

How To Learn Astrology

# **How To Learn Astrology**

**By  
Michael Erlewine**

# How To Learn Astrology

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# How To Learn Astrology

**This book is dedicated to  
Margaret Erlewine**

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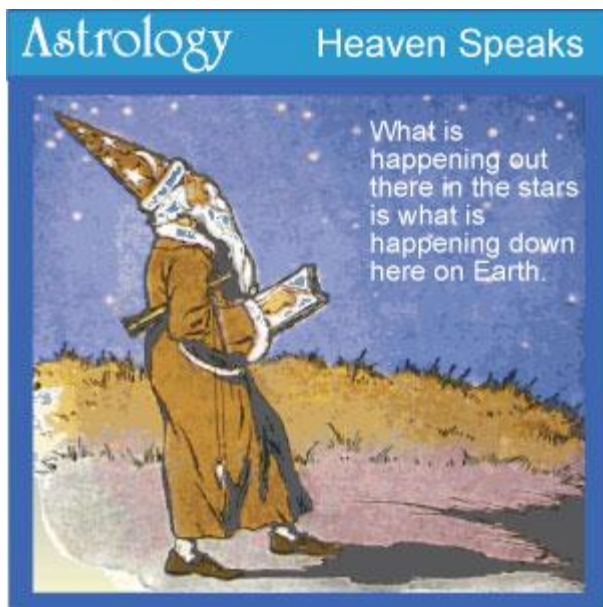
## How To Learn Astrology

### Greetings!



My name is Michael Erlewine and I will be your guide through this course on astrology. As for my qualifications, I have been studying astrology for over forty years, and during that time have worked as a teacher, programmer, author, and counselor. You can read about my background elsewhere in this course, but right now let's get down to it.

Astrology is ancient, probably as old as when man first measured time. It is present in some form in all countries and cultures, and always has been. In fact, the majority of the world's population uses astrology at the day-to-day level, and not just for entertainment, as we do here the West. Before we begin our study of astrology, it might be important to clear away two popular misconceptions about astrology.



### **Celestial Influences**

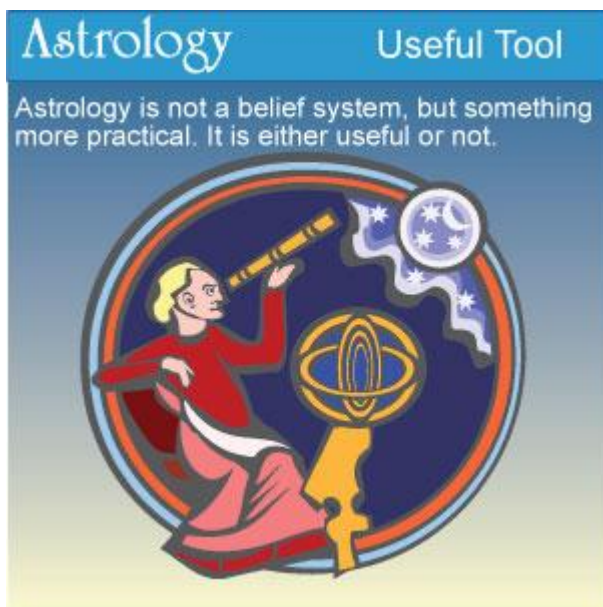
One popular misconception about astrology is that the planets out there in the heavens cause events to happen down here on the earth. Professional astrologers that I have known, and I have known many, do not hold with these theories of "celestial influence," that planets somehow make things happen to us. Instead, modern astrologers see the heavens and the earth as one whole entity, interpenetrating, and sharing the same space and time, which in fact is the case.

They do not see the various planetary configurations as causing events to happen here on earth, but rather see the earth (itself a planet) and all the other planets as interacting in the very same space, and as sharing whatever events are occurring. In other words, whatever events taking place out there in the heavens are also happening down here on earth. Neither is the cause of the other; both are happening simultaneously. The

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planetary configurations are just grand signatures (like writing in the sky), signs of events happening right here in our own lives. Both are the product of the same moment, one acted out in the heavens above, the other here on the Earth below.

