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7 Secrets of Reading Your Birth Chart

Answers to the most pressing questions people ask me about reading your own birth chart.

Professional astrologer in New York: Placidus, degree theory, and getting scary accurate on the big stuff

Introduction

Hello, I'm Ziggy. Welcome to the Seven Secrets of Reading Your Birth Chart. I am a professional astrologer based in New York. 15 plus years doing this, thousands of clients all over the world. I work mainly using the Placidus house system, and I'm known for getting scary accurate on the big stuff. Marriage, kids, business. So let's get into the questions I get asked more than anything else.

Secret One: House Systems, Whole Sign vs. Placidus

You've probably hit this already. You pull your chart up on one app, you check it on another, and your planets are all in the same spots, but somehow a third of them, or half of them even, jumped into different houses, and you're sitting there going, okay, so which one's right? What's going on? Did one of them break? No. Same planets, same signs, every single time. The only thing that changed is the house system that the app is using. So let's talk about what that actually means.

See, everybody agrees on the planets. Everybody agrees on the signs, especially because we're all using the tropical zodiac, unless someone is a Vedic astrologer and they're using the sidereal zodiac, Lahiri, right? There's other names for it. The tropical zodiac, right? That's the zodiac that I use, that most astrologers use in the West. The only argument for all of us tropical astrologers, not all of us, like half of us agree on one thing, the other half agree on another, then there's like a group of others, right? The only argument is the houses, really, right? Equal slices, 30 degrees each, that's whole sign. Uneven slices, all different sizes, way more detail about you, that is Placidus. And another thing that nobody really tells beginners, where the planets sit, what signs they're in, that's just math. It is settled. Where we actually split off from each other is how we carve the wheel into 12 houses. There are a bunch of ways to do it, but the two you will run into the most, without a doubt, whole sign and Placidus.

So let me show you both. And I'm using my own chart so you can see it for real. So I'm a Cancer Rising. In whole sign, this is about as simple as it gets. The whole sign of Cancer becomes my first house, all of it, 0 to 30 degrees. The next sign, Leo, becomes my entire second house. Virgo is my whole third, Libra is my whole fourth, and it just rolls around the

wheel like that, so on and so forth. One sign, one house, all the way around, every house exactly 30 degrees. It's the oldest system that we have, and there's a real elegance to it. There's a lot of validity to it depending on the applications you're making, right? Now watch what happens to that exact same chart in Placidus, the system that I actually teach in and build everything on. My rising is not just Cancer anymore, it's Cancer at 18 degrees and 34 arc minutes, and that exact spot is where my first house begins. My second house does not start at 0 Leo, right? You see? It kicks off at 8 degrees of Leo, and way up at the top of the chart, my Midheaven, my big career point, public reputation, it lands at 29 Pisces, 29 degrees of Pisces.

The very last breath of the Zodiac is the 29 degree of Pisces. The beginning of the Zodiac is at Aries zero, right? That's the big bang of the Zodiac. So now my houses aren't even anymore.

Some get stretched out, and some get squished down, and that unevenness is extra information that the chart is handing me. So anything before 18 degrees and 34 arc minutes is in my 12th house. So notice how my 12th house starts at Gemini at a certain degree. Before that, in the 11th house, there's a little bit Gemini in there too. Just like before my Ascendant starts at 18, there's 0 to 18 degrees and 33 arc minutes in Cancer. Does that make sense? I hope it does. It takes the curvature of the Earth into consideration, whereas whole sign doesn't. That is the biggest difference. That's why there's so much more nuance with Placidus. So I'm not going to sit here and tell you that whole sign is wrong. It's not wrong. Both of these house systems can be true at once. They are both true at once. Like when we're doing critical thinking, a good critical thinker knows that two things can be true at once, and there's a lot of nuance and things in everything in life. And plenty of brilliant astrologers swear by whole sign. You're going to see that come up. But for the work that I do, and for the way that I'm going to teach in the most efficient way and the best way that I can, Placidus is going to be the best for me because of how I do my astrology.

Placidus is where the details live, right? The dirty little secrets, the aha moments, the gold. In Placidus, a planet can move into a new house without ever even, you know, changing signs. It doesn't change signs. It's in the same position, but like it's in a new house, and it gives more nuance, way more nuance. It takes the curvature of the earth into consideration once again. So when a planet is in the second house in whole sign, but the third house in Placidus, those are going to be two completely different manifestations. You can take both into consideration when you start getting more advanced, but for now we're going to read using Placidus, okay? It is genuinely such a wonderful place to start because it's harder to read. So learn by starting with the hardest, and then you can veer into easier things, and it'll be like nothing to you. Another thing with Placidus, you get the exact degree that every one of your houses begins on, right? Like see how my first house cusp starts at 18 degrees Cancer, second house cusp starts at 8 degrees Leo, third house cusp starts at 0 degrees Virgo, fourth house cusp starts at 29 degrees Virgo. In Placidus, otherwise known as my Imum Coeli, the Nadir of the chart, the foundation, right? You get something whole sign literally can't show you. Interceptions. Because what's intercepted inside of my fourth house? Libra. Libra doesn't have a house assignment. If you look up to the north part of my chart, Aries is intercepted as well.

Empty Houses and Interceptions

Anytime something looks like it's missing from your chart, it shows up in two flavors. Sometimes it's an empty house, sometimes it's an interception. For me, I have Leo empty in my chart, right? I have Cancer empty in my chart, Gemini is empty in my chart, and I also have Libra that doesn't have a house assignment. Aries doesn't have a house assignment. That's just the nuance with Placidus. So let's start with the empty house part of it because that's the one that scares people. They think because they have an empty seven that they're never going to get married. If they have an empty second house that they don't have a relationship with money, they're not going to make money. That's not true.

