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REACHING FOR THE STARS: A CONSTRUCTIVIST INVESTIGATION OF ASTROLOGY
AS A TOOL FOR SELF-DISCOVERY IN A NEW AGE OF LEADERSHIP

by

Cameron Alvin Martin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2022

Dissertation Committee

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University of San Diego
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TITLE OF DISSERTATION: REACHING FOR THE STARS: A CONSTRUCTIVIST
INVESTIGATION OF ASTROLOGY AS A TOOL FOR SELF-DISCOVERY IN A NEW AGE
OF LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

To fully understand leadership in today's world, we need a radical reconceptualization of the developmental process required to lead. Changing paradigms demands new perspectives on leadership; these new paradigms suggest leaders must turn inward and develop knowledge of their inner selves to realize their full potential as leaders.

Astrology is an ancient way of knowing and making sense of the world and one's place in it that provides benefits to many people in our modern world, despite fervent academic, religious, and scientific criticism. Astrology is more than a divination tool. It is an entire epistemology of *self in relation to* the cosmos that addresses the transcendent nature of human beings. In our increasingly uncertain world, millions of people are turning to astrology in search of greater self-knowledge and meaning for their lives.

This exploratory study investigated (a) the use of astrological knowledge as a tool for promoting self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-development and (b) the extent to which this tool influences changes in an individual's *self*. To date, no empirical studies have been conducted to explore astrology as a developmental tool, despite its prevalence in popular culture. The data in this study documents that astrology is a useful tool for self-discovery, understanding interpersonal relationships, understanding the subconscious, healing, meaning making, making sense of change, personal guidance, and personal development. The study leaves open questions about astrology's predictive powers and concentrates, instead, on its developmental impact on practitioners. In short, it does not directly address the academic community's criticism of astrology and the ultimately unanswerable question of whether astrological readings are factual or merely highly functional fictions for the research participants.

While the demands of knowing one's self are significant for exercising leadership effectively in contemporary contexts, the study of *self* and the ways in which individuals promote self-awareness have been minimally addressed in the leadership literature to date. This situation was the impetus for this study. The study utilized a constructivist grounded theory perspective and an interview-based methodology with both astrologers and their clients to explore the phenomenon of astrological practice as a tool for leader development.

Key words: self-discovery, self-awareness, self-development, astrology, constructivist grounded theory, Theory U, leadership, and "self"

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I would like to acknowledge all of the study participants, without whom, this work would not have been possible. I am eternally grateful for you sharing your time with me. May you be blessed on your journeys.

I would also like to thank my Beloved, my family, and friends who have supported me through the greatest years of change in my entire life. This dissertation is just one product of all you have helped me to achieve. I could not have become who I am today without you.

Finally, a huge thank you to my Guides and to the One, Infinite Creator who makes all things possible.

Dedication

To the soul explorers—may you come to know your true Self.

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PREFACE

Two Paradigms of Self-Understanding

There are two fundamental paradigms, “two great myths, diametrically opposite in character, concerning human history and the evolution of human consciousness” (Tarnas, 2006, p. 12). The first paradigm describes human history and the evolution of human consciousness as an epic narrative of progress; from the dark to a brighter modern world. This great trajectory of progress was made possible by rationalism and scientific inquiry as the emergence of the modern mind reached its apex. This vision emerged fully since the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and “has become our common sense, the form and foundation of our self-image as modern humans” (Tarnas, 2006, p. 12). According to Tarnas (2006), this view has become so widely accepted that largely, and especially in the West, humans are “unconscious of this historical paradigm’s hold on our collective imagination” (p. 12).

The other paradigm tells a different story. In this understanding, human history and the evolution of human consciousness are seen as a “tragic narrative of humanity’s gradual but radical fall and separation from an original state of oneness with nature and an encompassing spiritual dimension of being” (Tarnas, 2006, p. 13). From a state of profound sacred unity and interconnectedness, the influence and the expression of the modern Western mind and ego brought about a schism between man and nature and ultimately, a desacralization of the world (Tarnas, 2006). This development has coincided with ecological disasters, the devastation of indigenous cultures, a loss of faith in spiritual realities, and an increasingly miserable state for the human soul.

Something like these two interpretations represent the myths of historical self-understandings: the myth of Progress and the myth of the Fall (Tarnas, 2006). Tarnas contends that both of these views are, in a sense, correct, “each with compelling arguments within its own frame of reference,” but because “they are both intensely *partial* views,” they both misread a larger story (p. 14). He states that each perspective possesses a significant grain of truth and, he continues:

Both historical paradigms are at once fully valid and yet also partial aspects of a larger frame of reference, a metanarrative, in which the two opposite interpretations are precisely intertwined to form a complex, integrated whole. The two historical dramas actually constitute each other. Not only are they simultaneously true; they are embedded in each other’s truth. They underlie and inform each other, implicate each other, make each other possible. (p. 14)

If we wish to gain a deeper understanding of the evolution of human consciousness, and the history of the Western mind, we need to develop wisdom, or the capacity to hold multiple realities in our consciousness at once. The two paradigms reflect opposite, but equally essential, aspects of human evolution, of our progressive ascent through greater differentiation and complexity and our simultaneous tragic fall from unity. This has, perhaps, prepared the way to synthesis on a new level as humanity reaches a critical, climactic moment of transformation.

These two perspectives have led to two primary world views: a modern world view that sets its experience as a radical separation between subject and object—a division between the self and the world—and a primal world view, characteristic of indigenous cultures, that does not maintain this division. The modern mind experiences separation between a subjective human and

an objective external world where the cosmos is seen as impersonal and unconscious. Contrarily, the primal mind sees the world as ensouled, a living matrix of embodied meaning in which the human psyche is embedded within the numinous.

The modern mind views the primal mind as reflecting an epistemologically naïve state of awareness, undifferentiated, intellectual undeveloped and without critical reasoning. Yet, the primal mind experiences the cosmos in way that a modern perception does not, and perhaps cannot, recognize (Tarnas, 2006). The quest of modernity, especially in modern science, includes the goal of ever-increasing prediction and control over the natural world, which is seen as “other,” the object of powerful knowledge. This privileging, however, has emptied the “transcendent divine reality that stands above an empirical cosmos” of all inherent significance to the human (Tarnas, 2006, p. 23).

Tarnas (2006) asserts that of all the “new paradigm” perspectives and theories, astrology is the most uncomfortably beyond the prevailing paradigm boundary line, the most likely to evoke immediate scorn and derision, [and] the most apt to be known more through its caricature in the popular media than through serious research, journals, and scholarship. Above all, astrology is that perspective which most directly contradicts the long-established disenchanted and decentered cosmology that encompasses virtually all modern and postmodern experience.

For this reason, astrology has been vehemently opposed by most contemporary scientists; “as they frequently point out, if astrology were in any sense valid, the very foundations of the modern world view would be placed into question” (Tarnas, 2006, p. 64). Tarnas continues, “It’s inherent absurdity has been regarded as so self-evident as to be beyond discussion: Astrology is

the last lingering vestige of primitive animism, a strangely enduring affront to the objective rationality of the modern mind” (p. 64).

These are the formidable obstacles confronting anyone considering this cosmological perspective and any method of inquiry used to understand it. Yet, human knowledge is constantly changing, in often unexpected ways. Sometimes what is rejected in one age may be reclaimed in another, as has happened with Aristarchus’s heliocentric view of the solar system which was later resurrected by Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo (Tarnas, 2006).

My own personal cosmological perspective is a non-dualistic blend of both paradigms, a mix of modern and primal worldviews. I know my conscious experience is inherently meaningful and I experience a deep connectedness to all that is, which has led me to study, practice, and share astrology with others. I also experience reality as something rich with archetypal dynamics and patterns ripe with meaning because astrology has influenced my world view, which could not be completely bracketed during the study. However, I also know myself, equally, from the modern, rational perspective. I understand and value the power of scientific and academic inquiry. I would not have engaged in this project otherwise.

Throughout the course of this study, I had to contend with both of these perspectives, within myself and within the academic community. This liminal space was the context in which I found myself as the researcher, which is a challenge that many academics have faced including psychologist Carl Jung (2006), who wrote:

Since scientific knowledge not only enjoys universal esteem, but, in the eyes of modern man, counts as the only intellectual and spiritual authority, understanding the individual obliges me to commit *lese majeste*, so to speak, to turn a blind eye to scientific knowledge.

This is a sacrifice not lightly made, for the scientific attitude cannot rid itself so easily of its sense of responsibility. And if the psychologist happens to be a doctor who want not only to classify his patient scientifically but also to understand him as a human being, he is threatened with a conflict of duties between two diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive attitudes of knowledge, on the one hand, and understanding, on the other. (p. 9)

This study, and its findings, are a result of the blend of these two world perspectives. The challenges facing humanity today require a plurality of perspectives for us to approach them. Our world could hardly be more ripe for a paradigm shift.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

We live in challenging times. Humans are experiencing life in the fastest changing period in history, and the changes we are experiencing now, amidst the digital and knowledge revolution, are as large and as significant as the changes from the Middle Ages to the modern world. We are living in a post-modern paradigm where the challenges occurring globally—from issues of epidemic illnesses, extinction, famine, extreme weather patterns, severe immune dysfunctions, cancers, widespread psychological distress, ever more frequent suicides, and an increasing number of mass murders—clutter our new feeds. As du Toit and Lombard (2019) have noted, “The quickening of everything seems like the lessening of humanity—an attenuation of being human” (p. 94). In these liminal times of “unpredictable, uncontrollable change, only our relationship to our guiding instincts, only our internal compass, only our dialogue with our dreams and revelatory systems of response provide continuity” (Hollis, 2020, p. 139).

Given the situation described in the previous paragraph, Scharmer (2016) has argued,

The leader’s new work is about developing an interior holding space—a space that allows them to navigate in the midst of conflicting information and interests, in the midst of institutional failure and systemic breakdowns, in the midst of confusion that makes people turn to anger, fear, and despair. (p. xxix)

To best understand leadership in our world today, we need a radical reconceptualization of what it means to lead. In this environment, there is an urgent need for leaders to make sense of the complexity in which we live which requires discernment on deeper levels of consciousness. According to Hollis (2020), “Any one of us who has a relationship to our inner life, our autonomous supportive psyche, will ride the currents of social change, as well as of personal

change, and emerge on the other side” (p. 139). Changing paradigms demand new perspectives on leadership; requiring leaders to turn inward, to enter into a relationship with their inner source—their *self*—and foster their greatest potential.

This chapter begins with the background to the study, a conceptual framework that structures the study and its main concepts, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, statement of positionality, limitations and delimitations, and significance of the study.

Background to the Study

This section contains the background which will provide the rationale for conducting this study. The first part of this section is a brief discussion of the role of astrology in people’s lives, both historically and presently, and specifically addresses the use of astrology as a tool for self-discovery and self-development. The second part of this section explores the importance of self-discovery in leadership and presents the conceptual framework that structures the study and its main concepts.

Astrology: Past and Present

Astrology: Past

For most people, just the word *astrology* alone conjures up somewhat exotic imagery, perhaps knee-jerk criticism, and almost assuredly, misconceptions. Mainstream science has long dismissed astrology as a form of pseudoscience and superstition, despite popular culture’s growing interest in this ancient tradition (Campion, 2009; Smallwood, 2019). From daily forecasts, personalized life readings, and energy updates to predictions of the future, astrology plays an important role in the lives of many (Smallwood, 2019; Campion, 2008, 2009). The history of astrology is rich and spans over millennia and, thus, providing a detailed discussion of

astrology's history is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, an abbreviated history of western astrology in the modern world will be included here to provide relevant context for understanding the foundation upon which the practice sits today.

Astrology is a long tradition complete with many different rationales, methodologies, and conceptual questions. To honor the complexity and richness of this tradition, it is best to conceptualize astrology through a broad definition, and, to do that, I will employ Patrick Curry's (2000) definition: "Astrology is the practice of relating the heavenly bodies to lives and events on earth, and the tradition that has thus been generated" (p. 3). Astrology is a means for the transmission of knowledge through symbols and, as such, Clifford Geertz's (1993) definition of *culture* could offer another acceptable description of astrology as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form" (p. 89).

Astrology is distinct "as a form of knowledge whose basic concepts and practices have lasted an extraordinarily long time—since their origins in roughly 2000 BCE in Mesopotamia" (Curry, 2000, p. 3). This knowledge has interacted with a wide array of traditions including Platonism and Neoplatonism, Aristotelianism, Christianity, humanism, Hermetic occultism, philosophy, psychology, and modern science, among others (Curry, 2000; Campion, 2009). From its origins in ancient Mesopotamia, Western astrology spread through Egypt, Greece, the Roman Empire, Europe, and the Islamic world (Smallwood, 2019; Campion, 2008, 2009). Eastern traditions of astrology exist in Eastern Europe, China, and most notably, India. Nearly all cultures around the world have some version of astrology.

According to Bobrick (2005), astrology is the origin of science itself: "Astrology once united disciplines long since sundered, and in some cases suppressed, and whose fragmentation

modern academies have inherited: astronomy, natural philosophy, medicine, natural magic, religious prophecy, divination, and what is now psychology and sociology” (Curry, 2000, p. 4).

Astrology has also influenced the calculation of time, mathematics (geometry and logarithms), medicine, botany, mineralogy, and chemistry throughout human history (Bobrick, 2005).

Historically, astrology has been “a form of magic, a system of prediction, a model for psychological growth, a science, a spiritual tool, a religion and a system of divination, definitions which are not mutually exclusive” (Campion, 2009). According to Curry (2007),

What astrology offers is the wonder of being part of an intrinsically meaningful place and moment on Earth that specifically *includes* the cosmos, especially insofar as it can be directly experienced (e.g., the Sun, Moon, visible planets and stars) as well as oneself, right down to the precise desire that initiated the inquiry to which the heavens have responded. (p. 215)

Marshall (2004) has noted, “As Western astrology split off from astronomy after the Scientific Revolution, the exploration of the psyche came to the fore” (p. xxxiv). This trend uses the symbolic nature of astrology as a technique to understand the character and lives of human beings and their place within the universe.

Carl Jung (1875-1961) was a seminal figure on the development of twentieth century psychological and astrological thought. Jung’s theory of synchronicity, the concept of the collective unconscious, the development of psychological archetypes, and the notion of individuation were all influenced by his own use of astrology (Campion, 2009). Jung emphasized that astrology’s value lay in the over 2000-year history of accumulated insight into the human experience when he stated: “Astrology represents the sum of all the psychological knowledge of antiquity” (Jung, 1971, p. 56). For Jung, “the outer world of events was inextricably linked to the

inner psychic world and each of us becomes a participant, a co-creator in a vast cosmic drama” (Campion, 2009, p. 258). While he thought astrology was not amenable to scientific investigation in the statistical sense, he worked on a path that both rejected and advocated for the need for scientific validation for astrology (Campion, 2009, p. 258). Jung provided astrologers a new lexicon to “analyze and discuss the client’s psychological complexes, desires, and needs in a way that contrasts with all previous astrology” (Campion, 2009, p. 254). He treated the horoscope—a diagram that shows the individual’s relation to the cosmos at birth—as the representation of the psyche and used it to discuss matters like an individual’s purpose, potential, and self-actualization (Smallwood, 2019). Through Jung’s contributions, the horoscope became an even more powerful tool as an aid to the therapeutic process; the process of self-inquiry through which the unaware person becomes a self-aware individual (Jung, 1970).

Perhaps Jung’s greatest contribution was that he disguised astrology inside his work on archetypal psychology allowing the wisdom of the ancient practice to live on in a modern context. Marshall (2004), for example, has noted,

From ancient times, [astrology] has been a vehicle for self-knowledge and offers the possibility of understanding oneself and shaping one’s life. It addresses such central questions as ‘Why am I here?’, ‘What is the purpose of my life?’, ‘How should I act?’ It holds up a mirror in which individuals can see themselves and become aware of their potential. It can awaken and transform the self. (p. xxxvi).

Astrology: Present

Ultimately, it is challenging to assess astrology’s status in the contemporary West. Despite attacks on its legitimacy as a knowledge system by scientists since the Age of Enlightenment, astrology has survived into the twenty-first century not simply an anachronism of centuries past

but as a popular system of discovering personal meaning useful in times of uncertainty and great change (Campion, 2009; Smallwood, 2019). Astrology's essential appeal is that it establishes a connection between the heavens and the earth in order for people to satisfy their desire to connect with something deeper: it provides "a sense of cosmic purpose and personal meaning" (Campion, 2009, p. 287). It is a system of identifying order in chaos and "it is in the very act of giving an account of one's feelings and circumstances that it accomplishes its goal" (Campion, 2009, p. 286).

Nicholas Campion (2009, 2012), astrologer and historian of astrology, also has noted that astrology is accepted, presently, as part of popular culture but it is subject to intense criticism—and even hostility—from both scientific and religious communities. While the topic of astrology has been the subject of considerable journalistic interest, there has "been little academic concern with its contemporary cultural nature and function" (Campion, 2012, p. 5). However, Curry (2000) argues there is a recent "tendency for scholars to become more familiar with the actual practices of astrologers in order to write better histories," and for astrologers themselves "to become involved in and/or produce more scholarly studies of their subject" (p. 5).

Smallwood (2019) has written, "Astrology is currently enjoying a broad cultural acceptance that hasn't been seen since the nineteen-seventies" (para. 3). The popularity of astrology is often explained as a result of several factors including the decline of organized religious practice, the acceleration of the internet and social media, global economic precariousness, political and social uncertainty, and a larger trend in the acceptance of New Age beliefs among younger generations including Millennials and Gen X (Smallwood, 2019; Beck, 2018). According to a 2019 IBISWorld industry report, astrology services is a \$195.84 million industry and accounts for 8.8% of a larger \$2.2 billion psychic services industry which is

expected to continue its upward trajectory through 2024 (Zheng, 2019). Astrology is ubiquitous on social media and in downloadable workshops, classes, webinars, and mobile apps (Smallwood, 2019).

Co—Star, the leading ‘hyper personalized’ AI-powered astrology app, is backed by \$6 million and, since its launch in 2017, has been downloaded over six million times (Smallwood, 2019). A growing number of celebrity astrologers including Chani Nicholas, who has around a million monthly readers online and “who uses astrology as a tool for social justice and radical action” and Susan Miller who employs thirteen individuals to maintain her calendars, website (with 11 million annual views), social media accounts, and app, are defining the changing landscape of astrology in the digital age (Smallwood, 2019).

Astrology: A Tool for Self-Discovery

The quest for meaning is a universal human experience and “in most, if not all, cultures, there is a predisposition to find meaning in the sky” (Campion, 2012, p. 9). Frankl (2000) offered: “As long as we consider man as an isolated being without the context of his origin, some things about him must elude our understanding” (p. 61). Astrology is more than a divination tool. It is an entire epistemology of *self in relation* to the cosmos that addresses the transcendent nature of human beings. Marshall (2004), for instance, wrote,

Above all, astrology offers a path of transformation since it can lead us from the confusion of everyday life to a deeper understanding of ourselves and our place in the universe. It is transpersonal because it sees the fully individualized person as a part of the cosmic whole. At this level, the ‘I’ of individual consciousness is transformed into the ‘We’ of universal consciousness. (p. 399)

Astrology has enduring appeal “as a means of framing human experience, of locating patterns, purpose and meaning in otherwise random events” (Campion, 2009, p. 284).

In our increasingly uncertain world, “millions of people are looking afresh at astrology as a possible guide to understanding themselves and for planning the future” (Marshall, 2004, p. 399). According to American astrological scholar Nicholas Campion (2009), astrology has enduring appeal “as a means of framing human experience, of locating patterns, purpose and meaning in otherwise random events” (p. 284).

Leadership and Self Development

The challenges that face our world today require new conceptions of leadership because the current management research and leadership studies miss the largely unexplored territory of the deeper dimensions of transformational change (Senge et al., 2004). At present, the limited attention to the value of the “self” and its development in leadership has obscured our understanding of emerging leadership paradigms. “This blind spot concerns not the what and how—not what leaders do and how they do it—but the who: who we are and the inner place or source from which we operate, both individually and collectively” (Senge et al., 2004, p. 5). “Cultivation, ‘becoming a real human being,’ really is the primary leadership issue of our time, but on a scale never required before” (Senge et al., 2004, p. 186).

While this idea is not new—the ancient “Confucian idea of leadership formation rests on the idea that ‘if you want to be a leader, then you have to be a real human being’”—it is all but lost in most of the leadership literature (Senge et al., 2004, p. 180). In this sense, to be a leader is to understand yourself, thus the cultivated self is a leader’s greatest tool.

The concept of one’s “self” or one’s identity has been the central concern of social theorizing for many decades, appearing in the work of psychologists (Jung, 1970; Erikson, 1974;

Gergen, 1991) and sociologists (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Giddens, 1991) alike. Identity has also increasingly made its way into the leadership literature through two primary ways (Sinclair, 2011). According to Sinclair (2011), the first way is in the accounts of the production of leadership identities—the ways in which leadership identities are manufactured. The second way is evident in the “substantial and growing popular literature which offers advice on how leaders can be more effective by adapting, presenting, and performing themselves (their identities) (Sinclair, 2011, p. 508). Here, identity is usually assumed to be a construction of the individual who exerts effort in self-development (and leadership development) to maintain and project an authentic leadership persona (Goffee and Jones, 2005; Sinclair, 2011, 2016). This trend is indicative of a growing phenomenon in leadership studies in which leaders feel pressured to produce and project coherent selves at work (Sinclair, 2011, 2016; Sveningsson and Larson, 2006; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Collinson, 2003).

Research on leader self-awareness is relatively rare in the leadership literature. Notable exceptions include the works of Ashley and Reiter-Palmon (2012); Atwater and Yammarino (1992); Atwater et al. (1998); Bass and Yammarino (1991); Fleenor et al. (1996); Higgs and Roland (2010); Riggio and Cole (1992); Showry and Manasa (2014); Sosik and Megerian (1999); Taylor (2010); and Tekleab et al (2008). Although scholars continue to debate how to define and measure self-awareness, “it has been established that by becoming more self-aware, leaders better understand their strengths and better identify where they might need further development” (Taylor, 2010, p. 59).

A study of self-awareness in leadership conducted by Tekleab et al. (2008) found that self-awareness was related to various positive outcomes including leader effectiveness and follower satisfaction. Their study “supports the potential efficacy of leadership development interventions

that are specifically intended to enhance leader self-awareness” (Tekleab et al., 2008, p. 197). Higgs and Roland (2010) assert “that leaders’ self-awareness provides a significant basis for equipping them to develop a capability to understand systemic challenges” and effectively lead organizations through change (p. 383).

Senge et al. (2004) suggested that “the cultivated self is a leader’s greatest tool” (p. 186) and to become a leader, you must understand yourself first. Karp (2012) argued that most leaders feel pressure to advance self-mastery and to develop their own self-awareness, however, they are not given guidance on what the concept of self is in relation to leadership.

Conceptual Framework

The following section defines the conceptual framework employed by this study. This framework integrates concepts from leadership theories—namely though Luthans and Avolio’s (2003) authentic leadership and Scharmer’s (2016) Theory U—well-known self-discovery instruments, and astrology.

Authentic Leadership and “Self”

In the leadership literature, one well-established theory that is concerned with the development of a “self” is authentic leadership. Luthans and Avolio’s (2003) chapter on authentic leadership development is generally credited as the starting point of the body of research on authentic leadership. Luthans and Avolio (2003) defined authentic leadership as “a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development” (p. 243).

Caza and Jackson (2011) have written, “The assumption underlying authentic leadership theory derives from the modernist psychological belief that each individual has a ‘true’ self, one that is independent of context and behavioral presentations; in other words, there is something to be authentic about” (p. 359). According to Harter (2002), authenticity is about owning one’s personal beliefs, thoughts, and emotions and acting in accord with the true self. Consequently, “authenticity is thus an entirely subjective, reflexive process that, by definition, is experienced only by the individual him—or herself” (Erikson, 1994, p. 35).

Authentic leaders are defined as leaders who exhibit the following tendencies: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, ability to challenge prior beliefs, self-regulation, and self-determination (Caza & Jackson, 2011, p. 354). While it has been argued that one’s self is an ongoing project of discovery (Ricoeur, 1992; Sparrowe, 2005), it is correlated with more positive emotions, well-being (Gardner et. al., 2005), and greater leadership effectiveness (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005).

Theory U: A Lens to Explore an Emerging Self

The Presencing Institute was founded in 2006 by MIT Sloan School of Management Senior Lecturer Otto Scharmer and colleagues “to create an action research platform at the intersection of science, consciousness, and profound social and organizational change” (Presencing Institute, 2021). The institute’s “change framework and set of methodologies... used by thousands of organizations and communities worldwide to address our most pressing global challenges” is known as Theory U (Presencing Institute, 2021).

Theory U provides a process in which “individuals, teams, organizations and large systems can build the essential leadership capacities needed to address the root causes of today’s

social, environmental, and spiritual challenges” (Presencing Institute, 2021). Theory U addresses the following question: What is required in order to learn and act from the future as it emerges? (Scharmer, 2016, p. 13). U is not only a theory, but it is also a practical methodology used by leaders guiding systemic projects in business, health care, public service, and education globally (Scharmer, 2016). Practitioners from “around the world have adapted the U process to an amazingly diverse number of innovation projects in business, government, and civil society—as well as in contexts that bring key stakeholders from the various sectors together” (Scharmer, 2016, p. xiviii).

The theory and methodology have a lot to say about a new type of leadership that emerges in times of turbulence and change (Scharmer, 2016). According to Scharmer (2016):

This leadership arises from people and groups who are capable of letting go of established ideas, practices, and even identities. Most of all, this leadership comes as people start to connect deeply with who they really are and their part in both creating what is a realizing a future that embodies what they care most deeply about. (p. lvi)

According to The Presencing Institute’s website, Theory U develops seven essential leadership capacities and central among them: *presencing* defined as “the capacity to connect to the deepest sources of self—to go to the inner place of stillness where knowing comes to surface” (Presencing Institute, 2021). Scharmer (2016) describes *presencing* as “the state of co-sensing and co-shaping the emerging future by opening our inner instruments of knowing” to connect more deeply with our individual mind, heart, and will (p. xxix).

This theory is illustrated in the shape of a U (see Appendix A), in which one moves down the left side of the U—connecting us to the world that is outside of our institutions—to the bottom

of the U—connecting us to the world that emerges from within—and up the other side of the U—bringing forth the new into the world (Presencing Institute, 2021). The sequence of this process is: downloading, seeing, sensing, presencing, crystallizing, prototyping, and performing.

On that journey, at the bottom of the U, lies an inner gate that requires us to drop everything that isn't essential. This process of letting-go (of our old ego and self) and letting-come (our highest future possibility: our Self) establishes a subtle connection to a deeper source of knowing. The essence of presencing is that these two selves—our current self and our best future Self—meet at the bottom of the U and begin to listen and resonate with each other. (Presencing Institute, 2021).

Theory U asserts that the most important leadership tool is your *Self*. When the ego and habitual *self* (lowercase “s”) talks to the authentic emerging *Self* (capital “S”).

Scharmer (2016) claims that we experience the essence of presencing” ...

When our “self” and our “Self” begin to communicate, we establish a subtle but very real link to our highest future possibility that can then begin to help and guide us in those situations where the past can't offer us useful advice. Thus, the most important tool in such a new leadership technology is the leader's (or change-maker's) self—your Self. (pp. 42-43).

In this conception, the very essence of leadership is about facilitating the letting go of an old “self” and the letting come of a new “Self” (Scharmer, 2016).

Crook et al. (2021) studied the applicability of Theory U in a change leadership context and found that self-awareness and its growth potential can be of help in change processes and that

“Theory U can offer value to leaders and organizations by enabling greater self-awareness and building a more accepting and compassionate view of one’s self. Based on their findings, they advanced Theory U to the presentation of a Theory O which “is offered as a conceptual and practical tool for continuous improvement of self-awareness of leaders” (Crook et al., p. 361)

Instruments of Self-Discovery

According to Bower (2015), a key component of a successful professional development coaching relationship is that clients are able to see themselves more broadly and deepen their self-awareness and to do that, “some type of self-examination or assessment is necessary” (p. 17). The practice of self-discovery has grown in significance as illustrated by the popularity of self-discovery and personality inventories used in business, management, and executive coaching programs. Some of these include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & Myers, 1995), Johari Window (Luft, 1969), EQ, Enneagram, The Big 5, Conflicts Dynamics Profile, FIRO-B, and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, among others. From this list, I will discuss two of these instruments further to illustrate their application in leadership.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Perhaps no self-discovery tool is more widely used in organizational development than the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Found in every industry around the globe, the MBTI often appears in organizational training, leadership development, and career coaching (Michael, 2003; The Myers Briggs Company). The MBTI was developed/adapted from the work of Carl Jung who, as previously mentioned, was significantly influenced by astrological study. According to the Myers-Briggs Foundation (2021):

The purpose of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) personality inventory is to make the theory of psychological types described by C. G. Jung understandable and useful in people's lives. The essence of the theory is that much seemingly random variation in the behavior is actually quite orderly and consistent, being due to basic differences in the ways individuals prefer to use their perception and judgment.

When Jung created his theory of *Psychological Types*, he designed it as an “aid to self-understanding” (Myers & Myers, 1995, p. 24). Mother-daughter team Katharine Cooks Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers worked to extend the application of Jung’s work and developed the MBTI instrument (Myers Briggs Foundation; Myers et. al, 2009). Even though concerns over appropriate uses and accuracy of the MBTI is often criticized, “people's infatuation with it shows that it’s quenching some kind of thirst they have for understanding themselves and others” (Strauss, 2015).

According to Bower (2015):

The MBTI helps coaches facilitates clients’ efforts to deepen self-awareness and broaden their perspectives. As this is accomplished, clients are able to define and achieve goals related to many different areas including communication, leadership, team building, career development, stress management, and relationships.” (Bower, 17)

Johari Window

The Johari Window is a tool created by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham (Luft, 1969) to promote self-awareness and has been used in organizations for decades. An illustration of the Johari Window can be found in Appendix B. According to Luft (1982), the Johari Window consists of four quadrants:

- I. The area of free activity, which refers to behavior and motivations known to self and others.
- II. The blind area, where others can see things in ourselves of which we are unaware.
- III. The avoided or hidden area, which represents things we don't reveal to others.
- IV. The area of unknown activity, which are unconscious to us but influencing our behaviors.

The model lends itself well as a heuristic device that promotes self-inquiry and is thus attractive to academics and nonprofessionals alike (Luft, 1969, 1982). Mohoney (2019) posits that the Johari Window can be a very useful coaching tool to help people check in with their own levels of self-awareness and continually develop it.

The MBTI and the Johari Window are but two examples among a number of well-established tools, suggesting that the demand for self-discovery tools and techniques is important and relevant in leadership environments.

Astrology, Self-Discovery, and Leadership

In a world where uncertainty is pervasive, our leaders are faced with challenges that can only be addressed by going within—by connecting to their individual selves. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of empirical research by the leadership academic community on the actual process of the development of one's self in leadership practice (Sinclair, 2011). There is a plethora of self-help and self-development books in the popular leadership literature and, as previously mentioned, there are a number of self-exploration tools used in leadership. However, astrology has never been considered among one of these tools, despite its ancient history and its recent rise in popular culture. It is perhaps the increasing uncertainty in our modern world that has given rise to astrology's popularity as a tool for self-discovery and self-development as more people seek

meaning for their lives. Whatever the cause, if astrology has something significant to contribute to society at large, it might also be significant in our emerging understandings of leadership through a greater understanding of the *self* from which we act. Much of the academic community is unaware of any potential contributions astrology could have on exploring a deeper, more self-aware leadership practice, simply because it is not being studied. This study aimed to explore the practice of astrology empirically to inform our understanding of what it might contribute to self-development practices.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars are baffled that astrology could have such influence in the lives of supposedly rational, modern individuals and yet so far, they have failed to adequately study what is behind its appeal and its impact (Curry & Willis, 2004). This section addresses the problem which this study aimed to address. It includes a brief discussion of a fundamental misunderstanding which pervades much of the criticism of astrology. It then explores existing studies of astrology and ends with a discussion of the specific gaps in literature which warrant the need for the study.

Astrology—More Than a Question of Belief

In Book VI of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle claims that there are five different ways that the human soul can grasp truth: science (*episteme*), producing (*techne*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), theoretical wisdom (*sophia*), and intuition or the capacity to grasp sources (*nous*). While *episteme* has become predominant culturally and academically, it is not the only route to understanding truth. The practice of astrology relies on a combination of all of these capacities.

The Pew Research Center reported that 29% of Americans believe in astrology, according to findings from a survey conducted in 2017 on New Age beliefs among U.S. adults (Gecewicz,

2018). This percentage represents a four percent increase from the 25% of U.S. adults who reported believing in astrology in another survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2009 (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2009). While these statistics are illustrative of a trend, they are skewed by a fundamental flawed premise. This question about belief in astrology points to an underlying misunderstanding superimposed upon astrology: the assumption that it should not be used because it is not founded on scientifically based a priori assumptions about the nature of reality. Simply discrediting astrology as non-scientific, which has been the main concern of members in scientific, religious, and academic communities for centuries, does not get at the heart of understanding astrology as a tool for self-reflection, complete with its own vocabulary and a priori assumptions about the nature of reality (Campion, 2009; Beck, 2018). This dismissal is epistemologically presumptuous and is perpetuated by hegemonic practices “which exert control over the flow of knowledge” (Campion, 2009, p. 269).

Campion (2017) points out that asking the question whether people believe in astrology is both impossible to answer and not useful to ask because the answer is more nuanced than a simple statistic allows for. The question assumes that astrology, epistemologically, is something to believe in, like the teachings of an organized religion, and thus limits us from fully understanding the phenomenon of astrology *in practice*. Asking this question is analogous to asking people if they believe in things like therapy, economics, or weather predicting. Hence, this question falls short of providing any real understanding of the nature and practice of astrology—and its potential application in new contexts like leadership—which this study aims to address. Campion (2009) suggested that it would help “to actually look at what astrologers do, something which most sociologists who have commented on it have avoided” (p. 284). This is precisely what this study will do.

Academic Literature on Astrology

To date, very few credible studies of astrology have been conducted by the academic community and virtually no empirical study has looked specifically at the practice of astrology as a tool for self-discovery. Searches in the EBSCO Academic Search Premier, APAPsych Articles, JSTOR, Sage, and Google Scholar databases with the key terms *astrology* and *self discovery* resulted in no studies on the topic. The closest studies informing this topic addressed astrology and personality traits (Clarke et al., 1996; Currey, 2017; Mayo and Eysenck, 1978; van Rooij, 1999) or astrology, self-concept verification and coping with negative life events (Lillqvist & Lindeman, 1998). All of these empirical studies employed quantitative methodologies. To date, there have been no qualitative studies published on the practice of astrology and self-discovery.¹ This is noteworthy because the practice of astrology is inherently subjective, from both the practitioner's perspective (based on training, experience, understanding etc.) and the client's perspectives (based on belief systems, life experience etc.) and, thus, qualitative in nature. This study aims to address this knowledge gap with a qualitative methodology.

