually. I initially thought that there were only a few topics. As I wrote more articles than planned, it seemed to me that the information I was generating could be particularly valuable as a complete collection for the beginning student. A student could make conscious choices earlier in their development, plus know of those choices that had been made for them by the thousands of astrologers who preceded them. If the student is more advanced in study, the information in this book can point out those unconscious choices previously made, giving each the opportunity to make whatever changes seem fit or at least make conscious adjustments for such pre-conditioning.

This book is a little different from the usual astrology textbook because it has to do with educating the student about the prior conditioning inherent in the centuries of astrological lore and on the myriad of choices in front of them as they choose which skills to develop. My intention is to explain and clarify some of those choices so the student can get the most mileage from the development of their astrological skills. This book is a compendium of those astrological choices that should be made consciously and is given subject by subject pretty much as they were written as individual articles. There is a bit of redundancy (not much), as each article was a stand-alone piece and I could not make assumptions that readers had access to all the articles.

- ✓ *Section One* is about astrology in general from a rich historical overview as to how it developed. Why? Such history has completely conditioned our current astrological lore. Thousands of astrologers made choices down through the centuries, choices that need to be visible so you understand your own unconscious conditioning.
- ✓ *Section Two* is about the who, the what and the why of astrological studies. What do *you* want for yourself? What do *you* hope to accomplish? Who should *you* go to for a reading? What kind of a reader do *you* want to be? What can be charted? Can *you* read it all?
- ✓ *Section Three* is about the up-front choices relative to systems and techniques, what to study and when, and is a triage of the more significant choices.
- ✓ *Section Four* looks into methods, techniques and applications to further the student's personal reading skills and choices.

Section One

The History and the Lore of Astrology

This section is about astrology in general from an historical overview, the development of its rich history. Why? Such history has conditioned our current astrological conclusions. Thousands of astrologers made choices down through the centuries, choices that need to be visible so you can understand your own unconscious conditioning.

- ✓ Chapter 1 - Astrology - Look Back to See the Future
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Astrology – Look Back to See the Future

Astrology has been around for thousands of years. Some of the earliest records and artifacts are astrological / astronomical in nature because those who practiced those crafts, the science and the art of interpretation, used both simultaneously. Once codified, the practitioners observed, measured, calculated, and kept copious and careful records. Astrology, as an art, interpreted and applied the ‘facts’ that had been generated by the science element of their work. Our early wise men were both scientists and artists. They could measure and ferret out the details and then apply that knowledge to the human condition and experience.

Ancient man emerged thousands of years ago in primitive circumstances and survival was the name of his game. Over the intervening centuries, mankind developed personal groupings, families, clans, societies, systems of beliefs, and relationships with their surroundings. They also developed a calendar that went beyond the simple recording of seasons into a rich body of information about the ongoing effects of time and seasons. Before writing became a reality, all information was handed down verbally, memorized by succeeding generations who added their personal findings to the whole body of knowledge. Ancient drawings and artifacts are the oldest recorded knowledge. From my study, first came pictograms (drawings or picture records), and then came writing.

According to Winston Churchill, “The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you can see.” Carl Sagan and many other really intelligent humans thought along similar lines. Astrology really looks backward to see what the ancients believed, because they appear to be quite literal in their observation and interpretation. One of my favorite archeological records for this literal observation is the photo and diagrams of an Akkadian seal¹ from the third millennium B.C. as depicted in *The Twelfth Planet* by Zecharia Sitchin. Before you disregard my controversial source (I happen to like Sitchin’s work), know that the seal itself is real and at one time was housed at the Vorderasiatische Abteilung of the State Museum in East Berlin where it was catalogued VA/243. This seal has also been validated in other archeological writings as well.



2. Cylinder seal VA 243. Museum ...
researchgate.net

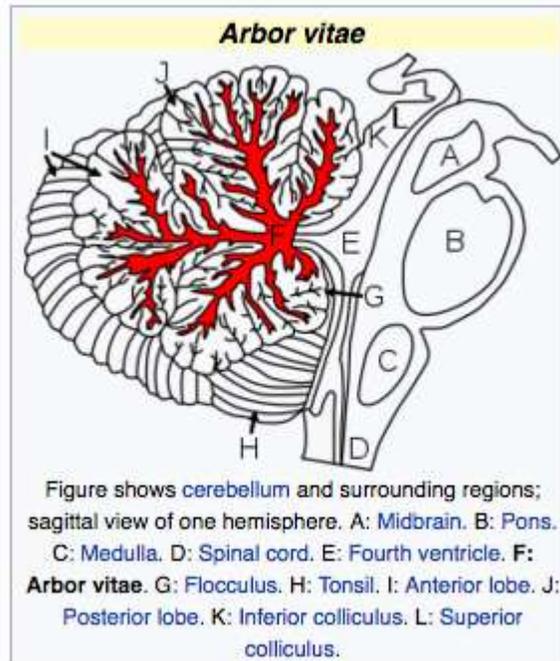
This is amazing proof that the ancients recognized the circular pattern and circular bodies. While explained recently by archeologists as a more celestial map of the night sky, to my mind and to Sitchin's interpretation, this seal is literally a drawing of our existing solar system. The much-larger, circular, star-like body is surrounded by ten circular bodies, each in reasonable proportion to their actual size as the planets surrounding Sol, our shining star of a Sun. Ten bodies? Yes, that count does include controversial Pluto. Two bodies are shown close together as a planet with a companion, perhaps our Earth and our satellite, the Moon. That very old record shows that the earliest view of our solar system was circular. The accepted flat earth concept must have come later in human development, and has been corrected *back* to the circular pattern by more modern practitioners. Were we getting wiser as we progressed?

The concept of third millennia BCE round planets and the Sun, our satellite, and the arrangement lends itself to the knowledge of a circular motion of galactic travel. Book pages 215-16 are [the identified sky versions](#), remarkably similar. Any slight differences could be due to the original rendering of a specific date or sky pattern. The ancients knew the Sun was in the center, the earth was round not flat, and that there were planets not visible to the naked eye. Just how did they know that?

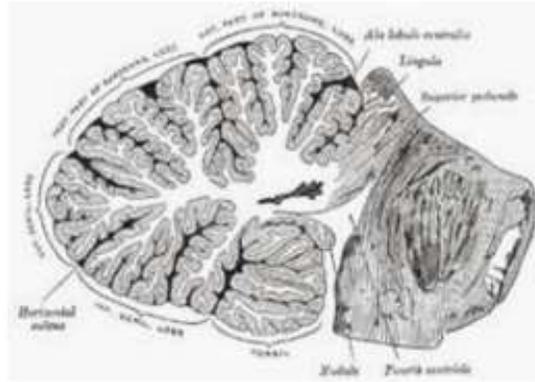
Another good verification of an ancient metaphysical doctrine not related to astrology/astronomy is that of the Tree of Life, an important concept of the ancients, appearing extensively in the Hebrew Kabbalah. It is so mystical, so "out there" for the literal-minded, that it is disputed and discarded as fallacy. Such a tree exists within the body of man and it is in the anatomy books of medical students everywhere. The way I learned about this was unusual.

For many years, I led a healing circle, a dedicated group of people who would meet weekly to join together in prayer for the betterment of a person or persons. Meditative in nature, we would join in common silence and meditation for the good of those in the group and for those who asked for our assistance. Space and time do not mean anything in such experiences unless you allow your concrete, reasoning mind to interfere in the process. Deep in meditation, I saw the Tree of Life in my mind's eye and just knew I had to find an anatomy book once the circle was complete. Sure enough, the Tree of Life exists once within mankind and twice in womankind.

At the base of the brain in the cerebellum, the arbor vitae or “tree of life” is amazingly visible and exists within both men and women².



Additionally, in women, the mouth of the cervix, the gateway to the womb of life, when shown in cross-section, clearly illustrates the tree of life itself and is part of the dictionary definition of arbor vitea³.



Arbor vitae (anatomy) - Wikipedia
en.wikipedia.org

The Tree of Life is not historical philosophy or myth - the Tree of Life is reality. Do you think the ancients might have been smarter than our modern society with our burgeoning and supposedly superior intellect gives them credit for? Ha!

As I mentioned, Carl Sagan believed much the same as Winston Churchill, in that you study the past to understand the future. Others sharing a similar mindset in this regard included American patriot Patrick Henry, the Roman emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius, and from our more modern era, Victor Hugo. Each voiced a similar concept but used their own words. Looking back in order to look forward is what astrologers do. We have a rich history of knowledge handed down to us through centuries and millennia of the observations of antiquity - verbally, through pictograms, through the development of writing, and eventually through scientific measurement and observation.

Ancient man needed everything that was usable just to survive. Knowledge without application serves no man, particularly primitive man who needed every type of assistance he could manage to survive and to develop. Sure, we can learn things, but those “things” should answer the common need and serve an ongoing purpose. Otherwise, “facts” are cold, unfriendly page notes. Humanity seeks understanding through the

development of that information. Understanding is achieved through experience and observation. Astrologers accepted the observations of our predecessors, developed a body of information based on ongoing personal experience, recorded those findings by whatever means were available to them, then passed on the information from generation to generation. The science survived and the interpretation survived as a single unit for millennia.

Separation did not occur until the emerging sciences separated themselves from the philosophy that had accompanied them through the preceding ages. This is typical of the child denying its parent. Intellectual sophistication developed and the thought was that it was smarter or better than instinct and history. While giving credit to master astronomers, scientists, and physicians in our history, intellect separated itself from the application to human experience of those same people and we lost something in the process. Astrologers did not forget. We just kept passing the information to succeeding generations, just as we do today. Welcome to the world of astrology.

We look backward so we can see our future more clearly. All parts of knowledge are needed. Separation is not conducive to the unity needed to achieve wisdom. We have always needed the scientific and the rational, but we have also needed the humanity - not just what, but why. Mind without heart is a cold thing. Heart without mind can play the victim easily. The marriage of mind with heart is true unity. Both are necessary, both have value, and together they achieve balance. Looking backward helps us understand our present and prepare for our future.

¹*Google Akkadian seal images*

¹*Sumerian cylinder seal solar system*

²[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbor_vitae_\(anatomy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbor_vitae_(anatomy))

³

https://www.google.com/search?q=uteris+arbor+vitae&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjh1JqbneDuAhWQKIMKHVCrC4gQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=uteris+arbor+vitae&gs_lcp=CgNpbWcQAzIECCM QJ1CQoQFYoqcBYPnLAWgAcAB4AIABZ4gBpwGSAQMxLjGYAQ CgAQQgAQtd3Mtd2l6LWltZ8ABAQ&scient=img&ei=p0skYKHIJp DVzALQ1q7ACA&bih=632&biw=1024

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The Universe as a Map of a Personal Journey – Fate or Free Will?

Throughout my writings on what astrology is, I discuss the cycles of the cosmos, particularly those of our solar system, and the history of primitive to modern man through their ongoing study of the night sky. As discussed, the passage of a body of information from teacher to student has continued down through the ages. The fact is that the *universe itself is a gigantic map*. According to our scientists, astronomers and physicists, creation itself is an incredible study in mathematics with a potentially infinite set of cycles. Whether we look at our bodies or our experiences, or study the heavens, these cycles surround us, permeate our lives and wrap us in rhythms and sequences, with or without our conscious knowledge. Ancient and modern man studied these cycles and derived meaning from them.

There are those who count and measure, plot and plan, construct tables and statistics, and there are those who say, “But what does it mean in terms of physical and human experience?” We use the map-like features of the universe to develop the scope and variety of measurable experience, constantly expanding our skills, the technology and the knowledge just as our cosmos is continually expanding. While commendable, it has little use or application to the common man living out his common life. Most of us will never strap ourselves on the side of a monster rocket and explore outer space. Most of us would thrill at the living vision of a galaxy or the wondrous picture of our Earth hanging in a dark sky, but it is not likely that we will personally experience this. Most of us must be satisfied with photos and reports of one kind or another and are jointly thrilled that humanity is making baby steps into the cosmos. As a matter of experience, little of that has direct application into our personal lives. Humanity continually seeks identification with its environment, experience and explorations. The cry from humans is, “What does it mean to me and my life?” Enter astrology!

A map suggests a journey... The patterns of the universe are splashed across our night sky visible to all, the evening movie of primitive man. Once night fell and the world closed in to a tiny perspective, that heavenly movie *was* the world to its viewers. Remember, this was before we had light pollution. In the passage of time, man recognized movement, patterns, and cycles. He saw patterns that helped him determine seasons and times of growth, harvest and disintegration. He saw symbolism and stories that helped him live his life as successfully as possible. He felt he was not alone, that the heavens understood his journey even if he struggled, and that It kept watch over him. Season by season the sky map of the night sky shifted continually like a moving picture.

Man had a map that moved or progressed. He could see the moving pictures of his heroes, his stories. He developed an anchor that linked what he saw in the night sky to his personal experience. A map that moves suggests a journey and not a single static experience. Not only did the universe provide a moment's snapshot, but that snapshot actually possessed movement. A moment of creation became a journey that over time and observation could be recognized and applied as human experience. Man did observe and learn, and he passed that information down through the generations. What we now know as astrology formed and eventually made its way to us. The snapshot is the natal chart. The natural movement provides the map for the continuing journey. For our modern skies, look at free cosmic maps on <http://www.skymaponline.net/> For our earthly journey, look at the free Mother Earth maps: <https://earth.google.com/>

Much of what you hear about astrology is of the pop culture variety - sun-sign astrology. I am not denigrating the writings or the methods used. I have done them myself over the years. Horoscopes are very popular and fun to read, occasionally personally astounding. However, you and I must admit it is a generic approach. It has served a wonderful purpose just by being popular. Most people know their sun signs and those of their family and friends. It is a great conversation point. A very high percentage of people will read their generic sun-sign columns on a weekly or even daily basis. Because your birth provides a map of a moment that is truly personal and specific to your life, your sky map should be personally specific, not generic. If it is to portray a map of a journey through life, it must have motion and meaning that is specific to the living of that life, a map not only of your moment of embodiment, but also of your journey... very personally specific.

The journey phase of such a star map is called progressions. You do not forever remain a newborn infant, crying its first cry after its first indrawn breath. You do not live that moment continually for however many years you are alive. You grow and become, experience and are changed by that experience. You hopefully will progress (and yes, I personally have witnessed regression). The sky pattern is not a single moment in perpetuity. The sky and your life are in constant motion. The snapshot that is birth is in reality the very first frame of a motion picture called your life or your personal journey. The moving sky provides the changing diagram of your life through its natural cycles.

A Map Does Not Make Free Will Choices A map is just that - a diagram. When singular, it is a map of a single, static thing. To become multiple (as the map of a lifetime), it must show a series, a motion, and a journey. The study of astrology itself is a study of cycles. Cycles in the heavens do what cycles do everywhere even here on Earth, they tend to be somewhat circular in nature, locked in step to the natural rhythm of whatever is being mapped. That could include a human gestation cycle, the life cycle of trees or a stock market ticker-tape progression. All that and more are applications of the concept of a cycle. Astronomers map those cycles in their ever-increasing study of the universe and map their structures and patterns in star catalogs and books of planetary travel called ephemerides.

These heavenly patterns are essentially circular, repeating, and rarely changing in the brief moment we call a human lifetime. They are observable in their cycles and measurable. Astrologically, they are a sky map of a journey of an object or pattern initiated at a particular moment in time. A map, even that of heavenly bodies such as a sky map, does not make free will choices for itself or for its application in our lives any more than a road map dictates which route will be driven. A sky map just graphs the progress of energy or a moment in time indicated in the heavens and applied as a pattern for human experience. Again, a map of a locked-in cycle does not have the capability of free will or the facility of choice. A map just measures and diagrams a moment in time and the natural cycle of movement thereafter.

The body of information I mentioned was handed down through the generations. It is a collection of observations, much of it thousands of years or at least centuries old, added to by hundreds of thousands of continuing observations as history progressed. Since the common man did not read, write or have the opportunity to study, it was the only game in town until just recently in our history. Collectively, it was both an assembly of measurable data (cycle, position, etc.) plus a body of

meanings for that data and motion - so it was both astronomical and astrological in nature. The measure (the science) and its meaning (the interpretation, an art) were recorded and treated as a single thing. If the left hand of a body does not believe in the right hand of that same body, such disbelief has nothing to do with whether or not the right hand exists. Such a lack of recognition could be a serious handicap to the usefulness of the whole, but both hands exist regardless of recognition or the lack of it.

- ✓ The heavens are a map, not only of the universe itself, but in astrological application, it is the universe as human experience, the “Universe-R-us”.
- ✓ The heavens are not static. They demonstrate journeys of experience.
- ✓ The universal map moves and allows itself to be a diagram of that changing experience. It is important at this stage and viewpoint that since the whole of the Cosmos is in circular motion with ever-enlarging circles, the actual motion is spiral in experience. It is not the same circle repeated indefinitely. They are expanding circles encompassing new territory and experience.
- ✓ A map of cycles diagrams the various parts of that cycle, but does not have the capacity of free will choice in that motion or diagram.
- ✓ As above, so below. The birth map diagrams the specific of a moment, but is continual in motion to show the various cycles and growth of that moment. It is what I am calling the journey of whatever was born in that moment of time (think spiral).
- ✓ This can all be observed, recorded and defined. It is an ongoing study of that birth and subsequent development. It is a map which diagrams life itself. But it is a map only and not an arbitrary maker of decisions.
- ✓ Astrology is a study of energy, patterns and cycles applied to our personal experience. New maps are possible for the “whenever” that we choose.

Note: As I completed this manuscript, I encountered an article I liked in the AFA “*Today's Astrologer*”, AFA Vol 43, No. 2, Feb 1981, pg 53-57, “Your Horoscope is Your Own Doing” by Birtha Kirk, MAFA. This single passage seemed to fit what I was saying:

" Your horoscope is your own doing...
From the point of view of reincarnation
your horoscope can be regarded as the sum of your past.
It can also be seen as a sum of possibilities
to be disposed during your lifetime.
In other words, when the astrologer charts a life pattern
right from birth, he doesn't chart the use of your free will.
At the most he charts how your free will has been used."

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Historical Record of Astrology – Ancient Relics Dated Back 25,000 Years and More

When you begin to study astrology, you are faced with an avalanche - myriad subjects and possibilities, the study of which can seem very daunting. Astrology is a massive body of information that has been handed down for millennia. As mentioned, it was initially verbal and eventually codified and written as human skills advanced. Or is that statement entirely true?

I have long been aware of ancient cave drawings in France that indicate knowledge of the lunar cycle. I could not recall exactly how old these drawings were thought to be, so I went online to date them. Imagine my delight when I was supplied with new website sources I had never previously seen thanks to our constant and burgeoning internet information flow, the world's largest library. I found support for ancient lunar calendar knowledge through other archeological artifacts as well. You can do this yourself simply by putting "lunar calendar drawings" into your browser search box and then visit those web pages that seem to be archeological or primitive relic-oriented. I hit pay dirt on my first two tries. Online encyclopedic sources are marvelous for such information. Just be discerning in your choice of sources.

Records of a written language from Mesopotamia circa 3200 BCE is the usual example given for mankind's origination of a fully codified writing system. As archeology expands its search worldwide, the validity of that claim may be in question. Records are continually being unearthed around the world, some in countries such as China (again around 3200 BCE) that have not been accessible until recently. Unfortunately, few records have withstood the ravages of time and some are still buried awaiting discovery. Counting and pictographs (picture symbols) predate a written language, and it is difficult to categorize some of these finds as language or even pre-language.

For this article, I am looking to the bone, tortoise-shell, hillside carvings and cave drawings mentioned (historical relics) that are variously dated in the range from 35,000 to 18,000 years old. Can you imagine? Those cave drawings of horses and a 29-day lunar cycle in Chauvet, France¹ are potentially 35,000 to 18,000 years old. Sources and dating vary as dating historical objects is difficult and can involve irreparable damage.

The amazing Ishango Bone² from the Congo area of Africa is thought to be a mathematical device from 25,000 to 20,000 BCE.

The Blanchard Bone³ (plaque) appears to be a meandering two-month lunar calendar and comes from the Dordogne, France region. It is dated to 32,000 to 25,000 BCE.

The Isturitz Baton⁴ (a deer antler) comes from the region of Isturitz, France and is dated 25,000 to 20,000 BCE. The markings on the baton seem to represent both a four-month and a five-month lunar calendar.

These are a few of the relics that have been found. These ancient relics are so involved, they go beyond the simple 29-day lunar cycle and represented both calendars and mathematical recordings of a primitive sort. There is so much speculation here. Precise dating and interpretation are difficult as this is *not* writing per se, but it is a form of record-keeping and much is based on the lunar cycle. Go online and see the history of these archeological treasures.

Original astrology/astronomy must have been primarily lunar-based, because that was the only large body of potential information that was visible to ancient man. Yes, they could clearly see the Sun and the solar cycles seemed to have evoked such places as Glastonbury and others because such sites clearly mark major solar cycles as well as other celestial cycles. But the Sun itself is so intensely bright during daylight hours that little else is visible with the exception of the monthly lunar post-crescent passage and beyond, and the limited dawn and twilight visibility of the morning and evening stars, Venus and Mercury. Occasionally other solar system bodies, such as Jupiter, become visible. Most measurements, observations and eventual delineations came from the night sky after the bright object called the Sun exited the sky for the evening and permitted human observation. To our knowledge, ancient man could only see the planets up to and including Saturn. Those further out were not visible to the naked eye and were, therefore, unknown... and yet we have a diagram on an Akkadian seal... Wonder how such primitive people did that?

The ancients were able to view, observe, measure, and develop theories, by again primarily using the night sky and the lunar patterns. For example, the ancients were able to see the planet Venus as a Morning or an Evening Star at dawn or twilight and developed meanings for their observations. As observed, Venus might lead or follow the rising Sun over the horizon, or lead or follow the setting Sun under the horizon. The Sun would represent the life-giving force, the leader, the patriarch, the king, father figure to the Moon's queen mother, the matriarch. Venus could be seen as the bringer of the light (rising before the Sun) or the follower of that light (setting after the Sun). The old word for the light bringer Venus was Lucifer, which is modernly defined as the devil. Similar observations of Mercury or other occasionally visible daytime body viewings can also be seen nearby the rising or setting sun but are not as frequent or as bright.

There is currently a group of highly educated, professional astrologers researching the old records and charts looking for buried treasure and seeking to understand the original concepts that have been passed down through the ages. During the telling and retelling of the old stories over millennia, many changes occurred. The researchers are sifting through the smorgasbörd of astrological lore to find kernels of truth. Their continuing search will uncover, sort, discern, eliminate or verify, find new choices and expand the astrological information base for all astrologers. Stay open for clarification.

Lacking any viable proof, my own thoughts are that for our ancestors, first there was observation of seasonal changes leading to a lunar calendar. That eventually led to observations of the effect on human experience that produced both astronomy and astrology. Initially the two comprised one practice but have drifted apart with the rise of science and technology. However, you cannot ignore that the two practices have common roots. Ancient practitioners were both astronomers and astrologers as were many of our most revered scientists and astronomers over the centuries. Astronomy measures and astrology interprets. They are the marriage of science and art, but were recently divorced and with strong personal opinions! As an astrologer, I use both so they are inseparable to me. Our rich human observational history facilitates our use of astrology.

**BCE dating runs from billions to zero year, backwards from the modern dating procedure which is one year counting forward from that zero point.*

¹ <https://smithsonianmag.com/history/journey-oldest-cave-paintings-world-180957685/www>

² <https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=2>

³ <https://what-when-how.com/ancient-astronomy/abri-blanchard-bone/>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isturitz_and_Oxocelhaya_caves

see The History of Writing (excellent)

http://realhistoryww.com/world_history/ancient/Misc/Writing/The_first_ancient_writing.htm

see Cave Painting

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_painting

Recent 38,000 year old cave art found

<http://www.ibtimes.com/38000-year-old-cave-art-found-limestone-slab-french-cave-sheds-light-early-human-life-2482737>

Astrological Lore, Its Relevance and Practitioners

As mentioned, astrology is an amazing body of information handed down through numerous generations for literally thousands of years. Through several millennia, astronomy (the measurement) and astrology (the interpretation) were one body of information. What started as a combination, with the two sciences treated as one, lasted until fairly recently (the last 300 years or so). Recent history shows the physical sciences began their codification and separated from those elements of their origin that were more speculative in nature: objectivity separating itself from subjectivity. Astrology was commonly practiced in other scientific fields beyond the mere measurements of astronomy as well. A few examples should illustrate some of these broad applications.

- ✓ Astrology was an important tool for the medical profession and a doctor who did not know astrology was thought to be lacking, perhaps unworthy of the title.
- ✓ Mythology is the history of mankind told as a story and parable. Astrologers fully used this mythological symbolism and metaphor to illustrate their readings. Carl Jung, the eminent psychiatrist/psychologist thought that astrology was the psychology of the ancients.
- ✓ Agriculture still relies on lunar and solar cycles. Almanacs from some of the earliest records depict the lunar cycle in some of the oldest human artifacts and cave drawings. U.S. Founding Father Benjamin Franklin himself published the highly regarded and widely used Poor Richard's Almanac, astrologically based, which is still published today.
- ✓ The courts and kings of countries from all over the world relied on their astrologers for counsel to their rulers and for the start and outcome of warfare. The astrological scholars of those days were expected to be right every time. That is particularly difficult to do unless your name is God. History illustrates that false counsel and error could and did lead to death. That would give you pause as an astrologer, would it not?

- ✓ Some countries and cultures revered their prophecies and predictions and others reviled them. Why? Do you suppose the ruling class and religious institutions might have feared the power of prophecy and the people who had the capability to predict the rise and fall of a king, a country, or a religious order? Such skill would give rise to questions of power and loyalty.

As with any human endeavor or practice, astrology has waxed and waned in interest and is continually subject to change and revision. What is suitable for one country, environment, climate, culture or philosophy might not be exactly suitable for another. For example, what worked for a waterfront culture might not work as well in the mountains. Once upon a time, these local forms of astrology were isolated to single locations. With the advent of world travel and the blending of world cultures, these once distinct practices have been merged. Over the centuries, there has been an abundance of potentially conflicting information. Sorting and triaging of measurements, techniques and interpretations was necessary.

Evolution requires a constant updating and revising of all fields of human endeavor and astrology is no exception. Science, astronomy, medicine, or law must grow and change or become a stagnant pool of old and useless information. The softer human subjects such as religion, philosophy, education, psychology and yes, astrology, must grow, change and develop as our planet and humanity grows, changes and develops. We cannot continually repeat the old teachings ad infinitum or stagnation and devolution could occur. Progress and change are necessary for growth and evolution. The universe itself is progressing, changing and moving constantly and we must keep up or be left behind in our understanding.

There are always tried and true principles at the core of any practice. There are principles that do not really change with time or experience, such as gravity. The Sun is believed to be a hot, large gaseous body that exerts gravitational control over our solar system. This principle contains a basic truism we rely upon whether we are looking back 1000 years, considering the present, or looking 1000 years in the future. Unless something specific happens to change our minds, that principle has proven to be a reasonably reliable belief worldwide.

Other word choices to describe the Sun might not be as universal as those few concepts. For example, if you are in a desert country, or on Earth's equator, your experience of the Sun will be different than that of an Eskimo. Your personal concepts and interpretations will be different as

well. Take that same understanding and apply it to any other human concept. Individual experience creates perceptions and we move forward in life based on our developing perceptions. That statement is true of an individual, a group of people, a continent, a world, or for all the subjects we could list.

