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# TAROT 101

Journey of the Fools: Level I







## SPECIAL THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This course manual is created from a variety of sources and combines information from:

"Learning the Tarot" - Copyright 1995-2002 by Joan Bunning.

Michael Dummett, *The Visconti-Sforza Tarot Cards*, New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1986.

Cynthia Giles, *The Tarot: History, Mystery and Lore*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Rahdue's Wheel is described by Eileen Connolly in *Tarot: A Handbook for the Journeyman* (North Hollywood, CA: Newcastle, 1987), pp. 128-157.

The Horoscope Spread is described by Sandor Konraad in *Classic Tarot Spreads* (Atglen, PA: Whitford Press, 1985), pp. 96-97.

J. A. and Magda Gonzalez, *Native American Tarot Deck* (Stamford, CT: U. S. Games Systems, Inc., 1982).

Michael Tierra and Candis Cantin, *Herbal Tarot Deck* (Stamford, CT: U. S. Games Systems, Inc., 1989).

Peter Pracownik and Terry Donaldson, *Dragon Tarot* (Stamford, CT: U. S. Games Systems, Inc., 1996).

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Hermann Rorschach, *The Rorschach (R) Test* (Switzerland: Hans Huber, 1927).

Dumbo (Walt Disney Productions, 1941).

The Rider-Waite Tarot Deck was originally published in 1910 by Rider and Company, London. The images were designed by Pamela Colman Smith under the direction of Arthur Edward Waite, a scholar of occultism. Dr. Waite's comments on these cards were published at the same time in *The Key to the Tarot*

## FOREWORD

This course will take you on a journey deep into the mystical realms of the Tarot and guide you in accessing your psychic intuition to find answers using the cards. We will begin with the history of the tarot deck covering each of the 78 messengers of the Major and Minor Arcana, to understand historical meaning of each card, and culminate in applying this understanding modern interpretation of three basic Tarot spreads: Celtic Cross, Three Card, and Lady's Fan.

The content of this course manual was adapted from a publicly available resource and has been edited to create a more coherent and teachable structure. While there are additional sections of this same resource available, the abridged version is intended to serve students in working through the course being offered.



# THE FOOL'S JOURNEY

The Fool's Journey is a metaphor for the journey through life. Each major arcana card stands for a stage on that journey - an experience that a person must incorporate to realize his wholeness. These 22 descriptions are based on the keywords for each major arcana card. The keywords are highlighted in the text. A card's number is in parentheses.

## The Fool



We begin with the Fool (0), a card of **beginnings**. The Fool stands for each of us as we begin our journey of life. He is a fool because only a simple soul has the innocent **faith** to undertake such a journey with all its hazards and pain.

At the start of his trip, the Fool is a newborn - fresh, open and **spontaneous**. The figure on Card 0 has his arms flung wide, and his head held high. He is ready to embrace whatever comes his way, but he is also oblivious to the cliff edge he is about to cross. The Fool is unaware of the hardships he will face as he ventures out to learn the lessons of the world.

The Fool stands somewhat outside the rest of the major arcana. Zero is an unusual number. It rests in the exact middle of the number system - poised between the positive and negative. At birth, the Fool is set in the middle of his own individual universe. He is strangely empty (as is zero), but imbued with a desire to go forth and learn. This undertaking would seem to be **folly**, but is it?

## The Magician and the High Priestess

On setting out, the Fool immediately encounters the Magician (1) and the High Priestess (2) - the great balancing forces that make up the perceived world. It is a feature of the material universe that as soon as we name some aspect of experience, we automatically evoke its opposite.

The Magician is the positive side. He represents the **active**, masculine power of creative impulse. He is also our **conscious awareness**. The Magician is the force that allows us to impact the world through a **concentration** of individual will and **power**. The High Priestess is the negative side. She is the **mysterious unconscious**. She provides the fertile ground in which creative events occur. The High Priestess is our unrealized **potential** waiting for an active principle to bring it to expression.

The terms *positive* and *negative* do not imply "good" and "bad." These are human distinctions that do not apply in the tarot. The Magician and the High Priestess are absolutely equal in value and importance. Each is necessary for balance. We may view the negative as our Shadow, but without shadows, we cannot see the light, and without a ground of potential, we cannot create.

## The Empress

As he grows, the Fool becomes more and more aware of his surroundings. As with most babies, he first recognizes his **Mother** - the warm, loving woman who nourishes and cares for him. He also comes to know Mother Earth, who nurtures him in a larger sense.

The Empress (3) represents the world of **nature** and **sensation**. A baby delights in exploring everything he touches, tastes and smells. He cannot get enough of the sights and sounds that enchant his senses. It is natural to delight in the **abundant** goodness of Mother Earth who surrounds us with her support.

## The Emperor

The next person the Fool encounters is the **Father** in the figure of the Emperor (4). He is the representative of **structure** and **authority**. As a baby leaves his mother's arms, he learns that there are patterns to his world. Objects respond in predictable ways that can be explored. The child experiences a new kind of pleasure that comes from discovering order.

The Fool also encounters **rules**. He learns that his will is not always paramount and there are certain behaviors necessary for his well-being. There are people in authority who will enforce such guidelines. These restrictions can be frustrating, but, through the patient direction of the Father, the Fool begins to understand their purpose.

## The Hierophant



Eventually, the Fool ventures out of his home into the wider world. He is exposed to the beliefs and traditions of his culture and begins his formal **education**. The Hierophant (5) represents the organized **belief systems** that begin to surround and inform the growing child.

A Hierophant is someone who interprets arcane knowledge and mysteries. On Card 5 we see a religious figure blessing two acolytes. Perhaps he is inducting them into church membership.

Although this image is religious, it is really a symbol for initiations of all kinds.

The child is trained in all the practices of his society and becomes part of a particular culture and worldview. He learns to identify with a **group** and discovers a sense of belonging. He enjoys learning the customs of his society and showing how well he can **conform** to them.

## The Lovers

Eventually, the Fool faces two new challenges. He experiences the powerful urge for **sexual** union with another person. Before, he was mainly self-centered. Now he feels the balancing tendency, pictured in the Lovers (6), to reach out and become half of a loving partnership. He yearns for **relationship**.

The Fool also needs to decide upon his **own beliefs**. It is well enough to conform while he learns and grows, but at some point, he must determine his own **values** if he is to be true to himself. He must start to question received opinion.

## The Chariot

By the time the Fool becomes an adult, he has a strong identity and a certain mastery over himself. Through discipline and **will-power**, he has developed an inner control which allows him to triumph over his environment.

The Chariot (7) represents the vigorous ego that is the Fool's crowning achievement so far. On Card 7, we see a proud, commanding figure riding **victoriously** through his world. He is in **visible control** of himself and all he surveys. For the moment, the Fool's **assertive** success is all he might wish, and he feels a certain self-satisfaction. His is the assured confidence of youth.



## Strength

Over time, life presents the Fool with new challenges, some that cause suffering and disillusionment. He has many occasions to draw on the quality of **Strength** (8). He is pressed to develop his courage and resolve and find the heart to keep going despite setbacks.

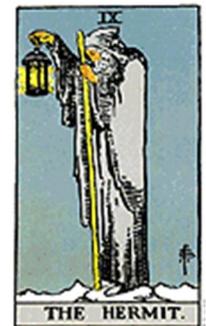
The Fool also discovers the quiet attributes of **patience** and **tolerance**. He realizes the willful command of the Chariot must be tempered by kindness and the **softer power** of a loving approach. At times, intense passions surface, just when the Fool thought he had everything, including himself, under control.



## Hermit

Sooner or later, the Fool is led to ask himself the age-old question "Why?" He becomes absorbed with the **search** for answers, not from an idle curiosity, but out of a deeply felt need to find out why people live, if only to suffer and die. The Hermit (9) represents the need to find deeper truth.

The Fool begins to **look inward**, trying to understand his feelings and motivations. The sensual world holds less attraction for him, and he seeks moments of **solitude** away from the frantic activity of society. In time he may seek a teacher or **guide** who can give him advice and direction.



## Wheel of Fortune



After much soul-searching, the Fool begins to see how everything connects. He has a **vision** of the world's wondrous design; its intricate patterns and cycles. The Wheel of Fortune (10) is a symbol of the mysterious universe whose parts work together in harmony. When the Fool glimpses the beauty and order of the world, if only briefly, he finds some of the answers he is seeking.

Sometimes his experiences seem to be the work of fate. A chance encounter or miraculous occurrence begins the process of change. The Fool may recognize his **destiny** in the sequence of events that led him to this **turning point**. Having been solitary, he feels ready for **movement** and action again. His perspective is wider, and he sees himself within the grander scheme of a universal plan. His sense of purpose is restored.

## Justice



The Fool must now decide what this vision means to him personally. He looks back over his life to trace the **cause and effect** relationships that have brought him to this point. He takes **responsibility** for his past actions so he can make amends and ensure a more honest course for the future. The demands of **Justice** (11) must be served so that he can wipe the slate clean.

This is a time of **decision** for the Fool. He is making important choices. Will he remain true to his insights, or will he slip back into an easier, more unaware existence that closes off further growth?

## Hanged Man



Undaunted, the Fool pushes on. He is determined to realize his vision, but he finds life is not so easily tamed. Sooner or later, he encounters his personal cross - an experience that seems too difficult to endure. This overwhelming challenge humbles him until he has no choice but to give up and **let go**.

At first, the Fool feels defeated and lost. He believes he has **sacrificed** everything, but from the depths he learns an amazing truth. He finds that when he relinquishes his struggle for control, everything begins to work as it should. By becoming open and vulnerable, the Fool discovers the miraculous support of his Inner Self. He learns to surrender to his experiences, rather than fighting them. He feels a surprising joy and begins to flow with life.

The Fool feels **suspended** in a timeless moment, free of urgency and pressure. In truth, his world has been **turned upside-down**. The Fool is the Hanged Man (12), apparently martyred, but actually serene and at peace.

## Death

The Fool now begins to **eliminate** old habits and tired approaches. He cuts out nonessentials because he appreciates the basics of life. He goes through **endings** as he puts the outgrown aspects of his life behind him. He process may seem like dying because it is the death (13) of his familiar self to allow for the growth of a new one. At times this **inexorable change** seems to be crushing the Fool, but eventually he rises up to discover that death is not a permanent state. It is simply a **transition** to a new, more fulfilling way of life.



## Temperance

Since embracing the Hermit, the Fool has swung wildly back and forth on an emotional pendulum. Now, he realizes the **balancing** stability of **temperance** (14). He discovers true poise and equilibrium. By experiencing the extremes, he has come to appreciate moderation. The Fool has **combined** all aspects of himself into a centered whole that glows with **health** and well-being. How graceful and soft is the angel on Card 14 compared to the powerful but rigid ruler in the Chariot (Card 7)? [\[Note\]](#) The Fool has come a long way in realizing the harmonious life.



## Devil

The Fool has his health, peace of mind and a graceful composure. What more could he need? On everyday terms, not much, but the Fool is courageous and continues to pursue the deepest levels of his being. He soon comes face to face with the Devil (15).

The Devil is not an evil, sinister figure residing outside of us. He is the knot of **ignorance** and **hopelessness** lodged within each of us at some level. The seductive attractions of the **material** bind us so compellingly that we often do not even realize our slavery to them.

We live in a limited range of experience, unaware of the glorious world that is our true heritage. The couple on Card 15 are chained, but acquiescent. They could so easily free themselves, but they do not even apprehend their **bondage**. [\[Note\]](#) They look like the Lovers, but are unaware that their love is circumscribed within a narrow range. The price of this ignorance is an inner core of despair.



## Tower



How can the Fool free himself from the Devil? Can he root out his influence? The Fool may only find **release** through the **sudden change** represented by the Tower (16). The Tower is the ego fortress each of us has built around his beautiful inner core. Gray, cold and rock-hard, this fortress seems to protect but is really a prison.

Sometimes only a monumental crisis can generate enough power to smash the walls of the Tower. On Card 16 we see an enlightening bolt striking this building. It has ejected the occupants who seem to be **tumbling** to their deaths. The crown indicates they were once proud rulers; now they are humbled by a force stronger than they.

The Fool may need such a severe shakeup if he is to free himself, but the resulting **revelation** makes the painful experience worthwhile. The dark despair is blasted away in an instant, and the light of truth is free to shine down.

## Star



The Fool is suffused with a **serene** calm. The beautiful images on the Star (17) attest to this tranquility. The woman pictured on Card 17 is naked, her soul no longer hidden behind any disguise. Radiant stars shine in a cloudless sky serving as a beacon of **hope** and **inspiration**.

The Fool is blessed with a trust that completely replaces the negative energies of the Devil. His faith in himself and the future is restored. He is filled with joy and his one wish is to share it **generously** with the rest of the world. His heart is open, and his love pours out freely. This peace after the storm is a magical moment for the Fool.

## Moon



What effect could spoil this perfect calm? Is there another challenge for the Fool? In fact, it is his bliss that makes him vulnerable to the **illusions** of the Moon (18). The Fool's joy is a feeling state. His positive emotions are not yet subject to mental clarity. In his dreamy condition, the Fool is susceptible to fantasy, distortion and a false picture of the truth.

The Moon stimulates the creative **imagination**. It opens the way for bizarre and beautiful thoughts to bubble up from the unconscious, but deep-seated **fears** and anxieties also arise. These experiences may cause the Fool to feel lost and **bewildered**.

## Sun

It is the lucid clarity of the Sun (19) that directs the Fool's imagination. The Sun's illumination shines in all the hidden places. It dispels the clouds of confusion and fear. It **enlightens**, so the Fool both feels *and* understands the goodness of the world.

Now, he enjoys a vibrant energy and enthusiasm. The Star's openness has solidified into an expansive **assurance**. The Fool is the naked babe pictured on Card 19, riding out joyously to face a new day. No challenge is too daunting. The Fool feels a radiant **vitality**. He becomes involved in grand undertakings as he draws to himself everything he needs. He is able to realize his **greatness**.



## Judgement

The Fool has been **reborn**. His false, ego-self has been shed, allowing his radiant, true self to manifest. He has discovered that joy, not fear, is at life's center. The Fool feels **absolved**. He forgives himself and others, knowing that his real self is pure and good. He may regret past mistakes, but he knows they were due to his ignorance of his true nature. He feels cleansed and refreshed, ready to start anew.

It is time for the Fool to make a deeper **Judgement** (20) about his life. His own personal day of reckoning has arrived. Since he now sees himself truly, he can make the necessary decisions about the future. He can choose wisely which values to cherish, and which to discard. The angel on Card 20 is the Fool's Higher Self **calling** him to rise up and fulfill his promise. He discovers his true vocation - his reason for entering this life. Doubts and hesitations vanish, and he is ready to follow his dream.



## World

The Fool reenters the World (21), but this time with a more complete understanding. He has **integrated** all the disparate parts of himself and achieved wholeness. He has reached a new level of happiness and **fulfillment**. The Fool experiences life as full and meaningful. The future is filled with infinite promise. In line with his personal calling, he becomes actively **involved** in the world. He renders service by sharing his unique gifts and talents and finds that he prospers at whatever he attempts. Because he acts from inner certainty, the entire world conspires to see his efforts are rewarded. His **accomplishments** many.



So the Fool's Journey was not so foolish after all. Through perseverance and honesty, he reestablished the spontaneous courage that first impelled him on his search for Self, but now he is fully aware of his place in the world. This cycle is over, but, the Fool will never stop growing. Soon he will be ready to begin a new journey that will lead him to ever greater levels of understanding.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE TAROT

The origin of the tarot is a mystery. We do know for sure that the cards were used in Italy in the fifteenth century as a popular card game. Wealthy patrons commissioned beautiful decks, some of which have survived. The Visconti-Sforza, created in 1450 or shortly thereafter, is one of the earliest and most complete.

Later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the cards were discovered by a number of influential scholars of the occult. These gentlemen were fascinated by the tarot and recognized that the images on the cards were more powerful than a simple game would suggest. They revealed (or created!) the "true" history of the tarot by connecting the cards to Egyptian mysteries, Hermetic philosophy, the Kabbalah, alchemy, and other mystical systems. These pursuits continued into the early part of the twentieth century when the tarot was incorporated into the practices of several secret societies, including the Order of the Golden Dawn [\[note\]](#).

Although the roots of the tarot are in the occult tradition, interest in the cards has expanded in the last few decades to include many different perspectives. New decks have been created that reflect these interests. There are [Native American](#), [herbal](#), [dragon](#) and [Japanese](#) decks, among others.

The tarot is most commonly viewed as a tool for divination. A traditional tarot reading involves a seeker - someone who is looking for answers to personal questions - and a reader - someone who knows how to interpret the cards. After the seeker has shuffled and cut the deck, the reader lays out the chosen cards in a pattern called a spread. Each position in the spread has a meaning, and each card has a meaning as well. The reader combines these two meanings to shed light on the seeker's question.



A simple process, but rarely presented in a simple way. In films, we always see the tarot being used in a seedy parlor or back room. An old woman, seated in shadows, reads the cards for a nervous, young girl. The crone lifts her wrinkled finger and drops it ominously on the [Death card](#). The girl draws back, frightened by this sign of her impending doom.

This aura of darkness clings to the tarot cards, even now. Some religions shun the cards, and the scientific establishment condemns them as symbols of unreason, a holdover from an unenlightened past. Let us set aside these shadowy images for now and consider the tarot simply for what it is - a deck of picture cards. The question becomes - what can we do with them?

The answer lies with the unconscious - that deep level of memory and awareness that resides within each of us, but outside our everyday experience. Even though we ignore the action of the unconscious most of the time, it profoundly affects everything we do. In his writings, Sigmund Freud stressed the irrational, primitive aspect of the unconscious. He thought that it was the home of our most unacceptable desires and urges. His contemporary Carl Jung emphasized the positive, creative aspect of the unconscious. He tried to show that it has a collective component that touches universal qualities.