Academic Literature on Leadership

In the leadership literature, there is a lot of documentation of *what* leaders do and even *how* they do it. In fact, this has been the predominant perspective we've used in management and leadership literature for decades. And while we have gained tremendous insights by analyzing the functional and process points of view of leadership, we have not systematically looked at a very

¹ Some studies have been conducted about sun sign astrology extroversion/introversion (Clarke, 1996), astrology and finance (Pelc & Bondar, 2010; Yuan, 2006), and even astrology and medicine (Roman et al., 2004; Harris, 2005; Cajochen et al., 2013; Della Monica et al., 2015). However, these do not adequately pertain to this study because they do not explore how people develop and understand their self-concepts using astrology and they were not qualitative designs.

important perspective in leaders' work. According to Scharmer (2016), the question we have left unasked is: "What sources are leaders actually operating from?" (p. 6). In the current leadership landscape, it is insufficient to understand only *what* leaders do and *how* they do it without also considering their *inner condition*— "the inner place from which they operate or the *source* from which all their actions originate" (Scharmer, 2016, p. 7).

Scharmer (2016) argues that this fundamental factor in leadership is a blind spot because if we were asked the question "From what source does our action come?", most of us would be unable to provide an answer. "We can't see the *source* from which we operate; we aren't aware of the place from which our attention and intention originate" (Scharmer, 2016, p. 7). But simply not being able to see something with traditional, and arguably, limited methods, should not stop us from seeking to understand it. As a tool used for self-discovery, astrology might be useful in this endeavor.

Purpose of the Study

Astrology is a unique phenomenon that provides a context for an individual to develop self-knowledge, to understand their own meaning-making processes, and to explore the advancement of their "self." This study employed Scharmer's (2016) Theory U—which asserts that the most important leadership tool is one's self—as its primary theoretical framework influence. To date, only Theory U comprehensively addresses the blind spot of individuals—one's interior space—within the context of leadership.

Even though astrology has been contested—considered unscientific by scientific communities, nonsense by academic communities, and taboo by religious communities—it is an ancient way of knowing and a system of knowledge production that provides benefit to many

people in our modern world. And if it is true that the greatest leadership challenges to date require that leaders become aware of their selves to shift the inner place from which they operate (Scharmer, 2016), then there is merit to exploring frameworks through which people can—and do—learn about self. Despite its popularity and its apparent utility in the lives of many, we don't really understand astrology as a practice and, hence, we don't yet know its potential impact on our understanding of self-development.

This exploratory study investigated the potential use of astrological knowledge as a framework for promoting self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-development, and the extent to which such a toolset influences changes in an individual's "Self." To date, no empirical studies have been conducted to explore astrology specifically in this context, despite its prevalence in popular culture. The justification for such a study is the following: once the phenomenon of an astrological consultation is more clearly understood, then it might be easier to understand its usefulness as a self-discovery tool and its potential application in different contexts, like leadership, vis-a-vis understanding what Scharmer (2016) refers to as "the source from which leaders act". Ultimately, this study was designed to explore the tool of astrology in the context of the nature of human self-discovery and self-development that could contribute to the greater bodies of literature on the subject. However, before the academic community can fairly assess the applicability of astrological practice to understanding self-discovery, it must first understand what the phenomenon offers those who engage in it. This is precisely what this study aimed to explore—astrological practice in its current context by those who engage with it.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How is astrology practiced today as a form of self-discovery and self-development?
2. What types of self-knowledge do study participants claim to acquire from astrological consultations?
3. To what extent, if at all, does astrology appear to help people understand the sources from which they act and how might astrology influence our understanding of self-discovery and self-development practices?

With these research questions, this study aimed to investigate previously unexplored territory regarding the phenomenon of astrology in the context of the practice of self-discovery. This study explored this experience to contribute to a greater academic comprehension of astrology, a greater understanding of self-development practices, and to inform its potential applicability in other contexts such as leadership.

The study neither challenges nor defends the legitimacy of astrological knowledge, astrological divinatory techniques, or astrological uses outside the specific context of self-discovery. It instead aimed to understand the activity of an astrology consultation as a co-constructed social interaction that helps people deriving meaning for their lives, and further, to explore the potential use of astrological knowledge as a toolset for promoting self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-development.

The following section includes a statement of my positionality as researcher in relation to the study's topics and addresses how I planned to mitigate the impact of any personal bias on the study's findings.

Statement of Researcher Positionality

I have been studying astrology for nearly four years and practicing astrology professionally for two years. I currently work full time as an Astrologer and Spiritual Coach running my own business—Path & Purpose²—using astrology as a primary tool for self-discovery and spiritual growth. I have a client list of nearly 100 individuals and offer astrology readings, courses, meditation workshops, and coaching packages to help people discover themselves from a cosmic perspective. Astrology is my passion because I am fascinated by what one can learn from their astrological chart and I want to share that knowledge with others. What astrology has to offer people, precisely, was the question for investigation in this study. I am informed by my own experience practicing astrology and my experiences from consulting with clients and friends. I have personally consulted with four professional astrologers about my own life in the last four years.

Though it informs the historic basis of science, astrology is perhaps more of an art than a science. It is from this perspective that I approach the subject and practice of astrology. I am not concerned about arguing or exploring the legitimacy of its methods against the yardstick of hegemonic empirical science. Rather, the focus is on the utility of astrology as a practice in its own right, i.e., as an activity that promotes self-discovery. The practice serves a valuable function in the lives of many people—myself included—and thus, is worthy of study.

I am a natural constructivist. I do not believe in a single, objective reality, but rather assume that the world is created by humans from their innate capacities to derive meaning for

² www.yourpathandpurpose.com

their experiences. Additionally, as an astrologer, I am familiar with the tools and language of astrological practice, and thus was able to derive more information from the study's data collection procedures than another researcher unfamiliar with this knowledge would otherwise likely be able to. This was an asset for the methodology employed in this study explained in the next section.

While I am familiar with my own approach to astrological practice, I could not guarantee that the participants in the study would engage in the practice in similar ways. With the number of different traditions, the variety of ways astrologers train for their work, and the decentralization of the practice, I expected that the study would explore variations in practice. To mitigate any potential biases that I may bring to the work I remained open-minded and brought a genuine curiosity to every observation and interaction with study participants. I also suspended expectations to the extent possible as a human being so as not to impose any of my own biases on what was being studied. Finally, the procedure I used for integrating literature in this study (which will be addressed in a future section) is another way I mitigated any personal bias.

The following chapters of this dissertation include the study's research design and methodology, a review of findings, reflections from the perspective of existing literature, and a final discussion and conclusion. For reasons discussed below, there is no traditional Chapter 2: Literature Review chapter in this dissertation. The literature is discussed in Chapter 4: Reflection on Findings from the Perspective of Existing Literature as part of the discussion of theory that was constructed from and grounded in the data generated and reported in this study.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used to address the research questions in this study. This chapter begins with a description of the study design which includes details on the study's purpose, participant selection and sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures. It also includes commentary on how I planned to address the research questions and a coding strategy. Finally, this chapter will explore limitations and delimitations of the proposed study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore astrology as a method of self-discovery. This study investigated the context of the phenomenon of an astrological consultation to determine the extent to which it is a tool for self-development and its potential contribution to the greater literature on self-discovery, self-development, and self-awareness.

Study Design

According to Curry (2007), the practice of astrology is physically embodied, socially embedded, and ecologically earthed. In astrology, truth, both ontologically and epistemologically, “is uncompromisingly contextual, situated, and perspectival” (Curry, 2007, p. 212). To understand astrology, “we need to try and penetrate its inner language, the means by which its claims and practices [are] lived and experienced” (Campion, 2009, p. xi). In alignment with these perspectives, this study employed a qualitative research design from a constructivist grounded methodology which assumes a relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology based on the notion that reality is socially constructed.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what

meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 6). Qualitative research is an inductive process by which the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Because often there is a lack of theory or inadequate theoretical constructions to explain a particular phenomenon, qualitative research is inductive; “researchers gather data to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than deductively testing hypotheses as in positivist research” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 17). In their seminal work on qualitative research, Glaser and Strauss (1967) made a case for building theory inductively. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), “theory is continually in process” and that the inductive method of theory development requires the analyst to “develop ideas on a level of generality higher in conceptual abstraction than the qualitative material being analyzed” to “bring out underlying uniformities and diversities, and to use more abstract concepts to account for differences in the data” eventually leading to substantive and formal theory conception (p.114). Because this study is concerned with understanding the meaning of the phenomenon of astrological practice as a form of self-discovery and as a possible situated act of leadership, a qualitative research design is most appropriate.

Constructivism is a research paradigm that is “virtually opposite to that of science” because ontologically, it denies the existence of an objective reality, “asserting instead that realities are social constructions of the mind, and that there exists as many constructions as there are individuals (although clearly many constructions will be shared)” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 43). Epistemologically, constructivism denies the possibility of subject-object dualism and methodologically, it is a hermeneutic/dialectic process that takes account of the observer as part of the constructed reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Mills et al., 2006). Because of the researcher’s involvement in the meaning-making process, their values must be acknowledged by themselves

and their readers in evaluating the meaning derived from such research (Appleton, 1997; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Stratton, 1997).

Grounded theory is a methodology that strives to derive meaning and construct theory from data. This inductive process requires the researcher to analyze data by constant comparison, translate data into codes, undertake thematic analysis, integrate literature throughout the process and build theory from the participants' experiences (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory methodology explicitly involves “generating theory and doing social research [as] two parts of the same process” (Glaser, 1978, p. 2). Hence, “the approach is often referred to as the *constant comparative method* (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.273). This interpretive work aims at theory development— namely substantive theory over more general/formal theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1990). A grounded theory approach is appropriate for this study because no one has studied astrology empirically in the specific context of an activity of self-discovery.

Constructivist grounded theory is a qualitative methodology used to explore processes in the context of a situated interaction (Charmaz, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006). This methodology is based on two philosophies: 1) a symbolic interactionism where people create meaning through interacting with each other, and 2) constructivism, where people create their worlds of meaning, based on their understandings and interactions that result (Schreiber & Martin, 2014). Constructivism has roots in symbolic interactionism and emphasizes “human agency in which people act, interact, negotiate, and renegotiate meanings, thus researcher and researched are together in a cycle of meaning-making” (Schreiber & Tomm-Bonde, 2015, p. 657). Charmaz (2000) has contended that a constructivist approach to grounded theory is both possible and

desirable because, “Data do not provide a window on reality. Rather, the ‘discovered’ reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts” (p. 524). There is a sense, from the position of constructivist grounded theory, that the researcher is co-producer of meaning with participants and that the researcher needs to immerse themselves in the data to evoke the experiences of the participants (Charmaz, 2000, 2001, 2006).

Epistemological and ontological considerations of qualitative study are important because, according to Charmaz (2017), the “theory of knowledge to which we subscribe or our claim to having no theory of knowledge has profound implications for which research questions we ask, the data we collect, our relationships with research participants, and how we render our analyses” (p. 4). Yin’s (2017) recommends that, some theory development prior to data collection is desirable, resulting in a clearly articulated research design and a “heightened ability to interpret [the] eventual data” (p. 35). Guided by this, some theory was developed from the researcher’s participation in astrological readings prior to conducting the study. This is addressed further in the aforementioned statement of the researcher’s positionality. While pre-theorizing is against the traditional notions of constructivist grounded theory, some was required to articulate the research design.

Literature Review Discussion

According to Allen and Davey (2018), an important methodological consideration that characterizes grounded theory over other qualitative methods is the integration of literature throughout the research process. While in many qualitative research designs, a review of literature is a generally accepted pre-condition of the research process, there are differences of opinion concerning the role of literature within the various iterations of grounded theory methodology

(Allen & Davey, 2018; Christiansen, 2011; Evans, 2013; Heath, 2006; Martin, 2006; McCallin, 2006; Charmaz, 2005).

In classic grounded theory, Glaser (1978, 1992) considers close reading of literature to be problematic when completed prior to commencing research because researchers can be led astray by it. Instead, the literature is integrated throughout the coding process to make sense of data being collected and analyzed (Glaser, 1992). According to Christiansen (2011), conducting a literature review in a grounded theory approach would likely be a waste of time because behavioral data gathered in a study could be very different from what the previous literature includes. Christiansen (2011) asserts that literature review should be initially suspended from the research process in the following:

To avoid the reconceiving and tainting influences from pre-existing literature and pre-existing concepts during treatment of the data, it is recommended that no literature studies in related fields are carried out before the empirical data work is finished and the theory has been generated from the data. (Christiansen, 2011, p. 22)

According to Heath and Cowley (2004), “focused reading only occurs when emergent theory is sufficiently developed to allow the literature to be used as additional data” (p.143).

Other iterations of grounded theory, namely, constructivist grounded theory, allow the researcher to use existing theory to “challenge emergent theory and locate the emergent theory within the current body of knowledge” (Heath, 2006, p. 527). Charmaz (2005) comments that in constructivist grounded theory, what researchers “see and hear depends on their prior interpretive frames, biographies, and interests as well as the research context, their relationships with research participants, concrete field experiences, and modes of generating and recording empirical models”

(p. 510). Therefore, a researcher without some prior knowledge of the literature will always be making judgements about what they are hearing and seeing (Allen & Davey, 2018). Since preparation for any research study is essential, it is usually necessary to read literature to frame a problem of a study and support knowledge generation (McCallin, 2006; Creswell, 1994). Reading literature is also something expected by most academic professionals in their fields, so one cannot completely remove themselves from literature when conducting research (McCallin, 2006).

While there are competing notions on the role of theory in grounded theory, I employed the constructivist grounded theory recommendations of Heath (2006) and Charmaz (2005) in this study.

The ability to conduct a full literature review assumes that the existence of a pre-packaged body of literature exists. No such body exists in the context of this study. In this study, I chose to suspend the completion of a full literature review prior to the study commencing. I considered it important to ‘not do a literature review’ to the extent that I could suspend preconceived notions of what is being studied but ‘do enough of a literature review’ that the study was informed and focused in a particular area of interest (McCallin, 2006). While this choice is a delimitation of the study, this design allowed optimal objectivity when it came to data analysis and theory development.

I approached this design by adopting four phases of literature integration offered by Martin (2006); *noncommittal*, *comparative*, *integrative* and *transcendent*. These phases are described in more detail in Chapter 4: Reflections on Findings from the Perspective of Existing Literature. In this process, literature was only reviewed to the extent that it helped me frame the study. Once the study commenced, appropriate literature (that explore emerging themes) was

reviewed, compared, and integrated throughout the data collection process and included as reference for theory development. In this way, I aimed to distance myself from predefined problems and concerns, suspended a priori assumptions, refrained from privileging concepts defined in the literature, and integrated literature as explanatory data for themes that emerged in the coding process. Throughout this study, I remained open to integrating literature from disciplines outside those initially expected, as appropriate. This study—which seeks to explore the practice of astrology—is inherently interdisciplinary, requiring the integration of literature from multiple bodies of knowledge. The power of grounded theory is that it holds out the possibility of helping researchers cross disciplinary walls to develop more potent theories (Martin, 2006), which is precisely what the literature review in this study, as outlined, aimed to achieve.

Participant Selection and Sampling

Participants for this study were selected through a purposeful sampling technique. In qualitative research, this is an appropriate method “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). Patton (2015) argues that “the logic and power of qualitative purposeful sampling derives from the emphasis on in-depth understanding of specific cases: *information-rich cases*” (p. 53).

There were two types of participants in this study. The first group of participants were practicing professional astrologers who are actively working with clients. The second group were clients (individuals who had received an astrology reading). Five astrologers were chosen from a process of snowball, chain, or network sampling. This strategy involves locating a few key participants who easily meet participation criteria and ask each to refer you to the other

participants (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 98). The astrologers were then be asked to provide a list of two clients who also agreed to be part of this study. The participant sample included 12 participants (5 astrologers and 7 clients).

While the initial study design included more client participants, I determined that I reached data saturation by the seventh client interview as many of the same themes were being repeated and new themes were no longer emerging in the data. This initially became evident at around the fifth client interview. Memo 27 included my comment: “After this interview with Courtney [5th client], I am not seeing new themes emerge. Clients are saying many of the same things. Consider reassessing after completing your next scheduled interviews.” Following the next two interviews, I determined that I had reached data saturation and that it would not likely significantly benefit the study to continue enrolling new participants. This process is in alignment with grounded theory data collection techniques where “ongoing sample adjustments are possible and expected” (Egan, 2002, pp. 282-283).

Data Collection Procedures

Data in this study were collected through participant questionnaires, interviews, field notes taken from questionnaire responses and during interviews, memos written in response to interviews, and reviews of horoscopes. I used MAXQDA, a software program designed for computer-assisted qualitative and mixed-methods data analysis, to help in the process of data collection. The use of this program helped to organize data for easy retrieval, order, and structure material, improve accuracy of analysis, and provided visual representations of data which aided in the research process. I also used Microsoft Word and my university Google Drive account to store documents.

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

This study employed a pre-interview questionnaire in two versions: one for practitioners and one for clients respectively. The astrologer version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C. The client version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix D. The pre-interview questionnaire served multiple purposes. It was used to gain insight about an individual's experience with astrology, to inform the interviews, to collect data about relevant beliefs and self-discovery practices, to collect contact information, and to collect relevant participant demographic information including birth information. Participant information and data from the surveys remained confidential throughout the study and will continue to remain confidential. The primary reason for the questionnaire was "to provide some knowledge of the context or to provide specific incidents, behaviors, and so on that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 139).

Each form of the questionnaire (practitioner/client) was provided to the study participant digitally via a Qualtrics survey link. This survey was completed before interviews with the researcher were scheduled. Each survey included a series of close-ended and open-ended questions to explore relevant themes about an individual's experience with astrology, their beliefs, and their self-discovery experiences to date. It was especially important to include open ended questions as open-ended questions may provide insights into previously unconsidered themes or categories that may prove relevant (Moyer, 2009).

A section of each questionnaire served to acquaint participants to the purpose, structure, and focus of the study and what they could expect from their participation in the process. Another

section gathered relevant demographic information, participant contact information, and participant birth information including date, time, and location of birth for data collection.

Field Notes

Field notes were taken from the review of the responses to questionnaire items and these field notes were used for interviewing. They were also included as one of the data sets in the study. A field notes journal was kept throughout the entire research process for reflection, observation, and eventual code development. The journal served as an additional source of data in the study. Geertz (1989) observed that field notes are an important component for establishing the ethnographer's necessary claim of 'Being There.' These observations were valuable because “[o]bservational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 137). This approach contributes “to eliciting more complex perspectives on an issue and to noticing more” about what emerged in an astrological consultation than perhaps the study would understand otherwise by only interviewing (Glesne, 2016). Nesper (2006) offers that the “point of such observational work is not to 'make the strange familiar' or 'make the familiar strange' but to make things *accessible* to the people whose lives they touch (p. 304).

The Horoscope as Document Analysis

Central to an astrological reading is a client's astrological chart known as a horoscope. The horoscope is “a diagrammatical representation of the earth's relationship with the heavens, usually calculated for a particular place, date, and time, [and is] the fundamental tool in astrology” (Campion, 2009, p. xvi). The Latin *horoscopus* means “observer of the hour [of birth].” See Appendix E for a sample horoscope illustration. Other commonly used names for the horoscope

include natal chart, birth chart, astrological chart, astro-chart, and star-chart. A horoscope cast for a client represents the potential energies of a person's life. Note that the term *horoscope*, that many people are familiar with, is often used to describe astrological forecasts and personal predictions that one can find in online articles and newspaper columns. In using the term *horoscope*, I am specifically addressing the traditional meaning of the astrological chart and not the astrology columns found in popular culture. A horoscope is the central tool present in an astrology reading and thus, is a rich source of data for research because it has the potential of highlighting themes that the astrologer and client are likely to consider important during their interaction. Also, since astrological readings are always grounded in the use of this tool, it was prudent to include this tool in data collection in a grounded theory methodology. Participants were asked to provide their birth information including date, time, and place of birth in the pre-interview questionnaire and I used this data to cast a chart for each individual using horoscopic tools available online.

It is important to note, once again, that this study did not plan to investigate or challenge the epistemological validity of astrology against the benchmark of hegemonic empirical sciences. However, because the horoscopic chart is central to the meaning making activity being investigated in this study, it was appropriate to include it in the data as a potential source of information from document analysis. Such data offered unique thematic descriptions yielding further understanding into the idiosyncratic experience of an astrological reading and offered insight to a person's attitude, beliefs, and views of themselves in the process.

Materially, a horoscope is not different from a visual document like a photo or piece of artwork. It is fundamentally an image that presents the basis of the reconstruction of life taking

place in the meaning making process of an astrology reading. The horoscopic chart, therefore, serves a heuristic function between astrologers and their clients and frames the context of the interaction between them. Because the horoscope was considered a document and a tool with the purpose of deriving meaning from it, concerns over the scientific validity of the instrument, therefore are unfounded. As a heuristic tool, it promotes dialogue between astrologers and their clients and offers the context for which the astrologer, client, and researcher discern meaning from these interactions and unlock the subjectivity therewithin. My position as a practicing astrologer aided in understanding these documents that other researchers might otherwise not be able to interpret for data collection. This is a significant advantage in this study.

Documents and artifacts are a major source of data in qualitative research and “can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 189). Documents can contain information that yield knowledge relevant to the research and can be incorporated into the process of building categories and theoretical constructs inductively (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Documents can be rich resources for comparative analysis and are especially useful because “[t]hey are a product of the context in which they were produced and therefore grounded in the real world” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 183). Data collection through document acquisition is epistemologically aligned with the grounded theory methodology that this study employs.

In this study, client horoscopes were used as both primary and secondary sources of information. Because the study is qualitative in nature, all participants are part of the research process including astrologers, clients, and the researcher (Schreier, 2012; Altheide & Schneider, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Primary sources are those which the “originator of the document

is recounting firsthand experience with the phenomenon of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 178). In this study, the astrologers used the client's horoscope as a primary source of information for their session together. In this way, the horoscope was used in a similar way as photos have successfully been used in qualitative research—by eliciting a topic of interest to stimulate discussion (Tinkler, 2013). “Secondary sources are reports of a phenomenon of interest by those who have not directly experienced the phenomenon” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 178). In this study, I used the client horoscopes as secondary sources of data. Because I was not able to observe the sessions between astrologers and clients directly due to privacy concerns, the horoscope provided some information about what the interaction likely included by knowing horoscopic information of the client. This design provided a wealth of information to gain insight from client sessions without overstepping practitioner-client confidentiality. I used the client's horoscope to prepare for the interviews to inform my line of questioning about experiences that were potentially meaningful to the client. Like photographs used as data in other studies, I used the horoscopes as “a means for remembering and studying detail that might be overlooked if a photographic image were not available for reflection” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011, p.151). For these two reasons, the same horoscope was classified as both primary and secondary data based on its contextual use.

I took digital notes about each horoscope that I reviewed and included them in my field notes journal. Occasionally, memos were also recorded.

Interviews

Interviews were arranged, between study participants and me, after the participants completed the questionnaire. Given the complex nature of astrological sessions and the limited

research on the topics of self-discovery and self-development within the context of astrology, the conversational approach to interviewing was employed because it was the most appropriate for primary data collection. The interviews were scheduled for 45 minutes and generally lasted anywhere from approximately 30-45 minutes, depending on the natural emergence of the conversation between myself and each participant. They were recorded from my Zoom account, reviewed for content, and transcribed for coding.

These interviews took place after the astrology-client sessions so as not to influence the natural process of an astrological consultation, to refrain myself from making any assumptions beforehand, or to influence the astrologer in any way in their reading with their client. These interviews were not intended to follow up any specific client session.

One thing about the interview process should be noted as part of the research methodology. The client questionnaire responses and horoscope were reviewed *before* the scheduled interviews to provide me with relevant context for understanding the client self-discovery process. The astrologer's horoscopes, contrarily, were reviewed *after* their respective interviews. This was done intentionally to see if it made any significant difference in the interview questioning between the two groups (astrologers and clients). This was designed as a check for internal validity of the horoscope as a data collection instrument.

The interviews in this study were informal and conversational in nature. The goal of the interviews was to understand the participant's experience in being a part of an astrology consultation and how it might have contributed to a greater understanding of themselves. Because it is the most open-ended approach to interviewing, sensitive to individual and situational differences, conversational interviewing "offers maximum flexibility to pursue information in

whichever direction appears to be appropriate, depending on what emerges from observing a particular setting or from talking to one or more individuals in that setting” (Patton, 2015, p. 439).

To best focus the conversation of the interviews given the time constraints of the participants’ schedules, an interview guide (See Appendix F) with a list of questions and issues to be explored during the interviews, was prepared in advance. This document provided a framework for conversation but did not restrict the interview, to promote a conversational exchange.

Memos

I followed the classic grounded theory practice of memo writing during every stage of data collection (e.g., memos on interviews, memos on themes, memos on codes, memos on emerging categories, memos on horoscopes, memos on literature) in accordance with the basic tenet of grounded theory that *all is data* and thus, all is useful for engaging in the constant comparison method (Glaser, 1992).

Research Validity

When conducting qualitative research, it is important to consider the validity, or what some qualitative researchers prefer to call the trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), of the research design. To address the concern of construct validity, this study was designed with two of the three tactics Yin (2017) describes: using multiple sources of evidence to encourage convergent lines of inquiry and establishing a chain of evidence (p.44). This study employs a triangulation strategy of collecting data from multiple methods including a questionnaire, document analysis, and interviews. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that triangulation is a powerful strategy for increasing the credibility, or internal validity, of research (p. 245). Patton (2015) adds, “triangulation, in whatever form, increases credibility and quality by countering the

concern (or accusation) that a study's findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's blinders" (p. 674). The researcher also engaged in member checking by soliciting feedback from participants on preliminary findings. This is an important way of ensuring that the researcher has not misinterpreted the meaning of what participants have shared throughout the research process (Maxwell, 2013). As mentioned in the previous section, the timing of horoscope use in client versus astrologers varied in order to influence greater internal validity of that particular tool.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "[q]ualitative data analysis is all about identifying themes, categories, patterns, or answers to your research questions" (p. 216). According to Egen (2002), "data analysis in grounded theory research involves a constant comparative method for generating and analyzing data" (p. 284). This method includes activities intended to generate categories among emerging data as well as delimiting and writing emerging theory (Dey, 1999). Thematic analysis, identifying segments in the data set that are responsive to the research question, was used in this study to understand the patterns and themes that emerge about the practice of astrology as a meaning making self-discovery activity. The qualitative data collected in this study was coded to discern the main ideas, patterns, and process and to build theoretical explanations.

The primary method of data analysis in this study is what Polkinghorne (1995) categorizes as *analysis of narratives* or *paradigmatic analysis*. According to Polkinghorne, analysis of narratives "produces cognitive networks of concepts that allow people to construct experiences as familiar by emphasizing the common elements that appear over and over" (p. 10). When analysis

of narratives is employed, particular pieces of evidence are identified to form general categories and concepts. This type of analysis seeks to identify common themes or conceptual structures discovered in the data. Polkinghorne's analysis of narrative aims to produce general knowledge from a set of evidence associated either with (a) existing theory or logical possibilities or (b) concepts inductively derived from data (just like Glaser and Strauss's [1967] grounded theory notion).

There are three distinct coding strategies in constructivist grounded theory research—*open coding*, *selective coding*, and *theoretical coding* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Charmaz, 2000, 2001; Eger, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This study employed all three strategies as part of the data analysis and theory development process. Throughout the coding process, I engaged in a note-taking process known as memoing to reflect on emerging patterns.

In data analysis, I established emerging impressions from the evidence, conceptualized data, and analyzed emerging relationships between concepts. This process of *theoretical sensitivity* requires that I focused on repetition in data collection and analysis and refused to focus on any single theoretical perspective in advance of evidence collection (Dey, 1999). This does not mean, however, that existing theories or bodies of literature were ignored but rather that they were “set aside with the possibility for future application as the analysis progresses” (Egan, 2002, p. 278). True to constructivist grounded theory, the literature was explored as themes emerged from the data. A brief discussion of the coding process is explained in the next three sub-sections. A more detailed explanation can be found in Chapter 3: Findings.

Open Coding

During open coding, I identified general categories that emerged as the data was compared from observations, interview transcripts, document analysis, and memos. In this study, an open coding process and the identification of core categories evolved alongside the development of the literature review.

Open coding began after the fourth interview was completed and transcribed and continued as each transcription was ready. The questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, horoscope field notes, and memos were all coded in a similar manner. During this time, codes were applied to individual lines or segments of data, by phrases, and by themes/ideas. *In vivo* codes, those that use direct participant language, were used during open coding to preserve participants' meaning and identify common language and phrasing used by participants.

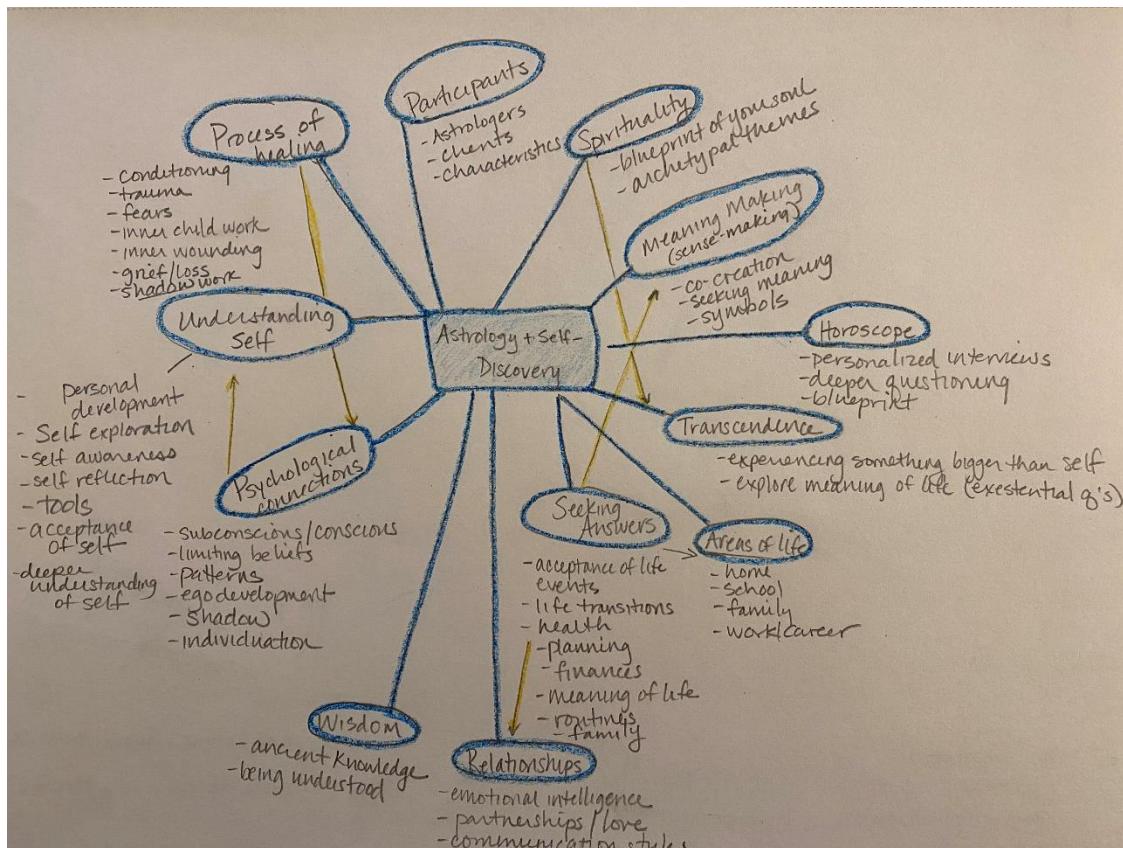
Concepts, categories, and patterns emerged through the process of open coding. Twenty-two main categories emerged from the data during open coding. From them, eight main concepts emerged:

1. Understanding self
2. Process of healing
3. All areas of life (where astrology is useful)
4. Emotional intelligence
5. Relationships
6. Meaning making
7. Personal development
8. Tools for self-understanding

These concepts served as the initial major “buckets” for literature review, which had officially begun at this stage. A complete listing of the initial categories and codes can be found in Appendix G.

Selective Coding

During selective coding, I checked emerging categories as they related to one another and refined category schemata. I also continued reviewing additional participant questionnaires, interview transcripts, and referencing memos as they became available to help me understand the themes as they continually emerged from the data. Many more codes emerged during this process and several more themes were generated. I created a mind map to help in this process. Miles and Huberman (1994, pp. 18-22) discussed the benefits of such a tool as a visual display of theory to help the design or operation of a study. This mind map, which illustrates the major themes beyond the initial eight from open coding, is presented in the Figure 1.

Figure 1*Selective Coding Mind Map*

The creation of a mind map helped me to assemble data in new ways and refine the core categories and subcategories of data. Some codes were combined while others were recategorized and separated out from their original codes to match with emerging theoretical conceptions. Examples of this relationship can be seen by looking at the yellow arrows in relation to the blue bubble concepts. The yellow lines indicated concepts that were similar to, connected to, or otherwise later combined with, other themes.

During the process of selective coding, I continued to review, refine, and integrate literature, in alignment with constructivist grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The ongoing literature review helped to make sense of the data. Memos and some

field notes were written from literature review and these were also coded. In alignment with the constructivist design of this study, my reflections on literature were included in the data because this methodology emphasizes “human agency in which people act, interact, negotiate, and renegotiate meanings, thus researcher and researched are together in a cycle of meaning-making” (Schreiber & Tomm-Bonde, 2015, p. 657). Admittedly, sometimes the literature review took me a bit far from the study’s initial codes as I searched for theory to support or help explain what I was seeing, however, I used the mind map as a tool to bring me back and focus my reading to only the most relevant literature.

Theoretical coding

Finally, in theoretical coding, core categories, propositions about the data, and hypothesis were developed. Final codes were determined, and final major findings were examined. The literature was refined even further to address only these major findings.

To ensure that I got as close as possible to the participant’s understanding of the phenomenon, I engaged in the coding process until it was determined that “data saturation” had been reached (Holton, 2010; Suddaby, 2006). As has already been noted, I reached data saturation by the seventh client interview as many of the same themes were being repeated and new themes were no longer emerging in the data. According to Egan (2002), “[g]rounded theory research is concluded when the researcher has observed a point of data saturation and a sufficient theory has emerged from the data” (p. 286). Conceptual development of theory was then based on the relationships between the central categories reviewed at this stage. The documentation of data and the review of findings in this study will reflect the process of constant comparison undertaken as the central activity of data collection and analysis.

Data Management

Coding is a critical aspect of data analysis and digital tools for coding data are especially helpful in guiding the analysis process. Although the ultimate analysis is the work of the researcher, software programs can be useful in helping researchers organize raw data, create codes based on the data, and organize emerging codes into themes and research findings. In this study, I used MAXQDA, a software program designed for computer-assisted qualitative and mixed-methods data analysis, to help in this process. The use of this program helped to organize data for easy retrieval, order, and structure material, improve accuracy of analysis, and provided visual representations of data which aided in the research process.

Addressing the Research Questions

The study's research questions were addressed with the following data collection methods:

RESEARCH QUESTION	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
How is astrology practiced today as a form of self-discovery and self-development?	Questionnaire, interviews
What types of self-knowledge do people claim to acquire from astrological consultations?	Questionnaire, interviews, document analysis, coding, literature review
To what extent, if at all, does astrology appear to help people understand the sources from which they act and how might astrology influence our understanding of self-discovery and self-development practices?	Observation, interviews, coding, literature review

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to explore astrology as a method of self-discovery. This study investigated the context of the phenomenon of an astrological consultation to determine the extent to which it is a tool for self-development and its potential contribution to the greater literature on self-discovery, self-development, and self-awareness. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How is astrology practiced today as a form of self-discovery and self-development?
2. What types of self-knowledge do study participants claim to acquire from astrological consultations?
3. To what extent, if at all, does astrology appear to help people understand the sources from which they act and how might astrology influence our understanding of self-discovery and self-development practices?

