

## **The Arizona Astrologer, September 2000**

### **By Eileen Naumann**

*Eileen Nauman's (pen name Lindsay McKenna) latest literary success is Morgan's Mercenaries: Heart of the Warrior, published in August 2000. Eileen began writing at the age of 13 and a half. Her first book, The Novien Moon, was published when she was 28. Since then she has published more than 60 novels and 10 nonfiction books. Contact Eileen at (520) 634-9298 or email her at [docbones@sedonia.net](mailto:docbones@sedonia.net). Eileen's birth data is May 24, 1946, 11:08AM PST, San Diego, CA.*

I'm always intrigued by what makes the difference between those who want to write and those who do. I taught writing (creative and manuscript evaluation) for five years in adult continuing education program at Akron University, Akron, Ohio, and I made some interesting discoveries. There are two types of people that yearn to write: Dreamers and Doers. Blend both aspects into one, and you have the potential of a best selling author.

Writing is an exercise in creativity, which one can parallel to a rushing river (Neptune, Mercury, Moon, Poseidon, Zeus, Cupido and Venus). The actual act of doing it, the discipline and hard work, are the banks of the river (Saturn).

The 'creative' Zodiac signs are Aries, Gemini, Leo, and Pisces insofar as book creation goes. Certainly, all signs are creative, but they each have their strength and weaknesses with it, too. There are many types of writers: technical, non-fiction, fiction, academic, short story and poets, to name a few. I find that Venus, which defines our passion in this life, and the element it is in, will give a 'hint' of what direction your heart and writing may lie. Venus in an earth sign is given to practical, pragmatic or earthy/sensual writing. Venus in an air sign is the technical, academic and non-fiction writer. Venus in a water sign points to fiction (visceral, gutsy, emotional) and poetic writers. Venus in a fire sign produces your adventure, techno-thriller and action fiction writers. Of course, anyone of these can be fiction or non-fiction. The choice is yours.

For example, my Venus is a 0 degree Cancer, a water sign. My passion is delving into the emotions of my characters. That passion is fueled by my emotions. I write about what I love, that which makes me emotionally passionate: love stories, homeopathy, flower and gem essence provings, medical astrology and shamanism. I write what I love and so should you. If you aren't sure what your loves, your passions are, list them. What are your hobbies? What do you wish you could do, but can't. Those count too as your passion. Passion may be expressed or unexpressed. The key to positioning yourself as a writer is to first write what you love to read. Write for yourself; no one else. Write from the heart (there's that Venus again). Write with passion.

Mercury in the elements will also hint where you should be focusing your passion to write. Mercury in a water sign indicates writing poetry, sonnets, and very emotionally intense material (this usually equates with fiction writing, rather than nonfiction). Mercury in a fire sign indicates a strong fiction voice that is involved in fast-moving, page-turning novels that usually deal with action, adventure and non-stop tension.

Mercury earth indicates sensuality, romance, and earthiness and is great for anyone wanting to leap into the Romance Industry. It can also bring out the technical writer, as well an air sign is

techno-thrillers that are all parts and little characterization. The name of the game for an air sign is ‘gadgets.’ This is also a good placement for a technical or academic writer, as well.

Writing, for some, can be an obsession or compulsion. There are people out there (and I’m one of them) who must write or they feel they’ll die if they don’t. Writing is akin to breathing to these people. If that is your case and the compulsion to write simply cannot be ignored, then look to a strong Pluto in the chart. It may be on the Midheaven or ascendant, or conjunct another planet.

Writing, for others, is an exercise in finding some idealism, some happy endings in their life. In their real world, this is not so. Writing, for these folks, allows them to ‘escape’ into their ‘other world’ and in doing so, this is very healing and rebalancing for them. If you fall into this category, then you either have a strong Pisces in your chart, or a strong Neptune. In my case, I have my natal Moon at 10 Pisces. I am able to extrude and feel all my pent-up emotions via my writing. As I write, I am literally, an emotional voyageur who gets to take a peek into other people’s lives, feelings, adventures and experiences. And I find writing a healthy and positive place to ‘hide’ (12<sup>th</sup> house, Pisces, Neptune) and regenerate and recoup from the harshness of this world I live in.

