

How Astrology Can Help You Create Health Daily by Dr. Christiane Northrup

If you are like me, you probably read your horoscope (sun sign) prediction in the newspaper or in magazines from time to time. It's fun, and sometimes they even appear to "come true." That feeling of accuracy or truth has some basis. There is evidence showing that some illnesses are more common in people born in certain months. For example, schizophrenia appears to be more common in people born in January and February. Your sun sign can also influence your career choices. Studies show that more architects, for instance, have been born in March than in any other month. Furthermore, it has been found that people born at exactly the same time and place lead remarkably similar lives and even die at the same time from similar causes, despite having completely dissimilar DNA. They are known as astral or spiritual twins.

But your horoscope prediction is not what the complex science of astrology is about. Astrology is the study of how the movement of the planets and constellations affects your emotions, behavior, and spiritual growth throughout your life.

And it is truly a science. If you're skeptical, think about how the moon influences your menstrual cycle and the flow of emotions and fluids in both your body and the oceans. This has been very well documented. Likewise, it's clear that the movement of the earth around the sun affects the length of the day, and subsequently has been proven to have profound effects on sleep, mood, behavior, and our immune systems.

While reading your sun sign prediction can be entertaining, in order to benefit from astrology you first have to have your astrological or natal chart done.

What Is an Astrological Chart?

Your sun sign tells you which constellation the sun was associated with when you were born. So if you are a Libra, all this means is that at the time you were born, the sun had an association with the constellation of stars known as Libra. And more than likely, you will have the same general characteristics as other born under the same sun sign.

However, if you've ever read your horoscope and said, "that's not at all like me," rest assured. The reason for this is because every other constellation and planet was also present in the sky at some location when you were born, and every one of them influences you in a unique way. In other words, not all Libras are created equal! That's where your natal chart comes in. Your natal chart shows you the placement of all the planets in the sky at the place and time of your birth.

The sky is also divided into 12 subsections, or "houses," into which planets and stars are located. Each house represents a certain theme in your life. For example, the 4th house represents the home in which you grew up, while the 7th house is the house of marriage and partnerships. The 10th house is occupation. The planets positions' at the time of your birth influence these different themes in your life. As planets pass through your different houses during your lifetime, you experience their various influences and changes associated with them.

Working with the Energy of Your Chart

I had my first astrological chart done professionally in 1981 and I continue to take advantage of updated readings, known as progressed charts, every two years or so. I find the information

helpful and accurate, and it allows me to work more consciously with what I call the energy of the universe as it comes through me. As a result, I've been more empowered when difficult or negative events have happened to me. Instead of feeling like a helpless victim, I've been able to take the stance that the event happened for a reason and was ultimately for my own good, even if it didn't feel like it at the time. That's because knowing what your natal chart looks like and learning how different planets affect your houses as they pass through them can give you a sense of the big picture and the reasons the picture looks the way it does.

For example, I once had a reading which "told" me that I was going to experience a betrayal of some sort from a medical colleague and that this was going to happen as a way to strengthen my sense of conviction about my work. When I was later reported to my state medical board by a disgruntled and frightened general surgeon for offering our mutual patient an alternative to surgery, I was able to understand that the reason was bigger than I was. As a result of my prior astrological reading, I was not as terrified as I might have been.

And although the entire situation was very painful and difficult for me, and though it brought up every doubt I'd ever had about my work, I emerged from the process stronger and more empowered than ever before. I came to see that my "betrayal" had contributed significantly to my personal growth -- so much so that in the end I was actually grateful for the whole thing.

If you get your chart read, it's important to remember that astrology won't predict the future. However, it can predict possible scenarios, which will be teachers for you. For example, I currently have Pluto, the planet associated with death and rebirth, transiting my 6th house, which is associated with work and physical health. While this does not give me a prediction about a specific event or health problem, I now understand why I have felt so compelled to change my mode of working and my place of work. Other big changes are also going on at this time. Knowing why allows me to work consciously with the energy of Pluto instead of resisting the "deaths" that have to happen in my life at this time and makes undergoing these transformations easier.

Astrological readings have also confirmed what I already knew intuitively. This has sometimes resulted in less suffering than I might otherwise have felt, because they give meaning and context to situations. However, astrological readings don't take away pain. If you don't have basic skills for identifying and regulating your emotions, if you tend to take things too concretely or literally, if you are looking for someone to tell you what to do, or if you don't have the basic skills necessary to care for yourself on the Earth (such as balance a checkbook, hold down a job, or maintain friendships) astrology probably won't be helpful to you. It might be too abstract. Astrology does not predict who you will meet and when you will meet them. It won't make your career decisions for you. And it will not tell you how to make money (though I can tell you that many highly successful people consult astrologers as a way to hone their own intuitive guidance system and help them act on their hunches). In other words, it's not a replacement for the discipline and skills it takes to lead a successful life.