This chapter introduces the theory by exploring the study's findings from data collection. It includes a discussion of the conceptual categories and major findings that are the foundation for theory development. Thus, in this chapter, I will discuss the study's findings from data collection sources including questionnaires, interviews, field notes, memos, and horoscopes.

Wherever possible in this study, the literature was integrated to aide in understanding more fully the phenomenon of an astrological reading. In congruence with the theoretical perspectives of grounded theory, the literature review was conducted and integrated as an ongoing part of this study's findings. These findings from literature exploration serve as additional perspectives on the study's raw data and contributes to theory development. A full discussion of the findings from relevant literature, which is interdisciplinary in nature, is provided in Chapter 4:

Reflections on Findings of Existing Literature. This chapter only includes data from the aforementioned data collection sources (questionnaires, interviews, field notes, memos, and horoscopes) so as to facilitate ease in data interpretation and discussion in this chapter.

This chapter includes information about profiles of study participants, study findings, and a discussion of the findings. The study's findings have been organized by the major themes that emerged in the data collection process. Each major theme is presented individually in two parts: (1) a quote matrix which includes relevant participant raw data and (2) an interpretation of the findings. Finally, the chapter also includes a section about the findings and related discussion about the use of the horoscopes as a data collection tool.

Participant Profiles

The following participant profiles were created from each of the participant's responses to the questionnaires (See Appendices C & D). They include demographic information, participant classification (astrologer/client), and behavioral information (including, for the astrologers, the number of years practicing or for the clients, the number of astrology consultations received). I also included participant birth information in the profiles because that information is the basis for casting a horoscope. This was included not only for demographic purposes, but for data transparency. Because the information is provided, other researchers can use the information to cast the participant's horoscopes and validate data provided in this chapter.

The participant profiles are provided in Table 1, which begins on the next page, followed by a brief discussion of findings based on this data. Pseudonyms were used in this dissertation to keep the individual participants anonymous.

Table 1: Study participant profile information

1. Name	Debbie
Role	Astrologer (42 years)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	High School, GED Equivalent
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Single, never married
Employment status	Fully employed
Birth Information	11/06/1958, 11:37 p.m. Middletown, CT, USA

2. Name	Melanie
Role	Astrologer (2+ years)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Master's degree
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Married or domestic partnership
Employment status	Self-employed
Birth Information	12/29/1990, 3:30 p.m. Springfield, MA, USA

3. Name	Michele
Role	Astrologer (45 years)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Master's degree
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Widowed
Employment status	Fully employed
Birth Information	05/24/1957, 3:59 p.m. Detroit, MI, USA

4. Name	Jaclyn
Role	Astrologer (10 years)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Master's degree
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Divorced
Employment status	Self-employed Part-time work
Birth Information	06/01/1990, 6:16 p.m. Red Bank, NJ, USA

5. Name	Arielle
Role	Astrologer (25 years)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Bachelor's degree
Racial Identification	Hispanic/Latinx
Relationship status	Married or domestic partnership
Employment status	Self-employed
Birth Information	09/01/1976, 2:20 p.m. San Diego, CA, USA

6. Name	Kathy
Role	Client (1 astrology consultation)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	High School, GED Equivalent
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Single, never married
Employment status	Fully employed
Birth Information	09/16/1999, 9:35 p.m. Springfield, MA, USA

7. Name	Linda
Role	Client (10 consultations)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	High School, GED Equivalent
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Married or domestic partnership
Employment status	Fully employed
Birth Information	08/29/1952, 10:55 a.m. Bourne, MA, USA

8. Name	Amy
Role	Client (1 consultation)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Master's degree
Racial Identification	Asian
Relationship status	Single, never married
Employment status	Self-employed
Birth Information	04/04/1994, 10:12 p.m. Mie, Tsu, Japan

9. Name	Allie
Role	Client (1 consultation)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Some college credit (no degree)
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Married or domestic partnership
Employment status	Fully employed
Birth Information	04/19/1987, 6:10 p.m. Holyoke, MA, USA

10. Name	Courtney
Role	Client (5 + consultations)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Bachelor's degree
Racial Identification	Hispanic/Latinx
Relationship status	Single, never married
Employment status	Self-employed
Birth Information	09/27/1988, 7:38 a.m. San Diego, CA, USA

11. Name	Gertrude
Role	Client (Approx. 45 consults)
Gender	Female
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Master's degree
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Married or domestic partnership
Employment status	Retired
Birth Information	06/14/1956, 12:46 a.m. Holyoke, MA, USA

12. Name	Gary
Role	Client (3+ consultations)
Gender	Male
Practice Religion?	No
Highest degree earned?	Bachelor's degree
Racial Identification	White
Relationship status	Single, never married
Employment status	Fully employed
Birth Information	12/07/1989, 11:54 p.m. Springfield, MA, USA

Participant Profile Discussion

This section includes a discussion of the participant profiles compiled from the questionnaire (above) and, where appropriate, by data shared in interviews with participants. The participants in this study were a sampling of five astrologers and seven clients, all from different geographical regions within the United States, from different socio-economic and racial backgrounds, and with varied levels of experience with astrology. The experience of astrologers in this sample ranged from two years of professional practice to 45 years of experience. The average number of years the astrologers in this study have been practicing is 24.8 years.

Three of the astrologers hold master's degrees, one has obtained a bachelor's degree, and one attained a high school diploma or equivalent. In the interview process, I learned that Michele was a licensed psychotherapist who earned her master's degree in Clinical Psychology and completed her academic research in astrology. This finding might indicate what is known already about the variation among practicing astrologers. Astrologers do not have to have any special licenses or educational attainment to engage in the work. Many learn to be an astrologer by studying under other professional astrologers, in formal training programs, or are self-taught. This sample of participant in this study represented all three preparation types. Michele stated that most astrologers don't have a "proper teacher," which is why she created an online astrology school seven years ago which today employs fifty individuals, thirty of which are trained astrologers that she certified. Her school teaches beginner, intermediate, and advanced astrology classes that lead to certification. All of the astrologers in this study were female. Their ages ranged from 32 years-old to 65 years-old.

Six of the seven client participants in this study were female. One study participant was male. Their ages ranged from 28 years-old to 70 years-old. Collectively, their experience ranged from having a single astrology reading in their lifetime to having approximately 45 readings (at a frequency of at least once per year). Their educational attainment levels, racial identifications, employment status, and relationship status varied.

When reviewing the study's participant profiles, two significant findings emerged. Most (91.6%) of the participants were female. Only one study participant was male. When asked in the questionnaire (1) if they had any religious affiliations and (2) if they practice a religion, 100% of the study's participants indicated that they did not practice or associate with any formal religion.

These findings are indicative of two major trends in astrology, (1) that astrology disproportionately attracts females to males and (2) that there is a correlation with one's understanding of and personal practice of spirituality and one's attraction to astrology.

Review of Major Findings

The study's findings have been organized by the eight major themes that emerged in the data collection process. These themes are: (1) self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-exploration (2) interpersonal relationships (3) relationship between the conscious and subconscious (4) healing (5) meaning-making (6) making sense of change (7) seeking guidance (8) personal development and purpose. Each major theme is presented individually in two parts: (a) a quote matrix which includes relevant participant raw data and (b) an interpretation of the findings.

Theme 1: Self-Discovery, Self-Awareness, and Self-Exploration

The first theme that emerged from the data is that astrology is a tool that enables people to understand themselves and, promotes self-discovery, self-awareness and self-exploration. Participants described this theme in different ways, but they all claimed that astrology was powerful for helping people more deeply understand themselves. Table 2 is a quote matrix that includes the participant raw data relating to self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-exploration. Participant roles are denoted next to their names with (A) for astrologers and (C) for client in the quote matrix.

Table 2

Theme 1 Quote Matrix: Self-Discovery, Self-Awareness, and Self-Exploration

PARTICIPANT	QUOTATIONS
Debbie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Self-acceptance and love of self.” • “It validates who they are.” • “It also helps the client confirm what they have been feeling inside for a very long time but have never known it was truly them.” • “Which all leads to self-love through the acceptance of self.”
Melanie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “And that can really just make them connect to themselves, touch their soul, understand what works for them and...make that connection, because most people are just very disconnected from themselves.” • “...it’s just a really deep way for them to connect to who they are.” • “I mean, I wouldn't say it changes our identity entirely, but I think it makes people really think about themselves. I think it makes people think about parts of themselves they maybe necessarily didn't think about before like maybe gifts they had that didn't know about, or where communication styles come from. I think it just really makes people like think and ponder on it.” • “We're all so busy and we're all doing a million things. We're also disconnected from ourselves and again your chart is the blueprint of your soul and it's the map of your life, and so, if you can go

	<p>into that—just knowing everything—I mean it just it makes life so much easier to understand yourself.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It's set up where you can look at every single area of life.” • “I think if you're not self-aware at all you can still do it, but the integration of what you learn might be a little difficult again it's going to completely depends on the person. But if you're not self-aware, but somebody can tell you what to do with the things that you learned, I mean it should be pretty easy to integrate.” • “Like heard things or seeing things in the reading and then kind of take that with what you know about yourself and then just integrate it in different ways. So, it's going to vary on the person, but I think it's still powerful, no matter what, for sure.” • [Important use]: “self-exploration” • “Yeah, I mean I don't think anybody's going to go into it and here's something that they never ever thought about themselves, I think it just might be something that they didn't necessarily think too much about.” • “So, it's interesting because you can look at you as a person, look at their chart and tell them all these things about themselves.”
Arielle (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It can highlight the archetypal themes in a person’s life, helping to put life into a perspective void of morality and judgments.” • “It frames what strengths and challenges are reoccurring and current.” • “It is exceptional at getting to the core of how familial influences shape and influence the personality and the life experiences.”
Jaclyn (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People want to know about themselves.” • “My clients have been saying pretty consistently that I help them to analyze their own charts and gain some understanding of themselves.” • “People are genuinely curious.”
Michele (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A detailed description of your personality assists your self-discovery.” • “Astrology is useful for self-awareness, timing, compassion for the other, understanding of the cycles that you're in as far as like not only timing, but like what era of your life are you in right now.” • That requires you to understand yourself more, so we apply it to practicality, but we begin with the astrology as the description of the character.

- “You can give people understanding of their idiosyncrasies you help them—assist them—to have greater compassion, not just for themselves, but others.”
- “I call it permission slips. I'm always giving permission slips [to clients]. You're allowed to be weird.”
- “I think the biggest single thing is they hang up the phone after a session and they feel relief. For having judged themselves.”
- “Everything we do is the psychology of astrology understanding why they behave the way they do and having this great reframe is useful for people.”
- Clients are usually “happy because they've been confirmed and validated.”
- “They understand that people are all different, and that there's a tapestry of life and it's okay to be different, and no one needs to be homogenized.”
- “Astrology answers what motivates me (which no one ever knows). Where's my idiosyncrasy? What's my low level? What's my high level? It's the answer to every question about you. What is astrology if not a personality assessment tool?

Linda (C)

- “I believe it is a transformational tool that aids and assists us on our life’s journey. It helps us to see what we may have mastered before and where we may go in the future. It shows us the best way to navigate through the rapids of our life.”
- “To better learn about myself.”
- “...because, you know, your true self versus your ego personality self, and learning why you do what you do. ‘Oh, that shows up in this House’ and ‘You have this ruling that house’ ...and that's why you're that way.”
- “[I’ve learned] that I'm very, very empathic and I’m very compassionate too and it's very hard.”
- “The importance of self-care.”
- “The other thing is the boundaries. That's a big one for me, and I think learning more about who I am through that has helped me to have boundaries...that boundaries isn't a bad thing, or something that, because in the past, I would wait way too long and by then I'm hurt in some way.”
- “You keep learning more about yourself, you keep unraveling who you really are or who you're meant to be that some people

Amy (C)

- may not know so to discover that about themselves that that is here at your blueprint of who you're meant to be is a big deal.”
- “To learn what my gifts are that I was born with, and to see the lessons I am working on in this lifetime.”
 - “Who I am at a core level.”
 - “I think astrology is one of the most incredible tools for learning about yourself and self-transformation, I mean to be able to really open up and see what's really in here in the head in the heart and to say: “Okay, are you on track, are you off? What would help you to get back on track again?” It's like riding the waves.”
 - “Most of the time it's validation. Validation is the biggest thing.”
 - “I'm attracted to astrology because it is one of the many ways that I can understand and know myself better. I am a huge proponent of anything that allows me to grow in my self-awareness and astrology does just that; it is a tool in self-awareness and self-discovery.”
 - “A tool for self-awareness and self-knowledge. A way to recognize that there are cosmic influences on us and that we are part of a larger cosmic ecosystem.”
 - “Getting a greater awareness of who I am.”
 - “I think my moon in Aquarius taught me that I am a logical person. And I tried to you know rationalize a lot of things and, you know, that it was a confirmation like ‘Okay, yeah that's how you know I behave. That's who I am’.”
 - “Knowledge, self-awareness, and self-acceptance.”
 - “Astrology gave me permission to be myself.”
 - “And that felt like a relief to like: “Okay, all of these aspects of myself can coexist.” And I don't have to try to conform myself to...to anything...It is it. It was true self.”
 - “Again, it comes back to self-acceptance, though, because you know I look at other people who have tons of friends and they look like they're having a great time and I've always been more of a one to one person I love getting to know someone on a super deep level, and you know certain situations don't always want that kind of communication, and so I felt myself feel lonely at times when people don't match that depth in conversation. And, once again, seeing that made sense like ‘Okay yeah that's who I am I like to go deep and that's okay,’ and if it not everyone is like that

	<p>and not everyone, you know lives in that way and that's okay, too.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “So once again yeah it really comes back to self-acceptance and just taking the pressure off of trying to conform myself for others to others to societal expectations. That's very freeing.” • “Validation of the inner, right, and maybe the world didn't support it, but something that you knew within yourself.”
Gary (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I believe that it is a powerful tool to help me just learn about myself and learn about how I can be the best version of myself and learn about things that are happening in the world.” • “Astrology helps people to learn about themselves and I don't think there's anything more meaningful in this world than learning about yourself.” • “Oh gosh, I mean, I learned about tendencies that I've had since I was a child. I've learned...I learned about...you know, deeper you know, causes or reasons for the way I act in relationships with my family with my friends.” • “My skill set and just things that make me who I am.” • “To that same point it helped me realize like, ‘Wow, like I am lovable’ like I was loved and it's okay that things worked out the way they did. Yeah, it definitely—one hundred percent—helped me reflect and just learn and grow. Myself, because I mean I think that's what an astrology reading is centered around me the, you know, the person getting the reading. And so, I'm naturally going to learn things about myself that maybe I'm not aware of...maybe that I've been blocking out or hiding.” • “Learning about myself and learning about who I am and why do the things I do, and why I am the person that I am.” • “I guess astrology helps you get there, like knowing and understanding yourself and who you are allows you to be a stronger person.”
Allie (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Understanding who you are and what and how you operate best.” • “I believe it's another key to a better life as our authentic selves.” • “I have learned that I am very energetic and need to be doing what I want to be doing to keep that energy. I need to take one step at a time instead of taking things head on.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I was a little apprehensive [to have a reading with an astrologer]. I wasn't too sure how valid, it was going to be how it was going to land.” • “They won't believe it until they sit. I know that they're questioning if it's real or not because I did the same thing for a long time until I sat down and there was really no way to say that it wasn't real. So yeah, I guess don't knock it till you try it and then you will see that it's there's truth.”
Courtney (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think astrology gives a really good template for your personality and areas of challenges to be aware of.” • “I believe astrology is a template that could be used as a very helpful tool in self-awareness if more people really understand it.” • “My psychic gifts, you know, having my Sun in my 12th house and Pluto I think ‘cuz in my house communication...is about how I see myself.” • “My chart is very heavily ruled by Venus energy, so the longing for relationship and all of that stuff is very much in my chart so it makes sense to me that it's part of you know my soul template.” • “It forces you to look within that very first one, I had that very first session it really forced me to look within and answer some hard questions.” • “It goes back to having an awareness and then you know being willing to look at in.” • “So, it's been interesting to kind of see all of that, and the self-esteem and self-worth stuff that I've worked in shows up in my chart as well.” • “I think it's a really great tool for people. I think everyone should have a natal reading. It really kind of reflects on your life and helps you understand who you are better from a bigger picture.” • “And so, astrology hearing those things in that session, and it really pushed me to start looking within to start seeing myself differently to start you know to be able to have the answers to questions about myself, and what I want in life.” • “I think it's a spiritual as in it helps develop your consciousness and your self-awareness and your shadow work and your internal processing.”
Kathy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I believe some of the most important uses for astrology would be self-discovery, acceptance, and awareness.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “When I met with her, she solidified so many of my internal conflicts that I have been dealing with my whole life. Things I have never been able to express she just understood and knew how to put into words. Everyone has negative traits or qualities, and of course those can sometimes be hard to hear or accept. But my view on it was at the end of the day is that knowledge is power.” • “I want to be aware of my tendencies so I can try my best to avoid things that aren't good for me. Being able to truly understand and know yourself is accepting the good and the bad.” • “Another example is my Sun square Moon aspect, which is probably the most difficult position in my chart. My sun is 23 degrees Virgo in the 5th house and my moon is 15 degrees Sagittarius in the 7th house. This would be the reasoning for my internal conflicts I struggled with my whole life. To put it simply; part of me always was so rigid, the Virgo in me was very critical. I wanted everything to be perfect and just right. Then that Sagittarius part of me always wanted to be outgoing, to have fun and to travel.”
<p>Gertrude (C)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “At first I was...I was in denial, and I'd say, ‘I don't do that,’ ‘that's not me,’ you know, ‘That isn't who I am.’ And the astrologer that I had Cameron, well he was tough. He didn't pull any punches so some of the things that he said I got a little angry at first. But then I started the more I started studying astrology and I started thinking about who I was. And, as I went through that [life] transition I said ‘Oh yes, this is me’ so it really helped me to see like how I project to the world to, so to speak, as opposed to what I feel inside is totally different.” • “Oh yeah, I wish that they would teach [astrology] in the high schools even. It would give these young students...a tool to understand yourself and who you are, you know because I feel that these kids are coming out of school—I don't know if you do—coming out of school, not knowing who they are they're not comfortable in their own skin.” • “They are learning who they are, they don't have a clue about individualization like, they haven't individualized. And that's again where astrology could come in, because then you're you know you learn that ‘I'm an individual,’ ‘I'm here,’ ‘I have my own blueprint,’ ‘I came in at this time,’ you know, the astrology

the chart is your blueprint for your life. I'm an individual, I'm not like everybody else and that's okay, so you know, for an acceptance of who you are.”

- “Astrology is a great tool. Again, it's a tool to get to that Higher Self: who you are, you know. I feel that a lot of people don't know that. Once you understand who you are then you're on a path to that discovery, you know, on the path to enlightenment.”
- “My Saturn in Scorpio in the 8th House. I think that's what gives me tenacity and without that I probably wouldn't have succeeded as far as I have in my life because I'm so mutable. So, I always look at that Saturn. Because I do have tenacity, like, I will continue on to do something until it's done, and I won't stop.”

Theme #1 Analysis

In a world where we are increasingly disconnected from ourselves, astrology is a tool that gives people a way of connecting deeply with who they are. All the study participants described astrology is a tool for self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-exploration, in some form. Astrologer Michele stated, “Astrology is useful for self-awareness” that “requires you to understand yourself more.” From a client perspective, Linda described astrology as a “transformational tool that aids and assists us on our life’s journey” while Gertrude commented that astrology is a tool to get to one’s “higher self.” The personal astrological chart (i.e., birth chart, natal chart, and horoscope), which is the source of an astrology consultation, was described as “the blueprint of your soul,” “the blueprint of who you’re meant to be,” “the map of your life”, “your soul template,” and “the template of your personality” by study participants. Astrology helps people to explore aspects of themselves beyond what they might ordinarily consider; it helps the clients in this study to understand themselves from a “bigger picture” perspective.

Considering Perspectives of Self. Astrology provides a means for people to connect

deeply with who they are. Melanie described the practice as especially important during our times “because people are just very disconnected from themselves” and astrology can help people “connect to themselves, touch their soul, [and] understand what works for them.” According to astrologer Melanie, “it makes people really think” about deeper aspects of self or see themselves from a new perspective. Linda mentioned that through engaging with astrology “you keep learning more about yourself, you keep unraveling who you really are or who you’re meant to be” and in knowing about the “blueprint of who you’re meant to be is a big deal” allowing people to understand who they are “at a core level.”

Amy shared that she was attracted to astrology because it is a way that she can consider different aspects of herself and get to know herself better. Gary similarly commented: “I believe that it is a powerful tool to help me just learn about myself and learn about how I can be the best version of myself.” For him, this is incredibly valuable because he mentioned that he didn’t “think there’s anything more meaningful in this world than learning about yourself.” Jaclyn shared that she thought it was an inherent human desire to know about oneself. She mentioned: “People want to know about themselves” and “they are genuinely curious.” She also added: “My clients have been saying pretty consistently that I help them to analyze their own charts and gain some understanding of themselves.” Amy offered:

It is one of the many ways that I can understand and know myself better. I am a huge proponent of anything that allows me to grow in my self-awareness and astrology does just that; it is a tool in self-awareness and self-discovery. [It is a] way to recognize that there are cosmic influences on us and that we are part of a larger cosmic ecosystem.

One study participant, Allie, stated: “I was a little apprehensive [to have a reading with an astrologer]. I wasn't too sure how valid it was going to be how it was going to land.” When asked what she would want people to know about her astrology readings, she shared “I know that they're questioning if it's real or not because I did the same thing for a long time until I sat down and there was really no way to say that it wasn't real.” She added, “Don't knock it till you try it and then you will see that it's there's something there.”

While sometimes the themes explored in an astrology reading might be surprising, or more often, unexpected, they very often concern things people don't “necessarily think too much about” in their day-to-day lives according to astrologer Melanie. Linda claimed that “most of the time, it's validation for one's experience of themselves and one's life that they receive.” According to her, “validation is the biggest thing.” Amy also commented about “validation of the inner” that you know somewhere deep within yourself.

Gertrude did offer an interesting story about her first experience with an astrologer. She mentioned that she was very much in denial about what he was telling her. She stated that:

At first, I was...I was in denial, and I'd say: “I don't do that,” “That's not me,” you know, “That isn't who I am.” And the astrologer that I had Cameron, well he was tough, He didn't pull any punches so some of the things that he said, I got a little angry at first. But then ... I started thinking about who I was. And, as I went through that [life] transition I said, “Oh yes, this is me” so it really helped me to see like how I project to the world to, so to speak, as opposed to what I feel inside is totally different.

Courtney shared a similar experience when she described her first astrology reading. She didn't expect that it would initially “push” her so hard. She offered, “It really pushed me to start

looking within to start seeing myself differently...to start to be able to have the answers to questions about myself and what I want in life.”

Debbie, one of the five astrologers who were interviewed, remarked that astrology helps her clients “confirm what they have been feeling inside for a very long time but have never known it was truly them.” Kathy mentioned that her first experience with an astrologer “solidified so many of my internal conflicts that I have been dealing with my whole life. Things I have never been able to express, she [the astrologer] just understood and knew how to put into words.”

Several study participants commented that understanding themselves is one of the most important things a person can do. The greatest draw to astrological practice—and indeed the reason why most people seek it—is to learn about oneself. Gary commented that, when getting an astrology reading “I’m naturally going to learn things about myself that maybe I’m not aware of...maybe that I’ve been blocking out or hiding.” Astrology is positioned to help people understand aspects of themselves because, according to Melanie, “It’s set up where you can look at every single area of life.”

Promotes Self-Acceptance. Debbie indicated that one of the greatest potential benefits of having an astrology reading is the promotion of “self-love through the acceptance of self.” Kathy shared that she believed “some of the most important uses for astrology [are] self-discovery, acceptance, and awareness.” Amy also commented that she believed the most important uses for astrology were “knowledge, self-awareness, and self-acceptance.” She also stated: “Astrology gave me permission to be myself.” Michele stated that, as an astrologer, she gives people “permission slips” to be themselves. She said, “I’m always giving permission slips [to clients]. You’re allowed to be weird.”

Often, it is the most challenging aspects of who we are that are the hardest to accept. Kathy described several aspects within her chart that explain some of the internal struggles she has dealt with her whole life. She mentioned, “The Virgo in me was very critical. I wanted everything to be perfect and just right. Then that Sagittarius part of me always wanted to be outgoing, to have fun, and to travel.” By exploring these two parts of her nature in an astrology reading, she was able to “truly understand” herself and accept “the good and the bad.” Kathy also commented that “at the end of the day, knowledge is power.” Gertrude shared a similar understanding of herself by describing different aspects of her chart—and her understanding of it—to me.

My Saturn in Scorpio in the 8th House. I think that's what gives me tenacity and without that I probably wouldn't have succeeded as far as I have in my life because I'm so mutable. So, I always look at that Saturn. Because I do have tenacity, like, I will continue on to do something until it's done, and I won't stop.

Linda spoke about learning to accept herself as very empathic and very compassionate, both of which caused her to learn about the importance of self-care through the setting of boundaries. Amy described coming to the realization that “all of these aspects of myself can co-exist and I don't have to try to conform myself to...to anything.” She described learning to accept herself as someone who wants to get to know people on a deeper level, beyond surface-level conversations, and that when she didn't match people in depth of conversation, she used to feel lonely. Through her reading, however, she discovered, “That's who I am. I like to go deep and that's okay.” This realization, and subsequent experience of self-acceptance, took “the pressure

off trying to conform myself to others or societal expectations.” And, according to her, “that’s very freeing.”

Michele, an astrologer in the study commented, “I think the biggest single thing is they [clients] hang up the phone after a session and they feel relief, for having judged themselves.” She continued, clients walk away understanding “that people are all different, and that there's a tapestry of life and it's okay to be different, and no one needs to be homogenized.”

Gary indicated that astrology has helped him “learn and grow” and commented that the process of “knowing and understanding yourself and who you are allows you to be a stronger person.” It has helped him realize and accept that he is lovable, he noted, despite what he believed based on earlier conditioning and relationship experiences. Whether it is learning to accept the deeper reasons why patterns are playing out in relationships, why you do the things you do, “how you operate best,” why you seek emotional connection so deeply in relationships, your psychic gifts, or the deepest longings within your heart, according to Gary, an astrology reading “helps you understand who you are better, from a bigger picture.”

Knowing One’s Authentic Self. As a tool for self-discovery, the data from the study suggest that astrology helps people distinguish egoic aspects of self from what is their authentic self. Several of the participants spoke about accepting one’s true nature, or authentic self. Allie shared that astrology is “another key to a better life as our authentic selves.” Linda described astrology as “a transformational tool that aids and assists us on our life’s journey...[i]t shows us the best way to navigate through the rapids of our life.” With astrology’s help, Linda indicated she has been able “to better learn about myself,” especially by distinguishing her true self from false selves, namely the ego personality. She shared the following: “Your true self versus your

ego personality self and learning why you do what you do. ‘Oh, that shows up in this House’ and ‘You have this ruling that house’...and that's why you're that way.”

Amy also commented that she reached a realization in her session that led her to really start seeing her true self for who she was. She shared: “This is it. It was true self.” Similarly, Gertrude mentioned, that astrology “is a tool to get to that Higher Self; who you are, you know, when I feel that a lot of people don't know that.” She added, “Once you understand who you are, then you're on a path to that discovery, you know, on the path to enlightenment.”

What all of these women were pointing to is an experience that astrology has afforded them to move past the limitations of their individual ego personality constructs to discover something else within themselves—something deeper about their beingness—something about the transcendent nature of their existence. Linda captured this idea when she noted that astrology is really “one of the most incredible tools for learning about yourself and self-transformation.”

Gertrude also alluded to the process of individuation, a concept first introduced by Carl Jung. When people have an astrology reading, she said:

They are learning who they are...they haven't individualized [before having the reading]. And that's again where astrology could come in, because then you're you know you learn that “I'm an individual,” “I'm here,” “I have my own blueprint,” “I came in at this time,” you know, the astrology the chart is your blueprint for your life. I'm an individual, I'm not like everybody else and that's okay, so you know, for an acceptance of who you are.

Understanding One’s Idiosyncrasies. The data for this study also suggest that astrology is a very useful tool for understanding the idiosyncrasies of one’s personality. Astrologer Michele

said that, with astrology, “You can give people understanding of their idiosyncrasies. You help them—assist them—to have greater compassion, not just for themselves, but [also for] others.”

Courtney shared that she thought “astrology gives a really good template for your personality and areas of challenges to be aware of” and, if people really understood it, it can “be used as a very helpful tool in self-awareness.” She talked about her personal issues of self-esteem, self-worth and her tendencies in relationships in astrology readings and she shared that the perspectives she has gained from these sessions have been invaluable for understanding her life experience.

According to Gary, astrology helped him learn “about who I am and why I do the things I do and why I am the person I am.” Michele indicated that astrology’s nature as “a detailed description of your personality, assists your self-discovery.” Michele, an astrologer said, “Astrology answers what motivates me (which no one ever knows). Where's my idiosyncrasy? What's my low level? What's my high level? It's the answer to every question about you. What is astrology if not a personality assessment tool?”

Gertrude went so far as to suggest that astrology should be used in schools to help students—particularly adolescents—understand their developing personalities. She stated:

I wish that they would teach [astrology] in the high schools even. It would give these young students...a tool to understand yourself and who you are, you know because I feel that these kids are coming out of school...not knowing who they are they're not comfortable in their own skin.

Integration. An important thing about exploring different aspects of oneself is integration. The data collected for this study suggests there are many things one can learn in an astrology reading. Melanie shared that because “it’s set up where you can look at every single area of life,”

taking in the available information in a session requires a client to “integrate it [the information] in different ways,” including integrating new information with what people already know about themselves. While, according to Melanie, this “integration of what you learn might be a little difficult,” especially for those who are not as generally self-aware, it can still be very powerful. From integrating new perspectives about childhood tendencies to accepting things about themselves they didn’t accept before, several study participants spoke about the importance of their integration process they engaged in after having an astrology reading.

Theme 2: Interpersonal Relationships

The second overarching theme that emerged from analyzing the data relates to how useful astrology can be in helping people understand and navigate interpersonal relationships. Table 3 is a quote matrix that includes the participant raw data related to this theme. Participant roles are denoted next to their names with (A) for astrologers and (C) for client in the quote matrix.

Table 3

Theme 2 Quote Matrix: Interpersonal Relationships

PARTICIPANT	QUOTATIONS
Debbie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Again, it's once you become aware of the nature of somebody then it's easier for you to accept how they are.” • “Parents want to understand their children better. They want to help guide their children on the right path in life. This happens through accepting that this is how their children are the way they are. ‘Oh that's why my son can't sit still, ok. I won't yell at him anymore for it.’” • “A mother who wanted to know things [about] her children.”
Melanie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You can look at every single area of life, you can look at the self in relationships.” • “Whether that's friendships, marriage, I mean everything career your public persona”

- “That was probably the most important thing I took away from that and that changed my relationship with my mother, and I think we got, that I personally got, some point, I can heal because I understood why everything happened. Before, it didn’t make any sense to me.”
- “It just explained so much [about my relationship with my mother] that I don't think I ever really would have understood without it.”
- “And then, to be able to have such a strong understanding of you and your needs and what you like, and all that stuff, and that makes you better in relationships, too, because you know.”
- “...people's emotions and how people deal with their emotions and how they manage them when they come up and kind of that emotional intelligence.”
- “I’ve also I had someone come to me, who was married and was having difficulty in her marriage, I mean went through her chart and then I looked at her husband's chart briefly.”
- “I looked at their chart help them understand other people, but then you can look at the person's husband star or the person's child star or the person's mother's chart and see what's going on with that person and how they can both interact better and how maybe, maybe something, healing needs to happen.”
- “...how they best communicate with others.”
- “We talked a lot about communication and she was baffled by what we discovered in there for both of them.”
- “How she should communicate, how he needs to communicate all that stuff. So it can go really deep. They can go really specific into certain areas of life that people are just lost on.”
- [understanding] “children”
- “Relationship dynamics”
- “How to be a better parent and partner”
- “People seek astrology sometimes to understand their children better.”
- “Parenting is one of my highest value [I value the most]. Marriage synastry is one of my favorite things I did for years; working with couples.”
- “I specifically, as a healer, work with assisting people to understand their character, their timing, their family members, their partners, and even their businesses.”

Michele (A)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I really love doing children’s charts.” • “When the parent understands the kid, the kid has a running start.” • “I have two astrologers in my system that are specializing just in parenting.” • “I work a lot with parenting. So, I did school— a whole school. I did astrology for every single kid in the school and worked with the teachers. Then I worked with the parents.”
Arielle (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The latter usually involves relational problems.” • “It can highlight the archetypal themes in a person’s life, helping to put life into a perspective void of morality and judgments. It frames what strengths and challenges are reoccurring and current. It is exceptional at getting to the core of how familial influences shape and influence the personality and the life experiences.”
Jaclyn (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Composite relationship charts are helpful.” • “A composite chart is when you take multiple charts, maybe one or two to start, then you put them together kind of like overlapping one another in order to see how the planets that are in one chart differentiate or similar to the other. It can be helpful for helping people see compatibility with each other or in compatibility and if people are potentially on similar life paths or not.” • “You could analyze any kind of relationship: father and mother, brother, daughter, son, business.” • “Absolutely, like, for example, I have a girlfriend who created her business on her birthday and we were able to compare her birth chart to her business on an imprint date, and that was really insightful.” • “I think that a lot of people want to know, obviously about relationships in their life. People really want to know about other people and how they play a part in their life.”
Kathy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Since water represents emotion in astrology, my lack of it means I have a hard time accepting my emotions and expressing them. That is something that has caused me to have a hard time in my personal relationships and something I work on every day.” • “This position also gives a lot of insight to my relationship with my mother, as our moon represents our mother. She has always been very aggressive and controlling and that is how it has played out in me. Growing up I thought I might be bipolar because of

this. I've always hated that about myself but through astrology brought me insight on it. Knowing that there is a reason why I am like this helped me. Now that I am aware of that I have ways to help me cope that I do daily."

Linda (C)

- "Whether someone is compatible with my working ethics."
- "It's like okay 'I gotta adjust my mind, because I'm not usually neutral when it comes to my relationship' and somebody saying something that I'm taking personally. So, I was able to rewire the way I look at things yet has changed me in the moment."
- "To find your connections with other people that you may or may not get along with, you know, like 'Oh yeah, this is a karmic thing'—either good or bad—and to know that's why it's so hard, or that's why we keep coming back to this place. I think that so many aspects like that of astrology is fascinating."
- "I guess the thing I would say [I see differently now is] my relationship, my primary relationship. Because in the beginning. There was so much push pull, and I think by recognizing it's a past life, it's a twin flame, it's this that helps me to understand that it's not always easy, but it's worth it, you keep working towards it, you know and. Now it's really getting to a good place you know it has been recently, and so I think all of that has helped me to understand more about my relationship."

