

**DYNAMICS OF PROFESSIONALISM**

Thank you so much for giving me the chance to address this very elite group of people, namely those of you who take astrology seriously enough to either be a professional astrologer or to strive to become one. You are the future of astrology and on your shoulders lays the heavy burden of responsibility of whether serious astrology will make it into the 21st century, of what chances we have to become again what once we were, and what role we'll play, if any.

Tonight I will try and address three issues:

- 1) What astrological students need to learn in order to become professionals
- 2) Some techniques and behavior patterns once you have an astrological practice
- 3) What all astrologers should do to enhance their professional image

First and foremost you should be a **well versed astrologer before you attempt to counsel or advise** someone else. To my way of thinking, nothing is more dangerous than a badly or barely trained amateur who pontificates on the horrors of Saturn about to conjunct your Sun or the immediate divorce facing you since Uranus is about to enter your 7th house. Of course you have to practice and start somewhere, be it a family member, a neighbor or maybe a fellow student in your class -- but all of that should take place while you are still a student,

long before you are a professional consultant, though quite a few up and coming astrologers seem to forget that and want to take shortcuts.

"Well versed" is also, unfortunately, a debatable term. NCGR has an excellent educational curriculum, and those of you who follow it will be well trained. There are a few other well thought out programs for training astrologers, but as yet we have no international, national or state programs that will certify how much knowledge is needed in order to be considered a professional astrologer.

It also is important to remember that once you are an educated and well trained astrologer, you will not automatically know how to work with clients or how to help them. Just because you can see certain characteristics and potentials in a chart, does not mean you automatically know how to impart that knowledge to others.

It can be as dangerous to one person to awaken certain forgotten childhood traumas, as it can be to another to ignore them. In one client it can produce anxieties to allude to sexual hang-ups, especially if you, the astrologer, do not know how to solve the problem; it can make another client nervous or even suspicious if you never mention a problem he or she is well aware of. Some well meaning astrologers not only advise clients as to possible vocational aptitudes, but enthusiastically tell them how to go about getting **that** job or training for **that** athletic feat, living out their own dreams rather than first ascertaining what the client's monetary, educational or home situation permits.

Even more **dangerous** than certain natal consultations are **progressions** where the insensitive astrologer can sow seeds of anticipated difficult times, illnesses or accidents. We have all heard horror stories of predicted death. One of my favorite ones involves a close friend of mine, an excellent astrologer herself, who was told by another astrologer that she better divorce her husband, else she

would die by age 42. She was 35 at the time. Though she knew this to be total nonsense, a little lingering doubt stayed with her for seven years. Can you imagine the added trauma had she not been an astrologer herself? Yes, we should talk about possible difficulties ahead, but we must know how to do it in order to help, not to destroy a client.

**Another danger** of the untrained astrologer involves making up a clients mind, or **playing God**. One of my clients originally came to me because she had been told not to marry her lover, since according to another astrologer, "they were quite incompatible, would make each other miserable and the marriage could not last." That was 14 years ago and they are still happily married. Are their charts very compatible? No. But they are both intelligent adults, both once divorced, and both willing and eager to make this relationship last. It is not up to us as astrologers to decide who should marry whom, it is up to us to point out to the clients what possible difficulties they may encounter in the relationship and to find out if the the couple is willing to work on those problematic areas.

What then is the answer? **Must every astrologer be a trained psychologists** in order to function? I don't think so -- but in my opinion each and every one of us should **get some sort of training in counseling techniques** so as to understand some basic rules of dealing with another human being. There are many books that can help, the libraries are full of them. There are occasional workshops on the subject which can also be very helpful. There are counseling courses and even certain ways of practicing your skills under supervised conditions. Just check with your colleges and universities.

I am very fortunate and work with a professional psychiatrist and psychologist. In fact these two have kept me so busy during the last five years that I have hardly taken any new clients. This association has also enabled me to open up

many deeply hidden areas of a client's psyche with the full reassurance that the follow-up will be handled by people who know what they are doing. In other words we each have to find our own solution as to the kind of practice we want to run.