We may never know the full range and power of the unconscious, but there are ways to explore its landscape. Many techniques have been developed for this purpose - psychotherapy, dream interpretation, visualization and meditation. The tarot is another such tool.

Consider for a moment a typical card in the tarot deck, the Five of Swords. This card shows a man holding three swords and looking at two figures in the distance. Two other swords lie on the ground. As I look at this card, I begin to create a story around the image. I see a man who seems satisfied with some battle he has won. He looks rather smug and pleased that *he* has all the swords. The others look downcast and defeated.



What I have done is take an open-ended image and project a story onto it. To me, my view is the obvious one - the only possible interpretation of this scene. In fact, someone else could have imagined a totally different story. Maybe the man is trying to pick up the swords. He's calling to the others to help him, but they refuse. Or, maybe the other two were fighting, and he convinced them to lay down their arms.

The point is that of all possible stories, I chose a certain one. Why? Because it is human nature to project unconscious material onto objects in the environment. We always see reality through a lens made up of our own inner state. Therapists have long noted this tendency and have created tools to assist in the process. The famous Rorschach inkblot test is based on such projection.

Projection is one reason why the tarot cards are valuable. Their intriguing pictures and patterns are effective in tapping the unconscious. This is the personal aspect of the tarot, but the cards also have a collective component. As humans, we all have certain common needs and experiences. The images on the tarot cards capture these universal moments and draw them out consistently. People tend to react to the cards in similar ways because they represent archetypes. Over many centuries, the tarot has evolved into a collection of the most basic patterns of human thought and emotion.

Consider the Empress. She stands for the Mother Principle - life in all its abundance. Notice how her image conjures up feelings of luxuriance. She is seated on soft, lush pillows, and her robe flows in folds around her. In the Empress, we sense the bounty and sensual richness of Nature.



The power of the tarot comes from this combination of the personal and the universal. You can see each card in your own way, but, at the same time, you are supported by understandings that others have found meaningful. The tarot is a mirror that reflects back to you the hidden aspects of your own unique awareness.

When we do a tarot reading, we select certain cards by shuffling, cutting and dealing the deck.

Although this process seems random, we still assume the cards we pick are special. This is the point of a tarot reading after all - to choose the cards we are meant to see. Now, common sense tells us that cards chosen by chance can't hold any special meaning, or can they?

To answer this question, let's look at randomness more closely. Usually we say that an event is random when it appears to be the result of the chance interaction of mechanical forces. From a set of possible outcomes - all equally likely - one occurs, but for no particular reason.

This definition includes two key assumptions about random events: they are the result of mechanical forces, and they have no meaning. First, no tarot reading is solely the product of mechanical forces. It is the result of a long series of

conscious actions. We decide to study the tarot. We buy a deck and learn how to use it. We shuffle and cut the cards in a certain way at a certain point. Finally, we use our perceptions to interpret the cards.

At every step, we are actively involved. Why then are we tempted to say a reading is "the chance interaction of mechanical forces?" Because we can't explain just how our consciousness is involved. We know our card choices aren't deliberate, so we call them random. In fact, could there be a deeper mechanism at work, one connected to the power of our unconscious? Could our inner states be tied to outer events in a way that we don't yet fully understand? I hold this possibility out to you.

The other feature of a random event is that it has no inherent meaning. I roll a die and get a six, but there is no purpose to this result. I could just as easily roll a one, and the meaning would be the same - or would it? Do we really know these two outcomes are equal? Perhaps there is meaning and purpose in every event, great or small, but we don't always recognize it.

At a party many years ago, I had the sudden urge to pick up a die sitting on the floor. I *knew* with great conviction that I would use this die to roll each number individually. As I began, the laughter and noise of the party faded away. I felt a growing excitement as a different number appeared with each roll. It was only with the last successful roll that my everyday awareness returned, and I sat back, wondering what had happened.

At one level, these six rolls were unrelated, random events, but at another level, they were very meaningful. My inner experience told me this was so, even though an outside observer might not agree. What *was* the meaning? At the time, it was a lesson in the strange interaction between mind and matter. Today, I know it had another purpose - to be available to me now, some 25 years later, as an illustration for this very lesson!

Meaning is a truly mysterious quality that arises at the juncture of inner and outer realities. There is a message in everything...trees, songs, even trash...but only when we are open to perceiving it. The tarot cards convey many messages because of the richness of their images and connections. More importantly, tarot readings communicate meaning because we bring to them our sincere desire to discover deeper truths about our lives. By seeking meaning in this way, we honor its reality and give it a chance to be revealed.

If there is a meaning in a reading, where does it come from? I believe it comes from that part of ourselves that is aware of the divine source of meaning. This is an aspect of the unconscious, yet it is much more. It acts as a wise advisor who knows us well. It understands what we need and leads us in the direction we need to go. Some people call this advisor the soul, the superconscious, or the higher self. I call it the Inner Guide because that is the role it plays in connection with the tarot.

Each of us has an Inner Guide that serves as a fountain of meaning for us. Your Inner Guide is always with you because it is a part of you. You can't destroy this connection, but you *can* ignore it. When you reach for your tarot deck, you signal to your Inner Guide that you are open to its wisdom. This simple act of faith allows you to become aware of the guidance that was always there for you.

We are meant by nature to rely on the wisdom of our Inner Guide, but somehow we have forgotten how to access it. We trust our conscious minds instead, and forget to look deeper. Our conscious minds are clever, but unfortunately, they just don't have the full awareness we need to make appropriate choices day by day.

When we are operating from our conscious minds, we often feel as if events are forced upon us by chance. Life seems to have little purpose, and we suffer because we do not really understand who we are and what we want. When we know how to access our Inner Guide, we experience life differently. We have the certainty and peace that comes from aligning our conscious will with our inner purpose. Our path becomes more joyous, and we see more clearly how we bring together the scattered elements of our lives to fulfill our destinies.

I use the tarot because it is one of the best tools I have found to make the whispers of my Inner Guide more available consciously. The ideas, images and feelings that emerge as I work through a reading are a message from my Inner Guide. How do I know there is a message, and it's not just my imagination? I don't, really. I can only trust my experience and see what happens.

You do not really need the tarot to access your Inner Guide. The cards serve the same function as Dumbo's magic feather. In the Disney movie, Dumbo the Elephant really could fly on his own, but he didn't believe it. He placed all his faith on the special feather he held in his trunk. He thought this feather gave him the power to fly, but he found out differently when it blew away, and he was forced to fall back on his own resources.

The tarot cards may help you fly until you can reach your Inner Guide on your own. Don't worry for now about how this might happen. Just play with the cards, work through the lessons and exercises, and see if you don't experience a few surprises.

# PERFORMING THE QABALISTIC CROSS BY SIMON JESTER

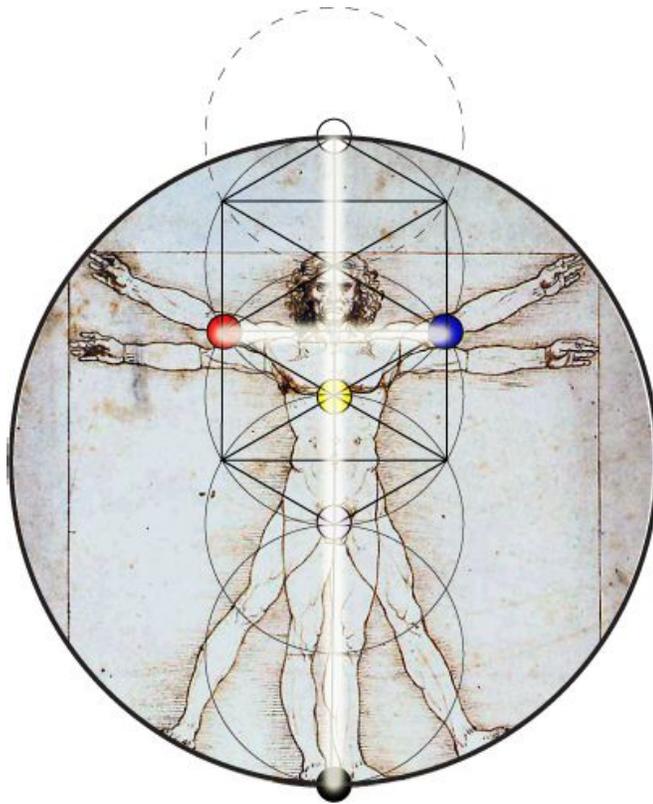
A Brief Introduction--This is a very basic ritual, one of the very first that students learn. It utilizes the archetypal symbol of the cross, which has possessed a significance in magic that long pre-dates the Christian era. One very early use of the equal armed cross was as a kind of basic map, representing the circular horizon visible from a person's point of view divided into four quarters and four cardinal directions: North, South, East & West. It thus came to symbolize the condition of being oriented, of knowing exactly where you are.

In the Ritual of the Qabalistic Cross, you will visualize a cross of brilliant light shining brightly within your body. This particular cross symbolizes a kind of spiritual orientation. It symbolizes the intersection of the two primal dimensions, worlds, or stages on which the drama of our individual destinies plays out: the dimension of Being, symbolized by the vertical line; and the dimension of Action, symbolized by the horizontal line.

The vertical line of Being, which is visualized emanating from a sphere of brilliant white light floating just above the crown of your head, moving down through your body, and entering another sphere of light encircling your feet, forms a connection between the Source of All (symbolized by Qabalists as Kether at the very top of the Tree of Life) and here: this place, this time in which you now find yourself (symbolized in the Qabalah as Malkuth, the lowest sphere on the Tree of Life.) Visualizing this line of power running vertically through your body is a ritualistic expression of the truth that you are a bridge between the Upper and Lower Worlds; a conduit through which the higher spiritual energies manifest here in the material world. Through performing the Ritual of the Qabalistic Cross, you form a conscious connection with these higher spiritual energies.

The horizontal line of Action is visualized as a line of brilliant light running from a sphere of red light at your right shoulder (symbolizing Geburah on the Tree of Life of the Qabalah) through the top of your heart center into a sphere of blue light at your left shoulder (symbolizing the sephira Chesed or Gedullah on the Tree of Life.) The line expresses the Truth that you are a conscious being with the power to make decisions that are based on values. The red Geburah sphere at your right shoulder symbolizes your ability to make limiting decisions (e.g., the decision to say "No!" or "I will not..."). The blue Gedulla/Chesed sphere at your left shoulder symbolizes your ability to make expansive (or giving) decisions (e.g., the decision to say "Yes!" or "I will...")

In the Qabalah, Geburah is also called Judgement or Power and Gedullah/Chesed is called Mercy or Loving Kindness, and through forming a line between them that intersects with the vertical line of Being at the center of your chest, you symbolically place yourself at the point of perfect balance where your decisions will be neither too harsh nor too lenient. You also symbolically locate your decisions (and the consequent actions which follow from them) at the point where they will be most greatly influenced by the higher spiritual forces flowing down from Above.



The Ritual of the Qabalistic Cross is thus a magical method of gaining spiritual orientation, of affirming that you know exactly where you are spiritually and what you are going to decide to do. This is the perfect metaphysical position, the magical "High Ground" upon which to build the Holy City and from which to venture forth on Quests or to wage battle with the Dark Forces in order to make Conquests in the Name of the Empire of Eternal Light.

Performing the Ritual—Here are the simple steps of the Ritual of the Qabalistic Cross. It may be performed anywhere, at any time you feel the need to become spiritually centered. But, for learning purposes, begin by selecting a quiet place and time. As your power of concentration increases with practice, this will become less necessary. But for now, try to eliminate interruptions and distractions as much as possible.

## One

Begin by standing (or sitting, if that works best) facing toward the East, the direction of the rising sun and the dawning light. You may either close your eyes or leave them open, whichever works best for you. Visualize a glowing sphere of white light, about ten inches in diameter, forming approximately 6 inches above the top of your head. Imagine that its light is blinding, like the sun at high noon, and that you can't look directly at it without squinting. Take time for this image to form clearly in your imagination and allow your thoughts to consider that this sphere symbolizes the Source of all created Being, infinitely high above your worldly worries and ambitions. Raise your right hand, place the tips of your fingers into this sphere of light, pull the light downward and touch your forehead, intoning the word "Ateh." This Hebrew word means "Thou art..." and acknowledges the Being of God.

## Two

Now slowly move your right hand downward from your forehead and let it hover a few inches away from your chest. Imagine that the light is moving downward with your hand, and that it continues straight down through your body till it reaches the region of your feet. (Try to imagine that your body is semi-transparent and that you can see the line of light moving down through yourself.) Visualize another sphere of radiant white light forming around your feet to the height of your ankles, touch your chest with your right hand, and say the word "Malkuth." This Hebrew word means "The Kingdom," and the sphere at your feet symbolizes the here and now in which you find yourself, now perceived as filled with the Holy Light of the Divine. Allow this image to become clear and strong in your imagination, and let your thoughts consider that you are the bridge between the Upper and Lower Worlds, and that it is through your decisions that the Divine Light manifests here on Earth. Place both hands at your sides while visualizing the upright line of the Cross for a while.

## Three

Now raise your left hand and let it hover a few inches away from your right shoulder. Visualize a sphere of burning red light, about ten inches in diameter, forming around and within your right shoulder. Allow this image to become strong and clear in your imagination. The red Geburah sphere symbolizes your power & vitality, your ability to define boundaries and defend them, your strength to resist harmful negative influences. Keeping all this in mind, touch your left hand to your right shoulder and say the words "ve Geburah," which are Hebrew for "the Power."

## Four

Still keeping your left hand on your right shoulder, lift your right hand and let it hover a few inches away from your left shoulder. Imagine that a line of light is streaming from the red sphere on your right into your left shoulder where a sphere of glowing blue light forms, again about ten inches in diameter, around and within your left shoulder. Allow this image to become clear and distinct in your mind, touch your left shoulder with your right hand, and say the words "ve Gedullah," which, in Hebrew, mean "the Glory." The blue sphere symbolizes your ability to be giving, loving, compassionate, and forgiving.

## Five

While keeping your hands crossed over your chest, visualize the horizontal line of light moving through your chest, connecting the red and blue spheres and intersecting with the vertical line of the Cross right in the center of your chest. The horizontal line represents the complete spectrum of your moral/ethical actions, and wherever your consciousness falls on this line will determine whether your decisions are made for the sake of your Self or Others, and whether they are harsh or loving. At the point where the two lines intersect, visualize a glowing sphere of yellowish-golden light forming. This symbolizes Tiphereth on the Tree of Life, the central sephira of Enlightened Consciousness, that perfectly balances influences from Above and Below, and from the Sephiroth on either side of it on the Tree. Imagine that the Tiphereth sphere is moving downward slightly until it is at the same level as your heart & now forming the base of a triangle with the Geburah and Gedulah spheres. See this clearly and vividly in your imagination, and watch as its light radiates from within you to surround you and illumine the room in which you stand. Say the Hebrew words "la olam," which are variously translated as "unto all the ages" or "forever."

## Six

Conclude by clasping your hands together, as in prayer, and holding them against your chest at the place where the sphere of golden light manifests. Say the word "Amen." This expresses your conscious decision to elevate and shift your consciousness to a Center of Perfect Spiritual Balance.

## Seven

Stand for a while and visualize the light of the spiritually orienting Qabalistic Cross glowing brightly within you. See the light radiate around you like a protective sphere, a Magic Circle of spiritual protection and illumination. Meditate on the symbolic significance of the ritual you have just preformed. You are now ready to go about your business from an altered point of view. This is a perspective that will put you more closely in touch with Higher Spiritual Forces, and make you more open to their positive influence.

There are many, many versions of this basic Hermetic ritual available in books and online. Many of the online versions simply outline the steps of the ritual without explaining its inner significance, and so people perform it mechanically without a true understanding of what it's really all about. That's a shame, because the Qabalistic Cross (with sufficient familiarity) provides a very potent ritual that clears the mind, calms the emotions, and enlightens the thoughts and decisions of the magician.

As with all magical rituals, the primary purpose of the Ritual of the Qabalistic Cross is to tune the mind so that it can begin to pick up higher frequencies. But this beneficial result can never be attained by a person who merely imitates the motions and sounds made by the magician without any comprehension of their meaning. Nor will results come quickly even to someone who does begin with an appreciation of the inner significance of the ritual. It must be done repeatedly on a twice-daily basis, until the mind no longer has to consciously remember the steps and is thereby freed to concentrate on their Hermetic significance while engaged in the performance.

Teaching the mind the trick of raising itself above the material concerns which weigh it down so heavily takes a lot of time and a lot of hard work. Don't be discouraged if you get nothing out of the Ritual of the Qabalistic Cross for a while. Keep at it. Meditate on it. Write down any inspirations that come to you while performing it and study them closely. Diligent efforts will be crowned with eventual success.

# HOW TO CONNECT WITH YOUR HIGHER SELF

Your Higher self is the spirit part of you that is said to ‘reside’ in the Ether (the non-physical realm). It’s your Divine spark. This part of you helps you to keep on track with your life purpose and in touch with your passion and joy.

Is my Higher self the same as my Soul?

Yes, it’s the part of you that has access to all the wisdom amassed over the course of the many lifetimes you’ve lived, past, present and future. Some people like to make a distinction between Higher self, Spirit and Soul. I’m not sure how useful these distinctions are unless you’re God and you need to get technical about it.

What does my Higher self-do?

Your Higher self is like a pure background consciousness that offers forth its wisdom and directions about where to go now. Sometimes these directions can take a while to come through into your mind consciousness. But, there are ways to access the wisdom of your Higher self directly by bypassing the mind.