Amy (C)

- "Helps a lot for me to understand my relationship."
- "I've learned about my life purpose, recurring themes in my life as it relates to family and romance."
- "The fourth house is about family, and I remember learning about how that really shapes the foundation of who I am and how that's at my core, and so I think about how much family is important to me."
- "The more I read about my chart and the more I read into other people's charts it reminds me that we all have different focuses in our lives."
- "I used to look at my brother and think that he was selfish because he's not family oriented, and you know, I thought that you should be more like me and care more about my family. And then I looked at his chart and he doesn't have any planets in the fourth house, and that is a very simplistic, you know way of looking at it, but it also confirmed to me like 'Oh, you know what, maybe that isn't where his strongest influence is his family

	<p>or like his biggest importance,’ and so, knowing that, it allowed me to take a step back and realize we’re all really different and it’s okay.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I realized that’s my own projection and that’s just my experience of it, but just because that’s my experience doesn’t mean it, you know it’s anyone else’s.” • “So, it’s helped me to understand others better and not try to control them in any way.”
Courtney (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Romance, personal growth and my business are always the main areas that attract me to astrology.” • “I was in the midst of a tumultuous relationship situation with the karmic partner and was just looking for guidance and, you know, expecting to hear good things I guess.” • “I’m able to see people you know people that I know that I know their charts I’m able to see certain behaviors and personality attributes and be like, that’s in their chart.” • “It’s helped with my interpersonal relationships, understanding why certain people do certain things, and obviously I don’t know everybody’s chart, but I’ve mapped out my family and my close friends and it’s you know it’s interesting.” • “If there’s certain challenging aspects that I have difficulty with people, it allows me to have more grace to be like ‘Well it’s part of you know... they’re not doing this to be difficult it’s part of their lessons in their lifetime and things they chose to learn and be with them.’”
Gary (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I was really just looking for anything at that point in time to just make me feel better, honestly. I was initially hoping to gain insight into my relationship with [my partner] but I ended up learning so much more about myself.” • “[I was] hoping to garner information about my relationship with [my partner] like ‘Why isn’t he with me?’ ‘Why did he break my heart?’ ‘Is he sleeping with someone else?’ ‘Does he not love me?’ ‘Did he not love me?’ And I learned this myself in having conversation with her that night. I remember thinking like ‘Oh [<i>expletive</i>], like he did love me’ like ‘Of course he loves me. He just can’t get out of his own way.’”
Gertrude (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Understanding family members.” • “The way others see me as opposed how I think others see me.”

- “My mother was very critical. She was critical towards, you know, towards me. Back to your question about the astrology but that's a karmic situation, so I say well it's not mom's fault, I chose this, you know, I chose to come in and that helps me better with my mother in our relationship.”
- “In the first 10 years I always felt like everything, you know, was ‘Oh, he's great, he isn't this, you know, stuff happens, shit happens it's my fault.’ Well that's the Neptune trining the sun like ‘I can make this better,’ you know, that I can do this better knows my ascendant so it helped me to say, well...I could be a little disillusioned by that partnership, sometimes.”
- “I looked [at astrology] a lot it helped me with the teaching. Because in teaching I would look to, you know, I wouldn't do the students charts, but I would see their sun their moon. First of all, I would look up the birth dates in the beginning of the year and that helped me to, you know, with their moon, yeah.”
- “Help those children shine or if they, you know, they're feeling something's going on, I would look to see. Well, Saturn's to their moon right now, you know. I know dad and mom aren't getting along, you know.”
- “How can I help this student like, he's got a square ... to Mercury square the Uranus so he's all over the place. So, you would look at that and see what's whatever planet sign it's in, and then try to appeal to them that way you know. Or if I had a student that was, say Mercury and it were their Mercury [suggested they didn't like] to write or they didn't feel safe to write. So, I would look to see that, where that Mercury is and if Saturn was, you know. Or if it was Uranus aspecting. It's just simple little things like that, and it really helped, I think. You know, it made me a better teacher.”

Allie (C)

- “I like learning about my personality and my kids and how I can help support them better.”
- “I had my chart done with my youngest daughter's chart. She [the astrologer] was able to look at our charts and give me guidance as to how to help my youngest daughter, how to better read her, and what she was looking for from a parent, which was super helpful.”
- “I have done a reading focusing on my relationship with my husband also.”

- There was a lot of back and forth between giving up or continuing down our path together probably around that time that she [the astrologer] had told me that we were leading each other to our spiritual awakening together. Knowing that information through the charts was definitely helpful. We were able to be conscious together and hold on tighter to each other and keep moving through the pain, which was helpful. I felt like I needed a little bit of guidance as to when to give up or want to keep going.

Theme #2 Analysis

The first major theme in this study, which was discussed in some detail above, was about discovering self in its many forms. The second major finding in this study concerns self-in-representation. The data confirmed conventional wisdom among astrologer that people seek astrology readings to understand interpersonal relationships. People want to know about their partners, about their families, about their friends, and even, about their bosses, to make sense of relationship dynamics. All of the study participants discussed the power astrology has for helping people (including themselves) understand their relationships with others.

Familial Influences. According to astrologer Arielle, astrology “is exceptional at getting to the core of how familial influences shape and influence the personality and the life experiences [of an individual].” For Amy, familial influences were a particularly strong theme in her life (and in her chart). During her astrology session, she learned about the importance of family for her personally and how her family really shapes the foundation of who she is at her core. She shared that astrology has helped her to specifically understand her relationship with her brother.

I used to look at my brother and think that he was selfish because he's not family oriented, and you know I thought that you should be more like me and care more about my family.

And then I looked at his chart and he doesn't have any planets in the fourth house, and that

is a very simplistic, you know way of looking at it, but it also confirmed to me like “Oh, you know what, maybe that isn't where his strongest influence is his family or like his biggest importance”, and so, knowing that it allowed me to take a step back and realize yeah we're all really different and it's okay.

Kathy described learning about the position of the moon in her chart which, according to her, suggests that she has a hard time expressing emotions. It has given her insight into her relationship with her mother and how patterns between them have played out in the past. Now, she is aware of these patterns, and she has ways to cope with an otherwise tumultuous relationship.

Melanie described a similar situation with her own mother and indicated that, from her work with astrology, her relationship with her mother has changed; she found healing and came to terms with everything that happened between them: “Before [astrology], it [her relationship with her mother] didn't make sense to me.” She added, astrology “just explained so much [about my relationship with my mother] that I don't think I ever really would have understood without it.

Gertrude also commented on her own issues with her mother in our interview. She stated: “My mother was very critical. She was critical towards, you know, towards me.” However, Gertrude said, after learning from astrology that the relationship between her mother and herself was karmic, she was able to take responsibility for her role in the relationship and it has made all the difference.

Several participants shared that astrology is a very useful tool for understanding your children. Debbie, one of the astrologers who participated in the study, talked about working with

a mother who specifically booked the session to know things about her children. She mentioned that it is common for parents to want to understand their children better. She shared:

They want to help guide their children on the right path in life. This happens through accepting that this is how their children are the way they are. "Oh, that's why my son can't sit still, ok. I won't yell at him anymore for it."

Allie also indicated she used astrology personally to better understand her own children and how she "can help support them better." Allie stated:

I had my chart done with my youngest daughter's chart. She [the astrologer] was able to look at our charts and give me guidance as to how to help my youngest daughter, how to better read her, and what she was looking for from a parent, which was super helpful.

Melanie, one of the astrologers in the study, states that her clients often want to know about supporting their children as well. Michele said, "I really love doing children's charts." She also commented, "I have two astrologers in my system that are specializing just in parenting." She shared that one of the reasons why providing parenting support is one of the things she values the most is because, "when the parent understands the kid, the kid has a running start."

Intimate Relationships. Often, according to a number of participants, people seek the guidance of an astrologer to learn about their intimate and romantic relationships. Gary and Courtney both sought the professional expertise of an astrologer when they were looking for guidance for their love lives. Britany shared, "I was in the midst of a tumultuous relationship situation with a karmic partner and was just looking for guidance, and you know, expecting to hear good things I guess." Unfortunately (or fortunately) for her, she did not hear good things in

that reading and the session began a whole process of healing for her. Gary claimed that, when he sought an astrology reading, he was “just looking for anything at that point in time to just make [him] feel better [about his relationship]. He made that point during his interview, this way:

[I was] hoping to garner information about my relationship with [my partner] like “Why isn't he with me?” “Why did he break my heart?” “Is he sleeping with someone else?” “Does he not love me?” “Did he not love me?” And I learned this myself in having conversation with her that night. I remember thinking like “Oh [*expletive*], like he did love me” like “Of course he loves me he just can't get out of his own way.”

Linda indicated that astrology had helped for her to understand her relationship with her husband. She mentioned that astrology helped her to adjust her mindset because she “is not usually neutral when it comes to [her] relationship.” She told me that she had an experience with an astrologer that gave her a “heads-up” about a few challenging periods with her husband. That reading helped her remained balanced throughout the periods when, indeed, things did get challenging for them. She almost considered leaving the relationship, but she remembered the guidance of the astrologer, and she and her husband were able to successfully weather the storm. She said that today, her relationship with her husband is stronger than ever.

Allie shared a similar story about her and her husband. She stated:

There was a lot of back and forth between giving up or continuing down our path together probably around that time that she [the astrologer] had told me that we were leading each other to our spiritual awakening together. Knowing that information through the charts was definitely helpful. We were able to be conscious together and hold on tighter to each

other and keep moving through the pain, which was helpful. I felt like I needed a little bit of guidance as to when to give up or want to keep going.

Gertrude described the many lessons she has learned about her relationship with her husband through astrology. She offered that she was a little disillusioned with her relationship, especially in the beginning: “In the first ten years I always felt like everything, you know, was “Oh, he's great, he isn't this, you know, stuff happens, shit happens, It's my fault.” Later on, she discovered her own power and place in the relationship and learned to create boundaries and speak up for herself. She attributed this to the position of Neptune trining³ the Sun in her birth chart.

According to Jaclyn, “People really want to know about other people and how they play a part in their life,” and they often want to know about how to be a better partner or how to foster a better relationship with their partner. In astrology, there is a practice of casting composite—or relationship charts—to see the energetic dynamics playing out between two people. This practice, also known as synastry, was described by Jaclyn in her interview. She described the use of composite charts in the following comment:

A composite chart is when you take multiple charts, maybe one or two to start, then you put them together kind of like overlapping one another in order to see how the planets that are in one chart differentiate or [are] similar to the other. It can be helpful for helping

³ A trine is a 120 degree angle between two planets. The trine represents a positive flowing energy between the planetary archetypes. An astrologer would likely say that, in Gertrude’s chart, *Neptune trines her natal Sun*, *Neptune trines the Sun*, or that *Neptune is trining the Sun*.

people see compatibility with each other or in compatibility, and if people are potentially on similar life paths or not.

Composite charts are most often used to look at people's closest relationships (i.e., romantic partnerships), but also can be used for other purposes. Jaclyn noted, for example, "You could analyze any kind of relationship: father and mother, brothers, daughter, son, [even] business." She indicated that composite charts can be used for any relationships, including our relationships with non-physically embodied entities (i.e., not people), like our businesses. She added, "For example, I have a girlfriend who created her business on her birthday, and we were able to compare her birth chart to her business on an imprint date, and that was really insightful."

Astrologer Michele stated that her work has a lot to do with "assisting people to understand their character, their timing, their family members, their partners, and even their businesses" and added, "Marriage synastry is one of my favorite things I did for years; working with couples."

Relationships at Work. Gertrude offered an interesting insight when she shared how she used astrology in her profession. She had just recently retired from 20 years of service as a third-grade teacher. She said she used astrology all the time to get to know her students in her classes and better serve them. She stated:

I looked [at astrology] a lot. It helped me with the teaching, because in teaching I would look to, you know, I wouldn't do the students charts, but I would see their sun their moon. You know, first of all I would look up the birth dates in the beginning of the year and that helped me to know [them].

She went on to explain that even with partial birth information, she was able to find out pertinent information about a student’s personality, home life, communication style preferences, emotional dispositions, and more. At the beginning of the school year, she would use the student’s birth information from school records to look up (some of) their astrology and that this practice helped her tremendously with knowing how best to interact with her students. She mentioned that she kept this information to herself and did not share it. But, for her, it was invaluable, even if she was not working with a complete chart. She said that she used astrology in her classroom to:

Help those children shine or if they, you know, they're feeling something's going on, I would look to see. Well, Saturn’s to their moon right now, you know. I know dad and mom aren't getting along, you know. [I would ask], how can I help this student like, he's got a square ... to Mercury square the Uranus so he's all over the place. So, you would look at that and see what's whatever planet sign it’s in, and then try to appeal to them that way you know. Or if I had a student that was, say Mercury and it were their Mercury [suggested they didn’t like] to write or they didn’t feel safe to write. So, I would look to see that, where that Mercury is and if Saturn was, you know. Or if it was Uranus aspecting.⁴ It’s just simple little things like that, and it really helped, I think. You know, it made me a better teacher.

⁴ An *aspect* in astrology is when two or more planetary bodies form a significant angle with one another. When this happens, the relationship between their energies become more pronounced. One could say there is an energetic expression playing out between them. I mentioned an aspect of a *trine* in the previous footnote. What Gertrude is saying here is that, in her example, that Uranus would be forming a specific (geometric) relationship between another planet, like Mercury or Saturn. In this case, the archetype of Uranus—the planet of shock, surprise, and instability—would be “playing with” (or influencing) the planets of communication and responsibility, respectively, in a particular arrangement, which indicates how the energy is expressed between them. Astrologers interpret aspects to understand how energy is being manifested in the life of their clients.

Michele, an astrologer in the study, spoke about similar work that she conducted in a school setting using astrology. She said, “I work a lot with parenting. So, I did school— a whole school. I did astrology for every single kid in the school and worked with the teachers. Then I worked with the parents.” Through this work, she was better able to help the adults understand and serve the needs of the students in the school using their personalized astrology.

Linda also described using astrology to determine “whether someone is compatible with [her] working ethics” before she chooses to go into business with people.

Communication Styles and Emotional Intelligence. Melanie, one of the astrologers in the study, noted that astrology is useful for learning about “people’s emotions and how people deal with their emotions.” She explained that the work of astrology can really promote emotional intelligence in people. She told me about a client she has that was having difficulty in her marriage. She went through the woman’s chart and her husband’s synastry (composite charts together) to help her understand how she could learn to better interact with him. They discussed the client’s own ways she best communicated with others and how her husband naturally communicated. “We talked a lot about communication and she [the client] was baffled by what we discovered in there for both of them.” Before her session, her client was really lost. After the reading, Melanie’s client was able to understand and apply a more appropriate approach to communicating with her husband which had a lasting effect.

Acceptance of Others. Debbie shared that “once you become aware of the nature of somebody, then it is easier for you to accept how they are.” Amy stated, “the more I read into other people’s charts, it reminds me that we all have different focuses in our lives” and that astrology has helped her to “understand others better [and] not to try to control them in any way.”

She stated that through astrology, she was able to understand more fully her own projections onto other people and to realize that even though she is having a particular experience doesn't mean someone else sees it the same way. Subsequently, she has found peace with allowing people to just be in their own experience without having to be right.

Courtney shared the following regarding accepting others because of astrology: "If there's certain challenging aspects that I have difficulty with people, it allows me to have more grace."

Melanie shared that astrology promotes acceptance because when you are "able to have such a strong understanding of you and your needs and what you like...that makes you better in relationships."

Theme 3: Relationship Between the Conscious and Subconscious

The third theme that emerged from the data in the study was how astrology provides a context through which people can explore the relationship between their conscious selves and their unconscious selves. Table 4 is a quote matrix that includes the participant raw data related to this theme. Participant roles are denoted next to their names with (A) for astrologers and (C) for client in the quote matrix.

Table 4

Theme 3 Quote Matrix: Relationship Between Conscious and Subconscious.

PARTICIPANT	QUOTATIONS
Melanie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Helps people to explore emotions and their subconscious." • "What else is a big one that comes up for people? Limiting beliefs is huge. That's a really big thing and, just like the subconscious and people's emotions and how people deal with their emotions and how they manage them when they come up."

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That's the depths of people’s subconscious so it's the things that they're not aware of. Your conscious is what you're aware of, and your subconscious is what is below the surface.” • “Past lives, I would say is always part of the subconscious, but when we look at the emotional piece, which would be people's moon.” • “Things you're not aware of them that you just don't have on the forefront of your brain, and we can also look at that via childhood. Everything goes back to childhood, because your subconscious is formed between the ages of zero to seven mostly so looking at those ages via astrology.” • “Many of these are themes in psychology.”
Michele (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That there's faith in something beyond them; that there is a possibility there are things they don't know that could help them open their mind. That there is a design. God is [the design]. Einstein said God's not playing with dice.” • “They realize that there's a language they didn't know about that creates much more compassion for the human they don't get.” • “It’s a spiritual practice. They’re not required to believe in anything because no one is going to explain where it came from. We’re all in the dark. No one knows. There’s no astrology Bible.” • “It's not religion it's a spiritual practice of studying the movement of the planets in relationship to the cycles and then back to yourself.” • “If the individual is in pursuit of self-mastery, they’re going to use a lot of things. It could be martial arts. It could be the study of reality or biology or sacred medicines. Astrology is one of many.” • “Astrology is not the source of it. It’s just one of many tools [for evolution].” • “My whole career—forty-five years since I started doing therapy—I always had a chart [of the client I am working with]. And Carl Jung always had a chart in front of him and he was quoted to say, ‘Psychology will be a dinosaur science until it includes astrology.’”
Jaclyn (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You know as much as astrology can be helpful, it can also be really, really revealing of where maybe some of our deepest healing and life's work is required, or where I don't want to say weaknesses are but like where we can improve. Internally and externally, according to our astrology chart so like just as much as

	<p>there can be aspects that are supportive for ourselves in our future there's also aspects within the chart that can point out where maybe our weaker zones are where there's room for improvement.”</p>
Arielle (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Astrology is another tool that connects us to truth and clarity.” • “To bring conscious awareness and new skills to unconscious material.”
Debbie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Astrology helps you to transcend the terrible world of the ego.” • “And the only way, you can be free, is by understanding the self because by understanding the self, you can hope to obtain Christ consciousness and rise above this...limitation of the ego and be present [in your life].” • “Learning what is ego and what isn’t.” • “Astrology is a tool that helps you gain consciousness.” • “Through that awareness they can understand and overcome their limitations.” • “Consciously that the more you know, you can use the energy cycles to your advantage.”
Courtney (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I see astrology and I see the natal chart as like a template. It's like a visual representation of your soul contract of what you signed up for in this lifetime including the lessons you chose to learn. Aspects that are helpful aspects that are going to be challenging things that you your soul decided to take with you in this lifetime. So, getting a natal chart reading helps you have a visualization of what your soul knows, but you may not be in conscious awareness of.” • “You're getting the template for it [the unconscious/subconscious] and you know there's always free will and choice, but having it's a tool, it brings more awareness into my life.” • “I don't think it's a substitute for religion, I think it's a spiritual as in it helps develop your consciousness and your self-awareness and your shadow work and your internal processing. And so, I think that that makes it a spiritual tool for those that are on that awakening journey but I wouldn't say that it's a replacement for religion.” • “I didn't really know what I was walking into and the person that I got the astrology reading from asked a lot of questions that made me really confront things in myself, and it was a lot of deep

	<p>inner looking that I wasn't anticipating because I didn't really know what to expect.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You still have to look within and see how that those projections fit within your life and look at your challenging aspects and it's still an internal work.” • “But having it's a tool, it brings more awareness into my life.”
Kathy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “When I met with her, she solidified so many of my internal conflicts that I have been dealing with my whole life. Things I have never been able to express she just understood and knew how to put into words. Everyone has negative traits or qualities, and of course those can sometimes be hard to hear or accept. But my view on it was at the end of the day is that knowledge is power.”
Gertrude (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “At first I was...I was in denial, as I say, ‘I don't do that,’ ‘that's not me,’ ...you know... ‘That isn't who I am.’ And the astrologer that I had Cameron well he was tough, he was some he didn't pull any punches so some of the things that he said I got a little angry at first. But then I started the more I started studying astrology and I started thinking about who I was. And, as I went through that [life] transition I said ‘Oh yes, this is me’ so it really helped me to see like how I project to the world to, so to speak, as opposed to what I feel inside totally different.” • “Astrology is a great tool. Again, it's a tool to gain get to that Higher Self who you are, you know, when I feel that a lot of people don't know that. You know who once you understand who you are then I you're on a path to that discovery, you know, on the path to enlightenment.”
Linda (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It helps me to be conscious and not get blindsided by life.” • “It's nice validation and also as the lessons are learning, you know going into different parts in the chart.” • “The more conscious you are, the more you can do about it and I love being conscious of things.”
Gary (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I guess you could say that the power of the knowledge that holds and offers ... there's just such a strong connection between awareness, consciousness, just bringing these things to the forefront. Even if I'm hearing things I know about myself in an astrology reading, it's still reminding me and allowing me to kind of, always make those my strengths and put those front and

Allie (C)

center. And then, if there's things that you know I need improvement on or things that can be improved upon.”

- “I definitely feel like it's my religion. So yes, it's a religion. I don't like the connotation of religion, though. Religion is like other people forcing beliefs. Astrology is a personal journey and experience. You don't need somebody to tell you their beliefs.

Theme #3 Analysis

Astrology consultations helped the participants in this study explore the relationship between their conscious selves and their subconscious minds. Nine of the study participants commented, in some way, about the power of astrology in revealing aspects of themselves that were not conscious to them, so that they can live with greater awareness of themselves. While there is a psychological distinction between the *unconscious* and *subconscious*, for the sake of discussion, these two terms were used interchangeably among study participants. However, I will use the term *subconscious* to mean “a part of our consciousness process that is not actively in focal awareness” versus the unconscious as “a process that happens automatically and is not available for introspection” (Ricee, 2021).

Gertrude shared that during her first astrology session, she got upset with some of the things the astrologer was telling her and actively rejected some of the information. She mentioned that she later realized that she was in denial. Upon reflection, she realized that much of what the astrologer said about her was true and she had just never considered it—or refused to see it—before. Her experience promoted her to “start thinking about who [she] was.”

Promotes Awareness. Melanie described that the nature of her work as an astrologer has a lot to do with helping people explore “things you're not aware of...and that you just don't have on the forefront of your brain.” She described the importance of exploring what is conscious and

subconscious to clients, as she put it: “Your conscious is what you’re aware of, and your subconscious is what is right below the surface.”

She described that much of people’s unconscious patterns “goes back to childhood because your subconscious [is strongly impressed] between the ages of zero and seven.” In many ways, astrology can be used as a psychological tool. Melanie claimed that many of the themes she explores with her clients in sessions “are themes in psychology,” themes like exploring the subconscious, limiting beliefs, and past conditioning.

Astrologer participant and licensed psychotherapist Michele said, “Everything we [astrologers] do is the psychology of astrology. Understanding why they behave the way they do and having this great reframe is useful for people.” She also stated:

“My whole career—forty-five years since I started doing therapy—I always had a chart [of the client I am working with]. And Carl Jung always had a chart in front of him and he was quoted to say, ‘Psychology will be a dinosaur science until it includes astrology.’”

Courtney described the natal chart as a template for one’s subconscious and according to her, “having it as a tool brings more awareness into my life.” Gary said, “There’s just a strong connection between awareness, consciousness, just bringing these to the forefront.” Debbie offered that through “awareness, [people] can understand and overcome their limitations.” Kathy mentioned that the knowledge she learned about her own traits and internal conflicts gave her a sense of personal power.

Exploring Personal Depths. Jaclyn described that, while astrology can be very helpful in one’s daily life, “it can also be really, really revealing of where maybe some of our deepest

healing and life's work is required." It can reveal to people aspects that are supportive, aspects that are challenging and even where our weaknesses lie, and because of this it is a "tool that connects us to truth and clarity" about who we are. Gary also described understanding more about his own strengths and weaknesses and how to work with them during his astrology session.

Melanie, one of the astrologers in the study, shared that one of the big things that is often explored with clients is their personal limiting beliefs and their emotions. "The subconscious and people's emotions, and how people deal with their emotions, and how they manage them when they come up" is a huge part of what she does. She described being able to see information in the natal chart that points to past lives and karma from past lives that might be influencing people presently. She mentioned that past lives "are always part of the subconscious." She said she can look at other indicators, like the moon placement in a person's chart, to understand a person's emotional state and help them manage their emotions in more productive ways.

Courtney shared that when she had her first astrology reading, the astrologer "asked a lot of questions that made me really confront things in myself, and it was a lot of deep inner looking that I wasn't anticipating because I didn't really know what to expect." And, although an astrologer may be able to see certain information in a chart, she mentions that "you will have to look within and see how those projections fit within your life...it's still internal work." Gary shared similarly that he had to do inner reflection during his reading and that there was great power in the knowledge that the experience offered.

Being Conscious. Arielle thinks that one of astrology's greatest benefits is to "bring conscious awareness and new skills to unconscious material." Debbie described astrology initially as "a tool that helps you gain consciousness." She mentioned that "the more you know, you can

use the energy cycles to your advantage.”

As an astrological client, Linda supported Debbie’s claim when she said that astrology “helps me to be conscious and not be blindsided by life.” She explained that the more conscious you are about the energetic patterns affecting your life, “the more you can do about it.” She adds, “I love being conscious of things.”

Michele, an astrologer participant said, that even though astrology helps people become more conscious, “Astrology is not the source of it. It’s just one of many tools [for evolution].” She stated, “If the individual is in pursuit of self-mastery, they’re going to use a lot of things. It could be martial arts. It could be the study of reality or biology or sacred medicines. Astrology is one of many.”

Transcendence. Debbie claimed that “astrology helps you transcend the terrible world of the ego.” What she meant by this is that astrology helps people to move beyond their egoic (mind-created) identities to discover something greater about the nature of their Beingness/essence/soul. By doing this, people are able to choose to move away from suffering connected to identity concepts that they hold onto and limit them in some way, whether these be childhood traumas, relationship patterns, or the like. She described that, in this way, astrology affords people freedom: the freedom to know, and be, who they are. Debbie added:

The only way you can be free, is by understanding the self because by understanding the self, you can hope to obtain Christ consciousness and rise above this...limitation of the ego and be present [in your life].

Debbie explicitly mentioned that she did not mean anything related to religion (specifically Christianity) in her use of the term “Christ consciousness.” She was referring instead to the idea of a universal consciousness of love that, she believes, exists beyond the egoic concepts of the mind. In order to reach this state, according to Debbie, “learning what is ego and what isn’t [the ego]” is of utmost importance. Gertrude described very similar sentiments about how astrology can help people transcend their typical understanding of themselves. She said:

Astrology is a great tool. Again, it's a tool to get to that Higher Self who you are, you know, when I feel that a lot of people don't know that. You know, once you understand who you are, then you're on a path to that discovery, you know, on the path to enlightenment.

Courtney described her understanding of astrology as a potential spiritual tool “for those that are on an awakening journey,” however she also described it as separate from and not “a replacement for religion.” Courtney described the natal chart “as like a visual representation of your soul contract, of what you signed up for, of what your soul chose to learn.” She reflected that “getting a natal chart reading helps you to have a visualization of what your soul knows, but you may not be in conscious awareness of.”

Astrologer Michele stated, “It's not religion. It's a spiritual practice of studying the movement of the planets in relationship to the cycles and then back to yourself.” She added, “They’re [clients] not required to believe in anything because no one is going to explain where it came from. We’re all in the dark. No one knows. There’s no astrology Bible.” However, she claimed that astrology has a way of helping people know that they can have faith “in something beyond them; that there is a possibility there are things they don't know that could help them open

their mind. That there is a design. God is [the design]. Einstein said, ‘God's not playing with dice.’”

Allie commented a contrary opinion to Michele (with a significant caveat). She said, I definitely feel like it [astrology] is my religion. So yes, it's a religion. I don't like the connotation of religion, though. Religion is like other people forcing beliefs. Astrology is a personal journey and experience. You don't need somebody to tell you their beliefs.

Even Allie, who thinks of astrology as her personal religion, notes a significant difference between traditional religious practice and what she understands astrology to be. The language that these three participants used to describe this quality of astrology are indicative of something about the practice as an experience of something greater, something transcending mundane reality, something truly Divine, the nature of which perhaps will always be a mystery.

Theme 4: Process of Healing

The fourth theme that emerged from the data is that an astrological reading can help people process emotions, early conditioning, trauma, and psychological wounding, and, consequently, promote healing within themselves. Table 5 is a quote matrix that includes the participant raw data related to this theme. Participant roles are denoted next to their names with (A) for astrologers and (C) for client in the quote matrix.

Table 5

Theme 4 Quote Matrix: Process of Healing

PARTICIPANT	QUOTATIONS
Melanie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “My work is natal chart based, which I think goes for most astrologers, but my focus is really based on healing for people.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Healing...that's different for everybody, but a lot of people have inner child stuff that's usually the biggest one.” • “Because that really leads to all of our problems as adults, usually, when you know people have all that trauma that so builds up in their body.” • “The first time I had a reading done professionally and she talks about my mother wound and oh my God that was, that was probably the most important thing, I took away from that and that changed my relationship with my mother.” • “Whether that's friendships, marriage, I mean everything career your public persona your past lives wounds, you need to heal your inner child stuff.” • “...integrate how to use the information the daily life, so if you don't have anybody giving you those tips and you're not self-aware, you might not necessarily know how to integrate the information.” • “Healing is the biggest thing and then also life purpose is a big one, too. People want to know why they're here, what they're meant to do as a soul, what they're meant to for work, so it's usually a mix and mix of both.”
Jaelyn (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I can kind of guess to me where a large portion of that individuals healing will occur for them in this lifetime [by looking at one’s Chiron placement].” • “It can also be really, really revealing of where maybe some of our deepest healing and life's work is required.”
Arielle (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Their childhood patterns, their secret insecurities, their hidden fears and desires.” • “To learn how to evolve by breaking old patterns.”
Michele (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’m also a psychotherapist. I have a master’s in clinical psychology, so I am a healer, and my work is to assist people to fall in love with who they are and give them a language that allows them to step away from the critic and the sabotage and the inner dialogue to a reframe so they can see themselves through the eyes of love. And suddenly, there's a wildly new point of view that allows them to stop judging and criticizing. So basically, I changed people's internal dialogue.” • “In psychotherapy, you don't include the cosmic imprint you just include the subjective point of view the person is bringing into the room. So, they're telling you their story. It's all from their

point of view. Astrology is the angle of the big picture of what were the agreements, what was the promise, what was the karma, and so it takes it out of the personal.”

- “I use astrology in every single psychotherapy session. They all know I'm an astrologer. There's never ever a mystery that I'm doing psychotherapy. I'm always [using the client's chart], starting with the very first session. Always. I don't work with anyone without looking at their chart.”
- “I specifically am here to help the human fall in love with who they are.”
- “I think the deepest underlying need in every human is to be seen and understood and loved for exactly they are.”
- “Your life experience is reflected by the parents, but then ultimately absorbed by the self so that you can be your [own] parent. So, astrology is a way to fall in love with yourself through the practice of loving eyes, better known as the astrologer.”
- “That's why they [clients] come—because everyone suffers. As a psychology, the mind is built poorly. It has one voice who's there to bug you—the ego—all day long. ‘You're not good enough. You're not good enough.’ And then the other voice is like ‘Let me help you.’ And without the soul's voice, the ego will eat you alive. So, astrology distinguishes that voice. You have your ego judging the [expletive] out of you. It is preventing your soul from taking its true path. So, let me just quiet that voice, give the true version of what you are really meant to be, and then bring the ego back in and say ‘Now, you're going to work for the soul here.’”

Debbie (A)

- “People often keep doing the same patterns.”
- “Fix the pain.”
- “The more pain in there, the better ... [richer astrology session].”
- “So that's why I say the best clients are the ones with the most [pain] to deal with. They have more squares in their chart and who have been getting nailed by either Saturn, Neptune, Uranus, or Pluto. They don't even know where they are [in life], but I can help them.”

Amy (C)

- “My shadow is that I tend to criticize myself very easily and I turn everything on me and so this this whole astrology journey has helped me to kind of you know, give back some of the pressure, some of the guilt, some of the shame off of myself and

	<p>see there are other influences, there are other perspectives that I can explore to heal.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...healing in a sense of getting a greater awareness of who I am.”
Linda (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To see what beliefs or paradigms might need to be shifted, healed or adjusted, in order for me to best take advantage of my astrology.” • “It is a self-transformation tool that helps me to really go deeper inside myself and look at what I still need to heal.” • “It helps you to coast more by making those changes in your life that are going to assist you to break your patterns move forward and really be able to look at yourself.”
Kathy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This position also gives a lot of insight to my relationship with my mother, as our moon represents our mother. She has always been very aggressive and controlling and that is how it has played out in me. Growing up I thought I might be bipolar because of this. I’ve always hated that about myself but through astrology brought me insight on it. Knowing that there is a reason why I am like this helped me. Now that I am aware of that I have ways to help me cope that I do daily.”
Gertrude (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Astrology can be useful for dealing with mental health issues.” • “Dealing with conditioning.” • “Conditionings I inherited from birth be it negative or positive.” • “The astrologer knew that. He said you hid something. You have a brother or a sister, he said, most likely it's male because it's Gemini it was in the third house with this, you know south node. This person has mental issues. You know, I always hid that, like I was always embarrassed like, you know, like I wouldn't tell anybody, you know my brother tried to kill himself when I was little kid.” • “My mother was very critical. She was critical towards you know towards me. Back to your question about the astrology but that's a karmic situation, so I say well it's not mom's fault, I chose this you know I chose to come in and that helps me better with my mother in our relationship.”
Allie (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We definitely broke down some belief systems that we had in the past.” • “It gives me, kind of, focus points on which parts are ready to come up and heal in the moment.”

Theme #4 Analysis

According to the data collected in this study, astrology helps people to gain a greater awareness of who they are, including the parts of themselves that need to be healed. Participants illustrated that as one engages in the process of self-discovery via astrology, they often can become aware of things that need to be healed from their past. This is because astrology brings to the light of consciousness those things that we would otherwise prefer to not deal with psychically. Most people would prefer to (or are unable to) look at what Carl Jung coined as the *shadow* within ourselves. According to study participants, astrology is exceptionally good at exploring this.

Inner child work. Melanie described the nature of her work as an astrologer as essentially about healing. She said, “my focus is really based on healing for people” which for most people looks like “inner child stuff.” The idea of the inner child is that we all carry within us our past versions of ourselves, including ourselves as children. All the trauma, conditioning, expectations, learned behaviors, learned coping mechanisms etc. of childhood, according to Melanie, “leads to all of our problems as adults,” and as adults, we have to deal with these things. Michele shared a perspective on this when she said:

Your life experience is reflected by the parents, but then ultimately absorbed by the self so that you can be your [own] parent. So, astrology is a way to fall in love with yourself through the practice of loving eyes, better known as the astrologer.”

Three study participants spoke about wounding (and the subsequent shadow vestiges within the psyche) related to their mothers. Melanie shared that the first time she had an astrology consultation, her “mother wound” was explored, and it ended up changing her relationship with

her mother after she was able to process with the astrologer. Kathy also shared that what she learned from her chart about her natal position of the moon (which represents 'mother' according to her), helped her to gain insight which led to her own process of healing within an otherwise toxic relationship.

Gertrude also offered a story about her mother, who, she said, was very critical of her as a child. Through the process of her astrology consultations though, she was able to see their relationship from a new perspective and take responsibility. She realized the following: "Well, it's not mom's fault. I chose this, you know. I chose to come in and that helps me better with my mother in our relationship." She also shared that astrology helped her deal with conditioning and even to gain perspective on certain mental health issues. Gertrude went further and told me about her reading with an astrologer that knew she was hiding something from her past and that she hides this thing from everyone. She stated:

The astrologer knew that. He said you hid something. You have a brother or a sister, he said, most likely it's male because it's Gemini. It was in the third house with this, you know, south node. This person has mental issues. I always hid that, like I was always embarrassed like, you know, like I wouldn't tell anybody, you know, my brother tried to kill himself, when I was little kid.

By working through this situation with the astrologer, Gertrude was able to gain new insight, find peace, and even to transform herself by releasing this past burden through this process of healing.

