

RELATIONSHIPS IN JEOPARDY--
CODEPENDENCY, THE ADULT CHILD SYNDROME,
AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ASTROLOGERS



CHAPTER SEVEN of
Counseling Principles for Astrologers:
Becoming an Effective Change Agent
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CHAPTER SEVEN: RELATIONSHIPS IN JEOPARDY-- CODEPENDENCY, THE ADULT CHILD SYNDROME, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ASTROLOGERS¹



The two major issues that clients bring to the practicing astrologer are love and career. I find that the most troubled relationship histories--and, all too often, the most snarled-up career patterns--have a common root of growing up in a dysfunctional family. Dysfunctional families, including those with alcoholic or abusive parents, incline their offspring to form codependent relationships with mates, bosses, co-workers, and friends. In this chapter, we'll discuss how these concepts apply to astrology clients, including the chart patterns to expect. We'll consider case examples using the charts of some famous people. We'll find out about types of resources clients can use. In addition, we'll look at ways that being codependent or being an ACA yourself can influence your astrological practice.

What is Codependency?

Codependency is an addiction to an addict or to some other person. The obsession with trying to help or change that individual grows in strength until it takes over your life, giving you no peace. It doesn't change just because that person leaves, but instead can become a pattern carried over to new relationships. Melody Beattie, in her best-seller, *Codependent No More*, defined it in this way: "A codependent is one who has let another person's behavior affect him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior."²

The term codependency originally derived from the field of chemical dependency and has been applied to families and significant others of alcoholics and addicts. Because of the way they grow up, almost all adult children of alcoholics who

¹ This chapter was originally my contribution to the anthology, *Astrological Counseling*, edited by Joan McEvers for the Llewellyn New World Astrology Series, 1990, and is reprinted here with permission.

² Melody Beatty, *Codependent No More*, Harper/Hazelden, New York, 198, p.31.

have not addressed this background from codependent relationships with mates, lovers, family members, friends, and even bosses. They tend to become involved with one alcoholic or addictive personality after another. Alternately, they may avoid from codependency by staying away from committed relationships, especially after being burned a few times.

Rather than lavish all that energy on fixing one person, many ACAs work long, poorly paid hours in service fields like astrology, where they may play the role of rescuer. There's nothing wrong with service, but when it's compulsive and driven by codependent needs, it can ultimately be damaging to both practitioner and client.



ACAs aren't the only people who develop codependency. It can develop at any stage of life when you love someone who has a severe physical or emotional problem. Parents aren't the only source--it could happen if a beloved brother started using drugs or a mate began drinking alcoholically. Grandchildren of alcoholics can also have the full-blown ACA syndrome, even when the parents are teetotalers. The grandparent passes it on to the parent who passes it on to the child.

Many traits common to ACAs apply to members of severely dysfunctional families as well. It's been estimated (Lord knows by whom) that 95 percent of all families are dysfunctional to some extent. I'm not talking about your average unfulfilling, emotionally illiterate, uncommunicative parents who don't validate your

creativity or worth. I'm referring to families where there was physical or sexual abuse or where a parent was chronically and severely physically or mentally ill. It can happen where a parent died early or committed suicide, where a parent was a gambler or promiscuous, or where there were severe or bizarre eruptions and disruptions. It could happen if your bedridden grandmother lived with you and her illness controlled the entire family, or if your sister was a child schizophrenic.

Since books on the topic topped bestseller lists in the 1980s-1990s and sold millions of copies, it is fair to say that codependency is a widespread problem. Popular awareness of codependency grew throughout Neptune's stay in Capricorn, but first gained widespread professional and popular recognition during the Neptune-Saturn conjunction. Saturn represents boundaries and limits, and Neptune represents the dissolving of them, so defining boundaries and learning to set limits became issues in the world at large. In particular, it seems to be an issue for the Neptune in Libra generation, for whom that perfect relationship has been the Santa Claus that never came.

As recognition of codependency grew, so did knowledge of how to get free. In that era, there were many helpful books on recovery from codependency and the adult child syndrome. Both regular and New Age bookstores commonly had special sections dedicated to these needs. Self-help groups, workshops, trained counselors, therapy

groups, and even inpatient treatment programs grew rapidly. In addition, approaches developed elsewhere, like assertiveness training, anger management, and work with the inner child have proven useful, keeping in mind the part dysfunctional backgrounds and codependency play in the problem. Many of the books referred to in this chapter are no longer in print, but may be found used on Amazon.com, at the public library, or even at garage sales and thrift stores. Keep looking—they are more than worth it!

The Hidden ACAS in Your Client Population

Statistics show that one person in four has been deeply affected by a relationship with an alcoholic. Therefore, at least 25 percent of the people who come to you for charts are family members, lovers, or close friends of alcoholics. However, I suspect it is more than that, for reasons we will presently discover. If you aren't finding this to be true of your own clients, it may be that they're ashamed to tell you this family secret. It's not the kind of information they readily volunteer, and they don't necessarily view you as having a need to know. After all, they're not coming to you about the firmly buried past, but about the future and about when their relationships are going to get better. Until I came to know the chart patterns that go along with an alcoholic family background and began asking the crucial questions, very few of my clients told me about the alcoholics in their lives.

It isn't always simply a case of being secretive. One of the major traits of families of alcoholics or addicts is that everyone, beginning with the alcoholic, tends to deny the addiction. This protects the addict from having to give up the habit and protects the family from the pain and shame of seeing how destructive a problem it is. A Neptunian defense mechanism, denial means that they either don't recognize that an addiction exists or don't recognize that they're addicted to the addict. Many see the addiction and yet deny the extent of the damage. ACAs say things like, "Yes, my Dad drank, but he stopped when I was 16, and it was so many years ago, it doesn't have any impact on my life today." As we'll see later, the residuals are considerable, especially in the ways ACAs relate and work.

