

Introduction

“Life is too short to be little.”

Benjamin Disraeli

Welcome. Maybe you picked this book up because you know very little about astrology, or you have some knowledge but want to know more. Or maybe you are a student of astrology already. This book is for you all, and I believe it will enrich your understanding.

Astrology is still the one of the most misunderstood alternative subjects. It is hard for me to reconcile the deep awe I so often felt in the oak panelled lecture rooms at Jesus College Oxford each summer as we studied charts and as I became aware of the profundity and scale of astrology, with the glib dinner party remark, “You don’t really believe in astrology, do you?” This is a nonsensical question to me. It’s like saying, “You don’t really believe in French, do you?” Astrology is a language, it is not at all a psychic skill. It is a deep, rich, mathematical, precise, symbolic language that has to be mastered. I don’t hear voices or see visions when I am working on a chart; it would be really handy if I did but sadly I don’t. I can feel the same process happening in my brain whether I’m translating French or astrology. It is a language.

So there seems to be a Grand Canyon of misunderstanding about the subject. Some of the greatest minds in human history, as we shall see, were astrologers. Astrology held a prestigious position through history in academic and high ecclesiastical circles up until the 17th Century, but in our modern world its general perception has been reduced to simplistic Sun sign astrology and “all Geminis will have a great day”. I hope this book goes some way to bridging that gap.

The beginning of my interest in astrology began almost four decades ago. After university I emigrated to Canada and happened

to join a yoga class. One of the attendees there, I discovered, was an astrologer. I asked if he would do my birthchart for me and gave him my first name, date, time and place of birth. That's all he knew. I went to have the consultation a week later and sat for several hours with him, stunned, as he explained the deeper meaning of my childhood experiences, my relationships with my parents, dates of important incidents (accurate to the month), my work life, my love life, my talents, my challenges—everything was there. How could he know all this about me more deeply than I knew it myself? He emphasised that astrology was a sacred language, not anything that required psychic ability, but I felt that this language allowed him to read my soul.

That afternoon, as I sat with him in his small flat in Toronto, I had been given a tiny chink of light into a vast universe of interconnectedness and possibility. That was the beginning of a journey that will never end.

I began my lifelong study of astrology that very week but sadly mislaid his recording of our session together during a house move. It was five years later that I found it, when I was leaving my flat to return to England, and played it while I was packing boxes. It said, "September 4, 1979, will be a major turning point, and by October 30 you will experience one of the major highs of your life". Well, that day was September 4, 1979, and I was leaving Canada forever to return to England. However, I'd also planned a big trip to India and Nepal and, spookily enough, on October 30 1979 I was sitting at 19,000 feet in the Himalayas.

Please come with me on this journey to appreciate the depth and enormity of the language of astrology and how, if we understand it, we can see that it touches every aspect of our lives, and serves to reconnect us with the universe.