**The Importance And Meaning Of The Astrological Houses**

The zodiac wheel is a circle (symbolizing no beginning and no end) divided into twelve segments called houses that represent different areas of life.

Every house provides a home for the planets residing there – giving that planet a place to act out its particular energy.

The horizontal line that connects the 1st and 7 house cusp (the cusp is the beginning of the house, marked by a new line) represents Earth’s horizon.

The 1st house cusp is the eastern-most point and the 7th is the western-most point. Planets near the 1st house cusp are called “rising” because they are coming up over the eastern horizon at the moment of birth.

* **The 1st house** affects the appearance and the personality, as it is perceived by the outside world. The rising sign is the degree and sign that marks the cusp of the 1st house and coincides with the first independent breath we take. This is why exact birth time is so critical in casting a natal chart – the chart’s very structure depends on the time and location of birth.
* **The Ascendant and 1st house** symbolize the process of beginning and initiation. Once you grasp this concept, you “get” what the 1st house is all about in a birth chart. Planets here will be easily available to the world and we will use great energy in the expression of those planets.
* **The 2nd house** is the house of values and possessions. It determines one’s level of self-esteem and also indicates personal talents and abilities. Our relationship to money and possessions as well as our attitude towards them can be understood from studying this house. Lastly, this house represents what we hope to gain in life – what we desire.
* **The 3rd house** has to do withsiblings, neighbors, youth, early school experiences and relationships with those who live nearby. Perhaps the most significant meaning of this house is communication – it tells us about every aspect of communication and all mental endeavors. This is also the house having to do with short distance travel. Keywords to this house include growth and exploration.
* **The 4th house** rules home, family, roots and the end of all matters. Ancestors, heritage and parents – particularly the nurturing parent, usually mother, are represented by this house. It is called the house of the soul and the sign on the cusp of this house as well as any planets here can help us understand the qualities and elements of ourselves we keep guarded.
* **The 5th house** is the house of romance, sex, conception, children, creativity, self-expression and risks. Most importantly, this house is all about self-fulfillment – doing as one pleases. It is the house of the inner child as well as your own childhood.
* **The 6th house** is all about work and service, our daily routine, jobs, and health. The keyword to this house is “duty”. Our level of dedication to maintaining details that result in knowledge and wisdom is expressed through this house. It symbolizes the mind-body connection and as a result, health matters can be understood from this house as well.
* **The 7th house (or Descendant)** is the house opposite the 1st house of self and identity, and thus it is concerned with the awareness of others. The sign placed on the 7th house cusp describes how we approach a relationship and also indicates what we are attracted to in a partner. Indeed the 7th house is the house of marriage, partnerships, and open enemies. Through these significant relationships the lession of being aware of others is learned.
* **The 8th house** is the house opposite the 2nd house of possessions and concern for what is “mine”, what “I value” and “my abilities”. Thus the 8th house is concerned not with what “I” have, but what “you” have, what “you” value and other people's talents and abilities. The 8th house will tell you about the financial status of your marriage partner, since it is the 2nd house from the 7th. It will tell you about any investment you have concerning other people’s money such as stocks, venture capital, taxes and inheritance. It is called the house of “sex, death and regeneration” because this house forces us to explore our most intimate and hidden depths by sharing ourselves with others.
* **The 9th house** is the house of long distance travel, higher education, philosophy, religion and politics. Opposite the 3rd house of accumulating knowledge, this house teaches us how we can share this knowledge gained through the 3rd with the world. This house asks the deep questions and helps us find the meaning and purpose in life. The 3rd house is where the journalist gets the information, but the 9th house is where he publishes it.
* **The 10th house (or Midheaven)** is the most elevated point in the chart. This explains why the 10th house is concerned with career, status, honors and recognition. It is also traditionally associated with our authority parent – most likely the father. The 10th house shows your reputation – the public image you present to the world. The very nature of our contribution to society is shown through the 10th house and it is one of the places you can look to determine your true calling.
* **The 11th house** is the house of friendships, hopes, wishes, and dreams. It talks about the relationship we have with the community and humanitarian issues. It is the most social of houses, indicating our involvement with groups, clubs and organizations. In the 11th house we find that dreams come true only when we consider society’s needs as well as our own.
* **The 12th house** is the most hidden house of the zodiac. It is where we seek to transcend the humanness of ourselves but at the same time where we fear to do so because of the uncertainty as to what we will find. Nevertheless, the ego is lost in the 12th house whether we like it or not in order to delve deep into our most unconscious issues and perhaps even take a peek at the collective unconscious. Once we get past the fear of losing the self, we find a treasure in the 12th house that teaches us our great potential for compassion and universal love. The 12th house is obscure, giving it the reputation of being the “house of self-undoing” and is also assigned to hidden institutions such as prisons or mental facilities.