So, in the consultation, if clients deny the addiction or its impact, and we don't recognize it, it's not addressed. Then there's no clear answer as to why their relationships are so crazy and addictive, why they're so isolated, why they just can't get along with their bosses, why they keep on getting victimized, and why they're in so much pain. All they get from you is the momentary comfort of hearing, "It's just your Neptune." And yet this momentary comfort carries a long-term sense of helplessness. You can't do anything about where Neptune is in your chart, except to die and be reborn.

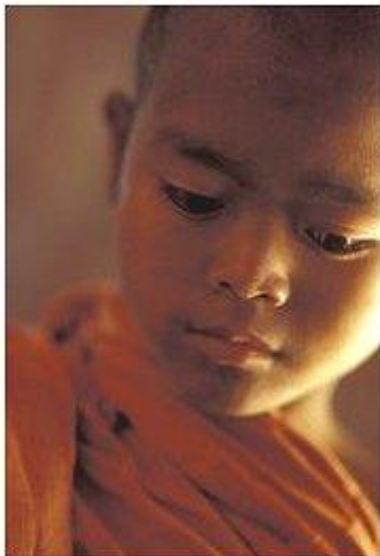
Why ACAS Are Drawn to Astrology

Many adult children of alcoholics or other addicts come to astrologers, psychics, and other consultants looking for an answer to their inexplicable confusion, turmoil, and pain. A major reason they come to us is that when you grow up in a chaotic,

unpredictable household, predictability has its appeal! Another reason they're drawn to us is that astrology and other such disciplines help ACAs solve that puzzling question of who they really are, as opposed to roles their families conditioned them to play.

Alice Miller, an important writer about treatment for ACAs, spoke of the path to health as finding the TRUE SELF, as opposed to the roles parents conditioned they to play. In *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, Miller said that the alcoholic parent is narcissistic and may love the child, but mostly as an extension of the self. Their love is given only on the condition that the child's self be buried to meet the parent's need for attention, admiration, and approval.³ Astrology, numerology, and other related tools can be major arenas for exploring the true self.

Our clientele may also have a higher proportion of ACAs than the general population because, I suspect, more ACAs believe in us than do other kinds of people. When you're a little kid and you have a grandiose parent whose brain is befuddled with alcohol, you are programmed with some remarkable ideas. (A kinder interpretation is that alcoholics are visionaries who stimulate offspring to look beyond everyday reality.) Like Alice in Wonderland, you may be required to believe six impossible things before breakfast. So, it's not that much of a stretch to believe in astrology, past lives, absent healing, holes in your invisible aura, parallel realities, or, for that matter, in capsules that will burn the fat in your body without the need to diet or exercise.



Finally, ACAs and people from dysfunctional backgrounds may have a special yearning for spirituality, unless they've been so wounded that they wind up hating God. Those who had disturbed or addicted parents may have a strong need to find closeness with a Father/Mother/God who is loving, understanding, wise, and all-powerful and who cares deeply about them personally. And, yes, it's also profoundly comforting to know that this wretched life, this crazy set of parents, this troubled history is not the only chance.

Since we inevitably confuse the relationship with the divine with the relationship with our parents, rarely is the spiritual path without potholes, detours, and false turns for ACAs. Often, the problem is not so much with the Divine, but with the messengers, to whom they transfer that need for an all-knowing, all-loving parent. They look for godlike qualities in astrologers and others who seem to be in touch with the Divine. When the messengers, themselves, are ACAs, the potential for distortion is compounded. For example, one such messenger, the fundamentalist evangelist, Jerry Falwell, is an ACA. His father was a wealthy bootlegger who murdered his own brother and then became alcoholic out of guilt.⁴

³ Miller, Alice. *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self*, .Basic Books Inc. NY, 1981, p.14.

⁴ AstroDataBank gives the birth information, rated A, from his twin brother as about noon, EST, 8/11/33, Lynchburg, VA, 37N25, 79W09. Family history discussed in Falwell's autobiography, *Strength for the Journey*, Simon and Schuster, NY, 1987. The chart is not presented here because this time doesn't seem to fit well with the events in his life.

A disproportionate number of astrologers also come from dysfunctional families. They may have many of these same defenses—and many of the same difficulties in their personal lives. Thus, they, too, may feel safer being the helper. It can be more comfortable focusing on clients' problems while denying the effects of their history on their own lives. There is a problem with insisting that a client needs help while denying one's own hang-ups. Astute clients tend to notice the discrepancy and to reject the referral along with the source. (Watch out for those eagle-eyed Plutonians especially. Nothing gets past them!)

Why Astrologers Should Know about Codependency

Astrologers need to learn about codependency for several reasons. First, it will help explain why so many of our clients repeatedly become involved in painful, crazy, abusive, addictive relationships. Second, we're on the front line for referrals to helpful resources. Many who come to us would not go elsewhere, even if they only come to ask when the alcoholic is going to straighten up. The codependent is used to being the helper and has difficulty asking for help. When you go to an astrologer, you aren't asking for help, oh, no, you're just curious as to what the future holds. Because there are resources for codependents, astrologers need to be able to recognize the syndrome, educate clients about what's wrong, and suggest where they can go for help.

Most importantly, we need to educate ourselves about the ACA syndrome and codependency because many of us are ourselves codependent without knowing it, and, as we are going to see, it has an effect on the way we practice. Talking to astrologers and healers around the country and the world, I find that, like myself, a very high percentage, including many of the top speakers and writers, are ACAs or come from severely dysfunctional families. The reasons given earlier as to why ACA clients are attracted to these disciplines are also reasons we're attracted to study them. They become our path for understanding ourselves and other people. Even more, they're an outlet for the common ACA need to rescue and fix people, as we were never able to do for our parents.

Common Characteristics of Codependents and ACAs

In his important book, *A Primer for Adult Children of Alcoholics*, psychiatrist, Timmen Cermak discussed the major characteristics of codependents.⁵

- 1) Codependent people will hide or even change their identity and feelings in order to please and be close to others.
- 2) A sense of responsibility for meeting other people's needs comes first for codependents, even at the expense of their own needs.