In other words, there is only one grand "play" or moment. The great drama enacted in the sky above is also acted out (in exact detail) here on Earth, and in the same moment. Another way to say this is that the Earth is part of the cosmos and shares in that cosmic moment. Astrologers tend to feel that all major cosmic events (eclipses, etc.) are interactive; they represent an activity also taking place within our self and consciousness.



### **Astrology Not a Matter of Faith**

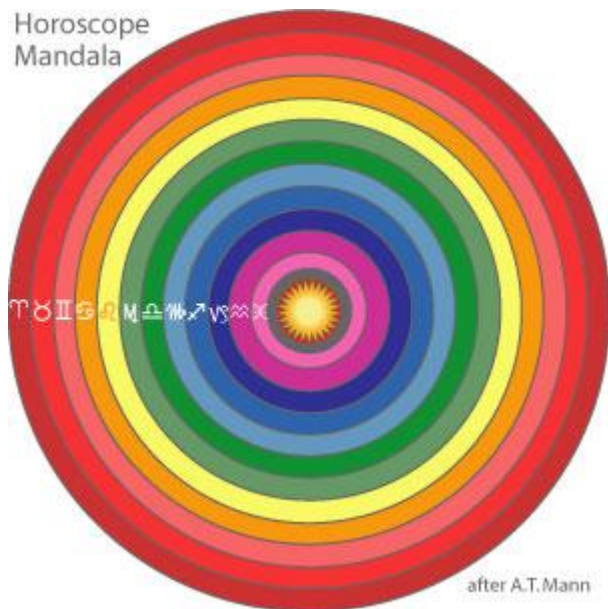
A second misconception about astrology is that to be an astrologer, you have to somehow "believe" in astrology. Astrology is not a question of belief, any more than you

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believe in psychology. It is not a question of belief, but one of use. I often find astrology useful in my life as a way of understanding who I am and what my life is about, plain and simple. I don't "believe" in astrology. I use it when I find it useful, and leave it alone, when I don't, like any other tool. Astrology is useful or it is not.

In summary, astrology is a study of heavenly cycles and cosmic events as they are reflected in our earthly environment and vice versa -- a vast cosmic clock. Astrologers find the cosmic patterns revealed in the rhythmic motions of the planets useful in shedding light on the seeming helter-skelter of everyday life. Astrologers do study the sky writing in the heavens, but only to better live life here on the Earth.

Horoscope  
Mandala



### What This Course Offers

Welcome to a course on how to learn astrology online. My name is Michael Erlewine, and I will be your guide to



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learning astrology. My background in this subject (teaching, readings, writing, programming) goes back some forty years. You can learn more about my involvement in astrology elsewhere on this site. Here I would like to give you an idea of what you need coming into this course and what you can expect to get out of it when you are done.

As for requirements, there are none, other than your own interest in astrology. Previous knowledge of the subject is not assumed and you can learn at your own pace. If course outlines are too confining, you are free to jump around and sample whatever sections interest you. I have tried to make the sections short and use illustrations as much as possible, sometimes just because they are fun and look good.

We will start at the beginning, working with concepts you already may (or may not) be familiar with, such as sun sign astrology, the signs, planets, and so forth. From there, we will learn the major elements of modern astrology, which include planets, signs, houses, aspects, and many other areas.

Throughout this course, I have tried to offer you several approaches, since we don't all learn in the same way. Of course, you will be introduced to the concepts, keywords, phrases, and images that astrologers have studied by rote memory and used for centuries. For those of you who like the nuts and bolts approach, we also offer much of the astronomy that astrology is built upon.

