

How to Select & Work With An Astrologer

*Including a Brief History &
Introduction to the
Practice of Astrology*



Joelle Steele

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by Joelle Steele

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Cover: Illustration of an astrologer casting a horoscope, from Robert Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi Historia (Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris historia*, Volume II), 1619-1621.

*Ye stars which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we seek to read
the fate of men and empires -- 'tis to be forgiven
that, in our aspiration to be great,
our destinies o'erleap this mortal state
and claim a kindred with you:
for ye are a Beauty and a Mystery and
create in us such love and reverence from afar
that Life, Fame, Power and Fortune
have named themselves a Star.*

Lord George Byron (1788-1824)
from *Child Harolde*

Preface

Many people today are looking for answers to life's questions in some unconventional places. They consult psychics, read the Tarot, cast Runes, and rely on one of the most ancient — and accurate — of divinatory practices: astrology. Astrology is the most consistently reliable method for obtaining insight into your personality and for looking at future trends. While some may prefer to study astrology in order to incorporate it into their own lives, others find the very idea of undertaking the study of such a complex, albeit complicated, subject quite intimidating. They prefer instead to consult professional astrologers, and that's what this book is about.

I designed this book to help you learn the most basic astrological terms in relation to understanding what it is that an astrologer does and knowing what kinds of information an astrologer requires in order to erect your horoscope. In addition, I have included advice on selecting an astrologer who's right for you, working with that individual, and understanding the various kinds of astrological specialties that are available to address your different needs.

If you want to learn more about astrology to better understand and communicate with your astrologer, or in order to learn how to interpret your own chart, there are many books available that can provide you with more detailed information about basic astrological principles. In the back of this book, I have included a bibliography of recommended works that should prove helpful to you. In the meantime, I hope that this book will help you prepare for your next — or first — astrological consultation.

-- Joelle Steele
June 14, 2026

A Brief History of Astrology

Almost every known ancient culture — China, India, Egypt, Mexico, South America — practiced some form of astrology. In today's western world, we are most familiar with the system of astrology that was originally practiced by the civilizations of the Middle East, most notably the Babylonians. Many classic texts describe astrology and its use during ancient times, and provide us with a fairly comprehensive idea of how astrology has been used and what the prevailing attitudes about it have been over the centuries.

In the 4th century BC, the Greek physician Hippocrates wrote that *A physician without a knowledge of astrology has no right to call himself a physician*. Three centuries later, the Roman writer Vitruvius wrote:

It must be allowed that we can know what effect the twelve signs, and the sun, moon and five planets, have on the course of human life, from astrology and the calculations of the Chaldeans. For the genethliological art is properly theirs, by which they are able to unfold past and future events from their astronomical calculations. And many have come from that race of the Chaldaeans to leave us their discoveries, which are full of acuteness and learning. The first was Berosus, who settled on the island of Cos and taught there, and after him the learned Antipater, and then Achiapolus, who however set out his genethliological calculations not from the date of birth but from that of conception.

Another three hundred years later, Greek astronomer/astrologer Claudius Ptolemais of Alexandria, Egypt, the father of Western astrology, began his work *Tetrabiblos* with the following:

Of the ways of foretelling the future through astronomy two are among the most important and the most powerful: one, which is first both logically and practically, is that by which we learn about the ever-altering configurations, produced by their movements, of the sun and moon and stars in relation to one another and

to the earth; the second is that by which we enquire into the changes produced in the world through the particular natural states of those configurations. The first has its own proper theory and method, desirable in itself even if it does not achieve the results given by its combination with the second; and it has already been systematically and scientifically set out (as best I could) in its own treatise (Syntaxis - the Almagest). Of the second, which is not so self-sufficient, we shall give an account in this book in a way that is philosophically fitting.

The Chaldeans referred to by Vitruvius are the astrologers mentioned in the Bible. They were originally just a group of people who came from lower Mesopotamia, but the term *Chaldean* was later used to refer to the Babylonian priesthood and anyone who was a student in Babylonian schools. Later, during the heyday of the Roman Empire, *Chaldean* was used only in reference to astrologers and to those who practiced any form of divination, which during those times included such barbaric rituals as interpreting the entrails of a chicken.

About thirty years before the birth of Jesus Christ, the emperor Octavian (Caesar Augustus) was such a firm believer in astrology that he expelled the Chaldeans from Rome because he believed that if their predictions about him became known, that it might precipitate an insurrection against him. During the time of Jesus Christ, the Romans were firm believers in the accuracy of astrological prediction. In fact, forecasting was their only use for astrology. The emperor Tiberius, felt the same way about astrology as did his predecessor Octavian, but Tiberius took it one step further by executing anyone who practiced astrology or had an astrologer cast their horoscope for them.

Nero believed that you could avoid having astrological predictions come true if you simply ordered a mass human sacrifice, and he did so on more than one occasion, even though the astrologers he consulted advised him against such actions as they would be fruitless.

Astrology was clearly controversial, and its influence on Christianity was far more political than philosophical. For many years

during ancient times, the Christian church vacillated between tolerating and opposing astrology. The greatest influence on ancient and medieval Christian writings was a collection of writings called the *Clementine Recognitions* which are frequently quoted by Christian writers of the time, and which contain (among other things) a series of accounts of discussions between the apostle Peter and Clement of Rome shortly after the death of Jesus. Astrology is mentioned in several of these works, and in the very beginning, there is a passage which says that God created the celestial bodies so that ... *they might be for an indication of things past, present, and future*, and that Abraham *being an astrologer was able from the account and order of the stars to recognize the Creator*.

The ancient Christians didn't oppose astrology because they thought it was evil or that it was contrary to Christianity; they believed it was erroneous, that it was simply inaccurate and invalid.

To this day, references to astrology remain in the Bible, such as the statement by the prophet Isaiah: *Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee*. (Isaiah 48:13).

It was during the Middle Ages that the concept of evil was attributed to the practice of astrology. It was during those *Dark Ages* that the Christian church, which at that time consisted in large part of a rather corrupt Roman Catholic church, took advantage of the widespread decline in education and increase in illiteracy to begin re-writing scripture to suit their own political needs.