Aside from astrological and counseling competence, astrologers need a healthy dose of common sense, since we are faced with a multitude of human problems and can't possibly be familiar with all of them. You need not have gone to war yourself to understand the horrors involved and the deep scars it may leave on a client. But you need to show your ability to empathize without condoning certain poor habits that may result from excessive drinking or escape into drugs. Yet you are **not** the parent, teacher or psychoanalyst, you are the astrological adviser. If the clients have problems beyond your expertise, have a list of experts on hand that you can send them to. I am never embarrassed to admit that I do not have all the answers and I have names of psychologists, psychiatrists, massage therapists, Hatha Yoga teachers, meditation specialists and more ready for the asking.

And that is another very important point to remember -- **know your limitations!**

And while we are on the subject of limitations, be sure to explain to your clients that you are not a clairvoyant, that you can give guidance as to which area of their life might be emphasized or activated, but that you cannot predict whether it will be positive or negative, how much or how little, since their own attitude and free will is going to determine the outcome.

There is another important yet rather touchy point I must bring up: The passing of judgment. Your judgment is based on your upbringing, your religion, your schooling, your life's philosophies and may be diametrically opposed to that of your client; yet you must be able to discuss his or her problems in an accepting and compassionate way. So please remember, keep your religious views as well as

your personal sexual preferences, enjoyments or hang-ups out of counseling or you will do more harm than good. If you can only see one point of view, namely your own, counseling may not be your strong point.

Before we go to my second issue regarding **techniques that can help once you have a budding astrological practice**, let me tell you of a book book that I consider must reading for all of you: It is called ***The Consulting Astrologer's Guidebook*** written by Donna Cunningham and it covers many of the areas I have harped on for the last 20 years, including many points I am covering today as well as some I won't have time for, such as how to advertise yourself, the fine line between promotion and hype, the nuts and bolt of composing a good biography, talking to clients about fees, where to get vocational information and many other valuable bits and pieces.

#### Issue #2:

Once you are "in business" what are **some helpful techniques**? Most of what I do is very simple and requires just a bit of human insight and a lot of common sense. Let's start from the beginning.

**The initial contact:** Be sure to get all the data you need, find out the source for the time of birth -- there is nothing more embarrassing and annoying than to work with the wrong chart and it will reflect back on you as a professional for not being careful in the beginning. Realize that "mother said" is more often wrong than right. Birth certificates are best, babybook, hospital records or baptismal certificate are next. *(One of my early clients had the time of 9:07 pm from her mother, which gave her Virgo rising. In walked this good-looking dame with a mane of her she kep throwing back...Need I say more? She sent for her BC and was born at 7:09 am, Leo rising!)*

Depending on how you work, get **all other information**, make all arrangements

regarding payment, date, time and place for the appointment clearly and concisely. If you want to be listened to and if you wish your advice to be taken seriously, you must also behave in a businesslike manner. Don't hedge or hesitate when it comes to money. Some astrologers seem to think that it is unspiritual to charge for their services. In my opinion that is total nonsense. Only amateurs can afford not to charge, and that is what you will be regarded as if you do not ask a fee for your services. Your neighbor whose chart you did for free will not listen to you with the same attitude as the clients who plunked down their hard earned moneys.

None of the other helping professions can afford free services, nor can you. Even the clergy or related religious servants are taken care of by their churches or temples and get additional compensation through your donations. If I do not know my client personally, I ask for a 50% deposit and upon receipt I will send an acknowledgment which also includes directions to my office, the date and time of our appointment as well as a reminder to bring a 90 minute or two 60 minute tape cassettes.

**The place of your first meeting:** If you have an office, the consultation will automatically have a certain flavor. If you work out of your home, it becomes very important that you have an office-like room. The kitchen table is not going to inspire great confidence in your ability, even if you happen to be the greatest astrologer who ever lived. There is no need to create distance between you and the client (like a desk between the two of you), but you should create an atmosphere or decor in line with the task at hand. Avoid interruptions, especially when dealing with a new client. But new or old, give the client your **undivided attention**, this is **their** time.