It is important that, as astrologers, we recognize the compendium of human experience that is the body of astrological lore and exercise discernment and discretion as to what is appropriate and what is not appropriate to each experience and individual. It is important that, since life is continually changing and evolving, we as astrologers keep pace with the change and with the evolution in all phases of life. Each new experience, each change, each discovery, and each modification must be incorporated into that compendium we call astrology.

Astrological interpretation is subject to the skill of its practitioners. We must learn for ourselves what works and what does not. We must examine, develop and contribute to the overall body of knowledge. In short, we must expect the best from ourselves. We must respect the same in others and expect their best efforts in return. We must root out discrepancies, error, misuse or blatant dishonesty if we should ever encounter it in ourselves or in others. We are students, readers, researchers, teachers and guides. As such, we should always strive to act in the highest and best interest of those whose lives we touch. We must reach for this excellence not only for our individual clients, but also for the highest and best interest of our subject, astrology, and for those who will follow us down through the centuries. Each of us stands on the shoulders of giants, those astrologers and teachers who were part of our own education. We, in turn, should offer our own shoulders to lift the next cadre of astrologers even higher, if possible.

Skepticism is not new to astrology; it has been with us for the whole ride. Skeptics are not going to go away just because we want them to or because we are uncomfortable with them. Skepticism, when viewed objectively, can be positive and constructive and will keep us honest. Of course some skepticism can be very negative. It can be without foundation or just plain mean. There are always people out there who just love to rain on other people's parades. If you believe in what you say, in what you read, in what you study, or in your conclusions, be prepared to stand your ground. If you do not believe in your work or your study of that work, you can be an instant victim of those who deride what they do not know or understand. It is your lack of conviction that will work against you in that instance.

An opinion is just that. It is not automatic or ultimate knowledge. Those who have not studied may feel they are entitled to an opinion, as uninformed as it must be by their simple lack of knowledge of their subject. It does not matter what that subject is. Those who fancy themselves as scientists or scientific in principle or practice, can fall into that same category. If they are uninformed in the study of astrology, such “scientists” possess an uninformed opinion. A title or educational degree does not make you knowledgeable on every subject. If you have not taken the time to fairly study or to investigate and research properly, a degree or title only allows you the usual personal opinion, and not necessarily an expert opinion. If a self-proclaimed scientist forms an opinion without doing the investigative work, that is not science, it is common gossip.

As an individual, I am free to discuss whatever subject I choose. If I want to be taken seriously, it is always a good idea to identify my skills, experience and knowledge base for that specific subject if I expect to act as a skilled or credible advocate or detractor. As individuals, if we do not know, we could easily admit that we do not know. Do you know how difficult it is to come clean and admit something like that for most people? Humans have a built-in knee-jerk reaction to certain subjects. We all have them. *Or* they merely repeat or parrot what they have heard or read without any personal knowledge.

Astrologers are people. Astrology is a subject. Both develop over time, through trial and error. Some astrologers fizzle, some blossom, some get very full of themselves and start believing their own press and publicity, and some are humbled by the opportunity to help others or contribute to the body of information. How each individual develops and uses knowledge is a moment-to-moment choice and can get away from us if we are not paying attention.

Astrology as used for an individual reading will only be as good as the skill, motivation and attitude of the astrologer. The chart can be right or accurately cast and the reading can be wrong. It is dependent on personal skill and choice. Besides, it is much harder to predict than it seems. At times I have been very, very right, but I have also been just as wrong over the many years of my study and application. I would not have stuck with this study of 47+ years (1973) unless I saw a return on my investment of time and effort. However, I am still in school astrologically and will continue to be until I draw my last physical breath. So, as all of us do, I will win some and I will lose some.

- ✓ Where are you in all this?
- ✓ Are you excited about what you are learning?
- ✓ Are you excited about the self-help tool astrology can become for you?
- ✓ Are you excited to share what you are learning with others?
- ✓ Can you live with the fact that not everyone will be interested, will listen or will follow your interpretations?
- ✓ Can you keep a lid on your ego relative to identification with your successes?
- ✓ Can you learn that failure is part of learning and that at times it might seem like two steps forward and one step backwards? I call this the three-step cosmic dance.
- ✓ Can you develop the ability *not* to throw the baby out with the bathwater if you make an error? Keep what works and throw out what does not work or re-study it later.
- ✓ Can you learn that doubt or skepticism encountered at moments in your development should not defeat your overall goal?
- ✓ Can you revel in your successes and take your failures in stride?

If yes, hang on and enjoy the ride.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poor_Richard's_Almanack

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Moon-based Research, Sun-based Application

Here is another example of the astrological choices we consciously or unconsciously make or that others make for us in our ignorance. It is not difficult to know or understand how we make choices unconsciously. Most of us have experienced moments of knee-jerk reactions stemming from some old memory or trauma. We cannot say that they were conscious actions on our part because they stemmed from old conditioning stored in largely forgotten memories. Just how could others make choices for us of which we may be ignorant?

Humanity, as it exists at this moment, includes you and me along with every other person alive on the globe. That count includes the astronauts on the space station and every person airborne. The last time I looked it up, that was 7.8 billion (2020). The collective of humanity is a current rendition of a purportedly evolving species. (At times I wonder if that is true!) Some of what is in us as a species is hard-wired, such as physical survival, perpetuation of the species (think sex), and other self-preservation mechanisms. Much of this is referred to as our reptilian brain functions, of which we are largely unaware because they are automatic. We eat and drink. We seek shelter. We want to feel safe. We wear garments to replace the fur we lost or never had. This helps with the sensation of vulnerability. We like company. We collect “things”. We are territorial. All these and more unconscious motivations are related to instinctual survival and are hard-wired into our physical and psychological make-ups. Yes, these traits do get screwed up at moments or may motivate people to the exclusion of common sense, but they are natural to us all. We just do not think about them often.

Humanity is unconsciously conditioned by whatever our ancestors encountered or developed through our long evolution. What has been learned through the ages has become a part of our unconscious makeup. Most of this is inherent in our species, but is not necessarily conscious knowledge in an individual human. By analogy, as astrologers we are completely conditioned by the body of information from all over the world that has been developed over the centuries. We take this whole body of information as it exists and study what we know to be old teachings. Initially, this was orally transmitted and records are non-existent with the

exception of a few ancient relics. Some records were eventually codified and preserved through written documents. Much was researched by untold thousands of practicing astrologers. In modern times, new theories and applications were developed and we absorb those as well, as much as our poor brains can encounter, retain and apply. We do that with both good stuff and bad stuff because we do not necessarily know that the information is one or the other. Unfortunately, humans do not automatically have or always practice powers of discernment.

Just as the mass of humanity has been influenced and educated by huge amounts of historical experience and theory, astrology has been influenced and knowledge has advanced by astrological history and theory. As students, we earnestly commit it all to memory. Then we forget that we ever knew it until we need it. Magically, it appears in our consciousness when the need or application arises. Consciously we may forget that, on an unconscious level, whatever we encountered has been stored in our vast memory banks. When we need a piece of information, we somehow retrieve it instinctively or perhaps through triggers provided by an individual star map.

I have briefly written about this oddity in astrological lore in other articles, but it just struck me this morning that such an ancient information source does affect our *astrological choices* in a very unsuspected way. This is my personal take on what I think happened. My personal take is not scientific, but it is just the opinion I happen to have.

The ancients observed the skies around planet Earth and made observations that were perhaps initially more calendar-related. The cycles that affected the Earth profoundly affected their survival. They were in tune with nature and eventually realized that the sky patterns repeated themselves seasonally and could be used as markers. Seasonal observations refined themselves as shorter-term cycles were incorporated. The lunar cycle was easy to see, measure and codify so carvings of it showed up on some of our earliest relics. Observation of cyclic activity of all sorts developed along with application to human experience. Astrology became a mostly oral tradition, recorded in a rudimentary fashion on physical objects, today's relics. Eventually our knowledge became a written body of information.

I have described the overall effect of the developing body of information that came to be known as astrology. However, there is an interesting underlying effect that I have encountered only in a few references of my long years of studying astrology. Ancient man studied the night sky for the most part. Why? To reprise earlier information, the Sun was so bright

during daylight hours that it made observation of other objects or patterns difficult if not impossible. For the most part, the night sky was what ancient man studied. The Sun, for its part, was very predictable. The Sun rose every morning and set every evening. It was not only visible, but it was dominant during the day and eliminated visibility of most other cosmic objects except the continually changing Moon and an occasional planet. Occasionally rain, fog or blizzard obscured direct vision, but the effect of the Sun's light was observed throughout the day. A rainy day was still far brighter than most nights.

Motion of the rising Sun set the calendar as it moved through the seasons, further north at the summer solstice, further south at the winter solstice, and directly on the center horizon point during the spring and autumn equinoxes. Measurement of the various stone circles such as Glastonbury¹ shows that our ancestors could precisely measure such solar phenomenon. These were the seasonal markers previously mentioned (spring, summer, autumn, and winter) that helped ancient man with his physical survival, migration patterns, planting, hunting, celebrations and rituals. Other than that, the night sky was what could be observed for greater detail. Once the Sun descended below the horizon at dusk, the universe suddenly became crystal clear (light on dark) until the dawn announced the arrival of the Sun the next day.

Yes, hazily at dawn and dusk, we might be able to see Venus or Mercury as Morning or Evening Stars for a few minutes and perhaps we might occasionally see Jupiter, which is quite bright at times. Mars or Saturn was far more difficult to spot and was dim by comparison (smaller or farther out). Jupiter might have looked like an interloper because it was not part of the usual pattern. If that is true, Jupiter might have been seen as a challenger to the supremacy of the Sun. The Sun would eventually win that imagined battle because Jupiter, if visible, would not stay visible near the Sun for long. This occasional possibility would have presented an interesting story in itself, and that story was a human description of an ongoing physical vision.

Logically, the huge body of astrological information that developed over the millennia of our existence had to primarily be based on observation of the night sky. Much of the recording of data was devoted to the lunar patterns, which is the largest and closest body to us. The Moon is our Cosmic Mom, counterpart to Cosmic Dad, the Sun. Because of the peculiarities of size and distance, they appear to be a matched pair both visually and in the ability to shed substantial light on our world. Continually changing, the feminine Moon returned now and again to her husband, the Sun. This was the celestial pair whose repetition of a 29-day

reunion was seen as the celestial marriage. The Moon's light diminished as she shyly (dimming light) approached her husband, the Sun. He was supreme in that moment of conception, overwhelming her with his light-giving rays, the planting of a new seed. In about two days, the Moon again became visible as a crescent near the horizon and as a steadily enlarging body. She was thought to be pregnant with life until she released that treasure at what we call Full Moon, that which had been conceived at the prior union (New Moon). Then Mom gradually diminished in size as she prepared for her next encounter with her husband, the Sun. The Sun was the planter of the seed and the Moon was the womb and carrier for that seed. Many old rituals were based around this celestial marriage.

Ancient astrologers were few and far between and attended to the needs of the state and its leader as society developed. As national treasures, astrologers were bound to their service. While not technically prisoners, they were not allowed to stray too far. So astrologers were quite isolated in their studies and practice. In addition, astrologers had better be right or their lives could be forfeit. The kings and regents had full power and control over everything, including life and death. While it might not be a good idea to kill your only astrologer, the ruler just might exercise that power because he could. Now that would be a difficult line to walk on, don't you think? Would you have wanted to be an astrologer during those exciting times? Just how good an astrologer are you?

Once travel became easier and astrologers were free to move about and meet each other (close to a couple of thousand years ago), they eventually got together. At that time, they collectively gave prime influence to the Sun. They took the entire body of what appears to have been lunar-based information that had been gathered over millennia and ascribed it to our current Sun-based system. I find that adaptation interesting. They took a lunar-based body of information and made it into a solar-based application. I certainly cannot argue with their expertise as they were much closer to the original sources than you or I can ever be. However, I do believe some discrepancies may have developed as the basis of the observations and resource were re-dedicated to a system with a different foundation.

As you study astrology, know that such choices were made for you by a group of then well-known and respected ancient astronomer/astrologers a couple of thousand years ago. When you learn astrological systems, those systems may have been influenced by that particular set of educated decisions. Astrological research on these old systems and bodies of information has been and is being conducted by very smart professional astrologers and researchers. Stay tuned for their discoveries.

Do not ever be afraid to question your astrological knowns. If they are valid, they will hold up under scrutiny. If the information does not hold up to research and questioning, be prepared to let it go or supplant it with new, more reliable material. I tend to put such questionable practices on a back burner until I can learn more about them. I do not throw concepts away just because they present a puzzle. I will wait until I can prove or disprove it before I decide to throw away what has worked successfully for others. As an astrologer, you are like a book that is continually being written. Your knowledge is subject to correction, editing, and new information. I find that very exciting.

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonehenge>

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Section Two

Astrologers and Charting

Section Two is about the who, what, and why of astrological studies. What do *you* want for yourself? What do *you* hope to accomplish? Who should *you* go to for a reading? What kind of a reader do you want to be? What can be charted? Can *you* read it all?

Again, you will find a couple of the chapters in this book in others of my books as well, particularly background material, because the concepts apply to other astrological applications. I cannot depend upon a reader encountering the material in a separate book, so some repetition of concept is necessary for clarity within each book. Again, hopefully I did enough but not too much.

- ✓ Chapter 6 – Why Do You Want to Learn Astrology?
- ✓ Chapter 7 – Social Conditioning Can Influence Our Personal Perspectives
- ✓ Chapter 8 – What Kind of Astrologer Will You Choose or Choose to Be?
- ✓ Chapter 9 – Generic Statements are Not True Astrology
- ✓ Chapter 10 – What can be Charted?

- ✓ Chapter 11 – There May Be Some Wheels You Cannot Cast or Read
- ✓ Chapter 12 – Can You Tell the Difference Between the Good Guys and the Bad Guys?
- ✓ Chapter 13 – Identification, Paradox, Contradiction, the Flip Side of the Coin

Why Do You Want to Learn Astrology?

As I enlarged this series on Astrological Choices, I decided to discuss your choice as to why you are studying astrology in the first place. Are you learning astrology out of simple curiosity, nothing serious, just having fun? That is as good a reason as any. Are you learning astrology for the purpose of self-help, understanding yourself and your life better on multiple levels? Astrology is the best self-help tool I have encountered in my long (over eighty years) study of life and living. Are you learning astrology so you can go farther than simple curiosity, fun or self-help, perhaps so far as reading for or teaching others about astrology?

Simple curiosity? Many start with the ever-popular newspaper, magazine or online astrology columns with favorites emerging for those that seem to truly illustrate or illuminate your life and experience. I have done many of these columns over the years for print, radio and television. While twelve sentences aimed at the entire world population tends to be a bit generic, much thought and effort must go into these columns. They are not just random sentences generated from a flip attitude.

From columns, you can graduate to the popular astrology magazines that give more detail and depth to the issues under discussion as well as the usual sun-sign column readings. And from there, I would then suggest quality sun-sign books. Why? Learning about self-identity (sun-sign) issues on a sign-by-sign basis does set a good stage for you to do a broader / deeper study of additional issues. Past that point, you are no longer satisfying idle curiosity or just plain fun. Past that point you need to move beyond the columns, the magazines and the sun-sign books and get into solid textbooks and teaching tools.

Self Help? As I said earlier, in my estimation self-help does not get better than astrology. I have had several psychologists as clients and have been told that even a clinician can use assistance in their own lives and that astrology was helpful. Psychology is a marvelous tool to help you get your life in order and live more successfully. Astrology falls into a similar self-help system but is based on a visual study of our solar system cycles. Having a diagram does help objectify and clarify the self-help elements. Many years ago I read that 75% of a healing is done upon recognition of the problem and the balance of 25% is the healing process itself.

You do know it is not easy to recognize your own foibles and that it can be very uncomfortable. Once your foibles are recognized through the energy patterns visible in the natal wheel, the history and influence of those foibles can be gauged through the lifetime progressions and the experiences that occur as you work your way through the lessons. In other words, the natal map shows the foibles, the progression shows the development and provocation of those issues, and the transits, eclipses, solar returns, etc. help you understand the timing and handling of the experience itself. Where do you begin to recognize your foibles, which is so difficult to do for most people? Look to your 12th house and your aspects. Study them one item at a time, particularly those that are currently active by progression or other triggering. Why the 12th house? That is the house of self-undoing. Just how do I shoot myself in the foot? Let me count the ways. The 12th house is a blind spot that may be self-sabotaging. The aspects seem to be the overall lesson plans, so I would look at them as well, particularly the stress aspects.

You want to be an astrologer? Now we are speaking my language. I mentioned that at the end of the fun or curiosity stage is the time to move past the popular columns, magazines and Sun-sign books. Now you need to get serious about your study, your choice of reading material, and your willingness to devote the months and years of work to develop a new language and a new skill. Do not get me wrong, the whole thing is fun to do, but if you want a deeper application, you must be willing to make the effort. If you want to become a pianist, you must play the piano. Good books and teaching tools, lots of practice wheels, perseverance, a great memory and all the ingredients mentioned are necessary to turn you into an astrologer. Anyone can learn astrology if they are willing to put in the effort. However, only you can turn yourself into an astrologer through your own efforts.

There are tons of mediocre astrologers out there. Please do not aspire to mediocrity. Aspire to surpass it for yourself, your clients and for the body of work we call astrology. I have met so many people who have read a couple of books or worked on a couple of charts and think of themselves as astrologers. They are students, pure and simple, but not yet astrologers - regardless of their claims. We will all be students for the whole of the time we study astrology because it encompasses all of life and experience, but it is necessary to have more experience than a couple of charts to be able to call yourself an astrologer. Past the point of fun and curiosity, this deeper study is not for the frivolous.

You want to be a teacher? Get ready to study even more. I mentioned that astrology covers all of life and experience. That is a pretty tall order for any human and none of us can ever learn all there is to know. Most astrologers are very good at certain facets of human experience, such as natal, self-help, predictive, relational, health, stock market or financial cycles, weather patterns, political or corporate issues, to name a few. These astrologers are specialists, but at times they do read more than one category.

A teacher must know astrology in a broader sense, and know more categories, with the ability to see beyond specific categories into the field at large. A teacher must focus on the development of the student and not try to impress the student with the depth of the teacher's knowledge, although such knowledge is truly a necessary asset to that teacher and their students. The idea of teaching is that the student can work the material and develop the skill. I have been to workshops where the speaker was magnificent as a speaker, but I could not use the material once I was alone. That is not a successful lesson or teacher.

Perhaps someone can teach you to do a specific technique and you are or will become better at that technique than your teacher. This is normal. A teacher may use their experience and study just to develop their teaching skill and the techniques they teach. I remember many years ago when I taught a student karmic astrology. He blew right by me in the very first lesson. I was awed by the innate skill of that student. I asked why he wanted to study with me since he could do far more than I could ever show him. I got an interesting answer. The student said he was very disjointed or disorganized in his efforts and had to rely more on a psychic sense than astrology to put the reading together for his clients. My body of information and teaching methods helped that student to organize his skills and to place his reliance on astrology and not just psychic insights. I am not judging the two techniques. I am just illustrating an application.

There is nothing wrong with psychic skills or the use of them but they are different from astrological skills. I have taught both psychic and astrological reading techniques. They are both valuable...just different. Any student or reader could still use psychic insights as they are useful in all walks of life. What my student learned was an astrological framework with which to work with a client in a more coherent or comprehensive way. That experience taught this teacher something as well.

My skill is as a teacher, and my students can become far better astrologers or specialists than I will ever be in some areas - and that must be okay with me. My job is to teach the skill set. My student's job is to take that skill set to the next level. We want our children to do better and be better than we are. A student is a child of your mind. You should want the very best for them and that should include them becoming better than what you taught them. That is why I say I stand on the shoulders of giants astrologically and I hope you will be able to stand on mine so you can see more and do more than I could myself. My students become my spiritual children.

There is more to this discussion of why you want to learn astrology. For now, I think it is enough for you to think about your personal interests, your motivations, your level of anticipated development, your willingness to devote the time and attention necessary to develop the skill and your intended application.

- ✓ Are you curious and want to have fun? Go for it.
- ✓ Are you interested in understanding and self-help for your own life? Outstanding. That is a great usage.
- ✓ Are you interested in developing your astrological skills to help others as a professional reader? Go for quality.
- ✓ Are you a natural teacher, ready to help others with what you have come to understand? There are good astrological teachers available. Strive to be great. I encourage you to use your experience to help others learn.
- ✓ Are you a researcher, getting great joy out of digging for connections and answers? Join me.

Social Conditioning Can Influence Our Personal Perspectives

Fate or free will is a continuing conundrum in human society as is the philosophical rhetoric about evolution or creationism. I am going to tackle both in this chapter. Why? When studying a subject that has a prophetic nature, fate or free will is a central point. When studying the cosmos as your field of possibilities, it is natural to wonder how it all came about. If you have a firm and non-negotiable belief system in one or the other of either pair under discussion, such belief system negates the possibility of examining all avenues of approach. It does not make you right, it just makes you rigid.

We all come to the table with preconditioning, religious or philosophical beliefs, and experiences that have gradually directed us in a specific manner. Since life is so varied and complex, one experience or belief system just does not cover all the possibilities. Sure, you can explain it all with a blanket statement of your personal beliefs. But again, this does not make you right and you will not convince others who lack your conditioning, beliefs or experiences.

What I have been describing is our personal perspective, that which has been produced by the influences from our society and family, our growing and becoming, the insights and realizations, the fears and frights, the inspirations, and the group activities that capture our beliefs. The first 31 years of my life were a valid description of my history based on what I just described. At that time, I had a startling awareness, a glimpse into experience that my prior conditioning could not support or explain. A tiny hole appeared in what I had held to be absolute. Being a curious type (Gemini rising), I asked questions. The answers slowly but surely illustrated that I was rigid but not necessarily right in some of my preconceptions. To many of the questions that were raised during that period of my life, I eventually held to my previous answers as valid.

However, many other questions poked more holes in my rigidity as I discovered I was not always right, even when I fervently believed that I was. I learned not to be afraid to question. The world, as I knew it, would not totally fall apart just because I asked a question. I could remain healthy and still in charge of my personal world. If I could have that kind of releasing experience, than anyone could - if they truly wanted to. They just have to be willing to trust themselves, which is not a small feat for some.

As an astrologer and a metaphysician, I have learned the value of being open to all the experience provided by the universe, employing discernment for what belongs to and with me, recognizing that I am a growing, changing, work in progress and that it is okay. Does that mean I am always open? No. But I have learned to be more open. I have also learned that I am not always as smart as I think I am and that the universe has more answers than I have questions. To question one's existence and personal place within that existence is natural. It should not be frightening, should not be termed a crime on any level, and can actually be fun. One by one I have examined many of my own points of rigidity and have learned to relax more and trust myself in my choices. Needless to say I have changed over the years and that has not pleased those around me in all instances. That is okay as well. It is my mind, my beliefs and my life to run as I see fit. The same is true of you and your life.

What about fate and free will? The conditioning of our American society is that we have free will. That is not necessarily true of many other societies. As I studied metaphysics, I learned that we have far more ability to direct our individual lives than we realize. That has added to my recognition of free will. I do feel that our free will is dependent upon our awareness at any moment and that it is not ultimate for every person. If that person is not aware of possibility, it would be difficult to move lack of awareness to probability.

As I have studied astrology and learned about the cycles and the timing of events in people's lives, I have discovered there is a pattern at work. As a pattern, this could be considered fated. I have experienced a long life and I have seen the concept of fate and / or destiny at work in my life and the lives of many others. Just how do you reconcile these two points of view? I believe there is room for both.

We do not arrive on earth with an instruction manual, or at least one that is identified as such. Your astrology chart can help serve as one. We seem to come in with a reasonably clean slate and our experiences write on that slate as we become. That does not discount the possible role of genetics. What if we arrived on Earth purposefully? What if we have life to grow

and become... for a purpose? If there is purpose to our existence, does that not lend itself to a more fated concept? Yet, what we do with our lives and ourselves is continually based in free will choices. Can you see both viewpoints operating simultaneously? Is it not possible that my life has purpose but that I get to make choices as to whether or not I serve that purpose? Choice implies just that. I may have come with intent but I may choose not to serve that intent and that is my choice. The two terms are *not* mutually exclusive. Is this the only chance we have to “get it right?” I do not believe that is necessarily true.

This is where I have arrived in my thinking. Yes, there is a lot more to my thinking on this subject, but this illustrates this one point. Reason this pair of words through your own mind to see where you personally see life. Is it fated? Is there free will? Or...is there room for both?

Our next conundrum is evolution or creationism. I am not going to get into a protracted religious discussion, because to me it is not just about religion. Let us start with the big bang theory, the current favorite in the scientific community. Everything we see and that which is still invisible to us – everything – came into existence from a singularity – all at one time which exploded into physical reality. It came from an indescribable nothingness and spread in every direction, but not uniformly. There are thick areas and empty areas of the cosmos. The thick areas are filled with galaxies, nebula, solar systems, and all sorts of cosmic material... and us. We are not sure if there is anything in the empty galactic areas, they only *appear* empty to us. The most recent philosophy on this is dark matter and/or dark energy (they apparently are not identical).

Religion posits that deity spoke or acted in some way and everything came from nothingness, the act of creation itself...and God spoke. Are you seeing any similarity between the two theories, because theories are what each of them are? If I say the cosmos exploded into being or the Creator created, the big bang concept fits both theories. I just do not see an argument here unless you like arguing semantics.

Belief in a creator or deity is a personal perspective. Belief in no such possibility is a personal perspective as well. Science is an intellectual frame of mind. Religion is an emotional frame of mind. Both intellect and emotion are valuable facets of human beings, probably equal in value. If you live and experience both intellectually and emotionally, you will have a reasonably balanced set of experiences. If you exclude one and live

totally in the other, you are experiencing only half of the possibilities of life and it does not matter which is experienced and which is excluded. Why? Both are valuable, exclusion simply halves your possibilities, and this is a common practice based on personal bias. To practice such exclusion is a personal choice and preference, but that is all it is.

Science looks around at life - the relics of the history of our world in particular and the cosmos in general. Based on those relics and related research, science reaches conclusions as to the age of the universe, our planet and the development of humanity. Science includes the concept of evolution based on natural selection. Based on this understanding and the archeological evidence, this is an intellectual approach.

People of a book (those who believe in a specific holy book, story or legend, or holy figure) follow that book, story, legend, or holy figure as a way of life. Their conclusions come from a community of belief that naturally filters through their emotions, and they are quite powerful.

Who is to say which is right and which is wrong? Both have value, both are strongly felt and held. It is truly a matter of personal preference. Unfortunately, these two seem to be mutually exclusive to their adherents.

I have been around a long time. In my long and busy life experience, I have never found a spot where the creative principle that formed this cosmos (whatever that is) left a message carved and signed in stone to dissolve any doubt. I have room in my consciousness for both evolution and deity. I am not limited. I like feeling my emotions and I enjoy the exercise of my intellect. I prefer to experience all of life that is possible for me, emotional and intellectual, scientific and inspiring, evolutionary and creative. I prefer to live a life that is not rigid or with selected parts based on conclusions that are not really my own. This is my personal perspective and you have your own personal perspective. Enjoy your journey.