During the Middle Ages, churches autonomously ruled entire cities and city states because they literally owned the land (and the buildings, farms, mills, etc.) on which these places were built. The church leaned heavily on the anti-astrology teachings of St. Augustine and they spread those teachings to their parishioners to pull them into the church as sources of income. In Augustine's work *De civitate dei*, his arguments about astrology are contradictory for the most part, but are ultimately summed up as saying that when astrological predictions are true it is due only to the intervention of demons.

But in the 12th century, the Spanish-Jewish philosopher Maimonides wrote: *For as much as God hath created these stars and spheres*

to govern the world and hath set them on high and hath imparted honor to them, and they are ministers that minister before Him, it is meet that men should laud and glorify and give them honor.

Unfortunately, Maimonides' opinions did not carry the weight of Augustine's, for it is through the latter's influence that people began to equate astrology with demonology and Satanism. It is also during Augustine's time that the Christian Bible, then consisting solely of the Old Testament, underwent the greatest changes during which certain books were even deleted from it entirely and at the sole discretion of the church leaders of the time. By the time of the King James translation in 1611, the Bible, including the New Testament, had been revised numerous times and had been derived from a variety of translations, many from the Greek and not from original Hebrew.

English statesman and scholar Sir Francis Bacon writing of astrology stated:

Predictions may be made of comets to come, which (I am inclined to think) may be foretold; of all kinds of meteors, of floods, droughts, heats, frosts, earthquakes, eruptions of water, eruptions of fire, great winds and rains, various seasons of the year, plagues, epidemic diseases, plenty and dearth of grain, wars, sedition, schisms, transigrations of people and any other or all commotions or general revolutions of things, natural as well as civil.

In 1594, Bacon's contemporary, the German astronomer/astrologer Johannes Kepler, began studying astrology while he was a mathematics professor. Two years later, he was corresponding with Tycho Brahe and Galileo, two of the most eminent astronomers of that time. Brahe, a Danish astronomer believed that *stars rule the lot of Man*. When he died in 1601, Kepler succeeded him as court mathematician to Emperor Rudolf II. Kepler erected charts for the emperor and other dignitaries, and in 1603 he published *De fundamentis astrologiae certioribus* in which he explained the veracity of astrology: *An unfailing experience of mundane events in harmony with the changes occurring in the heavens has instructed and compelled my unwilling belief.*

Despite Kepler's glowing tribute to astrology, his true love was astronomy. Unfortunately, it paid poorly, and he practiced astrology only as a financial supplement to his otherwise meager existence. In 1609, Kepler published *Astronomia nova* which included the first two of his three laws of planetary motion which are to this day acknowledged as the foundations of modern astronomy.

Just a century after Kepler's death, astrology was again alive and well. American statesman, scientist, and inventor Benjamin Franklin wrote the first of many astrological references that he would make during his life. In his 1733 almanac, Franklin made the following astrological prediction of the death of his friend Titan Leeds: *He dies by my calculation made at his request, on October 17, 1733, three hours twenty-nine minutes p.m. at the very instant of the conjunction of the Sun and Mercury.*

Some years later, the German poet Wolfgang von Goethe began his autobiography with this astrological allusion to his birth:

On the 28th of August 1749, at midday, as the clock struck twelve, I came into the world, at Frankfort on Main. The aspect of the stars was propitious: the sun stood in the sign of the Virgin, and had culminated for the day; Jupiter and Venus looked on with a friendly eye and Mercury not adversely; the attitude of Saturn and Mars was neutral; the moon alone, just full, exerted all the more as her power of opposition had just reached her planetary hour. She therefore resisted my birth which could not be accomplished until this hour was passed. These auspicious aspects which the astrologers subsequently interpreted very favorably for me may have been the causes of my preservation.

And, in the early 20th century, former United States president Theodore Roosevelt said of astrology: *I always keep my weather-eye on the opposition of my Seventh House Moon to my First House Mars.* In the latter part of the same century, another former U.S. president, Ronald Reagan and his first lady, Nancy Reagan, regularly consulted their astrologer, Joan Quigley.

Astrology in the New Millennium

Today, astrology is thriving. But most people have only experienced astrology as it appears in horoscope columns in newspapers and magazines. These *sun sign* forecasts are for entertainment purposes only and should never be taken seriously. If they seem even remotely accurate to you, rest assured it is only a coincidence, because these columns are extremely vague and unreliable and have almost no bearing at all on the professional practice of astrology. All they do is look at a sign, such as Libra, Aries, Capricorn, etc., and make extremely general and unfocused forecasts or predictions which may or may not ever affect you.

Astrology is a complex art and science which applies symbolic meaning to astronomical information as it existed over two thousand years ago when the practice of Western or Tropical astrology was first documented in writing by ancient astronomers/astrologers such as Claudius Ptolemais. Unlike the aforementioned sun sign forecasts, professional astrologers examine your horoscope in its entirety, interpreting all of the Planets, the Moon, the Sun, and other elements such as your Ascendant, (or Rising sign), your Mid-heaven, the lunar nodes, asteroids, fixed stars, aspects and aspect patterns, and other chart elements.

