



## NATURAL TIME: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO FIND IT

You already know everything you need to know natural time. But because you're living in a busy, hurried-up world, this innate sense may be under wraps, like Sleeping Beauty lying behind her tangle of brambles, waiting to be kissed awake. My hope is that this workshop brings you that kiss.

Most important to this work is to let your intuition lead. The monthly playbooks are full of words, but often, where your eye glances will be exactly what you need to read. Please don't approach this workshop as you may have other learning experiences—with expectations and "shoulds." Do only what you want to do. I really mean this. I guarantee you'll get more than your money's worth if all you do is focus on one or two Moon facts each cycle—as long as you do this with real curiosity, attention, and joy.

### Sensing Natural Time

The Moon does many things, but most deeply and pervasively, she tells time. Our ancestors followed her cycles the way we follow our calendars. The Moon's dance with the Sun guided their plantings, migrations, doctoring, home-keeping—nearly all facets of daily life. Our ancestors understood what we've forgotten—that time is not a quantity, but a living pulse that invites us to dance along.

The current view of time is more mechanical. Clocks and calendars drain the life out of time—which means we're frequently tired and left feeling that we don't have enough time. Yet we keep urging ourselves forward, assigning ourselves as many tasks as our day-planners can hold. What's hard—though far more rewarding—is to slow down and sense time. As my friend, natural time expert Samten Williams says, we need to stop pretending that "Time is money" and start realizing that "Time is art."

This is a big concept. One way to make it real is by listening to time through your body. This is our forest—our beach—our closest experience of nature. Stop and eat when your body tells you it's hungry. Rest when you're tired instead of gulping coffee. The ticking of natural time can be heard through your senses, your emotions, your energy level. You can read natural time anywhere. While gassing up your car—take in the air, the mood, the sound of traffic, the taste in your mouth, the panorama of the sky. For that moment—let yourself be lazy and human.

All minutes hold a thousand nuances that are lost when we strive to be more efficient than alive. The body is our closest natural resource. Studying the Moon with just the mind will quickly make moonplay meaningless. We need to develop our sensitivities. Eventually we will know which way the celestial wind is blowing. We can choose to protect ourselves from it or be supported by it—when we can properly gauge its intensity and flow.

### Ways of Knowing: Information, Instinct, and Intuition

Acquiring new information is the usual way to learn. I tried this with the Moon. I bought every Moon book I could find. But it always seemed like what I really wanted to know was missing. Or the author made such preposterous claims that the book felt full of lies. My experience had already told me that “Moon power” doesn't decree all our fates at once.

My favorite books were those with antique Moon lore from gardeners and healers. Yet they seemed quaint, superstitious, and irrelevant. Perhaps the worst result of my early Moon studies was that I felt more burdened. Often the books were full of rules, what I “should” do or think on certain Moon days. As a busy working mom, I already had enough “shoulds” in my life.

One day, I made a breakthrough. I was tired. Yet I forced myself to mop the kitchen floor. Before it dried, three dogs, one cat, four kids and one adult left their muddy footprints all over it. Now it was dirtier than before. I sobbed and raged: “Poor me!!” But later I got curious. The floor *did* take forever to dry—why? The weather was the same as when I washed it last week, But that day, it dried in just ten minutes. Then I remembered that today was a Pisces Moon, a cool and damp sign. The week before it was in Sagittarius, hot and dry. Could that old Moon lore – concepts I had thoroughly dismissed -- really be true? (*Dirt dissolves more easily on a water moon, but your floors won't quickly dry.*)

Heart pounding, I tallied up more Moon facts of the day. Pisces Moons can bring out the inner romantic or victim, and I had certainly been the latter. It was a Balsamic Moon, a time for rest. Had I listened to my body, and my inner guidance, I would never have washed that floor! I would have rented that movie I was thinking of and curled up on the couch with my mate (the Moon was in my Seventh House of partnerships.) Instead, I victimized him with my misery. So much of what I'd been thinking and feeling corresponded to the Moon—her phase, her sign, the house. My body knew it, my intuition knew it, and my day was miserable because I had gone against the flow. In the following months, I tested more lunar lore. I found a consistent correlation—between my instinct, intuition, and the position of the Moon.