This one freaks people out. You look at your chart and you see a house with no planets in it and you panic like a whole area of your life is missing, but it is not missing. You have 12 houses and only so many planets and mathematical points that typically show up, right? So everybody, and I mean everybody, you know, usually has empty houses. Look at my second house. That's my money and my resources house. Not one planet in it. Does that mean that I have no relationship with money? Come on. Here is how you actually read it. You see Leo's on the cusp of my second house, as I said before, and Leo is ruled by what? Zodiac Leo is ruled by the Sun. So I go find my Sun, and look at that. It is sitting in Aquarius in my seventh house, partnership, right? And it is kind of like a networking house, kind of like your public networking situation house and your relationship house, your marriage house. So the way I handle money runs straight through my one-on-one relationships, through the people I show up for. It's also the house of open enemies, by the way. That's literally all that it is. It is a house run by its ruler who happens to live somewhere else on the wheel. That's how you read the chart for every house that's empty.

That's how you make the most sense of it. And then you look at the aspects to it, but that's already getting a little more advanced. Now look at my 10th and fourth houses. See how there's no Aries in my 10th. I mentioned this earlier. No Libra in my fourth. Those missing signs, they have a name. They're called interceptions.

So what an interception basically is, it's like a sign that is trapped inside of a house with no cusp of its own. It never gets to start a house. And it always happens in pairs, okay? An opposite sign. So in my chart, Aries is intercepted. It's tucked inside of my 10th house, and clear across the wheel, as you can see to the bottom, Libra is intercepted down in my fourth. Neither one gets to begin a house. And because those two are hidden in the middle, two other signs have to pull double duty. See, Virgo shows up on two of my cusps. My third house cusp and my fourth house cusp. So does Pisces. Ninth house cusp and 10th house cusp. Those are your duplicated signs. And that right there is the, anytime you spot the same sign sitting on two house cusps, you got to go hunting. Hunt, hunt, hunt.

Because there's an interception hiding on the opposite side every single time. Now this one is personal for me here, an intercepted sign is tucked in a back room and it's running quiet. The sign on the cusp does the front facing work first, and the buried sign takes real effort before it ever comes out. My 10th has Pisces on the cusp. It's the healing, the caretaking lane, and that

one came out really early and easy for me, right? I was a nurse, but my Saturn's buried in intercepted Aries, that build it yourself, DIY, do it yourself, answer to nobody energy, right? That took years to claw its way out, and eventually it freaking did. I left nursing, went full-time astrologer. I was doing astrology part-time, and I was always told you have to do something normal, took that advice, regretted it, and instead of making astrology a part-time hobby, it became a full-time career that I am very, very grateful to be able to do. It's why I'm here right now talking to you.

It's awesome. I built this whole thing myself, and that's about as Aries Saturn as it gets, with a lot of grit and patience, because patience is always the biggest lesson for Aries, especially Aries Saturn. I still get to keep my nursing license, right? Because that Pisces cusp never really lets go in whole sign, and you never see any of that. It flattens it all and erases it, not to say it's bad. It's just what it is. It doesn't take the earth's curvature into consideration. And to me, it's golden to see Placidus, to use Placidus. I'm not going to throw that gold away, no way.

Birth Time, and Your Chart Ruler

And that brings me straight to birth time, because look at what every single thing I just showed you depends on. My rising degree, my house cusps, my interception, my Midheaven, all of it hangs on my exact time of birth. So what happens if you don't have yours? You keep a ton. All your planets stay in their signs. That doesn't budge. All your aspects stay. What you lose is the time sensitive stuff. So you would lose likely the accurate degree of your Moon, your Ascendant, all 12 of your house cusps, your Midheaven, your angles.

Even Mercury can budge a little bit, but that's about it though. My Moon, for example, is at one degree of Scorpio, one degree. If I had been born a couple hours earlier, it moves 13 degrees per day, approximately, that Moon. So it could be back in Libra for all I know if I didn't have my right birth time, my accurate birth time. And that's a completely different emotional read on me. Thank goodness I have that accurate read, that accurate birth time, because I am so a Scorpio Moon, plus the Moon is my chart ruler since I'm a Cancer Rising. Cancer is ruled by the Moon. Whatever rising sign you have, there's a ruler for each zodiac sign, right? So if your ascendant is Libra, you're ruled by Venus. If your ascendant is Capricorn, you're ruled by Saturn, right? I'm ruled by Cancer, so the Moon is a really important placement in my chart. So if you happen to be a Cancer Rising, you don't know your birth time, but you really are a Cancer Rising, right? You're going to want to get an accurate degree for your Moon.

That's going to be very important. Without that, it's really hard to interpret, because those aspects that that chart ruler, my Moon for me, makes to my placements in my chart is going to be everything for me, right? It's very important. Your birth time is what decides how the whole chart starts. Your rising, every house cusp, they all follow from it. So without it, you're better off in whole sign. If you don't have your accurate birth time, you're better off in whole sign. 100%.

100%, okay? Whole sign gives you a clean and solid structure. There's nothing wrong with it. I never said that. I will never say that. I use it to triangulate in my more advanced reads with my

clients. Placidus will always give you that same structure plus all these extra layers stacked on top. The exact degree of every cusp, your interceptions, your angles, all of that precision comes from one thing, the mathematics that are used, your exact time of birth and your exact spot on earth where you came out of mama's pelvic crypt. That's why I love Placidus.

Secret Two: Degree Theory

Once you start paying attention to those layers, you run right into the smallest, sharpest one of all, the exact degree a single planet is sitting on. And that right there is the whole basis of my degree theory, especially the house cusps. The degrees on the house cusps will tell you how the function of that house will work for you. It is truly so brilliant and such a game changer that not a lot of people really like that much, but I'm definitely excited to show you guys how degree theory works and why it is so accurate.

And I wish more people would give it a chance because it's what makes me so accurate. So have you ever met two people with the exact same rising sign, two Cancer Risings, and they feel like completely different humans? One is soft and nurturing and takes care of everybody, and the other one is like running an empire and low-key intimidating everybody in the room. They have the same ascendant sign. So why do they feel nothing alike? It's a very common question with all of the different zodiac signs, two different degrees on a Libra rising, two different degrees on a Scorpio rising, whatever, with all 12. You compare two of them and they're completely different people. It's the degree.

It's called degree theory for a reason. And once you see it, you cannot unsee it. So the framework that I build on comes from a Serbian astrologer named Nikola Stojanovic. And I have literally spent years building on top of his work, years, adding my own research, my own client cases, my own layers. But he's just where the foundation starts, right? Credit where it's due.

