

The Astropoetic School of Soul-Discovery

News From The Astropoetic School January 2017

Greetings from **The Astropoetic School of Soul Discovery** located on Milky Way Farm at the heart of the galaxy in the Missouri Ozarks – where unseasonable warmth brings false optimism to a season of cold, slow darkness.

2017 Tracking the Soul Webinar Class

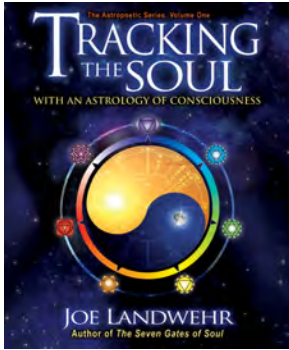


For those with a solid working knowledge of astrology, who are interested in learning the astro-chakra system as discussed in my book [Tracking the Soul With An Astrology of Consciousness](#), the 2017 [Webinar Class](#) is beginning in March (with the exact date and subsequent schedule to depend upon the availability of participants). There is one space left.

**If you have been thinking about this for a while,
or if you are reminded that you feel called,
it is best not to hesitate, or you will have to wait another year.**

The Webinar Class is both a small group learning experience, an interactive exploration of your own chart, and a personal growth opportunity. As with all offerings of The Astropoetic School, your life is the classroom, and what you learn can be applied to whatever real life concerns and questions you bring to the class.

What I love about your work and your insights is how they clarify astrologically what I am living. More importantly, they show proof that this very internal and "felt" process, which at the same time informs and includes the mind – so important – represents what I wish to actualize. – JY, Current Participant



The Webinar Class is 20 2-hour sessions – based on my book [Tracking the Soul](#) – with homework assignments, and the opportunity to get my input between classes via email. In the first hour, I generally introduce some new principle or technique, and in the second hour, we apply what we are learning to one or more charts of class participants. We explore the astrological dynamics of each chakra individually; learn how to feel our way into a deeper understanding of each pattern; and then identify astrologically-based strategies for working with and shifting patterns toward clearer expression, greater creativity and increased self-empowerment.

The class is kept purposely small (no more than six) to allow maximum opportunity for each participant to be the center of group attention. If you wish to be a part of the 2017 Webinar Class, you can sign up [here](#).

The Heart of the Matter – a Blog Series About Healing and the 4th Chakra

The following excerpt is extracted from a transcript from the 2016 Webinar Class that I turned into a blog series late last year.



Part One: Focused Awareness

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There are many ways to approach shifting a chakra pattern – and to pursue the journey toward healing and wholeness. But the real secret at the heart of all strategies for shifting patterns is simple awareness. Focused awareness harnessed to clear intention is what shifts a pattern. That is why, in this class, we are working toward deepening your awareness of your patterns. This is not just an intellectual exercise. If you are doing it correctly, it is mostly about creating a powerful platform for self-transformation built on increasing awareness.

If there is something in your life that seems problematic, or painful, or out of balance, or out of focus, or in some other way, not quite right, or not quite what you want it to be, then it can be useful to identify which chakra patterns in your chart correlate with these patterns. Once you have identified the pattern, you can work to become more aware and more conscious of what the pattern actually is, why it exists, how it functions, how it limits you, and what the potential is for shifting it into a more positive, creative, empowering expression.

Often when a pattern is problematic, it is because we actually don't see the pattern clearly. We might know that something feels off; we might even be able to identify the immediate trigger to those feelings – but the deeper underlying pattern that is being triggered, and that feels bad, eludes us. Or we get locked into a certain way of seeing it that allows no room for change. Mostly, the pattern remains unconscious, or at least subliminal. Most of the time it will be like a splinter in your

finger that you ignore as long as you can, going about your day, hoping it will just work itself out. Then, at some point, you will feel a sharp pain, and be motivated to go and get the tweezers.

