

## The Art of Communicating Astrological Imagery

These notes are for the use of students who are beginning their astrological practice consulting with the horoscope in a professional setting with clients



This has been compiled from my class notes, handouts and articles over time. While some content may be outmoded, you will still be able to place this in a modern context. As we know, the heart and soul of astrology does not change.

*...there are clients who want more from an astrologer. In my own practice around fifty per cent have had some kind of chart reading before. They already have accurate information about themselves, but they need support in turning the information into knowledge. As astrologers we need to equip ourselves to give a service to this type of client.*

- Roy Alexander,  
*The Astrology of Choice, A Counseling Approach*  
Samuel Weiser: 1983, p.11

# 1. Considerations on your Astrological Practice<sup>1</sup>

## *A Belief's Inventory*

Before we begin to use the horoscope as a counselling, interpretive and/or reflective tool, it is essential to take into account our own beliefs and considerations about the art and practice of astrology. The following questions are designed to help you reflect on your beliefs and how these beliefs might shape your astrological interpretations and understanding.

### *My Beliefs about my astrological practice*

**Of these four different types of approaches to the horoscope, which do you feel most comfortable with? Which do you feel least comfortable with? List your preferences using 1 for most comfortable and 4 for least comfortable.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ a *Supportive and Descriptive* approach describing & confirming personality
- \_\_\_\_\_ a *Predictive and Prescriptive* approach that tries to look at solutions and choices for the future based on a prognosis that includes possible outcomes and scenarios
- \_\_\_\_\_ an approach of *Advice and Direction* that seeks to help guide the individual to a decision based on the horoscope
- \_\_\_\_\_ a *Psychological and Growth Orientated* approach which helps the individual be more aware of their motives and more responsible for their actions, whilst also acknowledging the presence of unconscious patterns

### **Which description describes your work with an astrological client?**

*Place a check ✓ beside your choice*

- \_\_\_\_\_ an astrological reading
- \_\_\_\_\_ an astrological consultation
- \_\_\_\_\_ an astrological session
- \_\_\_\_\_ an astrological appointment
- \_\_\_\_\_ an astrological conversation

### **Which word do you feel best describes your work with astrology?**

*Place a check ✓ beside your choice*

- |                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| _____ Profession                     | _____ Career   |
| _____ Calling                        | _____ Vocation |
| _____ Trade                          | _____ Hobby    |
| _____ Other (your description) _____ |                |

### **When do you feel your session with the client begins?**

*Place a check ✓ beside your choice*

- \_\_\_\_\_ upon making the appointment
- \_\_\_\_\_ at your first appointment
- \_\_\_\_\_ when you feel a connection has formed
- \_\_\_\_\_ when they respond and engage with you

### **Of the following which would you prefer to be known as?**

*Place a check ✓ beside your choice*

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| _____ Astrologer | _____ Facilitator  |
| _____ Coach      | _____ Practitioner |
| _____ Counsellor | _____ Therapist    |
| _____ Educator   | _____ Helper       |



## ***Considerations on Astrological Practice***

***The following questions are designed for reflection on your astrological consultations. In your notes write your views and considerations of these issues as if you were going to discuss these matters.***

How do you begin a consultation?

What steps do you take to engage and connect with your clients?

Do you think a client's religion might have an impact on an astrological consultation?

What is our responsibility as an astrologer in a consultation?

Do you feel ongoing supervision is helpful to counselling astrologers?

As far as possible, what steps do you take to ensure that a client's expectations of a consultation are compatible with the way you work?

### **How do you or might you react and respond to the following type of client?**

- The 'agreeable' client (when everything you say is right)
- The 'hostile' client (one who is adverse and argumentative)
- The 'negative' client (nothing helps or works)
- The 'passive' client (does not respond or interact)
- The 'blameless' client (it is always someone else's fault)

### **How comfortable would you feel and how objective could you be when the following issues may be disclosed in the consultation? (See also Personal Neutrality list)**

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abortion          | <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction      | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse       | <input type="checkbox"/> Codependency   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Debt              | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression     | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug Abuse     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Inequality | <input type="checkbox"/> Grief          | <input type="checkbox"/> Infidelity        | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pornography       | <input type="checkbox"/> Self – Harming | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Disclosure | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicide        |

### **What issues, not included above, would you feel uncomfortable discussing in a consultation?**

### **Under what circumstances would you feel you should refer a client to a:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Advisor   | <input type="checkbox"/> Grief Counsellor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health practitioner | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal advisor    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatrist        | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychologist     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other               |   |

How do you respond when a client reveals a deeper motivation for coming to see you at the end of the session?

How important is observing the time frame in a consultation?

What arrangements do you make for payment for the session?

How do you respond when a client asks if you will see his/her partner?

How do you respond when a client arrives for the appointment with another person that they wish to include in the consultation?

How do you respond when a client becomes emotional or cries in a consultation?



How do you respond when a client brings the chart of another person to the consultation and asks you to comment on it?

What are your thoughts about a client asking for an appointment for an adult child?

What do you believe our ethical responsibilities are as astrologers?

How would you describe your philosophical, moral and religious beliefs?

How do you bring the consultation to a close?

### ***A Counselling Evaluation***

The following points reflect on and evaluate our attitudes and approaches to counselling, as well as any personal needs that might come into the process. Again we need to consider our beliefs about how astrology works and be comfortable and confident about the techniques that we are using. It is important to know we have a connection to the process that we use and that it is the right one for us:

✓ Evaluate your need to be right or to seek attention through being right. Is it uncomfortable when you do not know the answer to a client's question? How important is it for you to be seen as having the right answer or to be seen as being knowledgeable? Have you formed a situation to promote your own needs?

✓ Evaluate your ability to not know, to acknowledge your own lack of knowledge or experience, to feel stuck or to be uncertain.

✓ Evaluate your need to be needed and if this in anyway might encourage a client's dependency. Do you feel the need to rescue or give answers to your clients? Are you aware of projecting any wishes or unlived aspects of yourself onto clients? Can you differentiate between the need for a task- orientated session and a relationship-orientated session?

✓ Evaluate the level of emotional satisfaction you receive from helping others. Are your intimacy and emotional needs met in the counselling room with your clients, rather than in your own personal and private life?

✓ Evaluate your philosophy of life: are you at risk of placing your beliefs ahead of clients and their beliefs? How do you engage with their worldview?

✓ Evaluate your feelings as a helper. Do you need to be seen as helpful and positive?

✓ Evaluate how much information you give to the client. Do you feel you overload them with information? Do you feel uncomfortable not supplying information or answers?

✓ Evaluate if you relate to the chart rather than the client.

Example:        Client: *'I feel trapped and unhappy in my marriage'*.  
                      Astrologer: *'Well you have Saturn transiting your 7th house'*.

✓ Evaluate your ability to listen. How comfortable are you with silences in the session, not talking, letting the client cry or emote? Evaluate your ability to be in the moment with the client. Reflect on how much your preoccupation with the horoscope, its information and images inhibit your ability to listen to a client.

✓ Evaluate your knowledge of yourself. Are you able to discern the line between your problems and the clients'?