I have to give credit where it's due. Everything else that I've built on top of it, that's my own work. I just started with his fundamental basis. So every placement you've got sits in a sign, right? We all know that part, but it also sits at a number, a degree, somewhere from zero to 29 and some minutes, some arc minutes, right? So it ends at 29 degrees, 59 arc minutes.

And then next sign starts. That number carries a whole second sign's energy. That layer is right on top of that initial placement sign that it's in. So you're always reading two things stacked together when you're applying degree theory. The sign plus the degree, two energies layered. And so much of the nuance is right there in that stack. And finding it is easy, believe it or not. It's easy because it's just a cycle.

Cause it starts at Aries since Aries is the first sign, right? So degree one is an Aries degree. Degree two is a Taurus degree. Degree three is Gemini, right? Cause the first natural house is Aries. The second natural house is Taurus. The third natural house is Gemini. The fourth natural house is Cancer, so on and so forth. You just roll through the signs in order until it loops back around, okay? And then you start with the first house again. Since the 12th house was Pisces,

you start again. You keep going. Aries is the first house, but it's one degree, and 13, right? And then you go to 14 Taurus, 15 Gemini, 16 Cancer, 17 Leo, 18 Virgo, 19 Libra, so on and so forth. It's very, very simple. And you'll memorize them if you apply it long enough. So let me run my own chart for you because this is where it gets very, very fun. My Ascendant is at 18 degrees of Cancer, and 18 lands on what? A Virgo degree, okay? So my Cancer Rising, that very soft and nurturing and mothering thing everybody knows Cancer for, and it also has, you know, some shadows that we'll talk about another time. My Virgo degree Cancer Rising has a very precise and picky, detail-loving Virgo thread and running right underneath it. So, you know, that's just so me that it's almost hilarious because, you know, Cancer is very warm and caring, and Virgo energy with that degree on my Ascendant is the part of me that needs it done right and done clean and done properly.

I am the human embodiment of, I will open a notebook and I will write down like some writing on it, whatever. And if it's not neat enough, I will rip the page out. That is the epitome of me because I care and I want it done right, right? So that is the stack, sign plus degree. It's so hilarious. And I know what some of you are thinking. I know what you're thinking. You're going, okay, so does this cancel out my sign? That means I'm not a Cancer Rising anymore. I'm not a Scorpio Rising anymore. No, no. Like people, they think when I mention degree theory, so that means I'm not my rising sign anymore. No, that's not true. Your sign is still doing everything it does. Like I'm gonna be a Cancer Rising till the day I'm in the ground. Honestly, when I'm in the ground, I'm still a Cancer Rising if you're honoring my memory, right? Your sign is still doing everything that it does. Full strength, full strength, absolutely. The degree just layers a second flavor on top, right? The texture inside of it. You are your sign plus one more thing. Always adding, never erasing. Always adding, never erasing.

Write that down. You're always just adding nuance on nuance on nuance. You're never taking anything away. You're taking everything into consideration. Critical thinking is really important when it comes to astrology. Nuance is very, very important. It is imperative that you apply critical thinking to astrology, but I'm sure you're a good critical thinker because you've made it this far.

Critical and Anaretic Degrees: 0 and 29

So anyway, let's continue. Now, there are several degrees with special influence, but I want you to flag two of them for me, okay? Zero and 29. Flag them every single time you see them. They're a big deal, big deal. So there is an umbrella, right? So critical degrees, right? And we'll get into the next portion of this after. Zero and 29. Zero and 29 are both critical degrees, but then there's another umbrella, and that is called an anaretic degree. So zero and 29 are both critical, but 29 is critical and anaretic. Zero is just critical, not anaretic. So one more time. Zero is critical. 29 is critical and anaretic, all right?

So let's talk about zero first. Zero is the blank slate, the very beginning, before anything's even started. So a placement at zero degrees, it will read like a brand new energy, something you came into this life to start completely fresh with, absolutely no past template at all. For example, look at my Sun sitting at zero degrees in Aquarius. So my whole identity, my Sun came in writing

its own rule book from scratch, rule book, sorry. I'm just so excited. I love degree theory so much. So another thing to notice, you have anything at zero degrees in any zodiac, it has no other sign applied to it. No other sign gets applied to it. It is just the sign that it's in. Anything at zero, if it sits in a specific zodiac sign, for example, zero degrees Saturn in Aquarius, that is just Aquarius energy. It does not count in degree theory, it is its own energy. Like if you have something at one degree, that has an Aries flavor. So if it was a one degree Saturn in Aquarius, that would be an Aries degree Aquarius Saturn. But because it's at zero degrees, it is assigned to the zodiac sign that it sits in only, only. And when we move to 29, that's different because it is like the other one, but like I said, it's an anaretic degree and a critical degree. And it's also a Leo degree. It's not like zero degrees. It is assigned the Leo flavor, and it is the last degree. So it's super special in that respect. It is the unfinished business degree, right? It's a karmic completion point. Something you came in to master and don't really get to put down until you've worked all the way through it.

Like look at my Midheaven, see that 29 degrees Pisces? My whole career and a public life point sitting at 29 degrees of Pisces, that's the healing and the spiritual stuff and being seen for it, the mysticism, the spirituality, and perhaps shining bright with my knowledge. People know me for my knowledge about astrology, because maybe it's unconventional, because if we get into aspects, my Sun makes a sextile to it, and what is my Sun at? Aquarius, zero degrees. Raw zero degrees, Aquarius, nothing is assigned to it.

So I'm known for my unconventional spiritual knowledge, and what is the Sun? Sun is ruled by Leo. So it's Leo energy on Leo energy with Aquarius, the collective, and Pisces spirituality all blended together. See how brilliantly that lines up? It's incredible.