Your Higher self is not ‘out there’ in the Ether. I want to put forward the idea that your Higher self is you, your consciousness, in your body.

It’s you who set the course of your life and the things you came here to learn about before you even got here. It’s you whispering guidance to you about your highest path and purpose. It’s you who set that up as a mechanism by which you could use those as spiritual feedback about where you’re headed in your life.

Am I ever separate from my Higher self? I don’t feel connected to my Spirit.

You can sometimes be alienated from your Higher self when you see yourself as an inferior being or when there are other beliefs you have which block you from the truth of who you are as a spirit.

Have you ever caught a glimpse of all the possibilities that exist for you? Have you ever had a feeling that you’re here to contribute something unique? Those are background input from your Higher self. We mostly drown out such input with our thoughts and our fears and when we listen to our fear, we feel disconnected from our spirit.

How can I be more connected to my Higher self?

Connecting to your Higher self means living your Spirit. It involves three things:

1. Empowerment – remembering that you are a child of the Universe, with the power to create your world

You came here to be incarnated in the physical and to keep a connection to your Spirit intact. You want to keep a connection to your Higher self because that’s the part of you which knows where to go and, what to take on the journey and what to do to get there. Many souls who are incarnated here already do not have that connection anymore. They’ve lost it because they see themselves as separate from God or from the Divine energy that is the Creator of all things. People often treat themselves as if they’re at the mercy of an outside force that controls the course of our lives. This is the ‘normal’ way to be and behave.

Living your Spirit means remembering that you are God energy or Source energy in a physical body and the Creator of your world. The power inside you to create your world is the same power that creates worlds. You can utilize that power to create the world you want.

## 2. Intuition – talking to yourself

You don't need to contact your Higher self as an entity outside of you – it is you! And you don't need to get an intuitive reading in order to contact your Higher self (although you can if you're particularly alienated and don't know where you're headed or what you want). The wisdom is inside of you, if you will access it.

### Listen to your desires

Above all, pay attention to your desires. Your truest, heartfelt desires are feedback from your Higher self about what you want to do now.

Living from your Higher self means not sacrificing or ignoring those desires. It also means listening to those desires on a daily basis.

I manage my day by asking myself 'what do I really want to do now?'. You might think that asking myself that means that the stuff I don't want to do never gets done but it's not the case. I actually regularly become inspired to overcome the challenges and the difficult tasks also, when the time is right, or I bring in someone to help me. I take my desires as feedback about the direction I want to go in. And when I remember to do it, it allows me to live in an inspired way.

### Meditate and quiet your mind

The quickest way to practice accessing your truest self is meditation. It quietens the mind and the chatter which tells you who you are and what you can and can't do and be and takes you straight to the quiet and calm which is your Higher self. Start meditating by just focusing on your breath.

## 3. Healing – Clearing the clutter which stands between you and your truest self.

Most people who need healing don't necessarily know what they need – they just know that they feel bad. So what can you do if you mostly feel bad? What if you don't know what to do to heal that? You can just put out the intention to be as aligned as possible with your Higher self. Putting out that intention will put you on a healing journey back towards who you are.

If you have the energy to be proactive, make it your work to clear away anything which is not aligned with who you really are.

The clutter I'm referring to includes unhelpful beliefs such as 'I'm not good enough', any past associations or events which cause you to feel bad, and any traumas.

# THE MAJOR ARCANA

The standard tarot deck consists of 78 cards divided into two sections, the major and minor arcana. The word *arcana* is the plural of *arcanum* which means "profound secret." To the alchemists of the Middle Ages, the arcanum was the secret of nature. The tarot cards are therefore a collection of the "secrets" that underlie and explain our universe.



The 22 cards of the major arcana are the heart of the deck. Each of these cards symbolizes some universal aspect of human experience. They represent the archetypes - consistent, directing patterns of influence that are an inherent part of human nature.

Each card in the major arcana has a name and number. Some names convey a card's meaning directly, such as Strength, Justice and Temperance. Other cards are individuals who personify a particular approach to life, such as the Magician or the Hermit. There are also cards with astronomical names, such as the Star, Sun and Moon. They represent the elusive forces associated with these heavenly bodies.

The major arcana cards are special because they draw out deep and complex reactions. The images on the Rider-Waite deck are evocative because they combine esoteric symbolism with recognizable figures and situations. The symbolism is subtle, but effective.

A major arcana card is always given extra weight in a reading. When one of these cards appears, you know the issues at stake are not mundane or temporary. They represent your most basic concerns - your *major* feelings and motivations. In later lessons, I show in more detail how you can recognize and interpret the themes of the major arcana in a reading.

The major arcana is often considered as a unit. Different schemes have been developed to show how the cards form patterns that cast light on the human condition. Numerology, astrology and other esoteric sciences often play a role in these schemes.

Many interpreters view the major arcana as showing the different stages on an individual's journey of inner growth - what some call the Fool's Journey. In these systems, each card stands for some quality or experience that we must incorporate before we can realize our wholeness.

We all travel this road to self-actualization, though our trips more often involve detours, backups and restarts than smooth progression! Our specific paths are unique, but our milestones are universal. The 22 major arcana cards are markers on the path of inner development leading from earliest awareness to integration and fulfillment

The Fool's journey seems to move smoothly from one order of experience to the next, but our learning adventures are usually not so tidy. We make mistakes, skip lessons and fail to realize our potential. Sometimes we lack the courage and insight to discover our deepest levels. Some never feel the call of the Hermit to look inward or never experience the crisis of the Tower that might free them from their ego defenses.

Many times, we try to overcome our difficulties, but fail repeatedly. The lesson of the Hanged Man - to let go and surrender to experience - is one that is particularly hard and may need to be faced over and over before it is fully incorporated.

Often, we experience lessons out of order. A person may absorb the qualities of Strength early in life due to a difficult childhood, but only later develop the Chariot's mastery and control. Someone may overcome the attraction of the Devil's materialism through a life of seclusion, but then need to learn about relationships and sexuality - a lesson of the Lovers - at a later time.

The major arcana contains many levels and models of experience. These cards hold all the patterns of growth, whether they occur within one segment of a life or a whole life span. We could even say that an entire lifetime is really just one growth episode within the larger saga of our soul's development.

No matter what our pattern of self-discovery, the major arcana shows us that wholeness and fulfillment are our destiny. If we keep this promise as our polestar, we will eventually realize our true nature and gain the World.



# THE OPEN TAROT READING

## A Step-By-Step Procedure

Here are the steps for a tarot reading you do for yourself that is not based on a question. **Make Sure you have the following items available:**

- Your Tarot Cards
- The Layout For The Spread You Have Chosen
- The Card And Spread Information Pages, If Desired

### SETTING THE MOOD

- Prepare the environment according to personal preference.
- Sit down with some empty space in front of you.
- Relax and still your mind. Breathe deeply several times.

### MAKING YOUR STATEMENT

- Remove cards from container.
- Cup cards in one hand, other hand on top.
- Close your eyes.
- Say an opening statement out loud, if you wish.
- Say a general message of intent.

### SHUFFLING THE CARDS

- Shuffle the cards until you feel ready to stop.
- Keep your mind free and open while you shuffle.

### CUTTING THE CARDS

- Place cards face down in front of you with short edge toward you.
- Cut the deck in one unplanned action as follows:
  - Grab a number of cards from the complete pile.
  - Drop this smaller pile to the left.
  - Grab part of this second pile. Drop this third pile to the left.
  - Regroup cards into one pile in any fashion.

### LAYING OUT THE CARDS

- Hold cards in your hand with the short edge toward you.
- Turn over the top card as you would turn the page of a book.
- Lay out the cards according to the spread you have chosen.
- Turn reversed cards around if you are not using them.

### RESPONDING TO THE CARDS

- Note your responses to individual cards.
- Note your response to the whole pattern of cards.

## ANALYZING THE CARDS

- Analyze individual cards:
- Find the information page for the card.
- Read over keywords and actions.
- Look for actions that hit home.
- Write down thoughts and feelings, if you wish.
- Consider card orientation - upright or reversed?
- Analyze card relationships.
- Use principles of interpretation.
- Note additional insights.

## CREATING THE STORY

- Tell your story spontaneously out loud.
- Tape your story, if you wish.

## WRITING THE SUMMARY STATEMENT

- Think about the theme or message in your reading.
- Write a summary statement of 1-2 sentences.

## FINISHING UP

- Write down cards and their positions.
- Clear the deck.
- Gather cards together.
- Hold cards cupped in one hand. Place other hand on top.
- Close your eyes.
- Say out loud what you have learned from the reading.
- Express gratitude to your Inner Guide.
- Put cards back into container.
- Restore environment, if necessary.

## USING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

- Let the message of the reading guide you in a general way.
- Later, relate developments to what you learned in the reading.

## THE SPREAD

A spread is a preset pattern for laying out the tarot cards. It defines how many cards to use, where each one goes, and what each one means. A spread is a template guiding the placement of the cards so they can shed light on a given topic. It is within this template that the meanings of the cards come together so beautifully.



The most important feature of a spread is the fact that each position has a unique meaning that colors the interpretation of whatever card falls in that spot. For example, the Four of Pentacles stands for possessiveness, control, and blocked change. If this card were to fall in Position 4 of the Celtic Cross Spread (the "Past" position), you would look at how these qualities are *moving out* of your life. In Position 6 (the "Future"), you would instead view them as *coming into* your life - a quite different interpretation.

Tarot spreads can be any size or pattern. Rahdue's Wheel includes all 78 cards and creates a vast tableau of one person's life. A spread can also contain just one card. In lesson 5 I show how a one-card spread is useful for daily readings.

Most spreads contain between six and fifteen cards. This range is small enough to be manageable, but large enough to cover a topic in some depth. The pattern of a spread often forms a design that reflects its theme. For example, the Horoscope Spread is in the shape of the traditional circle that forms a person's birth chart. The twelve cards of this spread correspond to the twelve houses of astrology.

When cards are related to each other in a spread, an entirely new level of meaning is created. Combinations appear, and a story line develops with characters, plots and themes. The weaving of a story from the cards in a spread is the most exciting and creative aspect of a tarot reading. It is an art, but there are many guidelines you can follow. I discuss these in later lessons and give examples of the story-making process.

In these lessons, I refer to just the Celtic Cross Spread. I think you will be able to concentrate more on developing your intuition if you stick to just one spread at first. Once you know the cards well and feel comfortable reading them, you can expand your tarot practice by exploring other layouts. Before you continue with the lessons, read over the Celtic Cross Section. We'll be using this spread throughout the course.

## 3 Card Tarot Spread ~ Past, Present, Future

This 3-card tarot spread is a quick and simple way to get insight into the past, present and future. There are many variations on the 3-card tarot spread, including the [past life tarot spread](#), but this is one of the most common and useful (in my opinion!) spreads. This spread also works great with oracle cards if you prefer using those.

### 1. Past

- Energies and events that are in the past yet still effect you
- How your past either holds you back (blocks) or helps you move forward (growth)
- What you need to take from the past and use to your advantage today

### 2. Present

- What is going on for you right now
- The energy of the present moment
- Opportunities and challenges that are currently being presented to you

### 3. Future

- Outcome of situation
- The direction that things seem to be moving in
- What you are wanting

**Look closer at each card and ask yourself what it represents:**

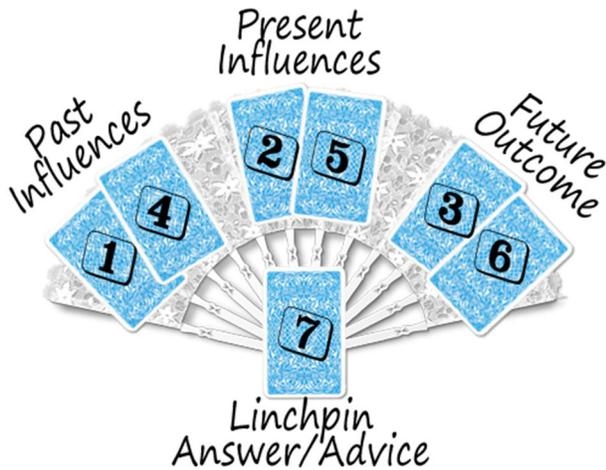
- Some possibilities are.....
- A person in your life
- A situation
- Your emotions / feelings
- Your thoughts
- You and the way you are approaching things
- A new way of seeing things
- A possible solution

# Cartomancy Lady's Fan Card Spread

A useful spread for answering specific questions with playing cards is The Lady's Fan. The spread consists of 7 cards which cover the past influences, the present circumstances, and the future outcome of the matter in question.

The 7th card serves as the linchpin of the reading. It is the most important card in the spread indicating the most significant influence on the situation. Often the answer to the question can be found in the linchpin card.

The cards can be drawn either randomly or dealt directly from the top of the shuffled deck, depending on the preference of the reader. Then the cards are laid out as in the following diagram:



**Past Influences:** The two cards on the left (1 & 4) represent the past influences leading up to the present situation. These cards will usually indicate the recent past in reference to the matter in question.

**Present Influences:** The two cards at the center of the fan (2 & 5) represent the present influences surrounding the situation. *Sometimes these cards will show the immediate future.*

**Future Outcome:** The two cards on the far right (3 & 6) represent the future outcome of the situation based on the present influences. It's important to remember that the future is fluid. Often the querent can influence the outcome of the situation by making a change in the present circumstances.

**Linchpin:** The linchpin card (7) is the most important card in the spread. The situation revolves around the influences represented by this card. For a yes-or-no question, the answer to the question will often be found in the linchpin card. *Sometimes this card will provide advice that if followed will expedite a happy outcome, or help to ameliorate an unfavorable one.*

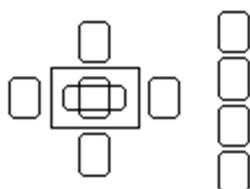
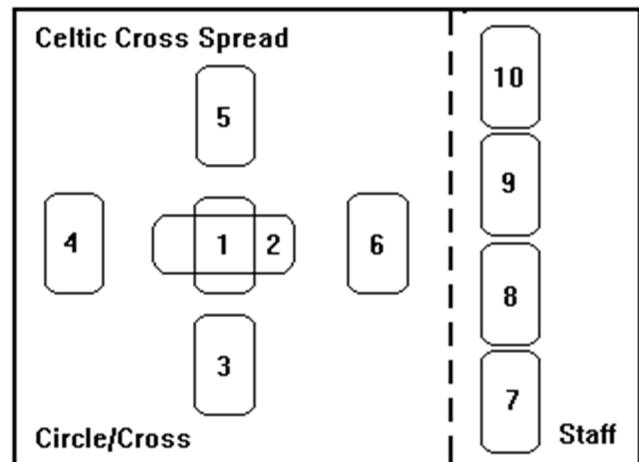
# The Celtic Cross

The Celtic Cross is probably the oldest and most popular pattern for reading the tarot. It has survived so long because the layout of the cards is simple, but powerful. A strong energy has built up around this spread due to its use by so many people over the years.

You can think of the Celtic Cross as divided into two sections: the **Circle/Cross** (six cards) on the left, and the **Staff** (four cards) on the right. (See diagram above.) The Circle/Cross simulates the Celtic cross found throughout Ireland. This cross

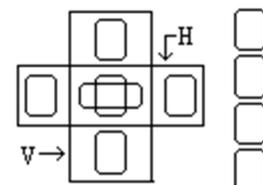
has a circle linking the four perpendicular spokes. The circle and cross symbolize the joining of spirit and matter and the unity of all events in time.

The feminine energy of the circular section works in unison with the masculine energy of the Staff section. These two parts of the Celtic Cross mirror the dual nature of manifested reality - the polarities that abound in the human psyche.



The Circle/Cross section is made up of two crosses - a central one (two cards) nested within a larger cross (six cards). The smaller cross represents the heart of the matter - what is most central to you at the time of the reading. It is the hub around which the wheel of your life is turning.

The larger cross consists of two lines that overlay the minicross. The horizontal line (H) shows time moving from your past on the left into your future on the right. The vertical line (V) is your consciousness moving from your unconscious on the bottom to your conscious mind on the top. Together these six cards give you a snapshot of your inner and outer environment at the time of a reading.



The cards of the Staff section comment on your life and lie outside of the immediate situation. Here, your Inner Guide helps you understand what is shown in the Circle/Cross section. You receive guidance about yourself and others, your life lessons and your future direction.

There are a number of versions of the Celtic Cross. The differences are usually in cards 3-4-5-6. I use a circular placement to emphasize how the unconscious and the past (Cards 3 and 4) lead to the conscious and future (Cards 5 and 6). I have also added some meanings to Card 9. This position traditionally means "hopes and fears," but I also use it as a lesson or guidance card. It is always possible to adapt a spread to your own needs as long as you decide on any changes before you do a reading.

## INTERPRETATION

Here is one approach to interpreting the Celtic Cross.

Look at the six cards of the Circle/Cross section. They show what is going on in your life at the moment of the reading.

Examine the cards in pairs, perhaps in the following order:

Look at Cards 1 and 2 to find out the central dynamic.

Look at Cards 3 and 5 to find out what is going on within you at different levels.

Look at Cards 4 and 6 to see how people and events are flowing through your life.

From these six cards, create a description of your immediate situation.

Consider the Staff section of the spread, perhaps in this order:

Look at Cards 7 and 8 to find out how more about the relationship between you and your environment.

Look at Card 10 - the projected outcome. How do you feel about it? What does it say to you?

Review the cards to discover the factors leading to the outcome. See if one card stands out as key. Also:

Compare the projected outcome (Card 10) to a possible alternative outcome (Card 5).