This was the end of the original article, but I need to expand the concept to life itself. These are only two examples of social conditioning that have been developed by osmosis, absorbing what is in our environment, or our response to our life experience. There is an infinite number of conditioning factors, religion or lack of it, cultural, generational, personal, the list is endless. We come to our experience with such conditioning already a part of us, although we are largely unconscious of such possibilities. Anyone we meet and / or with whom we form a relationship comes equipped with a different set of conditioning factors, again largely unconscious. We are made up of this conditioning in such a way that it is not usually questioned

and equally not understood, each in our own individual manner. With 7.8 billion inhabitants of this globe, there are literally 7.8 billion unique renditions of such social conditioning. Do you think this could affect the failure or the success of any relationship or reading in which you participate? As you explore the following chapters, remember that we are all different, that life and our experience changes us to some degree, and that we move in and out of our experience based on such unconscious instincts. It makes you wonder how we succeed in relating as well as we do.

One more example... Last night I tried to find a piece of information for a later chapter and visited nostalgia lane on the world's largest library, the internet. I played two videos from YouTube.com and sat in my chair and cried. When we act to our highest and best as humans, we are amazing. When we do not or we fall victim to our social conditioning and are less than our personal capability, we encounter the world as we know it. This morning I shared that moment with my daughter and she reminded me of my favorite Star Trek episode. Yes, I am a Trekkie! If you have the capability to download an old TV episode, then the perfect social conditioning example will be at your disposal. If you do *not* have the capability, ask someone to help you access and watch the episode: Star Trek, season 3, episode 15 "*Let That Be Your Last Battlefield*", starring Frank Gorshin and Lou Antonio as the protagonists, as well as the usual Star Trek cast.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Let_That_Be_Your_Last_Battlefield

<http://trekmovie.com/2012/01/16/top-10-star-trek-episodes-dealing-with-tolerance/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Gorshin

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lou_Antonio

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What Kind of Astrologer Will You Choose or Choose to Be?

In any human issue category, there is a huge number of service providers to choose from. Astrology is no exception. Just put any category into an online search engine and you can get thousands or even millions of possibilities. In a moment of curiosity, I Googled my own name and got 4,120,000 entries (2014). I was stunned! I had no idea there were so many listings ... for me and every other person who has a name like mine. This staggering amount of information is far beyond anyone's ability to meaningfully research just one item. Just how do you determine quality within such enormous quantity?

Since our subject is astrology and astrologers, does an astrologer have to be professional, accredited, famous, or just plain available? If you happen to be a budding astrologer, you will have to make choices as to what kind of an astrologer you will become. Your choices will involve the services you offer to clients, your skill and credibility, plus personal motivations and goals. In this chapter, I am offering an overview of several considerations to help you make valid astrological choices for yourself and eventually for what you offer your clients. As you understand what underlies your own motivations and choices, you should be able to apply the same reasoning to the choice of an astrologer to read for you.

Motivation Where are you coming from in your philosophical outlook? Do you see this as a service project, a way to make money, a profession, a love of the study itself or some other basic personal drive? Are you more interested in self-help, fun, business, relationship, evolution, or other astrological technique? How does a study or work of this type fit into your personal belief systems? Personally you will need to resolve any inherent conflicts or face a lifetime of self-questioning. When choosing an astrologer to read for you, you need to be aware that they face the same questions for their own choices.

Personality Are you clinical or a more personally sensitive person? Some readers are subjectively involved in their readings. Other readers prefer objectivity. Astrology provides a diagram, a personal map of an entity in wheel form that allows examination of their life. You can use the wheel in so many different ways. One of those is the choice between the subjective or objective approach. Do you prefer the personal approach or the arms-length approach?

- ✓ Do you want to read for yourself or do you want to provide others with a once-a-year reading done in a one-hour session, perhaps in writing or on a pre-recorded tape or even computer-generated?
- ✓ Do you want to read for yourself or do you want to provide others with personal access or with the ability to call back with questions?

Each of us is human and will choose the role most comfortable, the one that fits into our personal norms and provides us with good results. Look at yourself first. How do you see yourself reading as an astrologer? Do you want to be the clinician or the sensitive when you read for others? Then take those questions a step further. What kind of astrologer would you choose to read for you? Do you want the clinician or the sensitive to read you?

Setting Are you more comfortable in a business-like setting such as a formal office, for either seeing or practising as an astrologer? Are you more comfortable in a home-like atmosphere for being read by another or in doing a reading for another? Do you want strangers inside your personal space before the reading? Why? Each person who enters our personal spaces, whether they be astrologers or not, bring their personal influences into our spaces. During the many years I have practiced astrology, I have read clients in both in business and personal settings and I have encountered myriad settings when someone reads me. We do what is available and what is comfortable to us. Perhaps your choices will involve the possibility of a setting, urban or rural, private or public, or availability of resource. Many students study in private because of religious or philosophical differences with their families or their extended or cultural families. Ideology can get very uncomfortable under certain circumstances. Each of us has the choice of setting whether we are studying, being read or reading for a client.

Learning Curve When I started astrology, I was self-taught, spending the first few years busting the books. I did not realize there were teachers in my area, so I did not initially have specific teachers. As my studies progressed, I was able to locate other astrologers and to attend workshops. Later I started reading for others and eventually teaching others. If you can learn through this self-taught method, it is simply one specific way to learn. If you were fortunate enough to have a teacher or an established class, it is just as valid and possibly much easier than my relatively lonely journey. One learning method is not really better than another - it is just different. You should choose from what is available to you and feels the most comfortable to your own learning preferences. Students become astrologers by practicing their craft and not just by reading books or listening to lectures. Method and technique are just a means to an end. The proof will always be in the readings. This is true of your own information gathering and conclusions, as well as the same learning curve in other readers.

Repetition There is so much to learn that repetition may not seem like a good use of your time. That would be a mistake. It helps to repeat the elements of astrology as frequently as possible just because there is so much to learn. Take each layer of learning seriously and learn as much about that layer as possible before moving on in your studies. Think of a building with a poor foundation. It may look okay on the surface but in time there will be a problem with stability and function. Take the time to give yourself a good foundation. Reasonable repetition is good for you.

Credibility This should be a big issue astrologically. There are the usual issues of honesty, integrity, and respect for privacy. No one wants to encounter a scam artist, but they are out there in the same numbers as with any other human activity. Just because a person presents himself or herself as spiritually motivated does not make it so. A spiritually motivated person acts spiritually, never dishonestly. Remember, I am describing both you and any outside counselor you choose to read you.

You must be discerning, not judgmental. You must be observant and dispassionate in your choices. Trust your own instincts. If you feel uncomfortable with a reader, move on to find another. When you have a reading of any type, you allow another human being (a potentially unknown game-changer) to walk around in your mind. You need to be comfortable in such choices. Having said all that about an outside reader,

you need to face and develop those same credibility issues within yourself as you develop your skills and offer your services. It is important that you have honesty, integrity and respect for privacy. An individual's birth map in skilled hands has no secrets. Astrologers must be respectful of such trust. You have the right to expect that same respect when you put your birth map in the hands of another.

More on Credibility Unfortunately as mentioned, wherever there are humans there will be issues of misuse of information or skills. There are fakes and charlatans in every category of humanity. Some people seem to be inherently dishonest and the fields of astrological or other types of readings are no exception. Again...you must be discerning. If you get burned, consider it an unfortunate life lesson and move on. Just do not repeat your poor choice or recommend others to that poor choice. Word of mouth advertising is both the best and the worst advertising possible. If you are damaged in any way, and financial damage is the least of your concerns, go for remedy or healing as soon as possible. Do not let a problem fester from relatively minor into major over time or lack of attention.

If you encounter one who is continually trying to peddle outside services such as lighting candles to prevent negative happenings, preying on guilt or grief in personal tragedy, or other similar nonsense, know that those actions have nothing to do with astrology. An honest astrologer will not go down such a negative path. I have run into people who have needed help with such unnecessary negativity in their lives and I have helped them as part of my service as a human being. This help was not astrological in nature. To me it was necessary and healing in nature. Finance and power should never enter into the transaction as spiritual motivation. Yes, you are worth your hire just as a reader you choose for yourself is worth their hire. Choose carefully those you allow into your mind and life. Choose carefully what kind of an astrologer you will become because you have the potential to profoundly influence another person's life and choices. *ABC – Always Be Credible.*

Information Flow Astrologers should be able to tell you about yourself and your life without the information pump being primed. I do not believe a reading would be valid and honest if I were to ask you a bunch of questions first or allow you to load me down with information. If I am any good at what I do, I really should not need to do that. I might choose to question an either / or conundrum in the middle of a reading,

such as, “It could be this or that, how do you see this working in your life?” If you feed me information and I feed it back to you as a reading, to me it is simply not honest. I ask clients *not* to volunteer information about themselves and their lives and to allow me to generate the information from the wheel itself. That way I know I am getting the information from the patterns and not prior knowledge of the person. I cannot stop people from telling me personal information I would rather not know, but I do try.

My solution? I asked my clients if they wanted to hear their voice or my voice on the tape recording of our session. Usually they would respond that they want the information to come from me, my voice. That is an illustration of my desire for the cleanest possible reading. Oh... the answer is yes, I did tape my readings. I spoke very fast for probably an hour or more and that is difficult to absorb all at once. As the reading progresses, more and more of the individual is revealed through the reading process and that is natural. Just do not initially prime the information pump whether you are being read or if you are giving a reading. A competent astrologer should not need to do that.

Credentials What about credentials? It is possible to go through standardized astrological testing to establish credentials as to your skill. There are several organizations who can administer such tests should you choose, and these tests can be quite difficult. I know very good astrologers who never bothered to be tested and some equally good astrologers who did go through the testing procedure. The choice to do or not to do is always individual. A problem might occur if one group decided their way was the only way. But then again astrologers are still considered to be part of the human species, so there is nothing unusual about the ego running away with the mouth, is there? If you choose an astrologer to read for you, know that passing such testing simply specifies that an astrologer has a grasp and comprehension of the basics of astrology which truly is a great foundation for an astrologer. As I said before, proof of reading skill will always be in the readings themselves.

Psychic or Astrology Are you psychic as well as an astrologer and want to blend those skills? Astrological skill is very different from psychic sensitivity. I practice and teach both, so I understand the distinction. Psychic stems from an emotional, instinctive or feeling basis and astrology stems from an intellectual, intuitive or reasoning basis. From my perspective, if you are psychic, you can apply that skill to any level of your life and it should be a benefit to you and others. Hopefully you are reasonably accurate. Psychic ability has nothing to do with astrology *per se*, but can be useful in that context as well.

My personal astrologer, the late Robert K. “Buz” Myers, was both psychic and a good astrologer and he successfully blended those skills. Personally, I keep those skills separate at least most of the time. Should a psychic impression come up within an astrological reading, I identify it as a psychic message. I like to distinguish between my reading skills. My choice. Do you want a purist to read for you as a psychic or an astrologer or are you comfortable with a merged skill set?

These are a few of the issues that you will encounter as you choose an astrologer for yourself or choose to act as an astrologer for others. Motivation, personality, setting, learning curve, credibility and more, information flow, credentials, and purist or blended are a few considerations. Obviously, there are more issues, but this should give you a beginning point to make positive choices in your own becoming or those you allow to influence your mind and, therefore, your life.

Generic Statements are Not True Astrology

We have come to a small issue that is important enough to be included, but simple enough to be relatively brief in explanation. Astrological generic statements cause problems rather than understanding or education. This is a pet peeve of mine... generic statements that sound like they are valuable but lack content or logic. Let me give you an example.

I was driving home many years ago and stopped by a psychic fair. Everything was pretty much over, but an astrologer was holding court with a rapt audience. I say holding court because she was an imposing figure, arms outstretched, seated at a large picnic table in the front of the room, with her audience facing her from the center and back of the room... good staging. She was talking about Mercury and pronounced without warning, "Everyone with Mercury retrograde is dyslexic." On the inside of my body I jumped straight out of my seat and denounced such a ridiculous generic statement. On the outside of my body, I calmly left the room because this was her court and her people and they did not need my judgment. I was not the speaker, she was. I just could not stay and witness misinformation being passed. Why would that disturb me so strongly?

It was simply an untrue generic statement with no research, no logic and no validity. However, it was given by someone *thought* to be in authority, so it was accepted as truth. Logistically, Mercury has an orbital period of 88 days with retrogrades, three and occasionally four times a year. The action lasts for 18 to 24 days for each station and retrograde period. It is just not possible to say that every person born on the globe within an 18-to-24-day period is dyslexic. That is ridiculous. Now multiply that by three to four times a year and it becomes even more ridiculous. Taking the lower average, three times a year multiplied by approximately three weeks each multiplied by the existing birth rate at any given time period would equal an enormous number of people. As readers and researchers, do you think we would have noticed an enormous pattern of dyslexia periodically repeating?

On top of just plain logic, one of my children, an attorney with an IQ of 163, has Mercury retrograde and has never been, is not now, or evermore shall be, dyslexic unless something truly physically traumatic were to occur. Dyslexia did not naturally occur in my child regardless of their retrograde Mercury. I can see that Mercury could conceivably play a role in dyslexia because of its mental function in a sky map, but it needs to be thoroughly researched before such a blanket, generic statement can be made.

To me, such pronouncements are just plain irresponsible. I put a statement like that right up there with the meaningless psychic statement of, “Oh, you are surrounded by so many spirits.” Of course “you are surrounded by so many spirits”. That is where spirits live, non-corporeal, on the spirit side of life, frequently close to those who have great meaning to them on the physical side of life. I would not be surprised that the spirits of my deceased family might like to hang around me from time to time and I have a very large family, both alive and deceased. After all, I am quite loveable (grin). I would also not be surprised that a philosophical discussion on this side of life could interest and attract listeners on the spirit side of life. The only question for me would be who has the skill to see them? If you had that skill, why would you waste it on such meaningless generic statements? It sounds impressive on the surface, but it has no real content.

On a recent astrology blog, I noticed another generic statement that got my attention. The comment was that Chiron was in Pisces, so a well-known political figure would have Narcissistic Personality Disorder. That is truly a ridiculous statement. First of all, the person who made the statement was not qualified to make a diagnosis of a mental condition. And even if they were to have clinical qualifications, the assessment was made from a media perspective, definitely not from empirical observation. A competent medical person or competent astrologer would just not do that, would they?

Astrologically, such a blanket or generic statement suggests that everyone born that day and during the whole time Chiron was in Pisces during that single orbit would have to own the same disorder. The whole world would have to have gone over that particular cliff simultaneously, and that never happened. Believe me, we would have noticed. Going a bit further, everyone everywhere on the globe for every orbit where Chiron ever was or will be in Pisces would have to have the same disorder. That is not astrology! That is one person’s theory based on pure guesswork. I started to respond to that blog, but the 25 people ahead of me had responded quite well and my comment would have been superfluous. However, it did make a great example for this article.

When you hear or see specific blanket statements like the examples given above that cover potentially millions of people born close together in time or in repeating patterns, please run, don't walk, to the nearest exit. To reach such a conclusion would need serious study by a researcher reasonably competent in the subject under consideration, plus astrology using accurate birth data. Accurate birth charts can be difficult to obtain - trust me. I have now done four major research projects on specific subjects, and obtaining sufficient accurate case studies was a major undertaking for each. More cases would have been better for each of my studies, but astrologers run into accurate birth data limitations when we attempt to do serious research.

And please... do not make blanket generic astrological statements yourself. You are entitled to a personal opinion based on your observations and experience, and I will defend your right to have that opinion. But please do not state that personal opinion in the name of astrology or astrologers everywhere. We as a collective can easily be branded by another astrologer's poor choices. We need good, definitive research to back up or eliminate any guesswork, and I encourage you to do just that. Please, if you make pronouncements such as the foregoing examples, know what you are talking about. Be responsible and do the work before you share your conclusions. Your conclusions are just that: your conclusions. The choice for astrological quality is always yours.

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What Can be Charted?

In this series of articles, I began simple explanations for understanding astrological choices. My overall intention was to slowly but surely identify potential blind spots in astrology so that anyone can understand it. Now I want to go over what can be charted. Just how many types of astrological charts are available for our use? Having said that, I have been studying astrology a very long time and I know of many chart uses, but I doubt that I know all of them. I run into new applications of astrology every day. So here is a beginning to the what-can-be-charted list.

If you have read or studied astrology at all, you already know that you can chart the life of a person and that is called a natal chart. But you are not limited to charting a person and you are not limited to the use of a natal chart only. When a litter of kittens was born in my house many years ago, it seemed natural to cast a chart (or rather four charts, one for each kitten). Born close together in time, the kittens had very different outcomes to their lives just as people do. One little guy met his doom fairly quickly, within weeks. One was given to a good friend and had a wonderful, pampered life. Two kittens stayed with me for many years; one died at age eleven, the other at age nineteen. A difference of a very few minutes of birth time gave four very different experiences and outcomes.

Many years ago, I took a workshop from a well-known national astrologer who raised thoroughbred racehorses. She used charting to help determine which horses would make the best long-term investment. Many astrologers use their skills to gamble just as any other human might. Another astrologer friend had a horse-betting system that to me just did not live up to its hype astrologically. Another friend bet on the dog races. A couple of years ago, I had a client who had won well over \$100,000 in three days and wanted a repeat. I plotted and researched but did not see a similar energy pattern to her earlier win. There are astrological gambling books available if you are interested, just be cautious and do a little practicing before you plunk down actual money.

While not billed as gambling, financial and stock trading is a major category for some very successful astrological investors. I personally believe that this is a form of gambling. But if done astrologically and systematically, you should have a much better chance of winning. You do have to pay attention to the continually changing patterns. Once I purchased a penny stock at 50¢ a share, and it thrillingly climbed to \$10.00

a share in a very short time. I went on vacation, was not paying attention and came home to an outright, bottom of the barrel loss. Investing is not an area of entertainment. I got burned badly. My stock failure was not the stock market's problem. The failure was due to my own lack of attention. I accept total personal responsibility for my experience. When you put cash or credit on the line, you must know what you are doing and you must stay focused to prevent disaster. Do not make my mistake... know what you are doing first and pay attention!

You can chart a company, an event, a country, an illness or whatever else you choose. Whatever begins in a moment of time can be mapped. The question would be, "Do you have the skill to interpret that chart?" A chart of the moment an illness begins can show both the severity of the illness itself and its potential progress and is called the chart of the decumbiture. Charts are often erected for the start of surgery, especially elective surgery or a treatment, or for the birth of a child. Medical astrology is a risky practice that should not tackled unless you have developed the skill and possess the experience to do so. Once upon a time, medical doctors were also astrologers. More recently this application is frowned upon as are many old common medical practices. I personally believe that a medical doctor or a psychologist with additional skill as an astrologer could really be better at what they do. Astrology is a useful tool. It can work hand in hand with medical training, but I would not consider it as a replacement.

A time can be chosen for the start of an action or an event prior to the action or event itself. That is called an election chart. Previously, I mentioned a medical choice or a stock market trade. There are cycles within cycles and there are times that are better than others for starting an action such as opening a company, negotiating a deal, signing a contract, planting a garden, cutting your hair, proposing or getting married, surgery, etc. Our lives are filled with beginnings and we want to choose the best timing and the best circumstances for the best possible outcome.

A chart can be cast for any question on any subject and that is called a horary, which means "of the hour". There are times when the chart indicates the question was asked too soon or too late and the answer is either already known or not ready to be known. This is true! If you lost an object and were desperate to find it, you would ask a clear question and then read the answer in the chart. Even map directions are possible and this type of charting is also excellent for timing. The lost can be mapped and found and mysteries can be explored. Again, this is not for the faint-hearted... skill is required.

Charts can be cast for two people or more in a relationship and they can be compared. Two additional charts can be cast for the relationship itself: the idealized composite and the very real relationship chart. I will cover the basics of relational charting separately. Charts for a group such as a band or a family are possible, very involved but still possible. Again, it takes skill to read it, but it is not truly difficult. Additionally, I have written an astrology workbook on relational charting called *The Family* (<http://www.marilynmuir.net/books/>).

A chart can be cast for the start of a job or for the relationships between boss and employee or between co-workers. A chart can be cast for the start of a company, for an incorporation of that same company, for the release of an IPO for that company, for a merger or a hostile takeover for that same company and finally for the demise of that company. The natal map is a map of potential. These latter maps are of the journey of what began in a moment of time, such as a business. For my own purposes, I used the birth of Social Security to map what was occurring currently (2009) to that energy pattern when I was doing the research for my book, *Presidents of Hope and Change*. It is a major part of today's news stories. All this and myriad other possibilities exist as potential charts.

There are charts for weather patterns, for migration patterns, for natural or man-made disasters. I personally have done the charts for the Challenger and Columbia space shuttle disasters, the Chernobyl nuclear melt-down and explosion, the death of Princess Diana, 9/11, airline disasters, the collapse of the Clearwater / St. Petersburg, FL bridge, the development and use of the A-bomb, the rise of a potential pandemic (H1N1) - too many other projects to list. I have also charted many pleasant events such as the birth of our country, successful space shots, the selection of the 265th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, and charts of many spiritual leaders, celebrities, sports figures, and people from all walks of life.

I have mentioned a couple of charts that go past the point of the beginning we call a natal. The journey itself can be mapped at any given moment of time, for any event, and even for the end of time for that energy pattern. Most astrologers will not read death, but it is possible to do so. There are so many techniques and methods - they are too numerous to list, but they include progressions, directions, transits, diurnals, and solar, lunar or planetary returns, to name a few. Literally the sky seems to be the limit. For these ongoing charts, clients usually want to know about what is happening currently in one of three major areas of their lives. Most questions asked of me were about career / finance, health, or relationships, and all can be mapped and read.

The use of method falls to the eastern / western choice or sidereal / tropical. The type of map depends on the use and information you want of that map. Charting itself is never-ending, unlimited in potential, animal, vegetable, mineral or any other category you choose. Such charting will always be dependent upon accuracy of the basic information, chart construction, the skill of the reader and the acceptance of the information generated. This is human-to-human interpretation that is subject to human-to-human receptivity, but all is possible if you have the skill and are prepared to study the science.

There May Be Some Wheels You Cannot Cast or Read

Most beginning astrologers assume that every wheel will be open to them to cast or interpret. This is mostly, but not always, true. The inability to read a single wheel happens, even to the best of readers, astrological or otherwise. Occasionally, a wheel can defeat the best intentions. This has happened to me. Over the years, I have discovered reasons or explanations for this, but not excuses. However, even a sensible explanation does not make you feel better as you experience what appears to be a failure.

I remember one wheel in particular, the first one that fought my efforts to construct it accurately. After several futile attempts (and at that time hand casting a wheel was a time-consuming activity), I asked my student to explain her choice of an example wheel. It turned out it was her mother-in-law's chart and was being cast without her knowledge or permission. I know it is difficult to think of a piece of paper with a bunch of squiggles all over it or simple math calculations fighting the process of erecting a valid wheel, but that is what happened. I explained to my student the preference of acting spiritually from right values, privacy issues, and the right of any adult to make choices as to what information is given and to whom. I was firm about the fact that it was my belief that it was not my student's right to invade her mother-in-law's privacy. I did not read that map and I suggested strongly but kindly that she mind her own business. What she did was her business and her choice. What I did was my business and my choice.

Another time, a wheel just would just not allow itself to be cast. I finally got it done and realized I should not be reading that map. Again, I went to my (different) client and asked about her choice. She explained it was a gift to a friend. I explained the friend would definitely not be happy with this "gift". What I had in my hands appeared to be the wheel of a criminal who would take issue with anyone (me and / or her included) knowing their private business. I refused to read that map and suggested strongly that her "friend" definitely would not appreciate her gift and to find something else to give.

Similar circumstances occurred with a wife who wanted her husband's map read. It just would not cooperate and I asked if she had his permission. It turned out he was unaware and she was nosey. After these incidents, I now ask the permission and privacy questions up front *before* I do any work.

Casting the wheel itself was *not* the problem on one reading I attempted. It was my reading that did not work and I had to back down from it. Strange circumstance. The wheel I was attempting to read was for that person, so there was no problem with privacy or permission - or so I thought. My sister-in-law's wheel will not let me read it in any meaningful way despite several attempts. She consciously wants me to read her map. However, it must be important to her in some unconscious way that I not read her chart. We get along famously and have for many years and are more like sisters than in-laws, but I cannot read her sky map.

The only other wheel with a problem that I can recall resulted in my personal refusal to read. This was a potential client (female) with the foulest mouth, making the most degenerate sexual comments I have ever heard from anyone. Any reader always has a personal choice. I do not have to read for someone who makes me uncomfortable or crosses my own decency line. The choice to read anyone resides in me. This does not give me the right to judge her, but I can choose that in which I involve myself. I can do or not do for whatever reason makes sense to me. This only happened once in all my years of study and reading, so it is definitely not a usual occurrence.

Of course, I could not expect payment in any of the circumstances I have just described. If I cannot do the work, regardless of why, I cannot take the payment. I must just accept an occasional limitation and move on. I have probably read 30,000 charts or more over 47 years and only this handful have presented me with conundrums which I chose to solve by walking away. They were just not my charts to read.

Do not be harsh on yourself if you run into similar roadblocks. If you encounter continuing resistance, pay attention. Ask questions so you can learn why the resistance exists. Learn from that experience. Just be sure you do your very best so you do not question your decisions later. There will always be a possibility that a chart will not cooperate. I consider those to be the clients of other readers who happened to wander into my space. How you choose to handle these occasional problems will be your choice. I would recommend a spiritual approach - honesty, integrity, and respect for your contemplated actions.

Can You Tell the Difference Between Good Guys and Bad Guys?

In my many years as an astrologer, I have encountered comments and articles about astrologers not able to tell the astrological difference between good guys and bad guys, such as with cops and robbers. This discrepancy is somehow supposed to discredit astrology as a practice. I have run into a few of these conundrums myself over the years. I could wish that people were that easy to predict. Astrologers could then look at a newborn baby's chart and decide prior to any evidence or experience if that child is going to be a good adult or a bad one. If that last sentence made any sense to you, just skip the rest of this article; you are beyond my ability to discuss logic and reason about this issue.

Just ask any parent about their child's surprising criminal activity - if they saw it coming or knew that their innocent baby would turn out to be one of the really, really bad guys. The neighbors, relatives and friends of the man who mentally snapped and dove his plane into federal government offices in Austin, Texas a few years ago never saw this tragedy coming. Everyone I have seen interviewed relative to his terrorist-like actions was stunned at the development and did not believe him capable of such acts. According to his personal manifesto published on the internet, this has been a festering wound for a very long time, but something in his recent history made him snap and do the unthinkable.

Could such an aberration of character be visible in a birth map? To say "never" would fly in the face of the diversity of life and experience. To say "easy" would underestimate the complexity and paradoxical quality of life and living. There are just too many variables involved to make a quick and clean answer. Those who demand that kind of predictive pronouncement of any human know the question itself requires an impossible answer. However, skeptics or naysayers think it is fun to ask and to watch such an impossible question make someone else squirm.