So essentially my career was always gonna be this lifetime long Piscean assignment I have to keep working on until I get it right. Two very wonderful critical degrees in one chart, my Sun and my Midheaven, also my Neptune, conjunct my Sun, sextiling my Midheaven exactly as well, which is even more Piscean energy, modernly speaking, but that's another story. They're running my whole identity and my whole career. That is not nothing. So any critical degrees that you have in your chart, 0, 29, or anaretic, just 29, that is something you need to pay extra close attention to. Remember, you're assigning no extra degree theory flavor to a zero degree placement. You're assigning a Leo flavor to a 29 degree anaretic degree placement.

Retrograde Rounding

One precision thing here will trip people up. So just stay with me. My Venus, see that, conjunct my Descendant. It's in my seventh house next to my seventh house cusp. Seventh house cusp is also known as the Descendant when you're using Placidus. She's retrograde. She's in Capricorn. She's at 23 degrees and 28 arc minutes of Capricorn, and she's retrograde. Now, if my Venus were direct, I'd just read her at plain old 23, which is Aquarius, Aquarius degree, which makes sense for me as well. But when you have a retrograde placement, I would say to round up a full degree. So read it at 24 degrees. You can read it at the degree it's at, 23, or if it's retrograde, you could also read it 24. So 23 or 24. If it's direct, you read it at the degree it's at.

You'll notice that both interpretations will make sense. Either one will make sense or the other will make sense. When it's direct, usually the only interpretation you'll take into consideration is the degree that it's at. You'll notice how this plays out when you look at your own chart. I'm promising you. You can read two different interpretations, the degree it's at, or round it up if it's retrograde. If it's direct, repeating this once again, you are looking at just the degree that it's at, and you're not rounding it up. It doesn't matter which arc minute it's at. It doesn't even matter. Unless it is retrograde, you're not rounding it up. So you have to honor the retrograde. You have to take the next degree into consideration. You round it up because it moves the whole answer. The why behind it is a little more advanced, and we'll get into that another time. For now, retrograde rounds up, or you can read it at the degree it's at.

There are two interpretations for it. And usually, one or the other will make sense, or both will make sense. For direct placements, you'll notice how only that specific degree interpretation makes the most sense. You will see. I promise you will see.

The Paint Analogy

So let me make this dead simple. Think of your sign as the first coat of paint on a wall. It is the big color, right? The one that you can see from across the room.

You're in a big room and you see the color, right? That is the color. It paints the whole thing, right? The degree is the second coat that goes on top. Same wall, but the primer, right? Is there a primer that you put on top of colored paint? I think the primer comes first. Anyway, just think of color first, primer on top.

The clear coat goes on top, like you're painting nails, okay? Painting nails. So the nail or the wall is still the same color. It just got more specific. That's all a degree does. It will refine what you've already got, but that refinement gives you a lot of nuance that you otherwise would not get. So why are we bothering with the second coat, the clear coat or whatever, right? Because two people can have the same big color and still not match. That is literal fact. And I'm sure you've seen it everywhere. Why do I not resonate with this? Why do I not resonate with that? It's because there's so much more nuance than you can possibly imagine. Two Cancer Risings, like I said before, right? Same wall, different finish. So if you only read the sign, you'd swear those two people should be twins, and then you meet them and they're nothing alike at all, right? The degree is the part that explains why. That's the whole reason it makes a chart more accurate. It tells you apart from everybody else who shares your placements. One quick thing on the framework though, degree theory runs on the tropical zodiac with Placidus houses only, tropical zodiac Placidus houses only, okay? That is its home base. It reads the exact degree your angles and placements land on, right down to the minute, and that precision makes it a discipline in its own right with its own internal logic.

Degree Theory's Lineage: Stojanovic and Ebertin

It stands on its own as one valid way to read a chart, and it is in good company. Traditional Hellenistic astrology is its own complete system built over centuries, and it is valid. Vedic astrology is its own complete system with its own zodiac and its own rules entirely, so separate from traditional, so separate from modern astrology. They have different rules. Each one is complete on its own terms. Each one is fully valid. Each one does its own job. Do not let anyone invalidate practices that have been used over decades such as degree theory. Vedic astrology, centuries, and Hellenistic astrology, centuries, traditional astrology, centuries, I get it, yes, but we are here to refine astrology, just because it's been around for decades and not centuries does not mean that it's invalid.

Take it into consideration. I'm promising you it is wonderful. It is the reason why I have become successful. It is my main driving force of my success, my degree theory. It is the one that I go deepest on, and it's the one I'm literally handing you here. This has serious lineage too, okay? Like I said, degree level precision has been central to medical astrology for decades, not centuries, decades, but still, a German astrologer, his name is Reinhold Ebertin.

He is literally everything to me. May he rest in peace.

Reinhold Ebertin built a whole body of work on exactly how tight exact points in a chart show up in the physical body and in health. When you're reading something as specific as the body, the exact degree is what pins it down. Doctors of the chart basically have been working at this resolution for a long time, so this is a real serious discipline, and it's one that beginners never get shown, and then they learn more and they happen to find out about it, like maybe a few months into their practice, and they start assuming or insinuating that it's BS when it is not. They just already have this predisposition built up in their head that whatever they've been fed is correct and that nothing else can be true. That's why critical thinking and astrology is important. Just because one thing is true and another thing reads as weird doesn't mean it's not true. Two things can be true at once. I promise you this. Quick example so you can see it work. Say two people both have Mars in the same sign. It sounds identical on paper, right? But one person has Mars in a Scorpio degree and the other one has Mars on a Libra degree. Same planet, same sign, but the Scorpio degree Mars is going to run a lot hotter. Hell of a lot hotter. More intense, more all or nothing. While the Libra degree folk, that Mars wants to fight and be fair and it wants to talk it out. So the fight is not necessarily boom, boom, boom, punch you in the face. It's just like, let's sit down and figure this out. Scorpio Mars degree is different. It is different, right? In medical astrology, you take it even further. Mars rules what? Heat and inflammation. So the exact degree that it sits on can point to where in the body that runs. Same headline, two completely different stories going on here, right? The degree is what splits them apart. That is the precision that you're leaving on the table if you stop at the sign, okay? So can you read a chart without any of this? Of course you can. You can use the bounds and terms if you're doing traditional astrology, or you can apply Vedic principles, right? But this is what I do. This is a modern astrological practice. Not all modern astrologers buy into it either. This is very niche or niche, however you pronounce it, right? It is what it is, and it's what makes me successful, which is why I'm sharing it with you, because I want you to see the magic behind it. People read without degrees every single day and they can get really real, useful stuff out of it. There's

nothing wrong with that. It is its own valid practice in its own right, and it's a separate thing entirely. You're just working with one less layer, or a different layer that I don't use. I'm teaching you my layer. The sign gives you the broad strokes. The degree gives you the specific texture sitting inside of it. And once I'm reading both, once I've got that stack going, the chart gets so much deeper, it becomes mind-blowing.