Beliefs, Paradigms, and Patterns. Jaclyn claimed that she can see, by looking at a natal chart, where a large portion of her client's healing will occur in this lifetime. She mentioned that she could do this by looking at the person's placement of the asteroid Chiron in the chart, among

other things which, she says “can be really revealing of where...[the] deepest healing and life’s work is required.”

Arielle mentioned that a client’s “childhood patterns, their secret insecurities, [and] their hidden fears and desires” can only be healed by “breaking old patterns,” which requires those patterns to be made conscious to begin with. Linda says she seeks astrology consultations namely “to see what beliefs or paradigms might need to be shifted, healed, or adjusted, in order for me to best take advantage of my [personal] astrology.” She knows that astrology, as a self-transformation tool, can help her investigate within herself what still needs to be healed. She said, “it can assist you to break your patterns, move forward, and really be able to look at yourself.”

Allie, another client participant, said that in her sessions with an astrologer she “definitely broke down some belief systems I had in the past.” She also mentioned, “It [astrology] gives me, kind of, focus points on which parts are ready to come up and heal in the moment.”

Debbie mentioned that the best astrology sessions are the ones where clients are looking for ways to deal with their psychological pain. She mentioned that people most “keep doing the same patterns” until they reach a point of pain, and they are ready to make a change in their lives. She said her best clients are the ones really suffering to understand their pain and heal: “the more pain in there, the better.” She offered:

I say the best clients are the ones with the most [pain] to deal with. They have more squares in their chart and who have been getting nailed by either Saturn, Neptune, Uranus, or Pluto. They don't even know where they are [in life], but I can help them.

Amy thinks the key to healing in an astrology session comes from “getting a greater awareness of who I am.” She described a shadow aspect of herself—that she has become aware of—is that she is highly self-critical. She shared:

This whole astrology journey has helped me to kind of you know, give back some of the pressure, some of the guilt, some of the shame off of myself and see there are other influences, there are other perspectives that I can explore to heal.

Astrology and Psychotherapy. One of the astrologer participants in the study, Michele, is a registered psychotherapist and she shared a considerable amount of data about the connection between astrology and psychotherapy in her practice. She said:

As a healer, my work is to assist people to fall in love with who they are and give them a language that allows them to step away from the critic and the sabotage and the inner dialogue to a reframe so they can see themselves through the eyes of love.

In traditional psychotherapy, according to Michele “You don't include the cosmic imprint. You just include the subjective point of view the person is bringing into the room. So, they're telling you their story. It's all from their point of view.” She further explained,

I use astrology in every single psychotherapy session. They all know I'm an astrologer. There's never ever a mystery that I'm doing psychotherapy. I'm always [using the client's chart], starting with the very first session. Always. I don't work with anyone without looking at their chart.

Michele believes that a client's birth chart is so useful in psychotherapy because “astrology is the angle of the big picture of what were the agreements, what was the promise, what was the karma, and so it takes it out of the personal.” It helps her to gain a “bigger picture” perspective on the clients she is working with.

Michele described the importance of inner psychological healing to help one connect more fully with their soul. She stated:

“That’s why they [clients] come—because everyone suffers. As a psychology, the mind is built poorly. It has one voice who's there to bug you—the ego—all day long. ‘You're not good enough. You're not good enough.’ And then the other voice is like ‘Let me help you.’ And without the soul’s voice, the ego will eat you alive. So, astrology distinguishes that voice. You have your ego judging the [expletive] out of you. It is preventing your soul from taking its true path. So, let me just quiet that voice, give the true version of what you are really meant to be, and then bring the ego back in and say ‘Now, you’re going to work for the soul here.’”

Theme 5: Meaning-Making

Astrology as an activity of meaning-making which is negotiated between the astrologer and the client. The astrologer works as a translator of the language of astrology, but ultimately the client is also in their own process of meaning-making when engaging in the process. Table 6 is a quote matrix to summarize the most relevant data relating to this finding. Participant roles are denoted next to their names with (A) for astrologers and (C) for client in the quote matrix.

Table 6

Theme 5 Quote Matrix: Meaning-Making

PARTICIPANT	QUOTATIONS
Arielle (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To make meaning of experiences in the context of bigger life themes and archetypal processes.” • “Curiosity about the meaning of life.” • “... relational problems, confusion about work and life path, or a perpetual feeling of being stuck and without meaning.”
Jaclyn (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That it’s a language they can’t decipher on their own.”
Michele (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People want to know about purpose and meaning.”

Melanie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It really depends on the person, because if so if somebody is just researching astrology on their own, they're going to get confused there's no doubt about it.”
Debbie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Oh my God, they have no idea about astrology. They misunderstand what astrology is and what meaning it can provide.”
Amy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “While it’s hard for me to say exactly how much influence astrology has on my life (in the small moments and in big life changes), I cannot deny that there is influence. At times the influence feels more subtle, while other times it feels large. If you ask me the “how” of astrology, I have no idea to be honest. But I guess I don’t really care about the ‘how’; astrology feels intuitively important and influential on my existence and that’s enough of a reason for me to believe in astrology.”
Linda (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...told me that you you're going back because you're here to make a big difference in the world didn't know what it meant at the time, but as I started having different people go deeper in my chart.” • “They're like: ‘Oh yeah, and this is how you're supposed to help humanity and it shows up here and here, and here.’ It was nice validation to not think you're crazy and that yes, ‘I'm on the right path.’”

Theme #5 Analysis

Astrology is a tool that helps people derive meaning for their lives. According to Arielle, many people who seek her services have a “curiosity about the meaning of life” and seek “to make meaning of experiences in the context of bigger life themes and archetypal processes.” She said, most people experience “a perpetual feeling of being stuck and without meaning” in their lives and astrology offers them a way to combat this.

The challenge with astrology—namely due to the popularity of sun sign horoscopes and their reductionist nature—is that people don’t really understand it well, according to astrologer Debbie. She claimed that most people “have no idea about astrology. They misunderstand what astrology is and what meaning it can provide.” In her interview, she described to me that

astrology is a system of archetypes complete with wisdom and insight from ages past and that simply knowing one's "sun-sign" will not get remotely close to the depth of information that one will find in their complete natal chart.

Jaclyn, an astrologer, shared that astrology "is a language [that most people] can't decipher on their own." Melanie, another astrologer, added that if someone was just beginning to research astrology, "they're going to get confused. There's no doubt about it." This is where the skill and experience of an astrologer is valuable: to help people understand and, according to astrologer Michele, discover meaning for themselves.

Amy shared that the meaning she has derived from her readings with astrologers has been invaluable even though she doesn't "speak astrology." She has learned much about herself, her career trajectory, her relationship with her family and has derived meaning for her life experiences. She offered:

If you ask me the "how" of astrology, I have no idea to be honest. But I guess I don't really care about the "how"; astrology feels intuitively important and influential on my existence and that's enough of a reason for me to believe in astrology.

For Linda, the greatest meaning that she has found in her astrological experiences is that she has received validation and, as she stated, "I am on the right path."

6. Making Sense of Change

A sixth major finding in this study is that astrology can be especially useful for helping people understand and navigate change in their lives. Table 7 is a quote matrix to summarize the

most relevant data relating to this finding. Participant roles are denoted next to their names with (A) for astrologers and (C) for client in the quote matrix.

Table 7

Theme #6 Quote Matrix: Making Sense of Change

PARTICIPANT	QUOTATIONS
Debbie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Astrology is useful for understanding life transitions.” • “...useful for major life shifts.” • “...complete change and an opposing her Mercury, complete change in how she thinks complete change on how she is.”
Arielle (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Acceptance of life events and changes.” • “To better understand what is going on and why.”
Melanie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...they can go really specific into certain areas of life that people are just lost on.” • “It’s an extra tool to help you kind of navigate this wild ride.”
Kathy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They would be able to help you plan when the best time for a big change in your life would be.” • “They can find the exact time to have the most optimal career move, purchase, or even vacation.”
Linda (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To see aspects that are up and coming in order to best be prepared.” • “My lessons that I might be going through right now, and what I can do to turn things around. Often by knowing them ahead of time.” • “It shows us the best way to navigate through the rapids of our life.” • “...break your patterns move forward and really be able to look at yourself.”
Gary (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That [the astrology reading] that did change my life.” • “She was looking at the dates in my chart and she goes ‘uh-huh’ she goes, ‘This is always when people come to see me,’ she said. ‘I look in their chart and I see that something either didn't just happen or is about to happen and they're sitting right in front of me. It's so funny.’ I remember thinking to myself: ‘Well how the heck do you know lady?’”

<p>Gertrude (C)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "... just went through a major breakup and get a huge, huge life shift coming ahead." • "Major life-changing decisions." • "It gave me the understanding that this is going to happen, accept it or, you know, change it." • "Jupiter squaring me like right now Jupiter square and you know don't make these big decisions because you're overdoing, you're going to overdo it, you know, whatever the aspect is, whatever the planet is. So, each time I have a reading, say, 'Well, wait I'm going to wait for this transit to pass me. Because it's only going to bring me strife.'" • "I would put the pull the reins and on if I was making decisions major decisions, and I would wait that's a big part of astrology." • "I know this is happening because of this, this is what you're going to take out of it. So that's where I would look at the planet, you know and say okay I'm going to think I'm going to think about this for a while I think about it, and then I accept it it's easier to accept, knowing that." • "So, the readings would help me understand why things were happening, you see what I'm saying." • "It has shifted my thinking."
<p>Amy (C)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "While it's hard for me to say exactly how much influence astrology has on my life (in the small moments and in big life changes), I cannot deny that there is influence. At times the influence feels more subtle, while other times it feels large."

Theme #6 Analysis

Eight of the study's participants claimed that astrology helps them make sense of change in their lives. One study participant described life as a "wild ride" while another described it as navigating "rapids."

Debbie, an astrologer, claimed that astrology is useful for dealing with "life transitions" and "major life shifts." According to her, astrologers are able to "see aspects that are up and coming in order to [help people] best prepare." Kathy, a client, said, "[Astrologers] would be able

to help you plan when the best time for a big change in your life would be.” Kathy said that astrologers “can find the exact time to have the most optimal career move, purchase, or even vacation” based on your birth chart. From major life shifts like changes in career, housing, breakups, new relationships, and spiritual awakenings, astrology can help people navigate change with a “greater acceptance of life events and changes,” said astrologer Arielle.

According to the data, the awareness of planetary transits helps to shift people’s perspectives about the events of their lives. Debbie described working with a client with a major aspect to Mercury that suggested a “complete change in how she thinks...[and] how she is.” Gertrude described how knowing about the transiting planetary energies helped her to understand why things were happening in her life and helped her to shift her thinking. She described a transit of Jupiter square and how she might be prone to “overdoing it” during that time. She shared that each time she has a reading, she will say to herself: “Well, wait. I’m going to wait for this transit to pass me. Because it’s only going to bring me strife.” She further added, “I would put the pull the reins in if I was making a major decision, and I would wait. That’s a big part of astrology.” Knowing the energies of her personal astrology in a given moment gives her the space to think about things and accept them as a natural part of her life experience.

Gary described his own experience of change when he had his first astrology reading. He shared the following:

She [the astrologer] was looking at the dates in my chart and she goes “uh-huh.” She goes, “This is always when people come to see me,” she said. “I look in their chart and I see that something either didn’t just happen or is about to happen and they’re sitting right in front

of me. It's so funny.” I remember thinking to myself: “Well how the heck do you know lady?”

What he later was able to explore in that session with her was about the nature of his major breakup he was going through. He received guidance from the astrologer and a warning that another “huge, huge life shift was coming ahead.” Gary knows, in retrospect, that the huge shift she was taking about what, in fact, his spiritual awakening which began just a few months after his session. He said, “she was right. My life completely changed.”

Linda, a client, finds it helpful to get an additional perspective on “my lessons that I might be going through right now and what I can do to turn things around. Often, by knowing [what’s coming] ahead of time, [astrology] shows the best way to navigate through the rapids of life.”

Amy shared her perspective on astrology and change:

While it’s hard for me to say exactly how much influence astrology has on my life (in the small moments and in big life changes), I cannot deny that there is influence. At times the influence feels more subtle, while other times it feels large.

Theme 7: Seeking Guidance in Life

A seventh finding in this study is that astrology is helpful for providing assistance to people who are seeking guidance in their lives. The types of things that people seek guidance for in an astrology reading varies and includes most aspects of life. Some of these have already been explored in previous sections (i.e., relationships, healing, and making sense of change). This finding includes areas of life that have not been thoroughly explored in other parts of this dissertation and yet, are important for fully understanding the reasons why people seek astrological consultations. Table 8 is a quote matrix to summarize the most relevant data relating

to this finding. Participant roles are denoted next to their names with (A) for astrologers and (C) for client in the quote matrix.

Table 8

Theme #7 Quote Matrix: Seeking Guidance in Life

PARTICIPANT	QUOTATIONS
Melanie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s mostly about people’s personal lives, for me.” • “Because there's always things that people need guidance around have questions on but there's always things that usually lead to kind of the biggest answers that they didn't know they were seeking.” • “People can gain clarity on a specific question or a specific area of life.” • “I can go really specific into certain areas of life that people are just lost on.” • “It makes people think about parts of themselves they maybe necessarily didn't think about before like maybe gifts they had that didn't know about where communication styles who benefit from, I think it just really makes people like think and ponder.” • “...daily routines that would best serve them.” • “I don't I don't think anybody's going to go into it and here's something that they never ever thought about themselves, I think it just might be something that they didn't necessarily think too much about.” • “Yeah, it's as simple as that, I would say, just like an extra tool to help you kind of navigate this wild ride.” • “...all areas of your life to which is really powerful.” • “I do know astrologers that work with millionaires, billionaires all of that stuff so it definitely goes into the business world in the corporate world and all of that definitely exists.” • “For business, number one you can look at let's say we're working with the CEO. You can look at the CEO’s chart that's number one. So that's how they make money, how they communicate how they do everything in business basically be in there number two you could look at their employees, like their individual charts and I kind of put it all together if you have a support group of people

	<p>that work together all the time, you can look at their charts and see how they can work better, as a team, and then you have the sky, which is what's going on at the moment with the planets.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “And that can affect somebody's business so maybe it's not a good time to sign a business deal.” • “Or maybe there is an energy going on, specifically for the CEO where they need to step more into leadership or maybe they have a wound that they need to heal that's holding them back from the next level of their business, you know. Or maybe there's a transit going on a planet is moving somewhere and it's going to be a really good time to make more money, and they should just like ‘gung-ho’ and do x, y, and z to get there. So, it just gives you more information about how to work with the energies of resolve the energies of the team energies of the sky and kind of just put it all together to be a little more prepared and I kind of know what's going on energetically.” • “I think all business owners, whether they're aware of astrology or not could benefit from it so much because so much of business, no matter what you do, is your mindset and your personal stuff.” • “How they can show up in their career.” • “...also life purpose is a big one.”
<p>Michele (A)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hiring for business.” • “I have fifty employees in my company and every single employee I have, I've got their charts. I never hire anyone without looking at their chart.” • “Okay there's some people on my team. I have one woman that does astrology for entrepreneurs and she's specifically working with entrepreneurs about when they should do a launch, when they should do, you know, a promotion, [and] when they should look for new employees.”
<p>Debbie (A)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People want to understand.” • “It helps also helps the client confirm what they have been feeling inside for a very long time but have never know that that is really them.” • “Guidance for life transitions and major shifts.” • “[periods of] complete change” • “Same is true for relationships people want to know if they will divorce, get married. Is the partner the one for them? Some clients want to know about a business. Should I change jobs?”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Well, just telling the person who owns a business what's happening and then we'll work out exactly what's happening with their business and their people that they're working with.” • “...when to hold back on spending money when to sign a contract.” • “When to hire somebody. When to fire somebody.”
Linda (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To see aspects that are up and coming in order to best be prepared.” • “My lessons that I might be going through right now, and what I can do to turn things around. Often by knowing them ahead of time.” • “When I was doing coaching with her, she brought in the timing of the right things, and all of that junk do don't watch this at this day, this is an important time to do it, it will work better you'll reach more people, those kinds of things yeah.”
Kathy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Astrology can also be a great tool to utilize if you are struggling with your career, love life, health, family or financial situation.” • “They would be able to help you plan when the best time for a big change in your life would be.” • “They would be able to help you plan when the best time for a big change in your life would be. They can find the exact time to have the most optimal career move, purchase, or even vacation.”
Arielle (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Understanding life events.” • “To understand what’s going on and why.” • “It can highlight the archetypal themes in a person’s life, helping to put life into a perspective void of morality and judgments.” • “Their childhood patterns, their secret insecurities, their hidden fears and desires.” • “...relational problems, confusion about work and life path, or a perpetual feeling of being stuck and without meaning.”
Jaclyn (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A lot of people want to know, obviously about relationships in their life people really want to know about people other people and how they play a part in their life and also people want to know about their careers and their purpose in life.” • “I feel like I’m constantly looking at it to see how my life experiences compare to what’s happening in the stars.” • “Decision-making”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Totally, yeah, I mean we you could analyze any kind of relationship: father and mother, brothers, daughter, son, business.” • “For example, I have a girlfriend who created her business on her birthday, and we were able to compare her birth chart to her business on an imprint date, and that was really insightful.” • “...relationships in their life people really want to know about people other people and how they play a part in their life.”
Gary (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The biggest piece was just the awakening to my spirituality and again I don't I have to go back and listen, but I recall that one of the big things that she said was going to happen for me was spiritual awakening. And it happened. And it changed my life and perspective.”
Gertrude (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Life-changing decisions” • “Signing important contracts.” • “Conditioning I inherited from birth, both negative and positive.” • “So, I was in: “hook, line and sinker” after that [first experience] and began studying astrology.”
Amy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...reassurance to hear the things...as themes or some of the things that I am facing in my life.” • “I’ve learned about my life purpose, recurring themes in my life as it relates to family, romance, finance, and work. I’ve also learned about the energies of different locations on Earth that influence my life trajectory.” • “Clarity on my spiritual journey.”
Courtney (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Romance, personal growth and my business are always the main areas that attract me to astrology.” • “I did an astrology map for my business to kind of track the energies of my spiritual business.”
Allie (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think an astrologer is a leader or guide.” • “It could be useful everywhere. Instantly I think of businesses understanding each other’s personalities and I think that would be useful in guiding people into certain roles in business.”

Theme #7 Analysis

People seek guidance for many things when engaging in an astrology session. Debbie, the astrologer, shared that “people want to understand” themselves and their lives and that an

astrology session “helps the client confirm what they have been feeling inside for a very long time but have never known it was really them.”

Specific Questions and Revelations. Melanie explained, “People can gain clarity on a specific question or a specific area of life” from an astrology reading. The reason, she thinks, astrology is so powerful is because it has an ability to look into all areas of a person’s life. Astrology “makes people think about parts of themselves,” which fosters the preponderance of one’s life. She further shared that there are always things about which people need guidance, “but there’s always things that usually lead to...the biggest answers that they didn’t know they were seeking.” For example, Gary went into his first session with an astrologer seeking guidance about his failed relationship with his partner. What he found through the discussion, however, was something much bigger. He said, “I recall that one of the big things that she [the astrologer] said was going to happen for me was spiritual awakening. And it happened. And it changed my life and perspective.”

Career and Business. Five of the study’s participants shared that astrology is a helpful tool when seeking business guidance. Debbie noted that working with business owners as an astrologer can be particularly rewarding. She said, “Just telling the person who owns a business what’s happening and then [working out] exactly what is happening with their business and the people they’re working with” is very rewarding. She said she can help business owners decide “when to hold back on spending money, when to sign a contract, when to hire somebody, and when to fire somebody” based on the astrological energies of the moment.

Michele, another astrologer in the study, said, “I have fifty employees in my company and every single employee I have, I’ve got their charts. I never hire anyone without looking at their

chart.” She also described how members of her team, who are trained astrologers, specifically work with entrepreneurs. She stated, “I have one woman that does astrology for entrepreneurs and she's specifically working with entrepreneurs about when they should do a launch, when they should do, you know, a promotion, [and] when they should look for new employees.”

Jaelyn shared that she worked with a client “who created her business on her birthday, and we were able to compare her birth chart to her business on an imprint date, and that was really insightful.” Michele mentioned that astrology can be very helpful “in hiring for business.” Gertrude mentioned that can be helpful in guiding when to sign important contracts. Allie said that astrology could help “businesses [in] understanding each other’s personalities and I think that would be useful in guiding people into certain roles in business.”

Melanie explained that she knew astrologers who work with millionaires and billionaires and that there was certainly a benefit for using astrology in the corporate world. When I asked her how one could use astrology in business, she explained the following:

For business, number one, you can look at...let's say we're working with the CEO. You can look at the CEO's chart.... [you can see] how they make money, how they communicate, how they do everything in business basically. [...] Number two you could look at their employees, like their individual charts and I kind of put it all together. If you have a support group of people that work together all the time, you can look at their charts and see how they can work better, as a team, and then you have the sky, which is what's going on at the moment with the planets, [giving more information about their dynamics].

She further explained several hypothetical scenarios to illustrate her point:

Or maybe there is an energy going on, specifically for the CEO, where they need to step more into leadership. Or maybe they have a wound that they need to heal that's holding them back from the next level of their business, you know. Or maybe there's a transit going on a planet is moving somewhere and it's going to be a really good time to make more money, and they should just like “gung-ho” and do x, y, and z to get there. So, [astrology] just gives you more information about how to work with the energies of the team [and] energies of the sky and kind of just put it all together to be a little more prepared and kind of know what's going on energetically.

According to the data in this study, not only can astrology be used to help understand the personality and idiosyncrasies of business leaders, it can also be used to understand team dynamics and the dynamics of a business organization within the cosmic context of transiting planets. Melanie, an astrologer, shared that she thought “all business owners, whether they're aware of astrology or not, could benefit from it so much because so much of business, no matter what you do, is your mindset and your personal stuff.”

From knowing when to sign a business deal to choosing who to partner with, client Linda uses astrology for business guidance “to see aspects that are up and coming and to be prepared.” She said the conversations with an astrologer can sound like: “Watch this day, this is an important time to do it. It will work better for you. You will reach more people.” She said it can help, knowing ahead of time, to make business decisions. Courtney shared that, aside from romance and personal growth, her business is a major reason why she is attracted to astrology. She said she has sought guidance from an astrologer to make business decisions and she even “did an astrology map for my business to kind of track the energies of my spiritual business.”

And while many of the study’s participants commented about astrologers working with business owners, only one person, Allie, thought that astrologers were acting in a leadership capacity. She said, “I think an astrologer is a leader or guide.”

Objectivity and Decision Making. Perhaps the reason astrology is very powerful for many people is because, as Arielle explained, “it can highlight archetypal themes in a person’s life, helping to put life into perspective void of morality and judgments.” This objectivity can help people gain new perspectives on things like career changes, relationships, life purpose, finances, health, daily routines, business, and spirituality, among other things, and, thus, can help people in decision-making.

Theme 8: Personal Development and Purpose

The final major theme that emerged during the analysis of the data is that astrology helps to promote personal development and helps people understand their life purpose. In many ways, this is the “bigger picture” theme of the study. While astrology can help us to know many things about our lives (as addressed in the previous finding sections), the bigger questions remain: “Why am I here” and “What is my purpose?” Table 9 is a quote matrix to summarize the most relevant data related to this theme. Participant roles are denoted next to their names with (A) for astrologers and (C) for client in the quote matrix.

Table 9

Theme # 8 Quote Matrix: Personal Development and Purpose

PARTICIPANT	QUOTATIONS
Melanie (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Soul purpose; their soul’s mission.” • “Healing is the biggest thing and then also life purpose is a big one, too. People want to know why they're here, what they're

<p>Jaclyn (A)</p>	<p>meant to do as a soul, what they're meant to for work. So, it's usually a mix and mix of both.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People want to remember why they incarnated here.” • “Better understanding of their path.” • “People want to know about their careers and their purpose in life, I think the major one is life purpose, what is my life purpose, and I think you could say a lot about that, according to a person's chart and especially if you get into different kinds of astrology.” • “For guidance and for like finding their way or their path through life, so I think, to answer your question I just feel like the planets they're symbolic of so many things, and it can be really useful in defining current energies and predicting the future.” • “Well, if you just look at the north and south node alone, I love being able to have access to the south node and what's been written about it with regards to it, pointing to past lives, and if you believe in reincarnation and so like looking at the south node. I love being able to be like Okay, this is where maybe I have mastered things in my past lives, what is it I'm mastering this life and what is it that I meant to master going into the future.”
<p>Michele (A)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Purpose and meaning.” • “Answering the question: ‘Who am I?’” • “Astrology is the angle of the big picture of what was the agreements, what was the promise, what was the karma, and so it takes it out of the personal into a much higher view. Then we marry the purpose of the karma with the symptoms of what showing up in your life right now [to find balance].” • And that's the story [The Wizard of Oz] of us wanting to go home and taking with us our mind and our heart and our spirit. Those are just the three dimensions of the human. To go find the God that wasn't behind the curtain. It was actually always at home. Dorothy never had to go anywhere and if she would have just looked inside, she would have found out that she didn't have to get hit on the head by a witch's brew to deal with the dark side of herself. • It's every hero's journey; The Wizard of Oz. She starts off, gets hit on the head, goes unconscious, finds the dark side, goes to the other side, finds her three parts of herself, and the little innocent dog, only to find out that she should never have left.

Arielle (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Meaning of life.” • “Confusion about work and life path.”
Gary (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I recall that one of the big things that she said was going to happen for me was spiritual awakening. And that changed my life.” • “The knowledge and the understanding that I currently have about myself and how I can grow.” • “Astrology just led me down a path that literally changed my life and it opened up my life to greater and bigger things which eventually allowed me to live the life I live today, so.”
Courtney (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It really pushed me to start looking within to start seeing myself differently, to start, you know, to be able to have the answers to questions about myself and what I want in life.”
Amy (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Understanding my life purpose, understanding prominent themes in my life, and understanding whether they were truly life themes or just themes for a shorter duration of time.” • “I’ve learned about my life purpose, recurring themes in my life as it relates to family, romance, finance, and work. I’ve also learned about the energies of different locations on Earth that influence my life trajectory.” • “I think it also took away the pressure for me, because the north node is where I’m headed in life. It’s not somewhere that I get automatically like, you know, in a short amount of time. This is a lifelong journey, and so in knowing that I felt myself relax and ease up a little and say, “Okay I’ve got my whole life to slowly step into what I’m here to do.” As opposed to before it was like there was such an urgency to get to where I’m supposed to be, and every time that I couldn’t step up to that plate, I criticized myself and I, you know I blamed myself for not being ready or not living my life purpose as fast as I wanted to.” • “I wanted some guidance and into what I was meant to do in my life.” • “...validation and confirmation that what I wanted to do and whether I was on the right path.”
Linda (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Because I think it points away go this way in your chart and to really opens up doors for you and to know that, yes, this is, you know this is important don't skip over this.” • “Because I am an intuitive, I knew my path pretty much. I didn't know how, but I knew I was here and having a near death

Gertrude (C)

experience at a young age told me that ‘You're going back because you're here to make a big difference in the world.’ I didn't know what it meant at the time. But as I started having different people go deeper in my chart, they're like ‘Oh yeah, and this is how you're supposed to help humanity and it shows up here and here, and here.’ It was nice validation to not think you're crazy and that yes, ‘I'm on the right path.’”

- “I learned about karma and the conditions we set forth in our lives created by our own actions. Astrology has given me the opportunity to understand that I am personally responsible for my own destiny.”
- “...knowing yourself to evolve and to grow and to shifts patterns.”
- “Yes, absolutely as for self-discovery, for self-worth, for confidence. Everything that, you know, we need to...well, I think we need to survive and to have a happy life, you know to just feel comfortable in your own skin. So yes, I believe astrology helped me do that.”
- “A higher power and higher source and the energy.”
- “No, I don't think it's religion. It's a tool to get to where I want to get to that higher self.”
- “Astrology is a tool to get your answers to what you want to do in life and where you want to go or you know pick aspects to do a certain at a certain time, but the ultimate goal is to understand the karmic condition that we have incurred.”
- “It's helped me, with my inner self and that, to me, is the most important thing, through astrology that I have faith in. It it's not like a God. It's a tool. It's a tool to reach that higher self, you know what I'm saying? It helps me with the path of transcendence.”
- “I believe in karma and a higher power.”

Theme #8 Analysis

Most of the study's participants mentioned that astrology has helped them to explore their purpose in life. The existential question of one's life purpose seems to be, for many, a strong

reason for seeking an astrological consultation. As astrologer Michele mentioned, it is really about answering the question: “Who am I?”

A Soul’s Mission and Life Purpose. Melanie, an astrologer in the study, shared that “people want to know why they are here, what they’re meant to do as a soul.” Jaclyn, another astrologer, stated that people want “a better understanding of their path,” and that a major concern for clients is their life purpose. She said there are a lot of things you can tell about a person’s life purpose “according to their chart...especially if you get into different kinds of astrology.” She described the experience of looking at two points in a client’s chart: the north node and the south node of the moon. She said that much has been written about the lunar nodes relating to an individual’s past lives and can indicate what someone has mastered in their other incarnations, what it is they are “mastering in this life, and what is it that [they are] meant to master going into the future.” What she was really speaking of here is the concept of soul evolution which leads to the fulfillment of one’s life purpose.

Amy shared that she sought the consultation of an astrologer for “understanding my life purpose, understanding prominent themes in my life, and understanding whether they were truly life themes or just themes for a shorter duration of time.” Amy also mentioned the nodes of the moon and her growth response to it in the following:

I think it also took away the pressure for me, because the north node is where I'm headed in life. It's not somewhere that I get automatically like, you know, in a short amount of time. This is a lifelong journey, and so in knowing that, I felt myself relax and ease up a little and say, “Okay I’ve got my whole life to slowly step into what I’m here to do.” As opposed to before, it was like, there was such an urgency to get to where I’m supposed to

be, and every time that I couldn't step up to that plate, I criticized myself and I, you know I blamed myself for not being ready or not living my life purpose as fast as I wanted to.

Arielle shared that many of her clients are confused about their life's work and their life path, and often ask about deeper meanings for their lives. Courtney explained that her experience with astrology "really pushed me to start looking within, to start seeing myself differently, to start...to be able to have the answers to questions about myself and what I want in life." Gary said that his experience "literally changed my life and opened my life to greater and bigger things which eventually allowed me to live the life I live today."

Linda described that one of the greatest things astrology gives her is validation for her path. She offered the following:

Because I am an intuitive, I knew my path pretty much. I didn't know how, but I knew I was here and having a near death experience at a young age told me that: "You're going back because you're here to make a big difference in the world." I didn't know what it meant at the time. But as I started having different people go deeper in my chart, they're like "Oh yeah, and this is how you're supposed to help humanity and it shows up here." It was nice validation to not think you're crazy and that yes, "I'm on the right path."

Working with Karma. According to three of the study's participants, astrology helps people to understand karmic conditions left over from other incarnations. Jaclyn said, "people want to remember why they incarnated here." Gertrude shared that she believed in karma and a Higher Power and that astrology has helped her reach her higher self; "It helps me with the path of transcendence." She believes that the "ultimate goal [in astrology] is to understand the karmic condition that we have incurred." While she doesn't consider astrology a religion, it has been a

tool of self-discovery, self-worth, and self-confidence that helps her to get to her higher self. She stated: “I learned about karma and the conditions we set forth in our lives created by our own actions. Astrology has given me the opportunity to understand that I am personally responsible for my own destiny.” Michele, an astrologer, said:

Astrology is the angle of the big picture of what was the agreements, what was the promise, what was the karma, and so it takes it out of the personal into a much higher view. Then we marry the purpose of the karma with the symptoms of what showing up in your life right now [to find balance].

The Hero’s Journey. Michele, the astrologer and psychotherapist, connected the use of astrology as a tool for people to understand the archetypal hero’s journey. This journey is present in most literature genres, movies, mythologies and stories of oral tradition because it is an inherently human archetype. According to Michele, astrology helps to explain aspects of this journey well. She specifically referenced the movie *The Wizard of Oz* in her explanation. She said in many ways, working with astrology, she can help clients understand their dark side and learn how to “come home,” as Dorothy eventually did. She said:

And that's the story [The Wizard of Oz] of us wanting to go home and taking with us our mind, and our heart, and our spirit. Those are just the three dimensions of the human. To go find the God that wasn't behind the curtain. It was actually always at home. Dorothy never had to go anywhere and if she would have just looked inside, she would have found out that she didn't have to get hit on the head by a witch's brew to deal with the dark side of herself and be changed in the end.

Findings from the Use of Horoscopes

In the previous part of this discussion of findings, I highlighted eight themes and related subthemes that resulted from analyzing the interview data generated during the study. In this subsection, the focus shifts to unpacking a topic that was alluded to frequently in the previous section: the horoscopes used in astrological readings.

Central to an astrological reading is a client's astrological chart known as a horoscope (i.e., birth chart or natal chart). The horoscope is "a diagrammatical representation of the earth's relationship with the heavens, usually calculated for a particular place, date, and time, [and is] the fundamental tool in astrology" (Campion, 2009, p. xvi). See Appendix E for a sample horoscope illustration.

In short, a horoscope is an image that presents the basis for the reconstruction of the life being focused on in an astrology reading. The horoscopic chart, therefore, serves a heuristic function between astrologers and their clients and frames the context of the interaction between them. As has already been noted, a horoscope is the central tool present in an astrology reading and thus, it is a rich source of data for research because it has the potential to highlight themes that the astrologer and client are likely to consider important during their interaction. Also, since astrological readings are always grounded in the use of this tool, it is prudent to include this tool in data collection when using a grounded theory methodology.

It is important to note, once again, that this study did not plan to investigate or challenge the epistemological validity of astrology against the benchmark of empirical sciences. The empirical sciences, of course, normally are accepted as a (and, often, the) source of knowledge in the academy. Thus, because astrology is an epistemology outside that of the hegemonic paradigm, it is considered pseudo-science by most members of academic communities. However, because

the horoscopic chart is central to the meaning making activity being investigated in this study, it was appropriate to include it as something that was part of the document analysis portion of the study. Such data offered unique thematic descriptions yielding further understanding into the idiosyncratic experience of an astrological reading and offered insight to a person's attitude, beliefs, and views of themselves in the process. To a great extent, it also helped to address the third research question, namely, to shine a light on "the sources from which [the clients] act."

In this study, client horoscopes were used as both primary and secondary sources of information, as is explained in detail in Chapter 2. My position as a practicing astrologer aided in understanding these documents that other researchers might otherwise not be able to interpret during the data analysis process. My ability to read horoscopes is a significant advantage in this study. I took digital notes about each horoscope that I reviewed and included them in my field notes journal. Occasionally, memos were also constructed. An example of a participant's horoscope with my research notes are included in Appendix H.

A Note About the Use of Horoscopes

The primary reflection data about using horoscopes comes from the notes and annotations I made on the horoscopes, from memos, and from my field journal. There is a notable methodological consideration of the use of horoscopes that I want to share for transparency reasons.

In the case of the astrologers, I reviewed their own horoscopes *after* our interviews were completed. For the client participants, I reviewed the horoscopes *before* our scheduled interviews commenced and had them open and visible to me during our conversation. This was an intentional design aspect of the research design, as I was curious about whether there would be a

difference in the type of information gathered—and thus influence the horoscope’s utility as a data collection tool in this study—before and after an interview. Generally, in astrological practice, the horoscope would be read and prepared before a client’s session. I mimicked this real-life scenario in the research process and read the client’s charts before meeting them. I decided, contrarily, to read the astrologer’s charts afterwards.

