



## ***How to Use a Horoscope Reading***

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I see both astrology and psychotherapy as tools for self-exploration and ways of becoming aware and whole. But they are not substitutes for each other. The biggest difference lies in the method. In a horoscope reading I tell the client about themselves — there is a life-story written in the chart, and the art of the astrologer is to be able to read this story from the symbols. The person does not need to be there; I do some horoscopes on tape. I rely completely on the written symbols in the chart and my intuition to put them together into a story. However as a psychotherapist I provide space for the client to tell her/his life-story and to give time to let it unfold according to its own priorities. The art of the psychotherapist is to contain the client so that the client can express everything and find her/his own meaning, purpose or

equilibrium.

Going for a horoscope reading can stir up a lot, make you aware and put things into perspective that you want to change your life, but it is not psychotherapy. You might be moved to go into therapy or do more self-exploration, but the actual horoscope reading is only a trigger. A client of mine who came for a horoscope reading and started therapy afterwards said after four years of therapy, that she had listened to the horoscope again and was amazed that I had told her five years ago everything she had worked on and towards during therapy. The reading had prepared her and encouraged her at the beginning, but during the process she had completely forgotten about it. Now she found it reassuring. The actual horoscope reading is something which comes from

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outside and explains or meets your inside. I like to compare the working of astrology with that of a thermometer. As with the thermometer the stars don't do anything to you, but both can indicate where you are in your process. Nobody would ever attempt to use the thermometer to actually change the temperature of a room. But you would use it as a reference when you are not quite sure about your own perception, whether you feel cold from inside or because it is cold in the room. In exactly the same way is astrology best used, only the psyche — and astrology — is more complex than the room temperature.

Astrology can be an exact and reassuring guidance and reference system. It is like a bannister you hold on to, but walking down the stairs is something you still have to do for yourself. The living has to come from inside: it would be very restricting if you held on to the bannister all the time.

As an instrument or method astrology can be very helpful and supportive for psychotherapy. Although I do not do chart readings for current clients, I do refer them to other astrologers. Horoscopes can be applied to almost any situation where individuals or groups of people want to become more conscious about their process or a dynamic. For an individual it can be used as a personal guidance through your process and as a help to focus.

For couples it can help them become clearer about their relationship dynamic and to sort out individual problems and how these affect the relationship.

I have used group horoscopes very suc-

cessfully for supervision groups, staff groups or projects; when people wanted to look at the group-dynamic and their pattern. In groups a horoscope reading can help identify and name problem areas and describe the underlying dynamic, which helps the group to focus. It does not and should not take away the sharing of feelings and sorting the problems out.

In psychotherapy groups I have used a whole horoscope or aspects of a horoscope as exercises to get in touch with a certain theme or to focus on the dynamic within the group as well as looking at an individual's impact on the group. It has proved a good tool for focussing quickly on very deep feelings and with a bit of fantasy you can combine horoscopes or take aspects of horoscopes and use them as input or help to focus for any situation. It is very important, though, that the horoscope or astrology does not become the focus of the group. It would turn from a psychotherapy group into an astrology group and can be used as a defence, as an opportunity to talk about, rather than relate to, each other.

This of course applies as well for individual horoscopes: the reading is only useful insofar as it touches something within you that is usable. A good reading picks up information about your potential and purpose but it must pick up where you are at at the moment — which might be that you are stuck or resistant and want to use astrology as a way out, without wanting to go through those feelings.

It is not really helpful somebody holding your hand at all times, but it can be extremely reassuring to have a helpful hand from time to time.