

# LIFE AS AN ASTROLOGER, YOGA TEACHER AND REFLEXOLOGIST

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It has been estimated that only one out of three people are happy in their work. I am very fortunate to enjoy tremendously the work that I do. I am an astrologer, yoga teacher and Reflexologist.

You may well know this quote by the mythologist and writer Joseph Campbell. He used to advise his students in this way:

‘Follow your bliss. Find where it is, and don’t be afraid to follow it’.<sup>1</sup>

I totally agree with this advice. It has worked for me.

Ten years ago I gained my diploma with the faculty and I have been seeing clients ever since.

I have also been teaching yoga for a similar amount of time. I specialise in giving one to one sessions from my home in North London and in teaching pregnant women as well as new mothers with their babies.

In addition, I am a Reflexologist. In my reflexology practice, I particularly work with women experiencing fertility issues and women during their pregnancy.

Today I want to describe to you what I do in my working life. I’ll start with how I approach an astrological reading with a client. I’ll then talk to you about my yoga teaching and my reflexology practice. I will finish with my personal practice, what I do to look after myself.

### **Astrology**

My understanding and practice of astrology is very much influenced by Jungian ideas and in particular by the work of James Hillman who was one of Jung’s most prominent followers.

After completing my diploma I embarked on the MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology run by Nick Campion. My dissertation was on James Hillman and his views on astrology.<sup>2</sup>

Doing my research on Hillman has made me very confident to make it clear to clients that my approach is psychological when interpreting a chart, that I do not predict specific events but only look at trends and possibilities instead.

Central to Hillman’s work is the concept of the soul.

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<sup>1</sup> See Joseph Campbell Foundation website [here](#) for explanation of “Follow your bliss” quote cited from *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth in conversation with Bill Moyers*, broadcast by PBS in 1988.

<sup>2</sup> See my article *Hillman, Astrology and the Western Imagination*, *Astrological Journal*, Vol56, Jan/Feb2014



The two main things about his concept of the soul are:

1. The soul incarnates in order to fulfil a particular destiny. It does this by choosing its parents and to be born at a particular place and moment in history.
2. The soul does not incarnate a clean slate but with some innate personality traits, a set of dominant psychological complexes, or what Hillman as a follower of Jung, calls archetypes.

According to Hillman, these archetypes we are born with govern the soul and can be read in the birth chart by using the planets, angles and signs. They are like different inner characters with different personalities. Some inner characters get along, some not. Some are dominant, some not. Some characters could have a more active or more positive role in the person's life.

There may be phases in our life when a single character takes centre stage but then this changes; another character or maybe two or three of them take over and become dominant.

When people come to see me for an astrological reading, they usually come with a specific issue. They may be experiencing relationship difficulties or they feel lost and unsure about their direction in life.

I feel that my job as an astrologer is to talk to the client about the archetypes which their birth chart indicates to be dominant in their life, to describe them and to explore with the client how these archetypes can be best expressed in their life right now. In other words my job is to connect them to their soul.

After completing my MA, I did a course on Spiritual Companionship with William Bloom who teaches a holistic approach to pastoral care.<sup>3</sup> This course also influenced the way I approach a reading.

Above all, it has made me realise the importance of the quality of my presence. I try to be as calm, grounded and centered as possible throughout a session with a client.

I listen to their story with an open heart and leave the client enough space for their own insights to emerge. I leave plenty of time for questions and comments so that it is a dialogue, an exploration, rather than just me talking at them.

## **Yoga**

When I say that I teach yoga, one of the first questions people ask is what type of yoga do you do?

I have been practising yoga since my mid twenties and over the years have trained with a number of yoga teachers from various traditions.<sup>4</sup>

My way of working, however, is primarily inspired by Vanda Scaravelli who studied with Iyengar, Desikachar and Krishnamurti, three of the most influential figures to bring yoga practices and philosophies to the West.

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<sup>3</sup> See Spiritual Companions website [www.spiritualcompanions.org](http://www.spiritualcompanions.org)

<sup>4</sup> For more information see the "about me" section of my [www.londonyoga.org](http://www.londonyoga.org) website [here](#)



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For me, yoga practice is not a mechanical thing. It is not about achieving a physical shape or perfect pose. The aim is to soften the outside of the body so that tissues become more relaxed but also more responsive and alert.

Once we soften the outer layer of the body, this allows an inner strength to gradually develop and for the intrinsic intelligence of the body to express itself. The result is more enjoyment and freedom of movement.

It is not an easy way to work as it takes a lot of effort and concentration. So, it is challenging and yet it is also gentle.

In addition, I also do a lot of work with relaxation and breathing practices and practices that develop an awareness of subtle energy such as chakras.

### **Reflexology<sup>5</sup>**

As I said earlier, I also practice as a Reflexologist.

For those of you who do not know what reflexology is, it is a kind of foot massage in which you apply pressure in specific areas of the foot which are meant to correspond to different parts of the body.

A lot of the clients that I see are pregnant women. It is a way for them to relax and generally look after themselves and their unborn babies.

I also specialise in women experiencing fertility issues and a lot of the people who come are people with depression or chronic diseases such as arthritis.

During a reflexology treatment, as when I teach yoga, obviously I work with the body, so the work happens on a physical level but I also work energetically by using chakras for example.

Sometimes a client wants to talk, sometimes they prefer to remain silent, usually a bit of both. I hear all sorts of stories, some of them extremely sad such as women having multiple miscarriages or women having to give birth to stillborn babies.

Similarly to when I see astrology clients or teach yoga, I find that it is important during a session to be as centered and open-hearted as possible and yet to remain slightly detached. I try not to talk too much.

### **My personal practice**

Teaching classes and seeing clients can be demanding in all sorts of ways, physically and emotionally. I find that in order to have the resources to do this type of work and not burn out, I have to look after myself.

One of the ways that I do this is by being careful as to the way I eat. I try to eat healthily. Also, I walk a lot and go swimming regularly.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on my Reflexology practice see [here](#)



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Life can get in the way sometimes but I always practise yoga postures at some point in the day. If I don't do it, I don't feel quite right and also if I do not practise, I don't feel I have anything to teach! My own practice forms the basis of my teaching. The same goes with my daily meditation practice.

Yoga and meditation has always been very helpful to me. It gives me time each day to stop and get in touch with the state of my body, feelings and thoughts. This is a time to care for myself and reflect on what is happening in my life, to be aware of my energy and to realign any imbalances.

Another way of saying this is to say that yoga and meditation, like astrology is a way of connecting to my soul. Also, it is during my meditation that I connect to something greater than myself, to the mystery, wonder and benevolence of the universe and I find that this is primarily what sustains me in my work.

### **Conclusion**

As you can see from what I have described, I keep my practices of astrology, yoga and reflexology pretty separate even though there is some overlap and similarities between them.

In addition to involving working with clients or groups face to face, what the three disciplines have in common is that they are to do with wellbeing, either physical or mental or both. Also, they are part of an esoteric rather than a scientific tradition.

But above all, for me the three practices are different ways of working with the soul. They are soulwork. This is because, in my experience, our psychological complexes can not only be seen in the astrological chart but also are imprinted in our physical and energetic bodies, what we work with in yoga and reflexology.

I used to work in the City. I worked there for 20 years before deciding to leave it behind. I am so pleased I made this move. Over the last 10 years I have been having a great time following my interests in holistic health and spirituality. The esoteric fits much more comfortably with me and for me, it is really important work.

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