As aforementioned, I am uniquely positioned as the researcher in this study because I am able to read a horoscope. For other researchers unable to do this, this before/after consideration may not be significant, especially if one cannot interpret (or receive support from an astrologer to interpret) a birth chart at all. In this study, I was attempting to evaluate the validity of the information in the horoscope to what the participants were telling me. I observed several differences in data collection using the horoscopes prospectively and retrospectively. They will be described in the following sections.

Findings from Client Horoscopes

I found the experience of casting and reading the client horoscopes before the reading to be a very important tool for preparing me for conversation and to help me connect more deeply with the clients in the study during the process of interviewing. In some cases, seeing the client’s chart in front of me was the only way I could make sense of some of the things they were telling me. In short, the horoscopes turned out to be an invaluable tool in data collection about the client participants, their understanding of themselves, and their understanding of astrology.

In Linda’s interview, she brought up her north node and her life path (4th house in Aquarius). She mentioned this is one of the most important things she has learned about herself and her path in this life. She also mentioned that she has had to learn specifically about

boundaries with family (4th house) in order to deal with karmic lessons. She mentioned being empathic and having a strong desire to help/heal others and strong desire to be needed and helpful is characteristic of her ascendant in Virgo. While the horoscope didn't help me directly ask any particular questions during her interview, it did allow me to dig deeper (and understand more deeply) the things she was saying as will be described, albeit briefly, below. In other words, I was able to validate information for her and more powerfully hold space (and connect more personally) in the interview. This is also precisely what Linda said astrologers do—hold space.

From my perspective, I actually saw her chart come alive in the interview. I did not use the chart to guide her, per-se, but I was able to see what she was talking about very clearly. I wrote a memo directly after her interview which helped me to clarify some of the things she was saying and address some things I was not clear about in the interview transcript. In the memo I wrote, “When she commented on Jupiter in her 7th house, I saw that it is square to her north and south nodes of the moon. Working through challenges in partnership is key to her soul’s lesson in this lifetime.” I also wrote, “It is evident how important that her relationship [to her husband] is to her. She speaks of him with admiration.” In another comment, I wrote, “She seeks stability in the relationship (Jupiter in Taurus).” Finally, I wrote, “looking at her chart, it is clearer to me now why she spent so much time talking about her relationship with her husband in our interview. It is so important to her.”

The charts were helpful in other interviews as well. During Courtney’s interview, for example, on several occasions, her chart helped me to build rapport with her. She mentioned some things about herself, and I was able to validate for her, in the moment, that what she was speaking of was, in fact, connected to her chart. For example, she said: “Romance and partnership

are really important for me. I think my Venus placement in Libra and my moon in Taurus say a lot about this.” I was able to validate for her that what she was expressing was correlated properly in the chart. Basically, I assured her she wasn’t misspeaking based on my understanding of themes in her chart. During her interview, a few other moments like this happened and I found that with each successive one, the horoscope started to help me build a richer understanding of what she was trying to express. It also gave me context sometimes to clarify what she was saying.

My interview with Gertrude was very heavy in “astrology-speak,” and I referred to her chart often. Although there was a light touch of this in most of the interviews, she was particularly heavily speaking from an astrological context because she is well-versed in her chart. Gertrude, who told me she has had over 45 astrological readings in her life, was in an excellent position to provide very rich astrological descriptions, and because I am an astrologer as well as a researcher, I was in a position to communicate with her effectively during the interview. If I did not know astrology, however, I would have struggled to make sense of many things she was saying. The following table is a translation of one example of “astrology-speak” that Gertrude said verbatim. The exact transcript between us is in the left-hand column and my interpretation/understanding is in the right-hand column. In this excerpt, Gertrude was discussing her chart with me. She had just previously mentioned that her chart is ruled by the air element strongly and so she is very “in her head” a lot and, as she described, she was “ungrounded in nature.” She goes on to describe a T-square aspect (relationship) of Saturn in Scorpio and how it helps her to be focused.

Table 10

Interview Translation Example.

Transcript	“Translation”
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<p>Gertrude: You know, a grand Square or the T square. Well, it's really a T square. I say grand, but anyway.</p>	<p>(She is mentioning the positions of Saturn, Jupiter, the north node, and Mars in her chart.)</p>
<p>Cameron: Yeah, I can see what you're talking about.</p>	
<p>Gertrude: North node in the ninth house.</p>	<p>Her life path will lead her to experiences of higher learning, travel, and expansion of philosophies and belief systems.</p>
<p>Gertrude: So, I use that Saturn: For my...to stay sane because it gives me confidence that I have tenacity. As I was saying.</p>	<p>Placement of Saturn nearby suggests that she will be able to focus on her life mission. Saturn is about responsibilities and it is placed in a house of deep transformation.</p>
<p>Cameron: Yeah, and certainly deep psychological insight. And your eighth house. We're talking about transformation.</p>	<p>She has a deep psychological nature and is able to persist through challenging things in life. This is a position of stability in her chart that is otherwise, unstable in nature.</p>
<p>Gertrude: Yes, yes, and that is my that's what I always go back on; that Saturn. That strict Saturn in Scorpio. It is a strong position. And it's in the Eighth House so, that to me, it's my saving grace sometimes in my chart.</p>	<p>Saturn in Scorpio is determined to dig deeply into things and persist despite difficulty or challenges.</p>
<p>You know, because Saturn in Scorpio can just keep going and going and just get what it will.</p>	<p>Saturn is the planet of our foundations. She feels like this is a source of strength; a foundation for her.</p>
<p>It wants to keep going. It has a strong will. That strong force there, I feel.</p>	

I would like to note that most of my conversations did not sound like this. This excerpt contains one of the heaviest “astrology-speak” contents in all of the interviews I conducted. This was provided as an extreme example. However, it illustrates how my ability to understand Gertrude’s chart helped me to both connect and make sense of the data she provided that would otherwise be incoherent to most researchers.

Findings from Astrologer Horoscopes

My notes in the memos I created indicate I thought that the use of horoscopic information for the astrologers in the study was “very useful for understanding the characteristics of the astrologer’s personality, skillsets, and inclinations.” I found it “moderately useful for addressing the research questions,” (notably, the first or second research question) and found it very useful in “reviewing aspects of interview conversations” and “writing memos from the interviews” that helped me to process data.

The astrologers’ horoscopes gave me a greater understanding of the often similar traits and qualities among the astrologers, which could be interpreted as an “astrologer profile,” or, at least, a profile of the five astrologers who participated in this study. There was also, however, considerable variation across the astrologer’s charts.

Among the things found in all the astrologer’s horoscopes, at least thirteen are notable. Consequently, thirteen distinct initial codes were added after reviewing my memos and notes from the astrologer horoscopes. They all addressed the nature of the astrologer’s personality and what they bring to their working environments. In addition, quite a bit of data came from the charts that supports what they said they do with their clients. There were several qualities evident in all the astrologers’ horoscopes including strong communication skills, the desire to teach/learn, an interest in helping others, deep personal transformative experiences, and investigative skills.

Using the horoscope retrospectively is not how horoscopes are traditionally used, but it did help me confirm and validate what many of the astrologers said about themselves and the nature of their work with clients. The charts also helped me connect with the identities of the

astrologer participants while I reviewed their data which, I believe, helped me in the data analysis process because I was able to connect more deeply with their stories.

Analysis and Discussion

The use of horoscopic information was a valuable contribution to the data collection process. Not only did the horoscopic information help me to connect more deeply with the study's participants, but it also provided context for things that many participants wanted to say about themselves in the interview process. I did not anticipate that the participants would share specifics about their charts in conversation with me because I never prompted them to answer questions specific to their charts (See the interview protocol in Appendix F, but some of them did this, even though they were not asked to discuss their charts. When they did this, it was helpful to be able to have horoscopic information readily available to make sense of what participants were sharing as they were speaking.

The horoscopes also were useful at getting to the essence of the third research question concerning "the sources from which people act." People shared many things in the interview about things that were of major importance to them and often alluded to aspects about their charts that guided their lives while doing this.

In this study, client horoscopes were reviewed before interviews and astrologer horoscopes were reviewed after our interviews. The differences between these two approaches were valuable to explore because I discovered a proactive review of horoscopes is preferred rather than a retrospective review. I found that I was more prepared to process information and connect to data participants were sharing in their interviews when I had reviewed charts ahead of time, rather than afterwards.

In a memo preparing for my reading with Gary, I wrote, “Mars in Aries: He is impatient and likes change. Relationships are important to him. Relationships can begin and end quickly.” I also wrote, “5th house Venus and North node: Learning to create in partnership. Attracted to stability in love and romantic partnerships.” In our interview, a major theme Gary spoke about, at considerable length, was his relationship to his partner that had just ended. In some ways, the chart gave me a “heads up” about this and I was able to direct questioning around this theme that was so important to him. When I didn’t read a chart beforehand, I did not have experiences like these to connect to. In memo 3.4, I wrote, “using the chart afterwards doesn’t give me much and is of less help in interviews.”

The utility of horoscopes for data collection is, of course, limited by a researcher’s ability to interpret them. In this study, because I am both a researcher and an astrologer, the horoscopes could be used to triangulate information the participants shared about themselves and, in that way, were a source of internal validity for the study. I think this study’s internal validity could have been enhanced (and future studies could improve on what was learned) by asking another astrologer to read the horoscopes independent of the researcher and asking them to provide objective notes about the participants. The full limitations and benefits of using the horoscopes have not been realized from this study but can provide a sense of possibility for future research.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore astrology as a method of self-discovery. This study investigated the context of the phenomenon of an astrological consultation to determine the extent to which it is a tool for self-development and the potential contributions it might make to the literature on self-discovery, self-development, and self-awareness.

The data in this study indicates that astrology is a valuable tool for self-discovery for those who engage with it. Eight major themes emerged from the data collected in this study. They are described in the following list.

- **Self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-exploration:** Astrology is a tool that enables people to understand themselves, promotes self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-exploration. Astrology helps participants to consider aspects of self, promotes self-acceptance, fosters the knowing of one's authentic self, aids people in understanding their personalities, and encourages the integration of different aspects of one's self.
- **Interpersonal relationships:** Astrology helps people to understand themselves in various relationship dynamics including familial relationships, intimate relationships, and work relationships. Study participants said that their work with astrology around relationships helped to develop their communication skills, their emotional intelligence, and their ability to accept others.
- **Relationship between the conscious and subconscious:** Astrology helped the study participants explore the relationship between their conscious selves and their subconscious minds, helping them to live with greater awareness of themselves. Astrology promotes self-awareness by helping people to explore personal depths and become conscious of the otherwise unconscious aspects of their being. For some, astrology helps them on the path of ego transcendence and spiritual enlightenment.
- **Process of healing:** As a tool for self-discovery, astrology helps people to gain a greater awareness of who they are, including the parts of themselves that need to be healed. It can be a useful tool for personal healing work through the facilitation and exploration of inner child issues, beliefs, paradigms, and patterns that are influencing an individual's life.

- **Meaning-making:** Astrology is a tool that has helped the study participants derive meaning for their lives.
- **Making sense of change:** Change is an inevitable part of human life and astrology helps the study participants to deal with the changing nature of their lives and make sense of major life transitions.
- **Seeking guidance in life:** Through an astrology session, people can gain clarity on specific areas of life that are of concern and reveal things to them to shift perspectives. Study participants also claimed that astrology can be useful in business and in career development and can assist in decision-making.
- **Personal development and purpose:** The study's participants claimed that astrology has helped them to explore the nature of their purpose in life. Astrology is a useful tool for understanding a soul's mission, life purpose, and working with karmic patterns.

The study's findings also included several notable things about astrology outside of the context of self-discovery specifically. First, astrology has uses in various contexts including business, career support, and spiritual transcendence (spiritual awakening/enlightenment). This is evidenced by the comments that study participants shared about their own use of astrology within these contexts. This finding suggests that there are many possible applications of astrology, and it opens new lines of inquiry for future research about the practice of astrology.

Another notable finding concerns the use of a horoscope as a data collection tool in qualitative research. The use of horoscopic information was a valuable contribution to the data collection process. It helped me to connect more deeply with the study's participants and provided context for things that many participants wanted to say about themselves in the interview process.

The utility of a horoscope for other researchers may likely differ. This finding offers another opportunity for further research.

Of course, the use of horoscopes as a data collection, or even a triangulation tool, also requires some adjustments in epistemological thinking. You will recall, I had committed to not dealing with the epistemological issues associated with the use of horoscopes, as described in Chapter 2: Research Design and Methodology. My intent in this study was to focus on astrology's apparent impact on people's sense of self. However, I found that once horoscopes were invoked as a source of knowledge in a research study (rather than as only a way to better communicate with research participants), I inadvertently sidestepped that commitment. Whether that was ever possible—considering my conceptions and understanding of reality—is a good question. I suppose this finding suggests that an astrologer's way of thinking about the nature of reality is not so easily bracketed. This is not necessarily uncommon in qualitative research, and it is good to be reminded that researchers, complete with their personal (and perhaps unconscious) assumptions about the nature of reality, are part of, and influence, the research process. However, to the extent possible, it is necessary for researchers to bracket these things so as to limit personal influence over data collection.

Initial Theory Development Discussion

The goal of classic grounded theory is to generate a theory that is conceptual, grounded in data, and is relevant to the sample group (Glaser, 1998). Grounded theory extracts logical relationships from the data and applies that logic to making sense of the data by articulating theoretical constructs and, ultimately, theory. The perspective of grounded theory includes both data and theory (Glaser, 1998, p. 3). Glaser stated that a well-executed grounded theory would

transcend previous theoretical ideas by integrating them into a new theory of greater scope than those that exist, thus making a useful contribution (Glaser, 1978, p. 10).

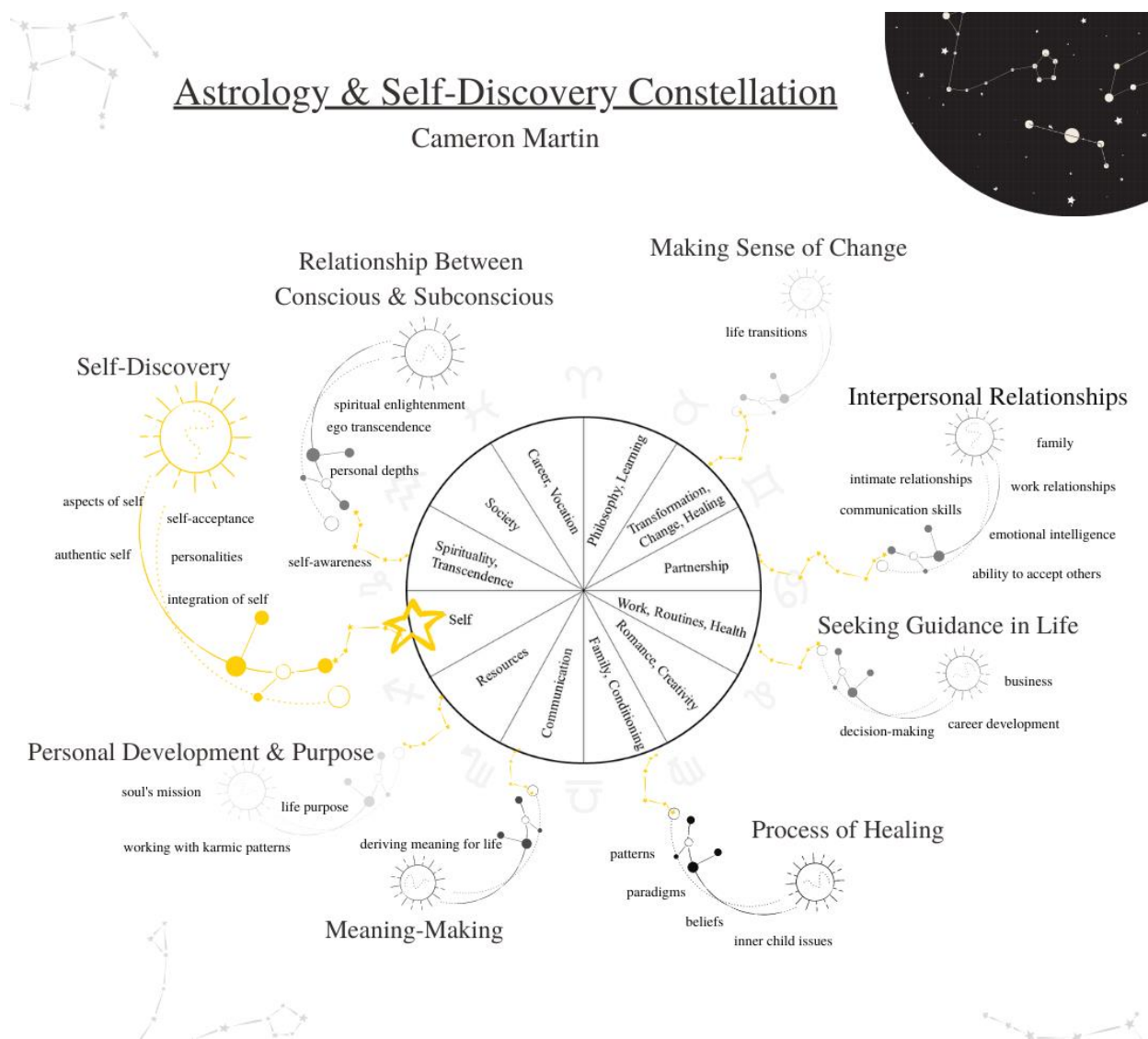
This section introduces a conceptual theoretical framework visually to address the study's findings presented in this chapter. This framework is presented in a diagram titled: "Astrology & Self-Discovery Constellation (Initial)." This diagram will be reviewed at the end of chapter 4 after a discussion of existing literature that is relevant to the developed theory. For now, this version is an initial conception of the theory emerging from the data in the study. The integration of literature will be part of a still emerging process.

When I began to envision how I could represent the emerging theory, two things were prominent in my mind. The first: *the data from this study constellated around 8 major themes*. It seemed only fitting that the findings would "constellate," and I decided to present them with this in mind. The second: *the horoscope is central to this practice and to the study*. Since the horoscope is central to astrological practice and it was even used as a data collection tool in this study, it seemed fitting that the centerpiece of the grounded theory produced by this study takes the form of a horoscope. So, the diagram was designed as a horoscope outline with constellated themes around it. The center chart represents a horoscope with each section of the chart labeled by its astrological meaning. In astrology, these "pie pieces" are known as houses. Each house in the horoscope corresponds to several aspects of life. In this chart, they are labeled with western astrology's generally accepted, but admittedly, broad descriptions. I boiled each down to their essence in a word or two for ease of understanding. They have many meanings including primary, secondary, and even tertiary meanings. However, these labels will suffice for our purposes.

The constellated themes were then presented around the horoscope. What is striking, but perhaps not entirely surprising given the all-encompassing nature of astrology, each of the major themes correlated to one (or, in some cases, multiple) houses in the horoscope chart. You can see this relationship illustrated by the yellow lines and their proximity to certain houses. The lines indicate that there is a connection between the theme and this house in the chart.

Figure 2

Astrology & Self-Discovery Constellation (Initial)



CHAPTER 4: REFLECTIONS ON FINDINGS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EXISTING LITERATURE

In alignment with the study's constructivist grounded theory design, a complete initial literature review was suspended prior to the study commencing. This suspension was to the extent possible as my role of researcher and academic influenced my knowledge and conceptions from literature.

Martin (2006) comments on "the subversive power of grounded theory to leap disciplinary boundaries" (p. 49). The nature of this study is transdisciplinary and integrative in nature. This is influenced by the integrative nature of my professional work, my research interests, and my personal and professional interdisciplinary training. To the extent possible, I limited myself from imposing literature upon the findings and only sought literature based on what I was seeing emerging from the participant data. However, I believe my background is an asset to this study and to the exploration of grounded theory at large.

According to Martin (2006), "Most times...researchers are not really free to go to the other fields where their questions may also be under study, and even if they are so inclined, the learning curve that awaits" them is significant. Sometimes the "data collection and analysis across different areas of interest that would be needed to develop a formal theory to transcend the substantive area [can] keep such a theory from development" (p. 50). Yet grounded theory holds out the possibility of helping researchers cross disciplinary walls; and a better understanding of the necessary tensions between the theory being developed from the data and previously existing literature can help researchers develop more potent theories (Martin, 2006). I hope my efforts to integrate literature and reflect upon it in the coming sections mitigates the former tendency of

stalling theory development and supports the latter possibility of crossing disciplinary walls in grounded theory research.

I posit that all literature that we know now as “existing” was once emerging—or developing. It is with this perspective that I present the following section, which contains my reflections on literature based on the study’s findings.

The Process of Integrating Literature

The literature in this study was integrated by adopting four phases of literature integration offered by Martin (2006): noncommittal, comparative, integrative and transcendent. In this process, literature was only reviewed to the extent that it helped me frame the study. Once the study commenced, appropriate literature that explored emerging themes was reviewed, compared, and integrated throughout the data collection process and included as a reference for theory development. In this way, I aimed to distance myself from predefined problems and concerns, suspended a priori assumptions, and refrained from privileging concepts defined in the literature.

Literature was integrated as explanatory data for themes that emerged in the coding process. Much of this was documented in memos, notes in my field journal, and conceptual digital files in which I stored important quotations from literature. The following subsections describe the process that I employed in this study to integrate literature as defined by Martin (2006): noncommittal, comparative, integrative, and transcendent.

Noncommittal Phase

When I initially proposed this study, I developed a list of various bodies of literature that I anticipated might connect to the study’s findings. Throughout this first phase of literature review, I remained open to integrating literature from disciplines outside of those I initially expected. I

did not commit to any bodies of literature at this point and compiled a list of topics that I later checked against the study's initial findings.

Comparative Phase

In the comparative phase of literature integration, memos were reviewed extensively for impressions from participant interviews. It was important for me to understand what people were saying about astrological consultations, thematically, so I could explore these themes further. Some themes emerged from the findings that aligned to my expectations, while some data were more unexpected. I wrote several memos about themes that were emerging that I planned to eventually seek connections to literature. At this point, I removed some items and added others from the list I created in the noncommittal phase of review.

Some literature “buckets” that emerged during this phase included meaning making, identity, self-awareness, ego development, individuation, and transcendence. There were a few themes from my initial proposed literature review that became clear to me were not related to the emerging data. For example, the literature on integral spirituality, although it could provide a perspective on what was being seen, did not feel to fit the data organically. The same was true about relational approaches to leadership and, most other leadership theories. The exceptions were Theory U (Scharmer, 2016) and authentic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Even at this stage, leadership was not clearly showing up as authentically connected to the data, so I did not pursue trying to make any connections to where there were none. Also, the emerging data did not connect directly to any historical accounts of astrology, as initially anticipated. So aside from its use in the background sections of the study, this was not an area of literature I planned to explore further at this time.

Integrative Phase

During the integrative phase of literature review, this was the point in the process the literature initially got away from me. This is when I experienced firsthand the “learning curve” that Martin (2006) was describing. As a researcher, I began to feel the tensions between discovery and theory. What I learned was that the literature that would have any relevancy to what I was finding was going to have to be integrative in nature and was likely going to span several disciplines including psychology, spirituality, philosophy, and leadership studies. To deal with this issue, I wrote several memos and designed a mind map to help me conceptualize the findings in a meaningful way.

This phase, in particular, was where I spent a lot of time reviewing Carl Jung’s (1960, 1970, 1983, 2006) work. Sometimes my research was interesting, but tangential, and not directly related to initial findings. However, once I completed more interviews, it became clear that themes of the ego, the shadow, individuation, and synchronicity that Jung (1960, 1970, 1983, 2006), wrote about were, in fact, intimately connected to the things participants were saying.

This phase was also the time when I started observing, from the data, the uses of astrology in different contexts aside from self-discovery. For example, the study participants spoke about astrology being useful in business, in running teams, in personal career development, in decision-making, in teaching, and in relating to people in different ways. I realized that topics within the leadership and management literature had connections to what they were saying, which, was not apparent during the comparative stage of literature review.

Transcendent Phase

By the transcendent phase of the literature review, I had learned to completely let the data and literature connections speak for themselves. I understood my role was to be a bridge between what was being said in the data and what others had written about those topics. Only the topics

that emerged from the findings would be integrated into the final literature review. It was also at this phase where I learned just how interdisciplinary my project had become. Considerations about the links between self-discovery and leadership started to solidify in my mind, but exploring transdisciplinary literature was going to be the only way to truly bridge the gap. I committed myself to being open, remaining objective with the study's findings, and only integrate the literature that was both connected to the findings and helped to explain additional perspectives on the findings. My memos proved important in the emergence of this process.

Introduction to the Following Sections

In the following sections, I will discuss my insight on findings in the literature that reflect, or integrate with, the findings in this study. This activity is interdisciplinary in nature. It is possible that some readers will not see the connections as easily as I do. I suppose that this is one of the idiosyncrasies of grounded theory. This whole study is a project in exploring emerging theory. My hope is the literature reflections in the following sections illustrate the theory as I presented it thus far, and in some ways, help the grounded theory further. The next section will serve as my reflection of the transdisciplinary aspect of this project.

Reflection on Findings and Literature Connections

The major themes that emerged in the data from questionnaires, interviews, horoscopes, and memos have been described in detail in Chapter 3. In this section, I will explore literature related to the following: meaning-making, self-knowledge and depth psychology, transformative learning, liminality, wisdom, and transcendence. These emerged as the major areas of literature related to the study from the transcendent stage of the literature review. In this section, I will offer a discussion of connections between these bodies of literature and the study's findings.

Meaning-Making

The data in this study illustrate that astrology is a tool to help people find and define meaning for their lives, according to the people, themselves. It is a co-creative process of meaning making in which the astrologer acts as a conduit, or translator, of astrological energies for the client to make sense of within the context of their own life. While a client's horoscope/chart can give details (raw data), the work of the astrologer is to translate archetypical symbols in the chart into something that the client can understand. In such an interaction, both individuals are engaging in a process of meaning-making and meaning negotiation.

The interaction that occurs between an astrologer and their client serves principally as a meaning-making activity through which individuals engage to more fully understand both what it means to be human and one's place in the greater cosmos. One study participant, Arielle, stated astrology helps "to make meaning of experiences in the context of bigger life themes and archetypal processes." The depth of meaning that can be understood from an astrology consultation is part of a natural human ability for synthesis of experience. A few of the astrologer participants concluded similarly: it is through our interpretation of the information and our ability to receive insight that makes the interaction possible.

In his work *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*, Viktor Frankl (2000) argues that human existence is about the will to create meaning for one's life. He explains that today, the will to meaning is often frustrated, leaving people with a sense of meaninglessness and emptiness, a condition Frankl (2000) calls an "existential vacuum" (p. 93). Frankl (2000) claimed that the will to meaning, although to differing degrees, is present within all human beings. Frankl (2000) adds that "Abraham Maslow goes further; to him the will to meaning is more than an "irreducible need"—he sees it as 'man's primary concern'" (Frankl, p.86).

People seek meaning for all sorts of things in astrology consultations including life transitions and events, family, personal and romantic relationships, career, health, finances, and even the meaning of life itself. In the study, several major topics emerged as the most popular for which people sought answers: relationships, career, health, finances, life transitions, and life purpose. It is through the exploration of the information embedded in an individual's chart that an astrologer can guide a client in the meaning-making process.

To understand the role of meaning-making in an astrology consultation, it is appropriate to turn to the ancient philosophical methodology of hermeneutics, the interpretation of meaning that is conveyed through language. Ladkin (2010) wrote, "Central to hermeneutic thought is the notion that meaning is constructed and occurs through an emerging process of dialogue between meaning-making individuals" (p. 165). The interaction of an astrology session is characterized by the concurrent dialogues between the astrologer and client and between client and their self. It has the capacity to reveal much about both the lives of the participants and the meaning each derives from the interaction.

A hermeneutic rendering "suggests that in order for meaning to be truly forged between people, both must be open to the other" (Ladkin, 2010, p. 113). For an astrology session to be meaningful, participants must be willing to be authentic about their intentions, perspectives, and emotions throughout the process. Ladkin (2010) asserts that "meaning-making and its alignment is facilitated by ongoing dialogue and discussion in which those involved disclose their intentionalities, perspectives, and emotional responses around the situation in question (Ladkin, 2010, pp. 124-125). When authentic engagement occurs between individuals allowing for co-created meaning to emerge, meaning-making can be considered a jointly negotiated activity

(Ladkin, 2010). Astrology consultations then largely serves a heuristic function, a phenomenon in which individuals discover meaning for themselves.

Carl Jung's (1960) theory of synchronicity is based upon the principle that the human psyche is responsible for the creation of meaning as a co-creator of the reflection of reality. According to his theory, "there is underlying objective meaning in the coincidences that fall together in psyche and world and strike us as intuitively meaningful" (Stein, 1998, p. 218). Jung's theory on synchronicity offered a new paradigm for the understanding of reality (beyond scientific understanding) by arguing that "the meaningful coincidence between a psychic event and an objective event" must be considered. This added the element of meaning to the scientific understanding of reality, which otherwise ignored meaning or the role of human consciousness altogether. Jung proposed "that a full account of reality must include the presence of the human psyche—the observer—and the element of meaning" (Stein, 1998, p. 214).

We are meaning-making, meaning seeking creatures. Carl Jung (1983) stated:

Every moment of our lives is trying to tell us something, but we do not care to listen to this spirit voice. When we are alone and still, we are afraid that something will be whispered in our ears, and so we hate the stillness and anesthetize ourselves through sociability.

In the experience of an astrology consultation, a client is offered one of the most intimate experiences of being with themselves by being with and exploring their soul's blueprint. James Hollis (2020) offers that, "meaning is a by-product of being in right relationship to our souls at critical junctions" (p. 108). It can be said that the exchange that characterizes an astrology consultation is an expression of this type of junction.

In our world today, “perhaps most elusive of all, yet most important a source of internal guidance for each of us, is our continued monitoring of our life experience regarding its experience of meaning” (Hollis, 2020, p. 108). Many humans are experiencing “a loss of meaning, the loss of a bigger picture in which to locate one’s journey” (Hollis, 2020, p. 118) and thus struggle to thrive in our ever-changing world. Astrology affords people an opportunity for people to engage with a numinous aspect of themselves to direct meaning for their experiences.

Meaning-making is a theme that emerged directly from the study’s initial findings and is part of the theory that emerged from the study. This was reflected in the final Astrology & Self-Discovery Constellation (Figure 3) with the orange-colored word placed next to the original.

Self-Knowledge and Depth Psychology

The data in this study show that astrology is a practice that helps people connect with unconscious aspects of themselves and helps individuals to know themselves more deeply. Depth psychology is the field of study that explores the unconscious aspects of the human experience and psychological conditions and is concerned with exploring the subtle and transpersonal aspects of human experience. The practice of depth psychology and its main components is attributed namely to the contributions of psychologist Carl Jung (1960) whose work explored the nature of dreams, complexes, and archetypes and includes a construct, or map, of the human psyche.

Psychotherapist James Hollis (2020) wrote, “Depth psychology differs from other forms of the discipline in that it is an effort to approach the whole person, to undertake dialogue with the essential mystery we all embody” and this requires engaging with the unconscious. Hollis (2020) adds, to limit ourselves by only recognizing the physical features of life “is a failure of nerve to take on the larger, nonquantifiable questions of meaning” (p. 23). Depth psychology understands

that the goal of life is not happiness but meaning and that to acquire meaning requires an effort to dialogue with ourselves more deeply than ego consciousness (Hollis, 2020).

All the astrologers in the study, and most of the client participants spoke about the nature of the ego in our interviews together. Astrologer Debbie stated, “Astrology helps you to transcend the terrible world of the ego.” The dysfunction of the ego part of our personalities, which is often explored in astrology readings, is mostly because people are not aware it exists or how it functions and because they are unaware that they exist beyond their conscious egos (i.e., there are unconscious contents influencing their psyches). Carl Jung (2006) claimed:

Most people confuse ‘self-knowledge’ with knowledge of their conscious ego personalities. Anyone who has ego consciousness at all take it for granted that he knows himself. But the ego only knows its own contents, not the unconscious and its contents. People measure their self-knowledge by what the average person in their social environment knows of himself, but not by the real psychic facts which are for the most part hidden from them. (p. 6)

There are many reasons why self-knowledge is very difficult because man is an enigma to himself. Jung (2006) stated, “There is and can be no self-knowledge based on theoretical assumptions, for the object of self-knowledge is an individual—a relative exception and an irregular phenomenon” (p. 6). He also said, “knowledge is needed to acquaint consciousness with what is known of the body, not to speak of all that is *not* known, which also exists” (Jung, 2006, p. 6). Based on the data in this study, astrology seems to provide an avenue through which people can engage in both the known and unknown aspects of themselves and develop self-knowledge.

Carl Jung (2006) claimed that most people are afraid of dealing with the unconscious aspects of themselves and that the fear of the unconscious psyche impedes self-knowledge and is an obstacle to a wider understanding of the practice of psychology at large (p. 50). He claimed that so many people are distracted from their own inner world by external stimuli to develop such knowledge. He said,

The development of the self acquires a significance whose full implications have hardly begun to be appreciated, because too much attention to external blocks the way to immediate inner experience. Were not the autonomy of the individual a secret longing of many people, this hard-pressed phenomenon would scarcely be able to survive the collective suppression either morally or spiritually. (p. 49)

Astrology, like psychology is a way of helping people explore the unconscious parts of the human psyche. Furthermore, astrology is not the only practice that challenges the paradigm of empirical science. Exploring the psyche by other means, like with depth psychology, challenges empiricism too. Carl Jung (2006) explained, “Most of the natural sciences try to represent the results of their investigations as though these had come into existence without man’s intervention in such a way that the collaboration of the psyche—an indispensable factor— remains invisible” (p. 11). He claimed:

Scientific education is based, in the main, on statistical truths and abstract knowledge and therefore imparts an unrealistic, rational picture of the world, in which the individual is merely a marginal phenomenon, plays no role. The individual, however, as an irrational datum, is the true and authentic carrier of reality (Jung, 2006, p. 11).

Jung believed that consciousness, which is inherent in every human being, was a precondition for being, and because of this, the psyche and its functions deserved to be considered not only as the ground for one's reality, but also "worthy of all the attention we can give it" (Jung, 2006, p. 82).

One study participant, Michele, was a licensed psychotherapist and astrologer who is trained in the traditions of depth psychology. She spoke at length about how her practice is not only enhanced, but based, on the use of astrology. According to Hollis (2020), the word *psychotherapy* means "to listen to or attend to the soul" (p. 93). Thus, the work we do to attend the soul's intent is called "healing" (p. 93). Michele described herself as a "healer" and shared that the way she heals is getting people to "change their internal dialogue" by exploring their psyche's unconscious contents and connecting to the soul.

The data in the study indicates that astrology, a self-discovery tool, can also be used for healing, namely by addressing the part of the human psyche known as the shadow. The shadow is a term coined by Carl Jung (2006) to describe the unconscious side of the ego's operations of intending, willing, and defending. Jung claimed the shadow is an aspect that within most individuals "is normally denied whenever possible or at least not spoken of" (p. 93). "When individuals are unconscious of their shadow side, great disturbance result. And because Western man is so prevented from looking at the individual life within, he projects his shadow externally onto others" (Jung, 2006, p. 63). If an individual can make their shadow contents "become conscious and integrated," (Stein, 1998, p. 108) then it will not unconsciously be projected onto others.

Carl Jung (2006) claimed, “Ego consciousness would like to let its own will play [the role of the directing principle of an individual’s life] but overlooks the existence of powerful unconscious factors that thwart its intentions” (pp. 60-61). This unconscious factor, which “our age thinks of as the ‘shadow’ and inferior part of the psyche contains more than something merely negative” (Jung, 2006, p. 107). However, it has the potential for helping someone access true self-knowledge through conscious awareness.