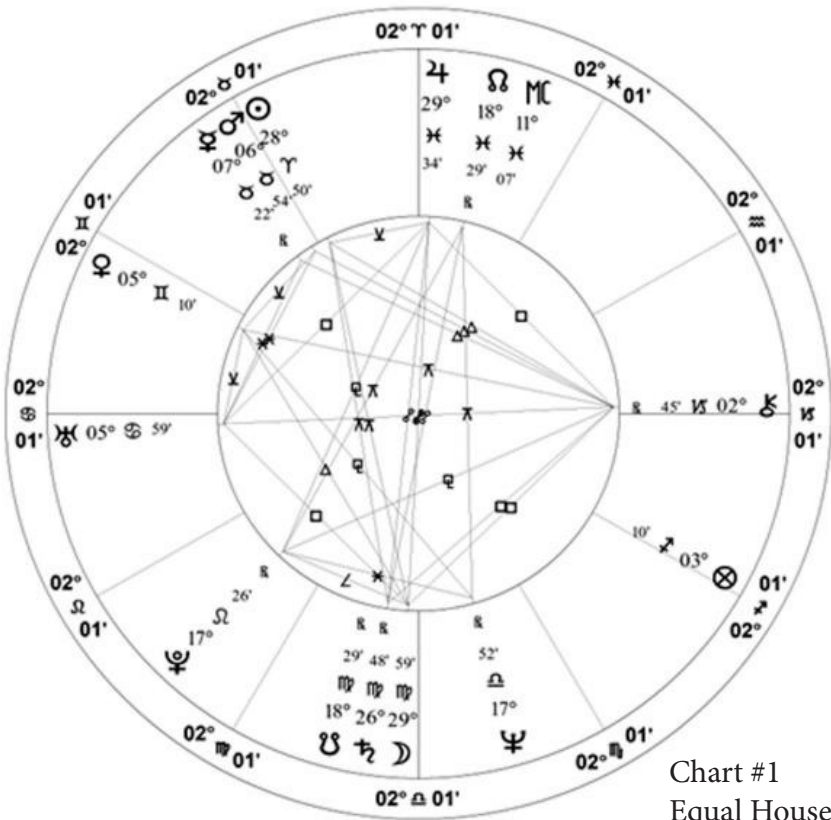
The Zodiac

Because Western astrologers use the ancient positions of the constellations, you may be told that you have, for example, Venus in Taurus. This means that when you were born, the planet Venus was in the astrological sign of Taurus. However, Venus may not have been in the astronomical sign of Taurus. Due to the precession of the equinoxes over thousands of years, astronomically, your Venus, depending on what degree it was in at your birth, could instead be in the sign of Gemini, because Gemini is now where Taurus used to be. Likewise, if your astrologer says that your Venus is in Gemini, that would be its astrological position. Astronomically, it could have been in Cancer when you were born since Cancer is now where Gemini used to be.

Western astrologers use these ancient constellation placements, and also make use of the Sidereal zodiac, which uses the current astronomical positions. If you decide to consult with Hindu or Vedic astrologers, they use only the sidereal zodiac, and their astrological practice and terminology is very different from Western astrology, but it works equally well.

Houses and House Systems

Astrologers begin by erecting a natal chart or horoscope based on the date, time, and place you were born. For example, most natal charts done by Western astrologers would look pretty much like this:



As you can see, the natal chart is divided into twelve sections called *houses*. Houses determine where the activities and focus of your life will be. Houses are also used to examine current planetary activity and how it will impact your daily life. For example, if you are planning a career change there will most likely be some daily planetary activity in your 10th house which rules careers. Planning to relocate? Your astrologer will look for current and future planetary activity in the 4th house which rules your home and childhood. Looking for love? The 7th house governs relationships and partnerships; the 5th rules love affairs.

How a natal chart's houses are determined depends on the house system used by your astrologer. There are at least eight major house systems in use throughout the world, but the three most commonly used in the United States are Placidus, Koch (pronounced *coke*), and Equal.

The Placidian system is named after its 17th century inventor, Placidus de Titus. It is used by at least 80% of astrologers in the U.S. because it is the most widely known system and its house tables are readily available in most areas. The Koch system is the second most commonly used house system in the U.S. It originated in Germany and is named for its first publisher, Dr. Walter Koch. Equal houses are most commonly used in Europe and are especially useful when erecting charts for people who were born in countries that are close to the poles.

All three house systems result in the same Ascendant, but the Midheaven and other house cusps will be different. In addition, Placidus and Koch are both unequal house systems which can result in *interceptions*. An interception occurs when two opposite signs are each on the cusp of two houses, while another two opposite signs are not on any house cusps at all and are instead inside of houses with neighboring signs on their cusps. Intercepted signs may result in planets that are intercepted because they are in the intercepted sign, and those intercepted planets will be interpreted differently from non-intercepted signs. In any given chart, the signs intercepted using Koch houses are not necessarily the same ones that would be intercepted using Placidus.

