

Did you
always feel
your parents
were from
outer space?

Astrology could provide an explanation

By Susan Rife
Knight-Ridder

All your life, your dad has pattered away in the basement or at the office, working late and seemingly never there for you. Probably a Virgo.

And then there's your mom — the one who punished you with the silent "ice-queen" treatment. That'd be a Scorpio.

If you've spent years in therapy trying to figure out what makes you tick, maybe it's time to look to the stars for some answers. A new book, *Childhood Rising* (Dell, \$7.99), explores how the astrological signs affected your parents.

If nothing else, *Childhood Rising* provides entertaining office water-cooler or dinner-table conversation. Be forewarned that author Michael Lutin writes with a razor blade, not a pen, and his descriptions can cut right to the bone.

But see if there's not a bit of truth in what he says.

Allene Cunningham is a noted psychic with a great interest in all things astrological.

But she was out of town so we talked to her son and business manager, Pat Preboth. On hearing the description of the Gemini mother ("not your traditional maternal creature"), he exclaimed, "That is exactly my mother. I recognize a lot of things in there, absolutely, especially the highway part" (Geminis are famous for their gypsy tendencies). "Going, going, going? Oh, yeah."

Preboth takes the whole thing with a grain of salt. "A lot of things you read in these (books)

are awfully light; they're not in depth," he said. "There's some hot points in there that make sense, but I also come from the point of view that if you read your horoscope in the paper, you can mix those things up. I can live with yours and you can live with mine."

Sonia Greteman, a graphic designer who grew up in a Cancer-Libra household and is interested in astrology, listened with interest to the description of the Cancer father.





Staff illustration by Catherine Weeks

Cancer dads are wrapped up in a father-child relationship all the time . . .

"So true," she said. "Oh my God, it is **so true.**"

He can be very aggressive and successful out in the world . . .

"One thing about being an aggressive business person," said Greteman, "he has an uncanny ability to be a good business person and yet be very well-liked."

In fact, the Cancer father was your

mother . . .

"I think he was my mother when I was very young because I didn't get along at all well with my mother then," Greteman said.

But the negative aspects of the sweet, warm Libra mother personality didn't line up at all with Greteman's mom.

"You haven't said one thing" that's true, she said after hearing the Libra mother described as somewhat detached, devious and manipulative, passive-aggressive and fearful of open communication. But late in the description a bell or two went off.

. . . she will imbue in you a highly developed sense of respect for other people . . . the ability to relate socially, civilly and rationally . . .

"She is a little haunted by her own dedication to serving others," said Greteman. "She's a teacher, she's a librarian, she helps all the children and all the teachers."

On turning to the description of children of Libra-Cancer pairings, we find that they often are "assertive, ambitious children determined to break out of a small-town mentality, to hit the corporate world . . ."

"I couldn't have said it better myself," said Greteman. "I have that really strong desire to not be a small-town kind of girl."

The description of the Virgo father sounded more than a little familiar to Dal Harrison.

He has the awesome power to get out of bed with a 103°F fever and go to work during a snowstorm . . .

"Yep. Yep," she said. "For example, my dad just went back to work today. They took him out of Cessna on Oct. 26, he had bypass surgery, and he's back to work. He'll go to work sicker than a dog, because that is what you do."

Harrison herself is a quintessential Sagittarius mom to daughter Abby.

Is she the finest homemaker in the universe? Not if you're going to judge on total cleanliness . . .

"The cleanliness thing is so true — that's the way my kitchen looks right now," said Harrison.

Jim Snyder, an associate professor of psychology at Wichita State University, thinks that's all very interesting, but he needs empirical evidence to convince him that the stars have an effect on parenting styles. "I don't know of any data, any research, that supports or fails to support that particular perspective," he said. "My general approach is, show me the data. But it's interesting to have fun with."

Parenting styles, he said, have to do with "how you were parented and the models you saw in terms of what effective parenting is."

And after hearing the descriptions of his own parents — a Cancer and a Libra, he said flatly, "It doesn't fit."

Here's an astrological look at parents; courtesy of Childhood Rising by Michael Lutin:

Mom



ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Happiest when working, even though she complains. Better than you are at everything. Role model: Debbie Reynolds.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Has a simple philosophy: I'm right. Any other point of view is an attack. Role model: Queen Elizabeth II.



GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Volatile; doesn't understand your feelings of abandonment; happiest when she's leaving. Role model: Judy Garland.



CANCER (June 22-July 23) — Forever grappling with her wish for autonomy and her fear of being alone. Role model: Nancy Reagan.



LEO (July 24-Aug. 23) — Wears the pants in the family; sets the example of stability in the family — in the form of inflexibility and control. Role model: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.



VIRGO (Aug. 24-Sept. 22) — Never idle, she is as perfect as you can get. Most of the time, knows what's good for you better than you do. Role model: Ingrid Bergman.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Keeps people on speaking terms. Runs interference for everyone; loves and resents her own dedication to serving others. Role model: Susan Sarandon.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Obsesses over her sex life. Your "crimes" will turn her into an icy statue. A pro at surveillance, which can drive her children to become sneaky and defensive. Role model: Princess Grace.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Can't sit still, loves fast-food, keeps a house with that lived-in look. Teaches you to respect truth, but not to fear bending it. Role model: Jackie Stallone.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Has a cold edge. Encourages creativity while stifling spontaneity. Role model: Jane Wyman.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Leads the parade but makes up her own steps. You never know what to expect from her. Always taking in stray pets and people. Role model: Lana Turner.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Believes there are external escapes from the pain of life. Gains stability as she ages, though she's always glamorous and unpredictable. Role model: Elizabeth Taylor.

Dad

ARIES (March 2-April 19) — Comes through when the chips are down, but takes everything personally and tends toward outbursts. Role model: Marlon Brando.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — A mixture of the Rock of Gibraltar and overindulgent flake. Is driven by money. Role model: Bing Crosby.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Never petty, his youthfulness gives him empathy for your pranks. Role model: John F. Kennedy.

CANCER (June 22-July 23) — A man of many hats, he's always trying to avoid confrontation with your mother. Usually cheerful and compliant, busy and productive. Role model: Bill Cosby.

LEO (July 24-Aug. 23) — Affectionate, protective and strong, but also has a punitive side that can be hard to accept. Craves excitement; dedicated to creating stability. Role model: Eddie Fisher.

VIRGO (Aug. 24-Sept. 22) — Knows everything — and what he doesn't know, he makes up. Can't stand for things to go wrong. Role model: Lyndon Johnson.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Acts as buffer between you and your mother. A pro at guerrilla tactics. Role model: John Lennon.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Silent, loving and doesn't reveal much about himself. A man of ferocious appetites, he knows about the dark forces that drive us. Role model: Robert F. Kennedy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Fun-loving, but with a secret dark side. Never wants his pain to show and is definitely a "do as I say, not as a do" dad. Role model: Frank Sinatra.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Supports you in style, but you'll probably never see him. His past has left him pained; his humor is tinged with irony. Role model: Richard Nixon.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Craves normalcy but takes delight in beating the system. Wants to be the boss but loves bossy women. Role model: Ronald Reagan.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Tender and manipulative, has great dreams for his children but undermines them. You may find yourself bailing him out of jams. Role model: Harry Belafonte.