For months, a panel of doctors had been trying to figure out what was wrong with my brother's health. Despite the time, effort and expertise involved, we did not receive a viable answer. Did that make them all bad doctors? Did it mean that their inability to give a correct diagnosis relegates medicine in general to the trash heap? Of course it didn't mean that. These doctors were hopefully doing the best they knew how to do with the information currently available to them, and my brother unfortunately presented his panel of doctors with a puzzle. You do not devalue the practice of medicine itself because a doctor or a medical team cannot solve one puzzle. Life is not like a one-hour forensic show with a successful conclusion. Life is far more difficult to live than that. And so the doctors tested and we waited and hoped for a good outcome. I am happy to say on this latest (2014) re-write that the doctors did finally figure out what was wrong and my brother did substantially recover. It took those doctors fourteen months of hellacious misery of my brother to resolve his devastating problem. At a moment like that, I regretted that I had not studied more medical astrology which is a formidable task.

A birth sky pattern is a map of available energy with the potential to unfold in a reasonably predictable fashion. Any astrologer attempts to read that map to the best of their ability - not only for the potential inherent in the moment of birth, but also for the unfolding of that moment in time. When you plant a seed in the ground, you do not expect to end up with a bad seed. If conditions are right and the seed develops naturally, you should end up with a seedling of the variety planted. What if a stray seed got into your seed packet and you planted something other than you anticipated? Does that make you a failure as a gardener? Of course not! What if there were drought or flood or an animal digging for food? Bye-bye seedling. There are lots of variables in life that provide us with less or more than we expect or take us in an unknown direction without warning. If everything in life were predictable and rigid in development or experience, this would be a very boring world and we would all act like the robots that would be necessary for that kind of world and experience. I don't know about you, but to me our world and experience are seldom boring! Rigidity of collective thought strikes me as a hive mentality.

This series of articles is about the choices we must make astrologically, those we make knowingly and those we as humans discover the hard way by falling over them. The birth time provides a map of inherent energy full of potential that should unfold naturally. That is essentially true unless life gets in the way and introduces a few surprises. Perhaps a child is born into normal circumstance with normal parents and family and has a normal upbringing with normal opportunities. Normalcy, whatever that means to the observer, could then be expected as the outcome. Perhaps the child is

born into poverty, tragedy, privation, or abuse, with an abnormal upbringing under abnormal circumstances. Can you still expect “normalcy” (whatever that means) as an outcome or should we consider that there might be alternatives? What if our normal circumstance child did not turn out normal? What if our abnormal circumstance child turned out okay? As you can see, there are many variables.

I raised four children pretty much by the same rules under one set of circumstances, and I was not a very different parent from one child to the other. Each of the four has a totally different perception and understanding of me as parent. Each parent / child pairing had and has a unique relationship based on our perception of each other as individuals and our interaction. That is normal. While relationships are unique, I was not substantially different from one child to another, but the outcomes are quite different.

I have cast sky maps of good guys and bad guys, of cops and of robbers. The charts for these two sides of a character coin really look quite similar. You can see earmarks of certain behaviors, such as the potential for violence. However, you cannot make assumptions about the behavior of those individuals. Does the person use their potential in a positive way and come down on the side of law and order? Or does the person use their potential in a negative way and become a violent offender? Every day in every way, we are confronted with choices. What we do with those choices determines our character. We could be a good guy for years and years and then “snap” and throw ourselves onto the bad guy pile without warning, such as our Austin, Texas suicide pilot. I spent over four years studying the birth charts of over 100 serial killers looking for an indicator that could signal trouble ahead. Believe me, it is not that easy to see. However, we cannot presume there is nothing *to* see. There may be something definitive in that study that I have just not found as yet, and so I continue my search.

Over my many years of reading professionally, I had had the opportunity to counsel several psychologists and some of their patients. The common experience of mental issues is evident in the maps of both the doctors and their patients. However, through their choice or because of overwhelming experience, the patients became victims of those mental issues. Those who became doctors chose a different route, that of studying those mental issues to develop the skills to treat them.

Right after the event happened, I wrote an article about the first massacre at Fort Hood. This was one of those hopefully rare instances when a trained psychologist made a series of personal choices that led to tragedy. This supposed good guy jumped on the bad guy pile without much warning. There have been hundreds of thousands of positive psychological outcomes but this one negative outcome is what grabbed the headlines.

What about preachers or religious types who turn out to be scam artists? What about judges, attorneys and police who forget that they represent the law itself? What about medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc. who have betrayed their calling? Humans do not always act humanely. We are still reeling (2008-9). from the country- and world-wide economic chaos largely caused by our bankers, credit card companies, stock market and investment advisors who exploited their fiduciary trust. What about the incredibly bright people who use their skills to take advantage of others, such as in computer hacking?

The Deepwater oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico drew attention to the blame game between the companies involved and the United States Congress, which just does not solve the problem. Oil gushed into the Gulf and our food chain and our need for oil were harpooned on the potential loss of a major natural resource, the Gulf, and perhaps even the potential loss of the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean because of the open flow between them. All the countries and states that bordered on those bodies of water were also threatened. Such a disaster potentially affected not only the southern border of our country, but the shorelines and food resources of countries worldwide. This was not just an ecological disaster; it was a financial disaster as well. In the intervening time much work has been done to mitigate the damage, but we will not know for years or perhaps centuries how much hidden damage was done. How long do you hold people responsible for the damage if you do not know the extent of that damage?

Believability in the people involved was and is a real problem. There have been so many similar instances of those whom we place in a position of trust. Do you think you could determine the good guys from the bad guys in the chart of a newborn infant? It is harder than it looks on the surface.

As an astrologer making choices when reading a chart, allow each reading to be individualized. To me this individuality is one of the great rewards I experience as an astrologer. Every sky map and every human are unique. As an astrologer, you read what you see and understand. Your middle name is not God therefore you cannot be expected to play that role. Not even the scientific or the religious communities get to do that. You may

perform very well with some energy patterns or techniques and not so well with others. You will be comfortable with some clients and not with others. Sometimes it may seem like two steps forward and one backward. However, with each three-step process, there is forward movement. This is true of astrology, of science and of life. I call this the cosmic dance. You will learn and grow through your experience as you develop your astrological choices.

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Identification, Paradox, Contradiction, the Flip Side of the Coin

Have you ever noticed that most sun-sign books are quite upbeat and positive about the astrological characteristics of any sign? I am a Scorpio, and when I first read opinions as to who I was supposed to be, there were a number of characteristics with which I just did not identify. Over time, I established a better perspective of what the books were attempting to teach me. Experience with certain characteristics, particularly those with which I had disagreed, resulted in clarification. Since you will probably be encountering such paradoxes, contradictions and an occasional lack of identification for yourself and those you read, it seems like a good discussion point for astrological choices. A couple of examples might help clarify conundrums you may encounter in reading for yourself and others.

Sun-sign clarification To me, most sun-sign books leave out a really important piece of information that could promote better identification with the sign traits. Earth is a great big schoolhouse and we are all students. You do not come in as a master of your Sun-sign. You come in as a *student* of that sign. If astrological authors would just add the words “to learn” to the beginning of each sun-sign heading, it would give a more accurate perspective. You are here to learn or develop the qualities of your particular sun-sign, preferably the positive qualities. For example, I am described as secretive because I am a Scorpio. I am not a particularly secretive person. Can I be secretive when necessary? Of course I can. Have I had to learn lessons about secrets and secretiveness? Yes, I have. “Secretive” is the name of a lesson plan, not necessarily an inbred characteristic. You are a student, not a master, of your sun-sign, and that includes all the good qualities and also all the negative qualities.

Flip side of any coin¹ My students probably got tired my repeating “every front has a back”. Most of what is penned in astrology books shows the positive nature of a sign, a planet, a house or an aspect. I enjoy authors who address both sides of an astrological element. If you have paid attention, life is not usually one-sided and positive. Instead life is a mixture of experience. The elements of astrology are like that. On their faces they

have specific qualities, but if you turn them over and look at them from the back side or even the inside, the flip side of their issues are also present. For example, Aries is dynamic and active. Flip the Aries coin over and you can get aggressive and foolhardy from that same energy.

Another example: the astrological fourth house is home, hearth, family - all nice, positive words, Are all families that way? Not to my knowledge. Something in or affecting the fourth house may indicate a problem. The front of that fourth house coin is something positive but the back of that same coin can show us what the fourth house problems are. As another example, beauty or talent can be such a gift... and it can be such a curse as well. Just look at the lives of our beauty queens through history. This is not paradox or contradiction. It is life itself, the front and the back of each particular coin.

Identification and denial Once upon a time, I read for a man who had trouble identifying with my reading. We pressed on because he wanted to take home the audio tape I provided with my readings in order to study his reading. He played it for his roommate who told him my reading was on the money. He called me a few days later and told me he had played the tape ten or so times over the intervening period. It totally amazed me that anyone would play hours of my voice repeating itself. He said that each time he played the tape he understood more. He said that as he replayed the tape, he heard parts he had not heard earlier that had clearly been there for every run through. Yes, I provided a tape because I talk really fast and use lots of words. He told me there was much on the tape to which he just did not want to admit and he did not want to view himself in that light. I didn't think there was anything about his reading that was that difficult to own or understand, just some lessons he was learning. He walked away satisfied that the reading was valid, but we sure took the long way around to get there.

Sometimes our view of ourselves takes a little study and some clarifying. We are human and can rationalize and justify our beliefs, our actions and our opinions. The overall purpose of any reading would be self-understanding. As long as we achieve our goal, the method may be daunting at times.

Another example...I was born with a very wide Sun / Uranus opposition that could indicate a rebel (one way of reading that aspect). However, I was *not* rebellious as a child. I understand I was a rather easy child to raise, so I did not initially identify with or demonstrate that supposedly rebellious opposition. Imagine my now ex-husband's surprise when my

Sun / Uranus opposition coming-out party occurred at age 31. I am very small, at that time a little over five feet and perhaps 115 pounds, but I physically threw a six-foot, 180-pound man out of my front door. No one was more surprised than me. Well...my then-husband was pretty surprised, too.

I can tell you my life clearly shows a before and after picture - one behavior up to age 31 and a completely different behavior after age 31. Before Uranus kicked in, I was a simple product of my old-fashioned culture and environment. After Uranus kicked in, I revealed my independence, became happy in my uniqueness and more the rebel against unnecessary restrictions... and I became an astrologer! Before you throw away the nature of an aspect or issue with which you are not identifying, know that your experience and your identification can vary over a lifetime. What does not apply to you now may apply to you as you grow and become.

Paradox and Contradiction To start with, let us establish that humans are paradoxical and contradictory in themselves, in their actions and in their experiences. Contradiction and paradox are normal parts of human experience, so do not be surprised if you encounter either or both in a chart. For example:

- ✓ You could have competing issues through which you are working.
- ✓ You can have good days and bad days in dealing with the sorting process.
- ✓ You can have issues when you are younger that become easier for you as you get older.
- ✓ You can have issues that erupt or develop out of current experience and establish new behaviors or challenges.

I have done all the above in my 80+ years of living, preferably but not always one at a time.

What if you had the Sun in the fourth house plus a Moon / Mars conjunction? One reading could be that you are very family-oriented but have great angst with Mom and / or the family. Both the closeness and the angst can show up in your chart and they will initially appear to contradict each other as a reading or to form a paradox in your experience.

Cancellation? Both issues are operating and both sides are valid. They *do not* cancel each other out. Do not bypass such a contradiction and do not negate either segment. Instead, read both. I had a client with a Jupiter / Sun / Saturn tight conjunction. She has had a remarkably good life (Jupiter / Sun) with a strong drive for business success (Sun / Saturn) that has managed to both drive and elude her to the degree that she would consider meaningful. Paradox and contradiction are alive and well in human experience. One last point...

Life Happens Let us speculate about a person who has a primary dream and spends much of their life working toward that dream. At times, life gets in the way with circumstance, experience, behaviors or choices that interfere with the fulfillment of that dream. An accident, a lack of money or opportunity, family pressures, economic turndowns, illness and all sorts of other possibilities can occur. I am not being negative. I am merely illustrating the “sometimes life happens” possibility. The dream may be very visible in the sky map, but you cannot exclude the possibility of life and living interfering with or changing the dynamic. So you may see not only the dream in a sky map but the interruption of that dream. They may appear to contradict each other until *study* of the conflict or experience brings some clarity.

Many sky maps and readings are straight forward and do not offer such conundrums or confusion. Occasionally you will have to work a little harder to understand how each piece fits within the whole. The most important point I can make here is that you should make the astrological choice to read each piece and learn to deal with any conflict that arises. Do *not* use one piece of the wheel to cancel out another or you may lose valuable information and understanding. All elements of any wheel are valid. Your skills will develop with time as you make good astrological choices.

¹ <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/the+other+side+of+the+coin>

Section Three

Section Three is about the up-front choices of systems and techniques, what to study and when, a triage of really important choices.

- ✓ Chapter 14 – Sidereal or Tropical Systems
- ✓ Chapter 15 – Heliocentric Versus Geocentric Charts and Readings
- ✓ Chapter 16 – Timed Charts versus Generic Charts
- ✓ Chapter 17 – Equal and Unequal House Systems
- ✓ Chapter 18 – Chart Wheels - Rigid or Floating Tropical Houses
- ✓ Chapter 19 – Age of Aquarius - When, Where, Why and How
- ✓ Chapter 20 – Major Planets, Minor Planets, Comets and Asteroids
- ✓ Chapter 21 – Major and Minor Aspects
- ✓ Chapter 22 – Planets versus Points
- ✓ Chapter 23 – Personal Sensitive Points – Midheaven, Ascendant, Nodes

Sidereal or Tropical Systems

As with most other human endeavors, astrologers do not always keep it simple. There are so many choices for charting, so many techniques and pet theories, that it can be difficult to thread your way through the labyrinth of possibilities. Of the people who believe in astrology, both systems, sidereal and tropical, have their adherents and their detractors. Do we have a dilemma here? Is one system right and the other wrong? Are both right? A simple definition of the difference between the sidereal and tropical systems should help.

Astrology as we currently know it has been formed from a melting pot of astrological practices from all over the world, ranging from antiquity to modern times. All was retained and little was ever removed from that boatload of information, whether or not it collided. And everything discovered through new experience was added. Astrology in some form is found on each of Earth's inhabitable continents and elsewhere could be buried under tons of ice and debris or lost to volcanic catastrophes, tsunamis, or earth movements, to name just a few causes of lost information. On top of that are the usual human reasons.

Writing itself is not that old in terms of human occupation of the globe. Most information was handed down orally through the centuries and generations and not all of it made it through to today intact, accurate, or correctly translated. Some of it could be in error, incomplete, re-translated, edited or lost. There is a great body of work, but please try to imagine that such information was perfectly transmitted by selfless beings over the centuries and under all circumstances. That is not remotely possible in my mind, especially where humans are involved. We can be very willful and amazingly destructive. Having said that, if a great tablet surfaces somewhere that is carved in lightning by a supreme deity, protected from the possibility of defilement, change, corrosion, erosion and the like, I might be persuaded to pay attention.

There are many sources for astrology and they are quite different from each other. Each was thought to be accurate by those who practiced the method and some are in conflict. As was previously mentioned, what was suitable for a riverbank civilization was not necessarily pertinent to

blizzard conditions in the Arctic regions or the deserts of the Middle East. Two basic camps of astrology are common, depending upon which sky view is in use. Both camps start the zodiac circle with Aries and end with Pisces. This was not always the order in ancient astrology, but is true today.

There are those who believe the stars in the sky are “fixed” in relationship to each other and that astrology should therefore be based on the fixed stars and constellations, galactic in measure. Sidereal astrology is used primarily by Jyotish (Hindu) eastern astrologers and also by a minority of western astrologers (sidereal). This system maps the signs as aligned to the zodiac constellations and maintains a very old system related to constellational astrology, which we call the Fixed Zodiac. In modern times, Aries occurs from approximately April 14th to May 14th in the sidereal system.

Western Astrology uses a different base from which to measure, the orientation of Earth’s axis to the plane of our orbit around our Sun producing our evident seasons. The arbitrary beginning is the Vernal Equinox when our Sun, the center of our particular solar system, enters 00 Aries on or about March 21st of each year. The signs follow in order through the zodiac and end with Pisces to complete one full circle just as in the fixed system. Notice the difference in the date of commencement between the two systems, approximately 24 days difference. This seasonal system is called tropical astrology and the majority of western astrologers follow this system, as do I.

Once upon a time, in approximately 290 AD¹, these two systems coincided (sources vary). They have slowly but surely moved apart over the intervening years with the current (2014) separation at approximately 24 degrees, and there are several choices for the adjustment rate. Astrology itself underwent a serious transformation close to this coincidence as the body of information known as astrology was seriously researched and codified into a merged body. The bulk of western astrological information used today comes from that compendium of information generated and codified at that time and from the works of Ptolemy. Of course, time and experience has added to or modified those methods. But again, little old material is discarded as more is added to the body of knowledge. There is a new drive underway to study the wisdom of our astrological forefathers to develop classical astrology. Many well-known astrologers, authors, and teachers study and support these very old but new rules.

Both the sidereal and tropical systems have come down through the ages as reliable systems of information, but they are quite different in construction and application. Both have strong adherents, some of which are puzzled by the use of the other system. Both systems work, as always depending on the accuracy of the work done, the skill of the astrologer and the experience being explored. My good friend Kishore Kattamuri is a Vedic astrologer, very good at what he does. The entire country of India collectively gets an annual reading covering the year ahead. Vedic astrology works for them. Since India has over one billion inhabitants, you cannot argue with that kind of success. But the readings for my Vedic friend's sidereal system and my practice using the tropical system are very different. Each can contribute to a person's understanding of their life and experience but will follow completely different approaches. My Vedic friend has read for me and I have read for him as well, each of us using our personal system and interpretation. The readings worked well for both of us in our experiences. Again, you cannot really argue with success.

There is nothing that says we cannot have more than one system. There is no reason to believe that one is ultimately right and the other is ultimately wrong. Each system has its value. Your choice of chart would depend on who you are and what you are seeking from a reading. Acceptance of the technique and information depends on your early conditioning and experience. Whatever reasoning and presentation are normal to you will resonate with you much faster and easier. This is not because one system is any more valid than the other, it is simply about what flows easiest for you.

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidereal_and_tropical_astrology

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayanamsa>

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_astrology

Website for casting sidereal plus tropical charts:

<https://horoscopes.astro-see.com/tropical-vs-sidereal-zodiac-astrology-calculator>

For a look at the Vedic chart of singer Taylor Swift, go to:

<http://www.navamsa.com/?p=1398>

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Heliocentric versus Geocentric Charts and Readings

Ancient man looked up at his dazzling night sky and marveled at the wonders of the heavens. Life was primitive and difficult, but the night sky was truly a thing of beauty. I would like to believe this was a bright moment in what must have been a difficult physical existence. Man dreamed his dreams and experienced his visions as the panorama of the sky revealed itself night after night. The patterns were paradoxically fixed, yet moving. Many similarities were observable night after night, but even such sameness shifted gradually as presumably unknown to man, the Earth revolved on its axis and traveled in its orbit. However, to the supposedly unaware inhabitants of that spinning, racing planet, they were stationary and the visions of the night sky were in motion. Constellations were chosen and named, and storytelling developed into cosmic myth. It was thought that the bowl of heaven, the visible half circle dome of the sky, contained the whole of the heavens. The day sky was dominated by the Sun and was too bright to allow many observations with the exception of the Moon, or at sunrise and sunset when Mercury, Venus and on occasion Jupiter were briefly and periodically visible.

Over the centuries, observations of the influence of the heavens on human behavior and experience developed into astrological patterns and meanings handed down from generation to generation. Since life on Earth was the basis for human observation, those patterns and meanings were naturally night sky-based and geocentric (geo = Earth + centric = centered) or Earth-centered. Astronomy and astrology were united as those early stargazers developed an Earth-centered body of information. There are ancient maps that clearly reveal that the circular nature of the bodies and their travel was known. There are even ancient maps that show the Sun in the center of our local solar system with the other bodies circling the Sun. (*see Akkadian seal, Chapter 1*). Despite that knowing, the body of information that developed was Earth-centered and night sky-based and it has slanted the history of astronomy and astrology for many centuries.

Since most of us have been to school (thank a teacher that you can read) and have studied the normal science curriculum, we are currently aware that we live in a heliocentric system (helios = Sun + centric = centered), a Sun-centered system. But our astrological observations are that of an

Earth-centered system. How do we resolve science with common practice? Astronomers have been doing this for years. How? Worldwide navigation maps are all geocentric. Reality is heliocentric, but apparent reality (Earth's view) is geocentric. We are dealing with perspective, both galactic and personal. The best way to illustrate this is by illustrating parallax.

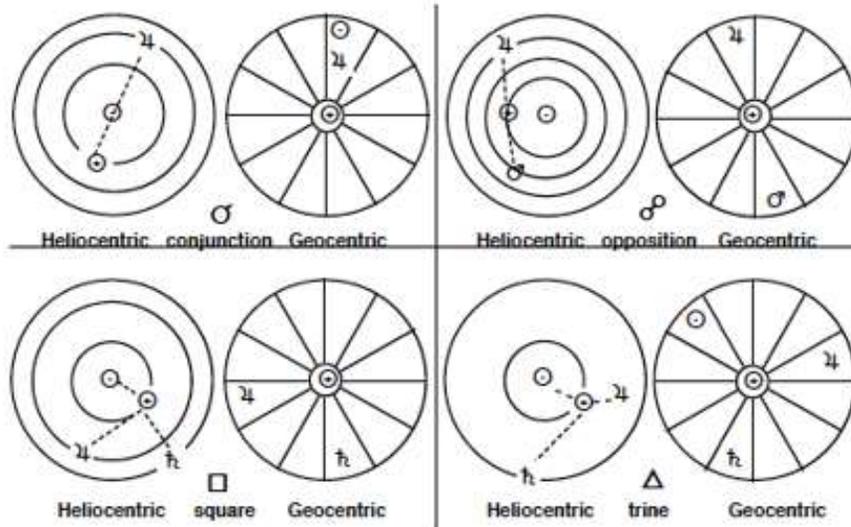
Parallax Find a small stationary object nearby, such as a door handle. Train your eyes on the object chosen and close one of your eyes. Hold one thumb up in front of your open eye and move your thumb until it covers the object chosen. Without moving your head, hand or thumb, close the open eye and open the previously closed eye. Did you notice that your vision somewhat jumped and that your thumb is no longer covering the object? In order for the object to be covered again you must move your thumb. Try this a couple of times to make the illustration clear. There are just a couple of inches between your eyes but there is a definite shift in perspective between what your left and your right eye see. Now think cosmically. There is a demonstrable difference in perspective over such a tiny distance (eyes). There should be a *tremendous* shift of perspective cosmically between the Sun as the center and the Earth as the center.

The planets and their satellites, asteroids, comets, and other space debris orbit our Sun, which happens to be approximately 93,000,000 miles away from us here on Earth. This is a 93,000,000-mile shift in perspective, not the tiny shift between our own two eyes. Our personal perspective is that all these bodies listed, including our Sun, orbit the Earth. The energy can be studied and applied as it is in generic reality (heliocentric) or as it is in our apparent and very personal reality (geocentric). This explanation will help you understand why our astronomers and mapmakers must use the Earth perspective to take their measurements, create tools and equipment, and apply those findings in an Earth-centered fashion. Seafarers and astrologers use the astronomical tables developed by scientists to create a personal perspective sky map. Most astrologers do not have a use for what is going on 93,000,000 miles away as they attempt to read a chart, they are looking for the personal perspective of an individual. So most astrologers prefer their mapping to be geocentric.



Does that make the heliocentric reality less real? Absolutely not; real is real. The very real heliocentric measure is scientifically accurate. The geocentric measure provides the apparent reality view based on Earth's personal perspective. The technique of heliocentric astrology exists but it is less popular than geocentric astrology. There are real applications for

heliocentric astrology, particularly in mundane charts such as weather, politics, the stock market, or natural geological experiences such as volcanoes or earthquakes. Also, there are serious students and adherents of heliocentric astrology for personal application, but it is not an either/or proposition.



One of the best readings I ever experienced used a combination of available charts. It combined a regular natal chart reading with a solar chart overlay. The detail was amazing. However, in this case the skill of the reader was paramount. The same is true of combining the usual geocentric chart with the heliocentric chart. The skill of the reader will determine the success or the failure of such a reading.

In my article title I used the word “versus” which can be true but can also be misleading. Your average astrologer will use a geocentric perspective. Your specialty astrologer may use a heliocentric perspective. Both will use different approaches, such as the left and right eye example, but both systems will have value. One is more generic to the whole of the system (heliocentric) and the other more personal to a specific location (geocentric). An astrologer skilled in the use of both systems may use them simultaneously, but may not see them as adverse to one another or versus. Why? Because both systems have real value. I have studied both, but I personally practice geocentric. That is not a judgment on the value of the two techniques. It is about my personal skill and choice.

As always, I urge you to experiment. You will not have to learn a *whole* new system to investigate heliocentric. The planets, signs, houses and aspects do not change their core nature. You will add an Earth/Moon position and reading, and you will eliminate the Sun because the entire system centers on the Sun as its core. You will also develop a new approach and application that may aid you in the delineation of any chart.

For heliocentric information I recommend any material you can access by the late Astrologer T. Pat Davis of Florida.

Timed Charts versus Generic Charts

Can you read a chart if you do not have the time of birth? You have a choice.

Obtaining the time of birth can prove to be difficult. Many people can provide their date and place of birth with only an occasional problem. Please be aware that many countries or situations do not have the opportunity or the accuracy that we here in the United States take for granted. I remember one student / client who had to correct her birth date after we had read her chart for about two years. We would get some of her reading right but, much to our puzzlement, other parts just did not work. She insisted that she did not have a Capricorn Moon and was sure she had a Sagittarius Moon. But...we had to go with the birth information she had been given by her parents. A later surprising revelation confirmed that she had been born in rural France, just outside Paris. Transportation was limited, with few if any cars in use. Her father had to walk into town to register her birth the following day. The birth certificate was issued for the day he registered her birth and not the day she was born. She actually did have a Sagittarius Moon.

Unless the time is given on the birth record, entered in a family Bible or record, or there is a bassinet card from the hospital nursery, then family memory is the only alternative and can be notoriously wrong. If the data is wrong, the chart will be wrong. Think of the common phrase used with entering computer data...garbage in, garbage out! There are some parts of the chart that do not change quickly from day to day, so there can be some reasonable accuracy from those elements. There are other parts of the chart that do change rapidly and inaccuracy would be an understatement. For example, on the midheaven alone, a degree of change is equal to four minutes on the birth clock and a year in the progressing life of an individual. You can see how accuracy would provide the most useful reading.

To add to the confusion, over the centuries, time patterns and even calendars have varied from country to country and can cause great confusion. Before the advent of computer-generated charts, charts had to be cast by hand, a time-consuming and at times frustrating exercise. In

addition, there was so much math involved in constructing a chart that error was common. The mathematical principles of casting a chart rely on spherical trigonometry, ephemerides for planetary data, worldwide time zone patterns, plus mathematical longitude and latitude tables.

Time zones alone were a crazy-maker, with Indiana probably the worst possible state to determine. Oddities crept into the source information such as Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia, PA recording the time of the afterbirth for sixteen years rather than the time of birth, substantially affecting the validity of the birth time. One town might observe daylight savings time while the next town over did not. In addition, loss, fire and destruction of records occurred frequently.

In the 20th century, much research over years of effort by hundreds of willing astrologers started to solidify the info and fill in the gaps. I personally drove to Miami to research newspaper archives for daylight savings time changes in prior years. Today's internet-access and material and the advent of computer-generated charts have made our lives much easier and charts are now more accurate. The system is still not perfect, but it is the best we can make it with the records available to us.

