



Synastry: Understanding the Astrology of Relationships

By Rod Suskin

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Relationships form the most fundamental aspect of our lives and reveal the innermost parts of ourselves. Synastry, a powerful tool for understanding the complex dynamics between two people, allows you to penetrate the intricate mysteries of the heart and provide invaluable insight into a couple's future life together.

In this comprehensive guide, Rod Suskin, renowned astrologer and author of *Cycles of Life*, explains every essential element of relationship analysis. Starting with the natal chart and focusing on the emotional needs of each partner, you will learn to recognize behavioral patterns, identify potential challenges, predict relationship longevity, and give practical advice for making your relationship work.

Offering a step-by-step approach that blends classic and modern methods, this book will show you how to give accurate synastry readings with sensitivity and objectivity. Based on proven techniques, *Synastry* provides you with a thorough and logical approach to relationship analysis:

- Instructions for easily interpreting composite charts and marriage charts
- Methods for predicting when changes in your relationship are likely to occur
- Sample worksheet outlining each step of relationship analysis
- Ethical and legal considerations when providing consultations
- Over forty chart analyses of anonymous couples and celebrities

Also includes an entire chapter with expert advice on conducting a live, professional synastry reading.



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Editorial Review

Review

"From methods of predicting relationship changes to sample worksheets and ethical and legal concerns, *Synastry: Understanding the Astrology of Relationships* is an outstanding survey perfect for new age libraries." -- *Midwest Book Review, August 2008*

About the Author

Rod Suskin (South Africa) has been a professional consultant for fifteen years. He has a radio program and often appears on national television to talk about astrology. In addition to writing for journals and magazines, he writes a daily astrology column for Cape Town's largest newspaper. He was commissioned by the official publication of the South African Parliament to create and interpret an astrological chart for the newly democratic country.

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- Love is one of the great mysteries of life; it can be a great frustration or a great joy. Astrology offers a way to penetrate the mystery that is meaningful and can offer the individual the possibility to gain some understanding of an important but often confusing aspect of life. **In This Chapter**
 - Why people come to astrologers to analyze their relationship and what astrology can offer them.
 - What compatibility really means.
 - First impressions and why they often are wrong.
 - How to analyze the Ascendant and planets in the first house.
 - The important role of Mercury in creating first impressions.

Why the Client Seeks Help

Every practicing astrologer knows that a good percentage of clients want to discuss two areas: love and money, or more precisely, relationships and profession. Some astrologers even make it a point to make some mention of these early in the chart reading so that the client is not distractedly listening and waiting.

Our relationships get to the very core of what it means to be human; they are related to our identity, self-worth, security, even the elusive state called happiness and the enigma of destiny. To be able to provide insight into the essence of being human is a valuable gift the astrologer has to offer, and is a significant responsibility that he or she carries.

Relationships are about more than the pleasures of love and sex or the mutual responsibilities and shared difficulties. They make us examine who we are and require us to expose all sorts of things about ourselves to somebody else; they bring our beliefs, ideas, and values right out into the open; and they show us what other people think about us.

We carry deep cultural beliefs about relationships and particularly about marriage. Marriage is a legal act that fundamentally affects our rights and our status, one of the reasons that governments control who is

allowed to marry. Even when a relationship is not "sanctioned" by marriage, relationships lead us to commit our resources and ourselves. They have a permanent effect on our lives and our futures.

Some of our beliefs about relationships are based on past experience. Most people are able to identify patterns in this area of life more clearly than any other—an area of relationships that astrology is particularly good at exposing. Some of these patterns clearly are based on early-life emotional experiences, another area in which astrology can be especially insightful.

Relationships bring into sharp relief how we value ourselves and what we'd like others to think about us. The powerful need for social approval is evident in how proudly we display our partners when we believe they have special status in the eyes of others (perhaps by being attractive or successful), as if that will somehow reflect back on us. Similarly, when we are with someone our friends may consider of a lesser social status than ourselves, we may become secretive and defensive.