✓ Evaluate how you present the client with differing choices. Do these choices come from your own standards and perceptions of the horoscope and the client, or are they born out of an interchange with the client?

✓ Reflect on the way you have handled changes in vocation, relationships etc. and evaluate the extent to which this influences your counselling style.

✓ Evaluate your own experiences and assumptions as an astrological counsellor. Reflect on your own personal experiences in going to a counsellor, i.e. an astrological counsellor, psychologist, careers counsellor, relationship counselling etc.

## **KNOW THYSELF: The Delphic Instruction**

At Delphi, the site of the greatest oracle of antiquity, the words **Know Thyself** were inscribed on the temple of Apollo to remind the supplicants and seekers that to understand the meaning of the oracle it was imperative for them to first know their hearts and selves, knowing the difference between the will of the divine and the will of the individual.

Knowing the self, our talents, our limits, our fears, our hopes, our dreams, our wishes, our ideals, our ways of communicating, our biases and our levels of tolerance will assist to raising the quality of all our relationships and deepening the meaning of all our encounters. In the consulting room it will encourage a more genuine interaction with greater value.

**For your own benefit:** Having reflected on your beliefs, philosophy and attitudes to astrology as well as considering your approach to counselling, prepare a written summary of how you may explain your approach to the horoscope and its timing to a perspective client.

### *A Question of Ethics*

Ethics can be defined as the reflection on the moral significance of human action. Ethics is the way people guide their actions in terms of their values. It is an active process of balancing various priorities and alternatives. We can begin to think about ethics as a set of principles. These four have been developed by Kitchener (1984)<sup>2</sup>:

1. **Autonomy** is freedom of choice, respecting the rights of others, the right to self-determine and the right to privacy, which is now a requirement of law with the *Information Privacy Act*
2. **Doing No Harm** is an ancient idea, part of the Hippocratic Oath, placing the client's welfare foremost and not being side-tracked by our own personal needs
3. **Justice** is the right to be treated equally and fairly and to behave in such a way. To be just is to operate in a way that is honest and truthful without exaggeration or inflation
4. **Fidelity** brings the issues of truthfulness, obligation, confidentiality, boundaries, informed consent, trust and equal exchange into our astrological practices

Our values are enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct and state of existence is personally or socially preferable to another. It is important to note that values are not expressed directly as a position statement, but are subtle undertones in the way we act, how we respond or comment. Through these subtleties our position affirms or disapproves of behaviours. Therefore an ethical problem can be best dealt with through upholding the most important values. However, this is always difficult as ethical issues involve value judgements, requiring you to uphold the strength of principled values and personal integrity.

## Questionnaire:

In astrological practice reflection on your values and ethics are very important to ensure the respect for the horoscope and the profession. When you begin to deepen your understanding of how astrology works, you begin to see that the psyche is engaged in the astrological exchange between client and their horoscope; therefore it suggests that looking at other's horoscopes without their permission is violating privacy. Therefore it is important to reflect on how you will deal with questions about other's horoscopes, working with children's charts or having someone else sit in on your consultation.

Reflect on some of these ethical issues, questions that you may not be able to address; in general coming to know the limits of what you can and cannot do. How might you address the following questions?

What does an ethical attitude or approach to astrology mean to you?

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Are there general ethical principles that should be consciously applied and which are mandatory for astrological practitioners?

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Which Basic principles do you see as necessary parts of an ethical ode for astrologers in general?

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Which ethical principles do you believe will apply specifically for your own areas of astrological work?

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## *Projection, Transference and Countertransference*

**Transference** is often described as a situation where a pre-existing client condition emerges within the counselling process and intrudes on the therapeutic relationship. Something is triggered that may remind the client of their mother, father boss or any other loved or hated person in their past where the relationship is still complex. The client unconsciously reacts to the counsellor as though they were this person. Within psychoanalysis this is seen as the displacement of feelings and attitudes towards significant others, generally the parents, but also siblings or a spouse, onto the analyst who is trained to recognize this and bring this into the therapy.

**Countertransference** implies that the counsellor's unconscious material is triggered by their client and may unconsciously respond to their client out of this material. In psychoanalysis this is the analysts' displacement onto the client, generally the analysts' emotional involvement in the therapeutic interaction which becomes a distorting element in the process of therapy. In an astrological consultation the astrologer needs to be conscious of their emotional participation in the session.

Both the client and the astrologer come to the session with their own unconscious material and this energy exchange quietly occurs underneath the conscious interchange in the counselling session. As the unconscious material punctures the surface of the interaction there may be noticeable shifts in mood and feeling; the ambience in the room may change. When the counsellor has feelings that are incongruent with the session this is a clue to some of the transferential material.

Of the many projections that can occur between client and astrologer, Liz Greene points to the parental complex. One way we might be more attuned to where we are most vulnerable in our astrological counselling sessions will be to reflect on the parts of our own chart that we feel are most susceptible to projection or areas of the horoscope that we feel are undeveloped. We might also be aware of any transits and progressions that are in effect at the time and how these may mirror areas or concerns where we may be exposed. We can be sure that due to the mutuality of counselling we will attract clients who will not only share similar transits and passages, but also mirror back our feelings of incompleteness and helplessness.

Some of the ways we might begin to become more aware of the process of transference and countertransference in astrological counselling are:

- Reflect on the areas where you may feel most susceptible to being challenged and the areas of your life that you feel you have not fully dealt with or have left incomplete. What aspects of your horoscope may reveal this?
- If you are aware of your vulnerable spots in an astrological context you can be alert for contacts between this area of your chart and your clients'
- Be more aware of feeling shifts, moods and atmospheric changes in your counselling session. Note when this happens and what is being discussed
- Be aware of when you feel your clients' behaviour or presence reminds you of someone else; when you feel you are overreacting or judging or experience feelings of helplessness
- Be mindful of shifts in your feeling during the consultation and note what was being said or implied
- Awareness of positive regard; feelings of friendliness and liking a client or not

It is also helpful to look at the synastry between you and your client before a consultation to alert you to any major contacts. Being aware of dynamic interchanges can help you be ready and more conscious of these areas in your counselling relationship. Which planetary combinations do you feel at ease with and which ones might you feel most challenged?

**Projection** is a potent defence mechanism where qualities and characteristics of our own are projected onto others or events or situations. These traits which are hard to integrate or recognize in ourselves are identified in others. It is as if we are seeing our own disowned characteristics in someone else. The more repressed the quality is in us, the more exaggerated it becomes in others. Projection is often distinguished by an emotional charge or reaction and through the identification of similar pattern in others; for instance if you have a string of angry clients or if there is a pattern of clients with a difficult Mars aspect, it is always helpful to reflect on this trait within ourselves. Projection is often a mutual collusion as the object of one's projections does often share the unconscious perspective towards the quality or characteristic being projected.

Again, it is helpful to be aware of what areas we find difficult and which characteristics, attributes and behaviours we find difficult. Counselling stirs our own issues and we can become hooks for client's projections and vice versa. Similarly as previously mentioned it is often suggested that in counselling the problems of the client often mirror ours as well.

