

The Astrologer's Role as a Consultant by Dane Rudhyar

I remember glancing through a magazine dedicated to public relations a few years ago and being attracted by a statement to the effect that, "Ours is the Age of the Consultant." The article went on to say that in a society having become extraordinarily complex and stressing specialization, executives confronted with the many problems of business and social organization have found it necessary to turn periodically to trained specialists and advisers in order to get a clearer picture of these problems, to sharpen their skills, or even merely to feel reassured that they are taking the right approach.

What is a fact in the business world, or in that infinitely hazardous business which is government and diplomacy, is also true where the private lives of modern men and women are concerned. Everywhere confused and harassed individuals are finding their ways to the offices of "consultants" — be they psychologists, health food specialists, marriage counselors, mediums or clairvoyants, or astrologers. People need advice now more acutely than when they were led to the confessional, the pastor, or the family doctor of olden days. They ask for this advice in much more precise, more "scientific" a way than ever before — that is to say, not on the basis of general ethical, religious, hygienic principles, but in terms of clear-cut indications as to how they can acquire a reliable technique for the solution of their problems.

The huge success of "how to" books is another aspect of this craving for technical information; but book knowledge rarely seems completely to take the place of the consultant, for people begin to realize that the basic problem behind all other problems is **themselves**; and no one can truly and objectively know oneself except in the mirror of someone else's eyes and mind; books are too full of ink to reflect the image of the reader to his anxious gaze!

There are evidently all sorts of consultants; and there is a great difference between the business specialist being consulted by an executive, the eminent scientist asked to advise on the building of a complex physics apparatus, and the professional astrologer or the renowned clairvoyant to whom a person unable to meet successfully special problems of interpersonal relationship comes for advice, in the hope that some pleasurable prognostication may be made.

Nevertheless, there are basic factors in any form of consultation which it would be well to consider if the work of the consultant is to be truly successful — not only at the superficial level of precise advice, but at the deeper psychological level of the **effect of the consultation upon the person seeking advice**. That person presumably needs, in most

cases, some precise information; but he or she very often needs more; that is, he or she needs to be reassured and — after leaving the consultant — to feel better able to handle problems in general. In other words, the consultant should be able to give not only information — a book or machine can do that — but self-confidence as well. Not all consultants do that; and many do just the opposite. We shall presently see how this applies to astrological consultants.

What is a "Consultant"?

A Red Cross planning committee came up, some years ago, with eight qualifications defining the consultant and the essential character of her function. The consultant is a person: **(1)** who is sought after for help; **(2)** who helps others to help themselves; **(3)** who has a broad knowledge and an objective point of view; **(4)** who has specialized training and skill; **(5)** who is adept at creating a climate for desiring help; **(6)** whose advice may be either accepted or rejected; **(7)** who is neither a doer nor an operator; **(8)** who must have adequate time to do an educational job. These specifications apply remarkably well to the person who is being consulted on the basis of his astrological knowledge and skill interpretation.

As I have pointed out for many years, natal astrology is a technique which enables human beings to obtain a specific kind of help in the solution of the problems which they cannot, unaided and by rational methods, both fully understand and solve. But the word "problem" can have an ambiguous meaning. As I am using it here, it refers to any situation the elements of which are unclear, confusing and conflict-generating — a situation which seems to require a decision, yet which does not provide the adequate knowledge upon which this decision could be logically based. A sound decision demands that we understand objectively the causes of the situation facing us; and we can only make a significant and "free" choice if we have adequate grounds for judgment and evaluation. Yet in life we have very often to take a new step without there being any rational way of knowing what other people involved in it will or can do, what may occur in the near future in our environment, and even how we ourselves will react when confronted with the results generated directly or indirectly by our actions. This is, of course, what makes the concept of man's "free choice" quite ambiguous.