Consider how the near future (Card 6) contributes to the projected outcome (Card 10).

See if Card 9 tells you something you need to know. Do you have a hope or fear that is relevant?

# CELTIC CROSS POSITION 1

- **Heart Of The Matter**
- **Present Environment (Outer)**
- **Present Environment (Inner)**
- **Primary Factor**

## *Heart Of The Matter*

central issue  
 major concern  
 basic worry or upset  
 primary focus  
 focal point  
 fundamental problem

## *Present Environment (Outer)*

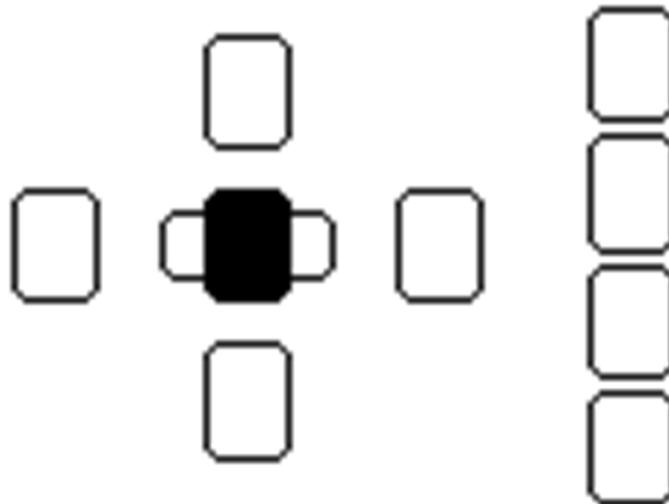
"that which covers you" - traditional surrounding circumstances  
 immediate problem at hand  
 what's going on around you  
 what you're dealing with  
 external factors

## *Present Environment (Inner)*

internal factors  
 how you feel about the situation  
 key personal quality  
 basic state of mind  
 emotional state  
 what's going on inside of you

## *Primary Factor*

major influence  
 dominant  
 characteristic  
 outstanding feature  
 most important element  
 most striking quality



## CELTIC CROSS POSITION 2

- **Opposing Factor**
- **Factor For Change**
- **Secondary Factor**
- **Reinforcing Factor**

*Opposing Factor*  
 "that which is crossing  
 you" - traditional  
 contrary element  
 source of resistance  
 balancing tendency  
 moderating influence  
 rival or subversive  
 agent

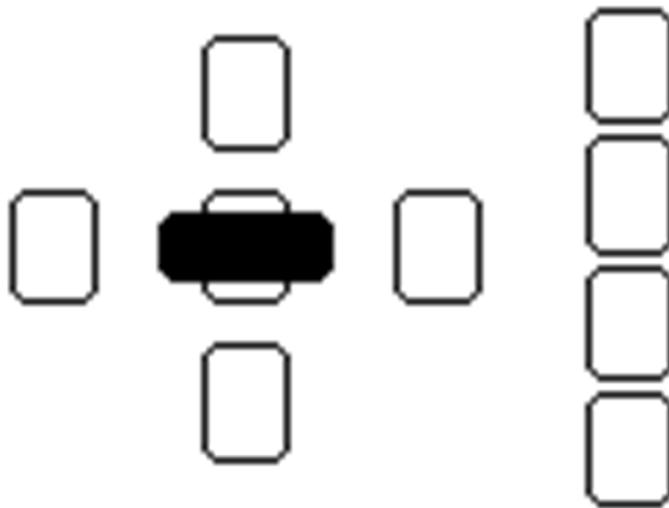
*Factor For Change*  
 something out of left  
 field  
 unpredictable element  
 new consideration  
 unbalancing force  
 surprise  
 what's rocking the  
 boat

*Secondary Factor*  
 tangential concern  
 another source of  
 information  
 side issue  
 subordinate problem  
 minor factor

*Reinforcing Factor*  
 supporting feature  
 additional emphasis  
 cooperating person  
 extra attraction  
 magnifying force  
 related issue

### *Placement:*

To place card 2 correctly, rotate the card 90 degrees clockwise and lay it on top of card 1. Card 2 is reversed if the top of the card's image is on the left after placement.



### CELTIC CROSS POSITION 3

- **Root Cause**
- **Unconscious Influence**
- **Deeper Meaning**
- **Unknown Factor**

*Root Cause*

source of the problem  
 basis of the situation  
 why things are as they are  
 childhood or past life  
 (karmic) influence  
 reason behind events  
 starting point

*Unconscious Influence*

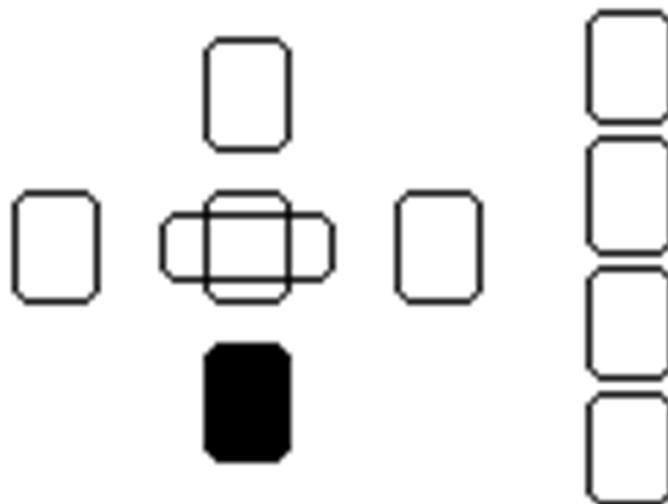
"that which is beneath you" - traditional  
 unrecognized  
 motivations  
 unacknowledged goals  
 most basic impulses  
 driving needs or desires  
 denied or rejected  
 aspects of self

*Deeper Meaning*

larger picture  
 fundamental pattern  
 all-embracing point of view  
 soul purpose  
 underlying context  
 what's really going on

*Unknown Factor*

hidden influence  
 unrecognized  
 contribution  
 undiscovered  
 participant  
 concealed agenda  
 behind-the-scenes  
 machinations



## CELTIC CROSS POSITION 4

- **Past**
- **Receding Influence**
- **Resolved Factor**
- **Quality To Let Go**

### *Something Related To The **Past***

quality  
person  
belief  
event  
opportunity  
orientation  
concern  
hope  
fear

### *Receding Influence*

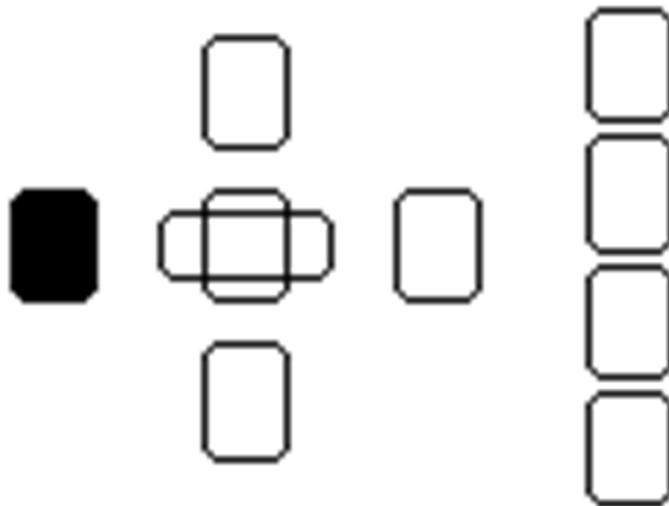
feature that is losing  
importance  
fading concern  
former focus  
someone/something  
going away  
falling star

### *Resolved Factor*

fully realized quality  
completed task  
what has been  
wrapped up  
what can be set aside  
what's been taken care  
of

### *Quality To Let Go*

outmoded approach  
what's no longer useful  
unnecessary baggage  
someone/something  
no longer needed  
factor to be discarded



## CELTIC CROSS POSITION 5

- **Attitudes And Beliefs**
- **Conscious Influence**
- **Goal Or Purpose**
- **Alternate Future**

### *Attitudes And Beliefs*

what you accept as true assumptions convictions how you view what is happening delusions or illusions where you are placing your trust

### *Conscious Influence*

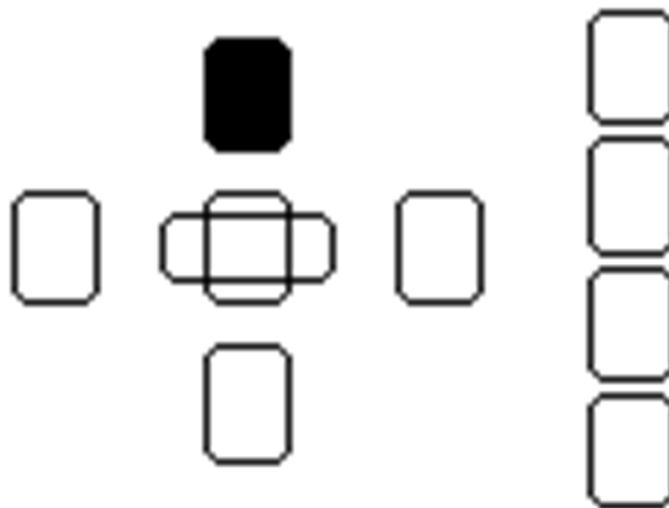
what's on your mind what you're focusing on what you're worried about what you're obsessed about what you acknowledge what is known

### *Goal Or Purpose*

aspirations what you intend to achieve expectations for the future what you have set your heart on preferences desired result

### *Alternate Future*

"what could come into being" - traditional potential development different possibility another option what you *think* will happen future you are consciously projecting



## CELTIC CROSS POSITION 6

- **Future**
- **Approaching Influence**
- **Unresolved Factor**
- **Quality To Embrace**

### *Something Related To The **Future***

quality  
person  
belief  
event  
opportunity  
orientation  
concern  
hope  
fear

### *Approaching Influence*

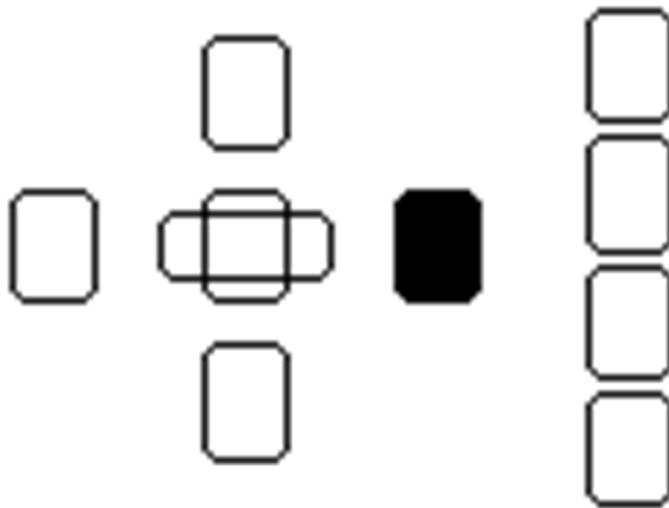
feature that is gaining  
importance  
developing concern  
coming focus  
someone/something  
coming nearer  
rising star

### *Unresolved Factor*

unrealized quality  
incomplete task  
what is still pending  
what must be  
considered  
what is to be taken  
care of

### *Quality To Embrace*

valid approach  
what will be useful  
desirable attribute  
someone/something  
that is needed  
factor to be welcomed



## CELTIC CROSS POSITION 7

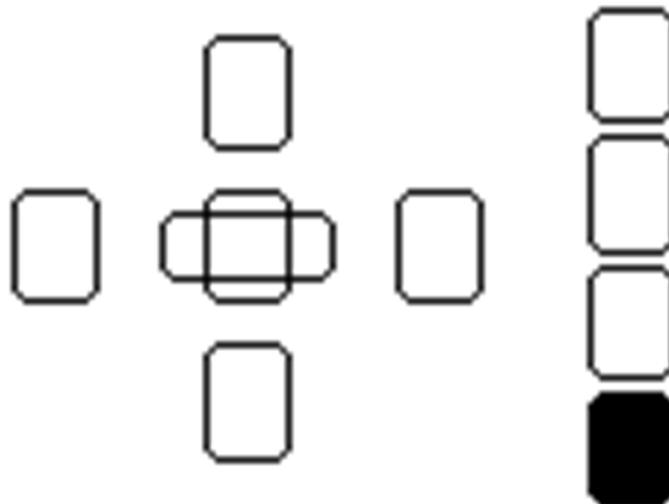
- **You As You Are**
- **You As You Could Be**
- **You As You Present Yourself**
- **You As You See Yourself**

*You As You Are*  
 personal style  
 your temperament or disposition  
 your approach to the problem  
 your unique orientation  
 your point of view  
 your way of being  
 your position or stance

*You As You Could Be*  
 inner resource to tap  
 talent or ability you can use  
 what you are capable of  
 an ideal to live up to  
 a possible approach  
 what you want to be  
 your goal for yourself

*You As You Present Yourself*  
 your public face  
 how you think you should be  
 mask you show the world  
 what you do for appearance's sake  
 role you accept  
 self-imposed duty  
 your false self

*You As You See Yourself (Traditional)*  
 your self-image  
 your beliefs about yourself  
 your sense of where you are  
 your fears about yourself  
 your assumptions about yourself  
 how you limit yourself  
 how you magnify yourself



## CELTIC CROSS POSITION 9

- **Guidance**
- **Key Factor**
- **Hopes And Fears**
- **Overlooked Factor**

### *Guidance*

what you might do  
 how best to proceed  
 how you can make a  
 change  
 word of warning  
 truth of the matter  
 different approach  
 helpful suggestion  
 honest assessment

### *Key Factor*

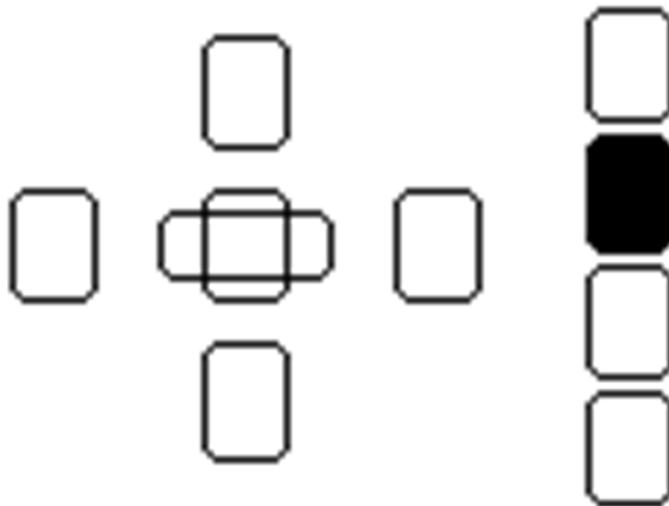
fundamental aspect  
 lesson to be learned  
 what explains  
 everything  
 clue to what is  
 happening  
 what you need to  
 know  
 connecting link

### *Hopes And Fears (Traditional)*

what you're afraid of  
 what you suspect is  
 true  
 what you're avoiding  
 personal demon  
 what you long for  
 your dream  
 your ideal  
 your secret desire

### *Overlooked Factor*

something you haven't  
 considered  
 missing piece of the  
 puzzle  
 someone else who has  
 a role to play  
 something else to  
 consider  
 element of surprise  
 underestimated  
 influence



## CELTIC CROSS POSITION TEN

- **Outcome (Overall)**
- **Outcome (Inner State)**
- **Outcome (Actions)**
- **Outcome (Effects)**

### *Outcome (Overall)*

the most likely result  
 what may come to  
 pass  
 how the situation may  
 be resolved  
 where everything is  
 leading  
 probable resolution

### *Outcome (Inner State)*

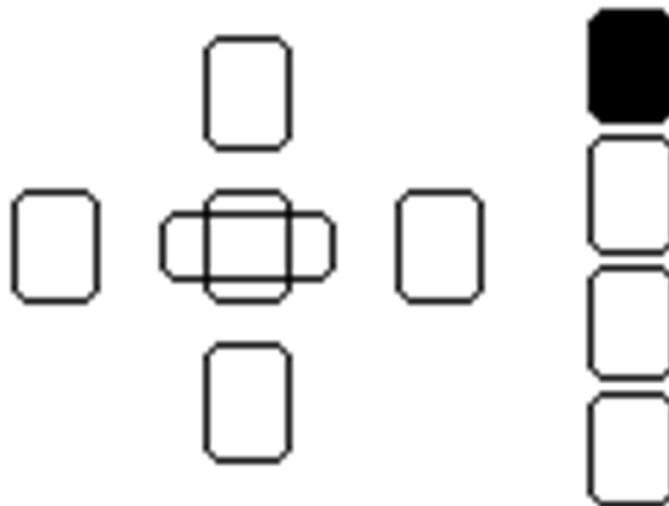
how you will end up  
 feeling  
 what your mood will  
 be  
 understanding you will  
 gain  
 lesson you will absorb  
 attitude you will  
 assume  
 quality or ability you  
 will realize

### *Outcome (Actions)*

what you may have to  
 do  
 how you may succeed  
 or fail  
 conduct you will have  
 to adopt  
 required behavior  
 what you may  
 accomplish  
 approach you may  
 have to take

### *Outcome (Effects)*

how someone else will  
 be affected  
 how the environment  
 will change  
 what others will do  
 possible  
 countermeasure or  
 backlash  
 possible benefit or  
 reward  
 improvement that will  
 occur  
 change in status



# THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment of a tarot reading includes the physical setting and your internal state. There are five inner qualities that are beneficial. These are:

- **Being Open**

Being open means being receptive. It is an attitude of allowing - being willing to take in what is offered without denial or rejection. By being open, you give yourself the chance to receive what you need to know.