And, of course, there were all sorts of arguments as to what constituted time of birth. Astrologers are instructed to look for the first indrawn breath, but there is no telling what was the basis of recorded birth times. Was it the crowning of the head, the emergence of the body, the cutting of the umbilicus, the first indrawn breath...or cry, or perhaps the time of the afterbirth? Were the watches and clocks accurate? Was the time recorded right away and accurately, or did someone forget to write it down and guessed at it later? Did the hospital use the same time standard as the surrounding area? Many hospitals recorded standard time for that zone regardless if daylight savings time were in effect. Now there stands a tiny piece of information that could be hard to determine, but of primary interest. An hour's error in birth time could seriously change the chart and change some prediction elements by approximately fifteen years.

- ✓ Longitude and latitude sound quite reliable, but even so there were confusions. For example, there are three Brooklyns in the state of New York in three different counties. You must clarify that unexpected question.
- ✓ Look at the shape of the international dateline for a small jolt of reality. You would think it was a straight longitude and therefore time line on the globe... it is not!

- ✓ I can remember taking an astrological test with the stated city of birth as Atlanta, Georgia, but the longitude and latitude listed was offshore in the Atlantic Ocean. How do you cast an accurate chart and define progressing aspect activations when the base data is so skewed? I simply made a note of the error at the top of my test page then answered the questions as if the base data were accurate. I passed that test with a 96 score! It was helpful that I recognized the error and noted it, but the test still had to be taken with the material provided, so I compensated by pointing out error.

Even though we have occasional problems with date and location, the ongoing problem for astrologers is time of birth. Categorically...you want an accurate chart to do an accurate reading. Even when you *have* an accurate chart you must be aware of the existence of potential error as previously mentioned. Just keep a mental note of that possibility as you do your readings. Feedback from the subject of the reading helps you determine the accuracy or the lack of it for each chart. This is a process.

- ✓ I have the good fortune to have birth time information for four people born within a 24-hour period...female time twins (see article)¹. Three of the four are astrologers, the oldest is not. Two have since passed away (a good example of difference in experience).
- ✓ I have research charts for two children born twenty minutes apart in the same hospital to two completely different families, one with one club foot and the other with two club feet. Both babies had Moon in Pisces, which rules the feet. To me, the physical difference between the children is a function of time of birth.
- ✓ I have charts of triplet males born a total of eight minutes apart. One is straight, one is gay, one is bi-sexual. This must be a function of time of birth, particularly the chart angles. No other placement can move fast enough to illustrate the difference.

In charting, time is critically important for accuracy.

Generic... The second part of the original question was about charts with no birth time and no ordinary way to obtain the birth time, or what I call a generic chart. It is a perfectly valid chart for anyone born on that 24-hour day anywhere on the globe. This date of birth only is the basis for

sun sign columns and radio or speculative readings. I have done all those kinds of forecasting over the years and they do work... to a point. They can never be as specific as a timed chart on a purely astrological basis. Additionally, they could serve as a focus point for a person reading with psychic abilities to allow for a more personal application.

Rectification... With skill, a reasonably capable astrologer can use events in a person's life to rectify a chart, to actually determine the time of birth. Due to some research I was doing, I actually rectified my mother's time unknown birth to a timed chart. At best, this is a calculated guess, but all the events in my mother's life worked quite well. It took me five hours to do the work!

Johndro charting... With the addition of place of birth, a Johndro chart could be calculated which brings longitude and latitude into play. Few astrologers know how to cast a Johndro chart so you will rarely encounter it or its delineation tools. Perhaps your computer program offers that possibility. I have not researched this type of chart.

Having said all this, you can get some general information for an individual using a generic chart. While we might prefer the accuracy and potential detail of an accurately timed chart, occasionally we have to rough it. Read, issue a basic disclaimer, discuss and get feedback so you can learn to read more using less. Learn how.

¹ See "Revisiting History: Time Twins...What an Interesting Concept!": <http://www.marilynmuir.net/articles/revisiting-history-time-twins-what-an-interesting-concept/>

Tropical Equal and Unequal House Systems

As stated earlier, a few brief articles eventually led to this apparent mission to provide basic choice explanations for the rudimentary principles of astrology. For this chapter, we will look at the tropical system of both equal and unequal houses. I am not a sidereal astrologer, so please rely on someone who is skilled in the sidereal system for an explanation of sidereal house layouts.

The outside of a typical western astrology wheel shows the positions of the zodiac for a single date at a specific moment in time, at a specific longitude / latitude. If any of those four elements, date, time, and place by longitude and latitude are changed in any way, the zodiac positions around the wheel will change. Additionally, no two objects can occupy the same space at the same time, so an exact duplication of charts is not possible unless a team of doctors does something truly amazing, which would present a conundrum to astrologers everywhere.

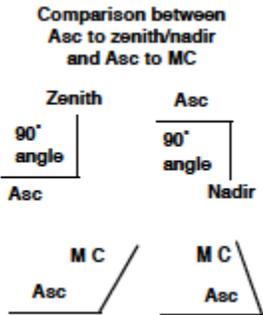
Note: In 2016 I examined the chart of conjoined twins, attached at the top of the head. It was a first for me. This was a singular birth of two distinct individuals. My reason for the charting was that the twins were separated and the medical information was available... and the one became two. Astrological research on conjoined twins is needed and should include the moment of separation for additional charting.

The universe emphasizes individuality. The specificity of birth based on the four elements given allows for the individuality offered by the universe to be mapped. Within our solar system, it takes just under 26,000 years for a pattern to apparently repeat itself. By that time, we will have moved so far along in the much larger galactic spin that no real duplication is remotely possible. Individuality is the norm. Only mankind works so hard to develop conformity from individuality.

There are two general types of Tropical house systems: equal and unequal. The equal house system divides the 360-degree circle into twelve equal compartments of thirty degrees each, with the implication that each part is equal. I do not know your experience of life, but mine is that life certainly is not equal. Just look around you at the variety of possibilities and the

rampant inequality. All house systems could serve a specific yet perhaps different or unknown purpose. While I can see value in any house system, I do not generally practice the equal house method. Choice! As I mentioned previously, one of the best personal readings I ever received was from an overlay of equal and tropical Placidus. I do not discount the value of the equal system, but it is my choice to read and to teach the unequal system.

To begin, it is important that you understand the difference between the Midheaven (Medium Coeli or MC) and Zenith, as well as the Imum Coeli (IC) and Nadir. They are different in measure and application but are often confused with one another. In order to do this, we will assume an accurate Ascendant, say 29 Gemini. If I look straight overhead to 29 Pisces, that location is Zenith. If I look straight down at my feet at 29 Virgo that is Nadir, each an exact 90 degrees from the Ascendant. The opposition to the Ascendant is the Descendant in all house systems, in this instance 29 Sagittarius. All the equal houses would read 29 degrees, starting with the Ascendant and proceeding counterclockwise around the wheel in zodiac sequence. This is an equal house chart. You may choose to “float” the traditional Midheaven if known to you in the house it naturally falls or you may choose to ignore it. Personally, I cannot imagine life without a Midheaven!



Why? The Earth revolves on its axis while it orbits the Sun, a dual motion that is in play every moment of every day. This orbital path is called the ecliptic (the path on which eclipses occur) and it travels through the middle of the twelve zodiac constellations we use astronomically and astrologically. The rotation of the Earth on its axis is *not* in a ninety-degree relationship with its orbit. Instead, Earth is tilted approximately 23 ½ degrees to the path of its orbit. This tilted rotation causes the Earth to spin in and out of that exact ninety-degree relationship with the center of the zodiac, distorting the way the zodiac is experienced here on Earth. That natural distortion reflects itself in the unequal distribution of space for houses. The personal chart Midheaven may or not be at a 90-degree angle to the Ascendant. My own Midheaven / Ascendant difference is 117°, almost a trine of 120°.

In tropical tradition, the IC is the exact opposition to the MC (Imum Coeli / 4th cusp and Medium Coeli / 10th cusp) including sign, degree and minute. The Midheaven represents the highest point to which a planet can rise before it starts to descend toward the western horizon, which is termed setting. The IC represents the lowest point to which a planet can fall before it starts to ascend toward the eastern horizon or rising. This distortion produces an unusual and unique distribution of zodiac degrees around the

wheel of the chart that reflects in the unequal house systems. Technically, the next step would be the division of that distortion by either space or time producing the various unequal house systems, but that will not be covered in this section. This explanation is only intended to help you understand equal versus unequal houses.

Date, time, and place are the three essential ingredients of a unique birth map. Date is easy, place is given by longitude and latitude; time on the clock is further defined by the time standard in play at the place of birth. The Ascendant is set for the moment of birth intersecting a specific point of the zodiac on the rising (left) side of the wheel, the rising sign. That point may be empty or occupied by a planet.

Empty of a body has no particular meaning that I can determine. It essentially allows that point of the zodiac to operate as the 'ruling' or dominant energy in that person's life. When I mention the degree of the zodiac as dominant, it is the ruling planet of that zodiac degree that actually assumes dominance. If there is a physical planetary body present at that degree, the zodiac degree ruler *and* the planet in question co-rule or are also dominant energies in that person's life. Is there more than one planet at that rising zodiac degree? Now the chart gets really interesting as the dominant qualities more or less vie for top dog position.

Distortion In my own natal unequal wheel, the first house contains only nineteen degrees, the second house only twenty degrees, and the third house only 24 degrees - or about 63 degrees for that whole first quadrant. That is accurate. The closer you are to the equator, the more equal the houses are. The farther you move off the equator north or south, the less equal the houses are.

This unequal house variation is what can cause interceptions in houses. Close to the equator, there are few if any possibilities of interception. As you move north or south from the equator for a birth location, the distortion of the houses increases and the probability of interception also increases. As you move into the latitudes of say northern Europe, the British Isles, the northern part of Eurasia, etc., multiple interceptions are possible. The same is true of the southern hemisphere, although human population density decreases as you approach Antarctica.

The closer you get to the less heavily populated northern polar countries, the Midheaven and the Ascendant can be literally almost on top of each other. This serves as cause for equal house proponents to show the inadequacy of unequal houses. To the contrary, I believe this proves the validity of the unequal house system. As we travel north or south toward

either polar region life gets more difficult and survivalist in nature. Since the Ascendant represents our physical self and the Midheaven represents our goals in life, I believe that to have them close to conjunct would translate into personal survival as the goal of existence. The close proximity of the Ascendant and Midheaven would squash the 11th and 12th houses into that physical survival mode. I do not think there is a lot of socializing going on in the Arctic north or the Antarctic south. There are limited opportunities and survival is the name of that game. And the self-sabotaging of the 12th house could be explained by simply not paying close enough attention to your environment (e.g., hungry polar bears, ice breakage, etc.).

Since all intercepted houses are a pairing by axis, the same situation would be true as the IC cozied up to the Descendant with the 5th and 6th houses squashed into that tight grouping. It is not my intention in this article to define intercepted houses, but it is important to your understanding of equal and unequal houses that interceptions do occur naturally, but *only* in unequal charts.

Equal house charts are easier to construct and there are no interceptions possible. Unequal houses take math skills or a good computer program. Equal houses are more generic in quality, but are quite effective if you are doing quick mini-readings for something like a fund-raiser, a psychic fair, radio or television work. Sometimes birth times are not known or available. You can work successfully with time unknown, but accurate data gives better results. In addition, the pairing of equal with unequal as mentioned previously gave an extraordinary reading done for me by Astrologer Jayj Jacobs. Each astrologer chooses what works best for them, but that is not a judgment on a system. It is a personal preference. Each has value and each has a place in your skill set, but you will choose one as primary.

Chart Wheels - Rigid or Floating Tropical Houses

I have just explained the use of equal or unequal tropical house systems. The choice of wheel style is another choice that is made early in the study of astrology, perhaps at a time when the student does not understand what they are choosing. There are many possibilities for style. Some you may feel quite comfortable with, but there are formats that may cause vague discomfort to you when you attempt to read a chart. Usually discomfort is produced by the usual feelings generated by the unfamiliar. This is entirely changeable should you choose to do so. Astrologers are creatures of habit as are all humans. Change what is familiar and we can be momentarily uncomfortable. Spend a few days with a new format and the discomfort will vanish.

Equal House The most common layout in the west is the rigid format that distributes twelve equal, pie-shaped segments around the wheel. The Ascendant is always the left-center position on the wheel, located at the nine o'clock position. The houses are then numbered sequentially counter-clockwise around the wheel starting with that Ascendant, which is also known as the cusp of the first house. The next rigid line that appears counter-clockwise is the cusp of the second house and so forth around the whole wheel to a total of twelve houses. The house itself begins with the initiating cusp, flowing counter-clockwise from the Ascendant, and each house extends until it encounters the next house cusp.

If you are using an equal house system, the rigid house format is very convenient as 1/12th segments of the physical wheel match the thirty degrees of a single zodiac sign. Since equal house cusps traditionally retain the degrees and minutes of the Ascendant around the chart, only the sign symbols change from cusp to cusp. These are again placed sequentially counter-clockwise. The difference between the house layouts has been described in the previous *Astrological Choices* chapter on equal and unequal houses. This particular layout design is called equal house, but has several applications.

Sunrise chart If you do not know the time of birth, it is common to set the wheel with the Sun directly on the Ascendant or rising point and this is called a Sunrise chart. This solar wheel is generic, readable for everyone born on that day anywhere in the world, but to me it is not as specific as an accurately timed birth map.

Noonmark chart Alternatively, you can place the Sun directly on the Midheaven, denoting the importance of the culmination point where the Sun has completed the rising part of its daily cycle and is transitioning to the setting part of its daily cycle. This is the approximate center of the business part of the day and places the Sun on or near the business-related Midheaven. The Moon position is questionable.

The Aries rising wheel is constructed with 00 Aries on the Ascendant and 00 degrees of each succeeding sign on each succeeding house in a counter-clockwise direction. The planets are then dropped in place by sign and degree as would be the Midheaven and Ascendant if known. This is popular with Midpoint, Cosmobiology and Trans-Neptunian astrology. Personally, I have had very limited use of this particular chart, so I am not an expert. I recommend Astrologer Michael Munkasey's work on this subject. Again, the moon is somewhat questionable.

Whole-sign wheel Increasingly in use is the whole sign wheel. The Ascendant sign is determined, but rather than the actual degree, zero degrees of that sign is placed on the Ascendant and the balance of the wheel shows zero degrees of each succeeding sign. The planets are then dropped in place. You must drop the Ascendant and Midheaven in place as well. I have not personally used this wheel. This concept reminds me of a Hindu technique of wheel construction.

Unequal houses The other layouts described in this chapter will fall into the unequal category. Know there are multiple choices here as well. House system used and choice of layout or design is personal. My choice for reading and teaching (and this workbook) is Tropical Placidus, unequal.

When using full birth data (date, time and place), accurate and detailed positions are generated. Repeating: equalization in house size is normal near the equators with unequal house sizes increasing as you move into high northern or high southern latitudes as described previously. While the segments could be drawn equal in size for convenience, the houses themselves will vary in size.

Repeating my earlier description briefly, the various unequal house systems (i.e.; Placidus, Koch, Porphyry, etc.) reflect differing divisions of time and space. The common factor is that the houses may or may not contain thirty degrees each and may vary widely as the birth latitude becomes part of the equation. The farther the birth location is from the equator, the more varied are the size of the houses and interceptions may be produced in houses larger than thirty degrees.

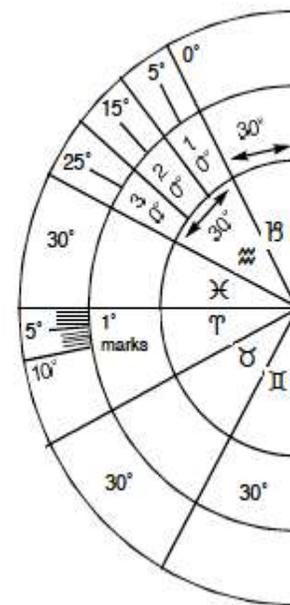
Charts derived from full birth data are personal and individualized. It is possible for a Sunrise chart to also be the true natal chart with the Sun directly on the eastern horizon at the moment of birth. The equal-house version would be considered to be the generic chart, good for any person born on that day, and the unequal-house version would be considered to be a typical natal chart.

Noonmark wheel This layout is particularly useful for business, countries, states, stock market IPOs, etc. because the focus of such a wheel is on the business part of the day. Again, this is somewhat generic, but tends to center your reading on the business part of the day rather than the more personal concept of the sunrise wheel previously explained. Simply put in 12:00 PM at the local longitude, latitude and time zone. The Sun should be close to the Midheaven, depending upon whether or not daylight savings time correction is used.

Personally, when I set a speculative chart (one where time is unknown), I prefer the Noonmark chart because there will be less error in the positions of the planets as listed in the midnight ephemerides (midnight is my personal preference) than the more commonly used Sunrise speculative chart. Again, the Sunrise wheel lends itself towards a more personal application and the Noonmark wheel lends itself towards a more business-oriented application.

The tropical floating format (no hard lines on the wheel) is common in Europe and has its own value; the rigidity is removed. But if you need the visual aid, you must draw in the cusps at the degree markers around the outer edge of the wheel itself (360 degrees), using the very tiny tick marks to locate each cusp. Of course if the chart is computer-generated, this might already be done for you. Simply choose European format and whether you prefer the wheel to be Ascendant- or Midheaven-based. The same basic information is contained in each choice, rigid or floating, but the layout looks different to the eye and you may find a certain choice preferable. That is the purpose to this series. You do have choices. I am attempting to educate you to possibilities so that you make good choices for yourself.

Zodiacal measurements



The key to the European formats is that the chart floats free with no rigid diagram, again based on one of two choices. One choice would be to assemble the chart from the Midheaven perspective and allow the balance of the chart to flow from that point. The other choice would be to set the Ascendant as the starting point and allow the balance of the chart to flow from there. Reasoning is given in previous paragraphs.

There is an advantage to free-floating house cusps. When you look at the wheel, you can easily see the size differential of the houses and that may help you in your reading. When looking at the Midheaven, the approximate noon position on the clock, whether that is by the rigid or the floating format, you have created a visual reference for the culmination of a rising planet, the point where it moves from rising to setting. That could conceivably assist you in your reading, particularly in areas of goals, ambition, accomplishment and position in the world. Conversely, the sunrise position illustrates the rising (into visibility) of the Sun itself.

When looking at the Ascendant which will be located near the 9 A.M. position on the clock, whether that be by the rigid or the floating format, you have created a visual reference for the way the individual responds to the world, their coping skills, and how others may see that individual.

Regardless of what house layout you choose, you are not ever locked in on a choice made before you were informed that there were other options. Once you get the opportunity to look into these possibilities, set a few examples so you can examine your choices. The system you choose is always negotiable. A few days of practice would get you past the natural resistance we have to the new and untried versus the known therefore comfortable. Something will appeal to you either because it requires less effort, gives more information, or just feels right. Ignorance is never your friend. Experiment so you can make informed personal *Astrological Choices*.

Age of Aquarius - When, Where, Why and How

“When the Moon is in the seventh house and Jupiter aligns with Mars”... The words from the song “*Aquarius*”¹ about the coming of the Age of Aquarius performed by the singing group The Fifth Dimension grabbed our attention more than forty years ago. While I love that song and frequently sing it at the top of my lungs, astrologically it does not say much - it is just fun. There is so much controversy about the Age of Aquarius and when it should begin that I thought a choice presentation was in order. What is an Age? How is it produced? How long does it last? What is there about the changing of an Age that grabs our attention so thoroughly?

We must go back to basics and start with the fact that astrology is a study of cycles - long term, short term, universal, multi-versal, cosmic, galactic, solar system, planet orbit, satellite or moon, etc. Then add all the debris left over from the formation of our solar system such as dwarf planets, asteroids, comets and good old space dust. And there might even be some stuff out there of which we are completely ignorant. We certainly have a variety from which to choose. Some of the cycles are so huge and involve such enormous time concepts, they are beyond comprehension. I will dispose of those cycles quickly so we can spend our time and thought on the more local and therefore more personal activations.

Think: circle, big circle, with a whole bunch of slightly smaller circles contained within it and you will get my picture of the universe. Additionally, there might be many universes, a literal multiverse, only one of which is ours. It keeps the scientists guessing. Whether they are in any way inter-related or on different wavelengths or dimensions is part of an ongoing philosophic discussion. Whatever the answer is, our universe is immense and it is enlarging at a rapid pace.

Recent astronomical thought is that what we call the universe started with a big bang 13.82 billion years ago and has been expanding ever since (source: Planck). What began as a singularity exploded out into multiplicity and everything is contained within this expanding bubble of

activity. The exploded matter or debris from the explosion is distributed irregularly so some parts of our universe are denser than others. As this bubble expands, the distances between the internal content also expands. Think: big circle getting bigger, including everything contained within it on some level or in some manner.

As the universe blasted out into the original void (space), pockets of activity developed and stellar nurseries spawned billions of stars: big ones, little ones, long-lived, short-lived, with variety and number beyond imagination. Every time our scientists think they have a handle on it, it reveals more of itself. Think: huge! These pockets of possibility over billions of years of the universe's life developed into stars with planet entourages, galaxies and all the amazing cosmic bodies. There is such variety that just determining and cataloging it (Astronomy) is daunting to say nothing of identifying and explaining it in terms of human experience (Astrology). While the scientists keep learning and guessing, it is difficult for interpreters (Astrologers) to pin down the definitions of experience.

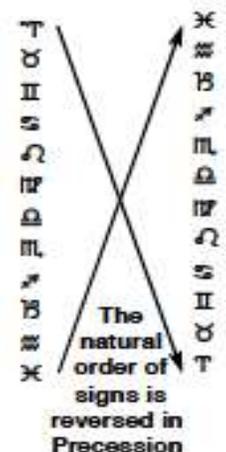
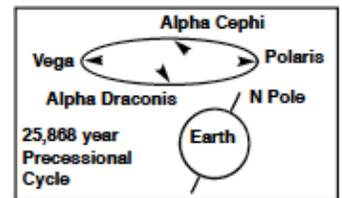
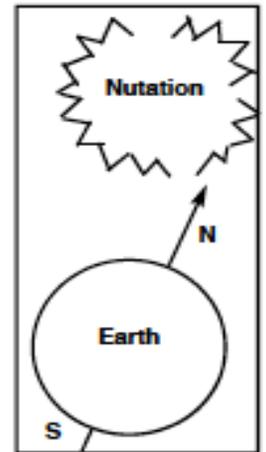
The galaxies are in constant motion and sometimes run into each other. One may cannibalize another, but constant motion and change is the norm, with amazing differences spawned as a result. Individuality is universal and conformity is man-made.

Locally our personal galaxy, the Milky Way, is a hybrid of merging galaxies and may eventually be swallowed up by the much larger Andromeda Galaxy. This will not occur anytime soon, so don't be nervous. We are part of a local cluster of about thirty galaxies that rotate around a common center, and I have no idea how long a cycle that would be - the science is in flux. I only know that it is incredibly long - way beyond 200,000 years. With the current political debate about immigration, I laughed when I read that our Sun and its entourage of planets and space junk is an immigrant into what we call our own galaxy absorbed from a prior galactic collision. What does that mean to our Milky Way Galaxy citizen status? We should be glad that there is no one present who can throw us out. I digress. Our galaxy spins around a common center that is thought to be a black hole. Our solar system exists on an outer spiral band about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way out from the center of the galaxy (sources vary). The individual galactic spin takes over 200 million years to complete, a huge circle that exists within the larger circle of the galactic cluster. Again, circles within circles², in constant motion around something larger.

For more personal and manageable circles, we must look within our own solar system. Each planet has a somewhat circular orbit at a specific distance from the Sun, and those planets also have small bodies in orbit around them called satellites or moons. All the matter within this solar system is bound by the gravitational attraction of the Sun. It is all in continual motion, and that motion is basically circular. Little circles within larger circles within.... you get the picture.

- ✓ The particular circle³ that sets the Ages of this material is measured from Earth's north pole. As Earth orbits our Sun, our north/south poles are tilted at 23.5° compared to our orbit.
- ✓ Earth is irregularly shaped. The water nicely covers up the uneven contours of the Earth so we look round from an outside viewpoint.
- ✓ Earth is also orbited by a satellite, our Moon, which is ¼ our size. The Moon exerts a magnetic pull of its own on Earth. As we rotate and orbit, we wobble slightly on our axis like a child's spinning top (nutations).
- ✓ That wobble is measurable and traces out a circle in the sky that takes just under 26,000 years to complete. Different sources provide different figures. The source I personally use was the first one I encountered around forty years ago and it says 25,858 years. The backdrop of that circle is the constellational zodiac of twelve signs. The rounded-off version is 26,000 years divided by twelve signs or approximately 2,155 to 2160 years per sign. 2,160 is generally used for the length of a single Age. We have no way of knowing what the zero year was to start the whole count!
- ✓ There is a trick to the Ages. The polar wobble moves backwards through the zodiac signs rather than the forward order we are used to when reciting the signs, so the Ages move backward through the signs as well. This astronomical measure is called the Precession of the Equinox, the measuring principle. For the last couple of thousand years we have been in the Age of Pisces and we have already or are about to move into the Age of Aquarius.

There is a specific measuring principle that indicates that the changing of the Age will occur in the 2400s to 2600s AD. I have a personal conundrum with this dating because the event markers for the Age of Aquarius are already in evidence. My explanation is that since there are no written instructions, the assumption that all the ages are equal may or may not be true. If each age is approximately 2160 years marker to marker, then we

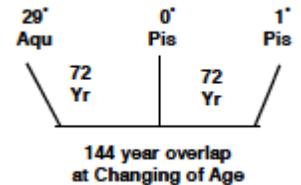


are still in the Age of Pisces. If each Age is not exactly equal, as the constellations themselves are not equal, the beginning of this new Age may already be upon us. The fact that the wobble itself fluctuates suggests the possibility to me that the numbers are not necessarily rigid. I stand on the Age of Aquarius side of the debate. Why? As I mentioned earlier, evidence...

- ✓ Uranus, which has been given primary influence over Aquarius, was finally identified as a planet in 1781, several years after the start of the U.S. Revolutionary War. That year also marked the beginning of what would become the French Revolution. Uranus had been sighted prior to this discovery date, but had not been specifically identified. Following that incredible period for individualism and independence came the U.S Civil War, the industrial revolution, the era of invention with the steam engine, the automobile, the plane, the bombs and rockets, space flight and more. All of these are based in revolution, independence and invention and flirted with the new era on into the future. That is all a very Uranian and not a Neptunian description. Neptune is the planet that symbolizes the Piscean Age.
- ✓ It is said in the Bible that the “Second Coming” of the Avatar or spiritual leader will occur when the “sign of man is in the heavens” (Matt 24:30). Well we have certainly done that. We have left space debris scattered from here to out past the outer edges of our solar system, the heliopause. The international space station recently had to decide whether or not to duck a piece of space junk. Even more recently, the remains of a previous launch landed in the Pacific Ocean. Or, is it possible that we are talking about the sign Aquarius as the “sign of man is in the heavens”?
- ✓ A most amazing picture to me is that of the black sky of space with the white-suited astronaut hanging over the semi-arc of the earth below⁴. Another profound image is the familiar picture of Astronaut Ed White tethered to a Gemini spacecraft in 1965. The “tether” he was testing is anchored like an umbilical cord as the first American man floated and turned in the vast expanse of space like a child in the womb of the universe. Then there is the photo of Astronaut Bruce McCandless on February 12, 1984. His white space suit hovers in the blackness of outer space while the upper edge of the blue earth floats beneath his feet. There is no umbilicus to his ship. He floats freely.