Secret Three: Your Chart Ruler

So much more specific, so much more you, right? So when I sit down with the chart and I look at the degree on the ascendant first, right? And then I move to the Sun, then the Moon, or perhaps I'll start with the chart ruler. And I read that second layer everywhere I go, sign plus degree, the whole way around the wheel. And once you've got the degrees down, there is one placement I go to before everything else, which I just told you. The first thing I look at every single time, the second I open a chart, the chart ruler. The chart ruler is what I will usually look at the first time I open a chart, because that will show you the beginning. That will show you where to start. Sometimes my students will have a better time starting with the Sun or the Moon, but the way that I do it, I have to tell you I always start with the chart ruler.

Quick question before we start. Have you ever looked up your sun sign, read the description, and you've just gone, that is not me, like at all, and this makes no sense to me whatsoever. Hang on to that feeling because by the end of this, I'm gonna tell you exactly why. And it comes down to one placement that most people have never even heard of, and it's called your chart ruler. And once it clicks, your whole chart kind of opens up a whole new world for you. So I'll show you what a chart ruler is, how to find yours in about 10 seconds, and then I'll walk my own chart through it piece by piece so you can watch it work. Five quick things in order. So picture your whole life as a car going down a road. Your sun sign is the engine, your core, the thing powering you underneath it all. Your Moon's riding shotgun, that's your private inner world, and somebody's got their hands on the wheel steering the whole thing, picking where you go. That driver is your chart ruler, indeed. It's the energy actually steering how you move through your entire life, where your focus goes, what you're here to do, and most astrologers, me included, will straight up call your chart ruler you in the chart. It's your little avatar, the character that's actually you walking around in there. It's my favorite placement to look at hands down, and if your sun sign has always felt a little bit off to you, keep that car in your head because the driver is usually the reason. Finding your driver takes two steps, that's it. So step one, you find your rising sign, your ascendant, the sign that was basically coming up over the horizon the second you came out of mommy's pelvic crypt. Step two, every sign has one planet in charge of it called its ruler, and the ruler of your rising sign is your chart ruler, that's your driver. So you just need to know which planet runs which sign. So Aries runs on Mars, Taurus on Venus, Leo on the Sun, and it keeps going like that, every sign's got one. Quick heads up, and it's an easy one. A few signs actually have two rulers, an old one and a new one, because astrology picked up more planets over the centuries.

Scorpio runs on Mars the old way, and Pluto the new way. Aquarius has Saturn and Uranus, Saturn the old way, Uranus the new way. Pisces has Jupiter and Neptune, Jupiter the old way, Neptune the new way. So if one of those three is your rising, you get two drivers and you read both, but I like for you to prioritize, please, the old way first.

So if you are, like I said, a Scorpio rising, I would like you to prioritize Mars. If you are an Aquarius rising, I would like for you to please prioritize Saturn. If you're a Pisces rising, I would like for you to please prioritize Jupiter. Once you've got your driver, you go find that planet on your chart and you ask it three little questions. What sign are you in? What house are you in? What degree are you on? Hold on to those three because we're about to answer all of them on my chart, one at a time, to give you a valid example of how I utilize this and how it makes sense to me.

So let me do mine for you, nice and slow, so you can watch it happen. See, look, I'm a Cancer Rising. Cancer runs on the Moon. So the Moon is my chart ruler. The Moon is my driver, my me. Now I go find my Moon on my chart and I ask it those questions. Where is it? Sitting at one degree of Scorpio down in my fourth house in Placidus, using the Placidus house system. Let's take those one at a time, okay? So start with the sign, Scorpio. The sign that my driver is in, the sign that your driver is in too, will tell you what kind of a driver you are. My driver's in Scorpio. So the energy steering my whole life runs deep, intense, private, all or nothing, pulled toward the hidden stuff, the heavy stuff, the things most people keep at arm's length.

That's the driver I've got behind the wheel. Then the house, the fourth. If the sign is what kind of driver you are, the house is where you're driving, the part of life where all of that energy actually plays out. The fourth house is home, family, roots, your private inner foundation. It's also about endings. So my driver is parked deep in my most private, behind closed door space that there possibly can be in astrology in the houses. So put the two together and it's dead simple. I run my whole life from the inside out, and that's already a ton of, two questions, right?

Third question, the degree. If you caught my degree theory video, you already know this move, the degree is the exact number a planet sits on and it stacks a second flavor on top of the sign. And if you missed it, the whole thing is, it's just one line, right? Every degree carries the energy of a sign too. So a planet is always a sign plus a degree layered together. So we have a base coat and then we have a clear coat on top, right? So my clear coat, my degree, my Moon is at one degree in Scorpio, and one degree is an Aries degree because one, the first degree, is the first natural house, one, right? Think of the degree as a quirk in how your driver drives.

So mine's got an Aries quirk, raw, brand new, charged, straight in energy, a little bit of road rage there, or a lot, right? Sitting right on the very front of it, first degree, the very start, fresh out the gate, Big Bang of the Zodiac, Aries energy, it's near the Vernal Equinox, it's the first Zodiac sign. So under all that deep, careful Scorpio, there's a part of me that throws itself at its own feelings head first, like hello, it's the first person to ever feel them, right? It's like it's the first person to ever feel them.

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Hope that makes sense. So look at everything one planet just handed us. What kind of a driver, Scorpio, where it drives, the fourth house, its quirk behind the wheel, a little bit of road rage with that Aries degree, right? Sign, house and degree all stacked on one placement. Do you see how much that single planet is already telling you? It's wonderful, it's so exciting, it's magnificent, it's beautiful, okay?