Within the consultation, when you recognize a client's projection the horoscope can be of great value in illuminating these to the client. Projection will occur in all areas of the horoscope and it



is a valuable tool to help address these issues. The horoscope can assist in articulating patterns and illustrating possible scenarios which draws attention to the client being the common denominator in the patterns you are exploring. Especially prone are 'lacks' in the horoscope such as lacking elements or modalities, difficult planetary aspects, unaspected or even angular planets. Planets in the houses also offer us a way to begin to approach the possibility of ownership of these energies in certain areas of our lives. The 7<sup>th</sup> house has always been seen as an arena where unconscious qualities are projected onto partners.

**For your own benefit** reflect on the other houses and who or what may be prone to becoming hooks for projections or identified as carrying unconscious qualities for the client, for instance:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. the physical body and appearance   | 7. partners, friends and enemies, clients |
| 2. money and possessions              | 8. intimate others, deceased loved ones   |
| 3. siblings, neighbours, school mates | 9. gurus, mentors, priests, shamans       |
| 4. parents, home and houses           | 10. authority and worldly figures, bosses |
| 5. children, lovers, creative beings  | 11. friends, colleagues, social figures   |
| 6. work mates, health issues          | 12. fears, hidden agendas                 |

## ***Supervision***

Supervision is becoming more accepted in astrology; those who have counselling practices in astrology agree on its value. It is a requirement for membership in both the Australian and International Association of Professional Astrologers.

Supervision is educational and reflective. It is a process that helps us become more aware of our own process in the consultation. It is not judgemental nor is authoritative. It helps us identify our own strengths and weaknesses to achieve a higher level of professionalism. It also explores issues pertaining to self-awareness, in particular transference, countertransference and projection.

*Psyche* is not exclusive to psychological astrology. When any astrologer engages with the symbols of the horoscope another dynamic is created which has the features of a psychological situation. Even the most pragmatic or technical astrologer will find the complexity of astrological symbols defy linear constructs. Following is an article I wrote advocating for astrological supervision to bring psychological awareness into the astrological consulting room. It is not a matter of being psychologically fluent, but reflecting on the in-depth encounter that occurs between an astrologer and their client.

## ***Astrological Supervision***

For me the term *psychological astrology* is redundant, as astrology inherently is a matter of psyche. As Jung described, astrology was a projected psychology which used the sphere of the heavens as the screen where subjective images became objectified. The ancient Greek way of thinking about psyche was that it was soul, the breath of life, and over time the understanding of this transformed as more rational ways of thinking developed. Astrological imagery can also be used in a rational and literal manner; however, to me what is implied in the term psychological astrology is the metaphoric usage of astrological imagery to articulate complex life patterns. It is not an adaptation of psychological theory onto astrology, but the vigilant awareness that astrological images are microcosmic, and in the proper setting reveal potent patterning in individuals' lives.

What is generally meant by the terminology is the application of psychological theory to help amplify and articulate the complexity of astrological imagery, and in this way the amalgam of the ancient art of astrology and the modern speciality of psychology makes powerhouse allies. A

more psychologically sophisticated astrology was seeded by the work of C.G. Jung. In the midst of the last century, the maturation of this approach took shape under the guidance of Dane Rudhyar, while in the past four decades the work of Liz Greene and many others have helped to structure this new astrological style. To me the best usage of psychological astrology is in redefining the magical revelations of traditional approaches in a contemporary setting, free of psychological jargon. Unfortunately the usages of psychological terms such as ego, id, shadow, anima, persona etc. have become concretized, stripped of their metaphors and seen as literal features of the psyche, reducing psychological astrology to just another interpretive method, rather than the fluid interactive revelatory process it can be. Whether the practitioner uses horary, financial or traditional approaches in their consulting work, knowledge of psyche is most important. As soon as one engages with another in a discussion of the horoscope a psychological situation is created with all the complexities and demands of a counselling situation. Hence I am an advocate for supervision in the practice of astrology, for no matter what approach you take to explain the horoscope, psyche is served.

Astrological supervision is nothing new. We've all done it – at astrological conferences, with peers, in the classroom; we all listen and learn to be more competent at the art of astrology. Discussing our own charts and sharing our personal experiences help us to become more proficient at astrological analysis. However, in a professional capacity, something else emerges. A dynamic mixture of ethics and responsibility, professional boundaries and presentation, as well as the psychological impact of projection and transference all converge to influence our capacity to function effectively enough to articulate the diversity of astrological images. It is no longer just our ability to read the chart which makes a consultation effective, but the capacity to listen and maintain authority whilst at the same time allowing the client to remain in charge, be empathetic and understand the client's motives. As we become active as astrological consultants, supervision can improve our performance as it supports and encourages us while confronting our blind spots, exposing our biases and offering new alternatives.

The purpose of astrological supervision is to improve our counselling expertise so we may do the very best we possibly can for our clients. It is essentially a 6<sup>th</sup> house requirement, part of the apprenticeship of becoming a counselling astrologer. The 6<sup>th</sup> house, as we know, represents the psychic sphere where we are able to gain access to coherence, one of the three great existential issues. These three issues are Power, Intimacy and Coherence. The 6<sup>th</sup> house assures coherence if we enter into the discipleship demanded of us here. We could view supervision in this way, as a discipline, which shapes our skills at imparting and sharing astrological insights. Without the 'super-vision', the third entity created between astrological counsellor and supervisor, we are at risk of being drawn back into the chaos of the 12<sup>th</sup> house, where we are faced with our own unconscious familial stories, fantasies and complexes. It is these stories, fantasies and complexes that will become silent intruders to the consultation process if we remain ignorant of the dynamic taking place in the consultation.

In the 1980's, as my astrological practice became busy, I sought supervision since I felt I needed support for what was taking place in the consulting room. As an astrological counsellor I had become witness, not just to the human being, but the human psyche as well. Each client's story seemed profound and I needed to talk about the issues when I was left feeling uncomfortable: domestic violence, sexual abuse, loss, death, rape, betrayal, terminal illness, deformity, retrenchment and financial hardship to cite a few. Even though I felt objective in myself, I was unclear about how to respond to issues surrounding adoption, terminations, and affairs. How did I leave myself open to the hostile client and at risk with unforeseen pathologies? The person I found for supervision was a psychologist, not an astrologer, but was very respectful of the astrological model. The astrological images were hooks for the complexes, rather than the complexes themselves; therefore, the sessions moved quickly beyond the astrological statements

into the heart of the issue and the character of the situation. Identifying my own issues in the consultation process improved my ability to be able to use astrology more effectively.

Identification, transference, parataxic distortions and parallel processes, arising out of the unconscious, are probable when we are working with a person in consultation, or indeed in the classroom. You will recognize one possible scenario. We draw up the chart for a client and we register – hmm, this person has a Saturn/Mars theme – same as ours, perhaps Moon in Cancer square Neptune in Libra, same as ours. About this time there should be a giant red flag waving in front of our eyes! The possibility of identification with our client has been magnified and we are at risk of losing perspective, authority and boundary. What do we do when a client undergoing a major Pluto transit stirs unresolved grief in us? How do we differentiate between our feelings and the client's projection?

