Happy New Year! With Pluto seated in Capricorn, and Uranus settled into Aries, we should be approaching the end of the beginning of the dynamic and tumultuous events of the last two years. Holding promise for much needed shifts across the globe, 2012, too, will be exciting. Ideally, these changes will benefit the many, not just the few. Our global community has a mountain to climb, and we’ll do it by both steps and leaps. Meanwhile, make the most of the adventure. As astrologers, we have the special gift of seeing life through the lens of cycles and phases. Our role is to share and spread the wealth of our collective wisdom!

Last November’s annual retreat in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina was OPA’s most successful to date! While enhancing our skills, plenty of fun was had by all. Thanks to the gifted leadership of our exceptional faculty, OPA’s peer group work continues to attain new heights. The facility and food were wonderful and the beach was such a treat. We plan to return to the Ocean Creek Resort for our next retreat March 21st - 24th 2013. Mark your calendars now!

This coming May, at the UAC conference in New Orleans, OPA will host an all day program. On Wednesday, May 23, 2012 we will spend the morning giving short talks, followed by our trademark peer group work in the afternoon. We will also share information about OPA’s groundbreaking certification program.

Speaking of the certification program, we are very pleased to announce that we have graduated our first class of OPA Certified Astrologers, seven in all. More astrologers are now in training and are on their way! This is an excellent and comprehensive program for anyone seeking to become a certified professional astrologer.

OPA’s mission is to nurture and support astrologers in their professional practices, to expand the perspective of its members and raise the consciousness of the planet. It is a privilege to a part of the OPA family! Wishing you all the best for a healthy, peaceful and prosperous 2012!

Stop! Who goes there? A writer? You have come forward to have your astrological article printed. I am the Publisher. Do you know the password? Silly opening isn’t it. Actually, you are the one who holds the power to be published, not me. It’s your good writing style that will open doors and give you a front row seat.

An introduction is in order. I am the publisher for the journal of the International Society for Astrological Research. ISAR receives over twenty astrological articles every three to four months. Each article has an author, possibly you, wanting to get your message out. In print, your astrological peers can read, understand and learn from your work.

Now let us watch the ISAR Publisher squirm and turn. Welcome, Richard, to Arlan Wise’s Writers’ Workshop at the OPA retreat at Ocean Creek Resort. [Continued on Page 2]
OPA Writer’s Workshop [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

Like astrology, there is no real magic in a well written article; it is simply good writing. “Simply good writing” is perhaps a misnomer. There is nothing really “simple” about writing well, yet it is the ticket for admission for your publisher, editor, and your peers. A well written article captures your readers mind, their senses, and their imagination. You will have a future captive audience of those who love your articles.

The first thing I learned in the workshop is that discipline is your friend, perhaps like Saturn and your editor, are your friends. It takes time, consistent practice, patience, will and determination devoted to writing. Discipline is not “an acquired taste” nor is your editor a barrier to your work. Your editor is on your side. Maintain the discipline of writing every day. Even the details are important; find a place where you can write, your own special place where the external world cannot penetrate your writer’s world.

The Writer’s Workshop experience is amazing. “Amazing how,” you ask. After four earthly rotations, myself and the other comrades in the workshop have been pushed, pulled, stretched and compressed to tease out the style, qualities and attributes in good writing.

While Arlan may appear to be a taskmaster with her galley of pupil slaves, Arlan is a kind, gentle and patient writing coach. Dispensing rules from Strunk and White; reading passages from Steven King’s On Writing; or Nancy Aronie’s Writer’s Mantra, Arlan guides like a skilled sculptor. Her assignments (homework required) are varied; both astrological and non-astrological; Japanese Haiku’s for each planet in our chart springs to mind.

So what is the magic, besides discipline and having your own special place?

1. Speak from an active voice, not passive.
2. Be wary of adverbs; be succinct and to the point.

3. “That” is better usage than “which.” Know the context and their differences.
4. Use all your senses: touch, taste, smell, hearing and seeing.