**Making the client feel at ease** is another very important facet of a successful

consultation. That can be done in many ways, whichever one seems the most natural to you. I myself like to offer something to drink. Maybe because at my first encounter with a psychologist he offered me coffee and the chitchat about cream or sugar put me at ease.

**Watching body language** is also very helpful. How does the client sit? And where? I can tell by how close to me (which corner of the sofa) someone sits, or which way they cross their legs or arms, how comfortable or uncomfortable they are. Little impersonal actions, such as testing if the tapes they brought work properly, can help to relax them. All of you probably have your own tricks of the trade.

**Your appearance** also matters. Each of us have a style, a certain way we like to look and have others see us. I don't care what style you use, be it a business suit or a dress, slacks or skirt with a shirt or blouse, a sweater or a jacket, it doesn't really matter as long as it is neat and clean. You may love robes or torn at the knee jeans, and in summer feel most comfortable in shorts - all great clothes, but **not** when receiving a client. Would you like to walk in your doctor's office and see him or her dressed inappropriately or somehow look less than professional? Wouldn't that reduce your feeling of trust or respect?

The actual **consultation** depends on YOUR methodology of **chart interpretation**. Some people just calculate a chart and give a cold "reading", (*A word that I avoid at all cost*) others make lots of notes or write everything down beforehand; some astrologers ask the client's reason for the appointment, others prefer to see what the chart says and find out more details during the session. None of that matters, as long as you the astrologer are at ease with and confident of your method, the client will respond in kind.

**What does matter** is that you listen to the client and do not just hold a

monologue. **Again watch for body language.** Is the eyebrow raised like a question mark? Maybe your vocabulary is not clear. Make sure the client understands what you are saying. **Make your language simple** - you are not trying to impress anyone with your IQ. or college degree. You are trying to communicate and impart important facts. I remember early on in my career telling a client how creative he was, never really looking at him, or I would have seen his puzzled face. Only years later through an acquaintance did I find out that he thought "creative" meant artistic, which he was not. He felt I really did not know what I was talking about...

Unless your client is a student of astrology, **DO NOT TALK ASTROLOGESE.** The average person couldn't care less if Saturn squares Jupiter or that Venus will conjunct the Sun. Say it in plain English (or whatever language you speak). Don't use psychological terms either, except for those words that have entered our everyday vocabulary. Do help the client understand what you are basing your interpretations on by helping them to **understand the principles of astrology**, in other words you are not doing voodoo.

I usually hand my client a special chart I designed which gives keywords for each house and translates the glyphs. I try to ascertain their knowledge of astrology, briefly explain some of the concepts such as: *I am working with your birth chart which is like a roadmap; you are free to choose any path you wish; since your birth you may have overcome many of the problem areas and utilized some of your potential.* I talk about free will versus fatalism, the uniqueness of each person as well as the importance of their environment. I usually point out where the Sun and Moon fall, and show the line representing the Ascendant. As I discuss their horoscope, I will occasionally make them look at the chart, just to make sure they realize I'm not a psychic but an astrologer.

**Personally I do a lot of preparation work before the client's appointment** -- not because I can't give an impromptu interpretation, but because I wish to see the chart by myself, unencumbered by the client's vibrations, uninfluenced by their needs of the moment. There is plenty of time to discuss what they think is troubling them, but before we do that, I want to know what I think is their root problem and how, according to their chart, they can possibly solve it. This I do best by myself, alone. Once the client sits in front of me, my intuitive nature takes over and much of my objectivity leaves me. That may be great, and most helpful in working with a client, but not always helpful, to me at least, in understanding the crux of the matter. That, by the way, does not mean taking over or taking control. The client's needs and feelings ALWAYS come first, and I will change my approach as often as is necessary.