Hollis stated, “The Shadow represents those elements, energies, and agendas in us or in our affiliative associations that, when brought to consciousness, contradict our professed values...the Shadow embodies the contrarian dimensions of our souls” (Hollis, 2020, p. 126). Jung claimed that it was our obsession with rationality that keeps us from knowing our true selves. He said:

Our rational philosophy does not bother itself with whether the other person in us, pejoratively described as the “shadow,” is in sympathy with our conscious plans and intentions. Evidently it does not know that we carry in ourselves a real shadow whose existence is grounded in our instinctual nature (p. 81).

“There is an unconscious psychic reality which demonstrably influences consciousness and its contents” (Jung, 2006, p. 81). The data in this study indicates that astrology is a tool for helping individuals investigate and explore this psychic reality within themselves.

Data in this study also referred to the process that Jung referred to as individuation. Individuation is defined as “becoming a unified but also unique personality, an individual, and undivided and integrated person” (Stein, 1998, p. 175). For Jung, individuation is the experience of an entire lifetime where the Self emerges in psychological structure and in consciousness.

Astrologer Deb and client participant Gertrude, specifically, spoke about the process of discovering oneself as an individual and how astrology can support that process.

In his book *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic*, psychologist and philosopher Erich Neumann (1969) asserted that there is a world of psychospiritual reality that lies beneath the ego construct: the deep Self. He explains that the deep Self seeks through choice and that it often requires painful suffering of inner conflict to lead people to understanding their own deep Self (Neumann, 1949).

According to the data in the study, one of the appeals to astrology is the opportunity to get to know oneself from a new perspective; the perspective of one's true Self. On reflecting upon the power of depth psychology—although, it could easily be asked of astrology—James Hollis (2020) asks:

“If we had access to a wise sage who knew us better than we know ourselves, was invested in our well-being and in our taking greater ownership of our journeys, would it not make sense to seek the advice of that sage? The Self that transcends ego-consciousness *is* that sage, and it offers us that locus of personal authority.” (p. 26)

This body of knowledge connects to the grounded theory presented, specifically because a major theme that emerged is the relationship between the conscious and subconscious which is the domain of depth psychology.

Transformative Learning

Jack Mezirow's theory of transformative learning is a useful framework for understanding the phenomenon of astrological practice. Transformative Learning Theory is a description of a

“learning process by which the subject moves from an unexamined way of thinking to a more examined and critically reflective way and hence more dependable way of interpreting meaning” (Mezirow, 1999). The reason transformational learning is such a powerful framework for considering the phenomenon of an astrological reading is because the framework provides individuals with the opportunity to self-examine their existing paradigms and unexamined assumptions, which, according to the data in the study, astrology promotes.

Mezirow (1978) first applied the label transformation in his study of U.S. women returning to postsecondary study or work after extended time away from those contexts.

Mezirow’s rendering of transformative learning emphasized the importance and centrality of experience, understanding one’s frame of reference, the role of disorienting dilemma, the importance of critical reflection and critical self-reflection, the role of discourse, and of dialogue in communicating with others (Calleja, 2014, p.120).

For Mezirow (1996), learning was primarily about the process of an individual using prior interpretation to revise and reintegrate the meaning of their experience through which will later guide future action. Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning has been influenced by Kuhn’s (1962) paradigm and Habermas’s (1971, 1984) domains of learning.

Kuhn’s (1962) conception of paradigm provides the basis for Mezirow’s framework for transformative learning. The paradigm became known as frames of reference in Mezirow’s theory to describe the “unconscious filters which form the ‘boundary structures’ for perceiving and comprehending” (Calleja, 2014). Bowers (1984) describes a frame of reference comprising of “habits of the mind and meaning perspectives, which in turn lead to a perspective transformation by making explicit the message system that enables us to reformulate a constraining frame of

reference.” The perspective transformation described in Mezirow’s theory refers to the change that occurs that alters an individual’s meaning structures and is central to his conception of adult learning. All the study participants described how astrology shifts a person’s perspectives in many different areas of their lives, thus the conception of paradigm is a useful basis for understanding astrological practice.

Jurgen Habermas’s conception of communicative action is another major influence in Mezirow’s theory and, additionally, helps to explain a facet of the experience of astrological readings. Habermas’s (1984) conception of communicative action, which is central to his emancipatory interest in learning, is described in the following:

Communicative action allows human beings to interact with the world around them, with other people, and with oneself (with one’s intentions, feelings, and desires) and thus the validity of what is said, implied, or presupposed is of utmost importance for communication to persist and to allow meaning perspectives to affect the validation process and be transformed. (p. 123)

The theory of communicative action is based on the idea that language, and the linguistic structures of communication, establish a normative understanding of reality. For Habermas, the key to understanding meaning perspectives and allowing people to interpret their experience of the lifeworld, is through language. “Only through critically reflecting on one’s actions (communicative practice) is the power of the lifeworld diminished” (Calleja, 2014, p. 125). This critical discourse is just what the process of an astrology sessions affords those who seek it.

To this point, I have already discussed the challenge presented with studying astrology, namely that it confronts well-accepted notions of empiricism. And while I believe I have

sufficiently addressed this, by Habermas's conception, this would be a moot point because, he argues, it is language that creates the social world. As such, the practice of astrology, in which people are communicating and understanding meaning for themselves, could be a valid perspective of reality, even if not considered empirical in nature. In fact, one could argue that the practice of astrology is an emancipatory act against hegemonic influences.

Mezirow's theory, grounded in the aforementioned traditions, "espouses a process of transformation, which leads the learner from a moment of disorientation to a moment of transformative self-reflection that results in a perspective transformation" (Calleja, 2014, p. 129). Study participants Melanie, Linda, Amy, Courtney, Gertrude, and Gary all described a process of inner transformation that took place during the course of their astrology readings with astrologers. They each described, in their own ways, how they dealt with initial disorientation as they discovered new things about themselves that required eventual integration. In this way, their experiences having astrology readings provided the ground for transformative learning to occur.

Transformative learning gives a perspective on the theme of making sense of change in the theory.

Liminality

An important concept for understanding transformative learning theory, Theory U, the conceptual framework employed by this study, and the practice of astrology, is the concept of liminality. Liminality is described by Turner (1979) as a state of 'between-ness' applying to individuals on the verge of a different state of being. According to Hawkins and Edwards (2015) "occupying liminality has a potentially transformational effect on the self." They assert "the liminal context here is vital because it provides a place in which [people] can experiment with

ideologies, identities, and practices that differ from those they employ teleologically in their lives" (Hawkins & Edwards, 2015, p. 34).

Hawkins and Edwards (2015) investigated liminality within a leadership learning context, and they assert that an important component of harnessing liminality for transformative purposes is dealing with threshold concepts—concepts that have not previously been accessible (Hawkins & Edwards, 2015). Threshold concepts have the potential to cause 'perspective transformation' (Mezirow, 1991); that is, new ways of knowing through the integration of newly conceptualized understandings and assumptions with understanding from previous experiences. "Threshold concepts are, therefore, helpful tools, which facilitate perspective transformation by encouraging acceptance of and familiarity with the incoherence that is common and, [Hawkins and Edwards (2015) argue], necessary to ... experience and practice of leadership" (p. 35). Hawkins and Edwards (2015) claim, "Navigating threshold concepts enables students to become comfortable with doubt and the existence of contrasting ways of thinking, knowing, doing, and being (p. 39). From a liminal perspective, by engaging people in discussion over threshold concepts, they can access new understandings that lead to self-transformation (Hawkins & Edwards, 2015).

One of the themes in the grounded theory is making sense of change. Liminality provides a perspective on this important theme.

Wisdom

Wisdom, and its application are important for understanding the nature of astrology, as indicated in the study's data, and for understanding Theory U. Varying definitions of wisdom exist in academic literature. However, prominent definitions include a focus on expert knowledge including insight, judgment, and advice (Baltes & Staudinger, 1993), the application of

intelligence, creativity, and knowledge mediated by values (Sternberg, 2007), and cognitive, affective, and reflective aspects (Ardelt, 2003). Walsh (2012) defines wisdom as “a function of deep, accurate insight and understanding of the central existential issues of life, plus practical skill in responding effectively and benevolently” (p. 16). In this definition, Walsh distinguishes between *phronesis*, an applied, practical wisdom; and *sophia*, a more subjective and intuitive wisdom (2012). The data in this study indicate that the practice of astrology is about applying knowledge and wisdom from both practical and subjective perspectives.

One theory helpful for understanding both the dimensions and the practice of wisdom is Bassett’s (2005) model of emergent wisdom. Bassett (2011) defines wisdom as “having sufficient awareness in various situations and contexts to act in ways that enhance our common humanity.” The model begins with four dimensions that include discerning, respecting, engaging, and reflecting (or transforming). Each dimension contains a chief descriptor that gives specificity to each quality as well as a set of corresponding proficiencies that “represent skilled and practiced behaviors and attitudes” (Bassett, 2005). Additionally, each dimension indicates ways in which it manifests itself in a person’s engagement, or involvement, and approach to life. Finally, each dimension contains a stimulus or question that, according to Bassett, “must become part of one’s psyche” in order to spark, probe, and stretch one’s own development through constant self-questioning at the threshold of each dimension. The four dimensions of Bassett’s Emergent Wisdom model includes:

1. *Discerning*: the ability to see a situation with as little distortion and projection as possible. The chief descriptor in this dimension is seeing objectively, from a postmodern sense of the meaning, or reality, we’ve self-authored (Bassett, 2005; Kegan, 2003)

2. *Respecting*: openness to include affective understanding which helps to achieve a more complete view of the situation. This requires stepping away from “from my own subjectivity and assumptions – so that I can act in ways that enhance our common humanity” (Bassett, 2015, p. 142).
3. *Engaging*: how a person chooses to act or become involved. Engaging asks us to turn our gaze outward and ask ourselves, “What guides my actions? To what ends are my actions directed?”, and take action based on adept decision-making, fairness, justice, and moral courage.
4. *Integrating*: realizing we are part of a much larger whole by inviting each of us into ourselves, to the center of our self and our values. As we integrate the previous dimensions of discerning, respecting, and engaging, we expand our sphere of consideration and see beyond our narrow self-interest to then transcend into more collective and universal needs, issues, and concerns. The manifestation of this level of integrity, self-knowledge, and self-acceptance allows us as individuals to embrace paradoxes and uncertainty and appreciate the interdependence of individuals and systems (Bassett, 2015).

What is notable about Bassett’s Emergent Wisdom theory is the connection between its components and the stages presented in Theory U (2016), which lays the conceptual foundation for this study. In the third stage—engaging—Emergent Wisdom Theory also addresses the “inner place” of one’s actions. In Theory U, this is referred to by Scharmer (2016) as “the source from which we operate” and is included in one of the research questions guiding this study. While Scharmer (2016) outlines a sequence of a methodology for conscious change-making, Bassett (2005) offers the interior capacities leaders require to access deeper aspects of Self. These

capacities are just what is necessary, particularly in the *presencing* stage of Theory U in which an individual (or a group) must engage in the process of “letting go” to “let come.”

Another significant component of Bassett’s (2005) theory is that wisdom is something that must become part of one’s psyche through a process of self-reflection. The data in this study illustrates that astrology has an ability to help people self-reflect in important ways. Emergent Wisdom Theory also recognizes the subjectivity “of the realities we self-author” which is necessary when thinking about the utility of astrology as a practice of self-discovery, as already previously discussed.

Bassett (2005b) claims that transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000) can provide a means to strive toward wisdom. Because wisdom is a developmental process, transformative learning, whose major purpose is to create “a deep structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions...a shift in consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world” (O’Sullivan et al., 2002, p. xvii), becomes a major tool for fostering the growth of wisdom.

Bassett (2005a) argues that when developing the capacity for wisdom, most schools of thought that approach wisdom through intellectual functioning are often missing things about individual wisdom development, namely: knowledge regarding the context of life, knowledge which considers relativism of values and life goals, and knowledge which considers the uncertainties of life. These are all things that the data in this study have characterized as part of the nature of astrology.

Contrary to intellectual notions of wisdom, Emergent Wisdom views “wisdom as an aspect of post-formal development” (Bassett, 2005a, p. 2). Wisdom is framed as exceptional self-

development, including ego maturity and post-formal operational thinking (Cook-Greuter, 2000). Post-formal development is often associated with a decentering of the ego and the ability to think dialectically, wherein an individual is able to integrate various aspects of the psyche and accept inherent contradictions and alternate truths (Becvar, 2005; Kramer, 2000; Labouvie-Vief, 2000). In the Emergent Wisdom model, the person recognizes himself or herself as a larger part of the whole, which requires a more sophisticated understanding of the world. According to Bassett (2005b), this necessitates transformative learning, among other means, to bring about the complexity the development of wisdom requires.

Wisdom directly connects with the first theme of self-discovery in the theory that emerged from the study.

Transcendence

In his essay *The Over-Soul*, transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1841) outlines his belief in a higher-power (God) who resides in each of us and with whom we all can communicate without the need for a religious authority as intermediary. This perspective was evidenced in the data of this study as none of the study participants said they practiced religion, yet all of them felt spiritually connected through astrology. He offers the following concerning human transcendence; the connection between human and that which is greater:

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist, and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the

act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one (Emerson, 1841).

In his work *Human Transcendence: The Possibility of Spiritual Irredentism* (2019), Raymond Tallis (2019) asserts that transcendence is part of our nature as human beings; a fundamental value that “resides in our humanity” (p. 84). According to Tallis (2019), something that is transcendent “exceeds usual limits or extends or lies beyond the limits of ordinary experience.” Tallis claims that the term ‘transcendence’ from theological and humanistic perspectives can refer to relating to universal existence by overcoming material existence; “it is our awareness of our own extra-natural nature, our difference or distance from the world in which we find ourselves, that furnishes us with the sense of a supernatural...existence” (Tallis, 2019, p. 85). While some might consider transcendence as an experience reserved for a select few, accessible only to the devout and the spiritually enlightened, by Tallis’ explanation, transcendence is a human ability common in all people because of our innate ability to exceed what is available to our physical perceptions alone.

Transcendence is a way for individuals to access what is at the edge of one’s consciousness to derive meaning for our lives. Paloutzian et al. (2003) claim “we are creatures who strive to fulfill a sense of meaning for whatever we feel is important, something to which we can contribute and that will perhaps endure after we die” (p. 124). Nullens (2019) argues that “the experience of calling and purpose presuppose a transcendental act which lifts us up beyond our own capacities and helps us overcome our selfish ego” (p. 203).

As human beings, we have the need for transcendence built into our psychological makeup, often expressing itself as what is commonly called "spirituality" (Paloutzian et al., 2003,

p. 124). Paloutzian et al. (2003) explain that the need for transcendence is "a need for purpose, and a built-in tendency toward spirituality that is part of what makes a person human" (p 124).

While some refer to transcendence as a spiritual experience, others define transcendence simply as an experience of human life that exists separate from the human body. French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty asserts that transcendence "refers to the aspects of humans which are seemingly unbound by material corporeality" (Ladkin, 2010, p. 58). In describing Merleau-Ponty's concept of transcendence, Ladkin (2010) offers that "the animating force of the human body for instance, can be described as 'transcendent,' as can the human capabilities of imagination, intention, rationality and consciousness. They seemingly move beyond and independent of the physical body" (Ladkin, 2010, p. 58). Despite not having bodily forms, these moments of transcendence illustrate the ways in which human experience happens outside of human physicality.

Philosophers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Theodore Parker, among others, wrote extensively about transcendentalism in 19th century America in response to religious and intellectual debates of the day. The transcendentalists urged that each person find, in Emerson's words, "an original relation to the universe" (Emerson, 1990, p. 3). Even today, in western societies, many people still do not recognize the power of the innate human ability to transcend corporeality. From a western perspective, the concept of transcendence is foreign to many because of a collective disconnection from the natural world and the greater cosmos. On discussing his experiences in rural Indonesia and Nepal, David Abram asserts that "nonhuman nature can be perceived and experienced with far more intensity and nuance than is generally acknowledged in the West" (Abram, 2017, p. 27). He further argues the following:

[We] can hardly be surprised that our civilized eyes and ears are somewhat more oblivious to the existence of perspectives that are not human at all, or that a person either entering into or returning to the West from a nonindustrial culture would feel startled and confused by the felt absence of nonhuman powers (p.28).

To understand our transcendent selves is to understand a greater purpose in connection with that which is not human, or human-made. It is a need to honor a part of what makes us human by entering into a relationship with that which is beyond human corporeality to build greater coherence around our human experience. Based on the study's data, this is the type of experience—an experience of coming into relationship with a deeper, cosmic Self—that characterizes the experience of an astrology reading.

Transcendence is related to the theme of one's conscious and subconscious that is presented as part of the theory in this study.

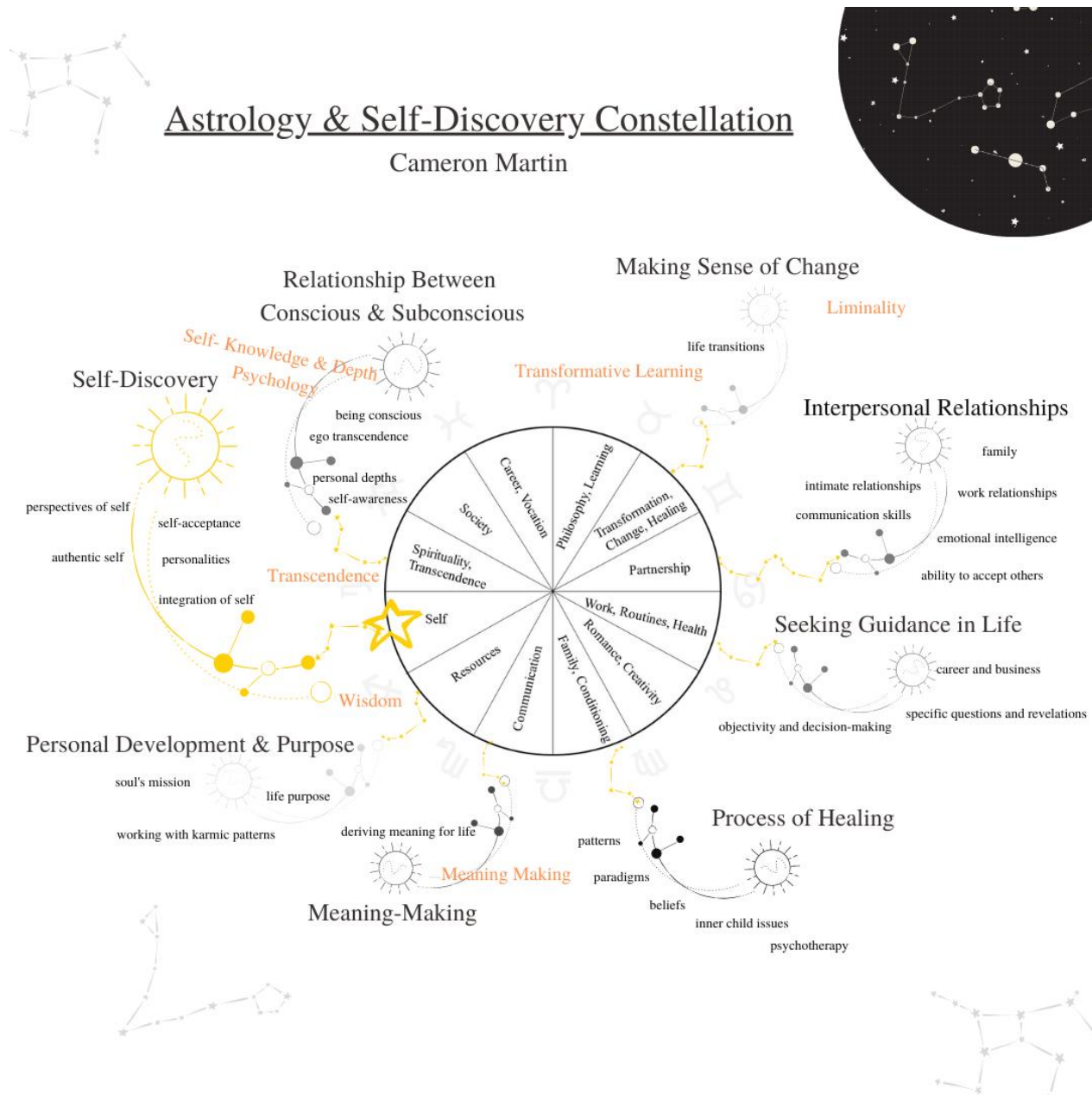
Theory Summary

The data in this study, from questionnaires, interviews, horoscopes, and literature constellate around eight major themes. As was described in Chapter 3, an initial diagram was constructed to illustrate these connections. Figure 3 is an updated, final diagram of the study's findings after the inclusion of literature.

In the final figure, the constellated themes were placed around a horoscope. Connections were drawn between the themes and generally-accepted meanings of the houses in astrology. In the final figure, the related literature (in orange) was added around the major themes to draw the connections between the data from questionnaires, interviews, and horoscopes with the data from literature review in the study visually.

Figure 3

Astrology & Self-Discovery Constellation (Final)



CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This exploratory study investigated the potential use of astrological knowledge as a framework for promoting self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-development, and the extent to which such a toolset influences changes in an individual's "Self." This study aimed to explore astrological practice in its current context by those who engage with it.

I addressed the following questions in this study:

1. How is astrology practiced today as a form of self-discovery and self-development?
2. What types of self-knowledge do study participants claim to acquire from astrological consultations?
3. To what extent, if at all, does astrology appear to help people understand the sources from which they act and how might astrology influence our understanding of self-discovery and self-development practices?

This chapter contains a discussion between the study's findings and leadership, limitations and delimitations, significance of the study, recommendations for future research, lessons learned from the research, and the conclusion.

Connections Between Astrology and Leadership

The data in this study indicate that astrology is a useful tool for self-discovery, for understanding interpersonal relationships, for understanding our subconscious, for healing, for meaning-making in times of change, and for personal development. Astrology also promotes the discovery of one's self and has many other uses, according to study participants, outside of the specified context of self-discovery. These include using astrology in business to guide leaders, to

help people learn about teams and relationship dynamics, and to consult about important timing for making strategic decisions. While these findings were not the most prevalent themes in the data, these findings may help us to understand new perspectives on leadership.

“What are the connections between astrology and leadership?” In this section, I will attempt to answer this question by presenting emerging theories of leadership that are related to the study’s findings. While this study’s findings are primarily about the potential developments in self-discovery and self-awareness through the practice of astrology, which do contribute to our overall understanding of self-development, and thus, leadership, the findings do not suggest a strong contribution to any specific leadership theory. However, the connections that are present imply the potential for future research agendas. The data in this study illustrate themes that are present in spiritual leadership, personal leadership, leadership as a process of sense and meaning-making, Donna Ladkin’s (2010) leadership moment, and embodied leadership (Barentsen, 2019).

Spiritual Leadership

Joke van Saane (2019) argued that there is a paradoxical development within leadership theories: “The growth of social constructionist theories on leadership with a strong focus on both leaders and followers” (p. 42) and the “call for strong leadership with a focus on skills and traits of the leader.” (p. 42). Van Saane (2019) claimed that this paradox, of trait-based leadership and process-based leadership can be overcome when the paradigms of spirituality are taken into account (p. 43).

Van Saane (2019) defines spirituality as “the constant search for meaning, from an open attitude, with a focus on sustainability and credibility, rooted in self-knowledge and in the desire for growth and development” (p. 47). It is from this same perspective that I understand spirituality

and, furthermore, the same perspective that the data in this study recognizes astrology as a tool for spiritual development.

While spirituality has become part of the canon of leadership theories, namely in theories on Spiritual Leadership (Fry, 2003), Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), and Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1996), the focus of such theories is mostly based on the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational culture, not necessarily the expression of spirituality (as a practice or way of being for its own purpose). Additionally, these theories have sometimes become invisible among the dominance of other leadership theories.

Van Saane (2019) names a number of characteristic aspects, which he says, “are useful to explore when we relate spirituality to leadership” (p. 47). They are:

- Spirituality is about the search for meaning.
- Truth can only be personal truth. It should not only be found but constructed by the seeker.
- Searching is more important than finding.
- Dealing with difficulties requires openness for the self.
- Within spirituality, one can grow in attention and awareness.

From these aspects, Van Saane (2019) argues that spirituality offers building blocks necessary for effective leadership (p. 48). These building blocks, as he describes them are also reflected in the findings in this study about the practice of astrology. The first building block is self-knowledge, which is required for knowing others. Without the knowledge of one’s strengths, weaknesses, and how one’s personal experiences influence behavior, an individual will not be able to effectively lead others. Self-knowledge, in combination with an acceptance of self, affords

people the second building block, self-confidence, needed to lead. Spirituality provides norms and values, without which leadership will fail. Leaders must be able to self-reflect (the third building block) and learn from choices made, experiences, and perspectives, in a continuous process of growth and development so that others are stimulated. Finally, the last core element of spirituality as a building block for leadership is imagination. This element includes the creative and intuitive thinking necessary to rise above everyday perspectives and create visions for what is possible.

The data in this study reveal the potential that astrology has to support the unfolding of self-knowledge, the development of one's self-confidence through self-acceptance, and the transcending beyond people's original perspectives to know themselves in a new way.

Personal Leadership

Joke van Saane (2019) provides a promising concept to fill the gap between leadership and spirituality: personal leadership. "Personal leadership can be defined as knowing yourself, having grip on yourself, on your personal environment, on your life as a whole" (van Saane, 2019, p. 53). Personal leadership requires learning, especially forms of engaged or integrated learning, and connects society, leadership, and spirituality in a coherent framework.

The self-exploratory nature of an astrological reading, as illustrated in the study's data, encourages participants to define for themselves who they are, how they relate to their immediate experience, and the life story of their soul.

There are three aspects of personal leadership that require further research (van Saane, 2019, p. 53). The first aspect is transformative learning which provides opportunities for self-reflection, self-examination, and options for constructing meaning to life. The second aspect is self-directedness in learning which informs an individual's self-awareness, which is then shared

with others. The third and last aspect of personal leadership is wisdom. The core of personal leadership is “being able to see both the own interests and the interests of others in a specific context” (van Saane, 2019, p. 54). Mezirow’s (2012) transformative learning theory is heavily referenced in the concept of personal leadership and was also one of the bodies of literature that emerged as data in this study. Wisdom was another theme that emerged in the data.

Leadership as Sense and Meaning-Making

The conceptualization of leadership as a dynamic process between leaders and followers, in which meaning and interpretation arise, fits into the scientific paradigm of social construction (van Saane, 2019). Leadership is created through perception, contextual factors, characteristics of observers/followers, and characteristics of leaders, among a myriad of other factors. While this context sometimes problematizes leadership, it offers opportunities for leadership beyond the person of the leader (van Saane, 2019). “If social construction is taken seriously, leadership is a form of sense-making” (van Saane, 2019, p. 51).

John Eliastam (2018) describes this constructionist process of sense-making as “discursive leadership,” which is based on the social construction of meaning negotiated by humans in order to make sense of our realities. “From a social constructionist perspective, leadership is a product of collective meaning-making within a sociohistorical context. Leadership is continuously negotiated and co-constructed through a complex interplay among various leadership actors, including designated leaders, emerging leaders, and their followers” (Eliastam, 2018, p. 41). Therefore, leadership, is a social activity that involves defining reality and making sense of it (Eliastam, 2018). In a similar way, the practice of astrology is a social activity of meaning making that helps individuals define and navigate their reality.

Eliastam (2018) proposes the term “transversal narrativity” to describe the process of creating new meanings as new stories intersect with dominant narratives. He asserts that “discursive leadership is a performance of transversal narrativity” (Eliastam, 2018, p. 45).

Conceived this way, the task of leadership is to facilitate the social processes of meaning-making and problem-solving by telling new stories that intersect with existing dominant narratives, but simultaneously challenge or unsettle them. Leadership is concerned with the creation of new meanings and new possibilities for action. New meanings and new possibilities for action are made possible by the introduction of new stories. (Eliastam, 2018, p. 45)

Perhaps the greatest potential with astrology as a meaning-making process is that it challenges existing narratives while intersecting with them, encouraging people to create new stories of themselves for them to align with.

Leadership Moment

Donna Ladkin (2010) offers a novel way of conceptualizing the experience of leadership in what she defines as leadership moments. She describes the idea of a leadership moment in the following:

Leadership emerges from a collective process created through the confluence of a particular situation or context, people involved in that process who take up roles as ‘leader’ or ‘followers’ and a purpose to which their collective action is directed. In it, each aspect plays an important role in the leadership experience. This model arises from an understanding of leadership as a ‘moment,’ explained by phenomenology as the kind of

entity which cannot be separated from the context from which it arises. In fact, its very appearance is totally dependent upon that context. (Ladkin, 2010, p. 177-178)

According to her definition, the experience of an astrology reading creates a space for a type of leadership to occur—a leadership moment—where either member can contribute to and exercise a major impact on the co-created leadership moment. "As a 'moment' of social relations, leadership is wholly dependent on the historical, social, and psychological context from which it arises" (Ladkin, 2010, p. 27). Astrology readings are wholly dependent on a particular type of psychological contact between two people. Those engaged in the phenomenon must attend to the specific moment and experience its richness in order to derive meaning.

Ladkin (2010) posits that leadership arises out of different social constructions and it is appreciated for its “ability to hold a psychological space in which dialogue between people who hold vastly different views can occur” (p. 32). Based on the data in the study, one can understand the experience of an astrology reading as a moment of leadership in which the astrologer holds psychological space for their clients. While only one study participant, Allie, ever used the term “leader” to describe an astrologer, five others described how one of the main responsibilities of an astrologer to hold space for the potential of self-discovery and self-awareness to emerge.

Ladkin’s (2010) concept of a leadership moment is based on Merleau-Ponty’s conception of ‘flesh.’ Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty published his most well-known work *The Phenomenology of Perception* in 1945. In it, he presents a radical form of perception which includes two concepts: *immanence* referring to the “embodied, present, material aspects of humanness”—the physical aspects of life—and *transcendence*, referring to “the aspects of humans which are seemingly unbound by corporeality” (Ladkin, 2010, p. 58). A concept presented in his work is the notion of ‘flesh,’ the space between immanence and transcendence; between physical

ways of being and animated ways of being. I offer that Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'flesh,' as the carrier of immanence and transcendence, is a useful construct for considering what the experience of an astrological consultation is all about. Ladkin (2010) argues that the "the concept of 'flesh' might provide a way of conceptualizing the 'middle space' between 'leaders' and 'followers'...indicative of a truly relational view of leadership (p. 65). I assert that 'flesh' is the energetic middle space between and our physical reality and transcendent reality; the medium through which humans can even experience an astrology reading.

According to Ladkin (2010), "'flesh' is that from which the possibility of experience itself springs. Without the interconnection which is made possible through the medium of 'flesh' any phenomenon—from astrology consultations to leadership—could not exist" (p. 71). "Such a construction highlights that although the in-between space is completely dependent on the entities which constitute the relationship, that relationship has a dynamism which is more than just the combination of entities which comprise it (Ladkin, 2010, p. 71). The interaction itself has a life of its own created between the individuals' dialogue.

Merleau-Ponty's conceptualization is useful for understanding the practice of astrology because this phenomenon is characterized by the relationality between individuals engaged in a meaning-making activity with each other and with the cosmos. According to Ladkin (2010), "relationality is at the nub of Merleau-Ponty's way of conceptualizing the world of things, including human bodies. It is not the separate entities which are of prime significance in his view but the relationship between them" (p. 61). I posit an extension of Merleau-Ponty's concept to include both the relationships of bodies to one another and the relationships of such bodies to the Cosmos/Spirit/God, which characterizes astrological interactions, to fully realize his concept.

Embodied Leadership

For humans, there appear to be two main ways of knowing, one driven by logic and the other by intuition. The concept of embodiment brings these two ways together (Barentsen, 2019, p. 119). Based on the philosophy of “embodied realism” as outlined by Merleau-Ponty, embodiment is the foundation for any knowledge, scientific or spiritual, because our bodies are the vessel through which we interface with the world and learn. Thus, “embodiment” is a useful tool for “deepening our understanding of spirituality, the practices of discernment and of leadership” (Barentsen, 2019, p. 122).

David Holzmer (2013) offers a three-part conceptual framework for understanding leadership as embodied leadership in times of change. The first concept, “liminality,” focuses on experiences of “disruption and upheaval” which leaders can use “as an important and necessary condition ... to construct new narratives” (Holzmer 2013, pp. 49–50). This liminal space holding, comparable to the concept of a “holding environment” adaptive leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009) indicates physical and embodied features so that people are supported through liminality. The holding space acts as an embodied experience of being held together. I assert that this holding space is analogous also to the concept of “presencing” at the bottom of the U in Theory U, which served as the theoretical framework for this study.

Holzmer’s second concept is “performance,” which relates to how leaders present themselves and their bodies in relation to how their bodies are experienced by subordinates. Finally, Holzmer’s third concept, “dialogue,” focuses on how leaders create “communicative space between people” so that the “transformative process” of dialogue can yield fruit (Holzmer 2013, pp. 57–58). Holzmer illustrates how leadership is an essentially embodied process of which

discernment and dialogue are vital components. Barentsen (2019) summarizes that “leadership can be seen as the embodied performance of providing a safe holding environment amidst liminality in order to enable people to cope, to be transformed and to develop a new sense of personal and social identity” (p. 119). According to the study’s data, astrology affords people a similar holding environment, within their constantly evolving lives, that has the potential of helping them to understand themselves more fully.

Limitations and Delimitations

Because this study employs a qualitative methodology, the findings of this study will not be generalizable, in a statistical sense. The practice of astrology is highly contextual—experienced within its own dynamic context—and thus, each interaction is not replicable. Curry and Willis (2004) wrote:

Since both the astrologer and/or the client bring a complex set of values, assumptions, problems, and strategies to *every* such situation, there is no such thing as repetition; and since it is impossible to ascertain algorithmically which of all these factors are ever important, that point is true not just trivially but substantively. (p. 97)

As a result, findings may not be easily generalized into other contexts. Given the current limited empirical evidence investigating astrology as a tool for self-discovery, it does not seem likely that a different, more generalizable design is even possible. The findings, in other words, have the potential to be at least somewhat transferrable.

The lack of previous research studies on the topic was another limitation in this study. Since there were few studies to pull from, grounded theory was the most appropriate methodology

for studying this topic. This challenged me particularly with literature review and eventual literature integration. I knew, however, that making connections to different bodies of literature, no matter how interdisciplinary they were, was necessary to help ground and contextualize the findings in this study.

Another limitation in this study is the relative utility of a horoscope for data collection (aside from document analysis). While in this study's context—complete with its specific research questions and my unique position as researcher—it was useful. But in other contexts, especially where researchers do not have the skills to interpret such a chart, its utility may not translate. However, within this context it was valuable, illustrating a unique context-specific tool (i.e., a tool used by the practitioner of something being studied as a data collection tool) used in qualitative research design.

A final limitation concerns the choice of sampling design. The snowball, or chain, sampling that was employed in this study, could have influenced and skewed the types of participants in the study. Since the astrologers were asked to connect me to client participants, it could be easily assumed that the likelihood of connecting me with an unhappy client or one who was very critical of astrology was low. It could be assumed that with this design, there was a greater likelihood that the astrologers would connect me with satisfied clients, which provided rich description, but might also have limited the number of contrary viewpoints presented in the data. However, in this grounded theory study, I am not sure another sampling design could have been possible to access willing and appropriate participants. Also, the underrepresentation of men in the study might have had an impact on the data as well. I do not know the difference this would

have made, but there is potential that men and women might experience astrological readings in different ways.