The Writer’s Mantra from Writing From the Heart by Nancy Aronie sets the intention:

I’m a great writer
I have great courage to write.
This is my practice and I honor it.

All the furniture in this house, every spider on these walls, each vegetable in that refrigerator, is so lucky to be hearing these brilliant thoughts of mine.

Oh yes, a book list is always in fashion:

On Writing
Steven King

The Elements of Style
William Strunk and E.B. White

The Well-Tempered Sentence
Karen Elizabeth Gordon

Writing from the Heart
Nancy Aronie

Writing Down the Bones
Natalie Goldberg

The Rulership Book
Rex E. Bills

Astrological Keywords
Manly P. Hall

Book of Rulerships
Lee Lehman, Ph.d.

Astrological Gardening
Louise Riotte

Coining ourselves the “Maven Writer’s Group,” I give my heartfelt appreciation to my fellow students for sharing their work and supporting this publisher’s writing attempts. My gratitude abounds, Arlan, for all your enchanting, guidance as I struggled (quite frequently, I will add.) You set the milieu, structure and delivery of your workshop. I strongly recommend Arlan’s writing workshop to develop your writing style. A style that will grab, inspire and captivate your readers.
A recent article, "Astrological Consultant and Psychotherapist", in The Career Astrologer described my practice as both a consulting astrologer and a licensed psychotherapist. I have combined both professions for many years in a modest, but thriving, business. Waking up each morning I still am excited to be in this combined profession. So when as an astrologer I noted that transiting Neptune would be going over my Mid Heaven into the tenth house of career and profession, I paused to consider the implications.

What do we really know about Neptune? Neptune was discovered in 1846 and had the first discovery return in 2009-2010. The truth is that 163 years is not a very long period to get to know the true nature of the energy put forth by a planet. What we do know is that Neptunian transits seem to create confusion, illusion, inflation, deceit, and uncertainly. On a positive note spiritual enlightenment, great service to others, true self sacrifice for a greater good, and creative inspiration may emerge.

As an astrological consultant I try to be careful when I have to interpret Neptunian energies going over a client’s angle or planet. Interpretation is handled with sensitivity, the very nature of the planet. So here I am, the consultant, having to face my own Neptunian transit over a major career point. Neptune crossed my Mid Heaven three times from March 17, 2010 to January 18, 2011, remaining within two degrees of the angle through January 15, 2012.

Given that Neptune is also considered the great dissolver, it did cross my mind that maybe my career would just disappear. In the therapeutic community professional practices were folding in these economic times. And I have Saturn on the Ascendant so I tend to think of the serious consequences first.

During this period I began looking deeply within myself for any tell-tell signs of an over grown professional ego, which Neptunian energy might feel needed an adjustment. I realize now that even doing this process is tricky because inflation is ever ready to make an appearance moving in either direction—seeing yourself as humble or seeing yourself as more than you are. Either quality can call in Neptune’s prick to the ego. What I really felt was being called out was getting to the essence of the next step in my career. What was I going to give back to the professional community?

I did put out the intent to the Neptunian Universe that I was willing to serve in whatever way was needed during the upcoming changing times on Earth. I always have to say in addition “give me the eyes to see, the ears to hear, and the sense to know what is on the path.” I have been known to be thick headed and stubborn. How many times do we ask for guidance, it comes, and then we don’t follow it?

I have lectured and I have written articles and pamphlets in the past, but I do so sporadically. Like Neptunian energy, my energy dissipates. I don’t keep with the program. Doing my own internal work, as any good therapist should, I noted that fear of criticism, lack of courage, and just plain laziness contributed to holding me back. Neptune is about splitting the veil that hides what we don’t want to look at.