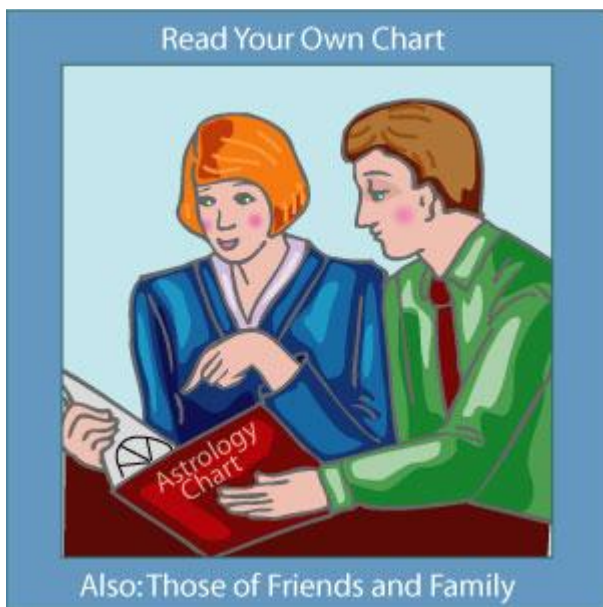
In addition, in most modules, you have the option of learning a more in-depth approach to astrology, one that explains not only how and why these concepts were created, but how to use them dynamically to develop

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your own keywords - to better understand how these concepts work.

Most important, we will study how to use astrology to interpret our own chart and those of our family and friends. This is the reason most of us study astrology in the first place: to better understand ourselves and our lives.

And last, but not least, I have done my best to include where possible short sidebars on the esoteric meaning of astrology, the inner or hidden side of the subject.

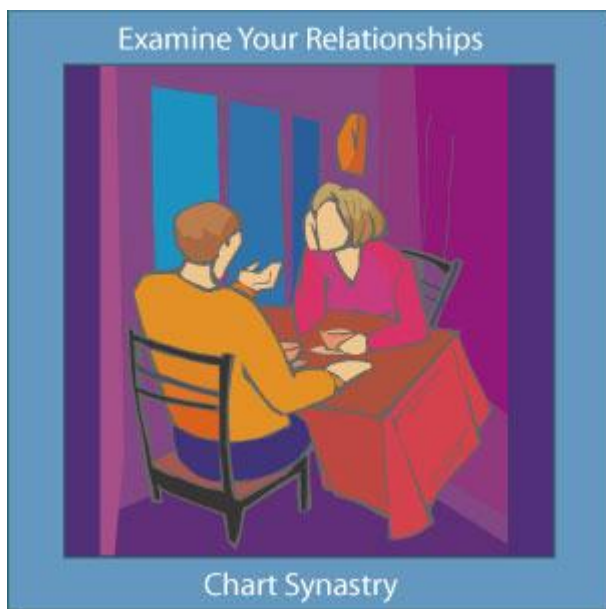


### **Learn To Read Natal Charts**

Most of us study astrology, because it offers us another view to our self than what we have known up to that point. Astrology gives us a different perspective, a second opinion as to who we are and why it is we are here. It also can help us to maximize our talents, and to take a direction in life that will be successful and fulfilling.

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Therefore, the first thing most of us want to do is to learn more about our natal chart, the personal astrological chart created for the moment or day we were born. As we study the various planets, signs, houses, and aspects (the basic building blocks of astrology), we will learn how they are configured in our own birth chart, our particular astrological signature. Learning about your own chart is perhaps the best place to begin. It is where most of us start out. We will spend the bulk of this beginning course introducing you to the basic elements of your natal chart, showing you how to use them.

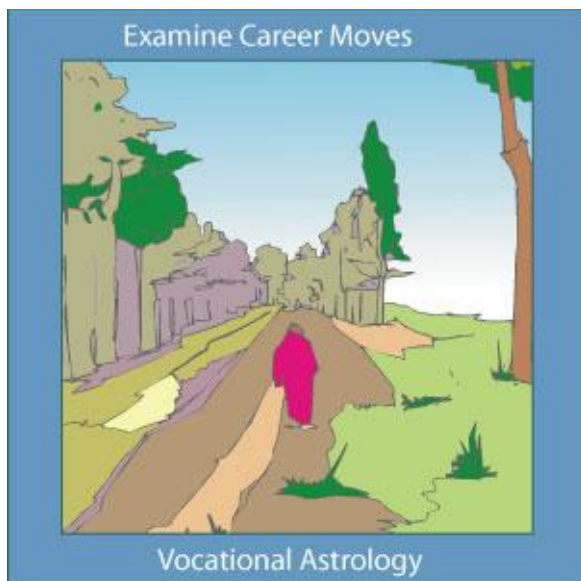


### **Examine Your Relationships**

Once we have learned the basics of astrology, and have some idea of what our chart is like (who we are, astrologically), we will want to look at the charts of our family, friends, not-so-friends, not to mention those of celebrities, important events in our lives, and so on.

