



Planetary Threads

Patterns of Relating Among Family and Friends

Lynn Bell

(Lake Worth, FL; IBIS Press, 2013)

This book is based on two separate seminars given by Lynn Bell for the Centre of Psychological Astrology in the late '90's. One held 27 June 1998, comprises *Part One* of the book discussing planetary threads within family. The other held on 19 Oct 1997, discusses connections between siblings and friends and is the basis of *Part Two*.

Bell begins with a clearly organized introduction, providing background and foundation for both seminars. She comments on general observations that many of us have made within our own family experiences, such as repetition of dates amongst family members and key events in the family story; parallel events, within and across generations, which are often cited as coincidence; and unusual 'twists of fate' that seem to reflect stories from earlier generations. The combination of the material presented by Bell, and the dialogue with participants, offers potential astrological explanations for these 'seemingly' mysterious circumstances. Illustrative chart and family examples support the discussion and, more than anything else, emphasize the need for understanding the individual's experience of family to bring the astrology to life. Weaving together the threads of stories and chart references, is where Bell really demonstrates her skill and experience. She creates a meaningful picture of the life of the individual within the family unit. Her ability to provide brief, yet detailed, well-organized family histories serves to underpin the astrological discussion making it easy to synthesize key ideas.

In *Part One*, Bell quotes Virginia Satir (1916-1988), an American author, clinical social worker, and psychotherapist, recognized for her approach to family therapy. She reflects that 'problems in families always came back to values, communication and rules.'¹ The discussion that follows draws in, as one might expect, the relative meaning of Venus (*values*), Mercury (*communication*) and Saturn (*rules*). The astrological discussion expands from here, drawing in other planets as well as some houses of the horoscope. A variety of topics consider repetitive patterns often revealed within families, such as the 'family myth', relationship matters, illnesses, adoption, and suicide. Bell has used well-chosen family examples making it clear how these issues can, and have, manifest within families.

Part Two focuses on Siblings and Friends. For me, this section was a bit disappointing as it was more heavily steeped in mythical stories. However, the examples are interesting, and once again Bell provides meaningful detail and clear background information for context. There is a great deal to work with here.

I must admit I am not a fan of books using the 'seminar format', but in this case it does not detract from the quality of the material. Lynn Bell has clearly done a great deal of work in this area and is unquestionably a highly credible astrologer who knows what she is talking about. If one has an interest in this branch of astrology, *Planetary Threads* is worth digging into and a good resource to keep on the bookshelf. [JL]

¹ Page 40.