The sign of man is already in the heavens and it is inventive, innovative, revolutionary, independent and futuristic... all Uranus / Aquarius keywords. Keep in mind that Aquarius itself is considered to be “the sign of man”, the symbolism that accompanies it astrologically.

When? The changing of an Age is not a single point in time. There are no fences between the signs in outer space. At the edges of signs (cusps) there is a falling off of one sign energy and the initiation of another - a blending or merging that takes about 144 years to complete. Why? Because it takes 72 years for Earth’s north-pole pointer to traverse a single degree. Since the change occurs between the last degree of an existing Age and the first degree of the new Age, that equals two degrees by my math, or 144 years of time to end one Age and begin the next.



It is important to realize that because of precession, the end of any Age occurs in the first degree of that outgoing sign, 1 to 0 degree. The beginning of any Age occurs at the last degree of that incoming sign, 30 to 29 degrees.

Death of an Age would not be any easier than ordinary death. Birth has never been considered easy, and that would include the birth of an Age. For the changing of an Age, birth and death are occurring simultaneously and happens at the end of one Age and the beginning of its successor.

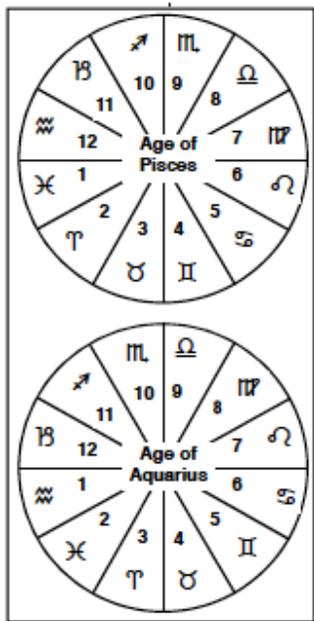
For a simple illustration of this blending, place your two hands together, palms up with fingers facing each other. Slide your hands together so that your fingers are lined up and interlaced. The fingers of one hand represent the death of the Age of Pisces. The fingers of the other hand represent the birth of the Age of Aquarius. At this moment in time, this interlacing of the two ages is happening. It takes 144 years. This is really a process rather than a singular event with a pivotal year. This is traumatic. Look around you at our current experience. And *you* volunteered to be here at this time...brave you.

To my mind, we have already concluded the Age of Pisces and have already entered the Age of Aquarius. We have moved from the age of believing, which is emotion not necessarily based in fact, to the age of knowing, which is intellectual, with knowledge as our friend. To me Pisces is our immediate history, our heritage that we had about 2000 years to learn. It includes our habits, our knowledge, our beliefs, our existing environmental patterning – all that we have been during the age.

- ✓ To my mind, Aquarius is our now and our future. We must learn, know, explore, invent and move toward the future. The remnants of Pisces will kick and scream and try to keep us locked in the past because the dying Age will try to cling to life. The coming Age is getting stronger and will hold dominance over human development for the next 2000+ years. The two Ages, one dying, one being born, and the trauma that accompanies both processes are locked together.

I think it is helpful to understand that “what has been” has been required to get us this far. “What will be” is the new direction for our future.

What I have been describing in other more political research and observations as the “dumbing down” of America due to the cutbacks in education is a little larger than that. It is a signature of the changing of the age. Staying locked in to the past through our existing belief systems is not an option. Eventually we will fully walk in the Age of Aquarius, an Age of knowledge, not belief. In the meanwhile, the struggle between that which has been our experience, and that, which is to become our experience, holds us all in thrall.



Perhaps you are one who believes that we are still in the Age of Pisces with its history steeped in the Age of Aries. Remember precession requires that we always move through the ages backwards through the zodiac. What would the Piscean Age be like? We would be driven by emotion, mystery, tremendous involvement in art forms and religious beliefs, the savior/victim mentality with domination or war as our heritage from the previous Age of Aries.

Perhaps we might be on that pivotal moment of 144 years where we change from one Age to another with all the mixed messages that come from change itself. If you want to explore the possibility of the effects of the Ages sign by sign, there are instructions in the Hierarchal Evolution (Chapter 5) of my workbook on *Karmic Astrology: Not for Sissies*.

What are the possibilities a time of simultaneous death / birth might offer? Where do you stand in this? Whether you “believe” (Pisces) or would prefer to “know” (Aquarius), it will happen with or without our conscious participation. The Ages unfold in a systematic pattern, a predictable cycle of energy more powerful than our understanding and they are not dependent on our individual beliefs or our personal knowns. The development and the unfolding of the universe is right on schedule – such birth happens with or without our conscious participation or belief. Where is your place in this unfolding cycle? The choice is yours.

***Food for future thought...* When describing our solar system's revolution within our galactic revolution, mentally picture our planets' circular orbits of our Sun, while our Sun orbits our Milky Way Galaxy, while our Galaxy along with thirty or so others orbit a common center, which in turn orbits... As you mentally picture each closely circular orbit, recognize that circle is moving forward continually as part of the larger orbits. Our circles, in reality, are spiral in nature. As we complete one circle, we have moved forward through the other orbits, resembling motion more spiral than circular in reality. Have fun mentally playing with this one!

¹ Fifth Dimension, Age of Aquarius:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPK7ZF6jfJE>

² Circles within circles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GibiNy4d4gc>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axial_precession

⁴ Astronaut images

<https://www.google.com/search?q=astronauts+in+space+images&oq=astronauts+in+space+images&aqs=chrome..69i57j0.58628j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

Major Planets, Minor Planets, Comets and Asteroids

As with the other articles in this series, we will explore a single astrological concept where the student or reader must make a choice from multiple possibilities. Such choices reflect the interest of the student or reader, the usefulness of the information, the reliability and quantity of the study material and the type of charting being contemplated. What ends up being selected as preferable by a single astrologer is not a commentary on the validity of other choices or techniques. It is simply personal preference.

Rarely can an astrologer become expert in all categories of astrology. That prodigious task usually falls to the researcher or the teacher. Both need a wider range of knowledge. I would doubt seriously if any one person could ever know all of astrology. Astrology is as vast as human experience and would be a pretty large order to fill. I have worked on this broader scope of knowledge for nearly fifty years, and I confess I do not know all of it and probably never will. Astrology is an exhilarating, yet humbling experience!

Previously we looked at such subjects as tropical and sidereal astrology, geocentric and heliocentric methods, equal and unequal houses, types of charts chosen and whether we are currently in the Age of Pisces or the Age of Aquarius. These are all choices we will make, but none are either right or wrong, or better or worse, for the study of astrology. In this section, I want to look at which bodies you might choose to study or read. In the following two sections, we will look at the personal points such as the Ascendant and Midheaven.

The major astrological planets consist of our Sun, our Moon, and eight (yes) planets. The Earth is common ground, underneath our feet and is not delineated separately. The Sun, which is literally a star, is the body that is the central gravitational force that holds our entire solar system together and is its governor. Our Moon is the closest celestial body to us and is not

truly a planet, though it is referred to as one for ease of reference as part of a collective. The Moon is a satellite of the Earth. Because of the size / distance differential, the Sun and Moon appear to be the same size and were considered by the ancients to be the celestial parents: dad and mom. The conjunction was the marriage or union that was thought to produce offspring: the planets.

Only five visible planets were in standard use by the ancients even though some were aware of the existence of other bodies as evidenced by the Akkadian relic mentioned in a previous chapter. Those five visible planets were Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. In more recent history, the discovery of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto brought us to a total of eight planets, or offspring, of the celestial parents¹.

The more recent re-discovery of the three outer planets changed the original system of rulership of planets over signs. The two systems of rulership will be a future subject of this series on *Astrological Choices*. I recommend at the moment that you study and use both the old and new rulership systems because the jury is still out on the two choices.

Standard astrological practice includes the use of the ten bodies that are collectively referred to as “the planets”, although in reality one is a star and another other a satellite. And, yes, I do know that Pluto was demoted by a small minority (5%) of the astronomical community², but the change itself was controversial. Pluto as a planet *has not* been demoted by the astrological community. I continue to use Pluto as a planet in my practice and teachings because it “acts” like a planet; one of my *Astrological Choices*.

There are many more bodies available to astrologers to study and to read. How far should you go in your studies and which bodies should move to the front of your line? I recommend you start with the ten major bodies just listed. Initially, you will have your hands full just understanding the ten main principles. Give yourself a chance. Do not take on more until you know those ten energies thoroughly. Their study will become the core and the basis for everything else you will study and apply. Just remember that these ten do not constitute *all* your possibilities.

When you feel comfortable with your knowledge of those ten energies, the sky is truly the limit for your choices. As an example, let us do a brief run-though of the possibilities, which number in the hundreds of thousands and are growing by thousands per month (can you say overwhelming?) and triage them into a more manageable proportion.

There is a controversial mathematical formula called Titius-Bode Law³ that shows where planets should be located as you move outward from the Sun. There are two anomalies in the measurement and they are *not* thought to be the problem of the formula. These two anomalies are bodies that should or should not be located at two points in the overall measure. Neptune is located where nothing should be according to Bode's law. Instead, the position of Pluto falls into the correct placement in the mathematical formula. Additionally, again according to Bode's law, a body should be located between Mars and Jupiter. The large field of debris and asteroids in the Asteroid Belt⁴ suggests that once upon a time in our solar system's distant past, there might have been a body located there, or that a body should have formed in that trajectory but never did.

Most but not all asteroids are located in the asteroid belt. Asteroids³ come in all shapes and sizes and are found in several locations throughout our solar system. For example, large collections are located at the Lagrange points of Jupiter⁵. These are believed to be collections of asteroids that have wandered into Jupiter's sphere of influence, perhaps by magnetic attraction or by sheer happenstance. Other planets, including Earth, have their own Lagrange points. Jupiter's mass determines the ability of a planet to form in that debris field.

Most dramatically, there are many asteroids in the inner portions of the solar system, including a collection whose orbits take them close to the Earth (Earth grazers). Our scientists are on a continual watch of these bodies, which may have future impact on Earth because of their proximity to us through their trajectories. The sheer number of possibilities was reduced substantially in the fall of 2011. Why? Better measuring tools.

I need to go astronomical on you for one paragraph *because* of a new discovery. As I re-wrote this section, our astronomers announced the discovery of the first Trojan asteroid that is linked directly to the Earth. It was found at the L-4 Lagrange point about sixty degrees ahead of Earth. The Lagrange Point for earth is calculated at the points where the Sun and Earth will trine in their orbital path. The Sun is one point, the Earth the second point, and the Trojan asteroid is located at the third point. Because of the changing relationships over the space of one complete orbit, there are two of these points, one ahead of the Earth (L-4) and one behind the Earth (L-5).

According to Space.com, “The Wise telescope scanned the whole sky in infrared light from January 2010 to February 2011 and discovered a large rock, the Trojan asteroid 2010 TK7 at L-4. We are in no danger from this asteroid. It loops back and forth across Earth’s orbit with the Sun but well ahead of us, barely visible. We do have at least one companion!”⁵

There are four asteroids that are in common usage and probably should be listed for your stage two studies: Ceres, Juno, Pallas and Vesta. Why would I choose these four rather than some of the newer, possibly more exciting, discoveries? Astrologers have built a wealth of information and proof of the influence and possible rulerships or influence of these four asteroids. There is more material, more serious research, more experience in reading and teaching available so these are a good place to start your study on minor bodies. Many years ago I had marvelous results studying other asteroids, particularly Hidalgo, for a specific application. That being said, most of the other asteroids have a much shorter discovery and identification period and have less credible material available. Asteroids do work, but allow yourself time to learn gradually, a few at a time.

Again, I must go astronomical on you for a paragraph... “We launched spaceship Dawn⁷ at 11:34:00 UTC on September 27, 2007 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida...It traveled 1.7 billion miles over a period of almost four years and arrived at Vesta on July 15, 2011 where it was captured by Vesta’s gravity and orbit was established. Dawn will remain in Vesta orbit until 2012. It will then leave that orbit and travel to Ceres to take up a fresh year-long Ceres orbit in 2015.” At another re-writing, Dawn was well on its way to Ceres. At my rewrite in 2015, Dawn had arrived successfully at Ceres⁶. At my rewrite in 2016, Dawn had completed its study of Ceres and is being repurposed in its mission. Is that not awesome? What does it mean to astrologers and their choices? Put the study of Ceres and Vesta at the very top of your asteroid study list. We just got up close and personal with two asteroids and plan to get up close and personal with more. Time to learn what they mean to translate to our experience. These new discoveries and accomplishments make this study a constant work in progress.

At the outer edges of what we refer to as our known solar system is an area called the Kuiper Belt. The Kuiper Belt is thought to be the inner or closer to the Sun part of another designation called the Oort Cloud. This vast area at the outer edges of our solar system is considered to hold the remnants from the formation of our system. Potentially (and astronomers are still guessing), contained within these regions are very large asteroids, planetoids, dwarf planets and comets. The discovery of what was thought to be planets larger than Pluto, very near Pluto was exciting but turned out to upset Pluto’s applecart.

As mentioned, Pluto was recently declassified as a planet and reclassified as a dwarf planet by astronomers. Since only 5% of the astronomers voted on this change, there is still great controversy. I will personally continue to use Pluto as a planet. Why? There is a wealth of knowledge, research and material using Pluto's astrological influence that has been developed since its discovery in 1930. Most importantly, I still see it working in chart readings.

That recent declassification of Pluto to dwarf planet status by astronomers, however, created a new category for a study of the other bodies inhabiting those nether regions of our solar system. At those vast distances, it is difficult to determine if the bodies are asteroids, planetoids, planetesimals, or comets. There is a wealth of new material being developed on them and they could eventually hold the same power and sway as Pluto. This would be another category for a later phase of your studies and is a work in progress as I write this.

Comets⁸ are thought to be more ice and gas than rock, and are thought to originate in the Kuiper Belt and Oort Cloud. Comets seem to be kicked from the Kuiper Belt region into the inner part of the solar system where they orbit the Sun for a time before they get a little too close and become ice toast.

There are long period comets and short period comets - those that closely orbit infrequently and those that orbit frequently, respectively. For centuries, the most famous of the comets has been Halley's, which has a 75-to-76-year period orbit. Certain comets have been catalogued and read for thousands of years.

The ancients, for example, saw the comets as harbingers of national or leadership trials and tribulations. Recently Chiron, which is a massive comet but was originally cast as a new planet, has become very well known. The study of the Centaurs with Chiron as leader will occupy a great deal of your time on the study of comets, but this is a relatively new area. Start with Chiron. If you choose your sources carefully, this would be a good addition to a later phase of your study. I would recommend Astrologer Philip Sedgwick and his newsletter "Galactic Times" (which recently changed its name to "Skyscraping") and Astrologer Zane Stein as reliable sources. You can easily access their information on the internet.

I must go astronomical on you for yet another paragraph. Our astronomers have been very busy! “On July 4th, 2005 (our nation’s 229th birthday) at 1:52 AM we threaded the eye of a needle in the tapestry we call outer space, and landed a bull’s eye by crashing a probe onto a comet while simultaneously keeping an orbiting mother craft at a discreet distance to photograph and scientifically record the action and the matter ejected.” We crash-landed on a comet 83 million miles away six months after launch. Amazing aim. Amazing feat. Astrologers cry, “What does it mean?” Back to my initial question...if we hit a comet in the eye will it return the favor? Does this make comets more interesting to you? If so, here are some comet articles⁹.

There are other bodies or pseudo-bodies to study. As a novice astrologer, I learned about Dark Moon Lilith and included her in everything I did. I studied her and practiced for two years before someone told me she was not considered a major planet. I have to tell you that in the two years of my steady application, she sure acted like a major player. I continue to use her today because I got so much mileage out of her in my early studies and thereafter. Since that time, Black Moon Lilith, an intersection point in space and not a body, and the asteroid Lilith have emerged. I have *not* done a deep study on either of those so I am not entitled to an opinion. Dark Moon Lilith is my choice at this time because I have personal and long-range knowledge of her workings.

The Trans-Neptunian planets are hypothetical planets located at crucial intersection points noted by astrologers over several decades. I have *not* made a study of them, although they are on my very long to-do list. Many well-known and knowledgeable astrologers trust them, so choose your sources and material wisely and put these on your advanced study list as you grow in your astrological knowledge and experience.

This is about as far as this brief article can take you in helping you triage what you can study and use on the subject of major and minor bodies. The last time I checked, celestial bodies are being discovered at the rate of thousands per month. That’s way too many bodies to keep up with, so you must be selective. Start with what has stood the test of time, then move into those areas currently under serious study or activation. Choose your bodies, your authors and your teachers and stay with what is credible. Study astronomy along with astrology because astronomy walks hand-in-hand and provides the scientific basis for astrology. Select a category or a few specific bodies and take the time to develop your skill and knowledge at reading those before you move on to your next set of choices. All of it is available, but only some is valuable. Pace yourself.

¹size comparison: <https://www.universetoday.com/36649/planets-in-order-of-size/>

² “Astronomy Declared Pluto a Dwarf Planet – What is Pluto Astrologically?”

<http://www.marilynmuir.net/articles/astronomy-declared-pluto-a-dwarf-planet-what-is-pluto-astrologically/>

³Titius-Bode’s Law: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titius–Bode_law

⁴ asteroids: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asteroid>

⁵ Jupiter’s Lagrange point asteroids:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jupiter_trojan

⁶ <http://www.space.com/12443-earth-asteroid-companion-discovered-2010-tk7.html>

⁷ <http://www.space.com/12290-asteroid-vesta-dawn-spacecraft-arrival-preview.html>

⁷ “Vesta Up Close and Personal”

<http://www.marilynmuir.net/articles-old/vesta-up-close-and-per>

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comet>

⁸ Read my comet articles at:

“Crash of the Comet – Was Jupiter Changed?”

<http://www.marilynmuir.net/articles/crash-of-the-comet-was-jupiter-changed/>

“A Cocktail in Space – Comet Lovejoy”

<http://www.marilynmuir.net/articles-old/a-cocktail-in-space-comet-lovejoy/>

“Comet Tails (Tails) Is There a Dragon Upon Us: Elenin Cometh! Part 1”

<http://www.marilynmuir.net/articles-old/comet-tales-is-there-a-dragon-upon-us-elenin-cometh/>

“Comet Tales (Tails) and Meteor Showers, Pt 2”

<http://www.marilynmuir.net/articles-old/comet-tales-tails-and-meteor-showers/>

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Major and Minor Aspects

When you begin to study astrology, you are faced with an avalanche of varied subjects and possibilities, the study of which can seem daunting. Astrology is a massive body of information that has been handed down for millennia. Ancient man could count and observe his natural surroundings and experiences. Through his observations of the heavens and the natural sequence of life, he made connections or associations, built those observations into a body of information and then passed that knowledge on to the next generation. My point?

There is so much to learn that it is necessary to make choices in that study. Those choices become personal perspective and not judgment. What has been retained and followed is valid to the user. We use what works for us. What has not been followed is simply another avenue that has not been explored successfully. In other sections, we looked at astrological choices in the material that is available for our study and use. Each decision requires that we make choices in what and how we will study, learn, and apply as astrologers, from our personal perspective. For this section we will look at aspects to determine our personal choices as to what to study first and what constitutes succeeding layers.

Just what is an aspect? In basic astrology, we primarily stay within our solar system: our personal star (the Sun), the satellites of the Sun termed the planets, and one satellite of one planet (our Moon that so closely orbits our planet Earth). We use ten bodies: the Sun, Moon and the eight planets other than the Earth. Earth is not counted as it is the point on which we all stand and is common to us all. I know the Sun is in the center, but that is the heliocentric view. However, we are all standing on the Earth. It is our physical location, so it represents the center of our personal experience or perspective. It is the geocentric view. The angular relationships between those ten bodies not including the Earth is what is termed as aspects. For our purposes, angular relationship equals aspect.

We are not limited to just those ten bodies. There are other objects that may be incorporated. We may also use intersection points, measurements of space itself, with or without a physical body present. Those are called personal sensitive points or PSPs, and they include important positions such as the Midheaven, the Ascendant, the lunar nodes, and the Vertex.

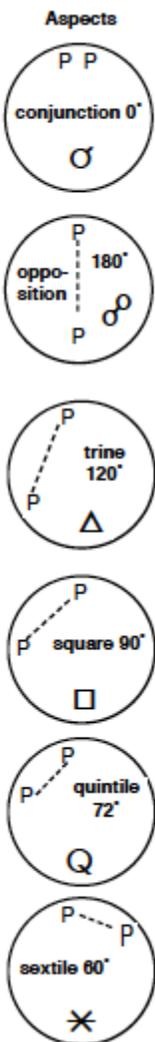
These could also be included in our primary determination of aspects. For easier comprehension, I will describe the angular relationships between actual physical bodies first. Similar instruction applies to the angular relationships between PSPs and between planets and PSPs, but those will be discussed in the following section.

Aspects are really quite simple to understand. If you have two bodies that occupy the same part of the sky within a reasonable orb (visual proximity), they will appear to be together, even though their orbits are actually widely separated by millions or perhaps billions of miles. They are considered to be conjunct. The aspect literally indicates that there is zero degrees of separation zodiacally. If two bodies were on either side of the Earth, they would be considered opposite because of their 180-degree angular relationship. The same is true of other measures as well, the square, the trine, the sextile, the inconjuncts and many more. As a developing astrologer, how do you decide which aspects to study first and which aspects may wait for a later study? The division is simple and for convenience is labeled as major or minor aspects. Remember this is my personal, but educated, opinion.

Major aspects are determined by simple division of the zodiac as represented as a 360-degree circle.

- ✓ If we divide 360 degrees by one, the bodies appear together, the conjunction.
- ✓ If we divide 360 degrees by two, we have 180 degrees, the opposition described previously.
- ✓ If we divide 360 degrees by three, we have 120 degrees, the trine.
- ✓ If we divide 360 degrees by four, we get 90 degrees, the square.
- ✓ If we divide 360 degrees by six, we get 60 degrees, the sextile.

Wait a minute, what happened to the division by five? If we divide 360 degrees by five, we get 72 degrees, very different from our previous 0-degree divisions, so this does not qualify as a major aspect. It is automatically thrown into the minor aspect category. The major aspects are conjunction, opposition, square, trine and sextile and are easily calculated and observed. There is ample information available on these five major aspects outlined. All other aspects are considered minor. *Note:* Traditionally, there is a sixth major aspect called the Parallel of Declination that is less commonly used and will not be addressed in this section.



Minor aspects are determined much in the same way, but produce odd multiples or unusual combinations for answers. The word minor does not mean unimportant. I doubt seriously that whatever created the universe did anything unimportant. Think of these aspects as more subtle, less understood, or less researched rather than unimportant.

- ✓ As mentioned, the 72-degree division produced by the five is called the quintile.
- ✓ Dividing 360 degrees by seven produces a 51+ degree aspect called the septile.
- ✓ Dividing by nine produces 40 degrees, a nonagon or novile.
- ✓ Dividing by eleven produces 32.7 degrees, and is called an undecagon.

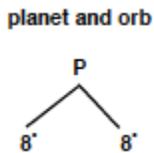
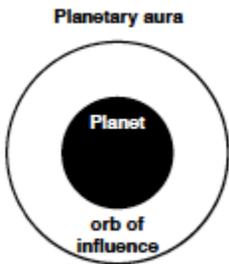
...and this process of division to identify aspects continues.

Did you notice that I again left a couple of numbers out of the divided by series. Why? Because as the number of divisions increases, we get multiples of previous calculations.

- ✓ For example, the 60-degree sextile is a multiple of the 120-degree trine ($60 \times 2 = 120$ -degree span).
- ✓ The division by eight is an exact bisecting of our division by four. In other words, the division by eight is exactly half the division by four so they are a multiple of the square. Division by four is a major aspect. Division by eight is a minor aspect.
- ✓ The division by ten is exactly half the division by five and is a multiple of the quintile, which has already been classified as a minor aspect.
- ✓ The division by twelve is the natural 30-degree division of the zodiac and exists within all major and some minor aspects. Division by twelve is the common base to many aspects, but the 30-degree angle itself is considered minor in nature and is the actual partner to the quincunx.

When you get into these multiples later in your studies, you can also look to the more advanced field of Harmonics for deeper understanding. Minor aspects are not less valid. They are less understood, less studied, and therefore less applied.

Orb One more consideration: it would be so simple to do these aspects *if* the planets or PSPs were exact every time. It is not difficult to compare ten to ten. But it is possible for these positions to be close but not exact and yet still be in aspect. That allowed separation is called orb of influence or simply orb. These space bodies are massive. The bodies occupy a physical space that can be distinctly measured but they have an area of influence around them, so they physically affect a much larger space than they occupy. In a human, this would be their common 2.5-to-3-foot aura. Scientifically, this could be the magnetic field of a planet. Astrologically, it is called the planet's orb of influence.



The major aspects offer much larger orbs than the minor aspects. Traditional orbs for conjunctions, oppositions, squares and trines are eight degrees on either side of a body. While still considered a major aspect, sextiles, a multiple of a trine, usually are allowed a six-degree orb on either side of the body. All other multiples have tighter orbs. One half a square (semi-square) or a square and a half (sesqui-square) usually carry up to a four-degree orb. As the aspects are refined, the orb diminishes to a single degree, or perhaps in some instances even to minutes. Broader aspect divisions or majors carry broader orbs, and expanded multiples or minors carry tight orbs. This is the system I have settled on in my 47+ years of astrological experience.

So where do you apply your attention? That is the subject of this article. Which aspects should you study early and which can wait? Which are most important? First, all are important. As I said, I doubt that whatever created the universe did anything unimportant. The universe seems to be mathematical at its core, so the old Hermetic maxim "God geometrizes" is appropriate.

- ✓ Start with the five major aspects as given. Take the time to study, understand and apply through literally thousands of examples until you understand each thoroughly.
- ✓ Then turn your attention to a second group such as semi-squares and sesqui-squares, quintiles, and inconjuncts, which are quincunxes and their partner the semi-sextile.
- ✓ Work with these until your understanding develops and then move on to the balance of the minor aspects.

Hold in mind that a minor multiple of a major aspect will operate in the same basic nature as the major but with diluted impact. A half a trine is a sextile so the trine is considered to be stronger than the sextile. A semi-square or a sesqui-square is of the same nature as the square but has half the power, and so forth. As you develop your understanding, test various orbs of aspect to refine your understanding.

I mentioned Harmonics earlier. Save this for your deepest study because this will take you the rest of the way in your understanding of aspects. The sky is truly the limit.

Planets Versus Points

The standard thirteen major points in a horoscope are comprised of the ten physical bodies: the Sun, the Moon and the eight planets in our solar system (other than the Earth on which is common to all of us). Our Sun is a star and the center of our solar system. Our Moon is the satellite of the Earth and the closest body to us (about a quarter of a million miles). The eight planets, other than the Earth, include controversial Pluto that astrologers still tend to treat as a planet even though it has been demoted by astronomers. The other three major points are not physical bodies but are important intersection points in space.

