

Joyful
Parenting
Through
Astrology

STAR CHILD

BRIANA SAUSSY

BOOK EXCERPT

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Introduction

Every Child Is a Star Child

"I don't think anyone can grow unless he's loved exactly as he is now, appreciated for what he is rather than what he will be."

Fred Rogers, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*

It should come as no surprise that Astrology can give us greater insight into our children and that it can support us in caring for them, educating them, and fully supporting their interests. We have consulted the stars for inspiration, knowledge, and self-development for millennia—ever since we first noticed them in that velvety sky. From kings and queens to financial brokers and even US presidents, humans have long sought out the insights that Astrology provides and have worked with it as a supportive tool in navigating daily challenges and successes.

Who are these precious children of ours? Who are they, really? How are we raising and guiding them? Astrology can give us flexible, playful, more profound information than other schematics and typologies, and it can support parents, guardians, and family members with immediate new insights into their children. These are the ideas I want access to for my own kids. These are the observations all of my clients, students, and friends who are parents ask for. And it's not just something for adults: the children themselves can get into their Astrology—and participate in it—by connecting with the stories and mythological figures of the signs and with the wonder that the stars inspire. This book is

both guide and support for raising and connecting to our young ones through the maps of our lives, woven in starlight. It is also an inducement to trust our own experience. It is a call to a quest.

I'll never forget the day in fifth grade when my mother got a call from my guidance counselor. There was a Situation. In mom rushed to the school for a meeting. My guidance counselor—let's call her Mrs. Cartwright—wore the sort of heels that make a brisk, clicking sound on the school's linoleum-floored hall. You could always hear those power heels before you saw her. You could also hear my mother coming long before you saw her. Instead of power heels, however, it was the jingling and jangling of the many charm bracelets she wore on each wrist. I sat there in the counselor's office, dreading each of those sounds. My stomach dropped to the floor. I had no idea why I was there, but I knew the battle of the Power-Clicking Heels versus the Charm Bracelets was about to commence.

I'm the sort of person who likes to read the end of juicy books first, so I'll tell you now that the Bracelets won. But let's return to the story.

What was the Situation? A boy had lavished unwanted affection on me. He told me he liked me, in *that* way. He expected me to kiss him. I told him nicely I did not like him back in *that* way. And that was that.

Well, almost. He wouldn't take no for an answer and continued to pursue me. So I tried again, more bluntly this time. I think I used the word "never." And perhaps something like "over my dead body" for added rhetorical and persuasive effect.

Anyway, it worked. Too well. This second verbal snub of mine upset the guy. But instead of teaching him how to take "no" for an answer, Mrs. Cartwright offered kind counsel to my mom that I had a problem. I was too honest, too blunt, too forthright.

I know what you're thinking, and I agree. Different times, I suppose, and I'm hopeful that young girls today would receive quite different guidance. In any case, my mother responded by explaining in precise and logical terms that Mrs. Cartwright was clearly confused. I did not have a problem with honesty, but Mrs. Cartwright

would be the one with the problem if she wanted to pursue the matter further. Turns out, Mrs. Cartwright did not pursue the matter further. The boy stopped lavishing unwanted attention on me. Life moved on. The Situation vanished.

Now, years later, I think Mrs. Cartwright might have been trying to counsel me to be more kind. Choosing kindness is certainly a bed-rock principle worth cultivating. But most little girls I grew up with were not encouraged to be outspoken. Kindness was a way to hide our thoughts and feelings, whereas boys were given a free pass to say pretty much what they wanted to, no matter how crass or hurtful, because “boys will be boys.” I went on to face this set of attitudes not only as a child, but in college too. Even at the turn of the twenty-first century, ladies at the seminar table still deferred to their male counterparts. The “problem” was that I was just not that sort of girl. I spoke up and told the truth, perhaps to a fault.

