

InPresence 0075: Why Astrology Endures

with Jeffrey Mishlove

Video Transcript - *New Thinking Allowed* with Jeffrey Mishlove

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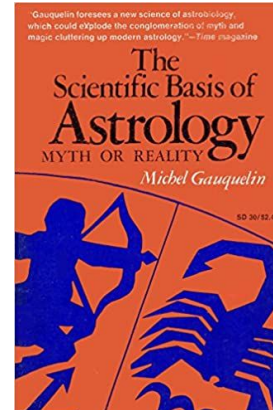
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(00:25) Hello, I'm Jeffrey Mishlove, and today my topic is "Why Astrology Endures". You see, from a scientific point of view there are good reasons to think that it ought not to. I mean, there's no logical reason that anyone has yet come up with as to why the angular relationship of the planets in our solar system to the Earth would affect events here, historical events and particularly people's personalities based on the time of their birth. And, in fact – let me be more specific – there have been research studies done by psychologists and other researchers where you take personality tests of different people, and then you take their astrology charts, their natal charts, and astrologers are asked to see if they can match them up. Can you figure out, based on the known personality information from a standardized personality test – like the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory – can you match that up with the astrology charts? And over and over again astrologers fail at that task.

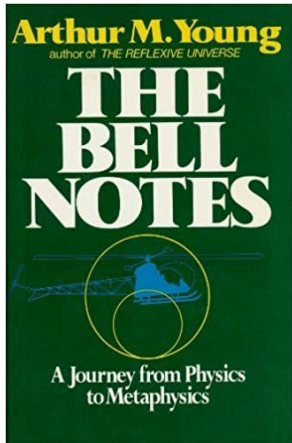
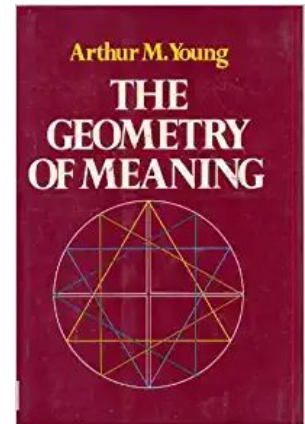
(01:39) So, that might be one reason to think that astrology doesn't work. And of course, we're talking about conventional natal astrology here. On the other hand, there's some evidence that astrology does work. Michel Gauquelin, a French researcher, found – looking at a large statistical database of thousands of individuals – that people who were athletes tended to have Mars, the planet of strength and athletic ability, typically at the Ascendant, a very important point in the astrological natal chart, at the time of their birth.



(02:20) And when the skeptics, particularly from the CSICOP organization – and I use the word "skeptic" very loosely, because these people tend to be what might better be termed "scoffers" – a true skeptic is, as I mentioned yesterday, a person who first and foremost is skeptical of themselves. But not these scoffers, they're filled with self-assurance. In any case, they endeavored to replicate Gauquelin's research in order to disprove it and they were so flummoxed, because they conducted their replication and got the same effect – the Mars effect that Gauquelin had reported. This was so troubling, they tried to cover it up, and one of their board members at the time, astronomer Dennis Rawlins, resigned because of that. And this caused a big flap.

(03:15) Now, that was many decades ago, but it's an example of how, not conventional astrology, but there are some very peculiar correlations that do hold up. I've mentioned that one of my mentors,

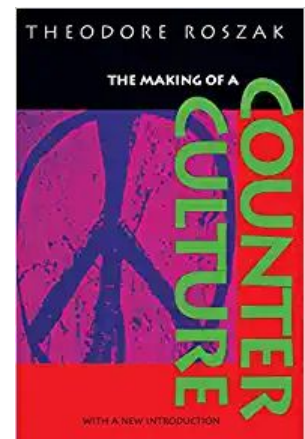
Arthur M. Young, the inventor of the Bell Helicopter, the cosmologist who wrote *The Reflexive Universe*, he also wrote a book about astrology called *The Geometry of Meaning*, a fascinating book in which he begins to explore the angular relationships of astrology, and develops actual notions of meaning, philosophical meaning, based on those angular relationships. Well, he was deeply into astrology. He found out, after his invention of the Bell Helicopter - he got involved in Jungian psychotherapy - and he began comparing the



analysis he was getting from his Jungian therapist with the analysis of astrologers, and he found the astrologers to be much more accurate, in his estimation. So, he became a deep student of astrology and funded a fair amount of astrology work.

