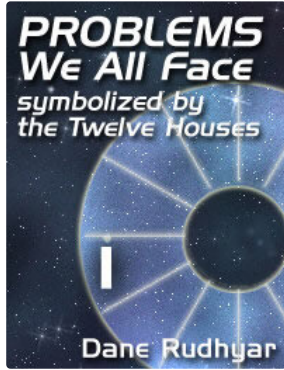


Problems We All Face - Symbolized by the Twelve Houses

by Dane Rudhyar

© Dane Rudhyar 1952, used by permission of Leyla Rudhyar
Republished from the [Rudhyar Archival Project](#).

The First House - How to Become Your True Self



Have you ever asked yourself: What am I here for? What am I supposed to be in this life?

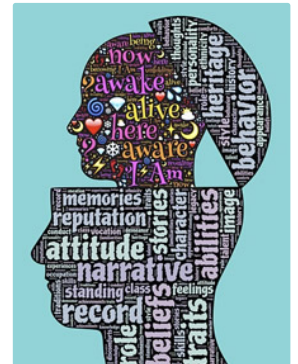
If you have, you have begun to live in a new way. You have begun to tap, even if only slightly, the power of your true self. You are on your way to becoming what you are meant to be. It is a long way, a difficult one. One proceeds along this way very gradually, hesitantly; there are usually many setbacks. But it is the only way really worthwhile, really "exciting." It alone gives significance to life — your life.

It is my deep belief that the function of astrology is to help men and women, who have begun to ask questions concerning the purpose and meaning of their own lives, to find answers to these questions. Astrology has, little of real value to offer to people who did not ask such questions. Astrology, for them, is a parlor game or a means to satisfy a more or less idle curiosity as to "what is coming next", "what is going to happen". This is all right as far as it goes; but the real function and value of astrology begin only when people ask of astrology rather than "what is going to happen to me", the far more important questions: How can I find out what I really am? How can I solve the problem which I am bringing to everything that happens to me?

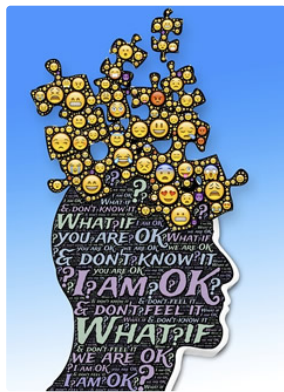
Every individual brings to all the problems of his life the greatest problem of all: **himself**. We may learn from our parents, teachers, priests or scientists how to meet intelligently this or that particular situation and problem, how to behave according to official and traditional rules of conduct in our family, society, business, clubs. We may learn these rules well and yet make a dismal failure — or a completely meaningless average "success" of the major opportunities and the decisive crises of our lives.

Why is this? It is because, while we may have learned to solve all sorts of external and social problems, we have never given much attention, or any attention at all, to the one fundamental problem of all: to find out the real purpose and meaning of our life. We have learned how to meet people and to talk to people in this or that standard situation — at home, in business, in places of amusement. We have not considered it at all important to learn how to meet ourselves every morning as we awaken and how to talk to ourselves when some new situation brings out in it a kind of response which seems to conflict with and disturb our cherished idea of ourselves. Did we ask then: What am I, really? Why do I act, feel or react **differently** from other people, from the way one is supposed to act or react? Am I so different essentially? Am I unique? If so, **why am I unique?** What is the purpose of my being different — the real reason for my feeling isolated, lonely?

We often ask these questions — but in a rather vague way, shrugging our shoulders and quickly forgetting the matter because there seems to be no way of getting a convincing answer from anybody. In some cases, the shock of seeing ourselves reacting to life situations in ways which are not according to the usual standards is such that we keep worrying about it. We come to think that there is something wrong about ourselves, that we are abnormal, neurotic or "plain bad" — and we develop an oppressive sense of guilt or inferiority.