Similarly in the classroom, as those of you who teach astrology will have already experienced, projection, projective identification etc. occurs. To teach in an ongoing classroom environment it is helpful to understand group dynamics. With 15 or over, there is often a strong possibility for the group to express itself through one of the students in the group, assigning the role of scapegoat onto that individual. Projections onto the educator will also occur. The idealized ones feel best but they turn quickly, while the negative ones are often hard to shake. Understanding the nature of these projections will allow effective and gentle management, which ensures the smooth running of the class and an optimum learning environment.

The focus of supervisory discussion is on the astrological practitioner and the issues that arise for them in the consultation process. These issues will range from confidentiality to boundaries with personal biases and beliefs, difficult clients and situations, loss and suffering, triumphs and disasters all brought out into the open. As each case is discussed the practitioner is more able to identify their part in the process and become more conscious of not only where their own blind spots affect the process, but improve skills at listening, linking and feeding back. With supervision psyche is honoured by the student becoming subtly aware of its powerful patterning and synchronicity.

As facilitator of a supervision group my mandate is to empower the student to become more at ease with process. In the student's chart we can often see where the transference has taken place but generally the astrology is not the issue. The issue is to recognize our own responses and the scope of our expertise at dealing with these issues.

On reflection supervision helped me to become more confident and focused. Ironically it made me less attached to the astrological information and more alert to what was being revealed through interaction with the client. It helped free my astrological analysis to listen to what the astrological image was revealing, so the client could lead and I could follow offering the astrology pertinent to their need. So much of my astrological learning and theory had to be deconstructed in the presence of the client. Through this progression I recreated my own style; with great reverence to both psyche and horoscope I act as a go-between, a process that feels more akin to the revelatory nature of astrology.

Clients turn to astrologers because their worldview embraces astrology and they are seeking its wisdom and revelation. Supervision helped me recognize that effective work is done in creating rapport with the client's predicament, not necessarily offering a checklist of their chart's ingredients. As well it helped me to instil the confidence that the chart would reveal itself even in the most difficult circumstances. In listening while consciously holding the image of the horoscope I felt something more was created other than my own astrological analysis.

Astrological supervision in a formal setting is relatively new in the astrological field. However today, unlike those many years ago when I sought supervision, there are many experienced astrologers with counselling and psychotherapeutic training who are able to support the novice practitioner to recognize the unconscious elements that exist underneath the consultation. Some astrologers have felt uncomfortable with this approach, preferring terms like coaching or mentoring. In psyche's sense, supervision is not inspecting or evaluating another's methods, but is designed to bring about awareness to the delicate practice of chart consultation, animating the images of the horoscope for the client's comprehension.

## 2. The Astrological Consultation

*Reflect on your thoughts and feelings on counselling:*

Counselling **is** a relationship that is structured and permissive. It encourages the client to gain an awareness and understanding of their

- Environment
- Behaviours, thoughts, feelings
- Social situations and relationship
- Family patterns, pressures and influences
- Social, cultural and racial expectations

To some extent counselling can enable the client to

- take positive steps towards action and resolution
- bring about some desired outcomes
- increase awareness, understanding and participation with all areas of life

Counselling **is not**

- psychotherapy
- a magic solution or panacea for all problems
- having answers, giving advice nor solving someone else's problems

Some important foundational principles that help counselling become an effective tool for personal growth and change are:

- the skills of the counsellor, respect for his/her clients
- structured boundaries
- non-judgemental attitudes allowing free expression
- building a relationship between the counsellor and the client
- listening, guiding, challenging, exploring
- security, safety, caring, enabling and empowering
- confidentiality and containment
- acceptance and authenticity

### *Astrological Counselling*

Astrology can be a highly effective counselling technique; however, due its nature, it has specific issues. Reflect on these issues particular to astrology and how you may feel

- ★ There is no cohesive agreement in the astrological field re: the profession and practice of astrology
- ★ Astrology can often be marginalized and trivialized. The public perception and view of astrology is often the antithesis of the practitioner's beliefs
- ★ Like all helping professions power is often projected onto the helper, or in this case yourself as the astrologer
- ★ Fate, free will and destiny are images associated with astrology
- ★ How susceptible are you to seeing the planets as the problem or the astrological signature as the root or heart of the difficulty?



## **For Your Own Benefit:**

*Reflect on any counselling you have had. Did the style and format of the counselling suit you? Did you feel connected to the counsellor? What brought you to counselling? Did you feel this helped you at the time? Did this have a long-term impact on you? If you have been to an astrologer, reflect on the session/s you have had. Consider the similar questions as above.*

*Given what you have thought about and recognized, how could you use these experiences to visualize yourself as a counsellor.*

## **The Astrological Consultation: Three Chapters**

*When beginning your astrological practice, it is important to recognise the fullness of the process. Below I have outlined some of the episodes of the process. Make notes to your self about what you need to be aware. Also make a checklist for each of these stages of the process and consult the worksheet you construct when we look at charts in the 7<sup>th</sup> lesson.*

### **Preface:**

*Notes to Myself:*

#### **Making the Appointment**

✓ Appointment diary, ✓ boundaries, ✓ length of session, ✓ fees, ✓ days and times of appointments, ✓ consulting rooms, ✓ policy regarding recording the session.....

✓ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Chapter 1:**

*Notes to Myself:*

#### **Beginning the Consultation**

✓ Greeting, ✓ philosophical statement, ✓ building connection and relationship, opening the dialogue .....

✓ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Chapter 2:**

*Notes to Myself:*

#### **The Consultation**

✓ Open ended questions, ✓ listening skills, ✓ care, ✓ engagement

✓ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Chapter 3:**

*Notes to Myself:*

#### **Ending Well**

✓ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Epilogue:**

*Notes to Myself:*

#### **Notes and journal entries on the process of the consultation**

✓ referral list, ✓ notes, ✓ keeping files, ✓ summarising chart data, ✓ supervision, ✓ professional development

✓ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Neutrality

There are many issues and areas of life we may find personally difficult, even repulsive, painful or unacceptable. However, we might come across these subjects, issues or clients as we begin our astrological practice. Therefore it is wise to consider how we might respond to these issues if they present themselves; what strategies would be effective in dealing with them for yourself and your client. As part of this review you could consider recommendations and referrals for any of the issues that you feel you would not be effective dealing with or could not deal with.

Some are more specific issues than others, but imagine which ones you **A.** could work with (mark **A** beside), **B.** would have difficulty working with (mark **B** beside) and **C.** could not work with (mark **C** beside). For those marked B, research and reflect on ways to navigate these issues. For those marked C find avenues of referral.

