

DHARMA CHART, KARMA CHART

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When I first got into astrology, the idea of a “dharma” chart did not exist. Back then there were no home computers, and not even simple 4-function calculators. Every astrology chart was done laboriously by hand, using pencil, paper, books, and log tables, and few people could do it, but that is another story.

Studying my astrology chart in the early 1960s gave me an alternate way of looking at myself, call it a second opinion (and some relief) from the toxic psychological descriptions of that time, labels that were then all the rage, words like paranoid, manic/depressive, schizophrenic, etc. That was how we grew up thinking about ourselves, not at all helpful for a young person. Anyway... I soon identified with my astrology chart and inhaled its alternate description of who I was compared to the labels society had pinned on my generation.

I just assumed the standard astrology chart of me that we all know was a map of my spirituality (or whatever we can agree to call it), when instead it was a map of my karma, the circumstances and personality in which I found myself living. Valuable? Of course, but it was nowhere near an overview, much less a map of how I might awaken and take advantage of my life. It did not clearly show a path, and I needed a path. Back then I struggled to glean specs of spiritual truth from my natal chart, when just by looking at my own birth moment from another (more inclusive) perspective, the path would have been clearer to see. When I finally discovered the Dharma Chart, it flipped me.

Keep in mind that, as mentioned earlier, there were no astrology programs. I was the first person in the world to program astrology on home computers and make those programs available to my fellow astrologers. This was in 1977 and computers for home use were brand new. According to an article done for Red Herring Magazine, the company I founded, Matrix Software, is the second oldest software company on the Internet. The only older one is a little company called Microsoft. That should tell you something. This was then a wild frontier.

Anyway, as a programmer, I naturally found myself exploring and programming various astrological techniques, and one of these was heliocentrism – sun-centered astrology. I knew nothing about it. For me it was one more technique to program and figure out how to interpret.

So there I was, peering through the lens of my traditional natal chart (and training) at this odd heliocentric perspective of myself, trying to make sense of what I saw there. And the helio chart gave a very different take on me, on who I was, what I was capable of, and so forth. Hmmmm, I thought, this is really me. Without realizing it, I had fallen down the rabbit hole and was about to go through an earth-change in consciousness. Before I knew it, I was identifying more with my heliocentric chart than with the traditional geocentric natal chart I was used to.

Wow! Please think about this for a moment.

The traditional astrology chart had been my whole world, astrologically speaking, and I had just transferred my identification from that chart to another more complete view of myself. In the helio chart I found the spirituality that I had always tried to intuit from my birth chart. Here indeed was a Dharma Chart.

And this “Dharma Chart” was the ‘me’ I always felt I was inside, but never had any confirmation of in my regular geo-chart. Before I knew it, I was inside the helio-chart full-time and looking out at (and through) my personality (traditional natal chart), rather than the reverse, where I had previously been -- an outsider looking in. There I was, suddenly on the inside looking out for the first time! It was empowering, to say the least, and it felt so natural. That’s what I meant earlier when I said I “flipped” it. “I” flipped.

I somehow transferred my consciousness to a deeper center and finally identified myself as a spiritual being, a traveler on a path to awakening. And although (of course) I still use my Karma Chart, I have never gone back to that old natal-chart view of my spirituality, because it was “through a glass, darkly,” to borrow a phrase. The heliocentric dharma chart is the natural way to view our spirituality, an inner self (dharma chart) looking from inside through the lens of our personality (karma chart) out at the world. All my life I had been an outsider trying to get in. I didn’t know myself. The helio Dharma Chart introduced me to myself, and I am forever grateful. My consciousness is seated at the center of the Sun, not Earth. Make sense?

Anyway... these two charts, the Dharma Chart and the Karma Chart are merely different views of the same moment in time, the same planets, etc. Of course each view is intricately embedded in the other, if only we could unravel it, but there is no need. We have both charts to look at. I have to laugh (and I mean laugh) when I think of how many years I struggled to read my dharma path from the standard traditional geocentric natal chart. It was not designed for that.

I believe the psychologist Carl Jung would have called the Dharma Chart, our Archetype, the tribe we belong to. It takes two views to triangulate, and in astrology it is possible to look at the planets and your birth moment from different perspectives or angles, from views other than the standard natal chart that has been used for the last millennium. In fact, without some differential for comparison, how is anything known? One of my favorite jazz tunes, one by Les McCann, is called (humorously enough), “Compared to What?”

With two (or more) perspectives, we can triangulate and get a three-dimensional view of something, in this case of our own essential nature. The dharma chart and the karma chart naturally complement one another, because they are simply two different views of the same planets at the same moment. The Dharma Chart is a view of who we are on the inside, and the Karma Chart is a view of what we are up against on the outside and have to deal with and go through. In hierarchy, the dharma chart is the key to our karma, just as in Buddhism, dharma is the key to our karma. The helio is the mother, the geo the child.

It took me some forty years to reduce the complexity of the helio chart patterns to something communicable. You can download the free e-book “StarTypes: Life-Path Partners,” or, if you want a personal report done by me, you can get it here:

http://astrologyland.com/personal_report/StarTypes.aspx