Time for the payoff, I promised you up top. So, so many people come to me going, I don't relate to my Sun sign at all, and nine times out of 10, why? They've been reading the engine and they're skipping right past the driver. The driver's very important.

Your Sun is your core for sure, absolutely. And your chart ruler is how you actually move through the world every single day. It's the hands on the wheel. You're more than just one Sun sign, right? You're a whole stack of them. You have your Sun, your Moon, the rising and the whole foundation of your chart. That's your big three, right? And other planets, you have your personal planets layering on top of that, okay? Mercury's how you think, Venus is how you love and your values, Mars is how you fight. It's the planet of war, right? All of it is you all at once. So one Sun sign description feeling thin makes complete and utter sense, in that it cannot fully describe you.

That is pop astrology, okay? That is BS, right? It's just one ingredient out of a dozen. So if you ever felt once like a Capricorn or whatever your Sun sign is, like if you've never felt that way rather, if you've never felt like a Capricorn, you have to go meet your driver, you must. Like if you're a Capricorn Sun and your Capricorn Sun sits in your seventh house and you're a Cancer Rising and your Moon happens to be in Aries in your 10th house, right? You might have a square between your Sun and your Moon, and that's a completely different person than just a Capricorn. That's a really hardcore driven energy that might not feel like calm sturdy workhorse, but more so like guns blazing, right? I'd put money on you feeling that your chart ruler is the planet and the sign and the degree that you embody at your bones, truly.

Secret Four: The Angles

And one more layer and then I'll let you go. This one runs a little bit deeper. So I'm gonna save the full breakdown for its own video, but I want you to see that it's there. Back to the car just one more time, okay?

So your driver's got company, there are passengers, your other planets, and some of them are leaning forward and talking to the driver, helping, arguing, backseat driving, one is buying snacks at 7-11 and asking nobody to pitch in because it's just such a wonderful placement, or perhaps it's asking everyone to pitch in equally, or perhaps it's making some other planet pay because they have beef towards it. Basically those conversations are called aspects. Sorry if I got convoluted there, because they all have their own personalities, right? You have to blend them together holistically. There are lines between your planets that show you which ones are talking to each other. So my Moon, my driver, is locked up tight and square with my Sun, almost exact. It's very tense, right? If my Moon and my Sun go on a road trip, my Moon is going to be

like, well, I paid for this last time, so you better pay for this next time. It's like, you know, an imbalance, it's like either one or the other. I'm having a lot of internal friction between my ego, core identity, Sun, and my driver, the Moon. Essentially, there are just two planets pulling against each other. So my feelings and my core identity stay in this constant tug of war. And it's uncomfortable. And it's something that I have to work on my entire life. But it's okay. It's just what it is. It's what I chose before I came down here. They want different things. And I felt that my whole life. My Moon's also got a hazy, dreamy line, square Neptune, which makes me deeply intuitive and sensitive. Though it also means I've got to watch those rose colored glasses, because limerence has been quite a theme in my life. It's very hard, right? Those are the passengers talking to my driver. And that back and forth is where the really deep specific stuff about a person lives.

Your chart ruler is the closest thing in your whole chart to just you, the driver, hands on the wheel, running the show, find that one planet, ask it three questions, what sign, what house, what degree, then check who's talking to it aspect wise. And you'll know more about yourself than any single sun sign could ever tell you. And one last breadcrumb before you go, the exact spot that your driver sits on, plus a few other major points like it, those are your angles. And the angles are where the whole chart gets so loud, the angles, that's the next one. So the angles are the four big power points in your chart, the four corners that hold the whole thing up, you have your Ascendant, your rising off to the east, straight across from it, you have your Descendant, the seventh house ruler, usually in Placidus, right? Up top, the highest point in your chart, your Midheaven, and straight down at the bottom, your Imum Coeli, your IC, the Nadir of your chart, those four, they are where the sky connects to the exact time and place you were born. That's why they're so personal for you and why anything sitting near them gets amped way, way up. They work in pairs, straight across from each other, like an axis, your Descendant and your Ascendant are one axis.

That's the you versus other line, Ascendant and Descendant, Ascendant being the first house cusp in Placidus, Descendant being the seventh house cusp in Placidus, your rising, your Ascendant, is how you show up, how you come across, the whole you, and then across from it, your Descendant, seventh house cusp in Placidus, is partnership, the other person who you pair up with, right? Then your Midheaven and your Imum Coeli, your IC, are the other axis. That's the public versus private line.

Your Midheaven way up top is your career, your reputation, what you're known for out in the world, and your Imum Coeli, your IC way down at the bottom is your roots, your home, your family, your foundation, the private stuff that nobody sees. So the whole chart's kind of held together by those two crossbars. So let me run mine. My Ascendant is in Cancer. So I come across soft and nurturing, perhaps a little bit guarded, maybe a little emotional, right? That crab shell thing. Straight across, my Descendant is in Capricorn. So I pair up with serious, grounded, built to last type of people. I love Capricorn energy. That's who I'm drawn to. Up top, my Midheaven is in Pisces, the very dreamy healing mystical career. And yeah, that tracks, look at what I do, right? And down at the bottom, my IC, my Imum Coeli, it is in Virgo. So my private foundation is this quiet, tidy, get it handled energy that only the people closest to me ever really

see. Four angles, two axes, axes, whatever they're called, right? And you already know so much about how my life is built. So why do we really care about the angles? A planet sitting right on one gets supercharged.

Angular house, right, turned all the way up, way louder than that same planet would be anywhere else in the chart, and I've got a perfect one. My Venus is sitting right on my Descendant. It's basically parked on that relationship angle. So Venus, love, beauty, money, what I value, all of it gets poured straight into my partnerships and my one-on-ones. It's a huge part of how I operate, all because of where it's sitting. That same planet sitting at five degrees deeper in a house would be way quieter, right, like in a different house, but on an angle, on my Descendant, my seventh house, it's running the show a little bit, right, not a little bit but a lot, honestly. It's opposing my Ascendant too, it's opposite my Ascendant, sitting on my Descendant, so conjunct my Descendant. And remember the degree stack we spoke about in earlier videos, right? My Midheaven, my career angle, it sits at 29 degrees of Pisces, that anaretic degree that I showed you, the very last degree. So my whole career angle carries that unfinished business, came here to master, it weighs right on it, right, it's my career point sitting on the one degree that says, hello, this is a lifetime assignment. That's the angle and the degree working together, and that's the kind of layering that makes a chart really start to come alive.