⁵ Timmen L. Cermak, MD. *A Primer for Adult Children of Alcoholics*, Second Edition, Health Publications, Inc., Deerfield Beach, FL, 1989, pp. 19-23. Reprinted with his permission.

3) Low self-esteem and very little sense of self to begin with is common to most codependents.

4) Compulsions and addictions drive codependents and keep them from having to confront their deeper feelings.

5) Just like alcoholics and other addictive personalities, codependents hide behind denial and have a distorted relationship to will power.

Cermak, who was the first president of the National Association for Children of Alcoholics, lists traits many ACAs share. Although not every ACA has all of them, these are common. They are fearful and especially fear their feelings, losing control, conflict, authority figures, and angry people. Although they're fiercely self-critical and suffer from low self-esteem, they're frightened of criticism from others, so they constantly seek approval. ACAs take on too much responsibility and feel guilty standing up for themselves. Intimate relationships are a special area of difficulty. Because they're afraid of being abandoned, they'll do almost anything to hold on to their relationships, which are often with addictive personalities or other unavailable people. They confuse love and pity, often becoming attached to people who are victims or whom they can rescue. They can also place themselves repeatedly in the victim role⁶.

One statement in a list of traits circulated at ACA Twelve-Step meetings is that, "even if we never picked up a drink, we took on all the characteristics of the disease of alcoholism." That is, ACAs who never drink can still act like alcoholics at times because, like all children, they pattern much of their behavior on parental models. Specifically, grandiosity and defiance are two main characteristics of alcoholics, and a

great many New Age people are massively grandiose and defiant. (It sounds like Neptune and Uranus!)

In their cosmic dimensions, studies like astrology encourage grandiosity. We may see ourselves as very, very special because of what we know and may subtly or even unconsciously encourage clients to see us in the same way because of that hunger for approval. We may even come to see ourselves as having a direct pipeline to the Divine. This arises from ACAs' need for a close tie to an all-loving Heavenly Father without the problems we experienced with our earthly father.

The defiant, rebel ACA often masks these traits by rigidly acting just the opposite. This doesn't mean they've overcome the conditioning from their alcoholic families, but rather that they're controlled by having to act out the opposite pole. As Cermak and others in the field have remarked, ACAs are reactors,



⁶ Cermak, pp. 34-37.

rather than actors. For instance, rather than showing their fear of authority figures, they may glory in defying authority. Rather than seeking approval from society, they may go out of their way to dress and act in ways that get negative attention. (In astrological terms, these are the Uranian types.)

Astrological Indicators of the ACA Syndrome

Let's look at chart signatures that go along with the ACA syndrome. No single aspect can be taken as a certainty, so you'd be looking for several confirmations. Neptune, naturally, is prominent, often in the 1st, 4th, or 10th, or in aspect to the Sun or Moon, or with Pisces in any of those spots, or many Neptune aspects or Pisces planets. The 12th house may also figure strongly, with the Sun or Moon often appearing there.



An individual who has many of these signatures would be classified as Neptunian. It is often possible to distinguish which parent was alcoholic, because when the Moon is aspected by Neptune, the - mother generally is either an addictive personality or made severely dysfunctional by the situation. Sun/Neptune or Mars/Neptune aspects hint at the males of the family as the addicted ones. Saturn/Neptune aspects often show that the authority figures were unable to provide consistent structure, security, or discipline, with alcoholism only one of the possible reasons.

Neptune aspects also indicate psychic abilities, in which we lose our boundaries and merge with others. *Psychic abilities* and *boundary problems* may just be two ways of describing the same phenomenon. As discussed in *The Medium, the Mystic, and the Physicist*, Lawrence Le Shan found that healers were able to heal when they could let go of self and become one with the person in need⁷. The problem for many with psychic abilities is shielding--i.e., establishing boundaries so that people's thoughts, feelings, and needs do not bombard them.

Psychic merging is common in addictive and dysfunctional homes, as the child or spouse uses psychic radar to monitor how the troubled person is doing, to prevent an eruption. Thus, psychic gifts are common in ACAs, as a survival skill. Many intuitive astrologers are ACAs who use this gift in their work. We who are psychic need to examine ways in which we may be codependent or have difficulty with boundaries in our practice. Many who study astrology but don't practice are wise to hesitate. They may sense that they haven't established firm boundaries and don't know how to set limits or to shield themselves psychically.

⁷ Ballantine Books, NY, 1982.

A WHO'S WHO OF FAMOUS ACAS:

In case your client files aren't full to overflowing with recognized or confessed Adult Children of Alcoholics, here are the data for some famous ACAs whose charts you may want to analyze.

CAROL BURNETT: It is well known that both of Carol's parents were alcoholic, and a grandmother raised her. AstroDataBank rates her data as AA, birth record quoted, as 4/26/33, 4:00 AM CST, San Antonio, TX, 29N25, 98W30. (She herself gives the time as 4:15 AM.)

LYNDON B. JOHNSON: The alcoholics were his father and brother. AstroDataBank rates his data as A, data from his mother's diary as 8/27/1908 at sunrise, 5:00 AM CST in Johnson City, TX, 30N016, 98W24. Family history in Kearns, Doris. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, Signet, NY, 1976, pp. 24-26.