Also Neptune energy is about inclusiveness, joining and belonging. I was very fortunate that my intent and joy for my work, floating on the ethers of the Neptunian Universe, were picked up by a dear OPA friend, Sandra Leigh Serio, who surprised me with an invitation to speak at the Midwest Astrology Conference in Ohio. (Ohio just coincidentally happens to be my birth state.) I first met Sandra Leigh at The Organization for Professional Astrologers. OPA is about inspiring one to be the best you can be professionally. Networking contacts in OPA can aid in that process as I have found out.

From speaking at MAC I got an invitation to speak at the State of the Art Conference and then had my application to UAC accepted to speak in New Orleans in 2012. I even received an invitation in the autumn of 2011 to lecture at my own home astrology group, the Astrological Society of Connecticut, belying the old adage about a “prophet in his own country.” The topic requested by the ASC was --- guess what? “Neptune Moving” [CONTINUED ON PAGE 4]
Flowing in Neptune’s Waters

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3]

into Pisces” Yes, there did seem to be a message emerging.

The reason I am relaying this story about my experience with a Neptune transit over the Mid Heave is that often we get scared into believing the worst about an outer planet transit. Carolyn Casey talks about engaging and playing with the energy of the planet. She suggests one way to do so is ritual. Maybe making a statement of intent with the planet’s energy in mind, like I did about doing service at this time, works too. Given that Neptune is in my tenth house for the next twenty years given an intercepted sign, I have plenty of time to experience the energies and research the meaning.

My hope and intent is to be as conscious as possible in the process, not deluded or inflated or discouraged, but inspired and creative. There are words, phrases, techniques and client stories and journeys I want to share with aspiring astrotherapists. Perhaps one of the new astrotherapists emerging will improve upon what I’ve been doing, adding to the body of professional knowledge.

Something has shifted within me. I have a new feeling free of fear, self-judgment and hesitation. Old thought patterns, not the career, were dissolved. Instead I experience joy in what I have to convey. I’ve found when I hold onto that energy of true joy in giving I’m in sync with Neptune, swimming in his waters and experiencing his support.

Jacqueline Lindley Janes, MA, LPC is a Certified Counseling Astrologer, NCGR IV, and was recognized by I.S.A.R. as a Certified Astrological Professional. She is a licensed professional counselor in Connecticut. Jacqueline has integrated the astrological consultation and astrological tools with psychotherapy. She has mentored astrologers at OPA Retreats and led workshops in spiritual development. Additionally she has written for OPA’s “Career Astrologer” and an OPA pamphlet, “Reframing: A Counseling Tool for the Consulting Astrologer”.

OPA Book Review by Arlan Wise

Consulting With Astrology: A Quick Guide to Building Your Practice and Profile


W endy Stacey has produced an excellent book, one that is helpful to both the aspiring and long time professional astrologer. She has written what she knows, always a good thing, and gives us the basic truths learned through years of practice as a consulting astrologer. The book is short yet thorough, practical and mind expanding.

There are other books about creating and maintaining an astrology practice, but what makes this one different is that Wendy brings the reader up to date on how to use the tools of the 21st century. She advises the reader how to adapt one’s work skills to the immediacy of today’s demands. Uranus is in Aries. Clients are impatient and want instant access to their astrologer and expect relevant astrological information as soon as possible. Wendy explains how to use the newest technology to address these needs. She frees astrologers from the confinement of the consulting room by pointing out the freedom available in using cell phones and Skype to meet with clients, especially international ones. She discusses how to attract clients through the use of websites. Wendy makes it all sound so seamless, even to technophobes.

The book is well organized. It begins with a section on how to get started, then instructs on practical matters such as fees, keeping records, setting up a consulting space. There are tips on preparing for and conducting the consultation. There is a segment on the difficulties that different kinds of clients may bring to the session and the important issue of ethics. She shares ideas on advertising and marketing. There is a concise outline of useful astrological techniques. The book ends with an account of her own experiences as an astrological consultant.

Wendy Stacey lives in England. She is the Chair of the Astrological Association of Great Britain and Principal of the Mayo School of Astrology. She completed the Masters of Arts course in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology at Bath Spa University in England. Wendy has been a practicing consulting astrologer since 1987. She has great credentials to instruct the reader that have been gained from her accomplishments. And, she is a lovely Leo lady.