Secret Five: Retrogrades

But that Venus parked on my Descendant, it's retrograde, and a retrograde planet works completely differently than a direct one. It turns the whole energy inward and flips how it shows up, and I've got two interesting retrogrades in my chart I want to talk about. So a retrograde is when a planet looks like it's moving backward through the zodiac from where we're standing here on earth. It just appears that way, but that apparent backward motion changes how the planet works. The whole concept in one line is basically, a retrograde planet, it turns the energy inward, right? A direct planet pushes its energy straight out into the world, easy and obvious and external, but a retrograde planet, conversely, it takes that same energy and runs it inward first, so you review it and you rethink it and you process it on the inside before it ever comes out. Quick thing to know up front, the Sun and the Moon are never retrograde, ever, don't go looking, everything else can retrograde though. So let me show you with mine. You remember my Venus parked right on my Descendant in the previous video, right? My relationship angle. Well, she's retrograde. So all that Venus energy, love, beauty, what I value, instead of flowing out easy and open, it all turns inward. It made me cautious in love, slower to show what I feel, a little guarded with my own worth, and it sent me on this long inward hunt to figure out what I actually value instead of what I was told to value. That is retrograde Venus, especially in Capricorn. A direct person just wears that energy on their sleeve, mine I had to go digging for on the inside first, and it was a lot of work and it was challenging, but it made me stronger and better for it, right? And look at this, because it ties right back to what I showed you before, right? My Venus is at 23 degrees and 28 arc minutes of Capricorn. Direct, I'd read her at degree 23, an Aquarius degree, but she's retrograde, and retrograde rounds up a full degree, so 23 becomes 24, and 24 is what? A Pisces degree. So the retrograde does two things to my Venus, it turns her energy

inward and it bumps her into a whole different degree flavor, same planet, two different rules stacking on her at once. That's why the nuance of Placidus matters so much, I will keep saying that. Now quick heads up so you don't over read your chart, the outer planets, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, are retro, they're retrograde for a very long portion of time, right? That's the best way to just put that, very long time, okay? So a lot of people happen to have the same retrogrades, all right, there are whole age groups of people that share the same retrograde, okay? So if yours are retrograde Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, that is a generational signature, I wouldn't worry too much about that, okay? Don't over analyze it, your whole age group processing rebellion or spirituality or transformation, bulldozer energy, inward together. So I don't put the same personal weight on those at all, okay? Please don't worry about that, please, not until you get much more advanced, and then you could start kind of hyper analyzing when you understand how to read aspects, then that could perhaps, you know, get interpreted more in depth, because if it makes an aspect to a personal planet of yours or even a chart ruler, that's when it would become significant, but for right now please don't worry about it, okay? It is the personal planets going retrograde that I want you to really take a good look at, right? Mercury, Venus, Mars, that really will tell you something specific about you, as opposed to looking at Uranus,

Neptune, Pluto. Just forget those until you are ready to analyze them a little bit more. But generally speaking, I don't even pay them that much mind when I'm reading a natal chart, because there's so much more you can get out of looking at the personal planets and aspects being made to them from the outer planets, not even looking at the motion of the outer planets in particular. Okay?

The Nodes and Retrograde Motion

So now my other interesting note, my North Node. You'll see folks insist the North Node is always retrograde. That is not true. The North and South Node, they go direct at least once a month. They're retrograde about 80% of the time and they're direct the other 20. So roughly one in five people have direct nodes. The nodes are a mathematical point. They're the spot where the Moon's orbit crosses the ecliptic, the Sun's path around us in the geocentric model that we use for astrology. Because we're on Earth, we must use the geocentric model, like as if everything's orbiting around Earth. Otherwise astrology doesn't work. Using a heliocentric model for astrology is very funky. If you ever saw like a heliocentric chart, it's really weird, right? So on a math point, the retrograde motion doesn't change a thing for me. A retrograde North Node and a direct North Node, they're going to read pretty much the same in my work. There are some things you can look into when it comes to Vedic astrology, when it comes to karma, which is a whole other topic entirely. But generally speaking, don't pay too much mind to it, because most people have their North Node, South Node retrograde. I've done a lot of research on this. I have a Virgo North Node over here. So just trust me. I'm really, really, really working on that Virgo North Node. I'm growing into it. And I have done my research on this, right? A lot of people have a retrograde, a lot, because I've read for a lot of people and most of them have a retrograde. Okay.

So whether yours has a little Rx or not, whatever, ignore the motion, especially if you're just starting out, the node itself is what carries the weight, the position of it, where is it, right? The degree it's at, the aspects it's making, right? That is your soul's direction, where you're growing toward. And I just don't want you focusing on the motion of that mathematical point, please. Okay. And there's two ways to calculate the node, the mean Node, which is a smoothed out average, and the true Node, the exact moment by moment position. I like to use true Node, okay, every time, it makes a lot more sense to me. And it resonates with a lot more of my clients. That difference can be a degree, degree and a half, right? And you already know how I feel about degrees, that little shift can land your node in a whole different house. And the house your node is in is the entire karmic point, like the house matters more than the sign, even, like the house that your node is in, that your nodes are in, the axis, because there's a North and a South Node, right?

North Node, for now, we'll focus on, right, you want the real one and the exact one. So it's true Node, always, please, switch your settings to true Node, if you can find those settings, please, okay.

