

Improving your relationships through an understanding of your Astrological Moon Sign using Psychological Astrology

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In understanding what nourishes you at a deep primal level, you can endeavour to learn fulfilling ways of nurturing yourself. This frees your relationship from the burden of parenting and instead, allows each of you to travel on your own journey side by side as life companions

Most of you are probably familiar with the Zodiac sign the Sun was in at the time of your birth. Fewer of you though, are likely to know the position of your moon.¹ In part this is due to the rapid speed, the moon moves at in the sky, making it difficult if you do not know your exact time of birth, to pinpoint the precise position of your moon. However, there is a deeper reason for this lack of familiarity. This is rooted in the primal instinctual nature of the moon whose purpose is to seek security, comfort and survival in the manner of its placement in your natal chart.

By its very nature the Moon in your chart is private and hidden with a primitive unrefined quality about it. Unlike your solar energy, which you have to struggle to develop throughout your life, your moon is fully formed at birth and initially experienced through your symbiotic relationship with your mother in her womb. Your experience of this primary relationship originally came through your body, translating into various emotional states including joy, anxiety, fear, terror and at times contentment, depending on your particular experience. This is in sharp contrast to your Sun sign, which often takes a lifetime to inhabit and develop. Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas aptly describe the difference between the Sun and Moon as follows: “The lunar realm teaches us how to relate, to care for ourselves and others, to belong, to feel compassion versus the Sun which beckons us on with the promise of a distinct and authentic personality which possesses not only the wit to survive but also the capacity to fill life with meaning, purpose and joy”.² The manner and degree to which we learn these lunar skills and the obstacles entailed in doing so is described by the sign, position and aspects to the Moon in our birth chart. The Solar and Lunar energies represent one of the biggest ongoing conflicts in our chart. The mythologist Joseph Campbell in his collection of stories and myths about “The Heroes/Heroines Journey,” has written extensively about the work involved in becoming our Sun sign. Carl Jung described it as the “Journey of

¹ Of course the astrological chart is no longer an accurate astronomical map of the heavens at the time of your birth. But on a symbolic level it is a very accurate map of your individual psyche.

² “The Luminaries” Pg ix and X by Liz Greene (analyst astrologer and founder of the Centre for Psychological Astrology in London (CPA)) and Howard Sasportas (psychologist astrologer and cofounder of the CPA)

Individuation.” Our main internal conflict on this journey is between the progressive urge to become separate individuals and take our place in the world (the Solar realm) and the regressive pull back to the womb where we are in a state of fusion with mother (the Lunar world). In other words: the world of adventure versus the world of security. Psychodynamically, this is represented as the world of Father versus that of Mother. In order to join the other warriors and fulfil their role in the outer world the mythological heroes like Achilles had to leave their mother.

However, becoming whole does not mean sacrificing the lunar in favour of the solar realm, the feminine for the masculine, the Anima for the Animus. Wholeness is about understanding all parts of ourselves and integrating them into a functional whole. For each of us this is an individual journey yet relationships play a crucial part in this process, acting as a mirror for who we truly are, forcing us to take back our projections and facing us with our unmet primal needs and wants. The Jungian analyst and writer James Hollis describes the main challenge in relationship as being “what am I asking of this Other that I ought to be doing for myself?”³ In other words which of my core needs am I abdicating to my significant other to recognise and meet rather than meeting them myself? How often do I expect my partner/loved one to know needs in me which I am not even aware of and which are distorted beyond recognition by childhood survival mechanisms such as denial, repression, manipulation and projection? How often am I going to act out the raging, sulking child within me who feels unloved and uncared for and unable to truly care for another as someone separate to me? How many times will I overextend myself into meeting the needs of others in the vain hope that my needs will eventually be recognised and met?