Here's an example of how one of my patients used astrology successfully in her life.

Astrological Case Study

Abigail was 52 years old and going through menopause without problems on low dose, bioidentical HRT. One day, her husband, seemingly out of the blue, asked her for a divorce.

For several years, Abigail's friends had been asking her if everything was all right with her marriage because they had noticed that Ralph seemed distracted and distant. Abigail dismissed their concerns, telling herself that Ralph's demeanor was simply the result of job stress. She also dismissed the fact that several months before Ralph's announcement, she found herself suffering from insomnia, moodiness, hives, and heart palpitations. Her salivary hormone levels and physical examination were all completely normal. An EKG and cardiac stress test were also normal. Her dermatologist prescribed Benadryl, an antihistamine, for her hives and told her the hives were probably the result of stress. She couldn't figure it out. (But soon thereafter, when Ralph gave her the bad news, Abigail realized that her body had known about the relationship problems long before she did.)

At about this same time, Abigail scheduled a chart reading. Abigail's chart depicted her as a person who had a tendency to cloister herself at home and lose her sense of self in caring for others. It also indicated that she tended to attract strong, domineering, decisive partners to whom she acquiesced. In addition, her chart indicated that she had a great deal of unrealized potential to achieve in the outer world of work. Abigail had always dreamed of getting her Ph.D. in clinical psychology and had once worked as a staff nurse at a local mental health center. She had also done occasional counseling, which she was good at.

By learning about her strengths and weaknesses through her chart, Abigail saw how she had allowed her marriage to lead her to a dead end in personal development. She saw her situation in a much different and more objective way than ever before.

Instead of wallowing in self-pity, Abigail became excited about transforming aspects of her personality that had led her to her current situation. In time, after going through about a year or so of grief and anger over the divorce, Abigail even came to the conclusion that her husband had done her a favor by divorcing her. All of her symptoms went away gradually during the year following her divorce, and she is now enrolled in a Ph.D. program in clinical psychology.

How to Get Started with Astrology

1. Get your natal chart done. There are a number of computer programs available that will do this for you for a cost of about \$15 to \$25. Astrolabe is one that I like.
2. Learn about your own chart. There's nothing like going through your own chart, planet by planet and house by house to begin to understand yourself. You can do this by consulting *The Only Astrology Book You'll Ever Need*, by Joanna Martine Woolfolk (Scarborough House Publishing, 1990). This book is one of the most complete and easiest to understand guides that I've seen. It will help you interpret your chart easily. I have also found the following books very useful and insightful: *A Spiritual Approach to Astrology* by Myrna Lofthus, (CRCS Publications, Sebastopol, Calif, 1983); *Moon Signs: The Key to Your Inner Life* by Donna Cunningham, (Ballantine Books, New York, 1993); and *Making the Gods Work for You: The Astrological Language of the Psyche* by Caroline Casey (Harmony Books, New York, 1998). Caroline is a very "hip" graduate of Brown University. Her humor, wit and intelligence shine off every page and will make you laugh.
3. Consider going to a professional astrologer. I had my astrological natal chart and "solar returns" (charts updated for how the planets are at the moment) interpreted by professionals for years before I actually learned about the subject myself. The knowledge of someone who has been working in this field for several decades completes the picture and can often help you

understand yourself better -- especially since we all have "blind spots" that we can't see when we do our own chart interpretation. You can learn a lot either way, but understand that astrology is a very complex science that takes years and years to master.

To find a professional astrologer in your area, you might consider visiting your local New Age bookstore for a referral. Most good astrologers who've been in business for many years do not need to advertise. They often get their business by word of mouth. You should also know that it takes time and knowledge to prepare a good chart reading. You can expect to pay anywhere from \$100 to \$300 for a good reading. The quality of a reading is only as good as the consciousness of the astrologer. Don't let one bad experience with an individual sour you on the whole field. [Ed. note: For help finding an astrologer, you can visit the alabe.com website or e-mail astrolabe@alabe.com.]

What Astrology Can Do for You

Everyone will benefit differently from an individual reading. But here are some common benefits:

1. Gives you access to the choices available to you in the future and helps you decide on the course of action that will result in maximal personal growth for you.
2. Gives you great insight into your personality and temperament, including your gifts and talents as well as your weaknesses and areas you'll want to avoid.
3. Gives you insight into whom you will be most productive and compatible with. This is especially true when you have a composite chart done with that person or group. (At Women to Women, we had a composite chart done at the very beginning of our enterprise to help us work more effectively together. I've also had composite charts done with family members.)

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