We let these negative feelings develop perhaps; before long, we find ourselves in a sad predicament. Then all the things that happen to us in everyday life seem to go wrong, even if they started out with great promise of success, happiness or achievement. Perhaps we feel so upset that we decide to learn a new technique, to change our residence, our circle of acquaintances, our profession. Yet things still keep going wrong, possibly from bad to worse. What is the matter? Will we get "better luck" if we ask of astrologers what will be the result of this or that new move or plan of ours so that we may act "at the right time" and bet on the right horse, so to speak?



We **may** avoid some serious mistakes or catastrophes with such help; but this help, in most cases, is aid in solving **external** problems only. Nothing will really work out well as long as the one problem behind all other problems is not solved, at least to some extent: Why am I different from others? What am I really? It is essential that each individual today should find significant, convincing answers to these questions, answers which will **transform** him, which will change **his attitude** toward his real self and the basic purpose of his existence here on earth, now in our present society.

The first thing is to be willing and ready to ask these questions, to realize that it is important to ask them. The next problem is: Who will provide the convincing answers?

Jesus, in the Gospels, said: Ask and ye shall receive. Many a great spiritual teacher has told us that when the pupil is ready, the master comes. It has been stated also that the whole of life can be our "teacher", that every friend or associate we have, our loved ones and also our enemies can give us the answer to this great problem of the "why" of our existence. In other words, we can see ourselves in their eyes, in their responses to us — **whenever we really want to "see" ourselves as we are**. We can understand our "differences", and perhaps our relative "uniqueness" of character and destiny, if we are **objective** enough to find in the reactions of friends or foes mirrors that reveal to us, directly or by contrast, our different and unique self.

However, it is very difficult to be sufficiently objective for this. We need — or we usually think we need — a "key" in order to interpret what we see pictured as ourselves in and through others' reactions. Moreover, even if we understand **how** we differ from others — perhaps a very frustrating, confusing or bewildering difference — this is not enough. We must somehow know **why** we stand out from the norm, why we are unusual — perhaps to the point of neurosis. What is the sense of it all? If there should be no sense, no purpose, then, the only thing to do would be to become normal, average or at least comfortably "adjusted", whatever the cost to our pride, our hopes, our youthful ideals of unique accomplishment.

Modern psychologists and psychiatrists often consider "adjustment" as the goal of their treatments; in many extreme cases, there is probably nothing else to aim at because the mental and neuro-psychological situation has become set beyond the possibility of **creative or transforming** change. Nevertheless, every crisis (mental or physiological) is the indication of an opportunity for change and self-discovery.

There are illnesses and crises essentially **because** people who experience them have long refused to ask questions as to the character and purpose of their true self. They dodge asking these embarrassing questions. Then **the problems that they themselves pose to anything confronting them** become more acute, more difficult to solve; they become more involved in their failures or "bad luck", more resentful of having "all these things happen to me!" This piles up and ends in a violent crisis.

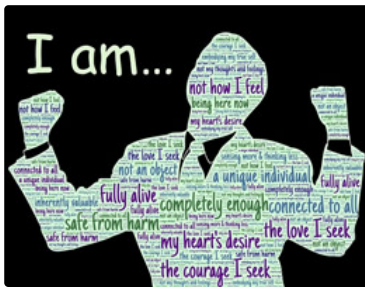
All crises, I repeat, are opportunities; but few individuals, while the crises last, can understand them as such! Who can open their eyes? Who can help them to meet their true self and to grasp the meaning and purpose of their "differences", their peculiar responses to life situations, their hopes and ideas which so few can share?

If only I feel then they might then it will stop then it will get better If only I don't If only I stop If only I pretend... then they will... If only I feel then they will... If only I do... then he would know...

Meaning of the Ascendant

If a person seeks to discover the nature of the basic type of **energy** which he can use, and should use, as he goes on living and acting, then he should look for the answer to his question to the Sun in his birth-chart. But energy is one thing; what we do with it, or what we should do with it, is another thing. It is valuable to know that one has the power to lead others, that one has great emotional vitality or a keen mentality or that one has a tendency to haste or anger; but what is far more important today, in our age of easily acquired psychological knowledge, is to know what we should use these powers **for**. It is to solve the many problems which constantly arise today as to **what to do with what we have**.