Once a client-astrologer relationship has been established, everything else falls into place. You may encourage a yearly update, you may urge the client to check with you frequently, you may prefer frequent sessions rather than one long one -- each person has to suit him or herself. My aim is **NOT TO TIE THE CLIENTS TO ME** but to **establish enough rapport** between us that they feel free to call me if they feel troubled or need a sounding board or want an update or whatever else I may be able to offer them. I also always urge the client to listen again to the tape a month or so after our session. Hearing is very selective and most people will only hear or observe what they are interested in at that moment, the rest barely registers. Listening to it again on tape, when they are in a different, maybe more receptive mood, will make all the difference. Usually the client expresses great surprise: *I really did not hear you say such and such, could we possibly discuss it? Or I must have been deaf when I had my appointment may I ask you a few questions?*

Ethics or what should and should not be said, is an important question that each astrologer must come to grips with. Earlier on we discussed the fact that I do a lot of preparation work. What if I saw something that I feel should be discussed or resolved, yet the client skillfully avoids questions and skirts answers. I usually try to approach the same subject a bit later, from a different perspective and if I still feel resistance, I must decide if the individual is not as yet ready or willing to deal with the problem, if I am exceeding his or her capacity to absorb at this time, or, again, if I am not equipped to handle the problem.

What about an often asked question: Can we see death in a chart, and if we do, do we tell the client? I have never been able to see the death of a client, since in my opinion the chart lives on. (Look at Marilyn Monroe's or Vincent Van Gogh's charts. They are activated every time they are in the news). But I think most of us can see the possible death of a loved one in a relative's or spouse's chart. There are some so-called classical aspects, such as transit, progressed or directed Saturn opposition natal Moon (mother/female) or Sun (father/male). The same can be said for transiting, progressed or directed Uranus, be it by opposition, square, or conjunction.

But watch out -- transit Saturn opposite natal Moon can mean a hysterectomy and directed, progressed or transit Saturn opposite the natal Sun in a female chart and opposite the Moon in a male one can mean divorce or some sort of separation from a mate, or just as often, it can pass without **anything** happening. Nothing is written in concrete in a horoscope. With those warnings in mind, if you see a few possible separating or otherwise stressful aspects that lead you to believe some sort of separation is possible, question the client on the status quo, on the relationship with- and health of parents or partners. I've never brought up

"death" per se, but often a client is worried about a parent and we will discuss the possibility of sickness or even death **if the client is the one to ask**. Please note the word POSSIBILITY and the CLIENT'S NEED to discuss it.

Another very important ethical question is how much to tell a client about another person. In synastry, for example. Do you tell Mary all about Joe who's data she has brought you? And what about John and his girlfriend Marsha? How much should you reveal without Marsha or Joe being present? I am very careful in those type of situations. If the client asks for an in depth comparison, I insist on having both people present. If it is an aside during a consultation "*My lover is really giving me a hard time now, what do you think?*" I will look at the lover's chart only in relation to timing. Is he/she going through a rough time? For how much longer? I do not discuss character traits, talents or problems without the lover being present.

A similar problem exists when delineating a child's chart for a parent or guardian. Again, come to grips with your own ethics, morals and philosophies before you start the session. Think of what is helpful for the child versus where you are invading its privacy. It may help Johnny if the adult realizes that he needs an extra dose of loving and hugging (Saturn in challenging aspect to Sun or Moon). Jane may benefit if those around her know that she is musical and a dose of Mozart will soothe her frazzled nerves. But is it any adult's business to know that Johnny may be slightly oversexed (Scorpio on the 8th and Mars in there in Scorpio)? I cannot give you the answers, you'll have to figure it out for yourself, but PLEASE DO THINK OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF WHAT YOU DO OR SAY.

As you deal with clients, you will learn many things, especially that your way may be different from your teacher's way or from what you have read in books.

That is perfectly fine. **Astrology is a symbolic language** and only when you have found your own symbols, not those of others, are you ready to become a good astrologer. The same theory applies when you work with other. I rarely tell clients what I think is wrong, instead I talk to them, I ask questions so that I can learn how aware they are of what I feel could be a problem. I try to draw out their answers rather than push my solutions. First of all, they may already be working on the problem, secondly, my telling them is not a solution. Intellectual knowledge or understanding does not necessarily bring growth or change. Just think of yourself with a very painful leg; does the doctor's explanation that it is broken take the pain away?