I highly recommend this book to those who are considering beginning work as a consulting astrologer and to those who have been in the field for many years. This short book contains a wealth of information. Everyone can learn something from reading this book.

Arlan Wise has been a professional consulting astrologer since 1978. She developed writing workshops for astrologers and taught them at OPA’s past three Astrologers’ Retreats. She will be giving another one at the next retreat in March 2013. Arlan teaches writing workshops for astrologers around the country. Contact her if you would like to sponsor one in your town. www.arlanwise.com
Like all other astrologers, I read new books in our field all the time. Every year or so one comes along that I recommend to my students. This two volume set is so important I felt like sharing it with the professional community through OPA.

The thing that makes these two books so insightful and useful is that they are born of a wellspring of personal experience from a very gifted professional astrologer, who is also a historian. Consequently the material is formulated from both first hand case histories and from historical biographies. The descriptions of each sign on the ascendant are easy to read, accurate, and thorough. But, what makes these works so incredibly unique is her understanding of the way that the Ascendant changes through time. As we age, the progressed ascendant changes signs, makes aspects, and alters the manner of functioning for the natal characteristics.

The quotes at the front of each chapter, the footnotes, and the bibliography for each sign give us several avenues to go deeper in our own understanding of material. And even through Kathleen Burt is a true scholar (graduate school at the University of Chicago is very demanding) the books are well written and surprisingly easy to read. Because she is deeply rooted in Jungian psychology, as well as having an active spiritual practice, the perspective coming from the pages of the book is helpful and uplifting. Kathleen has joined the ranks of the professional astrologers who are also yoga instructors.

I recommend these books to every practicing astrologer. I’ve read them over and over with continuing insight. They are a joy.

Bob Mulligan  As an astrologer since 1974, Bob sees clients and operates THE MASTERY OF ASTROLOGY™ correspondence school. His chart interpretation program INDRA, his book, “BETWEEN ASTROLOGERS AND CLIENTS” and his free monthly newsletter all receive praises. Bob is a life member of OPA, NCGR, ISAR, and AFAN. He has served on the OPA board and is the current head of the OPA certification program. Bob is a follower Avatar Meher Baba since 1970. bobmullig@aol.com; www.theastrologycompany.com.

Mark your calendar!

Plans are already underway for OPA’s next retreat.

March 21-24, 2013
Ocean Creek Resort • Myrtle Beach SC

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Uranus in Cancer — 10th House
My soul must feel free
It’s the pact I’ve sealed with you
I break all the rules

Sun in Virgo — 12th House
Someone locked the door
I’ll work through the night alone
Yet it’s crowded here

Moon in Gemini — 9th House
Is this making sense?
Not to worry, soon it will
I’ve just got a call

Ascendant in Virgo Leo SubPhase
Let the show begin
Love and music on parade
Service with a smile

Mercury Retrograde in Virgo — 12th House
Message in a jar
Speaks of something far away
Right inside my head

Venus Retrograde in Virgo — 12th House
Kiss me once again
Hold me in your arms and say
This will be the last

Saturn in Libra — 1st House
Moving in watch out
Steady, steady, almost there
They take me for real

Neptune in Libra — 2nd House Trine MC
Fickle finger fly
You give me the inside out
Cliff hangers galore

Chiron in Sagittarius — 4th House
Black sheep, black sheep sing
All the family’s underground
Nothing left but sky

North Node in Pisces — 6th House
Get to work and dream
Rescuers and helpless souls
Send them all to me

Jupiter in Aries Retrograde — 7th/8th House
Tough guy neighborhood
War lords feast on fattened calf
Now I’m one of you

Mars in Leo — 11th House
Magic in the square
Bolts of lightning everywhere
My friends see me now

Pluto in Leo — 12th House
I pay you your due
You do what you always do
Lay my soul to waste

The Writing Mavens Group
Caught within our words
Spark preserved forever now
Wind to longing heart
In November, fifty-four astrologers gathered at the Ocean Creek Resort Myrtle Beach, South Carolina for OPA’s 9th Retreat. This unique event included specialty tracks for financial, psychological, evolutionary and shamanic astrology as well as a track for astrological writing and OPA’s new certification program.