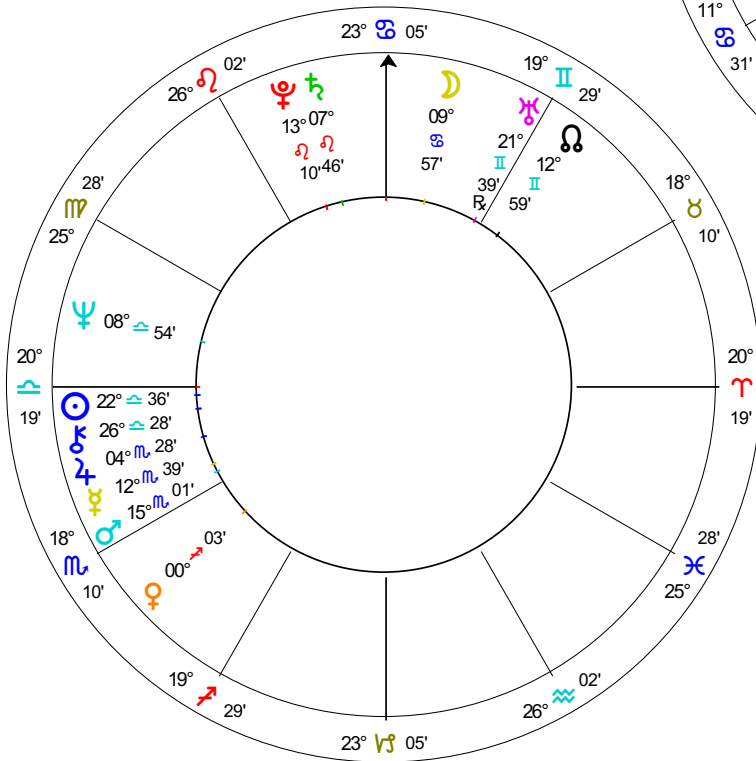
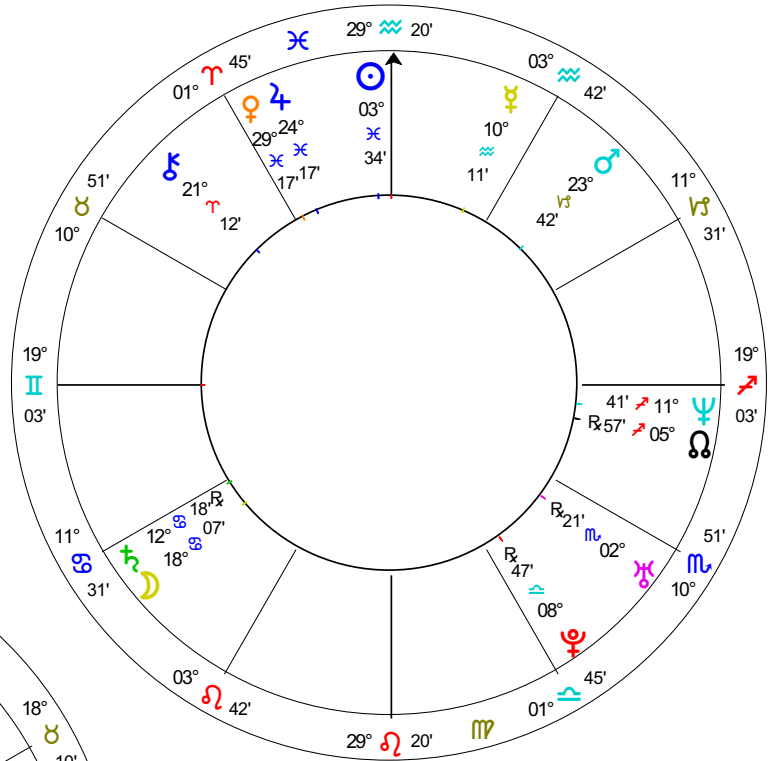
JOAN KENNEDY: The alcoholic was her mother, as discussed by Joan in a speech at the Houston Council on Drug Abuse and Alcoholism in 4/87. AstroDataBank rates her data as AA, birth certificate quoted. She was born 9/5/35, 6:10 AM EDT, NY, NY, 40N45,73W57.

JACQUELINE KENNEDY ONASSIS: The alcoholic was her father, Black Jack Bouvier. AstroDataBank rates her data as A, from memory. Profiles of Women, p. 159, as 7/28/29 2:30 PM, Southampton, NY, 40N53, 72W23. Family history in Adler, Bill. *All in the First Family*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, NY, 1982, p.112-3.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: Her father was an alcoholic, and away most of the time, and at the age of 9, her mother died of diphtheria. AstroDataBank rates her data as AA, based on a family birth record submitted by Joan Negus. She was born 10/11/1884, 11:00 AM EST, NY, NY, 40N45, 73W57. Family history discussed in Roosevelt, Eleanor, with Helen Ferris, *Your Teens and Mine*, Doubleday, Garden City, NY, 1961, pp. 21-22.

LILY TOMLIN: AstroDataBank rates her data as AA, birth certificate quoted. She was born 9/1/39 1:45 am EST Detroit, MI, 42N20, 83W03. This puts Neptune on the IC in a grand trine with Uranus and Mars.

DREW BARRYMORE
 2/22/75 11:51 AM PST
 Culver City, CA, 34N01,118W25



SUZANNE SOMERS:
 2/22/75 11:51 AM PST
 Culver City, CA
 34N01, 118W2

Chart Examples of ACAs



As an example of the Neptunian type of ACA, Drew Barrymore's chart is shown here⁸. Part of the famous Barrymore theatrical family, Drew began her career in the movies at the age of six in *E.T.* and has appeared in a great many movies since. The Barrymores have been noted for alcohol problems, including Drew's father, John Drew Barrymore, and her grandfather, John Barrymore. In fact, Drew has called herself a fifth-generation alcoholic. Drew began drinking at nine, smoking pot at ten, and using cocaine at twelve. By 1989, her drug problem was serious enough that, at the age of 14, she went to rehab centers twice and tried to commit suicide⁹. In maturity, she lives a lively, unconventional life, but appears to have left addiction behind and is a fine actress.

Neptune is angular in her chart, in the 6th, the house of work. This suggests that the pressures and terrors of fame at an early age may have contributed to the addiction. The legendary success of the father's side of the family as well as their addictions are shown by the Sun, Venus, and Jupiter in Pisces in the 10th house. Although the relationship has been a difficult one, her mother does not drink and was the main stabilizing force, as seen by the Moon/Saturn conjunction in Cancer.

