

What is Synastry?

Synastry is the system of comparing the astrological charts of two (or sometimes more) people to determine how well they will get along in the different areas of their lives.

But, before you can compare one person's chart with another's, you need to know a bit about basic astrological principles.

There are twelve signs in the zodiac. Each takes up 30 degrees of the full astrological chart, which is represented as a circle of 360 degrees total. Everyone has all the ten planets in his or her chart -- Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto -- and each planet is in one of the twelve signs as well as one of the twelve houses; placement depends on when and where the person was born. Even though you may be a Libra, or a Sagittarius, or a Gemini, that sign only describes where your Sun is. Your other planets can be -- and often are -- in completely different signs.

The twelve signs, twelve houses and ten planets are the basic components of every chart . Your synastry report compares the relative positions of the planets and the houses between your chart and the chart of someone else.

The Aspects

By looking at one person's chart, and measuring the distance in degrees from that person's planets to the planets in another person's chart, we can make certain predictions about where the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship are: whether it has staying power; in what ways the people involved are compatible or incompatible; which of the partners will take the lead in certain situations; and what problems these people may have to overcome in the course of their involvement with each other.

The measurements we use to make these determinations are called aspects. The main aspects employed in synastry analysis are the conjunction, sextile, square, trine and opposition. When two planets are in conjunction, they are "within orb" (usually six to ten degrees) of being in the same degree of the same sign. When sextile, the planets are within orb of 60 degrees (two signs) apart; when square, 90 degrees (three signs) apart; trine, 120 degrees (four signs) apart; and opposition, 180 degrees (six signs) apart. Generally speaking, sextiles and trines are considered easy aspects. Squares and oppositions are usually more dynamic or tension producing aspects. Conjunctions can be either easy or difficult to handle, depending on the planets involved.

For instance, if John's Moon (his feelings, domestic life and moods) is trine Jessica's Venus (her aesthetic sense and romantic urges) the planetary energies combine quite nicely and we would expect these two to relate easily and to be sensitive to one another's feelings. But if John's Mars (his aggressive, competitive urges) is also square Jessica's Mercury (her mental processes, communications and

ideas) these planetary energies clash, and we can expect them to have some heated arguments because his aggressive urges are stirred up by her words and ideas.

So, does this mean they will or will not get along?

It means that, like almost all couples, there will be areas of life where things hum along nicely with virtually no problems, and there will be other areas of life that are occasionally challenging.

Often, when people look at their chart comparison for the first time they will notice some negative aspects between their charts and become worried. But this is not necessarily cause for concern. Even the most idyllic match usually shows some areas of discord. Every relationship needs some dynamic tension if the individuals involved are to grow. A bit of challenge also brings excitement into the relationship. Without sexual tension, for instance, you can have a lovely friendship, but it may not go beyond that. What's important is that the comparison in general shows compatibility.

Comparative House Placements

In addition to looking at the aspects between the planets in the two charts, we observe where the planets of one person's chart fall in the houses of the other.

No matter what your sign is, all the other signs -- Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces -- are represented in your chart as well. Your chart will show your rising sign or Ascendant on the first house cusp, and the other eleven signs on the cusps of the other eleven houses. (Please note: many people have what are called "interceptions" in their charts. If you have an interception, there will be two signs, exactly opposite one another, that do not rule any house. Instead, the signs either directly before or directly after the intercepted signs will rule two houses each. Interceptions are quite common and have no bearing on relationships that we know of. Ask your astrologer if you have an interception in your chart.) Assuming for the moment that you have Aries rising, your second house will then be Taurus, your third house will be Gemini, your fourth will be Cancer, your fifth, Leo, and so on, throughout

your chart. But, if you have Gemini rising, your second house will be Cancer, your third, Leo, your fourth, Virgo, and so on, throughout the signs.

So, if you are a Taurus (or, in other words, if you have Sun in Taurus) but your rising sign (also known as the Ascendant or First House cusp) is in Aries, your Sun will fall in your second house. Because the second house represents values, both tangible and intangible, your life force (Sun) will be focused to a great extent on what you value. If your rising sign is Scorpio, your Taurus Sun will fall in your seventh house (the house of marriage and important partnerships) and your life force will be strongly focused on meaningful relationship. If your rising sign is Capricorn, your Taurus Sun will fall in your fifth house, the house of romance, partying and children, and your life force will be focused on these issues.