Are you "free" to decide, when there is no normal way of knowing the causes of the situation requiring a choice or the results of the possible choices? The animal in the natural state usually chooses the right way to react on the basis of compulsive instincts. Man has developed intelligence, ordinarily at the expense of at least some of his instincts. But intelligence needs to have conscious grounds for its judgments; and so many times there are no such grounds and the famous "voice of intuition" is not reliable, for it may be the voice of something else — a psychological complex, a fear, laziness, or even a real "spook" (i.e., a pressure exerted by some psychic entity, or "hidden persuader").

Where intelligence cannot provide us with the normally human and logical grounds which we need for a deliberate decision, astrology can come to our help — and we indeed need help! But there is help and help! We can become irrationally and compulsively bound to the helper or we can be helped to help ourselves. In the first instance, we have passively accepted the dictates of an authoritative source of information which has usurped our sacred human prerogative of decision making; in the second case, we have been given a new perspective, a new way of looking at our problems and some grounds upon which we can now make a decision — an objective conscious and informed decision.

There are astrologers — many of them — who, together with various types of "inspired" mediums and "miracle workers," are only too willing to announce what is going to happen, what course of action to take, whether this is good or bad for you, and so on. People run to them, for most human beings are glad to accept "authority" and "to know the Truth" (with a capital "T"). Other astrologers are real **consultants**; they have "a broad knowledge and an objective point of view" as well as "specialized training and skill"; but they do not intend to be "doer" or "operator." They establish a truly consultative relationship with their clients so that whatever advice is given "may be either accepted or rejected." The only thing they insist upon — or **should** insist upon if it were feasible (which is not often the case) — is that they "must have adequate time to do an education job, for an astrological consultation should be a form of education and, therefore, should be a repeated experience, for there is no education without repetition.

What kind of education can it be? One in which a person learns to be objective to his own total lifespan and to become aware of the basic rhythms of his or her existence as an individual person. These rhythms can be seen operating through the years of life which have gone by; they should be carefully studied. It is only on the basis of **a vivid understanding of the past** that one can orient the activities immediately ahead toward a constructive future in which the individual's innate potential can be more fully and more harmoniously **actualized**.

The astrologer cannot predict to an individual the **precise** future events of his life; if he could, astrology would be baneful and destructive of this man's integrity. No one could predict precisely such **individual** events; and whenever there are stories of such predictions, very basic factors are not mentioned. For instance, in the case of the famous ancient astrological books of India in which the exact destinies of many people even born today were apparently written down many centuries ago, only a person passing rigid selective tests could have read to him the prophecies for his day of birth. In other words, he, out of thousands of persons born on that day, had to prove to be the one fitting this specific archetypal pattern of soul experience in terms of particular events.

Astrology normally can reveal the structuring pattern of the life of an individual, the basic rhythm (or "form") of the process of existence from birth to death; but if a **structure** is determined, this does not mean that the actual existential **events** which fill in this basic structure are also predetermined. A glass can contain delicious wine or poison; both

substances are shaped by the form of the glass. Every one has a basic structure of being; it is the pattern of a individual selfhood. It is also his "destiny" — if by destiny we mean the schedule according to which what was potential at birth may become actualized during his lifetime; and I said "may" because many people actualize during their lifetime only a fraction of their innate potentialities.

Astrology tells you what "may" be actualized, not what "will" happen; but because it can reveal the **inherent structural order** of an individual's selfhood, it can "educate" this individual in meeting the confrontations of his everyday life with orderliness and objectiveness — that is, in terms of his whole potential of being, in terms of what Zen calls his "fundamental nature."

The true astrologer is a specialist in structural values concerning personality unfoldment, a specialist in human destiny. He can be consulted on all matters affecting the actualization of a man's potential — that is, on all matters referring to the question: "How can I **become** what I innately **am** as an organic whole of human existence?" He can, theoretically at least, answer such a question and its many ramifications as a consultant. But **as a consultant**, he cannot be expected to tell his client what will happen next month or next year or what he must do; this would be the province of a soothsayer or an oracle. The distinction is most important and should be made very clear in order to avoid deception and illusions.