Strangely enough, Pluto is often as prominent as Neptune in ACAs charts and is also often found in the positions noted above. Thus many ACAs would also be classified as Plutonians. Here Pluto signifies the sober or less addicted parent who struggles mightily to keep the addiction and the addict under control. It also signifies the child's efforts to control his or her environment and keep it safe, efforts that continue into adulthood, long after the original threats have passed. In my practice, these same Neptune and Pluto signatures, undiluted, often appear in the charts of grandchildren of alcoholics whose parents are not alcoholic. The ACA patterns of behavior and relating get passed on through the parents. Although a great many ACAs themselves have addictions, the strongly Plutonian type may at least resist the parent's drug of choice in an effort to maintain control.

Suzanne Somers's chart, shown here, is an example of the Plutonian type of ACA¹⁰. In her autobiography, *Keeping Secrets*, she was open about her alcoholic

⁸ AstroDataBank rates her information as AA, birth certificate in hand. She was born 2/22/75 11:51 AM PST, Culver City, CA, 34N01,118W25.

⁹ Family and adolescent history discussed in, "Falling Down and Getting Back Up Again," by Jeannie Park and Robin Micheli, *People Magazine*, 1/29/90, pp. 57-61.

¹⁰ Suzanne Somers was born 10/16/46, 6:11PM PST, in San Mateo, CA, 37N34, 122W19. AstroDataBank rates her data as AA, birth certificate in hand.

family background. (Warner Books, NY, 1988.) Pluto squares Suzanne's ascendant, a potent aspect that is easy to miss in these charts. It is in the 4th house, conjunct Saturn, the ruler of the 10th, a combination in itself suggesting a difficult childhood and possibly abusive parents. (Drew Barrymore had a square. I've seen Pluto/Saturn aspects in the charts of several child stars like Danny Bonaduce and Britny Spears.)

The Pluto-Saturn conjunction squares angular Jupiter, Mercury, and Mars in Scorpio, aspects that lend additional Plutonian energy. The Moon again is in Cancer, which does not in itself suggest an alcoholic background, but may show that the issue of nurturing is a critical one for the individual. Neptune is quincunx the Ascendant, but otherwise unaspected except for a mild sextile to Saturn. Richard Idemon used to say that an unaspected planet was like a loose wire, often more important in the native's life than would be expected.

Chart Signatures of Codependency



Astrologically, who are the codependents? Obviously many of the same patterns will be seen as in ACA charts, but there are additional indicators and interpretations. People with Neptune aspects to the Moon are often addicted to giving others the nurturing they themselves never got. Those with Neptune aspects to the Sun may have their self-esteem and identity bound up in rescuing. People with Neptune near the Ascendant keenly feel the needs of everyone they meet. When Neptune is near the Midheaven, rescuing can be a career choice. People with Neptune in the 7th or aspecting Venus are especially prone to committed but agonizing relationships with addicted people. People with Pisces planets in any of these places can have similar tendencies. Note that many of these placements can also signify an addicted or dysfunctional individual. Such people can become vulnerable to addiction, even **BECAUSE** they rescue, as a way of coping with the depletion and sorrow of rescuing.

While not all of us are codependent, we all have Neptune somewhere. We could become vulnerable to the syndrome, given the right predisposition, the proper transits, and a painful set of circumstances. (The child you adore starts using drugs, your beloved mother has a massive stroke, or your spouse develops cancer.) Neptune's house and aspects in your chart show areas of confusion about where you leave off and other people begin—where your boundaries are blurred. In those areas, you may have trouble setting limits and can be taken advantage of or even victimized. Thus, Neptune in the natal chart is often where we feel powerless—a victim or martyr. It is also the area where you would be most likely to become involved in codependency if the right set of circumstances triggered it. With Neptune in the 3rd, one could be a life-long sucker for siblings, some of whom may be alcoholic or addicted; in the 5th, with your love affairs or children; in the 8th, with sexual partners; or in the 11th, with friends.

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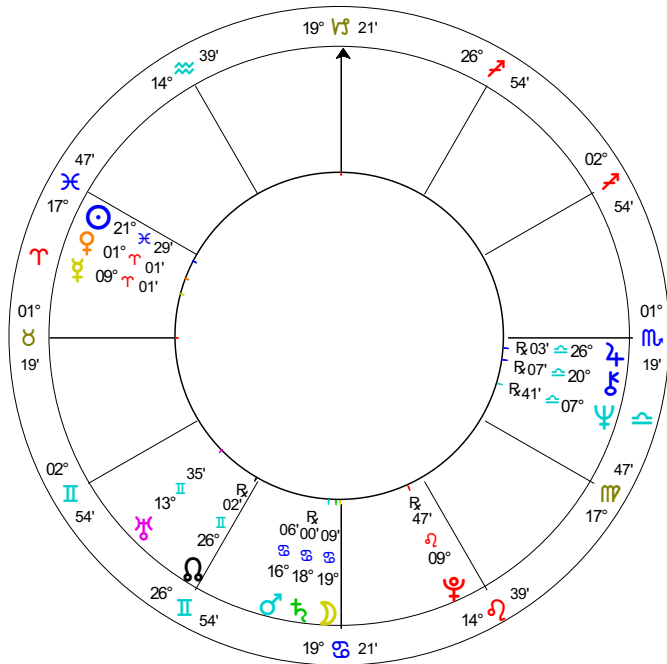
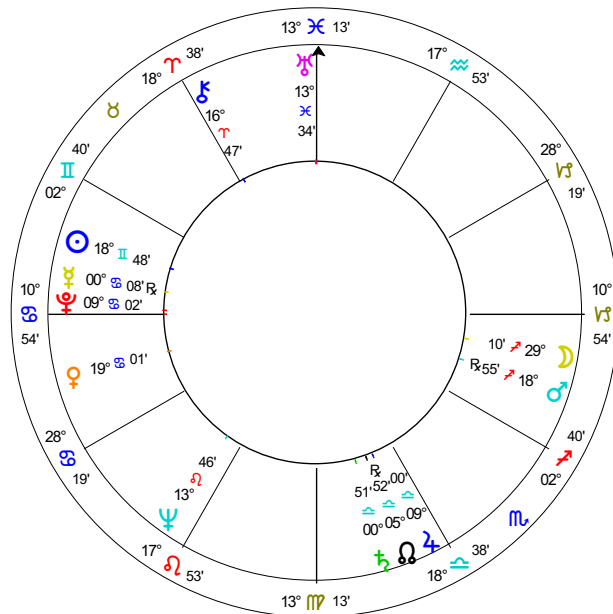
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Judy Garland
 6/10/22, 6:00 AM PST,
 Grand Rapids, MN
 93W31; 47N14.