The points are calculated by using the intersections between two “Great Circles”, of which there are several. In this presentation on your choices, it is far too complicated to give a technical definition of each of the Great Circles. But the common point to all is that they are great circles because they go through the exact center of their measure. For example, most of you know about latitude lines on our globe. The equator is in the middle and the smaller latitude lines (which make smaller circles) range north and south of the equator. Only the equator goes through the center of the globe so it is considered to be a great circle. The Midheaven (MC) is one, the Ascendant is another, and the Lunar Nodes are my thirteenth choice. These are quite important to the reading of any chart. When asked to single out a few placements to read, these thirteen would be the choice of most astrologers. There are many other personal sensitive points (PSPs) such as the Vertex, the Equatorial Ascendant, the Aries Point and more (next chapter). Each of the planets have nodal points which are rarely used but are interesting to study when your experience and knowledge are ready.

Astrologers tend to group them equally, but they are different. The planets are quite different from the points. Each of the planets is an actual physical body and the three non-planets are for the most part truly empty points in space. Occasionally, you will find an object at that point, but most of the time you will not. Turn your attention to a body in space we refer to as a planet.

Body: Planet have mass, location and motion. Compared to our human scale, they are huge bodies. They revolve around the sun, most rotate on their axes and are heavy, some have atmospheres and weather, some have satellites held by the gravitational pull of their planets, many have a magnetic shield or aura. They revolve around our Sun on predictable trajectories and speeds with small variations due in part to their elliptical orbits.

Take a look at your own physical body. You have mass, you have location, and you also have the capability of motion. You take up a specific amount of physical space, yet you influence the space around you. Just watch people riding an elevator. As the car gets more crowded watch people draw in on themselves tightly because they are feeling crowded. We affect and at times infect more than our actual physical space, influencing the space around us. This is called our aura. Astrologically, it is the orb of influence of a planet which astrologers use when aspecting.

Additionally, the planets are in continual and predictable motion around our Sun, or they would start to fall inward into the Sun and be destroyed. We as humans also have motion or trajectory, but at times our personal movements are predictable and controlled and at other times our personal motions are erratic and random. Can you imagine that type of motion in the heavens?

Point: If you were to look at the point in the heavens where a personal point (such as the Midheaven, Ascendant or Lunar Node) is located for an individual's wheel, you would simply see into the vastness that is space. While it is possible that a body or bodies may be located there, it is not usual. As described above, a personal point is a location where two lines of reference cross or connect. Amazingly, these connection points work quite well in charting, both from a descriptive position (reading) and from an activation position (events).

Personal Sensitive Points – Midheaven, Ascendant, Nodes and More

There is quite a difference between intersection points in space and the physical bodies we term the planets. A planet occupies a specific location and has mass, orbit, speed, energy, influence and orb. An intersection point in space has none of that. There is no body, no mass, no orbit, no energy of its own. Yet astrologers and astronomers bestow such a point with both motion and influence. Why? As astrologers, how would you feel if you did not have the Ascendant, the Midheaven or the Lunar Nodes with which to work? That got your attention, didn't it? I cannot imagine a chart without an accurate Ascendant. I cannot imagine a chart without an accurate Midheaven, nor can I imagine a chart without Lunar Nodes. Most astrologers use those three points on a regular basis but they are not physical objects, they are merely intersection points in space. Collectively these are called Personal Sensitive Points or PSPs.

The Ascendant in a chart is an intersection between the ecliptic - which is Earth's orbit around the Sun, and which in turn is the centerline of the zodiac belt. It represents Earth's eastern horizon at the moment of birth.

- ✓ We look to the eastern horizon at the moment and location of birth to determine the degree and sign of the Ascendant. There is usually no object there. Most of the time it is a point of empty space.
- ✓ Occasionally a planet will rise along with the ascending degree. The planet and the empty point are considered individually.
- ✓ Each individual body or intersection has value and each can overlap in influence. For example, if Gemini is the rising sign, then communication and information will be strong influences on the individual.

- ✓ If Mars also happens to be rising at that moment, Mars will add its influence and the communication and information indicated by Gemini rising will become faster, more active, and can, at times, be belligerent or assertive.

Most astrologers use the rising sign as if it were a planet, but it is not a planet. It is, however, an important Personal Sensitive Point, one we would not want to lose for interpretation.

The same is true of the Midheaven.

- ✓ The Midheaven represents the highest point to which a planet can rise at the moment of birth. It is the culmination before that planet starts to move towards the descendant or setting point.
- ✓ Midheaven is commonly confused with Zenith. Zenith is the 90-degree angle to the horizon, or directly overhead.
- ✓ The Midheaven may or may not be at that 90-degree angle at the moment of birth. At times, the Zenith and the Midheaven do coincide. See the previous explanation.
- ✓ If I were locating the Zenith or Midheaven, either would be an empty point in space. Each of these points have influence and motion even without a planet in that location or point in space.
- ✓ *The distinction is important because each succeeding four minutes of birth time moves the Midheaven one degree later in the zodiac. The Zenith's 90-degree relationship to the Ascendant is dependent on the physical latitude of that Ascendant. The Ascendant can travel from 3/4ths of a degree to 2+ degrees in the same four minutes of birth time that the Midheaven travels 1 degree. The Zenith is always a 90-degree relationship to the Ascendant; the Midheaven may or may not be in that relationship.*

In my astrological study and practice, the Ascendant and Midheaven are primary placements. Slightly less prominent are their axis partners, the Descendant and the 4th house cusp or I.C. (Immun Coeli). I do use all four these points in my readings. I rarely note Zenith and Nadir as they fall into the automatic 90-degree square relationship in my head.

What about the Lunar Nodes I mentioned earlier? The intersection points used for the north and south node of the Moon are trajectory points of the crossing of the ecliptic. The north node travels in a south to north direction and the south node travels in a north to south direction. I use these lunar points extensively in my readings and would not want to lose their guidance just because they are intersection points rather than physical bodies.

Ascendant, Midheaven, Lunar Nodes, Zenith, Nadir, and many other points are used astronomically as well, and the tables astrologers use stem from astronomical tables. Scientifically and allegorically, these points of empty space are useful for measure and for meaning. The Ascendant and Midheaven are determined by great circle intersections such as the horizon, ecliptic or prime vertical. There are other great circles that are not as generally well-known, but they do govern the mathematical calculation of intersection points.

Other PSPs The balance of the PSPs is not as well-known and material is still being developed. However, you should first study, learn and then choose whether their information is useful to you. You may always choose to use or not to use them. Do not deny or ignore such positions merely because they are unfamiliar or do not involve actual physical bodies. Ignorance is never your friend and these points and their study can greatly enhance your knowledge and understanding of astrology. They are definitely lesser-known points, but astrologers are diligently working to ferret out their meanings and applications. Since ignorance is never our friend, we will take a brief look at the other PSPs: the Vertex and Anti-Vertex, the Aries Point, the Co-Ascendant, the Polar Ascendant and the Equatorial Ascendant. Remain aware that all points are actually one end of an axis; even less is known about the other axis points, but will be developed jointly with their partners.

If you were beginning your studies or making a choice of which tools to study, I would suggest you focus on the Ascendant, Midheaven and Lunar Nodes. Once you are comfortable with your knowledge and application of those personal points, turn your attention to the Vertex and its partner. Then you can decide if the balance of the PSPs are of interest to you. Astrologer Michael Munkasey has done extensive research, and I consider him to be the best source for material on them. See Mike's "Time Cycle"¹ article online.

Vertex and anti-Vertex If you are a practicing astrologer, you might be familiar with the Vertex and anti-Vertex in a wheel. The Vertex is *usually but not always* located on the western or right side of a wheel. Remember chart directions are opposite planetary directions because our viewing perspective is reversed. We are on Earth measuring the heavens, not in the heavens measuring the Earth. I use the Vertex as a point for relationships, karma and expectations from the environment - my choice of meanings based upon years of study, research and application. The anti-Vertex is the axis opposite the Vertex. Less is known about that position, but in my personal experience it appears to be causative to the Vertex. Again, either point is just that. It is not a physical body. The intersection point itself is sensitive and may be read. Use tight orbs.

The balance of the PSPs are the Co-Ascendant, the Polar Ascendant, the Equatorial Ascendant and the Aries Point. The first three are intersection points determined by specific combinations of the great circles previously mentioned. As such, each of the PSPs should be considered equal in importance and impact. Many of the current astrology computer programs will inform you or insert these positions automatically but you will have to do the research for application yourself. Briefly, courtesy of Mike Munkasey and “Time Cycles” paraphrased...

The *Equatorial Ascendant* represents the part of our unconscious mind that allows us to “take stock of what is happening, evaluate life and our attitudes, perhaps even form new attitudes”. It has to do with our prejudices and our personal evaluation of self on multiple levels.

The Co Ascendant deals with the parts of the mind that deal with the non-sensory field, such as influences, impressions or vibes and how that affects us and our experiences.

The Polar Ascendant has “much to do with an ability to win others over to our thoughts and ideas”.

The Aries point is very easy to determine. Simply find 00 Aries in any wheel and you have your Aries point. It is always 00 Aries and is quite useful to Cosmobiologists and Trans-Neptunian practitioners. According to Mike, the Aries Point represents the impersonal events, situations and people that flow through our lives who we do not necessarily become involved with in a personal way.

These last four definitions are brief because they are points of weakness in my own education. I have only cursory knowledge and have continued my experimentation. I have begun my personal research with two projects on all the listed PSPs. The two studies are the 45 U.S. presidents as well as my 100+ serial killer research project. The common PSPs, the Ascendant, Midheaven and Lunar Nodes seemed to be more specific or impactful than the less common PSPs in those two studies. These are ongoing projects, and I am far from a conclusion on either, but I am diligently researching all the PSPs through those two major projects and will trust my own definitions once I see the results.

As I read through Mike Munkasey's material from 1995, I realized his take on the Vertex and anti-Vertex was quite different from mine. His material relates strongly to states of consciousness. I suggest you look at both viewpoints, test them out on your own charts and see where you stand on the issues. I would be interested in your conclusions. Contact me through my website.

Aspecting bodies and points There are distinct differences when aspecting a planet and a point. The planet has the capacity to affect or be affected by the energy of another planet. Venus and Saturn will act upon and be acted upon by each other. For example, Venus will both influence and learn from Saturn and Saturn will both influence and learn from Venus. A natal personal point can be influenced or modified by a planet as well, but from my experience, the point does not influence the planet in the same way as a body would. There may be influences that have not yet been formally studied, but for the purposes of this article, the point is merely an important and valuable marker in space and does have value in reading.

What about the orb of influence for these points? Would the same planetary orb be justified or should some modification take place? I use traditional orbs, eight degrees on the major aspects, but I have a tendency to reduce those orbs of influence if a point is involved. I am a person with two planets square my ascendant, Mars and Neptune, and I can see both of them working in my life. Each orb is six degrees. One square is separating and one is applying. I can clearly see how the planets affect my ascendant, but I cannot see as clearly the effect of my ascendant on the two natal planets. That, to me, is the distinction between planets and points.

Think about natal planet (A) influencing or being influenced by natal planet (B). Then do the same mental exercise using natal planet (A) with natal personal point (C) to note any difference in expression and involvement. Be sure to look at all combinations possible such as planet A to planet B and planet B to planet A and determine the effect each has on the other. If a natal planet aspects a natal personal point, it influences that point, suggesting planet A to point C as an example. To me that is very readable. Does point C, which is the intersection point in empty space likewise influence planet A? This reminds me of the old adage of a tree falling in the forest with no one around to hear... does it make a sound? Or as my non-dyslexic Mercury retrograde daughter says, "What tree?"

¹ <http://astrolog.offline.ee/astrolog/texts/psp.txt>

"Note: This is an article discussing Personal Sensitive Points. It is being posted here as a service to our customers and to the astrological community as a whole. We hope you find it as useful as we do." Time Cycles Research

Math or No Math

As I edited and reworked this book, I realized I had left out a very important choice, one that needed to be addressed however briefly. Once upon a time astrologers/astronomers looked to the living sky for their information. Observation was the medium and information was verbally passed. A few pictorial artifacts are the only relics that have survived the passage of time. As writing itself developed, heavenly information was initially pictorially recorded astronomically and astrologically. With the passage of more time, written material developed and charts were constructed and delineated. Archeology has proved that a system of astrology existed in many lands, surprisingly similar in form and function. Of course there are variations. Humans are known for variation even in language, which the Bible sought to explain by the Tower of Babel story. A body of astrological information was developed and artifacts are available as proof.

Throughout early time, astrology charts were constructed by hand by those who could both read and write. The subjects of such readings were the rulers and hierarchy of the political/social system of that time and place. Astrologers were valuable assets but were subject to and prisoners of those systems and the whim of the ruler. Mistakes were rarely tolerated. Astrology was not practiced for the general populace as it is today.

Slowly but surely, over the centuries graphs, tables and ephemerides were developed and what was a visual understanding of the heavens changed. With the resources available, it was no longer necessary to watch the living sky. Charts could be calculated and read by using the resources available. The effect was that charts were easier to determine and the work spread to the general populace. Everything comes with a price tag. What was the cost to the astrologer and the field of astrology in general?

The ancients could actually see the patterns moving and changing. Printed material diminishes that living, moving perception and the skill set changed. Easier availability of chart construction allowed the material to be read for the populace and not just the leaders or aristocracy. That is one reason why we needed to translate older meanings to apply in this enlarging society. That is basically where astrology was when I first encountered it in 1973. For many years, I cast all my charts by hand. This was very time consuming, completely mathematical in process, and daunting to some astrologers. Hand calculators and formulas made it easier, but all of it took much time and effort.

Enter computers. The sky opened and astrologers everywhere eventually experienced mathematical nirvana. What had taken me an hour now took a moment. As the hardware and software developed, it took mere seconds. It was a paperwork blizzard. Thank goodness computer data storage was solved or I would not have a single place to function in my home. The computer aided the learning process, the work for clients and students, and it was a God-send. I do not know what I would do without my computers. Repeating... "But at what cost to the astrologer and the field of astrology in general?"

We moved even farther away from the living sky and its visual messages. We moved even farther away from understanding the true motion of the planets, which is an arc and not a straight line. Books and linear information can only give us so much. Computers do it all for us, and reward us with a flat piece of paper with accurate coordinates, but with no sense of how they got there and where they are going. We see only a static image, which is untrue.

The sky is a moving, living thing. It is in process and is not static. The maps we cast to define an individual are living, moving representations of a living, moving energy. We try to read out of context and many times that just does not work well.

My live students really hated to learn the math because it scared them. It really is not all that scary. If you know addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and can balance your checkbook, astrological chart construction is not that difficult. Most of us went to school, so those rudiments should be part of our existing skill set. I insisted that my beginning astrology students learn the math. Why? Several reasons:

- ✓ I just described the visual grasp of the elements of a chart.
- ✓ The delineation effect of arc versus a flat, static piece of paper.
- ✓ The effect of a moment in a process versus a freeze frame out of context.
- ✓ If you know what an object is supposed to do, you can spot errors more easily.
- ✓ You must do the math in order to sit for astrological testing.
- ✓ What happens if / when the power goes out and the computer does not work?

Tools are supposed to enhance our skills and our reading, enlarge our resources and provide us with more and better and easier. If the tools eliminate some of our innate skills, make our resources rigid and out of context and limit our understanding to delineate, those tools are as much of a handicap as they are a help. Take the time. Learn basic math. See how things really are instead of what a flat representation tells you they are. It will be well worth the investment of your time and effort.

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Section 4

Up Front Choices

Section Four looks into methods, techniques and applications to further the student's personal reading skills and choices.

- ✓ Chapter 25 - Cornerstones of Astrology - Planets, Signs, Houses and Aspects
- ✓ Chapter 26 - Methods and Techniques for Reading the Wheel
- ✓ Chapter 27 - Planetary Rulership of Signs and Houses - the Old and the New
- ✓ Chapter 28 - Kids of All Ages Don't Come with an Instruction Manual - Or Do They?
- ✓ Chapter 29 - Predictive Techniques - Beyond the Natal Chart

Cornerstones of Astrology – Planets, Signs, Houses and Aspects

Reading charts is the unconscious goal of many who study astrology, even when they do not realize it. You can pick up any beginner's book or astrological magazine and read what others have written about the various parts of astrology. What many are wishing to achieve personally is the ability to look at wheel and decipher what it says and what it means. That takes some personal effort, a good memory and time.

Signs Sun sign astrology is very popular and you see it as the daily, weekly or monthly mini-readings done for the twelve signs. I have written many a column myself for magazines and newspapers, plus radio and television shows. It takes real effort to turn out those simple sentences, especially those phrases with which you closely identify. You cannot just grab sentences out of the air - or you should not, because many readers or listeners take what you say literally. I have often thought that someone must be following me around to be that accurate. Other times it is like the column is speaking a foreign language that has nothing to do with me. Accuracy has as much to do with the receptivity of the audience as it does with the skill of the astrologer.

Sun sign astrology is very generic in nature. The equivalent of one sentence aimed at 1/12th of the world's population has to connect with someone, does it not? Most people know their Sun sign, so they know which sentence to read. If you happen to know your rising sign, you can get double the mileage out of the column and you will also identify somewhat with those sentences as well. Add your Moon sign and you can get a few more tidbits from that column. I would doubt that even well-written and accurate Sun sign columns could give much more than that to the man on the street who possesses a cursory understanding of Sun signs. Sun sign astrology is very generic, but very popular and easy to access. But it is a shorthand version of real astrology.

So what is *real* astrology? It is a sky map constructed for an individual using date, time and place of birth, which includes longitude and latitude on the globe. Since no two births can occupy the same space at the same time, such a moment creates a map for an individual. We are pushing this particular envelope with multiple births at this time are we not? However, my brother is married to a twin and those twins are very different, though born only a few minutes apart. That map of the moving sky provides the astrologer with a diagram of possibility and intent for that individual that can be watched and read as a moving dynamic. Reading the chart is why you go to an astrologer. This is also how you become infected by the astrology bug - so you can learn how to do that reading for yourself. Having been around for a lot of years and having studied many self-help techniques, astrology is definitely the best technique I have ever encountered for understanding my own life. Once you get a full taste of what astrology can do for you, you want more... even if you have to work to obtain it.

Planets When you have an individual sky map, one that is your very own, a map only about you and your life, the sky is truly the limit. All sorts of new doors open besides the initial Sun sign door you may read in your local newspaper. There are other local bodies besides the Sun, which are collectively called the planets. I know, I know. The Sun is not a planet, it is a star. The Moon is not a planet, it is a satellite of the Earth. It is just easier to say *the planets* collectively rather than the Sun, the Moon and the planets. Repeat after me: “ease of reference, ease of reference”.

So we have the twelve Sun signs (and yes, you do have to learn all of them, not just your personal Sun sign), and the ten planets, and each of those planets in each of those signs, which has just hugely expanded what we thought we initially needed to study.

Houses If you look at the wheel provided when your sky map is cast, you will see twelve segments of the wheel like orange or grapefruit segments contained within the fruit globe. The wheel represents the wheel of life. It is the Earth upon which we all stand, down to earth, physical reality, all of it. Since all of it, all at once, is difficult to grasp, we conveniently divide it into smaller segments called houses. The whole wheel represents the whole life of the individual and the twelve divisions represent segments of that life, or what I call arenas of interest. There is a segment for your physical body and self. There is a segment for your parents and family. There is a segment for your profession and career, and so forth. Each division covers roughly 1/12th of your life. While small, the compartments are full of issues.

Add this to what you must understand to do a reading. Not only do you have to learn ten planets and twelve signs, but also those ten planets *in* each of those twelve signs. You have to learn those ten planets in each of the twelve houses and the twelve signs on each of the twelve houses. We now have three of the main categories with lots of work, but there is one more important category.

Aspects are the single most learning-intensive area of astrology. Why? Aspects must assume that you already know the planets, the signs and the houses because now you must see them interact or form relationships. Aspects are not necessarily more difficult as a subject, but you do need the other three categories working successfully before you can make sense out of them and know how to apply aspects in a reading.

If I were suggesting a study guide, I would suggest Sun signs as a good place to begin reading because we already have a head start with the popularity of Sun-sign astrology. Just remember that this is only a very thin first layer. Here you will begin to learn the nature of the signs, a prerequisite to the application of the planets within those signs. There are twelve signs but there are lots of combinations to learn within those signs such as cardinal, fixed and mutable and fire, earth, air and water, symbols or glyphs, the myths, etc.

The ten bodies we collectively call *the planets* would be my next suggestion to study because planets will become increasingly important as you develop your astrological skill. Study them one at a time and thoroughly as each represents a guiding principle, influence or energy regarding life, a facet of a human being.

Next, study the astrological houses in all their glory. I see the houses as arenas of human activity and interest. Each house represents 1/12th of your life experience so each tiny house is just jam-packed with issues, people, and events. There really is a lot to learn, so take your time. You have and will need a lifetime to pursue this study.

Last but definitely not least, study the aspects. As mentioned, the combination represented by the angular relationship between two bodies or points requires that you understand the two bodies or points individually before you study the relationship formed between them. Aspects can get in your face and demand your attention. Signs and houses will get into this act as well, so study aspects once you have learned the language of the other three categories. This perspective (mine) can be your basic study guide, the order in which to study the four categories, but you are always free to choose what you study and in what order. My personal mission is to free your mind and your choices.

Now I need to change gears as to the order of importance in application or reading. My best analogy for a beginning student is to think of building a house. First you select the country, city, neighborhood, subdivision, lot, architectural plans and builder – all necessary preliminary work. Astrologically you choose the type of astrology, eastern or western (sidereal or tropical), geocentric or heliocentric, type of charting and wheel, define your objective - all the preliminary steps that lead up to the setting of the sky map itself. All of this gets us up to the equivalent of laying the foundation of the house. The wheel itself at this stage can look like a plate of spaghetti that needs organizing and deciphering.

Usually once the foundation is laid, the cornerstones are set. In our analogy, the building will now have a guide or dimension for a natural flow of what is to come. Astrologically, the cornerstones are planets, signs, houses and aspects. Once your wheel is set and visible, you will then turn to the four categories we discussed to understand that sky map and you will use the information generated from your study of the four categories to read or translate it. As long as you have a plan and work the plan you will be surprised at how much information you can get from that sky map. That wondrous body of information will steadily increase as you develop your knowledge and your skill through experience. The first time I wrote out a chart reading, I generated more than a dozen hand-written pages (and I write fairly small) of information that was personal and pertinent about a total stranger. I was stunned. The stranger was stunned. I was also hooked. That was circa 1973 and I am still doing astrology.

We have four cornerstones which you should have diligently studied and through that study developed a body of information on each. One of those cornerstones must become the keystone, the one that leads or controls the flow of information for that chart. The order I gave you for studying must now shift as the natural key category moves to the front. To me the keystone is planets... again, my personal opinion. Planets rule or govern the signs and houses, and you will discover aspects or angular relationships can sound very similar to the nature of specific planets.

Most of what we can learn and apply can be defined as the what, where, when, why and how of existence. We can determine the what, where, why and how through these four natal astrological categories.

- ✓ The *what* of our lives (such as principles, energies, drives and motivations), are planets.
- ✓ The *where* of our lives (such as issues, events, arenas of interest), are the houses.
- ✓ The *how* of our lives (such as attitudes, expressions, mannerisms, or coloring), are signs.
- ✓ The *why* of our lives (such as stress, conflict, luck, flow, or constriction), are the aspects.
- ✓ *When* is a function of both the natal and the dynamically changing progressing charts and activations by transits.

It is really that easy. Once you learn the core principles of the four categories, the rest is application and experience. Your skill develops naturally and sequentially. There is always more to study, but developing an organized body of information that you have taken the time to cement into your consciousness is what provides the basis for all that you can and will do. If you skimp studying these categories, you will have a weak and porous base, holes in your knowledge that can trip you up every time until you fill those blank spots in your toolbox of astrological skills. I know this because I have been there and done that. These four categories are the place for you to begin to build a strong foundation of astrological knowledge that you will find no end to applying to your life. If I regret anything about my astrological studies, it is that I did not start sooner. Sooner would have made my life more understandable, particularly during the more difficult episodes.

Bon appetite! A virtual astrological smorgasbord awaits you limited only by those restraints you place or allow to be placed on it. The universe (and its Creator) provided us with a giant map of potential and possibility and gave us enough brains to develop the skill to read it. Go for it!

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Methods and Techniques for Reading the Wheel

Once you have learned the basics (planets, signs, houses and aspects) and have set the wheel into a readable format, the best part of astrology comes to the table - how to read the wheel. I would love to say there is one correct way to do this, set in concrete, signed by deity, but that is just not true. As always, there are multiple choices for reading the wheel, and they fit nicely into our series on astrological choices.

As I studied astrology over the years, the methods sifted themselves into preferences, those which were easy for me to practice and which gave the best results. However, all the reading skill in the world will not do you a bit of good if the person being read cannot identify with your reading. At times, the method itself is the key to the reading. Looking through a variety of methods should help you determine which works best for you on a regular basis. You can always trot out other methods for occasional use if your standard method is not giving you good results. The end result is a reading that both benefits the client and is that with which they can readily identify.

It is possible to create a simple starting place for reading a wheel, such as the Ascendant or the Midheaven. Both are house cusps. Or you could start with a planet such the Sun, or a theme such as work, family, lovers, or you could go with whatever comes to the forefront of your mind when you start the reading. I have had moments when some pattern or signature leaps off the page and assaults my senses, and that usually causes me to begin there. There are readings that are very organized. There are those that hop, skip and jump all over the place. I am sure I have been guilty of all of that over the course of my study and application. When I first began my study, it was rather scattered because I had not developed a format for reading. Why even bother to develop such a format?

There is so much information contained within a wheel that it would be easy to miss important pieces if you did not have some method, framework or order to what you are doing. I remember many moons ago when a lady approached me and said she had been studying astrology for eleven years

and still was not able to do a complete reading. Bless her heart... I gave that lady A for effort and tenacity and proceeded to show her how to assemble a reading. As I went from student to teacher, this was one of the areas I tackled first.

It is easy to do an all-over-the-place reading, but you can miss so much. It is not that difficult to develop a format for reading so you will at least touch into the more important parts of the reading for that client. Rigidity is not good because there is also something to be said for spontaneity and that wonderful flash of insight. So we want a basic but flexible format, one that will adapt itself to such spontaneity and insight but will hit the high notes and important points for most if not every wheel.

Houses If you start with houses, particularly the Ascendant or Midheaven, you will want to work systematically around the wheel. You will want to cover...

- ✓ what issues the house represents
- ✓ the sign of influence on the cusp
- ✓ the house position of the cusp ruler and its aspects
- ✓ any planets in the house in question
- ✓ aspects to and from those planets
- ✓ aspects for the houses of rulership for those planets

That is just the beginning of your reading.

Planets If you start with planets, you will do approximately the same procedure, but you will focus on the energy of each planet systematically around the wheel.

- ✓ Choose a planet and describe the energy of that planet in general,
- ✓ describe it in the sign it inhabits,
- ✓ describe it in the house it inhabits,
- ✓ look to the rulership sign by house(s) and describe that (them),
- ✓ read the aspects for that planet,
- ✓ apply that aspect reading to both the house of occupation and rulership.

In other words, thoroughly develop the reading for that single planet and then do each of the other ten bodies in the same manner. If you develop your reading this way, do not forget to also read the Ascendant and Midheaven as well, because they will have been accidentally left out of this method. For suggestions on developing a deeper read, I have provided the notes on the derivative house system given below.