In the branch of astrology called "Horary Astrology", the ascendant of the horary chart is said to signify "the individuality of the matter in question." It establishes the problem being asked, as the individual asking it sees it and is able to formulate it.



Everything that differentiates you from other persons has its source, astrologically speaking, at your true natal ascendant. There you find stated your uniqueness of being, the problem essential to the fact of being an individual ego, different from other egos; there also is the solution of this basic problem! Astrology actually shows us the solutions rather than the problems. Your birth-chart is "God's formula" for the solution of your problems; it is the Great Healer's prescription. By studying the solution, we can see what the problem is; but any **positive** use of astrology stresses solutions far more than problems. That is what you want to know, after all! You want to realize the real nature of your problems only insofar as this realization will lead to the knowledge of how they can be solved.

The Ascendant (and all the houses in general) refer not to the nature of your energies as much as to the way you are using them and gaining experience by so doing. A **natal** house is a "field of experience"; as you experience life, you come gradually to know yourself. You know yourself through the twelve primary kinds of experience represented by the natal houses. In the first house, you should **experience yourself as an ego**, a relatively unique and different kind of self.

The Rising and Ruling Planet

For instance, if you have one planet rising in your **natal** first house, use it for all it is worth to you, but do not overuse it. **Do not become altogether identified, as an ego, with it.** If there are two or more planets rising, the problem is how not to become "split" in trying to become identified in your personal character partly with one and partly with the other. A problem of personal integration is shown for you to solve. It is easier, of course, if the two planets push you, as it were, in the same direction; but a man with Saturn and Neptune in the first house must watch lest he become pulled apart by opposite trends in his ego life.

The planet "ruling" the sign at the ascendant is always theoretically the "ruling planet" of the chart; however, if a particularly emphasized planet is in the first house, this first-house planet becomes, as it were, an all-important "prime minister" to the theoretical "ruler". The ruler holds the realm of the ego together; the prime minister does the most effective external work!

In closing this brief study, I should say that, from the point of view presented here, the idea that the Sun symbolizes the real permanent "individuality" of a person and the ascendant his impermanent, fleeting "personality" does not apply, at least as usually understood.

The ascendant changes its position rapidly, and thus affected by the geographical latitude of birth. It refers to a particular person, in a particular situation, and to everything that makes that person more "particular", more formed and precise in what he is. As I see it, spirit works through particular persons and situations, through what is unique and new in them. The one task of a truly spiritual life is for a particular person to accomplish the particular task for which he was born, at a precise time and location on earth.



To be "spiritual" is to be able to bring **to a clear and distinct focus** the spirit, within and through oneself as an individual. The God-within is to be exteriorized, demonstrated, made actual. Every newborn has to do it, eventually and gradually. Every newborn has one particular function or task to perform, for which he was born. This is the focus of his "individuality", here and now — that which seeks to make him a spirit-oriented, creative, truly individual human being.

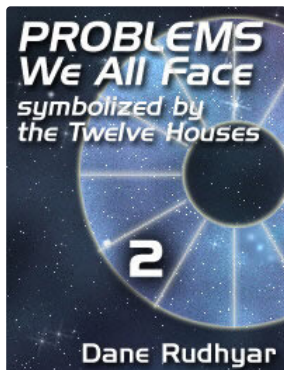
The Sun is not this individuality, but it is the power needed and made available to the individual in order that this individual may be able to fulfill his unique function. The Sun and planets represent power and the energy necessary for action; the power within the **potential** individuality — a newborn. The power is there for this newborn to become his true self, his unique self; **but he does not have to use it!** He can refuse to use it. He refuse to assume the responsibility of being an individual. He can follow "the easy way out" — the way of the average man, the man who is not distinct from others, whose true self does not stand out — a much easier way, indeed!