Let's face it. This is how most of us go about our lives. It is human nature. The bad news here is that when we are in acute pain, we are generally not at our best, and this may not actually be the best time to work with our patterns. The catch-22, of course, is that when we're not in acute pain, there is less motivation to do the work. So what I am asking you to do in this class is a bit counterintuitive, and if you are not feeling some resistance to this work, then you have probably not found the pattern that is yet ripe for healing.

This resistance arises from the simple fact that when we do enter into this exploration of our patterns – to the extent that they harbor wounding, they will also harbor pain. No one really wants to go there.

So we protect ourselves. One primary way we do that is to go unconscious in relation to the pattern that is giving us trouble. On a conscious level, we may find a way to rationalize our predicament, or a way to work around it, or cope with it, but we never really go to the heart of the matter, unless we set a clear and determined intention to dig up what we have buried and look at it again. "If ain't broke, don't fix it," but where there is pain and suffering, or imbalance, or something not quite right, then it is worth digging up the pattern, dusting it off, revisiting it, and looking again. Sometimes what gets buried for a very long time grows in value – like a rare archeological find. So who knows, but that some of the painful patterns may be ready to reveal their hidden treasure, or the silver lining, or their blessing in disguise.

Not all of your patterns will be ripe for transformation, but some of them might be. Outer planet transits and major progressions act as triggers to patterns, and when a pattern is being triggered by one or more of these factors, then that means it is available to be worked on. When it is not being triggered, it does not necessarily go away, but it will generally be more dormant. When it is being triggered, there may be some fresh pain, but there will also be a fresh opportunity to become more conscious, and to make a new set of choices in relation to something that has become unconscious and automatic.

So that is the work, regardless of which pattern you are working with or seeking to heal. At the Astropoetic School, this is how we learn and grow – not just intellectually, but as souls seeking practical wisdom on our way to becoming wise.



If you want to read the rest of this 15-part blog series, you can do that [here](#).

The Basic Correspondence Course

For those of you who may not feel quite ready for the Tracking the Soul Webinar Class – which does require a seasoned understanding of basic astrological principles

– The Astropoetic School also provides a more [Basic Correspondence Course](#). The course is a constantly evolving work in progress, currently encompassing 24 basic lessons, with homework assignments.

Students can sign up for 6 classes at a time. Because each lesson is quite intensive, and is meant to be a meditation that will only gradually reveal its full depth, it is recommended that students pace these lessons at one every two months. But more ambitious students, or students with more time to spend, can work at a faster pace, if that is what they want to do. Advanced placement is also possible for students with some knowledge of astrology, although even at the most basic level, I guarantee that every student of astrology will learn something new about themselves and about the symbolism of their chart.

Unlike some other courses of instruction in astrology, the Basic Course is not a pathway to professional accreditation, or competency, but is rather designed for those who want to use the language of astrology to more consciously engage their own soul's journey. Having said that, it is also my opinion that any practicing astrologer should have a deeply intimate knowledge of their own chart in relation to their own life process, and this course provides that perspective.

For those who feel ready for such an adventure, you can read the details and sign up [here](#). The following is an excerpt from Lesson 19 on the planet Mercury.

The Mythology of Mercury

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In mythology, Hermes – the Greek counterpart to Mercury – is considered to be the messenger of the gods, racing back and forth between the heavenly realms and Earth, conveying messages of import to humans from the deities who have taken an interest in their fate. Conversely, Hermes is also a psychopomp, or a guide to souls entering the underworld of Hades. This dual function at the extremes of the celestial universe is typical of Hermes' role in the pantheon of gods, which plays itself out in various ways – both mythologically and astrologically.

The story of Hermes' birth illustrates his basic character as a paradoxical sub-personality and points toward his more general astrological correlates within the psyche. Hermes was a son of Zeus and Maia, one of the seven sisters of the Pleiades. As Homer describes him in his *Hymn to Hermes*, "the child whom she bore was devious, winning in his cleverness, a robber, a driver of cattle, a guide of dreams, a spy in the night, a watcher at the door, who was soon about to manifest renowned deeds among the immortal gods."