Relationships have one other feature that drives clients to seek help. As much as clients may secretly wish to control their partner (hopefully not!), they will settle for being able to anticipate the partner's actions. They want to know how this person will behave and what is likely to be the outcome of having a relationship with him or her.

What Astrology Can Offer

When it comes to relationships, while clients have an idea of how they themselves feel and what they hope and fear about this relationship, they cannot be sure of how their partner feels. This uncertainty is probably the greatest of all motives that drive them to an astrologer, the motive wrapped up in the question "Are we compatible?"

We consider the client's complex network of beliefs, hopes, fears, feelings, experiences, and past experiences. We are able to offer a meaningful form of objectivity that will allow the client to make decisions that are less skewed by passions and emotions. Even though emotions are the very stuff relationships are made of, our feelings in partnership situations are closely related to our insecurities and the "buttons" that our partner presses in the exchange of love.

Which Relationships Can We Analyze?

One significant relationship for many people is their marriage or their romantic relationship. Relationships with siblings can be powerful and often represent a significant bond or ongoing issue in a person's life, just as a relationship with a parent can be one of those extremes, or some complex mix of both. Some people have a lifelong friendship that transcends many of the changes that cause other friendships to wane. All of our relationships deal with our self-worth, insecurity, beliefs, and needs for control and affection: these, and the many others our relationships bring to the surface, are the core issues of being human.

We can use synastry to explore any kind of relationship. Although this book will concentrate on romantic relationships, most of the techniques you will learn here easily can be applied to other types of relationships.

What Is Compatibility?

Most people assume that a successful relationship requires compatibility. They assume that the role of an astrologer in analyzing relationships is to tell them whether their partner is compatible with them, and they often expect the astrologer to give them information like, "You are compatible with Pisceans but not Geminis, and yet your perfect partner is a Scorpio."

If relationships were that simple, we wouldn't need astrologers in the first place. Not only is it meaningless to sum up a person as his or her Sun sign, but the notion of "compatible" is variable according to who defines it.

Is compatibility merely the ability to get along? Are we more compatible with people we are similar to? What is the meaning behind "opposites attract"? Does compatibility mean that there is never any conflict? Has this anything to do with "soul mates" and the idea that there is a specific person just for me somewhere out there in the world? Even if

unspoken, many of these questions are in the mind of the client seeking to analyze relationships for compatibility.

In reality, each of us is looking for something a little different. We all have different needs, drives, and experiences. What works for one person might not work for someone else. We often are astonished by our friends' choice of partners, or how their relationship with such an unlikely individual may seem to work.

Whether two people get along harmoniously or not may relate to their preference in relationship style. For example, some people tend to stagnate or become lazy in harmonious relationships and seem to need something more challenging to make them confront their own issues. The astrologer who sees many challenges in a synastry analysis cannot safely assume that this means the individuals are incompatible.

When it comes to compatibility, there clearly is no "one size fits all." There are, however, certain basic principles, which we will specifically look for, that all relationships depend on. For our purposes, these then become our criteria for compatibility?everything else is defined by the unique situation and needs of the individuals concerned. Here are the criteria for compatibility:

- Communication?expressing one's own needs and hearing the partner's needs
- Rapport and nonverbal communication
- Empathy?the ability to understand and relate to the partner's feelings
- Compromise?the ability to adjust one's own needs to allow for the other's needs to be equally met
- The ability to respond to specific needs of the partner
- The likelihood of gaining or improving something (especially oneself) through the relationship

There are a few special criteria that will emerge as we examine different types of relationship, but there is one more assumption we will make in order to seal our definition of compatibility: a relationship rarely succeeds when the value systems of the individuals concerned are different. This will be explored in considerable depth during the course of our analysis.