No astrologer can say positively and without fail whether a man will take this easy way; the decision rests mostly upon the person himself. Here is his sacred freedom. If he chooses to refuse to be an individual — in myriad of small decisions that total up to a big choice — then the indications found by studying the ascendant of his birth-chart will usually not work well or they will work in a negative manner. No one can tell if they will work.

The more they work, and in a positive or definite manner, the more the person will experience himself and probably will demonstrate himself to others (barring some very hard seventh-house obstruction) as an individual.

The danger of being too much of an individual lies in the tendency in many persons to stress "differences", whereas what should be emphasized is "distinctness". What matters is not of itself to be different from others, for this can lead to a sense of separation, isolation and complete ego-centricity. What counts, spiritually, is to be **distinctly**, precisely, in a clearly focused manner, what one essentially is. It is to be one's true self.

The Second House - How to Use What You Possess



When one speaks of "possessions" today, most people immediately think of the money they have in the bank, the house and the many gadgets they own, the size of their wardrobe, the make of their car and all that goes with these very concrete and tangible things. These are material possessions; but they are not the only kind of-possessions. We must extend the meaning of the word so as to cover all that the individual "I" **can use as his own** — and, using it, is able to demonstrate (to make actual, definite and visible) what he is.

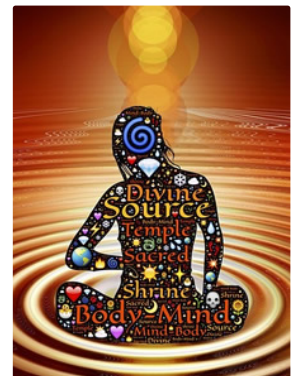
No one can say "I am" unless he has a tongue and larynx to say it with. No one can be a person here on earth without a body of flesh and bones and nerves. However, there are many people today who think that the body **is** the person, that out of the body a soul and mind somehow develop, that something happens gradually in the body in childhood which gives rise to the feeling of being "I". If this view is held, it may seem logical to say that the first house of a natal chart refers to the body — because, then, the body — is understood as the beginning of everything. But, in this case, one should realize that the "body" does not begin with birth. The beginning of the body is the act of conception, the fecundation of the female ovum by the male cell.

If the body is what comes first in astrology, then the astrologer should make his charts for the time of impregnation and cell fecundation. But one never knows as a matter of fact within minutes or hours the time when this happens within the mother's body, even in the most favorable situations. Thus, the beginning of the body provides a poor start for astrological knowledge.

However, astrology was built and has been mostly practiced by men who believed that a spiritual principle or entity — we may call it "soul", ego, "monad" — or whatever we wish — enters or becomes definitely linked with the body at the time of the first breath. This soul entity comes into this realm of life on earth for some basic purpose; it needs a living organism, a human body, to achieve this purpose. It has to exteriorize itself in and through a particular kind of body. It must "incarnate" gradually and always more completely with its individual characteristics; it must release from this body the energies and the powers required in order to fulfill the soul's purpose.

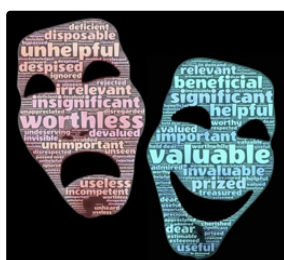
Thus, for you, as an individual soul entity, the body is your first and basic possession. You could not **be**, as a concrete and active person, and proclaim "I am", without **owning** a body. There is a portion of earth-matter which is your own; it is your body. If this is destroyed (or taken away, as it may be in some rare cases), then you cease to be as an individual person, even though you may be said to remain as a "spirit", a soul or an abstract "I" devoid of physical substance.

The first kind of ownership you experience is, therefore, the ownership of your body and of all its (potential or actual) energies. However, this body does not come out of nothing. It is a combination of two lines of ancestors, paternal and maternal; it results from a mixture of ancestral tendencies or, as scientists say today, of "genes". All these things are your inheritance from the past — the past of your family, of your race, of the human species as a whole.