Our job as astrologers is to show clients the many positive avenues they can take, to make them aware of all the potential they have and can use whenever they want to. It is a very happy task, since most people only use 20% of their talents and abilities. How wonderful to be able to give somebody hope when they need it, confidence that there is more to life than they may have found til now.

One of the best things I have found in my many years of observing astrology and astrologers is that each of us seems to attract a certain kind of clientèle and all clients seem to find the astrologer they need. How do they know? Maybe it's your voice on the telephone, your answers to their initial questions or maybe it's just the wonderful synchronicity of the universe. So in the long run your way of doing astrology is the **best way for you and your clients.** *and that's a very reassuring thought.*

And what about the third issue - what astrology needs to enhance its professional image?

I think the problem is best illustrated in an example Steven Forrest gives in his book **The Night Speaks**. He relates how people fly in from far away to see him, that his waiting list is long, he's been on TV and his name has been used

in crossword puzzles - yet he has a primal fear that somebody's conservative grandfather will come up to him at a party and ask that simple, ubiquitous question "By the way, Steve, what do you do?"

What a tragedy that astrology could be one of the best tools to help people, yet we have to be embarrassed to admit to who we are and what we do. So **what should astrologers do to bring astrology BACK as a respected profession?** (Please note that I said "back" because once we were <sup>totally</sup> accepted and respected)

**PROBLEM #1: MOST ASTROLOGERS SUFFER FROM POVERTY CONSCIOUSNESS**

As I mentioned before, <sup>many of seem to be</sup> you afraid that as a Good Christian it is sinful to charge? Do you think that because you help someone, it has to be a charity? A profession is supposed to carry you through life, to enable you to have a roof over your head, to feed yourself and your family, to buy your clothes, some sort of transportation if necessary and to ensure you a decent life style as well as keeping you from becoming a burden to the state. **DO YOU THINK SO LITTLE OF WHAT YOU DO OR YOUR ABILITY TO DO IT, THAT YOU HAVE TO KEEP YOUR PRICES AT A MINIMUM?** If you do not value what you do, how can anyone else.

In 1975 Washington DC astrologer **Barbara Watters** asked me how much time I give my clients and how much I charge. "Two hours" I said, and kind of reluctantly added, "and \$75". "Give them 90 minutes, charge \$500 and they'll run your door down!" Well, I did not quite dare to go from \$75 to \$500 - but I did charge \$250 and they've been running my door down ever since. It is time for astrologers to remember that PEOPLE RESPECT WHAT THEY PAY FOR. **If you take pride in what you do and do it well, people will respect you and stand in line to get your services.**

**PROBLEM #2: HOW THE PUBLIC PERCEIVES ASTROLOGERS**

**Sun Sign Astrology** may have its good side as it gets people interested in the

subject, but it's treated strictly as entertainment and you can't really blame people; how can you take anything seriously that divides humanity into 12 types. **900 Numbers** may have a few good astrologers on line, but it is mainly staffed with psychics and charlatans - not exactly the kind of impression you wish to make on the public at large.

**Psychic Fairs** How can anyone take astrology seriously as long as it goes hand in hand with tea leaves, crystal balls and card reading gypsies. Can you really blame the media for thinking us strange and off the wall? "Ye Olde Shoppe" with big signs advertising astrology in the same breath with psychics and tarot are not the right image either.

Quick "readings" are not much better. In fact, in my opinion, we should stop giving "readings," a word that has negative implications in today's language. It would be better to call it "consultations" or, if you are qualified "counseling."