The Difference Between Synastry and Natal Readings

All astrological techniques are derived from the basic astrological concepts: planets, signs, houses, and aspects. Even if you have only a rudimentary knowledge of astrology, you

already are equipped to start developing it into a tool that will allow you to understand relationships in a new and powerful way. As you apply this knowledge to working with relationships, you will develop techniques to extend your use of those basic tools:

- Using a natal chart to find specific things that are relevant to the matter you are inquiring about (in this case, relationships) rather than trying to synthesize the whole chart
- Learning to use astrological methods to see how people interact and how one person's chart can have an effect on another person's chart

- Taking your natal methods one step further to develop new charts that work similarly to natal charts but that allow you to analyze a relationship rather than an individual

When it comes to actually dealing with the clients, what makes a synastry reading so different is that you are dealing with two people. There may be other situations in which you will handle more than one chart at a time?in fact, any reading for predictions as well as many other techniques practically require this?but there are very few in which you will have more than one person in your office. This situation may not sound like anything special, but you will discover that it creates a whole new dynamic.

The last chapter of this book is devoted to handling the special dynamics of a synastry reading. Before you even begin to plan a session with your clients, you need to consider your whole approach to relationship work and know in advance your strategy for dealing with the sensitive ethical issues that arise.

First Impressions

Before people have any effect on each other, they see each other through a whole collection of expectations, hopes, desires, and beliefs about other people. Whether we mean to or not, we make a lot of assumptions about other people at the very moment we first meet them. Sometimes we even will go so far as to make decisions or judgments based on this first impression, but usually we will be careful not to jump to any conclusions and most of us will keep an open mind as we learn a little more about who the other person is. Still, that first impression often becomes a foundation for a relationship, or at least for some of what we believe about another person.

Despite the benefits of intuition and experience, first impressions are wrong more often than they are right. There are good reasons for this that can be well understood using astrology, and that makes the analysis of first impressions a useful starting point to examine the

earliest beliefs and expectations that may be set up in a relationship. Luckily, analyzing first impressions makes use of the most basic of all astrological methods, so even if you know only a little astrology at this stage, it is a good place to start learning about synastry.

Understanding why we form first impressions, and what is usually wrong with them, will allow you to help your clients understand why their expectations are not always accurate.

Why We Form First Impressions

We all have a genetic program that determines our instinctual behavior. The purpose of such behavior is to provide us with the most basic needs, one of which is self-preservation. We need to determine rapidly whether another being threatens our person or our resources, an instinct we share with all other living creatures. Following this rapid, unconscious assessment, we go on to decide whether this individual may have something we need, or whether this is likely to be an opportunity for gain in the future.

Since one of our needs is to be in a relationship (which includes some of the more basic needs like sex, reproduction, and comfort), it is necessary for this process to kick in. But as we are a lot more sophisticated than other species that are going through the same process, the standards we apply to what determines a threat or what determines an opportunity are quite far removed from those of the animal world. All of our beliefs and expectations, all the baggage we carry, and how we see ourselves help form the filter through which we assess another person and against which we measure the person's suitability.

Actually, it may be considered reasonable to apply this strategy; after all, all that baggage is relevant to describing our basic needs. But it is more complex than that. It's one thing to have a set of standards or a

measuring system? but just what is it we are measuring? What is it we know about a total stranger? And how accurate is that knowledge?

Why We Create Impressions in Others

Our inability to accurately assess people through our personal filter is only half the problem. The rest of the problem lies in the fact that each of us deliberately projects an image of ourselves into the world that is far from the whole picture of who we are. Sometimes that image is altogether different from our real self.

We project this image for reasons similar to the ones that make us judge others so early on. Most of the time, our instincts drive us to try to create a good impression. We want them to believe that we meet their criteria, and we also want them to believe specific things

about us. We want to be liked and we want to ensure that there is no way that a stranger will realize our flaws and insecurities.

Why First Impressions Often Are Wrong

Between all the biases we have when we "read" another person and all the impressions the person is deliberately trying to make, it is very unlikely that our first impression will be accurate. After all, we are gaining that impression through a lens we already have colored with our own projections.

What chance do we have for success when our beginnings are so fraught with confusion and misjudgment? In fact, it is likely that it is this very illusion-filled process that ensures we actually do have relationships. If we formed an accurate impression of somebody else, baggage and all, we would certainly shy away (if not run away) from any involvement. So first impressions are wrong by nature's very design.