Hermes was born at dawn. By midday, he was playing a lyre he fashioned from a tortoise taken shell from a tortoise he had charmed into giving up its life. By nightfall, he had stolen Apollo's cattle, and then skillfully turned Apollo's rage to laughter when he was confronted with his deed. Apollo was a Sun god, and Hermes special relationship to Apollo is played out, in part by Mercury's apparent movement – as seen from the Earth – backwards and forwards, never very far from the Sun.

TRICKSTER

Clever, precocious, inventive, resourceful, highly intelligent, and skilled at communication, the mythological Hermes points toward these same attributes in its astrological function, particularly where it is emphasized by its placement in your natal birthchart. This is not to say that Mercury is always rational. One of Hermes' mythological functions is the trickster – helping to mirror illogical patterns as well as those that are strictly logical.

Each of us has a subjective filter through which we remember past experience, perceive the present, and project ahead into a probable future. To the extent that your subjective filter is colored by unreleased pain, undigested lessons, or unfinished psychological business from the past – as it is for all of us – the information carried by Mercury will be somewhat distorted by what I call *shadow logic*.

As you follow the path dictated by *shadow logic*, it will often lead to further wounding, the opportunity to learn from a mistake, and/or the possibility of healing. The path of *shadow logic* can be understood, in some ways, as Mercury's contribution to the lunar agenda in his role as trickster. The trickster tends to provoke self-reinvention in an image that encompasses all the broken and lost parts of self, often in stark contrast to the image of the self that is held by the conscious ego. To the extent that you resist this more complete though often more disturbing image of self, Mercury will guide you through a funhouse hall of mirrors where you have no choice but to laugh at yourself, and eventually embrace the unembraceable.

In addition to great communicators, orators, and teachers, Hermes' minions also include liars, con artists, and snake oil salesmen. Not only do honest business people and humble merchants draw inspiration from Hermes, but also gamblers, thieves and amoral opportunists. To the extent that you are governed by *shadow logic* – and we all are to some extent – not only will you be more susceptible to Mercury's trickster function, but you may find yourself sliding down that slippery slope of questionable ethics. Mercury as trickster is not above setting you up for the big fall, luring you like Mephistopheles into a Faustian bargain with the devil.

Mercury's function as trickster is reflected mythologically not just by Hermes, but also by a long global tradition of trickster gods often taking animal forms – ravens, wolves, coyotes, hares, spiders, or monkeys – in various indigenous cultures. The hunchback flute player, fertility god Kokopelli of Hopi tradition; the Norse god of mischief Loki; and Maui, the Polynesian fisher god who created the Hawaiian Islands by reeling them in one by one on his fishing line, all fit this tradition of quirky deities who break the rules, steal from the gods, and use their clever intelligence to escape capture. We often secretly admire these gods, even when following in their footsteps proves disastrous, as our own *shadow logic* trips us up.

WANDERER

In addition to his more cognitive functions, Mercury governs movement, travel, and navigation. Hermes was considered the patron saint of travelers and wandering nomads (which today, would include the homeless, street people, and all those on the fringe of society, who live by wit and daily miracles). Craftspeople – who make things with their hands and wander from place to place to sell their wares – traveling salesmen, and long distance runners are all Mercurial by nature.

Regardless of your station in life, Mercury governs your characteristic mode of activity, business or trade in the world – how you manage; how you get by; how you get around. In general, Mercury speaks to the issue of mobility (or lack thereof) in your life, describes the way you move from place to place, how adaptable you are to change, how versatile and resourceful you are in dealing with the unknown, your basic navigational skills, and the way you discover and follow the path of your soul's journey. From Mercury's perspective, all souls are wanderers on a journey through this fleeting mortal life – and wandering is a life skill worth cultivating.