So how might this be different if we had a clear knowledge and understanding of our lunar needs – a knowledge of what brings us comfort, security, safety and nourishment. A compassionate awareness and presence to this primal part of us, to our body and our emotions. An ability to find sufficient ways to provide comfort for our needs in a way that is individually fulfilling. In this place lies the real possibility of relating to the other with acceptance and love of who they are rather than who we need them to be, without expectations that they are responsible to fill our nurturing holes. From this vulnerable centred place we can choose to meet each other’s needs at times in a way that does not have conditions or expectations attached to it as one equal to another rather than as parent to child.

In achieving the above first we need information to help us recognise what our basic nurturing needs are. The Moon in our birth chart describes this very clearly by element, sign, house and aspects. Hence the remainder of this article offers you some basic information about lunar needs by element and sign to assist you in expanding your lunar awareness. At the end of the article I have made some suggestions on how you might work with the information.

³ James Hollis “The Eden Project In search of the Magical Other” Inner city books pg 57

Further steps, which are beyond our scope today, include an exploration of the effects of aspects from Saturn (the boundary holder between the personal and transpersonal realms), as well as from the transpersonal planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto and the centaur Chiron. In aspecting or relating to the Moon these planets give a different hue to your infancy experience of nurturing and to your actual nurturing needs. The final step is to explore how you might work with the conflicts and complexes in your chart which prevent you from meeting your nurturing needs.

The Moon by Element and Sign:

Many symbolic languages use the Elements as an explanation of matter. The astrological elements of Fire, Earth, Air and Water are similar, though not identical to Jung's Intuitive, Sensation, Thinking and Feeling functions. In Astrology each element contains 3 signs, which have a lot in common yet also some identifiable differences. The Four elements are based on nature and as we are focusing on the lunar earthly/bodily realm, it is a good starting point in understanding what they signify.

Element: Fire

Signs– Aries, Leo and Sagittarius (Jung's Intuition function)

General characteristics for Moon in Fire:

Fast, hot, passionate, competitive, adventurous, needs a quest, enthusiastic, courageous, freedom loving, unpredictable, pioneering, headstrong, dramatic, demonstrative, exciting, willful, easily bored, hopeful, direct, creative, honest, romantic, volatile, self-centered, natural leader, initiator.

General comfort needs:

Goals, dreams, passions, and a belief/hope in the future. Movement and freedom of space and mind. A happy emotional atmosphere without too much emotional intensity. Exercise and movement – both physical and intellectual. Adventure.

Aries:

New and exciting projects. Having fun. Watching flames in a fire. Trying a new sport or learning a new skill. Speed and competition. Winning. Playing with friends. Mental and physical challenges. Courage.

Leo:

Performing. Being the star in some aspect of one's life. Being special. Creativity. Shining. Pleasure and fun. Laughter.

Sagittarius

Space – both intellectual and physical. Stimulating people and environment. Education and learning of all kinds. Traveling.

Element: Earth**Signs – Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn (Jung’s Sensation function)****General characteristics for Moon in Earth**

Solid, down to earth, private, stable, practical, protective, economical, likes routine, patient, humble, productive, retentive, containing, disciplined, enduring, persevering, stubborn, cautious, dutiful, dependable, conventional.

General comfort needs:

Sensual pleasures such as well-presented nice food, comfortable surroundings, being in nature. Privacy to digest emotions. Physical contact that is loving but not emotionally laden. Anything that connects one with the body like martial arts, dancing, etc. Physical and financial security.

Taurus:

Food, clothing, shelter. Cooking or eating a good meal in nice surroundings. Visual beauty. The arts. Doing the yard or walk in nature. Hugs. Massage. Warm, comfortable and beautiful surroundings. Flowers and beauty in nature. Singing

Virgo:

Time and privacy to process emotions. Nice objects in home. Being of service in some capacity. Connection to nature. Rituals. Stability and security. Understanding.

Capricorn:

Connection to nature – planting, potting, walking. Quiet time to read. Craftwork. Doing useful things for others. Authenticity. Status. Privacy. Fulfilling a task.