The projection is not sustained for long, and as we become more comfortable and familiar with our partners the mask slips and we show more of our real selves. Many of the problems that seem inevitable later in a relationship very often are based on the fact that our partners turn out to be different from who we thought they were at first meeting (and vice versa).

Helping your clients understand what they each tend to project (and why), and how they will perceive the other person, can go a long way to help them deal with the changes that develop later on and to become more compassionate when their partner misreads them.

Appearance Counts: The Ascendant

Even though we generally are aware that judgment of appearance rarely is related to underlying qualities, we often make much of our initial judgment based on the physical attributes of the other person. These include actual "looks" or genetic makeup and more significantly clothes, jewelry, hygiene, etc. Remember, people control how they wish to be seen by others through their choice of how they are going to appear.

Astrologically, appearance is described by the Ascendant. The Ascendant also describes how individuals place themselves in the world, how they tend to react and respond to it.

Analyzing the Ascendant for First Impressions

In this book, we always will assume that you have both parties to the relationship sitting in front of you. Now, for each chart:

- Bearing in mind what you know about the Ascendant and its role in attraction, describe to the client as how

he or she wishes to be seen. (In the next chapter you will learn more about how the Ascendant compares with the "real self," but for now your job is just to describe appearances and impressions.)

This table will help you get started by showing you what to look out for, but remember that people are individuals and these are only examples. Use your knowledge of astrology to relate appearance to the rising sign.

Table 1: How the Ascendant Affects First Impressions	
Ascending Sign	Apparent Characteristics
Aries	Enthusiastic, brash, easily riled, naive
Taurus	Conservative, lazy, sensual, down-to-earth, likable
Gemini	Talkative, flighty, intellectual, distracted
Cancer	Sensitive, easily hurt, nurturing, emotional
Leo	Warm, knows what's best, takes care of all, self-involved
Virgo	Fussy, helpful, critical, earthy, intellectual
Libra	Friendly, gentle, romantic, considerate, flighty, talkative
Scorpio	Intense, quiet, secretive, mysterious, powerful, confident
Sagittarius	Happy-go-lucky, uncommitted, friendly, warm, experienced
Capricorn	Serious, knowledgeable, practical, reserved, older
Aquarius	Remote, different, idealistic, individualistic, stubborn
Pisces	Quiet, sensitive, willing to cooperate, unfocused, spiritual, emotional

- Planets in the first house modify the Ascendant strongly. In describing the appearance, be sure to consider the influence of these planets. If there is more than one planet here, the planet that is closest to the actual Ascendant will be the strongest influence, but all must be considered. If there are planets in the twelfth house within ten degrees of the Ascendant and in the same sign, they also will have an influence.

Table 2: How Planets in the First House Affect First Impressions	
Planet	Effect on Characteristics
Sun	Warm, easy to like, draws attention, bossy, confident, self-involved
Moon	Sensitive, private, emotional, caring, intense
Mercury	Talkative, busy, intellectual, critical

Venus	Easygoing, lazy, romantic, artistic, seductive, feminine
Mars	Confident, aggressive, forceful, determined, masculine
Jupiter	Optimistic, gregarious, wise, generous, fun-loving
Saturn	Serious, seems older, conservative, disapproving, wise, fatherly
Uranus	Eccentric, individualistic, unpredictable, exciting, erratic
Neptune	Dreamy, romantic, glamorous, deceptive, vague, spiritual
Pluto	Intense, powerful, secretive (these people often "hide" Pluto behind likability and good manners, so don't expect this placement to be obvious)

Once you have described the Ascendant of each person in this way, you have set the scene for your clients. You can even discuss with them how they each saw the other and how this concurs with what they have just heard.

This initial description also serves as a great introduction to the whole concept of relationship analysis. Tell your clients that, having seen the outer appearance, you now will help them see a more accurate picture. Be light and gentle?it helps to break the ice and prepare the clients for what can become quite an intense experience of exposure.

Controlling Other People's Impressions of Us

Even though we consciously control our appearance as much as possible, the most immediate way we have to deliberately create an impression is through the use of language. Our choice of what we talk about, the way we talk, and even our tone of voice can be very powerful tools to help create a desired impression. This is particularly true since we tend to believe that what a person says is very revealing about how he or she really thinks. Clearly, at the early stages of an encounter this is anything but true.