Into this blending, this synthesis of many elements inherited from the **past**, **you** come. You are the **new** factor, the at least potentially transforming factor. You have to make something new of all this past stuff if you want really to be yourself as a distinct individual aware of a particular task or work in life. This inheritance from the past has become yours at the moment of the first breath; **you have to use it**.

As we grow through childhood, adolescence and early maturity, we constantly accumulate more possessions. Our body grows larger and heavier because we assimilate foodstuff; and there are many types of food! There is physical food, which we eat; there is also mental food (learning), which we store as remembered facts and ideas. To go through the process of education is to accumulate (and, one hopes, to assimilate) the mental foodstuff which makes your mind develop in a certain way — the way of your national tradition, your culture, your religious inheritance.



You also develop through the years something else of the greatest importance: a feeling of value. Some things you feel are good, worth while, attractive — others are bad, worthless or destructive. This sense of value is also, at first, something you inherit from your family and your society; but, gradually, you may transform this inherited sense of value and establish **your own values**. You come to see as valuable a thing or idea which has proven worthwhile **to you, as an individual**.

Thus, eventually, you own also standards of value which are distinctly your own and which perhaps single you out from your family, your class, your people. You may be utterly bored or repelled by baseball or television and love to pass long hours painting unconventional pictures; that establishes you to some extent as an "individual". People may think you are a freak; some may consider you a budding genius. But if you are not afraid to stand for all the things and ideas which to you are valuable, then you come to regard the conscious and deliberate use of anything you own as

an **individual responsibility**.

I pointed out last month how the study of the ascendant and of the first house of your birth-chart can help you to discover **what** your true self is. The planets rising in the first house and the "ruling planet" (ruler of the rising zodiacal sign) suggest, moreover, what kind of activity, or what way of acting, will enable you to express outwardly this true self which you are.

The next step is the study of the second house, a study which should be directed essentially toward a keener and deeper understanding of how to establish concretely and substantially your individuality by the very use which you make of what is "your own".

However, many people do not really care to demonstrate their individual selfhood or their individual sense of value. They do not want to use their possessions except in the way the average person uses them. Indeed, they very often cannot be said to "use" their possessions; it is the possessions which use them! These people have become identified with their possessions; they become what they own, not what they were meant to be as individuals. They live so as to increase and pass on "property".

They carry on the tradition established by the social position of their parents and impress it upon their children; they spend or waste what they own according to the custom of their class or the way an even more temporary "fashion" dictates. They do not want to stand out as individuals; they refuse to stand for anything which is not blessed by the collective sense of value of the average man and woman — the so-called "normal" people!

Astrology can hardly tell whether not a person will become an individual and use what he owns (body, mind and wealth) as an individual, for it is every man's supreme privilege to choose his **basic orientation** toward his self and the use of his possessions. No astrological birth-chart will reveal definitely what this choice will be, but only the terms or conditions of the choice. A person can make such a choice as well in the midst of plenty as while struggling in poverty where the way every cent is spent counts; in vigorous health (where he can do seemingly as he pleases) or in illness (where he must save the smallest amount of vital energy to do what seems necessary). What matters most is not to be told whether one can expect much or little, but in what way one can use whatever one owns in the most individual, the most creative, the most generous, the noblest manner possible.

Astrology can help us in this respect — but only if the astrologer understands clearly what the real problem is and that the purpose of possessions is to provide the means by which we may give substance and weight to what we are. We must realize what we are by using what we own; we must **prove** what we are, to ourselves and to all men, by this use of our ancestral inheritance and of whatever we come to acquire; we must transform these inherited and acquired possessions to fit the purpose of our true self. These are three basic steps.

[illegible]

It is, in my opinion, a serious mistake to think that the second house refers only to the usual kind of material possessions, to finances and to the person's ability to accumulate wealth. The second house refers first of all to **whatever a person finds himself endowed with at birth**: his body, his vital forces, his parental heredity, his cultural and social heredity. It indicates all that a "soul" is born into.