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When we have satisfied our thirst to know something about ourselves through astrology, the next thing most of us want to do is find out about our relationships, in particular if we are married or have a partner. If we are in a relationship, our well being depends on their well being, so what makes them tick is important to us. I have been doing astrological readings for some forty years now, and the most frequently asked question that comes up during a consultation is: what about my partner? Or, if they don't have a partner at that point, then they have a list of candidates to look at astrologically. At the very least, most people want some idea as to what kind of partner would be best for them. In this course, we will learn to examine relationships, astrologically.

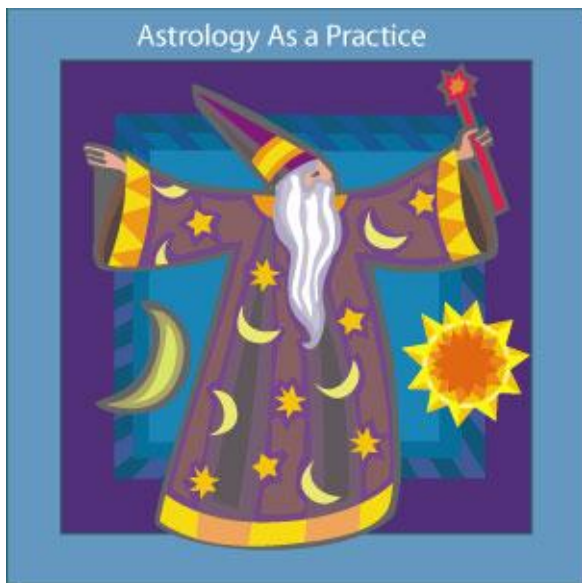


### **Determine Career Moves**

Almost as popular as learning about relationships is learning about your career. Regardless of how much or how little vocational training you have at this point in

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your life, what are you best suited for? Most clients I have worked with want to be put to some good use, to be used up in the most satisfying and successful way possible. Finding our path or road to success (making a living) is something each of us must do, before we can turn our attention to anything else - relationships, marriage, children, etc. If the wolf is at our door, that fact keeps us from enjoying many of the other areas of our life. Therefore, finding a career, your particular way through life (how to be successful) is key. In this course, we will learn several methods to determine career potential.

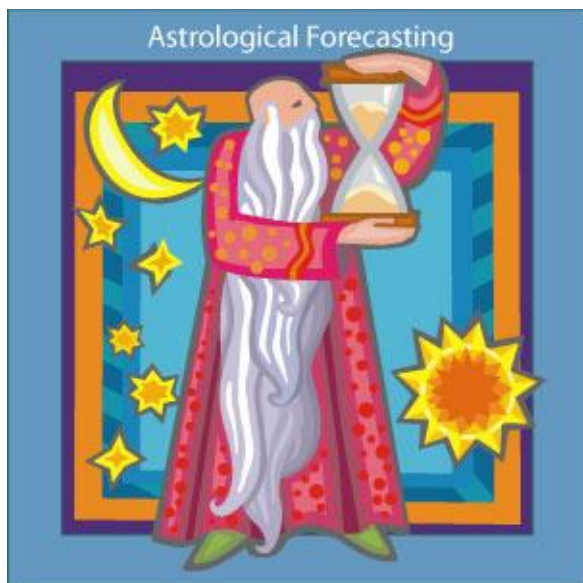


### **Living with Astrology**

As we shall see, astrology is not only a way to better understand who we are or what makes our neighbor tick, it is itself a way to live life - a path. In this course, we shall learn to become aware of the cycles of ups and downs we go through (and have always gone through) since the day we were born.

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Our life is filled with cycles, even if we have not learned to recognize them in the world around us. The monthly solunar cycle of the phases of the Moon, the cycles of the various planets and their aspects, the daily cycle of day and night, etc., are all astrological cycles that we can learn to be aware of and to put to use.