Secret Six: Chiron, the Wounded Healer

So that's retrogrades, energy turned inward, reviewed before it's lived out loud. And there's one point in your chart that's all turning inward, all about turning inward. And it is an old wound that you carry. So Chiron's kind of a weird one, even astronomically. A guy named Charles Kowal spotted it back in 1977. It was the first, very, very first of a whole new class of objects that we now call centaurs. These bodies that orbit way out between the asteroid belt and the Kuiper belt. So at first, they just called it an asteroid and gave it a number and everything. Then in 1989, it started acting like a comet. So it's sort of both at once, half one thing and half another. And it's named after Chiron from the Greek mythology. That's where the meaning comes from. In Greek mythology, Chiron was a centaur. And he was the greatest healer who ever lived. He taught medicine to the heroes. He knew every remedy that there was. And then he took a wound, an accident, a poison, right? And the cruel part was that he could heal anybody on earth except for himself. His own wound never closed. So he spent his whole life in pain that he couldn't fix. And he poured everything he learned from that pain into healing everybody else. That's the wounded healer. And that's what Chiron is in your chart. It's your deepest wound, the one spot that never really fully heals. And it sits right up against your greatest gift as well. So mine sits in Scorpio, in my fifth house. Scorpio is the deep stuff, intimacy, betrayal, power, the places you've been cut the deepest, right?

And the fifth house is self-expression, creativity, being seen, getting up and showing the world what you make. Put those together and that's my wound right there, being seen for what I create, putting myself out there and embracing to get hurt for it. And for years that's exactly why I kept astrology a little bit hidden, I kept it part-time and I kept it very safe, because the fifth house Scorpion part of me was so scared to be fully seen and then as a result wounded for it, right? I was scared of that. And the degree sharpens it. My Chiron is at 17 degrees, which is a

Leo degree, and Leo is all about being seen, recognition, the spotlight, the applause. So layered onto that Scorpio fifth house wound is the Leo fear, what if I, like, just step all the way into the light and show everybody everything I am and it's still not enough? Scorpio depth, Leo's pulled toward the spotlight, fifth house creativity, all stacked on one point in my chart that hurts the most. That's how precise this point gets, it's phenomenal how accurate it is. So the wound was never really meant to get fully fixed, it's meant to be felt all the way through to make us stronger, and that's what turns it into the exact thing you can give to other people. Mine turned into this, me sitting here fully seen teaching the thing I was once too scared to be seen doing, right? The wound became the work. Now some people heal their Chiron very young, they move through it early and it becomes their gift by 30. Me, I am still in mine, I still feel that flinch every time I put something out there, the difference is now I do it anyway, and the healing is basically you walking toward it instead of away. And whatever house and sign your Chiron is in, that's exactly where you're being asked to do that same walk. And everybody gets a big reckoning with it around the age of 50, 51, when we call that your Chiron return, and Chiron comes all the way back around to where it started in your chart, to its natal placement, and this whole midlife moment where the old wound comes back up to be looked at one more time so you can finally make peace with it and step into who you were always supposed to be, right? It's a very interesting time. So if you're in your early 50s and something old is resurfacing, that is your Chiron return, it's right on time, right on schedule honey. So to me this is a wound that your soul came in carrying from before this life, something old you're here to work through and turn into wisdom and bestow that wisdom onto other people.

Secret Seven: The Lunar Nodes

And speaking of what your soul came in to work on, there's a whole axis in your chart that maps the entire path, where you've been and where you're headed. So let's talk about the lunar nodes once again. So your nodes come as a pair, your North Node and South Node, right? They sit exactly opposite each other, 180 degrees apart, an axis straight across your chart, remember from before, they're a math point, a mathematical point, the spot where the Moon's orbit crosses the Sun's path. And this little axis is your soul's path, where you come from and where you are going. Your South Node is your past, that can mean your past like childhood or your past life, the stuff your soul already mastered before you got here, all that karma and habit you came in already carrying, it's what you're naturally good at, it's your comfort zone, the thing that you could do pretty much in your sleep. And your North Node, straight across, is your future, it's the brand new territory that your soul came here this time around to try to grow into, keyword try, because we can try and we can fail, or we could try and we could succeed, right? And that will determine your next life, at least from what I have learned and what I've gathered from everything, okay. It feels awkward and unfamiliar and a little bit scary, 100%, because you've never done it before, not in this life or any other, especially in that position in the chart. The South Node is the couch that you already know, okay, and the North Node is the climb that you came here to make. Now people get one thing dead wrong here, dead freaking wrong, they think that you're supposed to abandon your South Node, leave the past behind, only chase the North, absolutely not. Your South Node is the fuel, all that karma you built up, all those skills

from before, you use them to make the climb toward your North Node, you stand on what your soul already earned. Essentially the South Node is how you afford the trip north, okay. Mine explains my whole life. My South Node is in Pisces in my ninth house, that's the dreamy mystic, the one who runs on intuition and the cosmic hunch, who feels her way to the answer and just knows, right? That's the lifetime my soul already lived,

right? That's what came easy. And my true Node, my North Node straight across is in Virgo and my third house. Virgo is very precise, very careful. Get the facts right. You know what I mean?

Third house communication, the written and spoken word, my whole soul assignment this time around is to take that dreamy Pisces knowing energy, right? Like know it all energy, and just bring it down into something sharp and useful and teachable, and to also work on my communication skills. And to be more thorough in my speech. And I have Mercury squaring Saturn. So that's really hard, for my more advanced folk listening to this. It's been rough. It's hard to master this. And not only that, but also my Mercury in Capricorn mix that squares to the Saturn in Aries. And it also trines my Virgo North Node. How intense is that? Anyway, digressing, right? So everything I've talked about so far, degree theory, the exact degree, the precision, all of it, you can see it right here. That's my Virgo third house, North Node in action. I took the Pisces gift my soul came in with, the just knowing, and I'm spending this life turning it into the careful, exact, spoken out loud work. The dreamy part was easy. The precise part is the climb, and the degrees, my whole flagship. That's the exact mountain I came here to climb. And that's your nodes, one line across your chart, holding where you've been and where you're headed.

Closing

We've gone through the house systems, your degrees, your chart ruler, your angles, your retrogrades, your Chiron and your nodes. So go pull up your own chart and start reading it for real. Check your degrees, find your chart ruler and see what's parked on your angles. If you have any questions, send me an email, ziggy@ziggyastrology.com. Have a beautiful day.