- **Being Calm**

It is hard to hear the whispers of your Inner Guide when you are in turmoil. Tarot messages often arrive as gentle hints and realizations that can be easily overwhelmed by a restless mind. When you are calm, you are like a peaceful sea in which every ripple of insight can be perceived.

- **Being Focused**

Focus is very important for a tarot reading. I have found that whenever I feel a question strongly, I receive a direct and powerful message. When I'm scattered and confused, the cards tend to be the same. Your most insightful readings will be those you do when the desire is very strong.

- **Being Alert**

When you are alert, all your faculties are alive and awake. A cat is alert when it is watching a mouse or bug. Of course, you won't be pouncing on your cards, but you *will* find them difficult to read if you are tired or bored.

- **Being Respectful**

Being respectful means treating the cards as you would any valued tool. You acknowledge their role in helping you understand yourself better. You honor the choice you have made in deciding to learn the tarot and handle the cards accordingly.

Even though these five qualities are important, they are not necessary. You can have a meaningful reading without them, but it may be more difficult. The best way to decide if the time is right for a reading is to look inside. If something feels wrong, postpone the effort, but if your inner sense says go ahead, then all is well.

Besides the inner environment, there is also the setting of a reading to consider. The ideal place is one that elicits feelings of quiet, peace, even reverence. You could do a reading in a crowded airport, but the noise and distractions would make inner attunement difficult. Since you will probably be doing most of your readings at home, let's look at how you might create a agreeable environment there.

Set aside a place in your home where you will do your readings. By using the same spot over and over, you build up an energy that reinforces your practice. If you meditate or pray, you can do these activities here as well as they harmonize with the tarot in spirit and intent.

Try to create a sense of separateness about your spot. When you use the cards, you want to turn away from the everyday world and go into a space that is outside time and the normal flow of events. A separate room is ideal, but a corner set off by a screen, curtain, pillows or other divider can work too.

Try also to create an atmosphere of beauty and meaning. Place some items nearby that are special to you. Objects from nature, such as shells, stones, crystals, and plants are always appropriate. A talisman, figure or religious icon can help you shift your focus from the mundane to the inspirational. Consider pictures and artwork, especially your own, and appeal to your senses with such items as flowers, incense, candles, textured materials and quiet, meditative music.

These touches are nice, the only thing you really need is a space large enough to lay out the cards. You can use either a table or the floor. There is a grounded feeling to the floor, but, if that position is uncomfortable, a table is better. Choose a table of natural materials such as wood or stone.

If you like, you can cover the table or floor with a cloth to create a uniform area. The material should be natural, such as silk, cotton, wool or linen. Choose the color with care as colors have their own energies. Black, dark blue and purple are good choices. There should be little or no pattern, so the images on the cards stand out from the background.

Store your cards in a container to protect them and contain their energies. Any natural substance is fine, such as wood, stone, shell, or a natural cloth. I know of one woman who sewed herself a silk, drawstring bag and embroidered it with stars, moons and other designs. Consider keeping your cards wrapped in silk cloth when inside their container. Silk has a luxurious feel that will remind you of the value you place on your cards.

Tarot cards pick up the energy and character of those who use them. For this reason, set aside a tarot deck that is just for you, if you can. These cards are going to be your personal tool of communication with your Inner Guide. You want to bond to them closely.

When you do your tarot work in a place of your own, the experience can be quite powerful, but extra preparations are never necessary. All you have to do is use the cards. That's the important part.

## CREATING THE STORY

In this lesson, you will learn how to pull together the elements of a reading - to create a tarot story. This is not an easy process to describe because storytelling is an art. Even though you can be shown a few techniques, in the end, you must develop your own style as a tarot artist. This is the challenge (and fun!) of card interpretation.

First, I want you to set aside everything you've learned so far! That's right, just disregard all those fancy principles. In the last seventeen lessons, you've been exposed to pages of information about the cards, and I've only touched on the possibilities! Other tarot books contain system after system for relating the cards to each other. This is fascinating stuff, but what is its real purpose? It is to find a way to release your inner knowing **through** the cards.

The techniques you've learned so far have been based on the idea that you must *figure out* what the cards are saying, but this is not really the case. If you think of a tarot reading as an object to be dissected, you will have trouble grasping its full meaning. A tarot story doesn't come from without; it arises from within. Your stories are come from a part of you that is seeking expression and conscious realization.

Of course, I don't really want you to discard your tarot principles. They are valuable, but not because they hold the key to readings in themselves. They simply help you recognize what you already know. They draw you in so you can set up the circumstances to release your story.



The secret of creating a tarot story is getting from intellectual understanding to knowing, from a piecemeal grasp to a unified vision. To do this, you need to learn to recognize and honor your feelings. Feelings in this sense are not moods or emotions. They are the language of your Inner Guide. They are the outward expression of a knowing that is deeper than thought. The main feature of knowing is a sense of rightness. You **know** your insights are correct when you **feel** complete and satisfied with them.

The best way I've found to release inner knowing is through stream-of-consciousness talking - saying your thoughts out loud **as they occur**, uncensored and uncontrolled. You make no attempt to organize or clean up your speech. You simply let the words come out.

This technique is effective because it bypasses the critical ego. It allows the wisdom of your Inner Guide to come forth spontaneously. You feel as if something within has been set free. Your first attempts will probably be awkward, but your stories will improve with practice. You will develop an ability to guide the flow of words without imposing your will on them. Sometimes insights will surface that completely surprise you!

It's not necessary to rush or talk continually. You can pause whenever you want, but avoid thinking when this happens. Simply wait patiently until you feel the impulse to continue. Sometimes repeating the name of a card a few times can help. Queen of Cups....Queen of Cups....Queen of Cups. After each repetition, wait to see if anything comes to mind in the form of a thought or image.

Sometimes your story will just flow. You will have no trouble fitting everything together. Other times there will be gaps and empty places. Certain cards will stay stubbornly obscure. The moment may not be right for you to fully grasp these cards, or all the pieces of the story may not yet be in place.

Don't be concerned if you can't always create a beautiful narrative. Sometimes knowing comes in fragments. Stay with a reading only as long as the effort seems worthwhile. A partial understanding may be all you need.



I once drew the Ace of Pentacles reversed in Position 9. I knew right away that this card was telling me not to focus on money or material concerns. This realization hit me as soon as I saw the card. Everything I needed to know was in that one Ace, so interpreting the other cards was not all that necessary.

A good tarot spread makes weaving the pattern of the cards easy. By following the spread's built-in structure, your story unfolds naturally. Each spread has its own character based on its history, form and purpose. In the Spread Section, I discuss some features of the Celtic Cross and Yin Yang spreads.

# THE OTHER READING

You can do a tarot reading that is centered on another person or subject. I call this the Other Reading. An Other Reading is appropriate whenever you are simply curious about someone or something that doesn't involve you directly. Other Readings are *about* someone, not *for* him or her. When a reading is for someone, that person writes the question and you simply help interpret the cards.

Other Readings are fun and informative. They are also a good way to learn the tarot. When you use the cards for yourself, you only get to look at a limited set of problems - your own! Other Readings let you explore much more.

## 1. Choosing the Subject

Your first step is to decide on the subject of your reading. You can focus on just about anything - a person, animal, place, problem, or news event - as long as you identify the subject ahead of time. Usually it will be the central figure in a situation, but it doesn't have to be. Your subject can be a group entity, such as a marriage, family, team or neighborhood. You can focus on a country or the Earth, but, for such large entities, the information will be very general. You may be tempted to do another Reading about someone who is close to you - a relative, friend or colleague.

Here is a simple test you can take to decide whether an Other Reading is advisable. Ask yourself three questions:

- Do I feel *strong emotions* when I think about this person in this situation?
- Do I have a vested interest in this situation?
- Do I desire a particular outcome in this situation?

If your answer is yes to any of these questions, you should probably do a reading centered on yourself rather than an Other Reading.

You now need to write a question. Follow the suggestions in lesson 7, but write the question about your subject. Focus on the aspect of your subject that interests you. If you are wondering about a politician who is running for president, your question might be:

"What are the factors impacting Mr. or Ms. Candidate's chances to become the next president?"

## 2. Setting the Mood

You can place a picture of your subject nearby to help you focus during your reading. An object that reminds you of your subject works well too.

## 3. Asking Your Question

Say something about the other person or why you are doing an Other Reading. Request guidance that is in the best interest of all concerned, and mention that you hold only good intentions toward your subject. (If you can't say this truthfully, consider a reading for yourself instead!)



4. Shuffling the Cards
5. Cutting the Cards
6. Laying Out the Cards
7. Responding to the Cards

As you respond to the cards, remember that they refer to the other person, not you. However, don't be surprised if you see in the cards some interesting correspondences with your own life!

8. Analyzing the Cards

In another Reading, you are seeing the situation from your own point of view. What you see in the cards may or may not be related to what the subject actually experiences.

9. Creating the Story
10. Finishing Up

## THE OPEN READING/ GENERAL READING

An Open Reading is a request for guidance that is not tied to a particular problem. You don't write a question. You simply give your Inner Guide an opportunity to communicate what you most need to know at a given moment.

For most occasions, the Question Reading is the best type because it zeroes in on the issue that is most important to you. Just as with the telephoto lens of a camera, a question lets you move in to focus more narrowly on a subject, but it also keeps you from seeing the bigger picture. An Open Reading has more scope. It covers your long-term growth and development. It offers a higher level of guidance that embraces the larger patterns that are shaping your everyday experiences.

Open Readings can be quite powerful. I try to use them sparingly to preserve their out-of-the-ordinary quality. Consider them for special occasions, such as: birthdays, anniversaries, ceremonial days, equinoxes and first days (new job, date, trip).

Open Readings are useful when you are standing on the threshold of a new phase, such as after the birth of a child or move to a new house. Open Readings can help you adjust to new or unpredictable situations ahead of time. Whenever an expanse of unknown is opening out before you, that is a perfect time for an Open Reading.

### 1. Setting the Mood

To prepare for an Open Reading, you want to avoid the analysis that goes into writing a question. Simply let your mind empty of all cares and concerns. There is nothing you have to do or arrange except a gentle quieting of the mind.

### 2. Making A Statement

Instead of reading a question, say a more general message of intent such as:

*I welcome a message of wisdom and open myself to receive the guidance that I most need currently.*

You can narrow the focus, a little, as long as you avoid specific people and events. If you're interested in your health, you can add a phrase to that effect:

*I welcome a message of wisdom about my health and open myself to receive the guidance that I most need at this time.*

### 3. Shuffling the Cards

Keep your mind free and open while you shuffle. If a thought drifts by, let it gently pass without fixing on it. Ideally, you should feel like an empty house with all the windows open to every soft breeze.

### 4. Cutting the Cards

### 5. Laying Out the Cards

### 6. Responding to the Cards

### 7. Analyzing the Cards

As a rule, when analyzing the cards, you want to step back from the details of your life and let the cards show you the larger themes. Concentrate on the patterns as revealed in the reading. View everything in a wider context. Open Readings are not about the everyday.

### 8. Creating the Story

### 9. Finishing Up

## INTERPRETING A SINGLE CARD

When I interpret a reading, I go back and forth between sensing the cards as a whole and examining each one individually. The two approaches reinforce each other.

We will look at how to interpret one card in a reading on its own. There are four sources of meaning:

1. The first is your unique response to the card based on your background, personality and state of mind. This element keeps the meaning of the card personal and fresh.
2. The second is the set of meanings that have built up around the card over the years. These vary with different tarot writers and teachers.
3. The third is the set of meanings associated with the *position* of a card. These are also based on convention and common experience.
4. The fourth is your question or life circumstances. This element provides a framework for your responses. It sets boundaries and helps you relate a card to one area of your life.

To interpret a card, you need to combine these four sources of meaning into some composite that makes sense to you. This is a fluid process. These areas seem separate, but in practice, they blend together, and your response just happens.

At first, you will probably rely on the card and position meanings to guide you. Later, your personal reactions will be more important. Your reaction may be triggered by a card's image. The scenes on the cards can seem to relate to your situation very directly. For example, if you are building a house, the document on the Three of Pentacles might strike you as a set of blueprints.



Assume that you have drawn the upright Seven of Cups in Position 5. Your question is:

"How can I improve my chances of receiving a bonus this year?"

To begin reviewing this card, you would first note your reactions. Perhaps your glance falls on the cup filled with jewels. The figure in the foreground seems to be looking directly at this cup. You identify with him as he reaches out for treasure. This fits your question - you're *reaching out* for a bonus.



Next, you look at the keywords for the Seven of Cups. They are:

- wishful thinking
- options
- dissipation

When you read through the actions, you are struck by the following:

- kidding yourself about the facts
- waiting for your ship to come in
- lacking focus and commitment

These phrases suggest someone who is passive and unrealistic, someone who lacks the energy and desire for success. They reinforce the idea of wishful thinking.

On reading over the meanings for Position 5, you feel a pull toward:

- your delusions and illusions
- what you're obsessed about
- what you've set your heart on

The sense of this card is beginning to take shape for you. The card seems to be suggesting that you are too busy daydreaming to act constructively. The figure now strikes you as awed by the cup dangled in front of him. You decide that this card represents for you at this time an attitude of unreasonable hopes and unproductive dreaming. This is your *first* feeling about what the card is saying. You may modify your assessment later when you examine the other cards.

Clearly there are other possibilities. You might have been struck by the array of delights floating in front of the shadowy figure. He seems to have many options, another meaning of the Seven of Cups.

There is never just one right answer in tarot work! Both of these interpretations make sense. You may wonder how you can decide on the best meaning when there are so many possibilities. You must trust your intuition. Your Inner Guide will give you hints that will lead you toward the ideas that are most important for you. An insistent thought may keep popping into your mind. You may circle around a meaning - thinking about it, moving off, then finally coming back. When one meaning hits you with particular force, you know you are on the right track. This is the "Aha" reaction. An "Aha" reaction may not happen for every card, but when it does, you know it is important. These are the ways that inner knowing manifests.

## REVERSED CARDS

When you shuffle the tarot cards, they often end up facing in different directions. So far, I've suggested that you ignore this effect and simply turn the upside-down cards around. Now you are ready to learn more about reversed cards and what they have to offer.

. When you do a reading, your actions and intentions align the energies of the moment with the cards to form a picture. The cards capture the energy currents in and around you as you shuffle and cut.

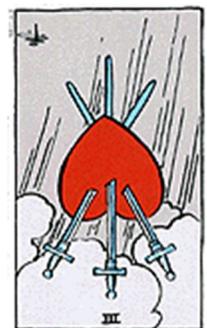
At any given moment, these energies will be at different levels. Some will be strong and powerful, others less so. Some will be just entering your life, others, moving away. How you use these energies depends on all the factors that bear on your situation.

When a card is upright, its energy is free to manifest. Its qualities are available and active. When a card is reversed, its energy is not fully developed. It may be in its early stages, or losing power. It may be incomplete or unavailable. The qualities of the card *are* present, at least in potential, but they can't express completely.

The Sun's energy is just what you would imagine - expansive and enlightening. An upright Sun shows the energy of *vitality* is openly available. You feel confident and successful. Now is your chance to shine. A reversed Sun shows this same energy is present, but at a lower level. The vitality is reduced or limited in some way. You may feel lowered pep or enthusiasm. You may have a desire for greatness that is frustrated. You want success, but something is holding you back.

The Empress reversed once appeared in a reading for a man who wanted to know if he and his wife might have a child. I guessed they had been trying to have a baby for some time. This card showed that the energy of mothering and birth was present, but held down in some way. This pregnancy was blocked. I told this man that once the block was removed, the chances for a child were good. Something must have happened to free up that energy because now they have a beautiful baby girl!

It is tempting to view a reversed card as undesirable. This man wanted a baby, so he was disheartened by the reversed Empress. Someone else might have viewed the same card differently. Reversed cards are not negative in and of themselves. Everything depends on what you hope to achieve. The Three of Swords represents the energy of heartbreak and betrayal. If this card is upright, hurtful feelings are a feature of the situation. Reversed, they are also present, but reduced. Perhaps the intensity of a painful episode is fading, or you are feeling lonely, but just a little. A reversed Three of Swords is more agreeable than an upright one, but it is still a cautionary sign. The fact that an unpleasant card appears at all means that its energy is present in some way.





Sometimes a card is reversed even though you are experiencing a high level of its energy. In this case, the reversal hints that you can improve your situation by making a conscious effort to lower the energy.

You have drawn the Seven of Wands reversed in a reading about being pressured to do something you don't want to do. This card represents defiance. Since you are being pushed against your will, you are probably feeling defiant in this situation. The Seven of Wands reversed suggests that you try to subdue your strong emotions. Lessen your feelings of defiance and find a different way to deal with the problem.



The meaning of a reversed card sometimes comes from a twist in the usual interpretation. In this sense, the Emperor reversed could show a powerful authority figure *topped from his throne*. The Ten of Wands reversed might remind you to *get out from under* burdensome responsibilities. It's surprising how often such meanings apply, but you can't force them. They tend to occur as needed.

It's helpful to look at the proportion of reversed and upright cards in a reading. When many cards are upright, all your energies are expressing freely and powerfully. The overall situation is well developed, and your purpose is clear. When many cards are reversed, your energies are low, and the situation is not clearly defined. You may lack direction or feel blocked, discouraged and restricted. You could be in a topsy-turvy state where change is likely. Since energies are not well developed, they are free to go in new directions.



I encourage you to try using reversed cards. When you feel ready, state out loud your intention to use them. You might say, "I have decided to interpret reversed cards in my tarot readings." In this way, you acknowledge your decision with conviction. After a time, if you decide you like using reversed cards, add them to your practice permanently. If not, just let them go. It's better to decide one way or the other, as switching back and forth can be confusing.