Theme If you start with a theme such as work or family, list what pertains to that theme and then systematically work your way through the list. When reading, choose several important themes and systematically work your way through each of them. For example, work is both a 6th house and a 10th house issue so you...

- ✓ look to the 6th and 10th houses of a wheel
- ✓ look at the signs on the cusps
- ✓ look to the ruler(s) of the cusps
- ✓ look to the planets in the 6th and 10th houses
- ✓ look to their house rulerships
- ✓ and any aspects
- ✓ work is also a natural Virgo and Capricorn issue. Therefore a natural rulership Mercury and Saturn issue, so you might include those in your work reading as well.

Another possibility, finance, can be closely associated with work as it can be a by-product. The finance houses are called succedent: 2, 5, 8, and 11. Now we have probably gone outside your astrological safety zone, but these houses are somewhat related and might be valuable to your “work” reading.

- ✓ The second house is the money that flows through your pocket or portable possessions.
- ✓ The eighth house is long-range or joint financing and indebtedness.
- ✓ The fifth is speculation and short-term financing, or “play” money.
- ✓ The eleventh is the financial / material results of your career.

See the associations?

Derivative House System

The best way to study the technique I have just described is called the derivative house system, or wheeling the houses. The time you spend learning these associations will make reading a chart so easy. While it is not exactly a formula, it is a set of associations that will become natural to you as you develop your astrological skills.

You can do the very same thing with the planets. Every planet, every sign, and every house become their own first position and the succeeding houses and planets contained within each succeeding house become the 2nd, 3rd, 4th of the planet, the house, or the sign, whichever system you are following. For example: put your finger on the Sun and that location is house number one for the self-identity and ego. The next house and any planets contained within that house are the value system for the Sun, the third house and planets are the communication for the Sun, and so forth. You can do this for each planet and for each house (issues) as well. You could go back and study the signs in this manner just to give yourself a deeper understanding of the signs themselves. I would not do this particular sign exercise for each individual wheel as it is a lot of work. This is best used as a learning tool or perhaps for your own chart to develop the skill.

Broad view

There is a larger picture to a reading a wheel that we have not examined. I call it the overview. If you were an artist painting a picture, you would probably not put a daub of paint here and another daub over there until somewhere along the line you ended up with a portrait of an individual or an illustration of a moving train. Instead...

- ✓ you would first decide what type of painting you planned to do based on your skills and personal preference,
- ✓ you would select the size and type of canvas,
- ✓ you would select the medium before you started (acrylic, oil, chalk, etc.),
- ✓ you might plot out your general strategy and make a mental game plan,
- ✓ then you would do the actual painting adding detail as you painted.

You can do the same thing astrologically. Start with the big picture and work your way into the detail.

- ✓ Look at the overall spread of the wheel, such as Marc Edmund Jones' seven chart patterns, which suggest the person's overall approach to life.
- ✓ Look at any major configurations such as T-squares, grand squares, grand trines, yods, kites, etc. for a dominating or controlling pattern to the chart and the life.
- ✓ Look at the hemispheres and the quadratures to find the key activities in the life and the developmental attitudes.
- ✓ Look at the distribution of signs and houses to see strengths and weaknesses, areas of great import and those areas less considered. Weakness, strength and balance are all valid reading points.
- ✓ Look for compensation factors before you decide weakness or absence of a quality. For example: no earth in a chart can easily be compensated for by having Saturn on the Ascendant or Saturn conjunct the Sun or chart ruler.
- ✓ Look to the Sun, Moon and Ascendant for a quick thumbnail sketch of the person. You are looking at their pro-active self, their reactive self and their coping skills, respectively.
- ✓ Develop the detail as described previously.

This brief portrait of how to read a wheel is introductory only, but you do have choices. As you can see, there are multiple approaches and I have described only a few. For myself, I start with that overall approach and then fill in the detail with one of the other methods. Occasionally I will encounter a wheel that causes insight to leap at me and spontaneity occurs. Whatever you do, find the way that is comfortable to you and gives you the information you need to do a good job on each reading. Be flexible enough to accommodate various demands. Just be thorough. You will flow into a method of reading that satisfies you.

Just remember it is not the "only" way or the "right" way. Nothing is carved in stone and signed by deity. When you lock yourself into "only" and "right", your ego has entered your perception. Your chosen method is good for you, but others may have a different, yet effective, way. With minor growing pains, you can always change your choices.

Planetary Rulership of Signs and Houses – the Old and the New

As we have illustrated, astrology as a body of information has been handed down from generation to generation since antiquity. The developing information has grown and changed through the centuries, but it has been preserved through each generation's application and evolution. What astrologers use today is a compendium of these generations of teachings. Life has changed dramatically over the intervening centuries and astrology has had to change along with it. However, it is difficult to take something that has worked quite well through the centuries and change it just because we must accommodate the new information being generated. Must the old make way for the new and give up its place? Or can the old and the new peacefully coexist and provide improved content or an alternative for the modern astrologer?

Planetary rulership is one such category of the old, the new, the combination, the replacement, or the alternative in astrological information. Old records suggest that astrologers were aware of far more than they regularly used for their work. I doubt if they were withholding information, but perhaps they were less certain of some parts than others. Perhaps they had an insight or access that they were not able to continue or repeat. In any event, the ancients were aware of the circular nature of our solar system and that there were more bodies to study than were visible to the naked eye. They just developed their ongoing studies with the visible planets. The whole body of astrological lore that was handed down reflected this limitation. With the advent of technical equipment in the last couple of centuries, more of our system became visible, and therefore measurable. New material was developed and that material had to be accommodated.

Just what is rulership? The ancients had a system where the seven main visible bodies within our solar system were similar to a family. The two lights, the Sun and Moon, were the celestial parents. The five visible planets (not including the Earth as it is common to us all, under our feet, and not visible as a separate planet), Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and

Saturn, were the children of the two lights. Saturn with its rings was the ring-pass-not of the ancients and the outer limits of the known universe as the centuries progressed. There was a division of “rulership” or influence between these seven bodies and the twelve zodiac constellations or signs. The division of rulership over the signs was really quite remarkable in its simplicity.

Starting with the sign pairing of Cancer and Leo, place the Moon next to the Sun respectively as rulers of those two signs (Moon / Cancer, Sun / Leo). Because they are a couple, mom and dad, the pairing was supreme and distinguished these two signs from their “kids”, the planets. The Sun and Moon were dominant. We know that the size and distance differential between the Sun and the Moon is enormous, but the ancients seem to have based their interpretations on what they could physically see. The two lights appeared to be approximately the same size, so they were considered equal in power as mom and dad. The Sun shone with a steady light during the day and then disappeared at sunset only to reappear at sunrise. The Moon was a constantly changing source of light ranging from no light at all when conjunct the Sun, the marriage of mom and dad, conception when the Sun fully outshone the Moon, to full and splendidly lit when in opposition at Full Moon. Also the enlarging and eventually diminishing Moon reminded early man of pregnancy and its aftermath. So the Moon was the female energy and the Sun was the male energy.

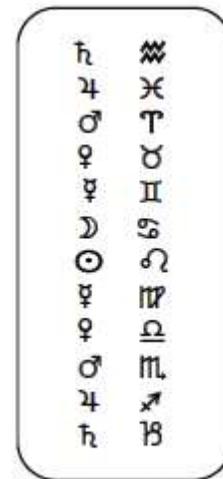
The coupling at the New Moon was the planting of the new seed. The rest of the cycle demonstrated the purpose of that seeding itself. The Moon was equal to the Sun, just different. Each was a parent. They were a matched pair, synergistic in that pairing. This interpretation came out of a society that saw the masculine role as projective and heroic, and the feminine role as protective, nesting and familial. The analogy between the signs and the rulers was based on that cultural and societal conditioning as well.

The planets were outside that intimate pairing, moving but distant tiny points of light that hovered around the parents like children. These kids did not go shooting off into space and leave the familial system. They remained in the system as part of a family. At times, the planets were visible... the night sky, and at times they were not visible... the day sky. At dawn and dusk, you might be able to see Mercury and Venus and occasionally Jupiter for a short time, close to the male parent. The planetary children were seen over the monthly cycle in the company of the Moon, Mom, a natural happening in their physical world.

Ten signs are left, with Cancer and Leo taken by the parental pair and five planets or kids remaining. You can tell what I am going to say can you not? Ranging on either side of the parental pair, the kids ruled two signs in order from the closest planet to the Sun (Mercury) to the limits of the “known” system, Saturn.

Old rulerships

- ✓ Cancer and Leo: Moon and Sun, the parental pair, the lights
- ✓ Gemini and Virgo: Mercury, closest to the parental pair, youth
- ✓ Taurus and Libra: Venus, Earth’s sister planet of relationship
- ✓ Aries and Scorpio: Mars, outward toward the abyss of space, courage
- ✓ Pisces and Sagittarius: Jupiter, the giant light in the sky, expansion
- ✓ Aquarius and Capricorn, adjacent: Saturn, the outer limits of the “known’ system”, organization



Old Rulerships

If you know some astrology by now, you can see that each of the sign pairs have a masculine and a feminine sign or side to their nature:

- ✓ The Moon is feminine and the Sun is masculine, as are their signs
- ✓ Gemini is masculine, Virgo is feminine by sign
- ✓ Taurus is feminine, Libra is masculine by sign
- ✓ Aries is masculine, Scorpio is feminine by sign
- ✓ Pisces is feminine, Sagittarius is masculine by sign
- ✓ Aquarius is masculine, Capricorn is feminine by sign

If you use the word “influence” or “affinity” and make it dominant, you will understand rulership; think: “governing”. The affinity between a planet and the sign it rules deepens your understanding of the sign by including the effect of the planetary energy.

Discovery What happened when emerging technology made visible three more major planets within our system? The discovery, which please note was *not* the invention, of Uranus brought the seven-planet rulership system into question. Rapidly emerging astronomy breakthroughs announced the discovery of Neptune. Shortly, Pluto had to be accounted for as well. Uranus was given rulership of Aquarius. Saturn was the old ruler and in mythology, Uranus and Chronos / Saturn were paired both as parent / child and as adversaries. Neptune was given Pisces to rule, while Jupiter retained Sagittarius. If you look at the dynamic between the sign and the new planets, you can see the affinity or association.

Next came the controversial pairing for Pluto. If you will notice, Aquarius and Pisces are adjacent and the probable next choice would be the next adjacent sign, Aries. But that is not what happened. Pluto's rulership was assigned to the other sign in the Mars grouping, Scorpio. There are astrological camps that accept the Scorpio rulership and there are other astrological camps that believe Aries is Pluto's sign rulership. My suggestion is that you look at Mars and Pluto, examine your understanding of how their energies work, then examine the signs and how they express themselves to see what rulership choice makes more sense to you.

I will tell you my choice, but... please do your own thinking for your astrological personal choice. I feel that the energy of Pluto more closely matches Scorpio and the energy of Mars more closely matches Aries. That is my opinion only and it is not cast in concrete and signed personally by deity. Please make your own choice, but base it on sincere thought and observation.

This has been further complicated by the disagreement between astronomers as to whether Pluto is a planet or something else. A few years ago, a small group (about 5%) of astronomers got together and voted Pluto to dwarf planet status. The larger body of astronomers did not like the call, so controversy still exists. I vote, as if astronomers will listen to an astrologer with 47+ years of experience in the subject, that Pluto acts like a planet and is therefore a planet for my purposes.

What about the other two rulership pairs that do not have a second body as an alternative? There are other bodies out there, for example very large asteroids within the asteroid belt that could be awarded rulership. Some astrologers think this is true. They may not be as large as the planets, but they do orbit between Mars and Jupiter, well within our system and relatively close to Earth. Eris, one of the recently discovered dwarf planets in the Kuiper Belt is larger than Pluto. This is one reason for the

astronomers' controversy, and it could eventually be awarded a rulership, but that is pure speculation at this time. Those large bodies at the outer edge of the solar system will continue to be questionable. There has been no awarding at present, but there is always room for possibility. My suggestion? Stay with the existing controversy and shelve the future possibilities until it becomes necessary to confront them. Do not borrow trouble - you have plenty to work on now.

New Rulership The seven-planet rulership system worked quite well for centuries and is still largely in use today. With evolution continuing, the new must be accommodated and change must be allowed.

Current New Rulerships

- ✓ Cancer and Leo: Moon and Sun, the parental pair, the lights
- ✓ Gemini and Virgo: Mercury, closest to the parental pair, the youth
- ✓ Taurus and Libra: Venus, Earth's sister planet of relationship
- ✓ Aries: Mars, outward from the Earth looking toward the abyss of space, courage
- ✓ Scorpio: Pluto with its Moon, Charon, the underworld of mankind
- ✓ Sagittarius: Jupiter, the giant light, expansion
- ✓ Pisces: Neptune, our water world, creativity, spirituality
- ✓ Capricorn: Saturn, the outer limits of the "known" system, contraction, limitation
- ✓ Aquarius: Uranus, the lightning bolt of the future and of change itself

So which should you choose and use, either or both? Remember that we had centuries of use for the old system. That system was well-researched and worked successfully for that expanse of time. However, when new energy comes into visibility, we must make it conscious in our experience. We have had far less time to research the new possibilities. So, for many astrologers, the change remains unproven. Is it necessary for one system of rulership to replace the other? Are both operational? What to use?



My personal choice: I use both or at least I keep a researcher's eye out for both. Even though I have been at this for many years, I can still see both systems working. Perhaps it is a question of evolution. It may take time for us to work our way out of one system and into another. Perhaps visibility, which introduces the concept of consciousness, takes time to develop. I would rather allow for both and eliminate what does not belong, rather than be ignorant of possibility, so I still watch and use both.

As you study and develop your astrological skills, this will be a choice that faces you. I have told you my thoughts on the matter. I have told you my choices and why. My middle name is not God, so you need to develop your own understanding and make your own astrological choice.

Kids of All Ages Don't Come with an Instruction Manual – Or Do They?

I have a bunch of kids (four) and they have a bunch of kids and they have even more kids. I am knee-deep in kids. The one thing I found out early in my life is that babies do not come with instruction manuals... or so I originally thought. The most amazing thing about my having several kids, all from one pair of parents, is that while raised similarly, my kids are very different from each other. Oh, there are similarities to be sure - sense of humor, strong family instincts, they all love to cook and produce great culinary delights, and so forth, but each is a unique type-A individual. As an astrologer, I would attribute that individuality to the constantly changing energy of our local solar system and the universe itself.

In other articles, I have described circles within circles on an increasing scale. I do not want to repeat myself too much, but briefly...

- ✓ we live on a circular world,
- ✓ that rotates (circularly) on an axis,
- ✓ that orbits (somewhat circular) around our local star, our Sun,
- ✓ that is located on an outer spiral band of our local galaxy, the Milky Way, and which completes its somewhat circular pattern in about 230 million years (depending on the source),
- ✓ that in turn is part of a local cluster of about thirty galaxies orbiting a common center,
- ✓ and the cluster itself is moving in an even larger, typically circular, pattern within the universe...

Circles within circles - like the dance of atoms our scientists have been exploring. The old Hermetic maxim, “As Above, So Below” is appropriate here. Our gigantic cosmic dance reflects itself in the minute dance of the atoms. In spite of the measure, which is literally astronomical in nature, there is similarity in motion. These moving circles trace out spirals with ever increasing dimensions.

The distances are so vast that it defies imagination. So let us bring the measure back into a more manageable scale, say within our solar system. To recap an earlier chapter: using the Earth’s north pole as a pointer, our system traces out a circle in our local space that takes just under 26,000 years to complete. It is called the Precession of the Equinox, because that spin reflects the backward motion of the Equinox, the beginning point of spring. The Equinox is measured against the backdrop of the traditional zodiac, a constantly changing energy system that completes one full cycle in just under the 26,000 years previously described.

During that period, the energy is not static. It is continually changing. A static state would produce sameness. The energy of the Earth and its inhabitants is perpetually shifting and changing, so exact duplication is just not possible. The energy available at any moment is, to me, best described as a series of unique moments of energy in constant change. The heavens dictate uniqueness and diversity, but man in his infinite (or is that word infantile?) wisdom insists on conformity. As in snowflakes, sand granules or leaves, no two moments or products of energy are exactly identical. Should someone or something live long enough in that 26,000-year cycle, repetition becomes technically possible. However, we will have shifted our position cosmically within our approximate 230-million-year galactic spin. Technically the moment of energy we choose to identify as the birth of a human being can never be exactly duplicated... ever.

Each human born in a moment of time is and always will be unique, never to be exactly duplicated. *You* are unique as is each child born on Mother Earth as she performs her cosmic dance through space. In 2009*, there were four births somewhere on our globe for every second on our clocks. Each is unique and does not come with an instruction manual - or so I thought as a very young, bewildered and at times beleaguered mother of four type-A kids. Then I discovered astrology. Oh, there really is a map. Thank you, Universe!

Not too long ago, my youngest daughter made a remark that fits with this article so well that I just have to insert it here. Her two young sons did something that made absolutely no sense to either of us and we were discussing their actions. She remarked, "Mother, I don't explain them. I just give birth to them." Oh, I wish I had known that way back when I was raising my kids. What a great explanation for a conundrum called a child. We are so very unique. Not even your mother can explain you or your actions. Do not give up on ever understanding them because the universe provided us with a map. That map is called an astrology chart. Upon being read properly, that map becomes a blueprint for an individual instruction manual.

I discovered astrology somewhere in the middle of raising my own children in the early 1970s. As soon as I got some astrological knowledge put together, I cast my children's astrology wheels and started to study their individual energy patterns. As we encountered the usual blips in the growing up process, I would study the activations to their patterns to understand what was happening, what the purpose was, and how to handle all that in the most positive fashion. Considering that I was a single mother raising four type-A kids who were turning into typical teens, this new information source became very handy. I discovered that the early versions of my own kids left home at age thirteen or fourteen and total strangers moved into their bedrooms. Who were these new people who called me Mom?

Did I do all this successfully? No. Did I do better with this system than I would have done on my own with absolutely no clue what was happening? Yes. What really appealed to me was my ability to view them individually to work my way through each blip. My kids are now adults, so we did make it with only a few bumps and bruises.

Your astrology wheel is a map of the energy that was available at the moment of birth. Since no two objects can occupy the same space at the same moment, each birth is unique. Yes, in the case of multiple births, the energy pattern is strikingly similar, but such births are rare and there will always be some minute or unique difference. The children who grow out of a moment like that become their own persons with their own experiences and perceptions of experience. I do not think we as astrologers have yet developed the skill to deal with such minute changes, but change did exist and will appear in the life of that individual. As with all fields of endeavor and with time and practice, astrologers will develop better methods of reading such minute changes.

I look to the natal or birth wheel as a unique map of cosmic energy in a readable format once you have developed those skills. The first map is of an individual moment in time that comprised the birth of a human being. The map reflects the energy potential of that moment in time. That newborn grew, developed, became, experienced and changed just as in any other evolutionary process. If the universe were invested in a static state of being, there would be no change because any static state would not accommodate change. The changing energy patterns can be read for that individual throughout their lives by various astrological techniques. Astrology provides a map that has the capacity to be extended, revised and read as needed just as our modern online Google-type maps can be moved and expanded and reworked. It takes skill, but it can be done.

We did come with an instruction manual. It was just called something else - an astrology chart. We can take advantage of this original instruction manual any time we choose by having our natal chart cast and read and we can cast and read its progressions. It is ageless and timeless. It can be read for a newborn or for any age desired. You can learn what your purpose and intention was at birth and what you have done with that potential and that intention as you have progressed through your life. Not everyone develops or expresses all their potential, yet some actually succeed. You can look at your lessons, your skills and talents, your strengths and weaknesses and your current status. To me, that is one handy instruction manual and it does provide choices.

*<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

Predictive Techniques – Beyond the Natal Chart

The best teaching tool and the initial application of astrology is the natal or birth wheel. To me, it's the most important of all the astrological tools. Why? If you are able to understand yourself in a continuing and deep fashion, to me that is the most important use of astrology. From what I can tell from my many years of experience, life is purposeful, and not random chaos. Self-knowledge and intimate personal understanding would help you make better decisions in your life, have better reactions to your ongoing experiences and grow and develop throughout your lifetime. The only thing we get to take with us when we leave this physical experience is who and what we have become by having been.

What is the most popular form of astrology? The predictive (what is happening to me in my life right now and in the future). Life is not an easy pastime or a stroll in the park. Life requires some serious experiencing, living, and learning. At times, you skin your knees. At times, life is just beautiful. Astrology is useful to deal with and to understand life and its experiences. Most astrological requests for readings involve questions about the present to the immediate future circumstances.

Let us say you have studied astrology, learned the basics and can read a natal wheel within reason. Skill does develop over time and experience. You trust that you have a reasonably accurate wheel, and now you feel it is time to move beyond the natal into your past, present and future experiences. What do you use astrologically to move yourself forward and backward in time and experience? This is where you must develop your predictive skills.

As always within the human experience, why have one way to do something when you can develop many methods? There are literally scores of predictive methods, each with their own value and adherents. This book could not possibly discuss all the available techniques for reading a sky map. There just are too many methods for this short chapter. However, I can describe a few of the most well-known and -developed techniques: progressed, directed, transits and returns.

Natal Our beginning point is always a natal map, which sets the stage for reading an individual or the beginning of anything. The planets and personal points shown on the wheel for that particular moment in time become sensitive points for future activation. If I place an object in your path and you encounter that object as your life progresses, you will have some sort of an experience relative to that object. It does not matter if you trip over it, avoid it, discount it, use it, worship it, marry it or are blocked by it. That object cannot decide your fate. Only you can do that. What you will do is encounter it, take some action (and avoidance is an action), and then move on.

Progressions A natal map is constructed and it is a still snapshot of a moving sky. A picture was taken of that sky so it could be studied, but the pattern shown on that picture never really stopped moving. If we follow the natural movement of the sky day after day, we can see the evolution of that moment in time - what happened over time to that pattern we initially recorded. This natural motion is called progression. Each succeeding day in a pattern's life, whether it is of a person, a country or a corporation, represents one year of progress in the existence of that pattern. The Bible mentions, "I have given you a day for a year," Ezekiel 4:6. That is the literal astrological application. I can read that energy snapshot through the experience of its life from birth onward to any point in time I choose through a series of additional snapshots of the evolving energy. Those emerging maps can be read individually, moment by moment, as temporary and continually changing experience. I can also compare an emerging map with the original map to measure the unfolding of those experiences. These are real-time patterns with maps that actually exist in the sky subsequent to birth. This flow of information is not limited in any way except by the limits you or others place upon that process.

Primary Directions The astrological houses and the inner planets move quite naturally and predictably, so the reading of ongoing experience is possible in a progressed wheel. The outer planets move quite slowly due to their gigantic orbits. Very little new progressed information can be developed for them over the period of a single lifetime, so another technique called Primary Directions is employed. This is a technique that is not based on real motion. It is instead based on symbolic motion. These moving symbolic patterns *did not* ever appear in the sky in those exact formats directly after that original birth moment. In this specific technique, all planets and points are moved by a rigid factor that is based on the continually changing relationship between the Earth and Sun. That motion equates to a single degree per day, which equates to a year of movement in the life of the entity. As usual, there are several choices of application within the technique itself.

Transits usually refer to what is happening in the sky at any time chosen. All the bodies in the heavens are in some sort of perpetual motion, some easily observable, some not. The motion illustrates occasional connections to the natal energy pattern and experience occurs. For example, as of writing this article, Pluto is in mid-Capricorn – for everyone, everywhere. The question is, does Pluto in this position activate a natal planet or point in your particular wheel? If contact occurs, experience occurs. Within the transit body of information is the Diurnal chart, which equates to a personal transit chart for any day in the life of that individual, complete with Ascendant and Midheaven.

A Full Moon is another common example of the continually moving sky. Many people are aware of the Full Moon and the unusual effect and experiences that can occur at that moment. Not every Full Moon will affect every person. At times the current Full Moon can make a direct contact to some sensitivity in your personal wheel and your life and you can have a Full Moon experience. Similarly, eclipses are well known phenomena, and they can have major impact in a person's experience. Each of these examples and more are part of the transit patterns just described.

Solar Returns The fourth most popular technique is referred to as solar returns. As noted previously, the birth pattern reflects several sensitive points in the sky relative to an individual entity. One of those sensitivities is the Earth / Sun relationship. When the Earth / Sun pair returns to their original birth alignment each year, that moment represents a new wave or re-seeding of experience for the original energy. This realignment is called the solar return and is computed on the Sun's actual physical reoccurring alignment with the Earth year-by-year. That new energy impulse will have influence until the next time the Earth / Sun pair returns to its original alignment, whereupon a new wave of energy or seeding of experience takes place, again constructed on the changing Sun / Earth relationship. Such moments are mapped and studied. The solar return is cast for that exact moment, and is very sensitive to accuracy. It is cast once a year and can be read as a temporary chart for that single year's experiences. It can also be compared to the natal chart for additional information.

Lunar Returns The concept of the solar return can also be applied to the Moon and is then called a lunar return. The Moon travels the whole zodiac every month and returns to its original position in about 27 days. That is the moment that is mapped for a lunar return. Because the cycle is 27 days, or less than a month, it is possible to have 12 ½ lunar returns per year. How do you get a half of a lunar return per year? One return starts in one year but carries through to completion in the following year. Every two years, 25 lunar returns are generated. That is a large number of returns to cast and read.

Planetary Returns As if that were not enough, you can also do the same for each of the other planets. A Mercury return can occur about once a year, and a Venus return can occur slightly longer than every year, Mars every two years, Jupiter every twelve years, Saturn every 29 years, and Uranus every 84 years. As you can see, as the orbits occur further and further away from the Sun, the potential for a possible return becomes infrequent. I know few astrologers who cast more than the solar and lunar returns.

What are my astrological choices for my predictive technique? You tend to use that from which you get the most value. I choose a combination of three techniques for most of my readings: progressions (naibod method), directions (radix method) and transits including eclipses. I frequently use Diurnals (personal transits). I selectively use solar returns as a backup technique, particularly if examining choices in the location of the return. I rarely cast a lunar return or a planetary return except for research purposes.

Diurnals This is a technique that I frequently use that is not as well-known or popular a method. It falls under the transit heading. I am a researcher and have used the technique extensively in my research, so I know that the method is effective. That technique is called a diurnal chart. Diurnal means day, so it is a wheel set for any day in the life of an individual. At 365 ¼ days per year, you obviously cannot cast and interpret a chart for every day. That would be a bit excessive. You can, however, pick strategic days such as a marriage or other major happening in life and look at the experience potential in that single day. When I am called upon for my best choice relating to childbirth for example, the diurnal is my preferred method to determine which is the potential day that I think birth can occur. Determining political outcomes is another excellent application for diurnals.

Each of these techniques requires a book of material, and that is not possible here. I have briefly explained several of the myriad techniques plus told you of my personal choices, those techniques that to me are most reliable under general circumstances. As you grow and develop your predictive skills, you will want to experiment with the many available methods so you can make your own *Astrological Choices*.

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Summary

As you can see, choices exist all over the place and many of them are just not that visible. I hope I have provided you with enough description that you can make better and informed choices as to your astrological practices. Please be aware that I am developing workbooks on many of the subjects I have pointed out. Stay tuned!