Special thanks to our OPA photographer, Robert Corre!

OPA’s 9th Astrologer’s Retreat
OPA President, Alexandra Karacostas, addresses the group.

Katie Mulligan is always ready to help.

Jack Hopkins was part of the writing track.

Jacqueline Jones and MaryAnn Davis.

Susan Stone, Alexandra Karacostas, Dianne Adams, Sandra-Leigh Sear and Susan Falk.

Bob Mulligan, Susan Falk and Arlan Wise.

Steven Stone

Susan Folk, Chris McRae, Monica Dimino, Geri Bellingo and Nancy Beale.
The Connecticut contingent... Glen Perry & Jacqueline Jones.

Dvora gave a thought provoking talk on the astrology of relationship.

Sarah and Twink find common ground in astrology and homeopathy.

Brad and Richard.

Hal Bahr, Anne Phillips, Sandra-Leigh Seno.

Conference coordinator, Geri Bellino, did an amazing job!

Dinner on our last night together.

Michael Faigan and Benjamin Bernstein.

Maurice, Sol Jonassen (who came all the way from Norway) and Rebecca.

Benjamin Bernstein and Hal Bahr.
The Organization for Professional Astrology

Robert Corne and Alexandra.

Victoria Petz and Richard Smoot.

Susan Folk & Jack Hopkins.

Geri and Michael Fagan.

Nancy, Geri and Randy.

Randy and Alexandra.

Dianna Eppler Adams and Jacqueline Jones.

Benjamin Bernstein’s Shamonic Astrology group
Jennifer Parde and Randy Teblum.

Sol Jonasse breaking the ice after hours with astrogames!

L to R: Claudia Simoes, Victoria Petz, Chris, Geri Bellino MaryAnne Davis, Hal Bahr, Anne Phillips and Nancy Beale.

The first group of CPA-certified astrologers. Congratulations!

Robert, Arlan, Sandra-Leigh, Monica, Sihan, Alexandra and Bob.

Arlan Wise’s Writing Mavens!
Five Elements

BY JACK HOPKINS

Greek Philosopher Empedocles advanced the idea of the four elements still used by astrologers today. The Chinese, who used the four cardinal directions in their sky maps, additionally developed the idea of the Five Elements found in the I CHING and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Long time harmonic astrology author, David Hamblin (Spirit of Numbers, The Wessex Astrologer Ltd 2011) associates fiveness with creativity. These five elements contrast with the more structural and static four elements and describe a system of interdependencies and balances, reflecting the dynamic nature of the number five. In the article, we will explore them from a Western perspective, portraying a world in motion, requiring discrimination and creative interaction, quite similar to the one we face today.

FIRE

Courageous ... Self-Assertive
Active Life Force ... Ardent & Strong

The Fire Element creates awareness and enthusiasm. It stimulates a bold response to life, the taking of chances, and pursuit of personal bliss. Fire will waste no time in seizing opportunities it stumbles upon, often with an innate recognition of their worth and potential in some grand pursuit. Fire illuminates uncertainty and teaches us to see a clear path before us, brightly marked by its passion for life and change. When unbalanced, ruthless and uncen-

tered, its energy will consume everything in its path, insatiable in its hunger for excitement, relentless in its blind passion. Even when balanced with the other elements, Fire will forge ahead with an instinctual sense of urgency that demands action and courage.

It is that wild force within us that refuses to follow the usual path, throwing itself into the most terrible of life’s struggles, creating unforgettable experiences out of inanimate potential. It breathes life into the void, transforming it into a blinding display of primary intent and will. Without Fire, we lose touch with our own magic. We’re re-
duced to following shadows, far from the blazing heat of the Sun.