Abortion	_____
Abuse	_____
Addiction	_____
Adoption	_____
Bisexuality	_____
Bullying	_____
Child abuse	_____
Controlling Partner	_____
Cultural Difference	_____
Depression	_____
Divorce	_____
Domestic Violence	_____
Drugs	_____
Emotional blackmail	_____
Identifying as a Victim	_____
Infidelity in the Marriage	_____
Marriage	_____
One parent depending on a child	_____
One parent neglectful of child/children	_____
One partner not helping at home	_____
One partner refusing to earn or share	_____
One partner refusing to have children	_____
One partner withholding sex	_____
Open Marriage	_____
Physical or Emotional Abuse	_____
Promiscuity	_____
Rape in Marriage	_____
Seductive behaviours	_____
Shared finances	_____
Suicide threats	_____
Transgender	_____

**For your own reflection:** *What other issues* that might arise in a personal consultation would be difficult for you to engage with? Reflect on what your actions and reactions.

## *Difficult Clients*

Most of your clients will want to engage openly and honestly, but there will always be a handful of clients that are difficult. It is important to distinguish the ‘type’ so you do not internalize bad

feelings about your abilities. Journal any thoughts and feelings about your involvement with difficult clients. Profiled below are some possibilities, but you will become aware of others such as the negative client or the always-agreeable one.

### *The Reluctant Client*

This client does not want to be present, is ambivalent or has been sent by someone else, not fully knowing why they are there. Red flags are:

- Confusion in making the appointment
- Changing times of the appointment
- Being late
- Not showing up
- Providing incorrect or insufficient data
- Announce they cannot pay today
- Appears bored or disengaged in what you are trying to do
- Unwillingness to engage in the process

### *The Resistant Client*

This type of client resists to prevent knowing a 'truth' which they perceive may hurt them or they are withholding and controlled. Be aware of:

- Identification or competition with the counsellor
- Silence, unwillingness to engage
- Inappropriate laughing or joking
- Talking excessively
- Intellectualising
- Generalising
- Making sense of everything
- Everything is fine!
- Hostility

### *The Hostile Client*

The hostile client will be very negating and generally respond sharply or be unable to apply anything you are saying to themselves, leaving you feeling inadequate and powerless. Notice your feelings and look for the red flags:

- Negating
- Yes/no answers
- Disrespectful of boundaries
- Body language, crossing arms, looking away
- Continuously challenging of what you may be saying

Behaviours that may also be defensive in clients are excessive talking, joking, asking questions about your personal life, generalising, rationalising, moralising etc. **For your own benefit** keep journal records of your responses and reactions to clients that you find difficult.

### 3. The Art of Listening

Listening is an art that we can learn and master. In consultation listening encourages engagement, relationship and trust. We listen so we can hear the feelings underneath the facts, what is not being said as well as unconscious clues and signs. In listening and mirroring back what we have heard to the other we are acknowledging our intention to be in relationship. Listening is not only an art, but a valued talent and skill in the human experience, as confirmed by these wise men and women.

Alfred Brendel: *The word 'listen' contains the same letters as the word 'silent'.*

Paul Tillich: *The first duty of love is to listen*

Zeno of Citium: *We have two ears and one mouth, so we should listen more than we say.*

Calvin Coolidge: *It takes a great man to be a good listener.*

Winston Churchill: *Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen*

Robert Frost: *Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self confidence*

William Shakespeare: *Listen to many, speak to a few*

**For Your Own Benefit:** Evaluate your own ability to communicate effectively.

- How do you try to see the other's point of view? How do you sense what it feels like from the other's person's vantage point?
- Do you ask open-ended questions from the horoscope?
- With what issues are you prone to become judgmental? Disapproving?
- Write down some ways that you might reflect back what the client is saying, such as "it sounds like..."
- Examine your own horoscope for your approach to listening and communicating
- What astrological signatures or symbols may you feel least capable of listening to? (i.e., a strong Neptunian signature, a stellium in Aries or perhaps a Geminian temperament)

***The Art of Astrological Conversation: No astrologese please –***

We know of psychobabble; in astrology we can also have astrobabble. Astrology has its own dialect, language and terminology. When using this with a client, they may become confused, lost and inattentive. Therefore, it is best to avoid astrological jargon as much as possible and speak as clearly as possible. Borrowing from **Donna Cunningham's** example in her book ***The Consulting Astrologer's Guidebook***, I have constructed an astrological situation which an astrologer might explain to a client. But a client unaware of the jargon will hear it like a foreign and mysterious language. All the words that are used in the example are in the dictionary.

Here is a light-hearted example but illustrative of how a client would feel bewildered by the terminology:

Astrological statement	Translation to what client might hear
Transiting	Hoovering
Pluto	Disney Dog
Conjunct	Endarch
Ascendant	Octachord
Opposition	Dihedral
Progressed	Rogation
Mercury	Messenger Service
Retrograding	Racketing
Descendant	Bicuspid

Astrologer: You have transiting Pluto conjunct your Ascendant in opposition to progressed Mercury retrograding across your Descendant.

Client hears: You have hoovering Disney Dog endarch your Octachord in dihedral to rogation Messenger Service racketing across your Bicuspid.

Therefore try as much as possible to **use English**, not Astrologese. Instead of saying ‘you have a cardinal grand cross; perhaps ask the question: ‘do you feel pulled in all directions, or ‘do you feel the weight of trying to initiate many different projects or demands?’. Rather than stating that ‘Transiting Pluto is quincunx the Moon’, you might ask a question focused on the home life, the family or their emotional wellbeing.

Also remember to keep your questions **open-ended**. If you are trying to add details to Saturn in the 3<sup>rd</sup> house, you may ask the client about their sibling relationships and birth order, rather than try and speculate if they are the eldest. Questions are asked in order to help clarify and amplify, as well as to engage the client and sustain the consultation. Open-ended questions invite the participation of the client, encouraging relationship and cooperation.

Remember the value of **active listening** and to clarify and mirror back what is being said; to perceive, not just the content of what is said, but also the feelings underneath. Therefore it is helpful to use feeling words when mirroring back what it is you have heard. These might include:

afraid, angry, appreciative, bored, defeated, disappointed, discouraged, doubtful, elated, envious, frustrated, glad, grateful, guilty, happy, hateful, hurt, inadequate, irritated, joyous, lonely, loss, pleased, proud, regretful, relieved, resentful, sad, uncertain, unloved, unsure, upset

### ***Myths, Metaphors, Images, Symbols and the Horoscope***

There are two main ways to engage with the signatures of the horoscope. These ways model the left and right brain approach to the horoscope: one is a more rational and factual approach while the other is more interactive and imaginative. Depending on your beliefs, experiences, life perspective and interests you may be more inclined to one way than the other or a mixture of both. However using astrology as a counselling tool, the imaginative and right-brained approach to the horoscope becomes dominant.

One way to approach the horoscope is through information, while the other is through understanding and meaning. One uses intellect while the other uses imagination. However, it need not be an either-or approach, as it can be a progressive movement from interpreting the horoscope to participating with it. When you begin to work more imaginatively, the intellect and all you have learned is still available. It now becomes contained, not the focus of reading the



horoscope. Your knowledge and learnt skills are the container which allows something else to happen. This something else is beyond what is possible with only an interpretive focus on the symbols.

Your astrological education has dealt with many doctrines, techniques, systems, theories and sets of guidelines designed to help extract information from the horoscope. Once you are confident with your information and knowledge it will become more contained rather than the centre of attention. To encourage a more imaginal approach begin to take note of the images, myths and metaphors that you associate with each astrological symbol. Once you begin consulting you will also gather many of these images from your clients who will have their own way of expressing the archetypal images.

