

Written by Sarah Kirton | Updated On July 07, 2022

Andrea Conlon on Astrotherapy - The Invisible Guiding Hand



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At a young age astrology caught me and helped me find myself. It was an initiation into a world of soul and meaning.

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ANDREA CONLON

LICSW Astrology

MysticMag

Andrea Conlon has been a psychotherapist for over 30 years and has studied many different theories of the mind and healing. Her work centers on helping people explore and align with their true nature using astrology – the ultimate authority in how she understands and works with people – and other healing modalities.

How did the study of astrology help you heal yourself?

Prior to encountering astrology, I think I was going through a spiritual crisis and didn't know it. Learning about my chart was such a revelation to me in that it affected my life so deeply. It was like a spark of recognition in my soul. Deep truths about myself were reflected back to me. Things I didn't like about myself were framed in a context of poetry and meaning. It was as if the universe was saying, 'you were made to be exactly as you are' and therefore perhaps I could learn to value and love myself. That is what I strive to impart in my work.

In your opinion, how does astrology complement and enhance psychotherapy (whether apparent or not)?

It complements and enhances psychotherapy in that my key guiding principle is 'what is the developmental moment the client is in and how can I make that more conscious for the person?' With psychotherapy, you are totally dependent on the client's words and reactions. With astrology, you have a basis for understanding a person before they open their mouths. Astrology gives a deep insight into underlying psychic structures – challenges and resources the client might not even be consciously aware of or have language for. Using astrology in therapy is like 'an invisible guiding hand'.

Additionally, astrology is a theoretical model that is non-pathologizing. I really take issue with traditional MH's system of diagnosing as though the diagnoser is the healthy one and the client or patient is the sick one.

“Astrology helps us make sense of our existence”. Do you believe that if consulted during childhood as part of our development, the world would be a better place?

Well yes, as a matter of fact – what a parenting tool astrology could be! Especially if astrology is used to impart to the child a sense of valuing and accepting their unique and particular qualities. Astrology is like a wise mother imparting unconditional love and acceptance. If people understood that earlier in their lives instead of trying to build it in later stages of life, we might certainly have a less violent world.

You refer to Astrology as ‘allowing us to see ourselves in the reflection of a cosmic mirror beyond a limited human world’- can you elaborate?

Astrology builds a bridge between the human and the cosmic. It is inherently healing to make this connection to the transpersonal – and not be solely defined by ‘my early development’ as traditional psychology does.

Jung would call it the numinous, and he has said there can be no true healing without a relationship to the numinous. Typically, people define themselves in the context of a completely human world. I think to have sound mental health has to include some kind of spiritual awareness and that is where the model of astrology comes in so beautifully.

You integrate both psychological and evolutionary astrology in your psychotherapy work with your clients. When would one discipline be more appropriate or prevalent than the other?

Both of these streams in astrology are pretty integrated in me and I don’t think I can separate them. Even Steven Forrest, the master evolutionary astrologer, is a psychotherapist with great skill and depth. With every therapy client, I pay great attention to the karmic material – the nodal axis – because it tells me where the client is trying to go amongst other things.

It describes the thrust of the evolutionary work in this life. One perspective I find valuable in psychological astrology is that of ancestral inheritance. Liz Greene, the formulator of psychological astrology, made a statement that has always stuck with me – that a large part of the chart deals with inherited ancestral themes. Unprocessed and inherited trauma and grief would be an example of that. It can be relieving and helpful to place ‘our issues’ in this larger context.

What is your preferred method of working with clients and how quickly can they expect to see results/feel enlightened?

My preferred method of working is using astrology as my theoretical lens in therapy. I can’t conceive of doing therapy without astrology. I prefer this over astrological readings, because for me there isn’t sufficient time or follow up in a single chart reading. Being a therapist is a better fit for my psychic makeup. I generally let the client decide how long our work will last – as long as they find it helpful.

How are chart readings different from using astrology as a therapist?

This is such a big question and one I have reflected on a lot! Readings are the standard of care in the field of astrology, where the astrologer does the majority of the talking and has things they want to cover. Whereas a therapist using astrology will be doing a lot more listening and letting the client take the lead, and then bringing in astrological material as it applies to the issues that are front burner for the person.

Therapy is a more improvisational process than readings. Readings are a bit more theoretical and seem more similar to a coaching model. In addition, therapy works more directly with suffering. To be mirrored by one's chart in therapy, is a powerful tool to foster self compassion and emotion regulation. This whole issue is something I'd like to bring to the conversation in the field – that doing astrotherapy is an alternative way to practice astrology. In fact, I recently heard from a client that she wouldn't want to work with a therapist who didn't have some knowledge of her birth chart...

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