27th August 2026

Personality

"Listen to what it says in the horoscopes: 'If it is your birthday, there may be an increased amount of mail. Expect gifts, friendly salutations from people and the occasional surprise. Possibility of cake.' That's so weird – I wonder if any of it will come true?"

Jasper Fforde, *First Among Sequels*

Now that we're past the Zodiac sign of Leo that covers my birthday, I've been reflecting on what someone born a Leo is supposed to be like. But before I do that, I should mention that I have a friend who, as a journalist in the 1960s, wrote both the Horoscope column *and* the Letters Page for a weekly Scottish magazine. Maybe it's that which makes me a horoscope sceptic. But then, I never really laid much store by horoscopes anyway, and it would appear that the writer, Jasper Fforde, is as sceptical as I am …

According to https://www.horoscopes.com/zodiac-signs (a good read, even for sceptics) being a Leo, this is me: *Element* – Fire; *Polarity* – Positive; *Quality* – Fixed; *Ruling Planet* – Sun; *Ruling House* – Fifth; *Spirit Colour* – Gold; *Lucky Gem* – Carnelian; *Flower* – Sunflower & marigold; *Top Love* Matches – Libra. I *do* like sunflowers and marigolds, but I married someone who's a Gemini not a Libra, and we seem to be doing OK.

But apart from my dubiety about star-signs determining our character, I want to suggest that personality analysis *can* be helpful. It's about "Psychometrics". The best-known systems are the Myers Briggs Personality Test from the 1970s (see www.myersbriggs.org), and the Enneagram from the 1990s (see www.enneagraminstitute.com). For myself, I found counselling using the Transactional Analysis methodology more than helpful (see https://ericberne.com/transactional-analysis).

Knowing ourselves and understanding why we are as we are, while it doesn't change us, gives us insights into how we relate to others and the world around us. The older I get, the more I wish I'd had more self-knowledge when I was younger. For, in understanding myself better, I might have made more suitable choices – and fewer mistakes.

No, I *won't* turn to horoscopes to help me know myself, recognise my personality, or map my future. That's work for *me* to do, in the best ways possible, so that, in truth, I might become a slightly better person.

A prayer for today

The me that I am is the me that I am. And I hope it's the me you want me to be.

An original reflection © Tom Gordon