Element: Air**Signs– Gemini, Libra, Aquarius (Jung’s thinking function)****General characteristics for Moon in Air**

Rational, detached, extroverted, civilized, reasonable, ethical, intellectual, fun loving, socially polished, socially tolerant, objective, humanitarian, logical, analytical, open to new ideas. Light atmosphere free of heavy emotions. Freedom.

General Comfort needs:

Communication of logical thoughts in a linear civilized manner. The world of ideas hence exhibitions, conferences, discussions. Atmosphere that is not emotionally laden. Physical contact only when requested. Space to breath and move. Freedom.

Gemini:

Communication of all kinds. Sound. Movement. Freedom. Humor. Varied intellectual stimulation.

Libra:

Beautiful calm surroundings. Civilized polite conversation. Lack of crudeness in atmosphere. Time to digest emotions. Pleasantness. Gracefulness.

Aquarius

Traveling. Research. Technology. Politics. Wide variety of stimulating friends. Interesting unusual hobbies. Learning opportunities. Involvement in humanitarian causes on an intellectual level.

Element: Water**Signs – Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces (Jung's Feeling function)****General Characteristics for Moon in water:**

Sensitive, psychic, empathic, compassionate, instinctual, non-rational, self transformative, courageous, deeply loyal, romantic, cautious, self contained, tenacious, moody, possessive, imaginative, profound, vulnerable, secretive, depthful.

General comfort needs:

Supportive emotional space to process feelings. Creative medium to express feelings. Emotionally safe atmosphere. The world of the arts and the imagination. Being in and around water. Helping others but need to learn to set clear boundaries or will get drained.

Cancer

Being around family and close friends. Expressing emotions with trusted familiar people. Baths and walks by the ocean. Music and dancing. Kindness and compassion - lots of listening and empathy. Crying. Watching movies and reading books. Music.

Scorpio

Emotional empathy and authenticity. Trusted friends to confide in and express feelings. Being near water. Detective/investigative stories. Delving into emotional depths through therapy.

Pisces

Creative imaginative activities. Time to daydream. Guided visualizations. Being near water. Keeping a dream journal. Music and dancing. Films.

Some suggestions on how to work with the above information.

I would suggest you take some time with your significant other and explore initially separately and then together your lunar placement. Start by thinking about what feels comforting when you feel vulnerable. Then have another look at the Moon descriptions above by element and sign and see if there is additional information you can add to your own list. Discuss this with your partner – observe the similarities but also the differences in what feels nurturing and comforting to each of you without judgement and with a lot of compassion.

The next step is to share with your partner the nurturing needs you are still struggling to meet in yourself and to consider the question posed by James Hollis earlier in this article “what am I asking of this Other that I ought to be doing for myself?”⁴ This can open up a rich and ongoing discussion as it is a question we each need to return to on a regular basis.

Finally, I would suggest you ask your partner if there is a comfort need you have that they feel comfortable meeting in you if you ask for it – for example: if your moon is in Taurus you might enjoy a massage or if your moon is in Gemini you might like more phone calls. Let them choose one that feels possible for them to meet. Then practice asking for it as a request and not a demand knowing that they may not be able or willing to meet it for you at all times. Notice without judgement what it feels like to have this need met and also what it feels like when your loved one is not able to meet it. If you feel resentful, track back to where this resentment really stems from. The string always originates in early infancy. Your task is to work at healing this. By doing so you are taking responsibility for your own Lunar needs.

In understanding and working with your lunar needs you open the possibility of real emotional intimacy and vulnerability with another. Here lies the potential for true compassion and understanding without the need to rescue the other. This is the place where love can truly grow.

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Consultations and Seminars in Dublin, Los Angeles and Hawai'i

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Bibliography

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James Hollis The Eden Project *In search of the Magical Other*

⁴ James Hollis “The Eden Project In search of the Magical Other” Inner city books pg 57