Difficulties on the Way

An astrological consultant, I repeat, should have a broad knowledge of human nature, of the social conditions in his client's environment; he should have an objective point of view — i.e., an approach not biased by his own subjective attitude and his personal biases. Of course, he should also have training and skill. He ought to realize a number of basic facts which are inherent in his role as a consultant.

The first of these facts is that, even if the client trusts the astrologer's competence, still he may feel that the consultant cannot put himself in his (the client's) place. An objective approach appears always somewhat suspicious and beside the point to someone subjectively and emotionally involved in a deeply upsetting situation. The astrological consultant may have to go back to perhaps similar issues in the client's past, and, as a keen psychologist, to show him what were the inner or outer results of the unsuccessfully met past crisis. He must prove to the client that he has "empathy" with him, that he can "feel with" the client's deepest emotions, thereby creating an atmosphere of confidence at a more than technical level — that is, at a human level.

The consultant has to realize that the client will tend to resist any suggestion implying a basic change of attitude. It is very human indeed to want situations changed, provided we do not have to change. This is where a broad picture of the client's life as a whole, with its basic rhythms of development and its cycles (planetary transits, progressed lunation cycle, and numerological cycles like the fundamental 7-year and 28-year cycles), should be of the

greatest importance. One does not want to change because one is hypnotized by the present moment. But this "now situation" has no deep meaning in terms of the individual self of the client until it is referred to the structure and rhythmic development of his whole life. The experience of the first menstruation for a young girl would be devastating unless she were told that it is a phase of the total development of her body and of her life as a woman-to-be. The "present" is but a fleeting phase of cyclic time; it acquires meaning only as it is placed within the cyclic process of a whole life, from birth to death — and, theoretically, even beyond birth and death if reincarnation is a fact one can live by intelligently and knowingly.

"Why does this happen **to me**?" questions the harassed client. What can the consultant tell her that will mean anything unless she can point to the place and function this harrowing experience occupies and fulfills within the total life scheme of actualization of the birth potential? To say, "Oh yes, Saturn is now moving over your Venus square Mars," is no consolation. Rather, it gives a more objective, inescapable, and frightening character to the situation. If Saturn is involved, let the consultant study with his client the entire circle of this planet, all the aspects the planet makes, the motion through one house after another; above all, let the consultant picture the **total** transit and progression situation of the chart and not emphasize only one apparently disturbing aspect. All planets are always active, whether there are exact aspects or not. **What matters is the total interplay of their cyclic motions** at any time in relation to the character of the natal chart.

Time is Needed

Another point which needs to be emphasized in the client-consultant relationship is the usual eagerness of the client to discover a solution to his problem or problems **at once**. The desire for quick results and easy solutions is the bane of modern life. The factor of time is rarely considered by anyone in trouble in our society which has lost touch with the basic rhythms of seasonal life and of slow biological unfoldment through the years. Because we all feel that we live through a period of enormously accelerated change and in a crisis of transition between two eras, we have become impatient of delays and unaware of the need for a process of healing and "redemption" which, if it is healthy, must begin at the deepest layer of the substance of the mind of humanity as a whole and only slowly reach the surface.

The human mind has suffered grievous wounds during the last two millennia — the period during which man has been growing up from the old tribal stage of bondage to the soil, traditions and ideals of exclusivism, up to a still dimly understood state of planetwide organization and harmonious cooperation. Likewise, the psyches of grown-up clients are usually twisted or scarred by old complexes, memories, and fears when the astrological consultant or the psychologist is asked for a solution to a more especially poignant recent problem.

Modern persons have become accustomed to consider psychoanalysis or psychiatric healing a long and costly process; but they still expect astrological consultants to bring them solace, hope, and faith in themselves in an hour or two. The consultants are under pressure to discover at once magical factors which will free the mind from anxiety and cause everything to turn out well — **and very soon**. This is, of course, an impossible situation; it arises from the fact that most people still consider astrology as a mysterious art able to cure all kinds of anxieties and uncertainties.