As a mother of two boys, I sometimes find myself reflecting on this incident from my school days. What would have changed, I wonder, if the adults in the room had taken certain facts into consideration about me, the boy, and themselves? We of course do not know how Mrs. Cartwright counseled the boy’s parents, but what would have happened if she and my mother had been aware that, contrary to my Sun Sign in charming Libra, my Moon is in blunt and truth-telling Sagittarius, indicating that I am very comfortable telling the whole truth, regardless of how people feel? What counsel would have been given if they had seen that my Mercury is in Scorpio in the Eighth House—another sign of blunt, forthright, and, yes, sometimes stinging communication? And then what about the boy? What were his tendencies and challenges?

Some of these terms may be unfamiliar, but you will likely recognize this as astrological language. You may have heard some of these terms in daily or monthly horoscopes, or you may have read books or studied the methods and terms of this ancient art. Mrs. Cartwright might have thought it to be poppycock. Or she might have learned it at her grandmother’s knee.

I don't know that having all of this astrological information would have changed the outcome at all. There is so much that goes into the shaping of young hearts and minds that I would certainly never claim that these facts hold the sole key to unlock the mysteries of human personality.

Yet I am convinced these considerations would have helped me (and probably the boy as well) to gain understanding and tolerance of ourselves and those around us. Astrology can provide a counterpoint—even a point of resistance—to some of our most entrenched habits of thinking, in this case about how children should or should not behave. With an understanding of Astrology, we could instead turn to the child himself or herself and make an effort to see them as they are, not as the culture, their parents, or school guidance counselors would have them be.

There are many tools that can help us see and know our children better. Psychology offers one popular set of tools. Whether we make use of the insights of psychology, those of Astrology, or both, the whole point is to be able to see our children for who they are and thus to develop healthy, growing, joyful relationships with them. And that means it's not just parents who can benefit from these insights but teachers, guidance counselors, relatives, neighbors, and family friends. This book is written for the whole village. Experience teaches us that knowing ourselves is hard—there's no way around it. Most of our difficulties with parenting, caring for, and teaching children begin with our inability, or even our refusal, to be interested in the challenge of self-knowledge at all. Even if it proves one of the most difficult of tasks to know our kids and ourselves, it will serve us well to get interested in them, find out about them, and try to see and know them for who they are independent of our own desires for fulfillment, hopes, dreams, and fears.

I am a storyteller, ritualist, practitioner, teacher, and writer in the Sacred Arts by trade. Over the years, Astrology has become one of a core set of disciplines in the course of my work. At the forefront of everything I do—at the heart of the Sacred Arts—is the problem

of self-knowledge. My community of soulful seekers follows closely the Delphic Oracle's famous pronouncement to "know thyself"; this is the motivating force behind our work. The consequences of not knowing ourselves are too plain—and perhaps too painful—to spell out. If we want to flourish, the place to begin is with this piece of sage advice. The same can be said about knowing our children and helping to foster their potential. The simple truth is that Astrology, if worked with intelligently and with a good heart, can be an excellent tool for helping us in our pursuit of self-knowledge and happiness.

It is, for instance, a useful thing indeed to go into your Pisces child's parent-teacher conference and already know that you will be told that they are imaginative, highly artistic, and sometimes overly sensitive with their friends. If you were privy to this information, you might feel empowered to encourage the teacher to stop trying to force your child into participating in big and loud group activities and to offer a quiet place in the classroom for them to recharge.

When it comes to life at home, activities shape themselves around the awareness you develop of your child's specific nature. With my own children, Astrology has shown me what to expect when it comes to things like playdates, parent-teacher conferences, academic performance, and selecting extracurricular activities. Moreover, I observe a positive difference when parents take even scant astrological information into account in their parenting, not only in the child or the parent individually, but especially in the relationship between the two.

With this book I hope to remedy two glaring, unexamined issues in conventional astrological practice. The first issue is a twofold problem with Astrology resources. On the one hand, there is an excess of needlessly complicated, jargon-filled books, websites, and teachings that offer very little advice on how to practically implement astrological information in everyday life. You'll get information overload and a big headache trying to sort through all the arcane details. On the other hand, the astrological world is filled with sugar pills—easy-to-swallow, sentimental platitudes. These little pills go no further than giving you the vague comfort of knowing that you are a Libra, that

your friend is a Cancer, and that such-and-such might be in store for you today. Astrology is vast enough to do more than provide a passing remedy and is instead able to go to the root of your life and experience, without breaking your brain.