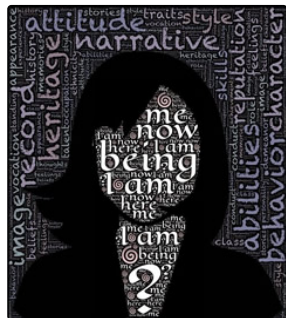
If we believe in reincarnation, the second house refers also to what the reincarnating spiritual entity has built in past lives in the way of powers or abilities — what it is able to bring to the new existence, as a spiritual capital and a power of attraction. At any rate, the second house is the reappearance in a new body of powers which had been generated in some kind of "past".

This is, however, only the first level of interpretation of the second house; the second level refers to the eventual **fruition** of whatever a newborn inherited at birth, as he grows up to active manhood or womanhood. We are all born with a capital — our body, our inherited mental abilities, our culture and social position. To become a mature person is to make this capital bear fruit. When we earn money, acquire property, gain friends and accumulate intellectual wealth, we simply make our birth endowment bear valuable fruit; we do it through our own efforts and often through "luck" — whatever this exactly means.

At this point, the reader may be confused by the fact that astrological textbooks speak of the eighth house, not the second house, as the section of the chart referring to inheritance and legacies. The "legacies" to which the eighth house refers are those which come to a person as a result of the **relationships** he makes or he keeps warmly alive through his life (seventh-house matters).

On the other hand, the second house represents the native endowment of the soul, the natural hereditary transfer from parents to children. This transfer is unconscious; it is not a deliberate gift of one individual to another. It is heredity rather than inheritance. Where something is bequeathed as the this refers to the eighth house because it follows after a conscious relationship between two persons.

Actually, when the astrologer considers the second house as that representing the money earned, the goods acquired, this is only half correct; all that man gains, while engaged in business or in any productive activity which depends upon some type of human exchange (physical goods or ideas), is basically an eighth-house matter because it is the result of human relationship (seventh house).



Thus, strictly speaking, what the second house reveals is the individual's characteristic way of approaching the problem of (1) how to **use** what he is born with; then (2) how to **orient** the use of his inborn muscular strength, mental abilities, intuitions and of his social position so as to enter into **fruitful relationship** with other people — relationships and partnerships which will, in turn, make for him wealth of some sort.

This "characteristic way" indicated by the second house is the way in which the individual truly reveals himself — the more so, the more of an individual the person is. It may not be at all, however, the way the individual will become rich, for it may not be his individual destiny that he should become rich in earthly goods!

How can the astrologer determine what is this "characteristic way" in which the individual tends to use what he owns? First, we should study the zodiacal sign at the cusp of the second house of the exact natal chart and the position and aspects of the planet "ruling" this sign; second (and this may be even more important), the meaning of any planet, if any, found in the second house.

It is my opinion that the cusp of the second house refers, generally speaking, to the **basic attitude** of the individual toward what is his own by right of birth. The planet ruling the zodiacal sign on this cusp indicates the **type of activity** through which this basic attitude is normally best exteriorized. If any planet is located in the second house, this planet refers more particularly to the type of activity by which the individual, as he grows up, is willing and able to acquire wealth or possessions.

Any birth-chart must be judged as a whole. The natal houses represent the twelve basic "fields of experience", acting through which a man comes to realize who he is as an individual and, thus, gains maturity. The keyword here is "experience". A person must experience. He must dare to experience all that comes his way, at least once so that, by solving the many problems which such experiences and their results produce, he may become in **full possession** of his powers and faculties as an individual.

This "full possession" is the ultimate goal of all second-house experiences. Physical goods or money, houses and bank accounts do not guarantee such a full possession of one's powers and faculties; indeed, they often hide the main second-house problem and the way it should be solved. "Full possession" comes only through significant, purposeful and creative or transforming use. Only, the possessions which are thus used help the owner to reveal and to experience his real self, as an individual.