Working with symbol, story, image, myth and metaphor frees the imagination. With imagination we are returned to the soul and its mysteries. Heraclitus, a pre-Socratic philosopher observed that one could never discover the extent of the soul no matter how many roads were travelled. Its nature was that profound. When beginning to work with images and symbols this profundity of the psyche becomes apparent and awe-inspiring. Jung mentioned that psyche is image and in following images we find psyche. Henry Corbin an Islamic scholar used the idea of an 'imaginal world' which was neither literal nor abstract, yet very real. This imaginal world has its own laws and purposes and this is the world available when we work with astrology in an imaginative and explorative way, not a reductionist or interpretive way.

### **For your own benefit:**

Revisit any books by Liz Greene, Howard Sasportas, Barbara Schermer<sup>3</sup>, Geoffrey Cornelius, Thomas Moore, James Hillman, Carl Jung or other writers who speak about imagination and the power of images.<sup>4</sup>

In the last two decades on the 20th Century, many books on astrological counselling were released. Of these, *The Consulting Astrologer's Guidebook* by Donna Cunningham; *Healing with the Horoscope* by Maritha Pottenger; *The Astrology of Choice, A Counselling Approach* by Roy Alexander and Liz Greene *The Horoscope in Manifestation* are recommended. Newer publications such as *Planets in Therapy Predictive Techniques and the Art of Counselling* by Greg Bogart, *Soul, Symbol and Imagination* by Brian Clark, *Alchemy the Soul of Astrology* by Clare Martin, *Images of Soul Reimagining Astrology* by Hadley Fitzgerald and Judith Harte, and *Jung's Studies in Astrology* by Liz Greene all explore one's deeper involvement with astrology.

In your notebook organize your thoughts and reflections on astrological myths and symbols. Consider images, myths and metaphors that correlate to these archetypes, as in the following tables. Add your own associations:

### ***Mythic analogies***

Each planet resonates with an archetypal orientation and way of being; therefore planetary images and symbols have always part of mythic narratives. Since the planets are also named after Titans, Gods and Goddesses we can also reflect on their mythic motifs, their genealogy, sphere of influence and storyline. A mythic sensitivity and sensibility are very helpful in amplifying planetary images and patterns. Again try and use you own imagination rather than be descriptive and literal about their associations. Sometimes it may be a motif, a symbol or image from the myth that is needed to amplify the planetary signature.

As you begin to practice the art of astrological counselling you will hear many mythic fragments and associations in the clients' stories. Compile a list of these; this is only a beginning – add your own mythic motifs and analogies:

Planet	Mythic Analogies
☾	Demeter as the mother and agricultural goddess; Artemis, Hecate & lunar goddesses, Mnemosyne as the mother of the Muses and feeling memory
☼	Apollo and the oracle, Know Thyself; Heroic myths such as Heracles and the Hydra, Jason and Ladon, Perseus and the Gorgon
♄	Hermes stealing the cattle of Apollo; Hermes as guide to underworld
♀	Beauty and the Beast: Aphrodite and Hephaestus; Venus and Psyche
♂	The Greek Ares, the Roman Mars; Warrior myths such as Achilles; the Amazons
♃	Zeus and Hera; Zeus, the champion of order; Zeus and Metis
♅	Cronus as time; Cronus devours his children and his own creativity
♆	Chiron's wound; Pholus; Chiron as mentor to the heroes; Chiron's cave
♁	Ouranus' castration; Sky Gods; Uranus and Gaia; Prometheus' theft of fire
♃	Dionysus and the Maenads; Poseidon & Athena; Amphitrite, the Nereids and all the sea goddesses; Proteus
♇	Persephone; Inanna and Erishkigal; Descent Myths; The Underworld, Hades, Dis

Mythic narratives will permeate all aspects of the horoscope; therefore reacquaint yourself with the zodiacal myths, deities that you feel are associated with the houses or reflect on aspects as dialogues between the gods.

### *Symbols*

Planets have many personifications, associations and correspondences, such as colours, plants, people, animals etc. However, these are also symbols, which are resonant with the archetype. For instance the Moon represents Mother; however it is also a symbol of mother or mothering. While mother is literal, we can use mother as a symbol to amplify the Moon in the chart as the deeper ways we care and mother ourselves, our style of attachment or what we need to feel at home. If we keep the keywords of the planets symbolic, not as literal manifestations of the energy, then we are able to deepen our understanding of the archetype in us.

If we can keep the symbol alive it leads to deeper and hidden aspects of the psyche. If we literalize the image it becomes a sign that points to a particular meaning, but not necessarily brings understanding. What are the symbols that you identify with each planet? Continue building this list:

Planet	Symbols
♃	Silver, Caretaker, Nest, Baby, Shelter, Habitat, Containers, like a cup or chalice
♌	A CEO, the Divine Child, the centre, Father, Gold, Lion King,
♍	Jester. Wordsmith, Courier/Guide, Trickster, Writer
♎	Beauty, Money, Lover, Sister, Jewels, Perfume, Cosmetics
♏	Warrior, Brother, Entrepreneur, Angry beast, Fighter, Sportsman, Competitor
♐	Professor, Judge, Philosopher, Time Traveller, Foreign land, University
♑	Wise Old Man, Crone, Authority, Lawmaker, Elder, Rock, Boundary, Wall
♒	Cave, Healer, Mentor, Shaman, Refugee, Homeless, Disenfranchised, Handyman
♓	Change-maker, Rebel, Humanist, Inventor, Broken Glass, Flying
♈	Illusionist, Magus, Shape-shifter, Artist and Muse
♉	Therapist, Sybil, Dark Lord, Masked Man, Underground, Buried treasure

Astrology is a symbolic language therefore underpinning each astrological image is a symbol which we can participate with to give us meaning. Revisit some of the keywords, images and words you associate with planets, signs, houses and aspects and begin to see these as a symbol, not a literal sign. How might you begin to amplify the symbol? And how might you begin to participate with the symbol in an imaginal way?

### **Metaphors**

Astrology is a language of metaphors. A metaphor uses a likeness of something else, such as another object, action or way of being to convey an image that animates a particular way of understanding. It is *as if* one expresses the other; as if Mars in Pisces were a dancing warrior or a shoulder to cry on. The astrological image is given a likeness. Therefore it is helpful to think metaphorically when looking at astrological images rather than trying to find a literal explanation or a factual meaning. Ironically sometimes the metaphor may be literal in real time, but it still is metaphoric. Use the phrase *as if* to express the image which keeps it from being literal or bound.

Think creatively about metaphor and how you might begin to have a metaphoric dictionary for astrological images.