EARTH

Offers Support
Common Sense
Consideration and Service
Awareness of Potential

Earth has the job of facing resistance and inertia and so must devise the most efficient way to deliver the desired result, on time, and within budget. Common sense and a realistic assessment of what’s within scope and what’s off the table make Earth unpopular with the other Elements. When the chips are down, Earth often ends up saving the day, providing the support that everyone often forgets. Purity and service rank among its virtues. Discipline and a brutally no-none

sense approach to getting the job done is its usual strategy.

Underneath that grimy exterior beats the soul of patience and often a unselfish devotion to bringing divine love into its many labors. It is the master of the long haul and the unsung hero. Disillusionment and self-effacement nip at it heals and can do serious damage to the effectiveness of its efforts. Freshness and optimism are often in short supply, and mindless ambition and conformity are always ready to lay its soul to waste.

Should it pass these trials, Earth brings the beautiful gift of authentic self respect and acceptance to its ambitions. It can be unassuming and simple, possessing genuine earnestness and unbelievable mastery over doing the right things well and with love.

AIR

Cooperative ... Inventive
Inspirational ... Intelligent & Alert
Objective ... Humane

Air is highly aware of the social dimension of life and can’t help but take other people’s points of view into consideration. Both friends and enemies figure into this, and Air often becomes tangled into some controversy where its plans unravel and damage control and cover up become the order of the day. At its best, Air is cooperative, humane and socially
savvy with any arrangement it enters into. The less noble types are fast-talking, insincere and dreadfully out of touch with reality.

A virtual wizard at getting its message across, the Airy type loves to be the one talking and making all the decisions, defining themselves along social and intellectual lines. They are capable of original thought and can introduce whole revolutions with the power of their words, often adjusting this or that position to gain additional acceptance and consensus.

Like it or not, Air is an indispensable fact of life. While today's media has become an absolute feeding frenzy for every political pundit and talking head, it is Air that urges us to reach out and draw people into our lives, share intimacies, and learn from each other. It is the most civilized of all the Elements, reminding us of our identity as social creatures. Air is at home when finding its place in the endless varieties of human exchange, endlessly arguing, forming and reforming alliances.

The true Air type will try all sorts of ways to engage with people, becoming involved, exchanging judgments, promoting cooperation and shared experiences. At its best, Air seeks involvement and intimacy. At its worst, it can be deceitful and intolerant, dismissive of authentic relationships and unwilling to face the truth. Air needs to make a definite stand on its position, even if it means some people may not agree. Being scrupulously honest and authentic is the high price it must pay to earn the freedoms and liberties it often talks about.

WATER

Psychic ... Compassionate
Intuitive ... Sensitive
Artistic ... Romantic

Water is the most emotional of all the elements and its positive keywords read like the advertising material for the local spa. Rejuvenating, refreshing, relaxing, and calming certainly sound inviting, but make no mistake, Water demands we face our own inner demons of rage and despair, which is anything but pleasant or calming. Water requires we get in touch with our true feelings and find ways to communicate our needs and wants to other people.

It is highly intuitive energy, often psychic, and able to tap into deep levels of unconsciousness and intuition. Water demands that we rise above our personal feelings and preferences, embracing our deeper natures, and accepting our inner fears and insecurities as part of that. Through compassion, artistic talent, and its unlimited imagination, Water pulls us out of our own ruts and puts us into touch with our higher and more altruistic nature.

At its best, Water is forgiving and compassionate, able to transcend petty and selfish motives and sees beyond the endless melodrama of human life and existence. At its worst, it can become paranoid and emotionally blocked, noncommittal, and absolutely refuse to stop living in its own dream world. When balanced, Water brings peace and directs us towards that still point in us that is unattached to anything transient or vain. It is the secure base of our deeper self, offering insight and sensitivity in contrast to the chaos we often face in our daily lives.