Wandering deities like the Norse god Odin, and the Celtic god Lugh reflect Mercury's perpetual nomadic mobility and adaptive versatility. When the young Lugh, out to seek his fortune, showed up at the doorstep of King Nuada, the doorkeeper would not let him in unless he had a skill to serve the king. When Lugh told the doorkeeper that he was a wright, a smith, a champion, a swordsman, a harpist, a hero, a poet and historian, a sorcerer, and a craftsman, the doorman said, "Sorry, but we already have people with these skills." Lugh replied, "Yes, but do you have anyone who possesses *all* these skills simultaneously?" When the doorkeeper admitted that they didn't, he had no choice but to let Lugh in.

FOOL

While Mercury is not generally associated with emotion, it does rule the use of wit and humor, and the ability to articulate how we feel, both to ourselves and to others. Mercury also governs our capacity to take delight in life, to dance and sing in the midst of difficulty, and to meet the challenges that life presents to us with improvisational creativity, out-of-the-box resourcefulness, seat-of-the-pants intelligence, and spontaneous fluidity of motion.

The Wise Fool is another mythological source out of which the astrological Mercury springs. In Lakota Sioux culture, heyokahs embody this aspect of Mercury when they ride a horse backwards, wear clothes inside out, and complain about how full they are when food is scarce – all in order to focus attention and provoke new ways of thinking. In Africa, the keshore played a similar role. Among the Sufis, countless stories of the humorous exploits of the archetypal village idiot Sheik Nasreddin teach many invaluable lessons. The sad-faced clown, the court jester, and the harlequin are all variations on this theme – in which humor, often combined with mischievous trickster energy, serves a teaching function.

FERTILITY GOD

Although Mercury is generally considered to be of neutral gender by most astrologers, his mythological counterpart Hermes was often depicted as a bearded man sporting a large erect phallus. Statues of Hermes in this position were placed at street corners, gateways, entrances of private houses, and along country roads, where they were greeted with ribald good humor and reverence as harbingers of good luck and prosperity. More than any other god in the Greek pantheon – with the possible exception of Aphrodite and Dionysus – Mercury was associated with the good life in an Epicurean sense, the capacity to enjoy yourself, the natural world, the company of good friends, good food, good wine, good conversation, and good sex.

Hermes himself fathered many children, among them Pan – the goat-footed god of

wild natural places, hypnotic music, and erotic escapades. Pan is one embodiment of a long lineage of fertility gods – among them Osiris, Tammuz, Attis, Baal, Adonis, Dionysus, Kokopelli and Hermes himself. Pan extends this sense of fertility into a more-than-human elfin realm of fairies, nymphs, and satyrs – a psychic space where the erotic imagination meets the wild untamed energy of the fertile Earth.

Priapus, like Hermes, was known for his oversized erect phallus. Some say Priapus was the son of Hermes and Aphrodite, although his true parentage is in some dispute. According to Greek legend, Zeus' jealous wife Hera cursed him with impotence, ugliness and foul-mindedness while he was still in Aphrodite's womb, in revenge for the Paris' audacity in judging Aphrodite more beautiful than she. The other gods refused to allow Priapus to live on Mount Olympus, leaving him on a hillside, where he was raised by shepherds. Eventually Priapus joined Pan and the satyrs as a spirit of fertility and growth, though he was perennially frustrated by his impotence. Like everything Hermetic, Mercury – in his paternal relation to Priapus – governs both potency of mind, body and spirit, and its opposite: impotence.

Another child of Hermes and Aphrodite was Hermaphroditus – deity of bisexuality and androgyny. As the story has it, Hermaphroditus was seduced by the nymph Salmacis in her pool when he was a teenager. Overcome by lust for the boy, Salmacis wrapped herself around Hermaphroditus and refused to let go. While locked in their embrace, she cried out to the gods to unite them forever, and her wish was granted. Hermaphroditus and Salmacis together became one being with sexual characteristics of both genders.