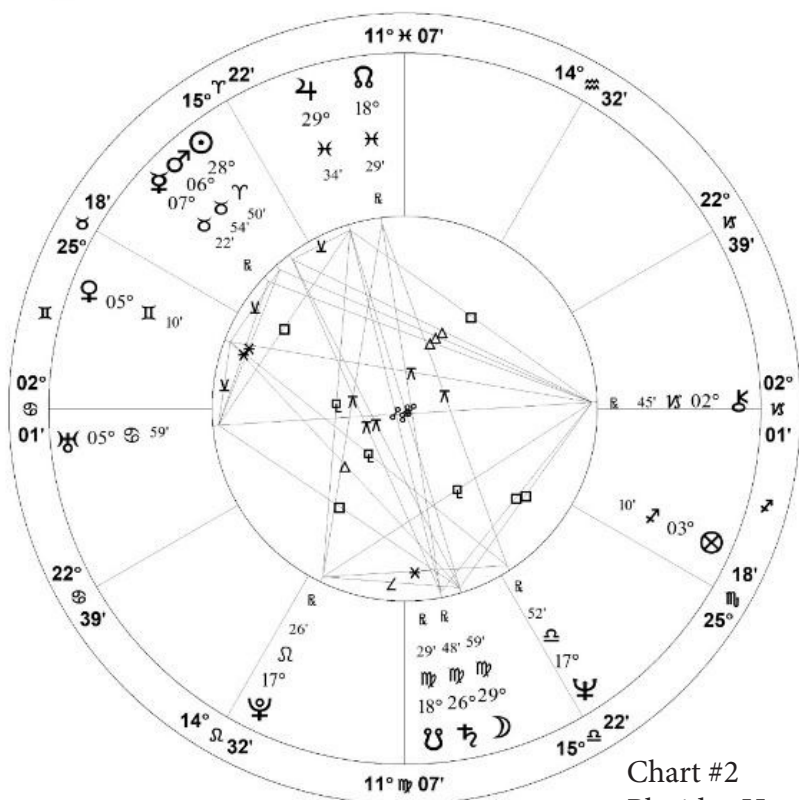


Chart #2
Placidus Houses

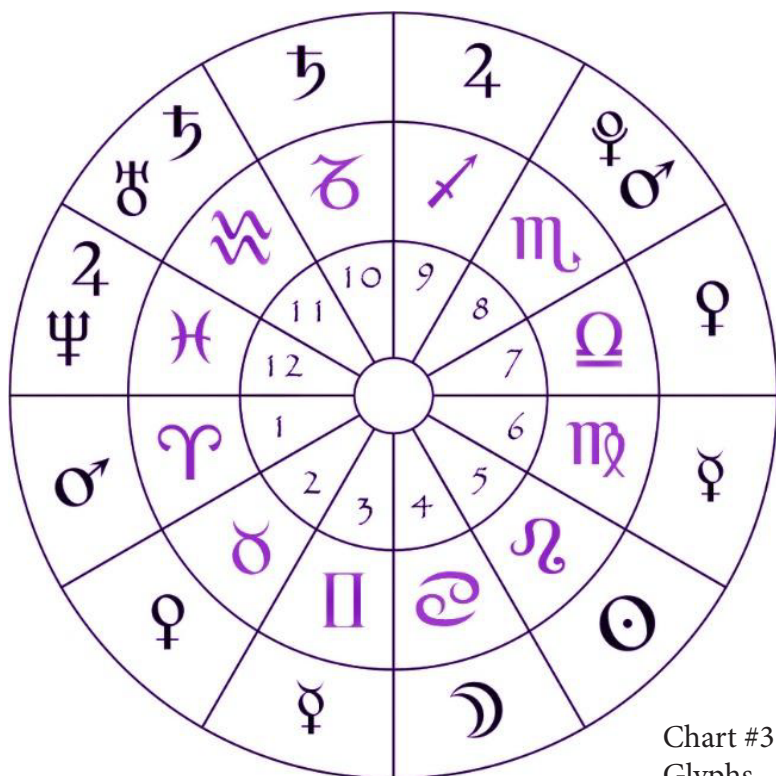
House systems do not affect the signs or degrees of the planets or the relationships (the aspects) between the planets. House systems only determine which houses the planets will be in.

No given house system is better than another, only different. Astrologers select the systems which they feel work best for them and for their clients. They also select systems which best suit the kinds of astrology they practice, giving them the desired interpretive results. For example, those who practice astropsychology are often inclined to use Placidus, and those who practice Uranian astrology are more likely to select Koch.

The lines that separate the houses are called *cusps*. Each cusp has a sign and degree on it, such as the 5th house cusp in Chart #1 (which has Equal houses) at 02°01' Sagittarius; the Ascendant or Rising sign, which is always the sign on the 1st house cusp, is

02°01' Cancer; the Midheaven or MC which is the 10th house cusp, is 02°01' Aries; the Descendent, which is always exactly opposite the rising sign and is therefore the cusp of the 7th house, is 02°01' Capricorn; and the Nadir or IC, which is exactly opposite the Midheaven, is the 4th house cusp, which is 02°01' Libra.

Each cusp has a sign on it which is written in the astrological shorthand of *glyphs*, pictorial symbols which act as abbreviations for the names of the signs and the planets.



Planetary Placements

The Sun, the Moon, and the Planets, each in their correct sign and degree, are placed in their appropriate houses by your astrologer who does this either automatically with a computer or manually using an ephemeris and a table of houses. In Chart #1 the Sun

is 28°50' in Aries in the 10th house; the Moon is 29°59' in Virgo in the 3rd house, etc. The Sun, Moon, and Planets all represent the various forces at work in the area of your life that is represented by the house in which they are located. The signs in which each is located further indicate the manner in which those forces will manifest themselves.

Planetary Aspects

The Sun, Moon, and Planets all form relationships to each other called *aspects*. Aspects are additional influences to the ways in which all of the items in your chart are connected and actively working together, sometimes with ease and other times with great difficulty.

In Chart #1, Mars and Mercury form an aspect called a *conjunction* in which they are at almost the same degree and sign; the Sun and Jupiter form an aspect with each other called a *sextile* in which they are 60° apart. Pluto and Neptune also form a sextile.

Other aspects not shown in Chart #1 include the *square* in which planets are 90° apart; the *trine*, in which planets are 120° apart; and the *quincunx* in which planets are 150° apart. There are also a lot of *minor aspects* such as *septiles*, *noviles*, *quintiles*, etc., which are a subject for a much bigger book than this.

Interpreting a Chart

Astrologers look at your horoscope as a sort of *map* to your personality. They interpret everything separately and then integrate it for you into a total, overall picture of you and your life. This is not something that an astrologer learns to do overnight or by reading a book or two about astrology. Not only does interpretation take years of practice, it also takes years of experience in working with and knowing a lot of people, and in understanding how people's activities, behaviors, experiences, and choices affect their lives. No one can practice astrology proficiently — least of all on a perfect stranger — if they do not understand human behavior other than their own. Everyone is very different, and a good astrologer must

understand this and be able to incorporate that diversity into the evaluation and interpretation of a chart.

Looking into the future, or forecasting, is also a practice that requires study and experience. To look at the future, astrologers must erect a variety of charts which are formulated on your natal chart. Astrologers who forecast are looking at three forms of planetary activity: Progressions, Transits, and Returns. Progressions are charts that examine how you have evolved as a person since you were born. Transits are the events-oriented daily movements of the planets. Return charts are erected for the exact time when the Sun, the Moon, or a specific planet returns to the same place it was when you were born. The most common return charts are erected for the Sun (Solar Returns or *Birthday Charts*), the Moon (Lunar Returns), and Saturn (Saturn Return). Returns provide general information about what a specific period of time is likely to bring into your life. In making accurate predictions, an astrologer looks at all of these charts to see which things or events are indicated most strongly and which are supported by more than one kind of chart.

From all those charts, an astrologer must be able to determine what kinds of opportunities or obstacles are coming your way and what part of your life they may affect. In addition, a competent astrologer must also be able to guide you in ways that will enable you to take advantage of an opportunity and overcome an obstacle. Sometimes you will have both at the same time!