The element of the sign that Mercury occupies shows how the individual uses language. This can go a long way to explain some of the incorrect perceptions we have of each other, because our style of speaking may not reflect our real values. The following list will give you a sense of how the element affects Mercury and will be especially useful when considering the basic misunderstanding conveyed when Mercury is in a different element from that of the Sun. (In practice, these examples must be made more specific to the actual sign that Mercury occupies.)

Table 3: Effect of the Element of the Mercury Sign	
Element of Mercury Sign	Style of Speech and Thought Process
Fire	The style of speech is more dramatic, frank, spontaneous, honest, blunt; the speaker may get excitable and step on toes unintentionally

Earth	Speech is slower and more deliberate; things are thought through; conservative ideas and language are expressed; there is greater emphasis on practicality
Air	Ideas and abstract concepts are readily expressed; the individual is very talkative; there is a lot of conversation about others, ranging from gossip to social concerns
Water	The emphasis is on emotional language, personal experience, and listening rather than speaking

Consider, for example, how an Aries with Mercury in Pisces could convey a more sensitive, emotional impression or how a Gemini with Mercury in Taurus could seem so much quieter and more conservative than he or she really is. It's easier to get a misleading first impression when Mercury is in a different sign than that of the Sun.

- The house that Mercury is in shows what the person tends to be concerned about. He or she is likely to talk about these concerns. This can help create an accurate impression.
- The aspects to Mercury will reveal more about the thought process and communication style. For example, a challenging aspect from Neptune will make it difficult for the individual to express him- or herself clearly. Such a person could be seen as confused or vague; a person with Mercury in aspect with Saturn may be seen as plodding or conservative; and so on.

Remember to keep the context in mind: if you are looking at the "first impression" aspect of Mercury, you are not going to analyze it too deeply. We don't reveal our whole mind at the start any more than we reveal our whole personality. Just consider the overall impression Mercury would make, especially in the context of the Ascendant, which sets the tone for the first impression. The following example will show you how this works. All natal charts are given in appendix C.

example: first impressions create a false idea

Helen (chart 6) and Peter (chart 7) met and married in a few short weeks. They sorely misjudged each other and didn't get along from the start, divorcing after only few years.

Helen has Cancer rising with Uranus in the first house. She wants to be seen as sensitive and nurturing, able to provide and take care of others, and as very home- and family-oriented. She's certainly very individualistic and probably will try to capitalize on her uniqueness to be seen as unusual, perhaps fascinating. Of course, some of these perceptions are out of her control?no doubt some people will think of her as eccentric or strange!

Mercury is strong in her chart because it is in its own sign. It helps her communicate in a rational and analytical fashion and, along with its conjunction to Saturn, makes her style of speech seem deliberate, well thought out, and a little

conservative. She even seems practical. That tones down the eccentricity of Uranus and helps convey the traditional family values of her rising sign.

Peter has Sagittarius rising, which contributes to his image of being fun-loving and happy-go-lucky. He seems eager to learn and fascinated by philosophical ideas, foreign places, and adventure. He has no planets in the first house, but you might have noticed how strongly Uranus aspects his Ascendant with an opposition, adding a bit of that eccentric flavor we already have seen in Helen's chart.

Peter's Mercury is in Aquarius. He seems full of fascinating ideas and strongly formed opinions. He's likely to be very talkative and engaging, enthusiastically discussing his ideals for the collective, be it his neighborhood or the whole world. Helen, with her strong intellectual orientation, is likely drawn to this?although it is not that intellectual orientation of hers that is visible to Peter. He's really a more sensitive, emotional person, and no doubt is attracted to her Cancerian appearance.

Finding the "Real" Person

In chapter 4 we will see that once we start expressing our needs and expectations in a relationship, the "real" self emerges and provides a potentially serious challenge to the couple. For now, let's see if we can identify more of that real self and how we can make a more accurate astrological comparison of the two charts.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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