The second issue is the lack of magic in much modern Astrology. Like all forms of divination, Astrology is associated with magic-making, but “magic” can be a dirty word. Magic is about power—so the understanding goes—and power is a problem. The earliest astrologers were also magicians, and the earliest magicians were all aware of the movement and relationships of the stars, Planets, and other major celestial bodies. This is part of what the ancient axiom “As above, so below; as within, so without” speaks to.

I want to offer a middle way between the extremes of information overload and sweet-tasting but ineffectual sugar pills: a way that is super-practical and gets into the nitty-gritty of daily life, and one that’s sufficiently radical, meaning it goes down to the roots of life where magic lives.

Let’s say you find out that you are going to have a tough transit in the coming year. Maybe your astrologer tells you that there are some funky alignments happening and you are going to be affected financially or with respect to your health. I don’t know about you, but when I get information like that my next question is automatically “OK, that doesn’t sound great. Now what?” Making magic is the answer to the “now what” question. It is the way that we petition and commune with our celestial holy helpers and take an active role in shaping our fates and fortunes. As we will find out, making magic is a completely natural way to put astrological information into action. In this book, you’ll get a better sense of how Astrology shows up in your own life and learn some working methods to try for yourself.

What if you don’t believe in magic but are open to Astrology? That’s perfectly fine, and I’m not out to change your mind. But you might be interested to know that magic, in the way I teach and practice it, is not really a matter of belief. The practices I offer in this book require no religious affiliation or adherence to a particular doctrine

whatsoever. They are fun and creative practices that help you bring the information you will learn here into your daily life. And if you have figured out a way to do this without magic—a way that is both easier or more comfortable and as effective—then go for it!

There are three basic questions this book answers:

1. How will Astrology help me have a more knowledgeable, joyful, and nurturing relationship with my child, the children in my life, and even my own inner child?
2. What are the starting points of Astrology? Where can I begin in the subject of Astrology if I want to make it my own? (Knowing where and how to make a good beginning is more than half of the whole endeavor and is important even for those with experience in the subject.)
3. What do I *do* with the star knowledge I have gained? How do I apply this celestial knowledge directly to my life here and now?

One useful way to think about Astrology is as a map that helps us orient to our place in the vast cosmos. So it is that *Star Child* begins with an overview of the basic features and coordinates of that celestial map with an eye to giving the reader a comprehensive familiarity. Thereafter it is organized according to Zodiac Sign, beginning with the first, Aries, and ending with the last, Pisces. Each chapter opens with a story from the rich folkloric traditions of the world that speak to some of the core qualities of the given sign. Stories and stars have always gone hand in hand, so when we begin to approach the meaning or significance of a particular astrological phenomenon, it can be helpful to approach through story. The original fairy tales were much starker and grimmer than the sanitized versions many of us are familiar with today. Within the folds of these stories there are pockets of pain, death, destruction, deceit, and callousness toward others. There is violence. There is also radiance, wonder, wise guidance, and love.

The stories that I share in the following pages come from all over the world. Some are sweet, some are salty, some are tough, and others are fun. I encourage you to share these stories with the children in your own life, making them your own. At the same time, I would counsel you to not edit out too many of the difficult parts, for this is often where the sauce gets most savory, and in my experience children love these best of all. When applied correctly, stories heal many of the heart wounds we sustain and dole out to each other.

After the story, we survey basic information about the sign, including its date range, Ruling Planets, alchemical element, quality, symbol, House position, and season. These considerations are followed by general points about the core personality, outlook, and attitude of each sign: a list that is necessarily limited in scope but handy as a quick reference. We then move into the depth of each chapter, broken up into several subsections. These include personality, friends and play, academics, physical activity, art and creativity, extracurricular activities, technology, sleep and waking, and discipline. I am consistently asked about these areas of focus by parents, students, and clients when discussing a child's astrological makeup. We also have a "How Best to Connect" section for each sign. Deeper and more sustaining connection is one of the most useful gifts of understanding our astrological makeup and that of our children.