Astrologers who forecast events in a person's life and brag about those events coming true are only showing their inability to properly advise their clients. Anyone can make a prediction to a client and have it come true. This is particularly true if a client is facing a difficult problem and is very vulnerable. Telling someone that something is going to happen to them when they are so susceptible will almost always result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. In other words, the astrologer plants the seed, and the client makes it grow.

The correct way for an astrologer to advise a client is to explain what the opportunity or obstacle is and then explain how to best maximize or minimize the effects. For example, if an astrologer sees that you are going to have Mars entering your 6th house and Saturn

conjuncting your Midheaven at the same time, this could mean that you are going to switch jobs or careers. Whether or not you get fired or quit your job is another story. Knowing that these transits are going to be in effect gives you the opportunity to search for a new job and to make that job change using the planetary forces that are operating. An astrologer may also see this same planetary activity as indicative of a possible accident or surgery. But, telling someone that an accident is imminent is planting that seed for a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead, a good astrologer will tell you that this is a time to be cautious and that it's a good time to have that medical checkup you've been putting off.

Importance of the Birth Time

In order to erect an astrological chart or horoscope, an astrologer will ask you for your exact birth date, time, and place. This information must be accurate in order for you to benefit from astrology. It's like the computer expression "garbage in, garbage out." You will only get results from astrology if the information you provide to your astrologer is correct. This is particularly true of the birth time.

Almost everybody knows where they were born and on what day, but many do not know what time they were born. The time is not always stated on birth certificates, and even when it is, it is not always accurate. Doctors and nurses often round off birth times from 8:38 to 8:40 or 8:35. A doctor may fill out the birth certificate later and just estimate the time of birth.

This rounding off may seem insignificant to you, however, an accurate birth time is essential in order to calculate the Ascendant or Rising sign, (which changes about every four minutes), and the placements of the planets in their houses. Without an exact birth time, astrology in general, and predictive astrology in particular, is rarely accurate. There may be some general information and interpretations that are correct, but the subtleties and events-oriented aspects will almost always be wrong.

If you are about to give up astrology because your time of birth was not stated on your birth certificate, or if the time is recorded

there but your mother swears it was twenty-five minutes later than on the certificate and your Aunt Em says it was actually about fifteen minutes earlier than the time on the certificate, there is a solution: Rectification.

Rectification is often a very time-consuming process which involves forecasting backwards in your life and adjusting your birth time until it coincides with all the significant events in your life. It can be an expensive investment. However, the time and costs can be considerably less if you have a birth time on your birth certificate from which to start the process, and if you have a very good memory for the dates and times of as many events in your life as possible. Rectification is an important investment for anyone who regularly uses and relies on astrology for guidance in his or her life. Once your exact birth time has been properly determined, you will find that astrological consultations are far more accurate than you ever imagined possible.

Before you visit an astrologer, get a copy of your birth certificate and talk to your parents or other people who were present when you were born, and try to determine just how accurate the birth certificate is. Give that information to your astrologer and let him or her advise you from that point on.

Astrological Practices and Specialties

Interpretations come in many forms: basic insight into your personality; examining specific trouble spots in your life; comparing and contrasting your chart with that of a loved one, friend, co-worker, etc.; looking at career options and financial indications; finding the best place to live; forecasting opportunities; selecting the best time for a wedding, to start a business, etc.; spiritual growth; and, answering specific questions.

All astrologers have a general practice which incorporates a variety of interpretive services. In addition, they may have some areas in which they specialize such as relationships, careers, forecasting, etc. Before you start looking for an astrologer, you must determine what it is that you want to know about yourself so that you can find an astrologer who can address your questions or concerns.

Personality Insight. Almost every astrologer does natal chart interpretations. Some also do astropsychology in which they delve deeply into the psychological aspects of your personality. They may also do crisis astrological counseling. Some astrologers who specialize in natal chart interpretations are also professional psychologists.

Relationships. Again, almost all astrologers interpret relationships, but some are specialists in synastry, or chart comparison. These astrologers will take your natal chart and compare it to the natal chart of the other person in the relationship. They will tell you how the two of you compare as individuals and they will probably look at a blended chart of your combined charts called a *composite chart*, to give you some insight into the dynamics of the relationship and where it is going.

Career and Life Purpose. Specialists in these areas can tell you for which career fields you are best suited; the individual types of jobs within those fields that would suit you best at this time in your life; when it's a good time to make a career move; etc. Since careers and life purpose are closely aligned astrologically, your reason for being on the planet is often a part of this specialty.

Financial. If you're thinking of investing or want to know when money-making opportunities will be coming your way, financial astrologers can shed some light on the subject for you.

Forecasting. If you want to know what the future holds, you will want to find an astrologer who practices predictive astrology, or forecasting. Predictive astrology fell out of favor in Western culture some years ago, but in recent years it has experienced a rebirth in the astrological community.

Horary. If you have a specific question such as, "will I get to go on the Titanic cruise?" or "will the police find my stolen Edsel?" you may want to consult an astrologer who is a horary specialist. You will need to be very specific about the way your question is phrased, and your horary will help you do that.

Electional. If you want to find the best time, astrologically speaking, to do something such as a wedding or the start-up of a business, etc.,

you should consult an astrologer who specializes in electional astrology. To keep the cost down on this service, you should pick out several possible dates that would work well for you, and then let the astrologer look at those and direct you from that point on.

There are many other specialties such as the interpretation of the various asteroids, fixed stars, Arabic parts, hypothetical planets, etc. But the specialties outlined in the previous paragraphs should cover the needs of most people for the time being.

Computerized Reports

Though condemned by some as harmful to the professional practice of astrology, many astrologers offer computer-generated reports which are interpretations of your natal horoscope and other kinds of astrological charts. These reports are based on your birth data and come in many varieties which interpret your personality, your career options, your relationships, your best places to live, and even your future.