The study is delimited primarily by the choice I have made in the use literature. I did not conduct an extensive literature review prior to the commencement of the study. Literature was only used in the beginning to the extent necessary to frame the study and then, in agreement with the generally accepted notion in grounded theory methodology to limit literature review prior to a study, was not explored further until themes emerged from data collection. The literature review is thus delimited conceptually and not contextually. According to Christiansen (2011), “conceptual delimiting means comparing emergent concepts—substantiative codes, theoretical codes, conceptual hypotheses—to pre-existent concepts and hypotheses in existing literature” (p. 24). In this sense, the compared literature is seen as new “data” to constantly compare to the emergent theory, that might benefit from a different perspective. (Christiansen, 2011).

Significance of the Study

While the demands of knowing one’s self is significant to leadership in emerging contexts, the study of *self* and the ways in which individuals engage in self-awareness activities is minimally addressed in the leadership literature to date and provided the impetus for this study. This study is significant for several reasons.

First, this study investigated a topic that, to date, has been scarcely explored by the academic community, making a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on the topic of astrology. Since there is virtually no empirical research on astrology as a practice of self-discovery, the study has the potential of illuminating for the academy, what astrology actually is, how it is used in our present day, and how it serves as a framework for self-discovery.

Second, this study, not only expands the knowledge regarding astrological practice that shape experiences of self-discovery, but it does so from a sector of society not normally the focus of research, particularly when it comes to leadership or organizational behavior.

Third, given the study's findings, there are potential implications for research and practice in several fields, including self-discovery, self-development, and business leadership, among others. This study also has the potential to inspire scholars and practitioners toward an emerging agenda in self-development and leadership praxis: one that is based upon knowing *self* and the places from which individuals act. Therefore, this study has the potential of making a significant initial contribution to these bodies of literature.

Finally, this study contributes to the greater body of knowledge of constructivist grounded theory and the even larger body of qualitative research. Most notably, the discussion of the horoscope as a tool for data collection is a valuable contribution to these bodies. This study has the potential for challenging generally-accepted notions of data collection, and potentially sparking a conversation in the academic community about the use of new data sources in research—sources that are embedded in the phenomena being studied.

Recommendations for Further Research

The practice of astrology affords a unique perspective to explore our human nature. It has the potential for illuminating things about our human experience that have traditionally been beyond the scope of academic literature, including leadership studies. This study aimed to explore the ancient practice of astrology empirically to inform our understanding of self-development practices, in hopes that it may have greater implications for leadership praxis in the 21st century.

The study's findings have implications for future research agendas, and it is my recommendation that further studies be conducted to gain a greater understanding of the following:

1. **Astrology in different contexts:** This study investigated astrology and self-discovery but the data suggests many uses for astrology including in business, organizational leadership, communication and emotional intelligence, meaning-making, subconscious healing, and personal development. I recommend that astrology be studied within each of these contexts to gain a greater understanding of its applicability. I believe there are interesting research opportunities studying the application of astrology in specific leadership contexts. I also believe there is potential for exploring the use of astrology in depth psychology and maybe, psychotherapeutic contexts.
2. **Astrology as an instrument:** The findings in this study concerning the horoscope suggest a potential research agenda about the use of a horoscope as a psychological tool. I believe it would be fruitful to conduct research comparing the use of a horoscope and other instruments like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which has a long history of internal validity. This might have the potential of providing a greater understanding of the validity of the horoscope. The full implications of using a horoscope were not explored in this study.
3. **Other research designs:** Different research designs, including case study designs and longitudinal studies might have the potential to contribute to the findings in this study and the practice of astrology. Investigating the impact of celebrity astrologers online through social media, for example, could provide a new context and different research design with which to explore the phenomenon of astrology. Also, a longitudinal design might be useful in exploring the intersection of astrological practice and Theory U (Scharmer,

2009), which served as the theoretical framework for this study. Scharmer argues that we “lack a new social leadership technology” based on the instruments of “an open mind, an open heart, and an open will” (p. 40). Astrology could be a tool to support the processes described in Theory U, from *downloading*, *seeing*, *sensing*, and most importantly the connection to oneself in *presencing*. However, this would require a longitudinal design (or perhaps, a case study design) to adequately track astrology’s influence for change over time, which could potentially contribute to a deeper understanding of Theory U. This study design did not afford such an opportunity.

Lessons Learned from Research

Before I complete my study, I want to reflect on some lessons learned from this research at both professional and personal levels. I consider these lessons useful for other researchers who might be interested in conducting research on the topic of astrology, or similar topics, in the future.

The first, and perhaps most important lesson I’ve learned concerns a researcher’s relationship to their cosmological perspective. What I mean by this is an individual’s relationship to the nature of one’s reality, and its influence over research. Every individual exists inside of some cosmological perspective, and they are influenced by it. Two prevailing cosmological paradigms have been discussed at length in the study’s preface. I did not realize, to the full extent, how my worldview influences my basic assumptions about the nature of knowledge. This extends far beyond what researchers consider as positionality. While I did everything within my conscious awareness to remain neutral and mitigate biases throughout the research process, as discussed in my statement of positionality, there were limits to this. I am only human, and I live inside of a reality, the boundaries of which I take for granted, as most people do. As I explained, I experience

the world outside of a traditional empirical perspective and had to deal with the challenge of being able to explore that perspective with the empirical tools of qualitative research, and at times, I pushed the boundary of what many would consider empirically appropriate, specifically with the use of the participants' horoscope, which was discussed in Chapter 3.

However, I do not believe this was a weakness, in any way, but is rather, one of the most important take-aways from conducting this research. Most of us have never fully contemplated the influence of the paradigm we live under and how it influences our understanding and generation of knowledge. While I will not go into a full discussion on the nature of epistemological validity here, what I do want to say is that I believe this is an inherent limitation of being a human and it requires great humility to explore when doing research. Our worldviews influence epistemological considerations whether we are completely aware of the extent to which they do or not.

There is an increased interest among leadership scholars, practitioners, and psychologists in accentuating the importance of the whole person—mind, body, heart, and spirit—to understand leadership in a changing world. Because of this, we will have to confront our own personal considerations of reality and truth as researchers, if we want to explore the depth of human experience in new ways.

The second valuable lesson I have learned from this research is just how important it is to push the boundaries in order to study something you love. I have a great passion for astrology because I know how it has changed my life, and I know what is possible for others through their engagement with it. I also know that most people misunderstand astrology to a dreadful degree. It is my hope that this research stands as testimony of what is possible and that it has opened your

mind to the potential of astrology's uses in our world. After all, our world changes one thought at a time.

Conclusion

Throughout their lives, Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, and many others pushed the boundaries of the scientific mind beyond its conventional limits to explore the realities known by mystics, poets, and visionaries. The development of depth psychology is an example of an attempt to bring a perspective of reason to the deeper mysteries of the interior of the human.

The questions and issues, of which this study dealt, requires us to explore a deeper sense of the self that seeks to comprehend the world. Our gaze outward, however, must be different. It must be transformed by a greater awareness of our interior. As we grow in self-awareness, we must recognize that our ability to engage with the universe would be enhanced if it more resembled a genuine dialogue. When the cosmos is assumed to have no ability to engage in purposeful communication, or any depth of meaning, no dialogue can take place.

This larger engagement with the cosmos, however, will require us to consider, perhaps a profound shift, in what we regard as legitimate knowledge. Our present task is to move beyond our modern stance of systematic self-distancing to cultivate a capacity for opening ourselves more fully to the "other" in all its forms—including the other within ourselves, as Carl Jung saw. We must direct suspicion not only on the spiritual dimension of life but also on modernity's own stance of skeptical objectification (Tarnas, 2006). Richard Tarnas (2006) stated,

We must be willing to enter into that which we seek to know, not keep it distanced as a silent object imprisoned by the framework of our limiting assumptions. We need to allow that which we seek to know to enter into our own being.

We must develop a new capacity for self-transcendence to discover not only our projections of the world but our encounters within it. Our dominant world views and cosmologies should not limit our intellectual quest. Instead, they should be comprehended and integrated as part of our inquiry.

I recognize that there are many reasons why a person with a usual background of modern cosmological assumptions would find it difficult to accept astrology as legitimate, but as the data in this study shows, people do find value in astrology. It is a tool for self-discovery, interpersonal awareness, exploring the unconscious, healing, making meaning, understanding change, guidance, and personal development and purpose. It provides extraordinary insight into the patterns of the human psyche and the complex nature of our reality. It radically recontextualizes the modern project by placing the modern mind, and the modern self, in a new light (Tarnas, 2006). Perhaps, most importantly, astrology has the potential for contributing to the emergence of a new, integral world view which might even be able to restore transcendent meaning to both humans and the cosmos.

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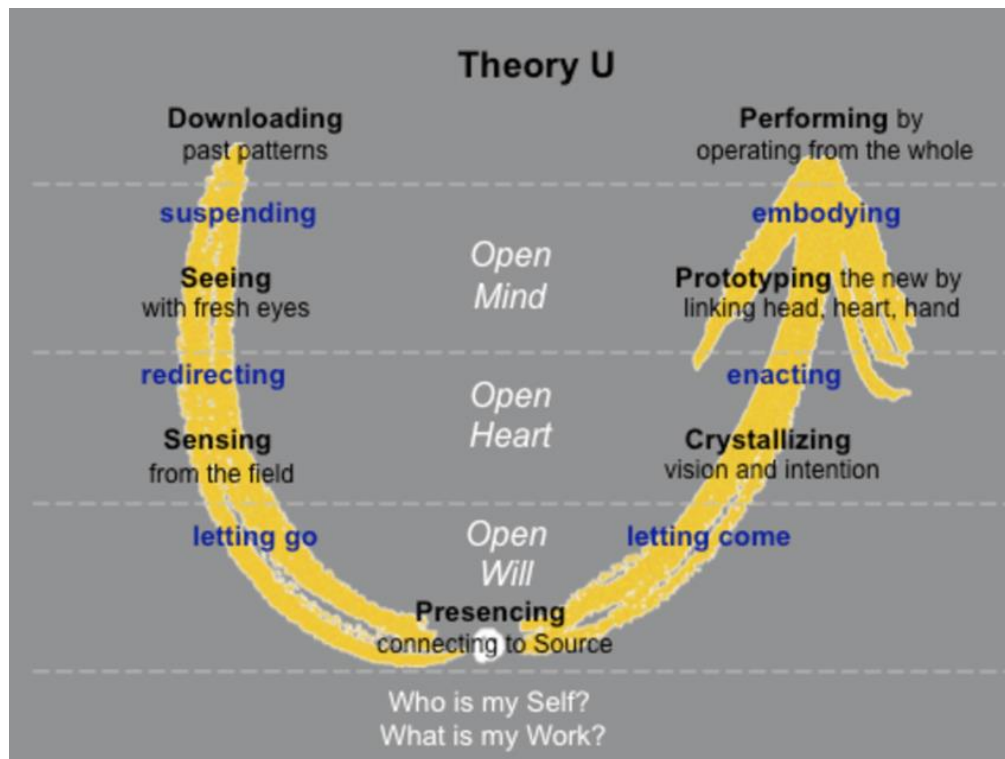
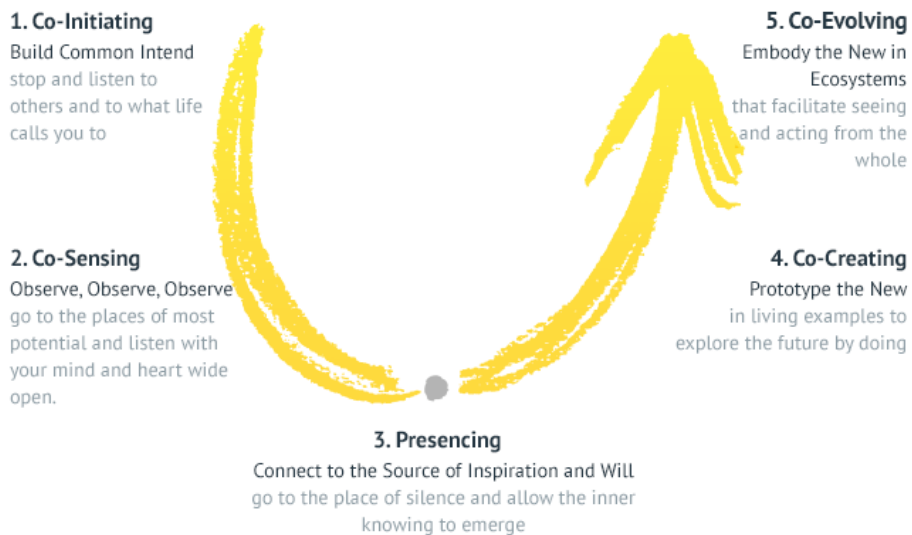
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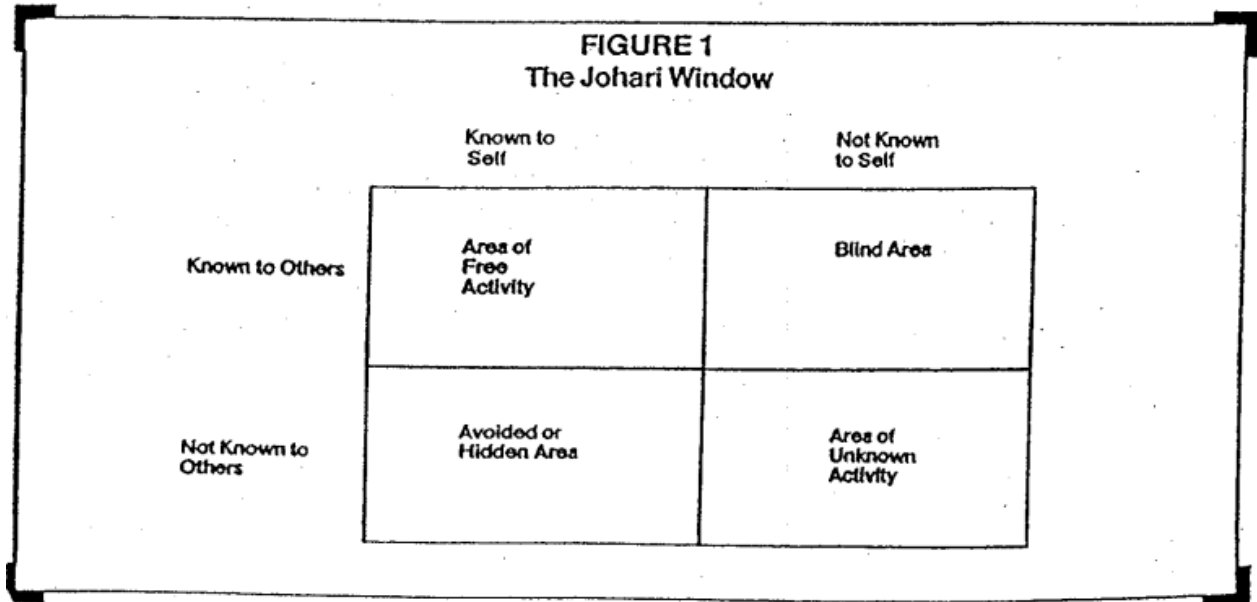
Appendix A

Theory U Illustration



Appendix B

The Johari Window



Appendix C

Pre-Interview Questionnaire for Astrologers

Thank you for participating in this study. My name is Cameron Martin and I am conducting this research study as part of my dissertation at the University of San Diego. The purpose of this study is to investigate how the practice of astrology can promote self-discovery and self-development. I thank you for taking the time to share your experience with me so that I can investigate the practice of astrology as a self-discovery tool.

The study will have two components for your participation.

1. The first part of the study is to **complete the following questionnaire**. It includes questions about your experience with astrology, your beliefs, and your experience with self-discovery work to date. It also includes demographic information. Please complete all questions to the best of your ability. The last question asks for your birth information including your date of birth, time, and location that will be used by myself to cast your horoscope. This information will be used to gain more insight and provide additional data during the course of the study. Your personal information will be kept confidential and will not be discussed with anyone or shared outside of this study. The survey should take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.
2. Your questionnaire responses will inform the second part of the study: **a personal interview**. After you have completed the questionnaire, I will reach out to you to schedule a time for a live interview via Zoom (or some other appropriate videoconferencing tool) with me. The purpose of this interview is to get a better sense of your experience of an astrological consultation. I am interested in knowing how you use astrology in your practice to help people understand themselves in new ways, if at all. I am also interested in knowing, from your perspective, the types of things that people often learn learned about themselves or gain from their experiences with you. This interview will be scheduled for 45 minutes at a mutually agreeable time and will be recorded. The audio recording of our interview will be transcribed verbatim. Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to myself for analysis purposes.

By completing this survey, you are stating that you understand the requirements of the study and are consenting to participate in it.

The content of the questionnaire begins on the next page.

Astrologer Pre-Interview Questionnaire Content

First and Last Name

Email contact

Phone contact

Date

Part 1: Astrology and Self-Discovery

- How long have you been practicing astrology?
- What do you think the most important uses for astrology are?
- Why do people seek out astrology? What types of things do people seek when they book sessions with you?
- How can astrology be used as a tool for self-discovery?
- What types of things do your clients claim to understand about themselves through astrological consultations?
- If it is possible to generalize, what kinds of beliefs do your clients generally (or frequently) express to you about astrology?

Part 2: Demographic Questions

- What is your gender identification?
 - Male
 - female
 - Nonbinary
 - Prefer to self-describe

- What is/are your religious affiliation(s), if any?
- If you practice a religion, how often do you attend religious or worship services, meetings, or gatherings, not including weddings and funerals?
 - More than once a week
 - Once a week
 - Once or twice a month
 - A few times a year
 - I do not practice a religion and do not attend.
- What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
 - Some high school, no diploma
 - High school graduate, diploma or equivalent (GED)
 - Some college credit (no degree)
 - Trade/technical/vocational training
 - Associate's degree(s)
 - Bachelor's degree(s)
 - Masters degree(s) (i.e. MD, JD)
 - Professional degree(s)/doctorate (i.e. PhD, EdD, DVM)
- How do you identify?
 - White
 - Hispanic or Latinx
 - American Indian, or Alaska Native
 - Asian

- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Other
- What is your relationship status?
 - Single, never married
 - Married or domestic partnership
 - Widowed
 - Divorced
 - Separated
 - Other
- What is your employment status?
 - Fully employed
 - Part-time work
 - Self-employed
 - Out of work and looking for work
 - Out of work and not currently looking for work
 - Student
 - Homemaker
 - Military
 - Retired
 - Unable to work
- Your birth information:
 - Date, Time, Location

Appendix D

Pre-Interview Questionnaire for Clients

Thank you for participating in this study. My name is Cameron Martin and I am conducting this research study as part of my dissertation at the University of San Diego. The purpose of this study is to investigate how the practice of astrology can promote self-discovery and self-development. I thank you for taking the time to share your experience with me so that I can investigate the practice of astrology as a self-discovery tool.

The study will have two components for your participation.

1. The first part of the study is to **complete the following questionnaire**. It includes questions about your experience with astrology, your beliefs, and your experience with self-discovery work to date. It also includes demographic information. Please complete all questions to the best of your ability. The last question asks for your birth information including your date of birth, time, and location that will be used by myself to cast your horoscope. This information will be used to gain more insight and provide additional data during the course of the study. Your personal information will be kept confidential and will not be discussed with anyone or shared outside of this study. The survey should take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.
2. Your questionnaire responses will inform the second part of the study: **a personal interview**. After you have completed the questionnaire, I will reach out to you to schedule a time for a live interview via Zoom (or some other appropriate videoconferencing tool) with me. The purpose of this interview is to get a better sense of your experience of an astrological consultation. I am interested in knowing how your experience has helped you understand yourself in new ways, if at all. I am also interested in knowing what types of things you learned about yourself from the experience. This interview will be scheduled for 45 minutes at a mutually agreeable time and will be recorded. The audio recording of our interview will be transcribed verbatim. Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to myself for analysis purposes.

By completing this survey, you are stating that you understand the requirements of the study and are consenting to participate in it.

The content of the questionnaire begins on the next page.

Client Pre-Interview Questionnaire Content

First and Last Name

Email contact

Phone contact

Date

Part 1: Astrology and Self-Discovery

- How many times have you had an astrology reading?
- What do you think the most important uses for astrology are?
- Why are you attracted to astrology? What types of things do you want to know about when you book a session with an astrologer?
- What types of things have you learned about yourself from astrology consultations?
- What do you believe about astrology?
- Please list any other tools, programs, trainings, or retreats (apart from astrology) that you have engaged in to discover more about yourself. We can talk more about these in our interview together.

Part 2: Demographic Questions

- What is your gender identification?
 - Male
 - female
 - Nonbinary

- Prefer to self-describe
- What is/are your religious affiliation(s), if any?
- If you practice a religion, how often do you attend religious or worship services, meetings, or gatherings, not including weddings and funerals?
 - More than once a week
 - Once a week
 - Once or twice a month
 - A few times a year
 - I do not practice a religion and do not attend.
- What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
 - Some high school, no diploma
 - High school graduate, diploma or equivalent (GED)
 - Some college credit (no degree)
 - Trade/technical/vocational training
 - Associate's degree(s)
 - Bachelor's degree(s)
 - Masters degree(s) (i.e. MD, JD)
 - Professional degree(s)/doctorate (i.e. PhD, EdD, DVM)
- How do you identify?
 - White
 - Hispanic or Latinx
 - American Indian, or Alaska Native

- Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Other
- What is your relationship status?
 - Single, never married
 - Married or domestic partnership
 - Widowed
 - Divorced
 - Separated
 - Other
- What is your employment status?
 - Fully employed
 - Part-time work
 - Self-employed
 - Out of work and looking for work
 - Out of work and not currently looking for work
 - Student
 - Homemaker
 - Military
 - Retired
 - Unable to work
- Your birth information:
 - Date, Time, Location

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Interviewee:
Interviewer:
Date:
Place of the interview:

Introduction:

Thank you for making the time for this interview. I greatly appreciate your participation. I am Cam and I am conducting a research study as part of my dissertation at the University of San Diego. The purpose of this study is to investigate how the practice of astrology can promote self-discovery and self-development.

The purpose of this interview is to get a better sense of your experience of an astrological consultation. I am interested in knowing how your experience has helped you understand yourself in new ways, if at all. I am also interested in knowing what types of things you learned about yourself from the experience.

Here is a copy of the consent form I sent you explaining the interview in detail. This is an informal, conversational interview that will take approximately 45 minutes. You are not obliged to answer every question. You may end the interview at any time for any reason or ask to skip over a question. The interview will be audio-taped with your permission and transcribed verbatim. Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to myself for analysis purposes.

Do you have any questions about the interview before we start?

Note to reader:

As a conversational interview, it was the intention of the researcher to create an environment of free-flowing, open conversation, to allow for the emergence of ideas and experiences that the researcher would not have otherwise been able to prepare for. This design is important for a grounded theory study. As such, these questions were intended only to guide the conversation. The client interview questions are organized thematically.

Interview Questions (for Clients)

Understanding the experience?

- What was your experience of an astrology reading like?
- Have you ever had an astrology reading before?
- Did you have any expectations going into your session? Did the experience meet your expectations?

What types of things do you gain from astrology consultations?

- What did you gain from the experience of your astrology reading?
- What have you learned from this experience?

Understanding “self”

- Having participated in an astrology session, do you think that you have changed? In what ways? Do you see your life differently?
- How did this experience help you understand yourself from a new perspective?
- What did you discover about yourself from the experience?
- How, if at all, did this experience help you critically self-reflect?

Self-development and mastery

- Was there something in your life that you see differently now?
- How has this experience impacted your life since then, if at all?
- Have you gained any insight through your session about the sources from which you act?

Interview Questions (for Astrologers)

- How would you describe your work?
- Can you describe your experience/expertise as an astrologer?
- What types of things can people gain from an astrology reading?
- Why do clients seek you? What are they looking for?
- Is there a “type” of client who is attracted to astrology? Do you think astrology can be useful for everyone?
- What are the uses of astrology?
- What is your experience like in your practice?
- What types of things do your clients report to gain from their sessions with you?
- How is astrology practiced today as a form of self-discovery and self-development?
- To what extent, if at all, does astrology appear to promote self-mastery?
- How does astrology help people understand the sources from which they act?
- Why, do you think, people are attracted to astrology?

Appendix G

Initial Coding Categories and Codes

understanding self (+)

understanding self (+)\self discovery
 understanding self (+)\acceptance of self (+) (+)
 understanding self (+)\Self exploration
 understanding self (+)\connection to self
 understanding self (+)\exploring the subconscious
 understanding self (+)\in every aspect of their life (aspects of self)
 understanding self (+)\limiting beliefs
 understanding self (+)\self affirmation
 understanding self (+)\self awareness
 understanding self (+)\self reflection
 understanding self (+)\self validation
 understanding self (+)\self worth issues
 understanding self (+)\self love
 understanding self (+)\soul purpose
 understanding self (+)\things you aren't aware of
 understanding self (+)\understanding their personality
 understanding self (+)\strengths and challenges

valuable for everyone

valuable for everyone\gay men
 valuable for everyone\new to astrology
 valuable for everyone\people don't believe in religion anymore
 valuable for everyone\receptive
 valuable for everyone\spiritual
 valuable for everyone\wanting to understand

valuable for everyone\women

valuable for everyone\young people

valuable for everyone\skepticism

valuable for everyone\curiosity

valuable for everyone\don't know astrology well

valuable for everyone\perceptions of who it;s good for

valuable for everyone\people misunderstanding astrology

valuable for everyone\people misunderstanding astrology\people know basics

process of healing

process of healing\conditioning

process of healing\dealing with trauma

process of healing\early conditioning

process of healing\fears

process of healing\healing

process of healing\healing pain

process of healing\inner child work

process of healing\insecurities

process of healing\wounds to heal

all areas of life

all areas of life\useful to guide businesses

all areas of life\useful to guide businesses\understanding human interaction

all areas of life\useful to guide businesses\understanding group/work environment

all areas of life\personal life

all areas of life\career questions/guidance

emotional intelligence

emotional intelligence\feelings

emotional intelligence\manage emotions

emotional intelligence\guilt

relationships

relationships\acceptance of others/understanding others

relationships\communication styles

relationships\familial influences

seeking answers

seeking answers\gain clarity

seeking answers\gain clarity\acceptance of life events

seeking answers\gain clarity\daily routines

seeking answers\gain clarity\gives them a comfort

seeking answers\gain clarity\life transitions

seeking answers\gain clarity\making conscious choices

seeking answers\gain clarity\making sense of change (+)

seeking answers\gain clarity\meaning of life

seeking answers\gain clarity\understand what's going on

seeking answers\gain clarity\understanding life experience

seeking answers\gain clarity\major life shifts

seeking answers\gain clarity\understanding patterns

guide people

guide people\disconnection

guide people\promote wholeness

guide people\balance

guide people\understanding gifts

guide people\to live in rhythm with life's cycles

meaning making

meaning making\co-creation

meaning making\seeking meaning

meaning making\seeking meaning\evolution

meaning making\seeking meaning\life path

meaning making\symbolic meaning

meaning making\symbolic meaning\Symbols

personal development

personal development\Freedom

personal development\prosperity

personal development\create your destiny

personal development\desires

personal development\understanding of needs

self-taught

self-taught\professional apprenticeships (training programs)

self-taught\online courses

self-taught\books

blueprint of your soul

blueprint of your soul\past lives

blueprint of your soul\connect to who they are

blueprint of your soul\connect to who they are\connection to soul

process of synthesis

process of synthesis\translating esoteric concepts for clients

process of synthesis\astrologer's perceptions

process of synthesis\variation in practice (interpretation)

process of synthesis\integration of ideas

tools for self-understanding

tools for self-understanding\science

tools for self-understanding\art

tools for self-understanding\language

providing personal guidance

providing personal guidance\holding space

providing personal guidance\to help

psychology

psychology\relationship between conscious/subconscious

psychology\individuation (+)

psychology\transcend the ego

psychology\human development

psychology\look at things differently than psychologists

psychology\useful in psychiatry

psychology\useful in psychiatry\understanding disorders

a tool that helps you to gain conscious

a tool that helps you to gain conscious\archetypal themes

a tool that helps you to gain conscious\overcome limitations

a tool that helps you to gain conscious\why they do the things that they do/ habits

a tool that helps you to gain conscious\understanding of the soul

feeling of being understood

feeling of being understood\understanding trends

feeling of being understood\understanding children

feeling of being understood\they walk away surprised/mesmerized

help people with with their life

help people with with their life\spirituality

help people with with their life\personal power

making sense of energy

making sense of energy\express energy

making sense of energy\guidance on dealing with energy

ancient practice

ancient practice\translating energy

ancient practice\embodied practice

ancient practice\sense of responsibility

ancient practice\not 100% in prediction

ancient practice\intuitive

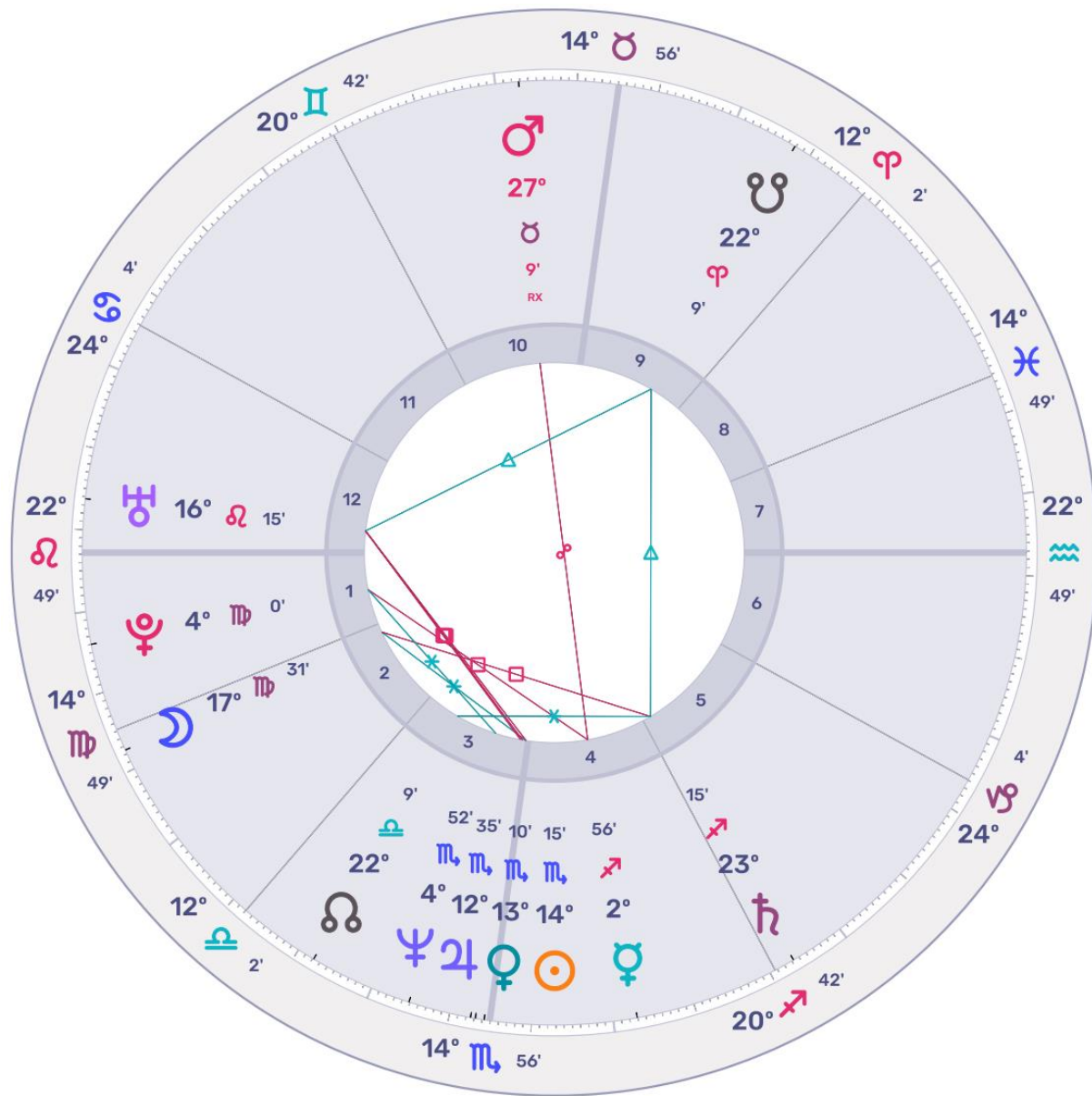
offering advice

offering advice\empowerment

offering advice\impact somebody's life

Appendix H

Participant Horoscope with Notes



November 6, 1958 @ 11:37 pm (UTC-5.00)
 Middletown, CT, USA
 Timezone: America/New_York
 41° 33' 44" N -72° 39' 2" W

Initial Interpretation

January 26, 2022

Sun, Jupiter, Venus stellium in Scorpio 3rd house. Strong communication skills. Ability to investigate, see, speak to/teach issues of the subconscious, fears, pain, loss, the occult. Derives much pleasure from communication/learning about esoteric subjects. Always seeking the depth of human experience. True pleasure is expressing this. Love for astrology and similar topics.

SN. in 9th Aries, strong desire to learn, grow, build things like a business. Higher learning, philosophy, teaching. Has a lot of self confidence about teaching/learning.

Saturn in 5th. in Sag. Disciplined in philosophy, higher learning, traveling and connecting with people from all walks of life.

NN 3rd. Learning lessons about communication and especially 1 to 1 communication. Libra- seeks to find balance within herself. Inner communication and being understood is a strong theme for soul development in this life. So, the career in which she can share her knowledge and requires her to communicate helps her to be aligned to her life's purpose.

Moon 2nd house, Virgo. Desire to be of service to others. Need to help others. Self-worth (and income) is connected to this ability and desire.

Pluto 1st house. Strong personality. Identity connected with transformation, change, death. Issues of deeper nature of humanity. In Virgo. Desire to serve. It is very much part of her personality and identity to "go deep" and help people (in a logical fashion) understand esoteric topics (self discovery, healing, trauma, etc).

Uranus in the 12th. Unique perspectives on spirituality. Leo. Desire to explore and assert individuality through spiritual pursuits. Leo. "Bigger than life" spiritual teacher.

Mercury in Sag. Can communicate and understand people from all walks of life. Can be scattered when it comes to final thoughts but she synthesizes information from lots of places when she consults with people.

IRB-2022-144 - Initial: Initial - Expedited

1 message

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>
To: cameronmartin@san Diego.edu, donmoyer@san Diego.edu

Fri, Dec 3, 2021 at 9:50 AM



Dec 3, 2021 11:50:57 AM PST

Cameron Martin
Sch of Leadership & Ed Science

Re: Expedited - Initial - IRB-2022-144, Reaching for the Stars: A Constructivist Investigation of Astrology as a Tool for Self-Discovery in a New Age of Leadership

Dear Cameron Martin:

The Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for IRB-2022-144, Reaching for the Stars: A Constructivist Investigation of Astrology as a Tool for Self-Discovery in a New Age of Leadership.

Decision: Approved

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Findings:

Research Notes:

Internal Notes:

The USD IRB requires annual renewal of all active studies reviewed and approved by the IRB. Please submit an application for renewal prior to the annual anniversary date of initial study approval. If an application for renewal is not received, the study will be administratively closed.

Note: We send IRB correspondence regarding student research to the faculty advisor, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research. We request that the faculty advisor share this correspondence with the student researcher.

The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited or exempt review at any time.

Sincerely,



*Eileen K. Fry-Bowers, PhD, JD
Administrator, Institutional Review Board*

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