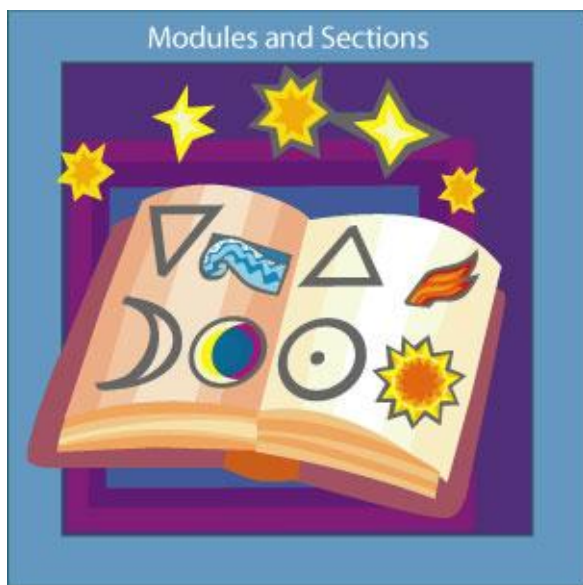
### Getting Your Forecast

"Coming events cast their shadows" is an ancient astrological slogan. Looking ahead is something astrology is good at. In this beginning course, we will learn to use various astrological forecasting methods, like the daily transits of the inner planets, the monthly lunar cycle, solar cycles, and the long-term cycle of the planet Saturn. Whether it is today, tomorrow, or the next thirty years, astrology has something to show us worth considering.

Astrology is perhaps most used for examining our self and life through the natal chart, as a way to better

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understand who we are. But these same astrological principles that we find in our birth chart are not static. They can be used to look ahead as well as back at our birth chart. Once we understand our own personal chart, with its inclinations and disinclinations, we can scan ahead in time, looking for days and weeks when a similar astrological climate is available. We can look forward to these astrological events, just like we now look forward to celebrating our birthday. A birthday is, of course, an astrological event. In this course, we will learn to use astrological forecasting tools to help us pick the appropriate days for different kinds of events.



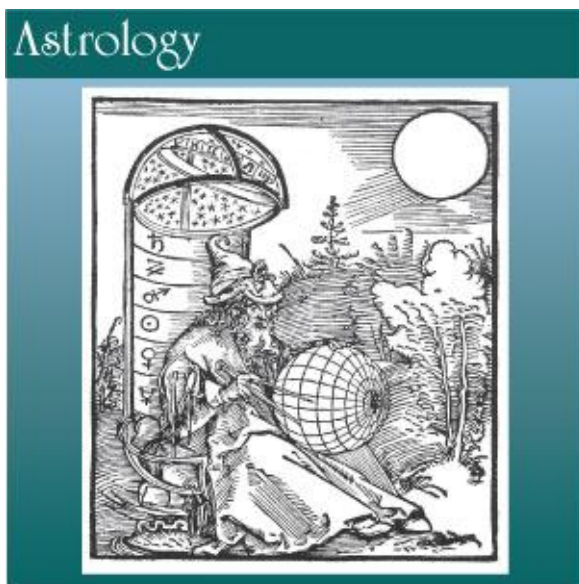
### **How Best to Use This Course**

As you can see, this course is laid out in modules. Each module has different sections, and each section has different topics. Once you select a section from a module, that section will be displayed on a separate page, with the text for the selected topic running down the right-hand side of your screen. However, the rest of

## How To Learn Astrology

the topics in that section are still available to you, and are listed along the left-hand side of the screen.

You can browse through all the topics, looking for those that most interest you at the moment. Each topic has an image or diagram to help illustrate what is being presented. If a topic does not warrant an image, you will get some image anyway - something fun to look at.



### **Astrology Now**

Astrology is ancient, probably as old as when man first measured time. It is present in all countries and all cultures, and always has been. In fact, the majority of the world's population uses astrology on a day-to-day basis, and not just for entertainment, as we do here the West. It would seem that almost everyone knows a little astrology, but I have found there are two popular misconceptions about astrology.

The first is that the planets out there in the heavens cause events to happen down here on the earth.