While reports are an easy introduction to astrology and offer a lot of information in an inexpensive format, they do have some limitations: they do not interpret aspect patterns, house rulers, mutual reception, and many other important chart items. And, they cannot pull everything together and give you an overall picture of your personality, your relationship, etc., the way an astrologer can. So, reports are fine, but you will probably still need to consult with an astrologer to fill in all the missing data that even the best computer programs simply cannot provide. So far, only a human being, in this case an astrologer, can give you any real advice.

Where to Find an Astrologer

Astrologers are everywhere — literally. Many choose not to practice full-time and therefore may have *day jobs* as bookkeepers, teachers, computer programmers, legal secretaries, real estate agents, sales clerks, domestic goddesses, etc. Those who practice full-time often do other astrology-related activities such as writing books or

articles about astrology, publishing astrology magazines and newsletters, speaking and lecturing on the subject, selling products with astrological themes, etc. Some astrologers do not advertise at all, while others actively market their services. None of these factors have any significant bearing on the competency of an astrologer.

You can start looking for an astrologer by asking around. Chances are you already know someone who has consulted with an astrologer and who can give you a referral to one they felt was helpful to them. The yellow pages used to list astrologers, but nowadays you may also want to check out the ads in your local new age publications or browse for one online. These magazines and tabloids are usually given away free at health food stores and metaphysical bookstores. And, you can always look at the ads in the various astrology magazines.

Interviewing Astrologers

Never make the mistake of assuming that just because someone is referred to you or because their ad looks good, that they are the right astrologer for you. Aside from the fact that they may not even practice the kind of astrology you need, you may not "click" with them. Try to think of looking for the right astrologer in the same way that you would look for a good dentist or a good neurologist. If you don't feel comfortable with a particular astrologer when you're just chatting with them and trying to find out what services they offer, you probably won't get much out of a consultation with them either.

When you are considering contacting an astrologer who was recommended to you by a friend, relative, co-worker, etc., try to think about how well you get along with the person who gave you the referral. If Uncle Ebenezer referred you to an astrologer saying, *she's wonderful*, and you have never gotten along very well with Uncle Eb, there's a good chance that you might not agree with his taste in astrologers either. But, it's a place to start.

When you are looking at ads, look for ones that say something about the astrologer. Advertising can speak volumes about a person. Do they list their services? Do they say what their philosophy is about astrology? Do they state their address so that you can write

to them if they are out of town or out of state? If they have a photo, do you feel an affinity towards them as a result? Does the ad look professional or does it look like something they threw together at the last minute? Remember, you want someone who practices with integrity and professionalism. You are going to talk about your life with this person. If you don't feel comfortable with their ad, there could be a very good reason for that. Listen to what your instincts tell you. Any questions that can't be answered by an ad should be directed to the astrologer when you first speak with him or her.

Have a list of questions ready to ask astrologers once you make contact. Ask about their services, and don't be afraid to ask for a detailed explanation of those services. Ask about their philosophy on astrological consulting/counseling, i.e., how they think astrology can benefit people. Ask where they got their training and how many years they have been studying and practicing astrology. Many astrologers who are self-taught can be just as competent as those who took classes, but you might want to question them a little more in-depth about what kinds of books they've read, etc. A truly capable professional astrologer should have read at least 50 books on the subject. I AM NOT KIDDING.

Find out what hours they work to make sure you can have a consultation at a time that is comfortable and unrushed for you. Ask if you may record the consultation and whether you need to bring your own recorder or cell phone. Most astrologers do not mind being recorded. And, last but not least, be sure to ask how they charge for their services and what forms of payment they accept, (e.g., cash, checks, and/or credit cards).

Consulting Fees

With regard to fee structures, there is considerable variation from one astrologer to the next. While some of this is based on the experience and reputation of the astrologer, a lot of what goes into setting a fee is based on the geographical location of the astrologer, since some parts of the country are more expensive to live in than others. But fees are also based on the amount of overhead the as-

trologer has in terms of advertising, software, etc. And, of course, there's the amount of time it actually takes to prepare for and provide a consultation.

Astrologers charge for the time they spend preparing for a consultation (erecting charts, examining those charts, etc.) and for the time they spend consulting to you. This means that if you are paying \$150 for a one-hour consultation, the astrologer has based that fee on the consultation, plus the preparation time. So, while it appears that the astrologer is making \$150 for one hour of work, in reality, he or she may have actually worked an hour and a half — or more.

Hourly fees, in general, can vary from \$50 to \$250, (and the higher prices do not guarantee better services). Your first consultation is usually the longest, (from 1-1/2 to 2 hours), and therefore the most expensive. Additional consultations with the same astrologer at later dates are often only 15 to 30 minutes in length. The exception is yearly consultations, or birthday consultations, which usually run about an hour or so. These figures all vary greatly, so do your homework!

Preparing for Your Consultation

Once you have selected an astrologer with whom you feel comfortable, you can make an appointment for a consultation. But, before you make the appointment or actually meet with an astrologer, you should examine your needs very carefully, and make a list of questions or items about which you want answers or insight.

Before consultations, most astrologers will ask you for some basic background about what you want to know. This is necessary because there is so much information in an astrological horoscope that you and your astrologer could spend all day talking about it in great detail. Since that is probably not within your budget, and since no astrologer can spend that much time preparing for a consultation, it is a good idea to let your astrologer know some of the general areas of your life on which you would like them to focus. For example, the most common areas of concern are love, careers, children, and money.

If you want to know about a specific relationship you should be prepared to give your astrologer the birth data for the other person

so that charts can be made for that individual too. This is true also if your question is about your child. If you are considering a career change, tell the astrologer what kind of change, for example, if it is from legal secretary to public relations. And, if your question is about where to invest the inheritance you received from Uncle Vanya or if you want to know when you can expect a raise, provide all this information to your astrologer.

When you provide this background information to your astrologer, try not to elaborate beyond the most general areas of interest as illustrated in the previous paragraph. You want to insure that the astrologer does not become biased by what you say. For example, if you are debating about getting a divorce, just tell the astrologer that you want to know about your marriage. Period. You can always ask additional questions and divulge more details during the consultation.

Your Consultation

At the appointed time for your consultation, you will visit or make the call to your astrologer. If you have not already made arrangements for payment for the consultation, you will do so before the consultation begins. Have your credit card handy and be sure that it is active and that you have sufficient credit available for the consultation fees as quoted to you by your chosen astrologer.