Where your planets are placed what house(s) also helps determine who is and is not a writer. One of the best placements for a fiction writer is having planets in the Terminal houses, the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> houses and, of course, these are the houses of Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces. All water houses. If one is to reach into the subconscious realm of our treasure chest of ideas, then water is the best highway to reach this trove. The best is the 12<sup>th</sup> house, Pisces house, because it is ruled by Neptune (fantasy, creation, ideas). For example, I have my Mars and Pluto in Leo conjunct in the 12<sup>th</sup> house, and I can guarantee you I have more ideas than I have time on this earth to write about!

Also, people with planets in these houses usually have what we call the “movie screen.” This individual can see, literally or figuratively, a movie screen across their brow. They see it in color or in black and white. They see the characters. They know what they look like. They hear them speak. People who have a strong Neptune, Mercury or Moon in a water sign of Cancer, Scorpio or Pisces, can have this gift or talent. Neptune rules the Pineal gland, or our third eye or brow chakra. So, it’s no surprise that people with a nicely placed or aspected Neptune would have this gift available to them. In my case, the only trifle I own in my natal chart is Sun trine Neptune, 10<sup>th</sup> house to 2<sup>nd</sup> house, and they are 3 degrees apart. And because of this aspect between these two planets, I’ve been gifted with the movie screen process. It sure makes writing a lot easier.

Another house that is important to a person who wants to write is their 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> houses. Each of these has to do with a person’s career. In other words: What do you want to do when you grow up? Want to be a writer? Want to make a JOB of it (and not a hobby or a sometime thing)? Then you must have planets in one or more of these houses to make writing your full time career. In my case, I have Mercury, Sun, Uranus and North Node in my 10<sup>th</sup> house, South Node in my 4<sup>th</sup> house and nothing in my 6<sup>th</sup> house, although by opposition I have two planets, Mars and Pluto, in the 12<sup>th</sup> house

## Neptune meets Saturn

I also met a number of students in my packed classes who were dreamers (Neptune) but not manifestors (Saturn, fixed signs). If Neptune makes no sextiles (a working aspect, an aspect that shows the person is willing to work hard to see their dream manifest into reality), or makes no conjunction or trine with Saturn (the planet of physical manifestation, hard work, elbow-grease, organization and discipline), then this person cannot get the job done and become a writer. They write in their fantasies and not on paper. There are so many writers out there who are far more gifted or inventive or wonderful with a turn of phrase, but the sad truth is they will never see anything published because Neptune is the realm of dreams; not the realm of reality.

Neptune without any grounding or help from Saturn or from fixed signs such as Taurus, Leo, Scorpio or Aquarius, is destined to the realm of ideas and pioneering. Idea people aren't necessarily the ones who produce the novels.

Who does then? If you have a predominance of fixed signs, Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius, in your chart, this is the first indicator you can do it. You can write and you can publish. No one promises it will be quick in coming. Indeed, I started writing at age 13 ½ and did not publish my first book, *The Novien Moon*, until I was twenty-eight years old. I wrote my next book, *Medical Astrology*, which was published by AstroComputing, at age 34. And then, at age 35, when transiting Saturn squared my natal Saturn, I sold my first fiction book to Berkeley Publishing and to the Second Chance At Love line, a romance novel list. After that, I was on a roll. Since 1981 to the present, 2000, I have published over 60 novels and 10 non-fiction books; making 70 in total. Hard work, perseverance and faith/belief in one's talents, can pay off. Maybe not in millions as some might think, but at least enough money to pay the bills and the mortgage on the house.

In my chart, I have natal Mercury at 24 Taurus, conjunct my Midheaven (career house) at 24 Taurus. Mercury is one of the signs of a writer. I also have my natal Mercury sextile my natal Saturn at 21 Cancer; and so my rise as a writer has been Saturnine; I published my first book at age 28, on the Saturn return. The first fiction book came on the transit of Saturn squaring my natal Saturn. And so it goes. It has taken me 20 years in the romance industry to reach 'best seller,' but even that is not the mass-market best seller that makes millions for the happy author. And I've had to work hard, consistently, with discipline and organization to produce three to five novels a year of good quality and continuing sales to my reading public. Everything is slow, but sure with Saturn. And one doesn't get any freebies. One only gets what one deserves with Saturn.

If you want to really write and publish, you need fixed signs and a good Saturn and/or Mercury placement in your chart. A nice aspect between Saturn and Mercury, such as a conjunction, sextile or trine, make it easy to sit down and be disciplined; to write each day. It gives you the discipline, the "gottawanna" attitude that a successful writer needs, in order to "just do it" as the Nike commercial tell us.

