



Astrology for the Journey

by Teri Parsley Starnes

Tools for Community

Community is the wonderful and maddening expression of communal hopes through the prism of distinct individual perceptions. In community, we are One and we are each different. In other words, community is paradox. Have you ever been frustrated by this paradox?

Astrology is a tool that easily embraces this kind of paradox. There are only 12 signs, implying that there are only 12 types of people, but astrologers know that those 12 basic impulses are expressed in many ways. Complexity is honored when we look at the houses of the chart—where in the sky the signs are found at the moment of birth; the different planets—each with its own agenda; and the way the planets relate to each other through the spatial aspects formed between them. Now we see how different each person in the same Sun-sign community can be. Each member of the Aries community, for example, although similar in many ways, finds a unique way to belong to that community.

Astrology studies human nature. It says that there are identifiable basic needs; impulses and ways of being that are common to us all. And it also describes our differences. For me astrology is predictive. It doesn't tell me what will happen in the future, but it does show me what to expect when people interact. What happens when that unique

Aries individual is in community with another unique individual who is a Virgo? How will their similarities and differences play out? What is the dance of discovery between these two signs? What are the essential gifts each has to share? Astrology gives us tools for understanding this.

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Understanding our differences and our similarities is vital if we are to work with the paradox of community rather than be dismayed by it. It is OK to have different perceptions of the communities we belong to. It is OK that communities are made up of very different individuals with very different needs. In fact, it seems to me that communities are most healthy when they make room for these differences. Another thing that is vital to community health is self-awareness—knowing how my needs express themselves in community, and taking responsibility for the consequences of that expression. Individuals who practice self-awareness create a self-aware community. I've belonged to the Diana's Grove Mystery School community for the past nine years because this type of self-awareness in community is practiced there.

Cynthea Jones, co-founder of Diana's Grove, has developed an exciting tool that she calls *The Twelve Opposing Kings: The Zodiac of Desires and Instincts*. This tool describes the perspective each sign contributes to community, and how each of these perspectives interrelate, sometimes misunderstand, challenge and align with each other to make the community whole. A complete community must satisfy the needs of every sign, whether or not each is represented by an individual community member. Each sign is a Season of the Soul; the soul of the group must develop by growing through every season.

Let's call them signs; let's call them seasons; let's call them twelve essentials. They form a pattern for deepening the possibilities of community. Briefly, they are:

Aries and Self:

Knowing that I can be myself within community.

Taurus and Comfort:

Knowing that I can take care of my own needs so that I can take risks.

Gemini and Communication:

Knowing how to find out what I need to know, and how to communicate what I need to communicate.

Cancer and Self-Image:

Knowing who the group is and why we are together.

Leo and Self-Worth:

Knowing that my contributions are important and acknowledged.

Virgo and Service:

Knowing that my work is necessary and that the values of the work we do together are clear.

Libra and Alliances:

Knowing my partners and my adversaries.

Scorpio and Power:

Knowing the power dynamics and the expectations about using and acquiring power.

Sagittarius and Mythology:

Knowing the stories of the community.

Capricorn and Professionalism:

Knowing how to achieve excellence and develop status within the community.

Aquarius and Community:

Knowing how decisions are made and how conflicts are resolved.

Pisces and Sacrifice:

Knowing what I am willing to sacrifice for, and why.

Which of these are currently most important in your life? Which are most important in your communities? Which dynamics are overtly acknowledged and which have not yet been made clear? How can you begin to address the hidden potential these Seasons of the Soul represent?

Astrology's pattern is a tool of awareness that actually helps me to enjoy the paradox of community. The infinite expression of these twelve simple desires becomes a picture of community's essence — pulsing, growing, changing, challenging and creating. ♀