SPIRIT

High morals ... Principled
Introduces Change
Renewal & Growth ... Unselfish
Team oriented ... Visionary

The Spirit element encourages us to break free of any unnecessary attachments that hold us back from seeing our true nature. It is the most metaphysical of all the elements, grasping the underlying unity in all things, often blurring considerations that block our awareness of the truth. The nature of Spirit is forward thinking and humanitarian in nature, seeking innovation and improvement for all people. Justice and equality figure large in its world; being able to successfully resolve conflict and strife are high on its list. Spirit seeks to create environments where people can work together for the common good. It is enterprising, innovative and brings change and transformation in its wake.

Small wonder that Spirit types can become so frustrated in a world so filled with non-believers. Their high expectations become quickly dashed with cynicism and intolerance. Anger and resentment can replace their natural enthusiasm and belief that life is sacred and the human spirit honorable and noble. Ignorance and disillusionment obscure their enlightened perspective which unites all living things, large or small, into one interdependent system of love and mutual respect.

Spirit types are the poets and the metaphysical philosophers of the world. They are the keepers of the truth, the interpreters of signs, sometimes having to go underground to protect themselves from political or social turbulence. They remind us of a distant home we all share, of its unspeakable glory and magnificence. In each age, they challenge us to listen to our own spirits, to remember who we are, and lay claim to our place in the grand cosmic plan. They guide us through our illusions and doubts, pausing only to remind us that it was love that created the universe and everything contained within it.

Jack Hopkins has been studying astrology since 1973 and has a passionate interest in investigating alternative divisions of the Zodiac in natal and predictive work. He has worked in the IT field for over 30 years and is author of several astrology programs which utilize his research on harmonics and degree areas. Jack has also applied his interest in harmonics to mundane astrology, resulting in some interesting looks at history and today's world, correlating his finding with degree areas to that as well. Find him on the web at: www.eagleeyes-spiritguide7.blogspot.com
You may be a great astrologer but if you don’t have good client rapport, your clients won’t return.

Many years ago, a friend of mine had an appointment with a well-known astrologer. She was very excited about her upcoming session and looked forward to all the knowledge she would gain from it. She also had the fortunate accident of birth to be born to parents who were both astrologers, so she wasn’t naïve or a novice when it came to astrology. Additionally, she had the benefit of being a no-nonsense Scorpio. When I saw her the next day, she immediately relayed how angry, frustrated and disappointed she was with her session. During our conversation she told me that when she sat down with the astrologer, she observed a television set on behind her head with a muted video playing of his most recent public performance. She couldn’t help but notice that, even though the sound was silenced, he kept glancing up at the screen watching himself. She was so insulted that five minutes into the session, she got up and walked out without a word to him. This is a clear example of what not to do in a session!

As astrologers, the majority of us want our field to be recognized as a profession along with law, psychology, medicine and others. There are many ways to achieve this, but one important qualification is conducting sessions in a professional and ethical manner.

Below are suggested guidelines for keeping it professional:

Prior to the session you should have established the time and place for the session, its length, cost, accepted payment information, recording options, if any, and the client’s level of astrological knowledge.

Upon arrival, greet the client and welcome him/her to the session. A handshake is professional and indicates a willingness to connect and reach out.

Explain to the client what to expect in the time you have together. You may want to mention at what point you will welcome questions.

Give information that is helpful and useful...
without too much astrological jargon unless the client is also an astrologer. The majority of clients inquire about romance, money, career, and health. Those are common questions you should be prepared to answer. Sometimes a client desires information on spiritual direction, past lives, mystical experiences and dreams. Whatever your response to these questions, be upbeat and positive in rendering any information.

Make your policy clear about yes and no questions. Astrologers are not psychics; they are personality and cycle scrutinizers. If a client asks when he/she will relocate, you can give an opinion but make sure you say it is based on the cycles of the planets and the correct birth information that was provided. I like to offer percentages to these types of questions. As an example, if someone asks “do you think I will change my job?” I may respond “looking at your chart you don’t have the usual configurations present when there is a job change so the chances that will occur are small, only 25-30%.”