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Professional astrologers that I have known, and I have known many, do not hold with these theories of "celestial influence," that planets somehow make things happen to us. Instead, modern astrologers see the heavens and the earth as one whole entity, interpenetrating, and sharing the same space and time, which in fact is the case. They do not see the various planetary configurations as causing events to happen here on earth, but rather see the earth (itself a planet) and all the other planets as interacting in the very same space, and as sharing whatever events are occurring. In other words, whatever events taking place out there in the heavens are also happening down here on earth. Neither is the cause of the other; both are happening simultaneously. The planetary configurations are just grand signatures (like writing in the sky), signs of events happening right here in our own lives. Both are the product of the same moment, one acted out in the heavens above, the other here on the earth below.

In other words, there is only one grand "play" or moment. The great drama enacted in the sky above is also acted out (in exact detail) here on Earth, and in the same moment. Another way to say this is that the Earth is part of the cosmos and shares in that cosmic moment. Astrologers tend to feel that all major cosmic events (eclipses, etc.) are interactive; they represent an activity also taking place within our self and consciousness.

The second misconception is that to be an astrologer, you have to somehow "believe" in astrology. Astrology is not a question of belief, any more than you believe in psychology. It is not a question of belief, but one of use. I often find astrology useful in my life as a way of understanding who I am and what my life is about, plain and simple. I don't "believe" in astrology. I use it when I

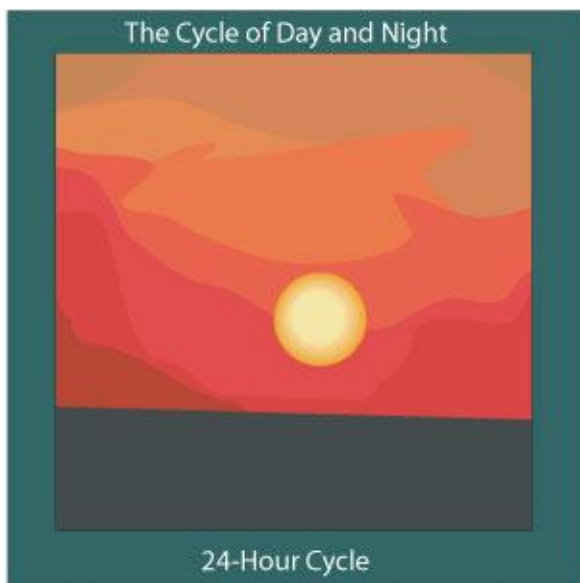
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find it useful, and leave it alone, when I don't, like any other tool. Astrology is useful or it is not, at any one time.

In summary, astrology is a study of heavenly cycles and cosmic events as they are reflected in our earthly environment and vice versa -- a vast cosmic clock.

Astrologers find the cosmic patterns revealed in the rhythmic motions of the planets useful in shedding light on the seeming helter-skelter of everyday life.

Astrologers do study the writing in the heavens, but only to better live life here on the Earth.



### **The Study of Cycles**

For now, we could define Astrology as the study and practice of the cycles we can find present in our life. We study astrology and cycles to get a better idea as to what is happening to us in our lives, and we practice or put to use what we have found through our study and understanding. It will do no harm to start with the

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dictionary definition of a cycle, although we will soon get much less formal.

The Oxford Universal Dictionary states:

Cycle : A circle or orbit in the heavens. A recurrent period in a definite period of years. A period in which a certain round of events or phenomena is completed, recurring in the same order in equal succeeding periods. A long, indefinite period, an age. A round, course or period through which anything runs to its completion. Etc.

Therefore, a cycle is something that happens in our life again and again, and always in roughly the same form or format. Each of us cycles through periods of feeling good or normal and feeling bad and not-so-good. This is a cycle none of us seem to be able to avoid. We experience all kinds of cycles all the time. The first step is to be aware of that fact.

Cycles are so important to the study of astrology that understanding what the dictionary has to say about them is but a start, and quite abstract at that. We must extend and deepen this understanding until we can see cycles not just as formal concepts, but as they are happening to us right now, and at work around us in our day-to-day life. Understanding these cycles in our lives may come slowly at first, but they are not that difficult see.

