

The Working Life

Nan Hall Linke

64, Astrologer

As told to [Pamela Colloff](#)

Born and raised in Houston, Linke is a third-generation Texan. She has been a professional astrologer since 1971. She also holds a master's degree in behavioral science from the University of Houston– Clearlake and did her clinical training in marriage counseling and family therapy.

The future represents the unknown, and the unknown is frightening to a lot of people. They want a little bit of predictability in their lives. That's why people come to see me. They want to know what's going to happen to them. They say, "Read my future!" and I have to explain that I'm not a fortune-teller or a psychic. I'm not looking into a crystal ball. If someone ever tells you with certainty that they know your future, you should immediately question it.

I've been an astrologer for 36 years now, but the questions haven't changed. Clients want me to help them pick the right day for their wedding or a time frame for when they should try to get pregnant. If they have their own business, sometimes they'll want guidance about who to hire. Women in particular will ask, "When is it likely that I'll meet someone?" Or "I met someone. Is he the right person for me?" One guy who raised Thoroughbreds wanted to know, "Do you think I could pick better horses by looking at their birth dates?" And I said, "I have no idea, but since astrology is a study of energy, hypothetically we can." We did that for a while with great results. Another guy, who had a bookie, wanted me to tell him who was going to win football games! You wouldn't believe some of the things people want to know, like "Is this a good day for a haircut?" People ask me the most mundane to the most serious things.

Astrology is all mathematical. It's based upon observable phenomena. I look at the planets and the ephemerides, which are the mathematical calculations of where the planets are and how they move. To do a consultation, I need your date, time, and place of birth. Then I'll work up three charts: your birth chart; a chart of your inner movement, which is a progression from your birth to the present day; and a chart of your outer movement, which shows where the planets are today. I look at the synthesis of those three charts to determine probabilities. So I have to think three-dimensionally. Astrology is not one-dimensional, like the fortune cookies you see in the newspaper. I call those "horrorscopes." It's complex. An astrological chart does not replicate itself again for many thousands of years. That's how finite the mathematics of this is.

I started off as a skeptic. Now I always tell people, "A skeptic is a zealot who is waiting to be converted." My mother was an artist, and she believed in astrology, and I thought she was crazy! I grew up in Houston, and I got a great education at Bellaire High School. I was a practical person. I believed in empirical evidence, not hocus-pocus. My mother would send \$5 off to these quacks to have my charts done, and when she'd give them to me, I'd throw them in the trash.

When I was at American University in 1968, my roommate and I decided to have our charts done. *Linda*

Goodman's Sun Signs had just come out, and everyone was reading it. The American Federation of Astrologers was located in Washington, D.C., and the founder's wife met with us. She was completely wacky. She was an older lady who lived in an old Victorian house, and she had lots of amethysts and little dogs on velvet pillows. I made my friend go first, because I didn't want to waste my money if she wasn't any good. When my roommate came out after the consultation, her face was white. So I gave this woman my date, time, and place of birth, and then I sat there for about two and a half hours. She absolutely blew my mind, she understood me so well. And at that point I'd had two years of psychotherapy, so I knew myself pretty well.

When I came back to Houston, I decided that I needed to study astrology so that I could better understand people. I took a correspondence course, and I read as many books as I could find. I never thought about devoting myself to it full-time, because I was going back to school to become a psychotherapist. But then I fell madly in love with a hippie guy, and I got married. Nine months later, I had a baby. So while my kids were little, I had an office in my house. I put a sign on a tree outside that said "Nan Hall Linke, Astrologer, Inquire Within." It was in Montrose, downtown. My husband owned the Good Karma Garage, which was in our backyard! People would drive by or call and make an appointment with me and have their chart done.

On a typical day now, when I'm doing consultations, I get up, I go to yoga, and then I go into my office in the Galleria. Six clients is the most I will ever see in a day. When they come into my office, it's very quiet, except for the sound of the fountain. I want my clients to slow down. I make them spit out their gum and turn off their phones. A lot of people ask if they can take off their shoes, and I say, "Absolutely! Take off your shoes and lie down. Do whatever you want." I have them fill out a form, and I ask them what they're interested in knowing. We stick just to that. I tape our consultation, and they take the tape with them. Then, when they have something else they want to know more about, they come back. I have some clients now who are in their forties who I first saw when they were teenagers. And now I see their kids too.

You wanted to know about the future of Texas, so I made a chart. Texas was born on December 29, 1845, which means that it is a Capricorn. What I did is I progressed the chart to 2008, to see where things were headed. What's interesting is that Texas has the planet Jupiter in the sign Taurus, which rules agriculture and animal husbandry. What that says to me is that the future of our state is still in our land—whether it's oil or wind farming or whatever. The strongest element in the state's chart is earth, and it's in a new moon, which is associated with leaders and pioneers, so we should see more innovation. None of that is very surprising. But something did amaze me when I looked at this. I said, "Well, if I didn't know better, I'd say that this state is going to go Democratic!" Jupiter goes into Capricorn in 2008, and the last time Jupiter was in Capricorn, the state went Republican. Amazing, huh? That's what astrology does. It helps us see the invisible.

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