Liza Minellii
 3/12/46, 7:58 AM PST
 Los Angeles, CA
 34N04, 118W15.

The Liza and Judy Show--a Case Study

As a case study in codependency, let's look at the charts of Judy Garland¹¹ and



her Oscar-winning daughter, Liza Minnelli¹². Judy's long struggles with alcohol, pills, and suicidal depression are as much a Hollywood legend as her gifts. Liza herself has been in rehab many times for addiction to pills and alcohol.

Although Liza remains intensely loyal to her mother's memory, her childhood sounds like an ACA's nightmare. By age 10, Liza was begging for food for herself and Judy and sneaking out of hotels and apartments to avoid paying bills and back rent. She was her mother's confidant, comforting Judy after her many suicide attempts¹³. In her teen years, the relationship between them became more explosive, and Judy would periodically kick Liza out. In 1962, Liza left home for good at the age 16, going to New York with \$100 to pursue her show business career.

Liza's chart is a prime ACA profile, qualifying strongly as Neptunian and less obviously as Plutonian. Her Sun in Pisces is in the 12th house. The trine from the Sun to her angular Moon/Mars/Saturn/IC conjunction in Cancer shows her closeness to her mother, but also the mutual dependency. Liza's Venus and Mercury are also in the 12th, opposite Neptune. Pluto in the 4th makes a wide 8° square to Liza's Ascendant—but wouldn't you say it works—plus a 3° sesquiquadrate to that 12th-house Sun.

Judy's Neptune does not immediately register as a strong one, and yet she was both a sublime musician and actress and an addictive personality--all Neptunian pursuits. Then we note that her Neptune forms an eye of God with her Pisces Uranus/MC conjunction and her Descendant. The strain of being constantly in the public eye and a sensation from her teens onward must have contributed to her addiction. We also discover that Neptune forms an odd-shaped triangle of semisquares and sesquiquadrates with her Mercury and her Sagittarius Moon (definitely somewhere over the rainbow, but how do you do a relocation chart for those coordinates?).

Like Liza, she has a strong 12th house containing Sun, Mercury and Pluto, although Pluto is closely conjunct the Ascendant. Both had a waif-like, lost quality, which can be attributed at times to the 12th house. Once more, we see the prominence

¹¹ AstroDataBank rates Judy Garland's data as AA, birth record in hand. She was born on 6/10/22, 6:00 AM PST, Grand Rapids, MN 93W31; 47N14.

¹² AstroDataBank rates Liza Minnelli's data as AA, birth record quoted. She was born on 3/12/46, 7:58 AM PST, Los Angeles, CA, 34N04, 118W15.

¹³ Family history discussed in Petrucelli, Alan W. Liza! Liza! an Unauthorized Biography of Liza Minnelli, Karz-Cohl Publishing Inc., Walled Lake, MI, 1983.

of Cancer, with the Ascendant, Mercury, Pluto, and Venus. Pluto isn't exactly pallid, being on the Ascendant, widely conjunct both Venus and Mercury (a midpoint), trining the Uranus/MC conjunction, and squaring the Nodes and Jupiter. Once more, there's that child-star signature of a Pluto-Saturn aspect—here a wide square to Saturn.

When you look at the connections between their charts, you will note that Judy's Venus at 19° Cancer is exactly conjunct Liza's Moon and IC, and closely conjunct Liza's Mars and Saturn as well. Liza's Neptune falls in Judy's 4th, conjunct Judy's Jupiter/North Node/Saturn conjunction, suggesting confusion about which one of them was the parent. Liza's South Node on Judy's Moon suggests that nurturing her mother was an automatic reaction. Judy's Neptune is widely conjunct Liza's Pluto. Even though those are generational placements, they do suggest a truth about the relationship, which was that Liza perennially had to keep the situation under control when Judy was falling apart. There are wide Sun-Uranus contacts on both sides. They not only show the stormy nature of the relationship and the wildness shared by both women that the relationship may have sparked, but also that each supported the genius, charisma, and uniqueness of the other. The contacts also form a restless but lively T-Square in mutable signs involving Pisces, Gemini, and Sagittarius. The outlet for the T-Square is on Judy's Virgo IC, and the two traveled constantly during Liza's childhood, never successfully establishing a home.

How Having an ACA Background Can Affect Astrology Practice

As we got to know the astrological profiles of the ACA and codependency syndromes, did you find some of your own chart in it? You're not alone--as mentioned earlier, a great many of us in the field of astrology, myself included, are ACAs. It is up to us as individuals to recognize and work on how the dysfunctional background affects their personal life. My concern here is to explore how it can affect your astrological practice.



Many of us have worked very hard to transform ourselves through a variety of healing tools. Thus, we are generally able to give good service. By now, many of us have already worked on our ACA issues. Yet, unless we remain conscious and vigilant, we may still be triggered into ACA and codependent patterns when clients' problems are similar to those of family members or others we love--or to our own problems. I myself attended ACA groups and later Al-Anon for several years and thought I had some good quality recovery. Yet, when reading the material on codependency, I was dismayed to see my blind spots.

The issue to think about now is your practice. Many ACA astrologers and ACA clients are still in ignorance and/or denial about the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional background. When we don't deal with this information consciously, the personality traits identified with the adult child syndrome can profoundly affect the ways we relate to clients. The following exploration of traits of untreated ACA therapists was developed by Cermak in *A Primer for Adult Children of*

*Alcoholics*¹⁴. My comments about how these traits may manifest in astrological sessions or healing work are highlighted in yellow.