Once the financial details have been taken care of, most astrologers begin by making a brief review of your natal chart. Every person has choices about how they are going to live their life. By reviewing your chart with you, the astrologer is able to better determine in what way you are currently handling the planetary placements and their relationships to each other. The idea here is for you to confirm or deny what the astrologer is telling you so that he or she can fully understand what kind of person you are. After this review, your astrologer can begin to address your specific questions and concerns.

As each area about which you asked for insight is addressed, you should listen very carefully to what the astrologer is saying, even if you are recording the consultation. You may need to ask for clarifi-

cation if what the astrologer said seemed vague or if it didn't exactly answer what you wanted to know. If you are recording, you will want that additional information to be recorded for future reference.

If your astrologer starts throwing out too much astro-talk and not enough English, let him or her know that you need to hear plain and simple English only, and that the amount of technical terminology must be reduced.

Some people find it very frustrating when they ask a question and the astrologer does not give them the kind of answer they want. This can happen when an astrologer is trying to avoid influencing a client, and is trying to prevent a suggestible person from fulfilling whatever prophecy the astrologer could potentially make. For example, a client asks if her marriage is going to fail, not because anything is currently wrong with it, but because she is thinking of having a child and wants to be sure there will be two unified parents to raise it. The astrologer sees the possibility of problems in relationships for her and could easily tell her that it looks like she may cheat on her husband in the future. But, if the astrologer does this, his client may decide that cheating is her fate, and when the opportunity to be unfaithful presents itself, she could very well jump right in and damage or even destroy her marriage. In these cases the astrologer often prefers to side-step the issue.

Another reason why some people don't get the answers they want is that they don't ask the right questions. This usually happens when you ask a question for which the answer is dependent on a choice to be made on your part or on the part of someone else in your life, and choices and decisions are what astrology is all about. The opportunities may be there, but how you act on them determines the outcome. For example, let's look at such questions as: "will I ever marry Juliet?" or "will I keep working at the Bates Motel?" or "will I ever have children?"

Whether you marry Juliet or not depends on whether an astrological opportunity exists for a marriage, whether that or a similar opportunity exists in Juliet's chart, and whether or not she wants to marry you. An astrologer can tell you if the opportunity exists for you both. The rest is up to the two of you. As for your job, continu-

ing to work there is largely up to whether you want to stay and whether your boss Norman is the unpredictable type who gives employees the ax at the drop of a hat, for no apparent reason that you know of. Your astrologer can tell you whether it looks like changes are coming in your work life, but without Norman's chart, we can't know with absolute certainty what's on his agenda.

Regarding the question of having children, numerous astrological windows of opportunity open regularly in a woman's (and man's) life for possible pregnancies. However, having a child is dependent on another person (unless you're making a withdrawal at the local sperm bank). If you are in a relationship and you have been trying to get pregnant, and you have both been given a clean bill of health, you may be able to maximize your chances of conceiving by taking advantage of certain astrological aspects associated with increased fertility (and there are astrologers who specialize in this area). But, if you are not in a relationship and are not sexually active at the moment, the window of opportunity could be wide open, but short of the immaculate conception, nothing is going to happen. Whether you have a child in the future would be almost impossible to say for sure, but the fact that you want one would certainly incline you to take steps towards achieving that goal in some way or other, including adoption.

Astrology as a Tool

The last thing you want to do is become dependent on your astrologer for every little decision in your life. But, at the same time, things may start to happen which reflect back on your initial consultation and you may want to ask for your astrologer's advice on how to best handle a situation. Most astrologers will do short paid consultations of 10-15 minutes or so in order to address a specific area of concern, however, the more dependent you become on your astrologer, the longer those consultations are likely to become. You may end up with a couple hours of consultations each month which helps your astrologer make the payments on his new car, but could begin to wear a hole in your pocket.

Always remember that astrology should be used as a tool, as a guide — not as a crutch. Using astrology as a tool will make you more aware of just how much in control you really are in your life. No one is a "karmic victim" here unless he or she chooses to be one. The very nature of astrology speaks to our free will and the many choices we have to make in this world, in this life.

The best way to use astrology is to learn how to evaluate a problem on your own, to examine the choices you have to make in order to fix the problem, and then to consult your astrologer to see in which ways the possible solutions will work for you and when the best time is to make changes, take risks, be patient and wait, etc. With all that information in hand, you possess a powerful knowledge with which to solve your problems, change your life, and be the person you have always wanted to be.

Recommended Reading

There are so many books on astrology that it would be very difficult to read them all. But, I have read over 250 astrology books, and some of those that were the best in terms of the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the texts are listed below. Some are out of print and you may have to look for them in a used book store, or through a web search, or through an interlibrary loan. Just a few of the other authors who have written some excellent astrology books include Charles Carter, Sophia Mason, Max Heindel, Dane Rudyar, James Braha, Richard Houck, C.C. Zain, and Nicolas Campion.

Never look at only the "latest" books on astrology! The books listed below are older books that are extremely well written and will not lead you astray into believing only what *their* author thinks you should know.

Besides your local new age bookstore, you can find a good selection of astrology books through the American Federation of Astrologers; ACS Publications; and there is always amazon.com.