### Making the Cycles Personal

We have just one Moon. But consider how on any moonlit night, Earth offers up to the Moon countless reflections. Across the planet there are millions upon millions of visible Moons—in oceans and lakes, puddles and windows, strips of chrome, shards of broken glass. Likewise, there is just one New Moon each cycle—but it offers countless reflections. The goal of moonplay is to steady yourself enough to discover yours.

This workshop offers the simplest presentation of astrology you'll ever find. We're primarily concerned with just two celestial bodies: Sun and Moon. Even so, how these two bodies touch our lives is so pervasive, surprising, sacred, and complex, that trying to absorb their influence all at once can be overwhelming. Keep your emphasis on your own reflection of these factors: sense and observe. Let your intuition lead. Record the honest flow of your own experience.

Years ago I was standing around the water cooler listening to a brilliant co-worker share one of his latest theories. When somebody delivered a criticism, he replied, "It's a useful theory. But that doesn't mean it has to account for *everything*." A wise answer. When we get excited about a new theory, we want to apply it everywhere. This happens a lot with astrology.

Especially in the beginning, while we're nailing down the basics, we feel poised on the edge of discovering a great secret that once revealed, will explain every moment of our lives. This expectation is consistent with the scientific view: a proper theory *should* work one hundred per cent of the time. But it is far less useful for the mystical arts—where spaciousness, creativity, and a nimble delight in surprise are more relevant.

Look for the Sun and Moon in the most obvious places. Their influence is everywhere. Let this workshop be a life-changing experience. You're exploring a quality of time that science can't explain, and that long ago, men and women didn't need science to explain.

### Ingredients for Success: A Quiet Place, A Quiet Mind, A Belief in a Sacred World

Even in a quiet house the refrigerator hums. We live in a world of mechanical noise—our phones sing, beep and bleat, our televisions shout, radios sing, trucks roar by. It's easy to get lost in this noise—and carried away from the Sun and Moon.

One key to success is finding a special place—where you can drop in to contemplate natural time in relative silence. Silence is the soil that can grow your instinct and intuition. Along with outer silence, we need inner silence. The single most important practice of a good intuitive is daily meditation. It doesn't matter which meditation technique you use, as long as it works for you. If your life is getting better, then your meditation is working.

You should also eat well. Get enough exercise. Give yourself the sleep you need. As our primary "natural time" tracking device, our bodies deserve the best from us. And finally, nourish your spiritual life. There are reverent mentions of the Sun and Moon in virtually every spiritual tradition. Whatever your beliefs, I encourage you to find the connections between your faith and these natural cycles. What was once common knowledge has long

been buried. Rediscovering these sacred connections is exciting beyond words.

### **If You Go Real Slow, You'll Get There Fast**

A friend of mine once got lost on her way to a workshop in New Mexico. She stopped to ask a desert-weathered native for directions. He knew the roads well and described in careful detail how far she needed to go, which turns she needed to take. He ended by saying, "If you go real slow, you'll get there fast." My friend hurried anyway. She missed the cactus marking the turn and had to double-back. Twice she got stuck twice in mud. Then, speeding over ruts in the dirt road, she got a flat tire.

By the end of the drive, she understood the real wisdom of going slow. Working with the Sun and Moon is a lot like that. Many are eager to experience their magic. But often those who are most eager in the beginning disappear before the journey is done. It didn't happen quickly enough so they moved on.

As with most facets of astrology, tuning into the Sun and Moon requires commitment--to study the principles, to listen to instinct and intuition, to observe, test, and deepen your knowledge over time. If you go real slow, working with just one or two factors at a time, you'll get there fast.