Life is a constant energy flow - a marvelous dance guided by Spirit. When we understand that flow and move with it creatively, all things are possible. We can direct energy consciously or just let it take us where it will. In either case, reversed cards add an extra dimension to a reading that will help you appreciate the play of energy in your own life.

## MAJOR AND MINOR ARCANA CARDS

Certain cards in the tarot naturally form into groups. These cards have unique meanings, but they also have a common identity with the other cards in their group. The two largest subgroups are the major and minor arcana. The terms *major* and *minor* reflect the relative weights of these two groups.

A major arcana card represents an energy that is deep, strong, decisive or long-term. When a major arcana card appears in a reading, you have tapped into a powerful energy in some area of your life. The minor arcana cards do not carry the same weight, but they are still important. They chart the ups and downs of daily life and register changes in feelings and thoughts. These dramas are gripping while they occur, but they pass with time as new concerns take their place.

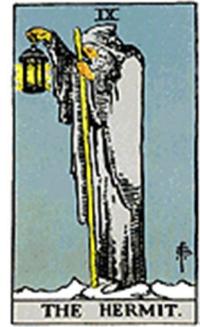
Compare the interpretation of two cards with similar meanings, but different weights - the Hermit (major) and the Eight of Cups (minor). The Hermit is the archetypal symbol of one who seeks truth and deeper meaning. He stands for the impulse to renounce superficial pleasures to seek understanding within. In a reading, the Hermit could hint that you are feeling a strong urge to find answers even if it means giving up aspects of your current way of life. This is not a passing fancy, but a major desire that could last for some time.

With the Eight of Cups, your interpretation *might be* much the same, but, as a minor arcana card, this card implies your search does not have the same force. Maybe you've been a little bored at work. Some days you feel like chucking everything to go make hats on the beach, but you don't really mean it. You *are* seeking, but the urge is not yet a heartfelt desire.

Let's say you have been happily married for many years, but suddenly find yourself attracted to an acquaintance. You consult the tarot and draw the Two of Cups in Position 1.

One of the meanings of this card is **attraction** - being drawn toward a person, place or idea that is pleasing. As a minor arcana card, the Two of Cups tells you your attraction is probably based on surface elements such as common interests or sexual desire. The feelings are strong, but they're mainly coming from the give-and-take of everyday adventure - *for now*.

You could draw a minor arcana card in one reading and then draw a major arcana card about the same subject in a later reading. What started as *minor* has become more important over time. Similarly, a *major* matter can fade and lose its urgency as your life changes. You can assume that a major arcana card brings greater energy to whatever area it represents. Give that aspect extra consideration and take advantage of the power building there.



# THE FOOL



## MEANING

BEGINNING  
SPONTANEITY  
FAITH  
APPARENT FOLLY

## ACTIONS

beginning  
being spontaneous  
having faith  
embracing folly

## DESCRIPTION

As Card 0, the Fool lies at the beginning of the major arcana, but also somewhat apart from the other cards. In medieval courts, the court jester was someone who was not expected to follow the same rules as others. He could observe and then poke fun. This makes the Fool unpredictable and full of surprises. He reminds us of the unlimited potential and spontaneity inherent in every moment. There is a sense with this card that anything goes - nothing is certain or regular. The Fool adds the new and unfamiliar to a situation.

The Fool also represents the complete faith that life is good and worthy of trust. Some might call the Fool too innocent, but his innocence sustains him and brings him joy. In readings, the Fool can signal a new beginning or change of direction - one that will guide you onto a path of adventure, wonder and personal growth. He also reminds you to keep your faith and trust your natural responses. If you are facing a decision or moment of doubt, the Fool tells you to believe in yourself and follow your heart no matter how crazy or foolish your impulses may seem.

# THE MAGICIAN



## MEANING

ACTION  
CONSCIOUS AWARENESS  
CONCENTRATION  
POWER

## ACTION

taking action  
acting consciously  
concentrating  
experiencing power

## DESCRIPTION

The Magician is the archetype of the active, masculine principle - the ultimate achiever. He symbolizes the power to tap universal forces and use them for creative purposes. Note his stance in the picture. He acts as a lightening rod - one arm extended up into the Divine for inspiration, the other pointing toward Earth to ground this potent energy. [note] His abilities appear magical at times because his will helps him achieve what seem to be miracles.

What makes the Magician so powerful? First, he is not afraid to act. He believes in himself and is willing to put that belief on the line. He also knows what he intends to do and why. He doesn't hesitate because he understands his situation exactly. The Magician can focus with single-minded determination. As long as he remembers the divine source of his power, the Magician remains the perfect conduit for miracles.

In a reading, the Magician implies that the primal forces of creativity are yours if you can claim your power and act with awareness and concentration. This card is a signal to act and act now, provided you understand exactly what you want and are committed to getting it.

# THE HIGH PRIESTESS



**MEANING**  
NONACTION  
UNCONSCIOUS  
AWARENESS  
POTENTIAL  
MYSTERY

**ACTIONS**  
staying nonactive  
accessing the unconscious  
seeing the potential  
sensing the mystery

## DESCRIPTION

The High Priestess is the guardian of the unconscious. She sits in front of the thin veil of unawareness which is all that separates us from our inner landscape. She contains within herself the secrets of these realms and offers us the silent invitation, "Be still and know that I am God."

The High Priestess is the feminine principle that balances the masculine force of the Magician. The feminine archetype in the tarot is split between the High Priestess and the Empress. The High Priestess is the mysterious unknown that women often represent, especially in cultures that focus on the tangible and known. The Empress represents woman's role as the crucible of life.

In readings, the High Priestess poses a challenge to you to go deeper - to look beyond the obvious, surface situation to what is hidden and obscure. She also asks you to recall the vastness of your potential and to remember the unlimited possibilities you hold within yourself. The High Priestess can represent a time of waiting and allowing. It is not always necessary to act to achieve your goals. Sometimes they can be realized through a stillness that gives desire a chance to flower within the fullness of time.

# THE EMPRESS



MEANING  
MOTHERING  
ABUNDANCE  
SENSES  
NATURE

## ACTIONS

mothering  
welcoming abundance  
experiencing the senses  
responding to Nature

## DESCRIPTION

The Empress and the High Priestess are the two halves of the female archetype in the major arcana. The Empress represents the fertile, life-giving Mother who reigns over the bounty of nature and the rhythms of the Earth. From her comes all the pleasures and joys of the senses and the abundance of new life in all its forms. The Empress encourages you to strengthen your connections with the natural world which is the ground of our being. Too often false sophistications and pleasures take us far from our roots. Let the Empress remind you to keep your feet firmly planted in the Earth.

In readings the Empress can refer to any aspect of Motherhood. She can be an individual mother, but as a major arcana card, she also goes beyond the specifics of mothering to its essence - the creation of life and its sustenance through loving care and attention.

The Empress can also represent lavish abundance of all kinds. She offers a cornucopia of delights, especially those of the senses - food, pleasure and beauty. She can suggest material reward, but only with the understanding that riches go with a generous and open spirit. The Empress asks you to embrace the principle of life and enjoy its bountiful goodness.

# THE EMPEROR



**MEANING**  
FATHERING  
STRUCTURE  
AUTHORITY  
REGULATION

**ACTIONS**  
fathering  
emphasizing structure  
exercising authority  
regulating

## DESCRIPTION

The figure of the Emperor says much about the essential qualities of this card. We see a stern, commanding figure seated on a stone-slab throne. His back is straight, and his eyes meet ours directly. He is confident of his complete authority to rule.

The Emperor represents structure, order and regulation - forces to balance the free-flowing, lavish abundance of the Empress. He advocates a four-square world where trains are on time, games are played by rules, and commanding officers are respected. In chaotic situations, the Emperor can indicate the need for organization. Loose ends should be tied up, and wayward elements, harnessed. In situations that are already over-controlled, he suggests the confining effect of those constraints.

The Emperor can represent an encounter with authority or the assumption of power and control. As the regulator, he is often associated with legal matters, disciplinary actions, and officialdom in all its forms. He can also stand for an individual father or archetypal Father in his role as guide, protector and provider.

# THE HIEROPHANT



## MEANING

Education  
Belief Systems  
Conformity  
Group Identification

## ACTION

getting an **education**  
having a **belief system**  
**conforming**  
identifying with a **group**

## DESCRIPTION

Except in rare cases, every human grows and develops within a culture. We learn by living with others. The Hierophant represents such official learning, especially in groups. A Hierophant is someone who interprets secret knowledge. On Card 5 we see a religious figure in a formal church setting. He is wearing the elaborate vestments of his office. His task is to bring the two initiates into the church so they can take up their appointed roles.

Besides churches, there are schools, clubs, teams, companies, and societies. The Hierophant represents all of these because his realm is structured groups with rules and assigned roles. Such environments emphasize belief systems - facts, rules, procedures, and ritual. Members are rewarded for following conventions. They develop a group identity. The Hierophant is one of three cards that focuses on the group. (The 3 of Cups and the 3 of Pentacles are the others.)

In readings, the Hierophant often represents learning with experts or knowledgeable teachers. This card also stands for institutions and their values. The Hierophant is a symbol of the need to conform to rules or fixed situations. His appearance in a reading can show that you are struggling with a force that is not innovative, free-spirited or individual. Groups can be enriching or stifling, depending on circumstances. Sometimes we need to follow a program or embrace tradition, other times, we need to trust ourselves.

# THE LOVERS



**MEANING**  
RELATIONSHIP  
SEXUALITY  
PERSONAL BELIEFS  
VALUES

**ACTIONS**  
relating to others  
being sexual  
establishing personal beliefs  
determining values

## DESCRIPTION

The Lovers is one card that is easy to remember. Love and sex are riveting subjects, and, as you'd expect, this card represents both. The urge for union is powerful, and, in its highest form, takes us beyond ourselves. That is why an angel is blessing the bond between the man and woman on this card.

In readings, Card 6 often refers to a relationship that is based on deep love - the strongest force of all. The relationship may not be sexual, although it often is or could be. More generally, the Lovers can represent the attractive force that draws any two entities together in a relationship - whether people, ideas, events, movements or groups.

Card 6 can also stand for tough value choices and the questioning that goes with them. In some decks, the Lovers shows a man torn between two women - a virgin and a temptress. This rather old-fashioned triangle symbolizes the larger dilemmas we face when we are tempted between right and wrong.

The Lovers can indicate a moral or ethical crossroads - a decision point where you must choose between the high road or the low road. This card can also represent your personal beliefs because to make such a decision you must know where you stand. Following your own path can mean going against those who are urging you in a direction that is wrong for you.

# THE CHARIOT



## MEANING

VICTORY  
WILL  
SELF-ASSERTION  
HARD CONTROL

## ACTIONS

achieving victory  
using your will  
asserting yourself  
achieving hard control

## DESCRIPTION

Picture Julius Caesar riding his chariot triumphantly into Rome. He has defeated his enemies and conquered vast, new lands. This is the spirit of the Chariot. Card 7 represents the victories that are possible through willpower and self-mastery. A military image is appropriate for the Chariot because this card stands for the strengths associated with combat - discipline, grit, determination and assertiveness.

The Chariot represents the positive aspects of the ego. A healthy ego is one that is strong and self-assured. It knows what it wants and how to get it. We can get annoyed at someone whose ego is *too* healthy, but we often turn to that person to lead us through difficult moments. We know he or she won't be wishy-washy.

In readings, the Chariot often appears when hard control is or could be in evidence. At its best, hard control is not brutal, but firm and direct. It is backed up by a strong will and great confidence. The Chariot can mean self-control or control of the environment. This card also represents victory. There are many types of wins; the Chariot's is of the win-lose type. Your success comes from beating the competition to become number one. Such moments are glorious in the right circumstances.

# STRENGTH



**MEANING**  
STRENGTH  
PATIENCE  
COMPASSION  
SOFT CONTROL

**ACTIONS**  
showing strength  
being patient  
being compassionate  
achieving soft control

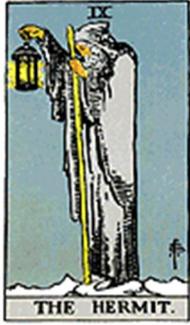
## DESCRIPTION

Usually we think of strength in physical terms - big arms, powerful legs - but there is also inner strength. Inner strength comes from an exercise of the heart muscle. It is perseverance, courage, resolve and composure - qualities that help us endure when times are tough. In the past, a person with inner strength was commonly said to have character; he or she could be counted on in the darkest moments. Card 8 represents this energy of quiet determination. Strength is not a flashy card, but one that is solid and reliable.

Card 8 also represents patience and compassion. Getting angry is easy when events turn sour, but dealing calmly with frustration takes great strength. So does accepting others and forgiving mistakes. We need strength to mold situations softly. The Chariot controls through mastery and authority. Card 8 is more subtle, even loving. Notice how the lion (itself a symbol of strength) is being guided and tamed by the woman's gentle hands.

Card 8 will appear in a reading when its qualities are needed. It can be a reminder not to despair or give up. You have the inner strength to endure and triumph. If you are pushing too hard, you need to withdraw for the moment and be patient. If other people or circumstances are driving you crazy, remember the strength that comes with love and forbearance. These will see you through the hardest moments.

# THE HERMIT



**MEANING**  
INTROSPECTION  
SEARCHING  
GUIDANCE  
SOLITUDE

**ACTIONS**  
being introspective  
searching  
receiving/giving guidance  
seeking solitude

## DESCRIPTION

The traditional hermit is a crusty, bearded character who has withdrawn from the company of men to live a life of seclusion and hardship. Card 9 supports this understanding. The Hermit represents the desire to turn away from the getting and spending of society to focus on the inner world. He seeks answers within and knows that they will come only with quiet and solitude.

There comes a point in life when we begin to question the obvious. We sense that there is a deeper reality and begin to search for it. This is mainly a solitary quest because answers do not lie in the external world, but in ourselves. The hermit on Card 9 reminds us of Diogenes, the Greek ascetic who is said to have gone out with a lantern in hand to search for an honest man.

Diogenes is a symbol of the search for truth that the Hermit hopes to uncover by stripping away all diversions.

In readings, the Hermit often suggests a need for time alone - a period of reflection when distractions are limited. In times of action and high energy, he stands for the still center that must be created for balance. He can also indicate that withdrawal or retreat is advised for the moment. In addition, the Hermit can represent seeking of all kinds, especially for deeper understanding or the truth of a situation. "Seek, and ye shall find," we have been told, and so the Hermit stands for guidance as well. We can receive help from wise teachers, and, in turn, help others as we progress.

# WHEEL OF FORTUNE



## MEANING

DESTINY  
TURNING POINT  
MOVEMENT  
PERSONAL VISION

## ACTIONS

feeling a sense of destiny  
being at a turning point  
feeling movement  
having a personal vision

## DESCRIPTION

In Greek mythology, there are three women known as the Fates. They are responsible for spinning the destiny of each person at his or her birth. It is not surprising that the Fates are spinners because the wheel of fortune is an apt image for the elusive turns of a man's fate. This is the theme of Card 10.

The Wheel of Fortune is one of the few cards in the major arcana that does not have a human figure as a focal point. This is because its center is above the realm of man - in the higher levels (clouds) where the destinies of all are woven together in the tapestry of life. The tarot recognizes that each person sets his own path in life, but is also subject to the larger cycles that include him. We experience chance events that appear to be accidents although they are part of the great plan.

In readings, the Wheel of Fortune can indicate a vision or realization that strikes with great force. If you've been struggling with a problem or tough situation, this card can signal that you will find the answer if you stand back and view everything from a larger perspective.

The Wheel of Fortune also represents unexpected encounters and twists of fate. You can't predict surprises; you can only be aware when one is circling around. Indeed, Card 10 often suggests wheel-like actions - changes in direction, repeating cycles and rapid movement. When the energy of the Wheel arrives, you will feel life speed up. You are caught in a cyclone that may deposit you anywhere. "Round and round and round she goes, and where she stops, nobody knows."

# JUSTICE



## MEANING

JUSTICE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
DECISION  
CAUSE AND EFFECT

## ACTIONS

respecting justice  
assuming responsibility  
preparing for a decision  
understanding cause and effect

## DESCRIPTION

On Card 11 we see the familiar figure of Justice. She has the scales of equality and impartial judgment in one hand, and the sword of decision in the other. In the tarot, Justice represents the understanding that life is ultimately fair and just. Even though the vagaries of day-to-day life tend to make us doubt this fact, Justice reminds us that there is divine balance. Notice the similarity between the Emperor and Justice. Both cards stand for universal order; the Emperor in its underlying structure, Justice, in the action of karma - cause and effect.

There is a serious feel to Card 11 - the tone of the courtroom. This card refers to legal matters of all kinds, but is not restricted to them. The courts are where judgments are made and decisions rendered. Our legal system is the official arena in which we explore the principles of Justice - fairness, impartiality and the quest for truth.

In readings, Justice often appears when you are concerned with doing what is right or making sure you receive your due. This card can also appear when you are feeling the impact of a past mistake or good deed. The *cause* you set in motion at one time is now returning to you as an *effect*.

Sometimes Justice is a signal to do what needs to be done. A time comes when responsibilities must be accepted, and accounts settled. The past will continue to haunt you if you do not recognize your mistakes and make amends for them. You will need to weigh matters carefully and perhaps make important decisions about your future course.

# THE HANGED MAN



**MEANING**  
LETTING GO  
REVERSAL  
SUSPENSION  
SACRIFICE

**ACTIONS**  
letting go  
reversing  
suspending action  
sacrificing  
being a martyr

## DESCRIPTION

The Hanged Man is one of the most mysterious cards in the tarot deck. It is simple, but complex. It attracts, but also disturbs. It contradicts itself in countless ways. The Hanged Man is unsettling because it symbolizes the action of paradox in our lives. A paradox is something that appears contradictory, and yet is true. The Hanged Man presents to us certain truths, but they are hidden in their opposites.