A person with a Mercury-Saturn square faces a dilemma. They can use this square as a stumbling block or building block. Its their choice. They can choose to learn how to sit down and produce a single page of a story, day in, and day out. Or they can perpetually procrastinate and put sitting

down and writing as a low priority on their list of daily things to do.

The Mercury-Saturn inconjunct is the toughest to work through. There can be many diversions, be it your career, raising children, having to take care of an elder, or a hundred other things that demand and take your time away from your wish to write. Often, these people don't get a chance until they are much older. However, the good news is that you can break into print at ANY age. There is no age barrier to becoming a writer, thank goodness!

## **SUCCESSFUL WRITING RULES**

There aren't many, but they work and I can guarantee you, that over time, if you follow these rules, you will get in print.

1. Write every day. It doesn't matter if it's one sentence, one paragraph or a whole page.
2. Write what you love to write and read. Write for yourself; what you like to read. Don't set out to write for others - you will doom yourself. Without your passion, what you love, being invested in what you write, your manuscript will be DOA, dead on arrival, at the editor's desk.
3. Write what you KNOW. Look in your own back yard of experience and knowledge for your story line, your plot, or your idea. Don't belittle what you think you "only" are. All knowledge can be used to make the story come alive. What makes a book come alive and sing is the details, the intimate knowledge, the "been there-done that" information that is woven into it.
4. Play "what if?" If you want to keep your readers guessing, keep them on the edge of their seat, play "what if?" Look at how many ways you can change or twist the story around to make it alive, different. Surprise the reader with some off-the-wall, yet very logical sequence of events that could, realistically, take place instead of the ho-hum logical conclusion to the scene or chapter by playing "what if."

An example of this from my most recent book, Morgan's Mercenaries: Heart of the Warrior (Silhouette/Lindsay McKenna, Aug. 1, 2000) is my need to provide a powerful and ongoing friction and danger for Inca, my Amazonian heroine. Even though this is a romance, I wanted other elements to keep the reader reading, to keep turning the pages, to find out what happens next. I knew that Inca and her partner (who of course, eventually fall in love with one another) were going to lead a contingent of the Brazilian army deep into the Amazon to capture a cocaine factory and free the Indians who were slaves and being forced to work there. My "what if" in this instance was: what if the colonel, who led the contingent, hated Inca on sight? What if she had killed his oldest son? And he'd sworn vengeance against her to fulfill his family's proud honor? What if he was forced to work with her? And not kill her? And not seek vengeance? The "what if" premise made this book explode with tension because Inca had to interface with the colonel all the time as she led them through the Amazon Basin. Her life was always in peril from this man and that wasn't, of course, the last of the "what ifs."

5. Take a class in creative writing from your local adult education program, local high schools, YWCA. Just make sure that your teacher is a seasoned and published writer; otherwise, forget taking the class! Those in the Phoenix, AZ area can also join the Romance Writers of America (RWA). They have monthly training on how to write, but also critique groups where you can read what you've written, as well as getting support from them. Also check for other book clubs, such as a mystery writers club, and join.

6. Don't give up. Just keep writing. Realize that rejection is just one person's opinion. Take what they say from the rejection letter and better your book or material and resubmit somewhere else. Don't give up, keep writing.

7. You don't need an agent; so forget it. The only time an agent will be interested in you is if you have been offered a contract from a publisher— THEN, get an agent! The *Literary Market Place*, a book found in the REFERENCE section of any Library lists agents and what they sell. Very frequently, the publisher, if asked, will give you their short list of good literary agents, too ... so ask!

8. Target potential publishers. Again, at the library, in their reference section, is the *Writer's Market*. It is put out yearly and has all the large and small publishers in the US and Canada (plus an overseas section), magazines, and other outlets, such as poetry, all contained within its pages. Make a list of who is buying what you have to sell.

9. Think Virgo when preparing manuscript for submission. If your manuscript looks messy, smudged, has the edges crinkled or folded back, or is dog-eared, this sends a message to your potential editor that you are not a professional. And she or he is going to approach your manuscript with this in mind. The cleaner, neater, crisper and more Virgo-like you can get your manuscript to look, the better the reader/editor will think of you.

That is writing 101 in a nutshell. Most of all, have FUN doing it. You must LOVE what you do. You must wake up every morning, eager to sit down at the computer to find out what your characters or story are up to next. Writing is a joy. It is a wonderful balancer between the raw, sometimes nasty world we live in and the world we create in our heads and put on paper. I love a happy ending so, I wish you success and fun.