### **PROBLEM #3: DEGREES**

Not so long ago, Astrology was taught in universities. The last seat I know of was held in 1800 something in Germany. It is high time that we go back to that. The **Kepler** project is a step in the right direction and should be encouraged. I hope you are all aware that a group in Seattle is trying to found a university which gives a degree in astrology plus fulfilling regular university rules and regulations. (There are some flyers on Kepler in the Trade Show) We should also try to get back into existing universities. This is not only important to legitimize astrology, but also because additional knowledge will help many of our current specialized astrological approaches. The FINANCIAL astrologer will benefit by knowing more about economics, the MUNDANE one by having a background in history and politics, the MEDICAL/HEALTH or NUTRITION oriented astrologer by

learning some PRE-MED techniques and the PSYCHOLOGICAL approach warrants more knowledge on that subject.

Let me tell you a true story that took place not that many years ago. When I was eleven years old, there used to be a series of philosophical and metaphysical seminars in my hometown in Switzerland. **Jung** was one of the lecturers and his then patient, Hermann Hesse, one of the attendees. Hesse was a good friend of my family and after each lecture, long and wonderful discussions ensued at my house. Despite Hesse's tremendous reputation - he had already written *Siddharta* and *Steppenwolf*, a snicker and funny glances would result every time Hesse mentioned that he was in analysis with Jung. The same kind of snickers and glances you get today when you mention that you are seeing an astrologer. Now I am not a youngster, but this change of attitude towards psychology happened in my lifetime. Such a change of attitude toward astrology can happen in your lifetime if we get back into the universities and become more serious about our profession.

#### **PROBLEM #4: LICENSING**

This simple little word brings out the biggest reaction amongst astrologers, and I can literally feel you flinch or flex your Uranian muscles in protest. A few months ago Newsweek had a great **cartoon** titled "*Which of these does NOT have to be registered?*" It showed a dog, a car, a bicycle and an assault rifle! Unfortunately we are game for a similar cartoon showing a psychologist, a nurse, a realtor, a manicure and an astrologer and ask **"which of these professions does not have to be licensed?"** YOU GOT IT!

The problem of no licenses is <sup>much worse</sup> by some so-called astrologers hanging out their shingles without much training and the client or customer cannot tell who is knowledgeable and who is not.

Astrology is considered Uranian/Neptunian and we reflect that by being unique (Uranus) and intuitive (Neptune), as well as rebellious (Uranus) and blurred of vision (Neptune), we don't want to be like anyone else or do what anyone else does. So we protest when anyone mentions so plebeian a word as **licensing**. The mere thought evokes worries and fears. Who will decide what astrology is all about? Which practicing astrologers will be grandfathered in?

Frankly I had many of the same objections until I talked to Jim Turner, a brilliant lawyer from Washington DC who was instrumental in getting licensing for **accupunctarists**. Do you remember how people snickered as late as 8 years ago about somebody poking needles in you - ~~now~~ they have become an accepted addition to medical care for which even the toughest insurance company reimburses you. Yet their problems were very similar to ours, hailing from many different backgrounds, having a multitude of approaches and schooling, using diverse methods of application. Yet Jim Turner insists that with guidance it was easy for them to agree, because the licensing requirements were so standard and so primary that arguments quickly fell by the wayside. Apparently he is now working to do the same for herbologists.

Degrees or licenses will not ensure that someone is a good doctor,  
or astrologer.  
lawyer, Only self-regulation within the profession will do that, yet all of the  
aforesaid is a beginning to try and regain what I would consider our rightful  
professional standing. Jan Tunney and a dedicated committee of helpers (your own  
Monica Dimino is one of them), are trying to ascertain how all astrologers feel  
about some of these problems. They are trying to send out a survey to reach as  
many astrologers as possible. They call it **PROJECT FOCUS** and the survey is  
called **A.S.Q\*U.S.** which stands for Astrologer's Survey Questionnaire in the  
United States. I hope that many of you here who either are or want to become

professionals, will talk to Jan and give her your insights or helping hand, or, *better yet,*  
both.

*also*  
I <sup>^</sup> hope that as many of us as possible will start working toward some of the  
goals I have discussed tonight so that we can again stand erect  
and state with pride: **I AM AN ASTROLOGER!**