The main lesson of the Hanged Man is that we "control" by letting go - we "win" by surrendering. The figure on Card 12 has made the ultimate surrender - to die on the cross of his own travails - yet he shines with the glory of divine understanding. He has sacrificed himself, but he emerges the victor. The Hanged Man also tells us that we can "move forward" by standing still. By suspending time, we can have all the time in the world.

In readings, the Hanged Man reminds us that the best approach to a problem is not always the most obvious. When we most want to force our will on someone, that is when we should release. When we most want to have our own way, that is when we should sacrifice. When we most want to act, that is when we should wait. The irony is that by making these contradictory moves, we find what we are looking for.

# DEATH



MEANING  
ENDING  
TRANSITION  
ELIMINATION  
INEXORABLE FORCES

ACTIONS  
ending  
going through transition  
eliminating excess  
experiencing inexorable forces

## DESCRIPTION

Death! A powerful energy indeed. Who can look at the dark, skeletal figure on Card 13 and not feel uneasy? Here we see the face of our deepest fear - our greatest unknown. We recoil from Death because we think of it as annihilation. In the tarot (and in life I would suggest) Death is not a permanent end, but a transition into a new state. Life is eternal in its essence, if not in its form. To grow, to move, to live - we must "die" to the old to give birth to the new.

It is a truism in tarot work that Card 13 **rarely** has anything to do with physical death. A responsible card reader never interprets Card 13 in this way because this view is too limiting. Death is not something that happens once to our bodies. It happens continually, at many levels and not just in the physical. Each moment we die to the present so the future can unfold.

In readings, Death often represents an important ending that will initiate great change. It signals the end of an era; a moment when a door is closing. At such times, there may be sadness and reluctance, but also relief and a sense of completion. Death also suggests getting down to basics. Dying has a way of making you concentrate on what's important. This card reminds you to cut out the unnecessary. Death can also mean you will experience an inexorable force. Death is inevitable, and sometimes there are events that are inescapable as well. When these moments occur, the best approach is to ride your fate and see where it takes you.

# TEMPERANCE



**MEANING**  
TEMPERANCE  
BALANCE  
HEALTH  
COMBINATION

**ACTIONS**  
being temperate  
maintaining balance  
experiencing health  
combining forces

## DESCRIPTION

There are certain people who exude a kind of quiet composure. They may not say much, but they go about their business with an air of calm deliberation. Their presence is comforting because they are so centered. For me, this is the energy of Temperance.

To be temperate is to show moderation and self-restraint. In a world full of enticing indulgences, it is often necessary to find the middle ground. Sensible, maybe, but also a bit boring? The energy of Temperance may seem unexciting on the surface, but it is the calm of a hurricane's eye. All around are swirling winds, but in the center is a still point that brings everything into balance.

In readings, Temperance can represent a need for moderation, especially when extreme cards are present (such as the Knights). This card can also indicate a need for balance. In conflict situations, Temperance suggests that compromise and cooperation are vital. Look for any opportunity to bring opposing parties together. In fact, to *temper* can mean to modify by adding a new component. By combining and recombining, we come up with the ideal mixture or solution. Temperance is the card of good health in all areas - physical, mental and emotional. When illness or dis-ease is a concern, Temperance holds out the promise of vitality and well-being.

# THE DEVIL



## MEANING

BONDAGE  
MATERIALISM  
IGNORANCE  
HOPELESSNESS

## ACTIONS

experiencing bondage  
focusing on the material  
staying in ignorance  
feeling hopeless

## DESCRIPTION

Lucifer. Mephistopheles. Satan. The Prince of Darkness. No matter what we call him, the Devil is our symbol for what is bad and undesirable. From our human perspective, we see the world as a struggle between light and dark. We want to vanquish the bad so the good can prevail. In fact, good and bad cannot be separated, just as you cannot separate a shadow from its source. Darkness is simply the absence of light, and it is caused by errors that hide the truth. Card 15 shows us these errors.

First is ignorance - not knowing the truth and not realizing that we do not know. Second is materialism - the belief that there is nothing but the physical. As spiritual beings, we long for the Divine, but we lose contact with this source of truth if we trust only our senses. There is also hopelessness, which robs us of our joy and movement toward the light.

Traditionally the Devil stands for evil, but it does not have this rather frightening meaning in a reading. This card lets you know that you are caught in an unhealthy, unproductive situation. You may be in the dark about something - ignorant of the truth and its implications. You may be obsessed by a person, idea, substance or pattern that you know is bad for you (or maybe you don't!). Sometimes this card reflects back the negativity that has made you doubt yourself and your future. We are prone to many errors in life. Card 15 lets us know when they are serious enough to require attention. When you see the Devil, examine your assumptions carefully. Make sure you are not working from a false picture of yourself and the situation. Hold fast to the highest vision of who you are.

# THE TOWER



**MEANING**  
SUDDEN CHANGE  
RELEASE  
DOWNFALL  
REVELATION

**ACTIONS**  
going through sudden change  
releasing  
falling down  
having a revelation

## DESCRIPTION

The Tower is an unsettling card. Fire, lightning, falling on jagged rocks - definitely looks like trouble! Card 16 will not be welcomed by those who dislike change. It represents a sudden, dramatic upheaval or reversal in fortune. Usually change is gradual, giving us time to adapt, but sometimes it is quick and explosive. This is the action of the Tower.

In films, the hero sometimes slaps someone who is groggy or babbling. Having tried everything else, he finally resorts to a sharp sting to snap him out of it. Sudden crises are life's way of telling you to wake up. Something's wrong, and you're not responding. Are you too full of pride? Expect a blow to your ego. Are you holding back your anger? Expect the dam to burst. Are you stuck in a rut? Expect a surprise.

How you respond to the Tower's change makes all the difference in how uncomfortable the experience will be. Recognize that the disruption occurred because it was needed. Perhaps embracing the change is too much to ask, but try to find the positive in it. In fact, you may feel tremendous release that you have finally been forced in a new direction. You may have a burst of insight about your situation and reach a new level of understanding about it.

# THE STAR



**MEANING**  
HOPE  
INSPIRATION

**ACTIONS**  
regaining hope  
being inspired  
being generous  
feeling serene

## DESCRIPTION

People have always looked to the stars as a source of inspiration and hope. There is something about their twinkling light that draws us out of ourselves and up into a higher plane. When we turn our eyes heavenward, we no longer feel the distress of earth. The Star reminds me of the clear, high voice of a soprano. There is something otherworldly about it. All the harshness and density of everyday life has been refined away leaving only the purest essence. After being exposed to the Star, we feel uplifted and blessed.

In readings, the Star is most welcome when grief and despair have overwhelmed us. In our darkest moments, we need to know that there is hope, that there is light at the end of the tunnel. The Star is the opposite of the Devil who strips us of our faith in the future. Card 17 holds out the promise that we can eventually find peace of mind. The Star also reminds us to open our heart and release our fears and doubt. If you have been holding back in any way, now is the time to give generously.

It is important to remember that the Star is inspiring, but it is not a card of practical solutions or final answers. Truly without hope we can accomplish nothing, but hope is only a beginning. When you see Card 17, know that you are on the right track. Your goals and your aspirations are blessed, but to realize them, you must take positive action. Use the light of the Star to guide you in your efforts.

# THE MOON



## MEANING

FEAR  
ILLUSION  
IMAGINATION  
BEWILDERMENT

## ACTIONS

feeling fear  
believing illusions  
stimulating the imagination  
feeling bewildered

## DESCRIPTION

If you look around the room right now, you will (probably!) see people and objects that are comforting in their familiarity. Everything is exactly as you expect it to be. You *know* that if you closed your eyes and opened them, the room would be the same. But...have you ever lost the familiar to find, in its place, a world so extraordinary you can't even grasp it? This is the experience of the Moon.

Most of the time we live in a tiny pocket of normality that we wrap around us like a security blanket. We turn our backs on the mysterious universe that waits outside. From time to time we may sneak a peak with our imagination, or venture out through fantasy or expanded awareness. We can be thrust out there unprepared through drugs, madness or intense experiences such as battle.

The Moon is the light of this realm - the world of shadow and night. Although this place is awesome, it does not have to be frightening. In the right circumstances, the Moon inspires and enchants. It holds out the promise that all you imagine can be yours. The Moon guides you to the unknown so you can allow the unusual into your life.

Sadly, we are usually afraid of the Moon. In readings, this card often stands for fears and anxieties - the ones that come in the darkest part of the night. Card 18 also stands for illusions. It is easy to lose our way in the moonlight. Be careful not to let deceptions and false ideas lead you astray. Sometimes the Moon is a signal that you are lost and wandering aimlessly. You must find your way back to the path and your clarity of purpose.

# THE SUN



## MEANING

ENLIGHTENMENT  
GREATNESS  
VITALITY  
ASSURANCE

## ACTIONS

becoming enlightened  
experiencing greatness  
feeling vitality  
having assurance

## DESCRIPTION

Brilliant. Radiant. Sparkling. So many of our words reflect (!) the power and glory of light. When we turn on the light in a room, we *illuminate* it so that all the dark corners are visible. When we turn on the light in our minds, we are *enlightened*. We see clearly and understand the truth. Both within and without, the energy of light expands our limits and makes us shine.

Throughout history, people have honored the Sun as the source of light and warmth. In the myths of many cultures, the Sun is a prominent god - full of vigor and courage. He is the vital energy center that makes life on earth possible. In the tarot the Sun also symbolizes vitality and splendor. The Sun is definitely not a meek and retiring card.

In readings, you will understand Card 19 if you imagine yourself to be a Sun God. How do you think and feel? You have total confidence in yourself. You are not cocky, but profoundly sure of your power. You have unlimited energy and glow with health. You have a greatness about you and stand out brilliantly. Finally, you see and understand all that is happening within your sphere. When you see this card, know that you will be successful at all you undertake. Now is the time to let your light shine.

# JUDGEMENT



MEANING  
JUDGMENT  
REBIRTH  
INNER CALLING  
ABSOLUTION

ACTIONS  
making a judgment  
feeling reborn  
hearing a call  
finding absolution

## DESCRIPTION

On Card 20, we see people rising up at the call of an angel. It is Judgment Day, when the faithful are brought to heaven, but what about those who are not saved? Have they been judged and found wanting? For their sins, will they be denied the presence of God? It is this aspect of judgment that is unsettling. How can judgment be reconciled with forgiveness?

In fact, judgment comes in two forms. The hurtful kind says, "What you did is wrong, and you are bad and worthless for having done it." This type of judgment separates and leaves no room for redemption. It is possible to judge without condemning. We assess the matter, weigh all sides and try to discern the truth. We recognize the need to choose and hope for the courage to do so wisely - but without blame.

In readings, Card 20 can be a reminder that judgments are necessary; sometimes you *must* decide. At such moments, it is best to consider the matter carefully and then commit yourself without censure. If you are being judged yourself, learn from the process. Take what is of value, correct what needs correcting, but never lose sight of your worth.

Card 20 also stands for the feelings that come with salvation. When the angel calls, you are reborn - cleansed of all guilts and burdens. The past and its mistakes are behind you, and you are ready to begin anew. You may even feel a calling - a personal conviction of what you are meant to do. If you are in a low period, in need of hope and absolution, Judgement can show you that renewal is at hand.

# THE WORLD



**MEANING**  
INTEGRATION  
ACCOMPLISHMENT  
INVOLVEMENT  
FULFILLMENT

**ACTIONS**  
integrating  
accomplishing  
becoming involved  
feeling fulfilled  
savoring the present

## DESCRIPTION

It's Thanksgiving Day. You've just finished a delicious meal, and there's a hot mug of coffee in your hand. Friends and family are arguing about the latest fiasco, the baby's cooing at you from across the table, and your feet are rubbing the belly of a devoted mutt. You're happy, fulfilled and truly thankful (at least until you have to start the dishes!). For this moment, the World and everything in it is yours.

We all recognize this feeling. It can come at any time or place and is always welcome. We can feel it at home raking the leaves or on the world stage accepting the Nobel Prize. It can seem quiet and simple, or wild and glorious. What is this feeling, and where does it come from? Card 21 can help us find out.

A major element of happiness is wholeness - the sense that everything is working together in harmony. Not in a static way, but with dynamic balance. Involvement is also important. To be happy, we must feel connected - engaged with what is around us. There is also accomplishment - knowing that we have goals and are moving toward them successfully. When all these elements come together, we feel fulfilled and blessed.

The World represents these moments and all that goes into them. In readings, it is a very positive sign that you are in a position to realize your heart's desire. What that is for you depends on the situation, but it will always feel great. Remember, though, that Card 21 is a symbol of active contribution and service. To hold the World in our hands, we must give of ourselves to it. That is the source of true happiness.

# THE MINOR ARCANA

While the major arcana expresses universal themes, the minor arcana brings those themes down into the practical arena to show how they operate in daily events. The minor arcana cards represent the concerns, activities and emotions that make up the dramas of our everyday lives.

There are 56 cards in the minor arcana divided into four suits: Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles. [Note] Each of these suits stands for a particular approach to life.

- **Wands**

The Wands are the suit of creativity, action and movement. They are associated with such qualities as enthusiasm, adventure, risk-taking and confidence. This suit corresponds to the yang, or masculine principle, in Chinese philosophy and is associated with the element Fire. A flickering flame is the perfect symbol of the Wands force. This energy flows outward and generates passionate involvement.

- **Cups**

The Cups are the suit of emotions and spiritual experience. They describe inner states, feelings and relationship patterns. The energy of this suit flows inward. Cups correspond to the yin, or feminine principle, in Chinese philosophy and are associated with the element Water. The ability of water to flow and fill up spaces, to sustain and to reflect changing moods makes it the ideal symbol of the Cups suit.

- **Swords**

The Swords are the suit of intellect, thought and reason. They are concerned with justice, truth and ethical principles. Swords are associated with the element Air. A cloudless sky, open and light-filled, is a symbol of the mental clarity that is the Swords ideal. This suit is also associated with states that lead to disharmony and unhappiness. Our intellect is a valuable asset, but as an agent of ego, it can lead us astray if it is not infused with the wisdom of our Inner Guide.

- **Pentacles**

The Pentacles are the suit of practicality, security and material concerns. They are associated with the element Earth and the concrete requirements of working with matter. In Pentacles, we celebrate the beauty of nature, our interactions with plants and animals and our physical experiences in the body. Pentacles also represent prosperity and wealth of all kinds. Sometimes this suit is called the Coins, an obvious symbol of the exchange of goods and services in the physical world.

Each minor arcana suit has a distinct quality all its own. Our everyday experiences are a blend of these four approaches. Your tarot readings will show you how the different suit energies are impacting your life at any given moment.

The suits are structured much as our everyday playing cards with ten numbered cards (Ace - Ten) and four court cards (King, Queen, Knight and Page). Each card has a role to play in showing how its energy expresses in the world.

- **Aces**

An Ace announces the themes of its suit. The Ace of Cups stands for love, emotions, intuition, and intimacy - ideas that are explored in the other cards of the Cups suit. An Ace always represents positive forces. It is the standard-bearer for the best its suit has to offer.

- **Middle Cards**

Each of the middle, numbered cards presents a different aspect of a suit. The Wands explore such themes as personal power (card 2), leadership (card 3), excitement (card 4) and competition (card 5). A card may approach an idea from several angles. The Five of Pentacles shows the many faces of want - hard times (material want), ill health (physical want), and rejection (emotional want).

- **Tens**

A Ten takes the themes introduced by an Ace to their logical conclusion. If you take the love, intimacy and emotions of the Ace of Cups to their ultimate, you have the joy, peace and family love of the Ten of Cups.

- **Court Cards**

The court cards are people with personalities that reflect the qualities of their suit and rank. The court cards show us certain ways of being in the world so that we can use (or avoid!) those styles when appropriate.

- A **King** is mature and masculine. He is a doer whose focus is outward on the events of life. He demonstrates authority, control and mastery in some area associated with his suit. A King's style is strong, assertive and direct. He is concerned with results and practical, how-to matters.

- A **Queen** is mature and feminine. She embodies the qualities of her suit, rather than acting them out. Her focus is inward, and her style, relaxed and natural. A Queen is less concerned with results than with the enjoyment of just being in the world. She is associated with feelings, relationships and self-expression.

- A **Knight** is an immature teenager. He cannot express himself with balance. He swings wildly from one extreme to another as he tries to relate successfully to his world. A Knight is prone to excess, but he is also eager and sincere, and these qualities redeem him in our eyes. We admire his spirit and energy.

- A **Page** is a playful child. He acts out the qualities of his suit with pleasure and abandon. His approach may not be deep, but it is easy, loose and spontaneous. He is a symbol of adventure and possibility.

You now have a basic idea of the role of each card in the tarot deck. You have a feel for how they all fit together and what each one contributes to the whole. In the following lessons, you will learn more about these cards and how to interpret them in your readings.

# ACES

Each Ace represents the qualities of its suit in their purest form. An Ace always adds something special to a reading. It stands out from the other cards as if in a circle of its own light. The images on the Aces are all similar. A strong hand, glowing with energy, comes out of a cloud grasping the token of its suit. An Ace "hands" you a gift that comes from some unknown source hidden in the clouds. The nature of the gift is symbolized by the suit token.

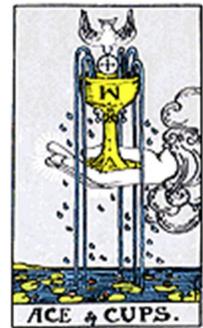
## ACE OF WANDS

A wand is a strong, masculine object, alive with potent force. Leaves are growing as new life bursts forth. The wand reminds us of a magic wand used to perform miracles and create wonders. The gift of the Ace of Wands is creativity, enthusiasm, courage and confidence.