From a psychological standpoint, Hermaphroditus represents the Jungian *hieros gamos* or coming together of male and female within, suggesting that Hermes – perhaps through his relationship with Aphrodite – was a guide to this process. Certainly when we integrate the *shadow logic* of our lunar agendas, there is a parallel integration of left and right brains, head and heart, wisdom and compassion, caring and capability, courage and vulnerability, imagination and common sense, that makes us whole beings beyond the ordinary distinctions of gender.

SHAMAN MAGICIAN

Such a process – initiated through tutelage to Hermes or his local equivalent – was common to indigenous shamans, and by some accounts, an importance source of their healing capacities. Asian, African, and Australian shamans were often transgendered, some going so far as to undergo ceremonial sub-incision of the penis in order to simulate a vagina. This interpenetration of male and female energies – as well as of left and right brain, the ida and pingala (central nerve channels) of kundalini yogic practice, and of Hermes own dual function as deity of divine inspiration and underworld journeys – was symbolized by the caduceus, said to represent two snakes copulating. The caduceus came to be confused with the rod of Asclepius, and associated with the healing dimensions of the medical arts – particularly during the 7th century, when Hermes became the patron deity of the alchemists. Later in the 15th century, it was promoted as a medical symbol by the Swiss medical printer Johann Frobenius; and in the 19th century, adopted by the US Army Medical Corp. Since then, there has been a movement back toward the rod of Asclepius as the more mythologically accurate medical symbol, while the caduceus is now more accurately understood as a symbol of commerce.

Be that as it may, my sense is that the caduceus can rightfully be considered a kind of magician's staff – not without healing power, since the ability to penetrate to the hidden dimension of things, and to harness natural forces in service to clear intention – the essence of magic and all hermetic arts – is part of Hermes' domain. Mythologically, this is implied in the image of copulating snakes, since the serpent has a long tradition of association with forbidden wisdom – as evidenced, for example, in the Christian story of the Garden of Eden.

In his association with the Egyptian god Thoth, Hermes became known as Hermes Trismegistos during the Hellenistic era (approximately 2nd century BCE to 2nd century CE). Hermes Trismegistos was the reputed author of a vast body of magical literature – including the *Hermetica*, a compendium of incantations, initiatory rites, and instructions for the ceremonial use of herbs, gemstones, and ritual talismans.

In Egyptian mythology, after Osiris was hacked to pieces by his archrival Seth, Thoth gave Isis the magical words necessary to resurrect her consort, so that she could get pregnant and conceive his child. In the Sumerian myth of Inanna's descent into the underworld to visit her sister Ereshkigal, Enki – the god of wisdom and magic, equivalent to Hermes – dispatches demons, created from the dirt from beneath his fingernails, to recover the young goddess after she fails to return as expected. In Norse mythology, the storm god Odin hung upside down for nine days on the World Tree Yggdrasil in order to channel the runes, and traded one of his eyes for a drink from the Well of Remembrance. Faust, Merlin, Gandalf from the Lord of the Rings, and Dumbledore from the Harry Potter series all embody this magical dimension of Mercury's archetypal repertoire.

Astrologically, Mercury gives access not just to the thoughts of the conscious mind, but to hidden knowledge, rooted in the unconscious, the collective memory of our species, and the evolutionary trail humans took to get here through the more-than-human world. Not only has Hermes often been associated with animals, but within his mythological tradition are a long lineage of shape-shifters, calling on deep knowledge of prior states of being and other beings to extend their capacities.

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Celebrating the Sacred Mysteries

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Quote of the Month

"To keep the heart open, we must continually move in the direction of our fears and vulnerabilities and in so doing, discover a power within us that transcends them. When we can live in this place – when we can love ourselves and each other enough – the issues with which we struggle today will no longer exist." – Tracking the Soul