Cermak says that untreated ACA professionals can be recognized by the way that they encourage you to be angry for their own purposes. They often push you to take action before you're ready. (Although astrology clients may come to you about a life concern like a marital separation, they aren't necessarily ready to make a move.) They intellectualize, rather than encourage you to express your feelings. (If you suddenly find yourself inundating the client with astrological jargon and technical material, ask yourself if the emotional content of the session is making you uncomfortable.) They are uncomfortable with silence. (When the client pauses for reflection, do you rush in with a metaphysical lecture or information about their fixed stars, asteroids, and so on?) Untreated ACAs resist exploring Twelve-Step programs and are certain that they've already dealt with all their codependency issues.

Reading other writers on the subject like Claudia Black, Melody Beatty, Alice Miller, and Janet Woititz, led me to consider additional ways the ACA syndrome and untreated codependency can cause difficulty in our sessions. For instance, in *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, Alice Miller says narcissistic practitioners, as many ACAs can be, have a great need for approval, understanding, and validation from clients. There is a pressure for the client to meet one's expectations and to present material to fit one's concepts and belief systems¹⁵.

Miller notes that the codependent practitioner easily becomes defensive and needs validation and stroking from clients. Do you get upset if a client questions your chart interpretation or doesn't tell you how right on target your interpretation is? Many of us are overly-attached to clients' approval and admiration. We feel we have to know it all and have the right answers. We do tap dances to dazzle and amaze. We may also be overly-attached to being right in our predictions and interpretations, at the cost of a true dialogue with the client. We can get depressed after the consultation if we don't get enough positive feedback. Then we question ourselves, our work, and our worth.

Boundary problems show up as over-identification in its various forms. The client's problem becomes your problem, or conversely, your own difficulties get confused with the client's. You may feel pain or anxiety about giving clients interpretations and predictions other than what

they want to hear, even though the transits or progressions are anything but positive. There may be problems in setting limits--e.g., taking too many phone calls from a client whom you allow to become excessively dependent or else your sessions may go on for hours. Fuzzy boundaries can also result in being drained afterwards. (This may mean you're doing energetic healing without conscious awareness and need to channel divine energy rather than your own energy.)



¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 69-70. Used with his permission.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.24.

The common ACA need to fix people may have motivated us to do charts in the first place. That need may lead us to want to rescue clients who are addicted or in severe difficulty. We may try very, very hard to solve every problem in the client's life through three-hour sessions. Where we are overly responsible, we may take on too much of our clients' problems or spend too many hours preparing. For instance, astrologers may think they have to do several years' worth of transits, progressions, harmonic charts, midpoints, and fixed stars. (This can result in an information overload for the client, far too much to assimilate in one session.) The pervasive trait of low self-esteem may result in not charging or charging too little.

Untreated ACAs and codependents also tend to be extremely controlling, although they can be subtle and gifted at manipulation. (Keeping things under control was a survival skill at home. Are we talking Pluto?) When clients don't respond by doing what ACA astrologers recommend or don't believe that this is THE ANSWER, ACAs can sometimes become agitated, enraged, or vindictive. They may respond by guilt-tripping, shaming, and invoking their divine connection, scaring clients about their Pluto transits, or threatening clients with cancer if they don't straighten out their way of thinking. Similarly, there can be agitation and even rage when clients don't change in the way the ACA thinks they should.

There are two main issues clients come to us about—career and relationships. Unfortunately, two primary characteristics of untreated ACAs are that they have authority problems and distorted relationships. If we haven't addressed these issues in our own lives and are in denial, it's a matter of the blind leading the blind. If we have difficulty around intimacy or anger, can we teach clients how to have healthy relationships or be positive role models for them? Let's suppose you're still living out the victim role and have a history of being betrayed in relationships. You bring your ACA mind-set to the session, so when clients ask about difficult relationships, you counsel them to watch out for betrayal.

Similarly, out of unresolved anger toward our own parents, we may encourage clients in anger against their parents or bosses. If we're grandiose, we may encourage clients in grandiose career plans, rather than taking a grounded and realistic approach to vocational astrology. Many ACAs live on the edge financially, due to improper grounding in their unstable families, and the financial path in career astrology is anything but sure. Many of us have serious difficulty working for anyone else, and that's part of the attraction of being self-employed. When a client is having difficult 8th or 2nd house transits, we may ignore the possibility that this client has gone deeply into debt with credit cards and bill-payer loans¹⁶ or we may be inhibited about



¹⁶ An astrological aside: Pluto rather than Neptune appears to be the predominant theme for people who are addicted to their credit cards and to ruinous debt. It may show up in the 2nd or 8th or forming important aspects to planets in those houses, or with Scorpio placements in those houses. Here, the issue seems to be spite and revenge. Many incest survivors have debt compulsions.

asking the relevant questions. (In such a situation, the currently popular equation of the 2nd house with “VALUES” simply does not meet the client’s real life needs.)

Traits like low self-esteem explain why some ACAs study astrology for many years and never feel good enough to turn professional. Many don't practice or practice infrequently because they don't feel they CAN fix people and yet expect themselves to. Or they don't practice because they feel it's too much of a responsibility. Given the grandness of our tools, they may expect themselves to be all knowing and feel self-hate if they're not as grand as their sources of knowledge.

Finally, ACAs are especially susceptible to addictions and compulsive behaviors. In our field, more of us than we like to recognize are alcoholic or suffer from some form of addiction. We practice individual and collective denial about it, but it's an occupational hazard. It's a way of dealing with the sometimes overwhelming responsibility, sense of isolation, endless giving out of energy, and psychic bombardment that our consultations entail. We also may want to stuff feelings that are stirred up in a session when we deal with major life issues in such a concentrated form. If your role models used substances or compulsions to deal with stress and keep feelings at bay, you tend to live what you learned.

Toxic Shame as a Barrier to Change Efforts



Many clients suffer from severely damaged self-esteem. Particularly if they come from dysfunctional backgrounds, their level of shame may be so high, that the idea of exposing their inadequacies to a therapist or other helper is daunting. They may also feel they don't deserve a better life. If we, the practitioners, also come from dysfunctional families, our own level of shame may be so toxic but so unrecognized for what it is that we are unaware of when it is operating.