Just as your planets fall in different houses -- and affect you in different ways, depending on the houses they are in -- so the planets of the people in your life will fall in different houses of your chart . And the energies of these people will affect you in different ways, depending on which of your houses the planets fall into.

So, getting back to John and Jessica again, if his Venus (asthetic sense, romance) falls in her seventh house (marriage and other important partnerships) he is likely to impress her as a exactly what she's looking for in a marriage partner. But, if his Saturn (limits, responsibilities, hard lessons) falls in her eleventh house (friends, hopes, associations) she may have to adjust her social life or aspirations somewhat in order to make a go of her marriage to him, and there may be occasional clashes between friendships and marital responsibilities.

What To Look For In A Synastry Comparison

The most important considerations in a synastry comparison are aspects to, and comparative house positions of the Sun, Moon, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and the Ascendant/Descendant(first and seventh house cusps). Typically, Mars and Venus show attraction. Sun, Moon, Descendant and Saturn show emotional/ego satisfaction and staying power. The moon's nodes and the tenth house/fourth house are considered next in importance. Mercury and Jupiter play supporting roles and when well-aspected, can add to the quality of a relationship; but in and of themselves they will not determine any major impact on the people involved, unless it's a purely business relationship.

The outer planets, from Uranus through Pluto, play far more limited roles in determining the dynamics of relationship. These outer planets take on greater importance, however, when in very close aspect to (orbs of two degrees or less), or involved in a multiple-planet conjunction with, the Sun, Moon, Mars or Venus.

Notes To Professional Astrologers

Synastry is one of the more complex techniques of astrology, primarily because there is so much to consider. First, and most important, before you begin to compare the charts of two individuals, you must understand as much as you can about each of the people separately. What is each looking for in a relationship? What do each of these people need, fear, hope for? While a conjunction between partner A's sun and

partner B's moon is generally an indication of emotional connection, if one of the people involved is incapable of relating emotionally, the aspect won't fulfill that potential.

For that matter, you may compare two charts and find a wealth of trines and sextiles between them and conclude that this is an ideal match. But if one or both of the partners needs excitement and tension in order to stay interested, the relationship will not satisfy his or her basic needs. On the other hand, you may compare two charts, see mostly hard angles and difficult house placements and conclude that this is a marriage made in hell -- only to learn that the couple has been crazily in love for the past twenty years. Again, examining the individual charts will tell you the basic needs of the people involved. Only then can you determine if the relationship fulfills the needs.

Other Points To Consider

1. Comparative house placement -- even in unrelated signs, a planet in A's fifth house, and a planet in B's fifth house in the same relative position, can act like a soft conjunction. These planetary relationships will not be apparent in the computer interpretation; they must be discovered by examining each chart individually and then together.

2. Planets in one house, but in the sign of the next or preceding house, may operate as if in the house ruled by the sign rather than in the actual house placement. Often, these planets affect both the house they are in, and the house ruled by the sign. Much depends on how far in degree the planet is from the house cusp ruled by its own sign. If, for instance, you find partner A's Mars at 24 degrees Aries and partner B's 10th house cusp is 26 degrees Aries, the planet, while technically in the ninth house will operate more like a tenth house comparative placement. Read interpretations for both houses to get the clearest possible picture.

3. Solar houses should be checked in addition to any other house system you opt for to give a clearer picture of what the relationship is all about. Calculate using a Sunrise Chart and the Equal House system for each partner. (Note: the degrees of each partner's moon will not be valid in this calculation -- unless, of course, one or both were born at sunrise.)

4. The aspects between the partners' planets show how each relates to the other; where the planets of one partner fall into the houses of the other (comparative house placement) there is the greatest impact on the partner whose houses are being considered. The placement of partner A's planets in partner B's houses tell you far more about how partner B experiences partner A than about how partner A experiences partner B.