Often health concerns are evident in the chart. When that happens, do not scare the client. If you see a potential health problem, suggest a doctor’s visit or encourage regular health checkups. Be tactful and diplomatic. Never state emphatically that the client has a disease or the potential for one.

Along those same lines, questions about death may arise. Do not predict death for the client or someone in his/her close circle. If you see very difficult aspects forming, talk about changes in lifestyle or relationships. The only exception is when an ailing, elderly relative or friend is terminally ill or lingering. At that point, the client may want information about the timeframe for that person’s passing so he/she can be present or make arrangements. Keep in mind that a client may not appear uncomfortable when discussing death, but may in fact be very sensitive to this topic so be gentle and compassionate. If you are uncomfortable with the topic of death, make it clear from the onset of the session that you don’t answer those types of questions.

It is quite common for clients to inquire about relationships. Avoid revealing infidelity or predicting divorce for the client. You can suggest a difficult time or crisis in a marriage and may further suggest counseling. For many marriages a crisis can lead to a stronger union. If a client asks if his/her spouse is cheating, simply say it is something you don’t address or say you don’t have enough information to answer that question or the information you have makes the answer unclear.

During a session, in an effort to connect with the client, the astrologer often shares personal information. However, it is much more ethical to not talk about your personal life or reveal anything too intimate about yourself. You are there to impart information to the client not to chat about your life or experiences. I have organized Psychic Fairs for over 20 years and the most common reason someone wants a refund is because the reader talked about his/her life instead of focusing on the client.

We all have our own particular views on current events, but your own prejudices and opinions about politics, religion and sexual orientation do not belong in a session. Avoid being judgmental and lecturing to the client. The most capable astrologer is one who is comfortable with whatever the client reveals.

In an effort to establish a bond with a client it is important to avoid comments or behaviors that can be viewed as flirtatious, sexual or seductive. These types of behaviors could bring sexual harassment charges and lawsuits.

Clients reveal confidential information to us. They often see us as therapists with a privileged view of the future. Do not repeat personal information about the client after the conclusion of the session. Keep all information private. This applies even when the client is a colleague or relative. The only acceptable situation for repeating information is if the person is a danger to him/herself or to others or when you have information that a crime has been committed. In that situation, you will need to contact the police.

All sessions should be punctual. Start the session on time and end within a few minutes of the designated time. If you give a client extra time without an additional charge, he/she will expect it the next time. Set good boundaries in the first session with the client. In that way the client will know what to expect in subsequent sessions.

Smoking or eating during a session is considered bad manners and bad taste. Always have water available for both you and the client. Coffee, tea and non-alcoholic beverages are optional but could delay the start time of the session if they are not prepared ahead of time. It is a good idea to have a box of tissue easily accessible to the client. Cell and office phones, if possible, should be muted. They are an intrusion into the client/astrologer container you are trying to establish.

At the conclusion of the session give the client your card or brochure and a record of the session if you normally provide one. Inform the client of any follow-up procedure you have and also of your policy for further sessions.

As a final thought, if you deal with your client in a respectful and kind manner, you will have a healthy and enduring relationship that will continue for many years to come.

Sandra-Leigh is a full-time, professional astrologer with a Master’s Degree in Psychology. She lives in Boulder, Colorado. For 25 years, she wrote a weekly astrology column for a major newspaper and has over 30 years experience working with clients all over the United States. Sandra-Leigh is certified by ISAR, AFA and OPA as a professional astrologer. She has written for Llewellyn Publications, Horoscope Magazine and StarIQ. Presently, she is President of the Rocky Mountain Astrologers (ROMA) and is the Secretary and a Group Leader for OPA (Organization for Professional Astrology). Sandra-Leigh can be reached at sandraleigh@sandraleigh.com or 303-604-2777. www.sandraleigh.com
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