It is useless to ask this of astrology. Astrology is a technique of understanding and a discipline of thought thanks to which a person can get a new outlook on her entire life and a more objective and structured understanding of the place and function of her most important life experiences and crises. Astrology can transform a seemingly meaningless crisis into a process of catharsis, prelude to rebirth at a higher, more inclusive level of existence. It can tell whether a client is at the beginning, middle, or end of certain cycles — and whether or not it is wise to push ahead at once or to wait for a more opportune and significant time.

It is not the task of the consultant, or of any type of consultant, to make decisions for his client. The consultant is essentially an educator, and adviser; he should assist his client — perhaps even train him in acquiring a new approach to life problems and, most of all, to the problem that the client himself presents in his contacts with people and with social traditions and prejudices. Of course, such assistance requires that the astrologer and his client are truly able to communicate with each other; and for the astrologer to communicate what he sees in the relevant astrological charts is often very difficult.

The Problem of Communication

It is difficult because astrology is a special language, whose very inclusive symbols cannot easily be translated into the ordinary language of words which have a more or less precise and concrete meaning, familiar to the client. The astrological language is even more difficult to understand for academically trained scientists because it is a language whose words (planets, signs, houses, nodes, etc.) can refer to many different levels of significance and may have, in many cases, either a positive or negative meaning. Thus, what the astrological consultant may "feel" about his client's situation, as pictured by the charts in front of him, can often not be stated in terms of definite and concrete actions. In this respect, the astrologer's position is similar to that of the genuine clairvoyant, who, when consulted about some matter, "sees" a symbol (or a symbolical scene) which he knows represents the solution of the real problem.

But the real problem is not always the problem which the client tells about, and the solution expressed in the symbol may not be easy to put into words which would **communicate to the client** what the real meaning of the situation is.

This, however, is what can occur in any consultation — medical, psychological, astrological, sociological — where questions are raised referring to individual persons and

interpersonal relationships; in such areas of human experience, levels of reality interpenetrate and conscious factors are rarely entirely separate from unconscious or semi-conscious drives, hopes, and fears. This is what makes these professions at the same time fascinating and dangerous. They require from the consultant not only a broad scope of knowledge of human nature and technical skill, but also the capacity to **resonate** in sympathetic vibration with the client so that the deeper advice he can give will be conveyed without words — i.e., by the sheer contagion of his presence and of what he stands for.

This is a big order. Very few consultants can fill it; but these few are not always the most sought after because what the great majority of people want are clear-cut solutions and easily worked out recipes formulated in simple terms which their ego-mind can quickly grasp — and usually forget or fail to act upon because of sheer laziness or indifference! There is a time for everything. A consultant should have an accurate sense of timing. Some things can be said at the end of an interview which would be detrimental at the beginning. Here again, the astrological consultant is usually most seriously handicapped by the traditional form of the relationship between astrologer and client — one fairly brief interview during which the client expects everything to be said.

A new type of relationship is badly needed today — indeed, a new approach to Astrology. The present-day astrologer's concern about "raising" astrology to the acceptable level of a "science" by means of statistics and other analytical tools worshiped in our official "factories of knowledge" (i.e., universities) will not produce a more constructive approach to the problems faced by the astrological consultant in relation to his clients. It is more likely to make such a relation less effectual because in order to be really effectual, it must be a relation of person to person — and science does not deal with **individual cases**, but with **statistical averages**.

Science does not deal with human values, but a person comes to an astrological consultant asking for help. He always unconsciously asks for help even if **consciously** he is motivated by curiosity. He comes for help with his sense of unique individual selfhood, even if his stated problem seems a common one; and it is with this sense of self that the consultant must deal.

We are all our own most basic problem; and astrology should help us to meet it objectively and serenely, without evasion or without the false sense of insecurity which our intellectual ego can generate.