It can take a little time to pick up on these ideas, much less to experience them happening in life around us, but it is well worth our effort. Without becoming aware of the cycles in our life that we have always been experiencing, and learning to recognize them as they occur, our understanding of cycles remains just an abstract idea - a bunch of words. Let's go over this again.



### **Life As Cycles**

Our life is filled with cycles. There are very short cycles, short cycles, long cycles, and very long cycles. All cycles repeat or return on themselves - happen again. Some examples of convenient-sized cycles that we can understand and measure with our mind include the cycle of our breath, the cycle of the seasons or year, and the cycle of day and night. The cycle of our heart beating is almost too small and fast for us to keep in mind. Smaller cycles yet include cellular cycles and, of course, atomic and sub-atomic cycles. These smaller cycles happen so often or fast that they are a blur to our mind. They fall through or beneath our awareness and make up the ground of our consciousness.

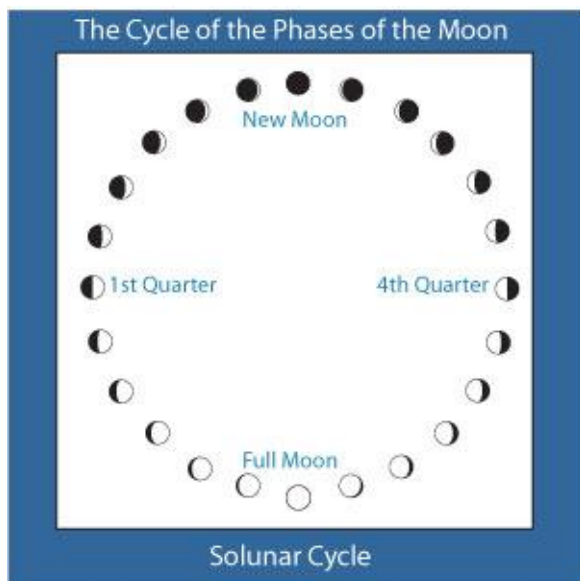
When we look for long cycles, the planets provide good examples. We live through and experience the two-year cycle of the planet Mars, the 12-year Jupiter cycle, and even the 30-year Saturn cycle. However, many people don't live through the 84-year Uranus cycle, much less

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the much longer cycles of Neptune and Pluto. While it is possible to grasp the meaning or import of these longer sized cycles with our mind, it can be very hard to bring home the meaning of these long cycles - to practice them consciously on a day-to-day level. Then there are cycles, like that of our Sun orbiting the Galactic Center, that take so many millions of years that, for our purposes, these cycles assume the proportions of a straight line. The portion of these larger size circles or cycles that we can witness or comprehend in our lifetime are so small as to appear like a straight line. We can't even see the curve of the line, much less the return.

Thus our awareness is bounded on the one hand by the incessant hum of smaller cycles and the long-theme straight-lined cycles on the other. This leaves us with our awareness or consciousness of those cycles that we CAN recognize and appreciate. At this point, it is important for you to be beginning to understand that our entire life is cyclic. It is all cycles - nothing else. I will explain.

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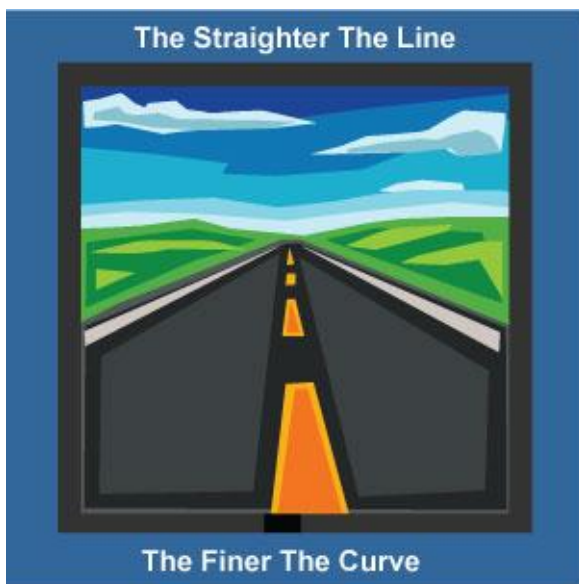
### The Tangle of Cycles

For now, let's not even try to sort out the tangle of cycles in which we are embedded, and say "This is the Mars cycle doing this, that is the Jupiter cycle over there," and so on. It is quite enough to become aware that our moods, capabilities, attitudes, etc. come and go in a very regular manner. We can wake up minutes, hours, days, months, or years later and remember that we have been here before, have been going through a patch just like this. We may not have felt this good in years. These are cycles that we are seeing at these times, although they have been there all along.