Planet	Metaphors – As If
♃	Feeling blue; for instance a Uranus-Moon might be a roller coaster ride of emotions or Neptune-Moon could be a tidal wave of feelings, perhaps Pluto- Moon, a sea of grief
♌	A broken heart, lion-heart, brave heart, spirit, perhaps Jupiter - Sun, a big heart

♁	A walking dictionary; bright as a button; Uranus-Mercury, as if switched on
♀	Heart on your sleeve; the light of my life, as precious as gold, love is like a rose
♂	Boiling mad; a struggle with the devil, on fire, a slow burn, got him going
♃	The fruits of knowledge; the school of life, long and winding road, new horizons/worlds
♄	A grandfather clause; a dinosaur; time is a thief, wise old man, money in the bank
♅	Battle between instinctual & civilized; a healing crisis; a place in between two worlds; a near death experience, a stranger in a strange land, on the margins
♆	A road less travelled; grassroots movement; cracks in the pavement or foundation; trapped behind a plate of glass; Uranus-Mars might be lightning fast
♇	The fog slowly is descending or lifting; music of the soul; lost in the crowd hanging upside down; swimming with the current; Neptune-Mercury - lost in translation
♈	Like renovating a house; a dark cloud hangs overhead; going down a darkened hallway; Pluto-Venus might be my relationship is like therapy

### *Symbols Speak too*

Over the course of my astrological consulting practice, I have witnessed and been involved in many profound and meaningful exchanges that were beyond what I could have imagined when I first began seeing clients professionally. I would describe these experiences as reverent, as something was constellated beyond my astrological and psychological techniques and awareness. It occurred when the client was open to the exploration of the symbol that I was endeavouring to amplify and bring to consciousness. In the process something else happened; sometimes a memory was restored which changed the whole dynamic and atmosphere of the consultation. Or an emotion rising to the surface would bring tears which accompanied an unbereaved loss or the sediment from a painful betrayal. Other times something quite magical would happen like the lights would flicker or a chilly current of air would blow through the room.

I always recognized this as part of the consultation as the horoscopic images had psychically stirred something. But it was no longer a theoretical or intellectual process that we found ourselves in. Not all astrologers may engage any farther, as this requires a participation with the ambiguity of the unconscious and a willingness to trust their own subjective processes and involvement. Revelations from the astrological horoscope may be meaningful interpretations and explanations, but they do not always pierce what lies beyond the literality of the symbol. Not all enter into this mystery of the symbolic process.

It is not something that is easily illuminated; this mysterious process of how astrology reveals and heals. For a long time, I accepted that it was part of the process, especially when the unconscious was stirred and the client was open to exploration. I have found that this four-fold description offered in the Hermeneutic process to be helpful in contemplating those times when something else beyond the horoscope, the client and I is occurring.

## Hermes Helps with Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics was always a philosophical study that mystified me, but since its ‘folk etymology’ was connected to Hermes, the multifarious god of the in-between, I felt his underlying presence might offer me something of value. Hermes was not just the god of words, but the god who found imagination in the word; hence a god of symbol. Words were symbols, but his sleight of hand could also trick us into thinking we were on the right track when we really were not. As a god who was granted access to both worldly and underworldly hemispheres and the god known as the shepherd of dreams, somewhere in this study, I sensed Hermes would offer guidance.

The word *hermeneutics* derives from the Greek to suggest interpretation or explanation. This way of thinking developed in ancient Greece as a means to interpret oracles, myths, dreams, omens, even epic poetry. How important it was, given Hermes was also the god of liars, that the interpretation could be determined to be truth or lie. At Delphi, Pythia, the oracular voice of the divine, delivered her messages in riddles. Since divine messages were ambiguous, irrational and lacked clarity, an interpretative method to decode it in lay language was often necessary. One of the first ways of thinking about this process was allegorical; that was to express it differently, mainly in a nonliteral way, which attempted to extract a deeper or hidden meaning. What was being signified by the message?

However, allegory as a means of perception remains objective. While meaningful and insightful, it does not necessarily activate self-reflection or musing. Astrological symbols are allegorical; for instance, your Saturn in the 7<sup>th</sup> house might be interpreted as an older partner or a projection of authority onto others. At this stage the symbol is interpretative. And even though it may be factual or accurate, it does not invite us to consider an inner dimension, nor reflect on a deeper soulful image.

Remaining at Delphi for a moment we are also reminded of another layer of interpretation embedded in the sayings or Delphic maxims which were inscribed on the columns of Apollo’s temple. The most commonly known is *Know Thyself*, followed by two others: *Nothing in Excess* and *Surety Brings Ruin*. Something more is being asked of the petitioner by the god: to reflect on self, to be honourable and uncertain. I mention these aphorisms as these speak to the ethical and moral layers of interpretation, which open up a new dimension that the symbol evokes.

Christians used the hermeneutic method to meaningfully amplify the moral lessons in the Bible. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, a four-fold model of interpretation was being used and it is this model that best helped me to reflect on illuminating the symbolic process. I say *process* because in our time we often suggest that the act of interpretation ends with providing a solution or an answer. This focus on the four stages in the interpretative process was of interest to me, as I had spent my adult life ‘interpreting’ horoscopes. Throughout the process of sitting with clients, something else beyond my own comprehension often occurred when I was focused on a symbol.<sup>5</sup> It was this mystery, beyond the interpretation and separate from the technique, that brought life force into the interactive space between myself and the other.

The four stages of the hermeneutic process that have helped me imagine what happens when we engage with symbol are: 1. *The Literal*; 2. *The Allegorical*; 3. *The Tropological* or Moral and 4. *The Anagogic* or Mystical

This symbolic process is similar to what James Hillman referred to as ‘seeing through’, or Henri Corbin suggested was ‘penetrating into the invisible’, or what Jung said were ‘transformers’.<sup>6</sup> The symbol is the agent that pierces the literal realm ‘into the world of mystery, into the esoteric dimension.’<sup>7</sup> (“a symbol guarantees the correspondences between two universes belonging to different ontological levels; it is the means, and the only one, of penetrating into the invisible, into the world of mystery, into the esoteric dimension”.)

Let’s imagine we are amplifying an image from a dream, a Tarot card or an astrological symbol – the first stage of encountering the symbol is *literal*; for instance, you dreamt of your childhood home;



you drew the Moon card or you have Mercury retrograde. All these are literal in that they are unembroidered facts. Constructs like time, or emotions like anger, can also be literal.

With *allegory* we assign a meaning to the symbol which is often derived from the conventions of the discipline, whether psychoanalytic, Tarot symbolism or astrological. For instance, the childhood home is a symbol of your revisiting the innocent past; the Moon card suggests not everything appears as it is and Mercury retrograde is the time to rethink your strategy. While the interpretations can be much more elaborate or sophisticated, or accompanied by the wise use of metaphor, not all students, nor even some practitioners of symbolic processes venture beyond this stage, remaining more objective and impartial, personally removed from the impact or affect of the interactive process.

Next is the *tropological* stage, a turning towards the esoteric or mysterious sense of the symbol. Tropological derives from the Greek *tropos*, *to turn*; one implication is to turn towards the self. At this stage the symbol engages us in subjective experiences and focuses us on an interior and deeper meaning, not in a factual, but a more amplificatory, reflective and personal way. Objectivity and certainty begin to wane; forms of subjective knowing are stirred and constellated through a slip of the tongue, a spontaneous image, a physical reaction, a memory, song lyrics, feelings being awoken, a spontaneous thought, an emotion bubbling up, recollecting a parallel experience.....when we turn towards these experiences, another way of knowing is aroused. The soul stirs.