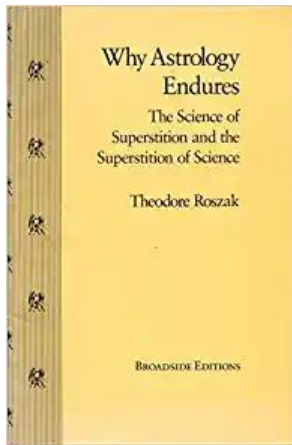
(04:34) Now, I have already spoken about how, when I completed my doctoral dissertation and had it approved, finalized my doctoral degree at Berkeley in 1980, I went to see Arthur Young – I was so proud of myself having accomplished this – and the first he did, he took out his ephemeris and began paging through it. The ephemeris is a book astrologers used to use back in the days before computerized astrology that would show you all the planetary positions, day by day. He asked me this question, he said: “How long were you in this academic program?” I said, “Six years.” And he said, “Well, it will be another six years before you undo all the damage the university has done to you.” And wouldn’t you know it? He was right. Six years later, after having gone through a terrible lawsuit, I, with my partner Arthur Bloch – another student of Arthur Young’s – created the *Thinking Allowed* TV series – the original one – that was back in 1986.

(05:52) Now, Arthur Young did something else very interesting. He examined my astrology chart in detail and he noted that I have an exact opposition in my natal chart between Mars and Uranus. This opposition is related to an obscure feature in astrology known as the “Arabian Part of Coincidence.” So, he began asking me, “What were the most striking coincidences that ever occurred in your life?” And I have had several actually, so I listed them and we talked about the dates. He discovered that when these coincidences occurred for me the transiting planets at the time were in conjunction with the location of the Mars-Uranus opposition on my natal chart. He even published an article about that in the Institute for the Study of Consciousness Notes, back in the days when it was active in Berkeley. Now, so there’s a paradox – astrology does work, astrology doesn’t work – and it seems as if, for me, both are true. I suspect that that’s the case with many of you out there viewing.



(07:11) Which brings me to the title of my talk today. Why does astrology endure? Is it because people get intermittent reinforcement? One might think so. But, there could be another reason altogether – a deeper reason – that

was postulated by my late friend, the sociologist Theodore Roszak, who achieved great fame with his book *The Making of a Counter Culture*, and his analysis of the 1960s and what was going on at that time. He wrote a small essay called, *Why Astrology Endures*, and he said, “Look, we live this tiny life.



We are individuals.” – Alan Watts used to like the phrase “skin-encapsulated egos” – “We have this small life, and yet somehow we know we are connected with the infinite.” And in between our ego life – our home, our family, our work, our responsibilities in life, the routines we go through – and our sense that we also partake of infinity, there needs to be an intermediate level. Roszak referred to this as the level of “mythos” – the level of the gods, the level of the deities – and in our modern culture astrology is one way in which the average person connects up with that level of mythos.

(08:48) After all, the planets are named after the ancient gods of Greece and Rome, and the constellations suggest as much. So astrology, I think, is important for that reason. It’s also important as a tool to help people open up to intuition. As I pointed out a couple of days ago in my monologue, an appreciation of nonsense – and astrology can be filled with nonsense at times – is very helpful, very useful, for opening up to intuition. So, in conclusion, let me ask you this: What sign are you? How much do you relate to your own astrology chart? How important is astrology in your life? Does it work for you at all? You know, most people I talk to have this attitude: “It seems to work for me, but I don’t use it or rely on it or think it has any scientific merit.” Well, I guess that may be how it’s meant to be. But, I’d be curious to hear from those of you who find that astrology has been especially meaningful, or not. Thank you for being with me. (10:07)

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