Many people have no awareness of the cycles they are going through each day or month. They may not even recognize that they don't feel very good or that they do feel very good, so embedded in the tangle of life's cycles are they. That is why the first step is to develop

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an awareness of how you do feel and begin to be aware of the cycles in life.



### **The Straighter The Line**

This next concept is very difficult to grasp and realize, but I am going to put it out there anyway. You can work on it. Here it is:

All existence (our very life) is maintained or keeps going through the sum total of the endless repeating cycles of which it is composed. It is even more direct than that and I am going to get very abstract for a just a moment.

Our very existence is ONLY by virtue of our awareness of these cycles or circles. And now for the hard part: Everything IS or continues to exist only by returning, repeating, and restating itself. That is: everything we know and can have any awareness of has to somehow persist or exist long enough for us to experience it. The converse is also true.

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That which does not re-instate or repeat itself (in other words, that from which we get no return) IS NOT for us. In fact, that which does not return for us (come to our awareness) comprises the sum total of our ignorance. We ignore it. It does not register. Our consciousness then, that which we are aware of, is made up of the endless returns or returning of cycles. Don't panic. I am going to try to make this clear.

This is not an easy concept to grasp, but it is an essential one, and if you can get it, it will make your study of astrology much easier. Let me rephrase:

Our consciousness, in other words, that which we are now aware of, is made up of whatever lasts (holds together) long enough for us to see and experience it. It persists, and we perceive it. Every thing we can see lasts long enough to restate itself, and these endless re-statements or returns make up our conscious life, and only that.

When we reach the 'point of no return' in any project, we abandon that direction. When something ceases to restate itself, to return on itself, it drops from our awareness and is forgotten. Everything that is only is by having the strength to last and exist. If it loses that strength, it no longer persists.

Everything is only by returning. It is by the returns that we know anything. If we reach the point of no return on any subject, it is just that: the point where there is nothing coming back. It becomes like a straight line for us.

This concept is difficult, so let's drop it for now and take another approach at the same material.

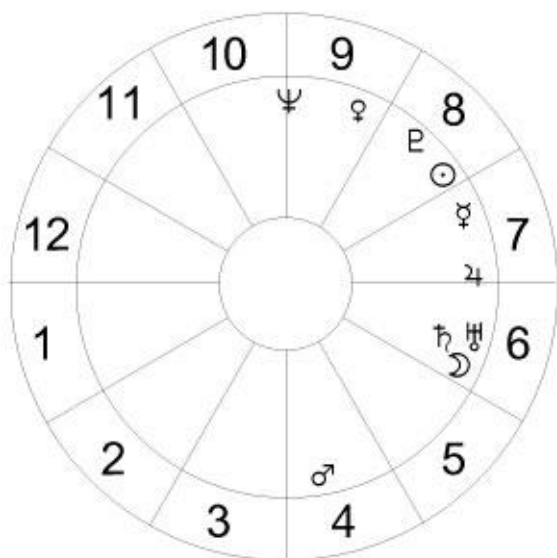
Our entire life can be viewed as a process of investment and returns, giving and taking, and this process



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endlessly repeats itself and can be studied in the form of cycles.

## ***The Houses***



## **The Houses**

We have all seen an astrological chart wheel, divided into twelve roughly equal pie-shaped sections, much like we would cut up an apple pie or pizza. These twelve sections are called the "Astrological Houses" or usually just the "houses." In each pie-shaped house, we might find one or more the planets or the Sun and the Moon. Just as someone might tell you they have the Sun in Aries, so they might also say that they have the Sun in the 11th house. And these twelve houses have specific meanings, just as the twelve zodiac signs do. The phrase "He's a Taurus," might just as easily be "He's a Second House Sun." We will learn about what the houses mean, but first it will help to know something about what houses are, and where they come from.