When working with a client, this is when the symbol turns to a mutual shared experience, a transference level, the ‘secret, mutual connivance’<sup>8</sup> as Jung called it. Without even being conscious the image of the childhood home stirs in the therapist; the subjective experiences of the Moon are awakened in the Tarot reader and deep Mercury stirs in the astrologer as the psychopomp takes us beyond what we consciously know. Both client and other are now involved in a participatory and connective universe; the synchronicity that always exists, can be seen. Boundaries between the observer and observed, psychotherapist and patient, astrologer and client are dissolving through the subjectivity of feeling.

Jung makes an interesting comment about how some psychotherapists find it strange, even ridiculous that ‘they should also have a *feeling-relationship* to the contents of the unconscious’. Jung makes the assertion that when the symbol turns, ethics are implied. But it is through subjectivity, not an intellectual or objective approach that this occurs. Jung says:

Feeling always binds one to the reality and meaning of symbolic contents, and these in turn impose binding standards of ethical behavior from which aestheticism and intellectualism are only too ready to emancipate themselves.<sup>9</sup>

The last level is the *anagogic* or mystical dimension; in a sense an inner knowing of divine presence. No longer an intellectual knowing or an objective statement, but an inner recognition that the symbol has rung a bell, created a deeper feeling of connection to the true self, and that that this inner knowing now interfaces with the world in a more meaningful way. This inner sense of being involved with a divine knowing evokes an acceptance that the literal world is connected to my presence in it and that this is encompassed by a larger picture or divine sentience This acknowledgement reenchants the secular world. In this way the symbol brings a sense of wellbeing, even if the symbol is dark or painful. It encourages a sense of hope even when the symbol is despairing because the sense of the divine and our way through the outer world are now interconnected.

The symbol has turned to hope and acceptance; the stage where Jung suggested the symbol “is psychologically true, for it was and is the bridge to all that is best in humanity”<sup>10</sup>. At this level the symbol evokes the ethical and the honourable, the moral level, which is the key to constellating all that is best in us! It is a wellspring that reconnects us to the world.

## 4. The Knack of Not Giving Advice

### ALPHA and OMEGA: *from the Beginning to the End and Starting Over*

I would like to take you back to the beginning – the first time you realized that astrology was your language. Reflect on what drew you towards astrology and how you feel about that today.

If you began your study with us at Astro\*Synthesis you will remember that in our first class we spoke about the timing of your study in astrology. It is a living, vibrant language, and we drew a parallel between your opening up to a larger worldview and your quest for self knowledge beginning to study astrology. Your life was changing and you wanted to participate with the soul logic of these shifts and astrology is a valuable tool to access the wisdom of the soul. Perhaps it might be time to look back at the transits and progressions that were in effect then and the cycles that are in effect now. Reflect on your journey in astrology and where it has led you. In the introduction in the first workbook<sup>11</sup>:

You shall come to realize that the symbols of astrology can manifest in a variety of ways. The ‘statements’ in a horoscope are not necessarily always conscious to an individual; they can often be denied, sublimated or projected out onto others, events or objects manifesting as something outside the individual. Each horoscope is also influenced by the values and beliefs of the family and culture of origin. Therefore what could be authentic to an individual may be repressed since it was not in accord with the mores and beliefs of the system into which this person was born. Both family and culture exert a powerful and primal influence on human development. The natural morality of a horoscope can often be at odds with the environment that contains it. Therefore the symbols of a horoscope need to be imagined in a wider context. Astrology’s symbols are never as apparent or literal as the astrological textbooks would have us believe. Events of one’s life are not so easily determinable as they are hinged on many factors including socioeconomic, educational, and health conditions, not to mention the atmosphere of the times and the cultural and familial influences. Many other factors influencing the horoscope are also unconscious or invisible to consciousness. While horoscopy, the erection of a horoscope, involves precise numerical calculations of the rising and setting of signs, planetary angular relationships etc., the interpretation of these arrangements is not precise. This relies on intuition, imagination, personal experience and judgement. Astrological knowledge is subjective and the more intimate and knowledgeable we are with ourselves and others, the greater our understanding of astrology will be.

How different do you feel now looking back on your understanding of astrology than when you began your study? Perhaps now you are in the same place, but as TS Elliot’s famous line says, *we know the place for the first time*. Being back where you started but knowing this place for the first time are a creative space, as now you will feel ready to share your astrological insights and knowledge.

Astrology is a life time study that deepens and develops as we mature. Like the heavens, it is never static, not always visible nor constantly revealing. But as a student of astrology, the art will always be of service when approached with an open and respectful attitude. And for all counselling and educational practitioners of astrology, it is important to be aware of your values, to act ethically and to continue your development through professional trainings and supervision.

## ENDNOTES

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*Note that CW refers to the Collected Works of CG Jung, translated by RFC Hull, Routledge & Kegan Paul (London), listed by volume number and paragraph.*

<sup>1</sup> As part of the Astro\*Synthesis program, Glennys Lawton was responsible for developing and teaching much of the syllabus for the Counselling Skills program and the Supervision groups. As part of the Diploma, counselling skills training and at least 25 hours of supervision were required.

<sup>2</sup> Karen Kitchener's point are summarized in this counselling article:  
[https://www.counseling.org/docs/ethics/practitioners\\_guide.pdf](https://www.counseling.org/docs/ethics/practitioners_guide.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Schermer was a vibrant and creative astrologer, colleague and friend. She died at the age of 67 on June 17, 2014, two days after her 67<sup>th</sup> birthday. Barbara was a pioneer in experiential astrology and her book *Astrology Alive* (Crossing Press: 1998) is a good book on imagery and experiential astrology. For the last four years of her life, Barb enjoyed living in Mexico.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Moore has edited a book called *A Blue Fire* which covers some of James Hillman's essential writings – this book is published by Routledge, London: 1990 and highly recommended for an introduction to James Hillman's work.

<sup>5</sup> Two references have been enormously valuable – Geoffrey Cornelius, *The Moment of Astrology*, The Wessex Astrologer, UK: 2003, pp 277 - 302 and Angela Voss, "From Allegory to Anagoge: the Question of Symbolic Perception in a Literal World" – see <https://www.astrosynthesis.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/From-Allegory-to-Anagoge-Angela-Voss.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> See James Hillman, *Revisioning Psychology*, Harper & Row, New York: 1975, pp 140 -145; Henri Corbin "Mysticism and Humour", Spring: 1973, p. 27.; CG Jung, CW 5: 344.

<sup>7</sup> Henri Corbin "Mysticism and Humour", p. 27

<sup>8</sup> CW 8:905

<sup>9</sup> CW 16: 489

<sup>10</sup> CW 5: 343

<sup>11</sup> This is the first workbook, *The Wheel of Life*, in a series of twelve workbooks. See <https://www.astrosynthesis.com.au/student-astrology-e-workbooks/>.