We also carry a certain level of shame at practicing a profession that is held up to public ridicule. Without being aware of it, we may find relief from our own shame by feeling superior to clients, especially morally or metaphysically. ("I'm okay because I can tell you all the ways you're not okay.")

At the magical level where the damaged inner child operates, many clients project onto astrologers such a level of omniscience that for us to judge them is devastating. So, on the one hand, we may be trying to build their self-worth by listing the positive qualities in the horoscope. On the other hand, the very way we discuss their difficulties and urge them to seek help may reinforce the shame.

As a caring person, you no doubt are watchful of what you say to clients, so that you'd never knowingly shame them. Often, however, it is not so much what you say aloud, as what you are thinking and feeling. The true reaction bleeds through by tone of voice, body language, or even telepathically. It is difficult to control such negative reactions--and even less effective to feel shame about having them. The best solution is for astrologers to heal their own shame. The most helpful material in this regard is

John Bradshaw's book, *Healing the Shame that Binds You*¹⁷. The bonus for working out your own shame issues is that you can also speak about it to clients whose lives are crippled by shame-based low self-esteem.

The Adult Child Syndrome and the Politics of Groups

The combination of grandiosity and defiance, as you can imagine, plays holy heck with the politics of astrology organizations and other New Age groups. Many of the traits Cermak mentions also play into group dynamics. They include the leaders' need to be in control, the members' fear of conflict and of angry people, inability to take criticism, the tendency to see things in a black and white perspective, the need for agreement and approval, and the tendency to feel like a victim.



Put a large number of defiant, grandiose, unrecovered and in denial ACAs together, and you're likely to see some bizarre group behavior. It is likely that you would find feuds, splintering, flaming each other on email lists, casting out those who dare to question, and crowds who are oohing and aahing over the emperor's non-existent new clothes. These types of brouhahas do erupt periodically in astrology groups, the main reason being an officer or board member has never appealed to me.

When such groups predominantly consist of ACAs, it's not unusual for top positions to be filled by the equivalent of alcoholic parents. That is, even if they never pick up a drink, leaders have been known to behave alcoholically. Strong denial and a high tolerance for bizarre behavior are ACA characteristics that can be carried over into group life. Thus, members may indulge and overlook even the most astonishingly dysfunctional behavior from leaders. The members' need to create a happy, close family-type experience is a powerful one. The painful isolation they've suffered, and the life-long sense of being different and not belonging, makes the group so precious to its ACA members that they tend to deny dysfunctionality in order not to threaten the sense of finally belonging. With these blinders on, everyone and everything is WOOOOOONNNNDERFUL.

If you should be so unwise as to point out that the emperor is not, in fact, wearing any clothes, they may turn on you as though you'd done something indecent. "Oh," they say, "but he's sooooo spiritual!" The group may ostracize you, and they certainly won't ask you back to speak. Truth is an unwelcome visitor in places where denial is king.

¹⁷ Health Communications Press, Deerfield Beach, FL, 1988, still available at Amazon.com and other outlets.

Further characteristics of alcoholic families that may be replicated in groups made up largely of ACAs are codependency and fuzzy boundaries. Many ACAs (myself included) elect to stay out of even healthy groups and out of group politics because of family histories that wildly violated personal boundaries. Far more likely than the average astrology group to violate members' boundaries are cult-type organizations, to which ACAs are more vulnerable than the average person.

A close-knit spiritual group can be a priceless gift; a group which insists that you give up your individuality to belong is destructive. A group mind intent on invading boundaries can do great damage to an individual whose boundaries are shaky in the first place. Cults which profess to be spiritual are notorious for this, but even a more loosely organized group can at times lose respect for individual members' rights, beliefs, and feelings.

The hope for sanity is the hope that more and more ACA members will come to recognize the syndrome in themselves and their groups. It would be helpful if some of the traditions the Twelve Step programs aspire to were used in these groups. Just for starters, there is one that says, "Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

How Current Conditions Intensify the Need for Recovery



Current world conditions, as signified astrologically by the passage of the outer planets through the universal signs, are intensifying the demands on all the service professions. People are extremely needy and confused, feeling helpless and powerless over the vast social changes just on the horizon. The forces of chaos are very strong just now. As a result, people are looking to astrologers and other service professions for guidance and **ANSWERS**. It would be easy to become burned out from clients' demands. Learning to set limits is becoming a crucial. We will need to master

limit setting in order not to get so burned out that we stop the work.

Before we act, we also need to assess which clients' demands are legitimate and which are not. Alcoholics and chronically dysfunctional people can project feelings of helplessness and bottomless need so powerfully that the psychically sensitive pick it up and react to it. To bolster low self-esteem, rescuers need to be needed. Thus, they often hook into the helplessness and keep people helpless by enabling them to continue dysfunctional patterns. We need to learn how crippling rescuing is so we don't do that with clients. We cannot keep on enabling, rescuing, and answering the non-genuine need or we will not survive.

However, we're also being forced to function at the outer limits of our capabilities and to stretch ourselves to a higher level of professionalism, and that's

stressful. You'd be in physical pain if your limit was a mile a day and then you ran a ten-mile marathon. If you then proceeded to run ten miles everyday, that would eventually become your new limit. Likewise, as we continue to be stretched past our limits as service workers, those new levels of functioning will ultimately become ours. Just as marathon runners have to nourish themselves carefully while training, we must also nourish ourselves carefully—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—when stretching our capacities.

Even where clients' needs are legitimate, there's so much more pressure that we can grow weary. It's important to rest, relax, and take care of ourselves emotionally, spiritually, physically, and fiscally. An important way of taking care of ourselves is to recognize and let go of codependency in our personal and professional lives. I hope this discussion has been a beginning of that recognition. If we astrologers who have the syndrome use the tools that are available--the books, the groups, and other self-help aids--and if we tell our ACA and codependent clients about them as well, we'll all gradually get free.