Bills, R.E., *The Rulership Book: A Directory of Astrological Correspondences*, AFA, Tempe, Arizona, 1991

- Dalton's *Tables of Houses: Spherical Basis of Astrology*, Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply, Richmond, VA 1975
- Goldstein-Jacobson, Ivy M., *Simplified Horary Astrology w/Requisite Mathematics*, Frank Severy Pubs, Alhambra, Calif 1975
- Greene, Liz, *Saturn: A New Look at An Old Devil*, Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach, Maine, 1976
- Hamaker-Zondag, Karen, *Psychological Astrology*, 1990
- Hand, Robert, *Planets in Transit: Life Cycles for Living*, Whitford Press/Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., Atglen, Pennsylvania, 1976
- Hand, Robert, *Planets in Composite: Analyzing Human Relationships*, Whitford Press, West Chester, PA 1975
- Hickey, Isabel M., *Astrology: A Cosmic Science*, Isabel Hickey/Fellowship Press, Watertown, MA 1970/1979 (The very best book for beginners!)
- Keane, Jerry L. Keane, *Practical Astrology: How to Make it Work For You*, Parker Publishing Company, NY 1967
- Lehman, Lee J., *The Book of Rulerships*, Whitford Press, West Chester, Pennsylvania 1992
- Leo, Alan, *The Progressed Horoscope*, Destiny Books, Rochester, Vermont, 1983/1989
- March, Marion, & McEvers, Joan, *The Only Way to Learn Astrology, Volumes I through VI*, ACS Pubs, San Diego, 1976-1994
- Michelsen, Neil F., *The American Ephemeris 2001-2050 at Midnight*, ACS Pubs, San Diego, CA 1982/1992
- Michelsen, Neil F., *The American Ephemeris 1900-2000 at Midnight*, ACS Pubs, San Diego, CA 1980
- Tester, S. J. (Jim), *A History of Western Astrology*, Ballantine Books, New York, 1987

Tierney, Bil, *Dynamics of Aspect Analysis*, CRCS Publications, Reno, Nevada, 1980/83

Volguine, Alexandre, *The Technique of Solar Returns*, ASI Publishers, Inc., New York, 1976

Zoller, Robert, *The Arabic Parts in Astrology*, Inner Traditions Int'l, Rochester, Vermont, 1980/89

BOOKS BY JOELLE STEELE

<https://www.joellesteele.com>

Joelle Steele began studying astrology in the early 1960's, and began practicing professionally in 1974. Today, the Joelle Steele Seismic Data Collection of over 3,500 earthquakes is available in her book, *The Astrological Prediction of Earthquakes*, and is also part of the Cosmic Patterns research database in the Kepler professional astrologer program. While retired from professional astrology, Joelle still consults the stars for herself and her friends.

FICTION

Devil's Garden (2026)

Devil's Garden: An Encyclopaedia of Toxic and Poisonous Plants
(2026)

The Bones of Creed Howlett (2024)

Death by Orchid (2023)

The Man in the Drawer (2023)

Enterré dan a Tourbe (2023)

Buried in the Peat (2022)

Spider in the Attic (2019)

Reflections (2016)

Delusions (2015)

Shades (2014)

The Rosary Bed (1980) (OOP)

ART

Souvenirs of Europe: Decorative Landscape Etchings (2018)

*What Did They Really Look Like? The Art and Science of Depicting
the Human Face in History* (2018)

Make Your Living As An Artist (2026)

CAT CARE

Cooking for Fluffy: Home-Made Feline Diets (2026)

Cocinar para Fluffy: Dietas Felinas Saludable (2026)

The Holistic Cat (2026)

FORENSICS

Identification Dilemma: The Effects of Decomposition on the Human Face (2021)

Sign Here! Detecting Forgery in Handwritten Signatures (2021)

Quick Guide to Comparing Faces in Photographs (2019)

Guide Rapide pour Comparer des Visages sur des Photographies (2026)

External Ear: Anthropometry, Biometrics, Anatomy, Development, Measurement, Analysis, Forensics, & Authentication of Human Identities (2018)

Face to Face: Analysis and Comparison of Facial Features to Authenticate Identities of People in Photos (2013)

Anthropometry & the Human Face in Photos (1992) (OOP)

GENEALOGY

Researching and Writing Your Family History and Memoirs (2026)

PhotoGen: Photo Analysis for Family Genealogists (2026)

PhotoGen: d'Analyse Photographies pour les Généalogiste Familiaux (2026)

Grandma Helny's Old-Fashioned Swede-Finn Recipes (2004)

A Brief History of the Buzzini, Crosetti, and Martelli Families in Italy and America (1990-2026)

An Illustrated History of the Steele, Furu, and Forström Families in Finland and America (1977-2026)

The Garbageman's Daughter: The Memoirs of Joelle Steele (2026)

ASTROLOGY

The Astrological Prediction Of Earthquakes and Seismic Data Collection (2020)

How to Market Your Astrological Services (2026)

How to Select and Work With An Astrologer (2026)

Introduction to Astrology (2026)

WRITING

Living & Breathing: How to Make Your Characters Come Alive (2023)

Unblocked: How to Expand Your Creativity by Removing and Preventing Creative Blocks (2023)

*Desbloqueado: Cómo Expandir su Creatividad Superando y
Preveniendo Bloques Creativos* (2023)
The Writing Biz: How to Make Your Living as a Writer (1993) (OOP)

POETRY

Perceptions, Passions, and Paradoxes: A Poetry Collection (2014)
A Tapestry of Eden: A Poetic Memoir of Monterey County (2000) (OOP)
The Physics of Love (1989) (OOP)
Thursday's Child (1987) (OOP)
Under A Weeping Sky (1976) (OOP)

INTERIOR-EXTERIOR LANDSCAPE

*English & Spanish Guide to Interior Landscape Maintenance (Inglés
y Español Guía al Mantenimiento del Paisaje Interior)* (2019)
Interior Landscape Dictionary (1992)
Indoor Watering Techniques (2025)
How To Start Your Own Interior Landscape Business (2023)
Human Resource Guide for Horticultural Companies (Word) (2016)
Get The Job & Make A Profit (2025)
Create a Successful Web Site for Your Horticultural Business (1994) (OOP)
How to Market Your Horticultural Services (1985) (OOP)
Soils & Nutrients for Indoor Plants (1989) (OOP)
Plantscaper's Guide to Interior Landscape Maintenance (1985) (OOP)
The ABCs of Indoor Dracaenas and Other Related Foliage Plants
(1999) (OOP)
The ABCs Of Indoor Ferns (1999) (OOP)
The ABCs Of Indoor Palm Trees (1998) (OOP)

SMALL BUSINESS

The Small Business Webmaster (2026)
Contract Basics (2026)
Human Resource Guide for Small Businesses (Word) (2016)
How to Market Your Small Business (2003) (OOP)

NOTE: OOP = out-of-print.