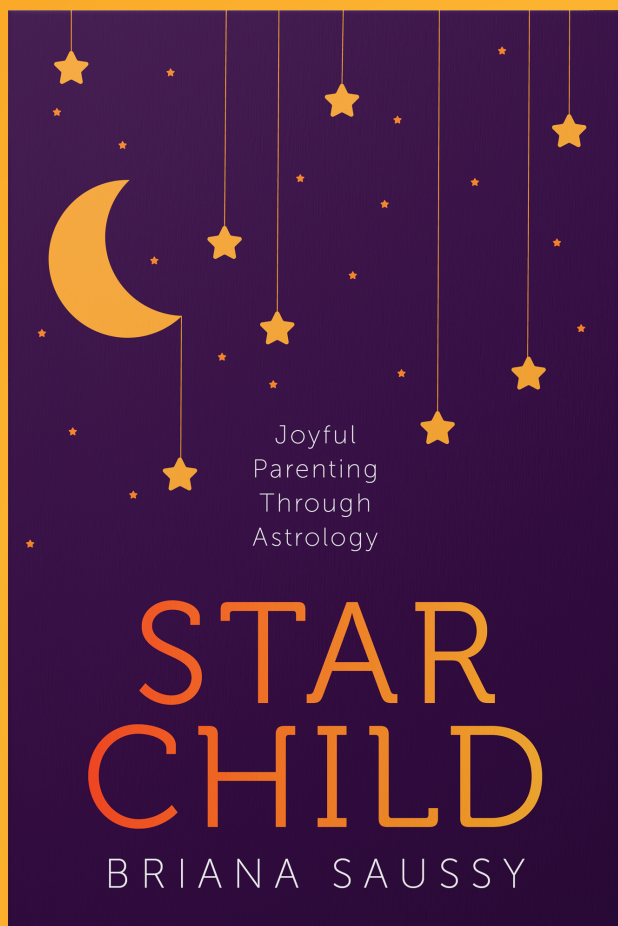
Finally, each chapter concludes with three practices to help put to work the ideas of each chapter in your life. The practices I offer here are simple and, in many cases, everyday activities that are given a bit more breadth and scope. At the end of each chapter there is an activity and a little ritual that a child can do alone or with an adult, and then there is a final practice that is meant for the adult who wishes to get in touch with their own inner child. Our child-selves are still part of us—our memories, our stories, and our current experiences. It is remarkable how much insight we can gain into our adult lives when we reflect on our inner child through the prism of Astrology.

While this book is a handy reference, my best advice is to read it all the way through. Take it in whole. All the signs are interrelated

and are all present in everyone's story, so the best use of this information is to develop a feel for the whole of the Zodiac and the Houses and to reflect on, as you read through the signs, all the people in your life, both children and adults. Don't try to fit people into the boxes of the signs, but let your living experience of them lead the way. You will find as you read that more than one story or chapter is relevant to your child, to yourself, and to others in your life.

Those of us who have children know that it does indeed take a village to raise a child. While parents will find this book helpful, I have made an effort to include all of the adults whom a child has a deep relationship with including their teachers, extended family members, family friends, and other caregivers. Finally, it should be noted that this is written primarily to address the life and times of school-age children and that a further assumption is that children are in a conventional, public-school-type setting. If your child does not fall into that category, there is still much of worth and value here for you, and all sections can be adapted to specific life circumstances. After all, Astrology is all about giving a complete and comprehensive picture as well as a good story to share.

Every child is a Star Child. And long after youth has faded, every grown-up still carries their own childhood within. In this way, every adult is a Star Child too. These facts are easily forgotten or ignored. What would happen if we started remembering?



BRIANA SAUSSY is a teacher, storyteller, spiritual counselor, astrologer, and founder of the Sacred Arts Academy, where she teaches divination, ceremony, magic, and other Sacred Arts for everyday life. She is the author of *Making Magic: Weaving Together the Everyday and the Extraordinary*. Learn more about her at brianasaussy.com.

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