## Ace of Cups

A cup is an open, feminine object - a receptacle designed to hold nourishing liquids. Water pours from the cup showing there is a never-ending supply of refreshment flowing into the world. The gift of the Ace of Cups is emotion, intuition, intimacy and love.



## Ace of Swords

A Sword is a weapon - a finely crafted tool to cut through any obstacle or confusion. A sword extends the power of its user to fight and prevail. It can wield a cruel force, but also a clean, sharp one. The gift of the Ace of Swords is mental clarity, truth, justice and fortitude.



## Ace of Pentacles

The pentacle is a magical sign for the mystery of nature and the everyday world. It is stamped on a coin, the token of material exchange. With money and raw materials, we have the wherewithal to make our dreams real. The gift of the Ace of Pentacles is prosperity, practicality, security and the ability to manifest.

Aces are portals between the realms of the major and minor arcana. They allow powerful, but impersonal forces to come into your life. An Ace in a reading shows that its qualities are becoming available to you. If you take advantage of them, you will achieve greater happiness and success. An Ace is always interpreted as beneficial, positive and life-enhancing.





An Ace can indicate a new adventure is beginning. I once saw the Ace of Cups in Position 1 for a friend's reading about her new love affair. What better card to signal the beginning of love and intimacy? (Well ... possibly the Fool, but that's another story!)

An Ace can also represent a window of opportunity that is opening. The Ace tells you to pay attention so you don't miss it. Think of an Ace as a seed of possibility that will grow given your attention and care.

A relative once drew the Ace of Pentacles in Position 1 and the Ace of Wands in Position 2 - a dynamic combination that says "Look for a real, *creative* outlet for your energies that will bring greater *prosperity*." Several months later, she told me that - encouraged by this sign - she pursued a challenging opening at her workplace and was now making more money with greater personal satisfaction.



When you are working with an Ace, look for the potential in every situation. See how you might take advantage of whatever comes your way because you will have the chance to make real and important changes in your life.

# COURT CARDS

You have probably noticed that people tend to fall into types. Their traits cluster together in familiar ways. We sometimes give these clusters names, such as "loner," "dreamer" or "life of the party." Psychologists have devised elaborate systems that categorize types of people. The popular Myers-Briggs is one such system.

The tarot has its own system of personalities represented by the 16 court cards - the King, Queen, Knight and Page of each suit. In lesson 3, you learned about the four suits and court card ranks. These are the keys to understanding the court cards because the personality of each one is a combination of its suit and rank.



## Kings

The King of Wands is **creative, inspiring, forceful, charismatic** and **bold**. These are typical positive traits of the Wands suit. They are prime examples of its dynamic fire energy, but they also reflect the character of a King. Kings are active and outgoing. They want to impact the world through the force of their personality.

## Queens

The Queen of Wands is **attractive, wholehearted, energetic, cheerful** and **self-Assured**. These are also Wands qualities. This Queen is upbeat and lively, but she does not wield her personality as a force directed outward. Queens express their suits from the inside, setting a tone without imposing it.



## Knights

Knights are extremists; they express their suit qualities to the maximum. Such excessive feelings and behavior can be either positive or negative depending on the circumstances.

For example, the Knight of Pentacles has an excess of **caution** - a trait typical of the steady, conservative Pentacles nature. This Knight prefers to check and double-check everything. He always proceeds slowly before committing himself - the kind of person you would ask to fold your parachute or guide you through a mine field.

On the other hand, you could also say the Knight of Pentacles is **unadventurous**. He will never double his money in two months through a risky investment or propose a surprise trip to Paris on a whim. Such daring moves are not in his nature. You would have to check with the Knight of Wands for that!



The keywords for the Knights are positive and negative word pairs (**cautious/unadventurous**). In readings, you must consider both views when interpreting a Knight. Does he represent a beneficial or harmful approach? The other factors in the reading (and your own honesty!) will help you decide.

## Pages

Each page shows a happy child holding the token of his suit. He is fascinated by his plaything. The Pages inspire us to enjoy their interests with them. The Page of Swords can represent the thrill of intellectual discovery or other mental challenges.

Pages also encourage you to "Go for it!" Children do not hesitate when they want something. They just reach out and grab. If you want what the Page is offering, don't be afraid. Seize the day!

If the Page of Cups is your card of the day, and a fellow student smiles at you, take this opportunity for friendship. Strike up a conversation, or suggest getting a cup of coffee after class. This Page encourages you to bring some love and sharing into your life.

In many tarot systems, the court cards represent people of a certain age and type. For example, the Queen of Swords is often a divorced woman. To me, this way of looking at court cards is too limiting. Traits are not limited to certain groups. The King's approach may be more typically masculine, but his style is also available to women. Children are more often playful, but that doesn't mean that a Page must always represent a child.

A court card in a reading is showing you how a certain approach to life is (or could be) impacting your situation. There are several possibilities.

First, a court card shows you a side of you that is being expressed or seeking expression. It may be a side you value, or one you neglect. It may be an approach you recognize, or one you deny. How you view it depends on your question, the other cards and the situation.

Let's say you are trying to decide whether or not to enter into a business partnership. If you draw the King of Swords, you could interpret him as a way to act in this situation - to be fair and ethical, to review everything carefully and to articulate your needs. If you are already taking this approach, the King of Swords affirms your position, but, if you are lying or hiding something, this card asks you to reconsider.

A court card can also represent another person. If you look at a court card and say to yourself, "I know who that is!" then it probably does represent that person. It may also indicate someone of whom you are not yet aware.

Let's say you have met someone who is very romantic. You spend long hours together and connect on a deep level. In a reading, the Knight of Cups could represent this new lover, but, since he is a Knight, you should look at this relationship closely.





What are you hoping to experience with your lover? You may be enjoying the romance, but are you also looking for dependability and commitment? The Knight of Cups is a signal to you that this relationship may be lopsided: abundant in intimate sharing, but deficient in other ways.

Finally, a court card can reflect the general atmosphere. Sometimes, an environment seems to take on a personality of its own - one that matches a court card type.

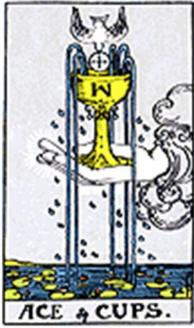
Let's say you consulted the tarot to find out about the group house you just joined and drew the Queen of Pentacles. You wonder if you will get along with your future housemates. This card could be telling you that the atmosphere will be nurturing. Your housemates will be warm and generous with a sensible approach to problems.



On the other hand, you may meet someone in the house who is similar to the Queen of Pentacles, or you may be like her yourself in this situation. Such is the subtle play of the tarot!

The court cards have a human dimension that the other cards do not, so they can give you clear messages about who you are and what you want. The trick is to understand yourself and the situation so you can accept the messages when they come.

# ACE OF CUPS



**MEANING**  
EMOTIONAL FORCE  
INTUITION  
INTIMACY  
LOVE

**ACTIONS**  
using emotional force  
developing intuition  
experiencing intimacy  
proceeding with love

## DESCRIPTION

The Ace of Cups shows is a symbol of possibility in the area of deep feelings, intimacy, attunement, compassion and love. In readings, it shows that a seed of emotional awareness has been planted in your life although you may not yet recognize it. When the seed sprouts, it could take almost any form. It might be an attraction, strong feeling, intuitive knowing, or sympathetic reaction. On the outside, it could be an offer, gift, opportunity, encounter or synchronistic event.

When you see this Ace, examine your life to see how its loving energy could work for you. This card often means that love is the essence of the situation. It may or may not be romantic love. Look for ways in which you can begin to connect with others. Do you have someone to forgive, or do you want to ask for forgiveness? Can you set aside your anger and find peace? Would you like to drop your reserve and let your feelings show? The Ace of Cups tells you that your time is coming.

This card also suggests inner attunement and spirituality. Cups are the suit of the heart, and the Ace stands for the direct knowing that comes from the heart. Trust what your feelings are telling you. Seek out ways to explore your consciousness and your connections with Spirit. Allow the power of your emotions to guide you in a new direction. Embrace the love that is the Ace of Cups.

## TWO OF CUPS



MEANING  
CONNECTION  
TRUCE  
ATTRACTION

ACTIONS  
making a connection  
calling a truce  
acknowledging an attraction

### DESCRIPTION

To understand the 2 of Cups, all you have to do is look at its image. A man and a woman are gazing at each other, ready to share their cups (emotions). Here is the very picture of romantic and sexual attraction. The energy between these two is almost palpable. The Two of Cups shows the beauty and power that is created when two come together. This is the card that lovers want to see, and, in fact, the Two of Cups is the minor arcana equivalent of the Lovers in many ways.

The Two of Cups has a deeper meaning as well. Whenever two forces are drawn together, there is the potential for bonding. This card can stand for the union of any two entities - people, groups, ideas, or talents. In readings, the Two of Cups tells you to look for connections in your life, especially those that are one-on-one. Now is *not* the time to separate or stay apart. It is the time to join with another and work as a partnership. If you are in conflict, look for truce and the chance to forgive and be forgiven. If you are struggling with two choices or tendencies within yourself, seek to reconcile them.

Usually, the Two of Cups is welcome in a reading, but it can also sound a note of warning. The energy of Two can be very compelling. If you have ever stood next to two people in love, you know what I'm talking about. They create between themselves a world of their own that can feel exclusionary to outsiders. "Two's company; three's a crowd." Make sure that the tendency to pair off is not creating disharmony in your situation.

## THREE OF CUPS



**MEANING**  
EXUBERANCE  
FRIENDSHIP  
COMMUNITY

**ACTIONS**  
feeling exuberant  
enjoying friendship  
valuing community

### DESCRIPTION

There are three cards in the tarot that focus on the group - each from a different point of view. For the Hierophant, it's the formal approach. For the Three of Pentacles it's teamwork, and for the Three of Cups, it's emotions. What does it feel like to join with others? What is friendship and community? These are the questions answered by the Three of Cups.

On this card, we see three women dancing together in a circle. Their arms reach out to each other to connect their feelings (Cups). In many settings, women create and nurture the social glue that bonds people together. These dancing women are a symbol of coming together in love. (Of course, these feelings do not only relate to woman.)

In readings, the Three of Cups can signify a friend or the feelings associated with friendship. This card can represent community - the network of support created when we interact with others. It can be any group in which the members feel a bond. When you see the Three of Cups, examine your attachments to the groups in your life from an emotional point of view. Consider reaching out to give or receive help. This card stands for all forms of support, including formal aid such as counseling and other social services.

The women on the Three of Cups also express joy and high spirits. Such feelings are not limited to groups, but can be especially strong there. Celebrations spontaneously arise when people feel connected, loved and secure. The Three of Cups can stand for a mood or experience that makes you feel like dancing and singing.

## FOUR OF CUPS



### MEANING

SELF-ABSORPTION  
APATHY  
GOING WITHIN

### ACTIONS

being self-absorbed  
feeling apathetic  
going within

### DESCRIPTION

Those who enjoy kayaking and other river sports know that there are areas of the river where the water flows in a dangerous circular motion. Instead of moving forward, it turns back on itself. In the same way, we can get stuck in *emotional* hydraulics. The Four of Cups represents such periods of self-absorption.

If you are self-absorbed, you tend to refer everything back to yourself - your own interests and desires. On this card, we see a man who is unaware of the cup being offered to him. He misses this gift because he's turned within. In readings, the Four of Cups can indicate that you are wrapped up for the moment in your own world.

In some situations, you *must* focus on yourself. When life is too stressful, you need to devote time and energy to yourself or you will feel swamped. The Four of Cups can represent a positive period of self-reflection and renewal. By taking the time to go within to dream, muse and reflect, you restore your emotional balance.

The Four of Cups is sometimes a sign of apathy. You don't really care much about anything. Your life seems stale and flat because you've lost interest in the activities that used to bring you pleasure. You're not motivated to make much of an effort in any direction. At such times, the Four of Cups can show that you're stuck emotionally. You need something to focus on that will so engage your mind and heart that your path down river becomes clear again. Open yourself to your surroundings. Soon you will be on your way again.

## FIVE OF CUPS



### MEANING

LOSS  
BEREAVEMENT  
REGRET

### ACTIONS

suffering a loss  
feeling bereft  
feeling regret

### DESCRIPTION

The Five of Cups is about loss. On this card, we see a figure draped in black and covered in grief. He so dominates the card that it is hard to look beyond him. The Five of Cups refers to that time when the pain of a loss is most acute. This man is looking only at the overturned cups in front of him. For now, he cannot acknowledge the two cups that are still standing. Later, when he has healed somewhat, he will be able to see all that remains.

In readings, the Five of Cups can alert you to the possibility of a loss and its associated emotions - sorrow, regret, denial. The loss could be great or small. It could be tangible (money, possession, relationship, work), or intangible (dream, opportunity, prospect, reputation). You may already know what this card represents, but, if not, use it as a warning to help you avoid a loss, or at least reduce its toll.

You may feel discouraged by this card, but it does have a positive side. Every loss opens new possibilities for growth because every loss initiates change. Loss hurts because it is our emotional resistance to change. No matter how much we accept intellectually that we must go with the flow, if that flow separates us from what we love, our feelings say, "No!"

In a story from *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, the master Hakuin is falsely accused of fathering a child. His reputation in the village is ruined, but he accepts this *loss* and takes tender care of the child for a year. Suddenly, the real father appears, and Hakuin willingly yields the child to its parents, accepting loss again. We who are not Zen masters may not flow quite so lightly with events, but we can learn from this story. The more we struggle to hold on to what is gone, the more we suffer.

## SIX OF CUPS



### MEANING

GOOD WILL  
INNOCENCE  
CHILDHOOD

### ACTIONS

experiencing good will  
enjoying innocence  
focusing on childhood

### DESCRIPTION

In the film *Parenthood* there is a scene in which all the members of a large family come together to witness a birth. As the camera moves from person to person, we see as if for the first time the uniqueness of each one. The people talk and laugh, but suddenly their actions seem anything but ordinary. There is a sweetness in the air that builds until we see its very embodiment - the new baby. This is the spirit of the Six of Cups.

It is a truism that there is violence, anger and mean-spiritedness in the world. Certainly there is enough of this, but there is also much good will and caring. A mother hands a drink to her child. A friend lends his car for the weekend. A worker fills in for a sick colleague. Small gestures, barely noticed, but so important. The Six of Cups is a card of simple goodness. It encourages you to be kind, generous and forgiving.

The Six of Cups also represents innocence - a word with many shades of meaning. You can be innocent in the strictly legal sense of lack of guilt. You can be innocent of the truth - unaware of some secret. You can be lacking in deceit or corruption - innocent of ulterior motive. Finally, you can be virtuous or chaste. These are all possibilities that can apply to the Six of Cups, depending on the situation.

Notice that the two figures on the Six of Cups appear to be children. Often this card represents a baby or young child. In a larger sense, it embraces all of childhood and the feelings we associate with youth (ideally!) - being carefree, playful, secure and loved. Children are our treasure, and the sweetness of the Six of Cups is a quality to be treasured as well.

## SEVEN OF CUPS



**MEANING**  
WISHFUL THINKING  
OPTIONS  
DISSIPATION

**ACTIONS**  
indulging in wishful thinking  
having many options  
falling into dissipation

### DESCRIPTION

As I gaze around the room right now, taking in the casual disarray, I know the Seven of Cups speaks to me - for better or worse. It says, "Yes, order and hard work are nice, but ... isn't it more fun to just let everything go?" Letting everything go is what the Seven of Cups is all about.

It is easy to worship the gods of efficiency and neatness. We like trim lawns, alphabetized filing systems and time management - the world of the Emperor. We admire order in all its forms and want everything to be just right. The Seven of Cups provides the balance. This card stands for all that is sloppy, impractical and lax.

When the Seven of Cups appears in a reading, it is important to look carefully at how disordered your situation is. Is everything too controlled and regular? Perhaps you need to let things fall apart a little. When a rigid system breaks up, there can be a tremendous release of creativity. The man on the Seven of Cups is amazed by all the options he has.

On the other hand, if you are in a chaotic situation, some tightening may be necessary. No one is happy and productive in a crazy environment. Regularity gives structure to life. Taken to an extreme, the looseness of the Seven of Cups can lead to harmful patterns of decadence, addiction and self-indulgence.

Sometimes the laziness applies to your thoughts and dreams. It is easy to wish for something, but not so easy to make that wish come true. When you see this card, make sure that you are backing up your plans with work and effort. Tighten up your life and commit yourself to doing what it takes to reach your goals ... even if it means (sigh) cleaning house.

## EIGHT OF CUPS



**MEANING**  
DEEPER MEANING  
MOVING ON  
WEARINESS

**ACTIONS**  
seeking deeper meaning  
moving on  
growing weary

### DESCRIPTION

A psychologist friend once told me that when a group is ready to break up, the members give off subtle signs to that effect. They display a certain restlessness. They arrive late to meetings, communicate less and seem distracted. At some level the participants know it is time to move on, but they need a while to work up to that final step.

This process applies in many situations where an ending is approaching. Nothing is permanent in life. Sooner or later, everything slips away...or we slip away from it. The Eight of Cups stands for those moments when we realize, once and for all, that the past is gone. What was true is no longer true. The signs of change are in our face, and we must accept them. It is time to move on.

Moving on can mean a physical change such as leaving a job, location or relationship. It can also mean an inner change - releasing old patterns, especially those that have dominated our thoughts and emotions. On the Eight of Cups, we see a man leaving on a journey. He has turned away from his old feelings (cups/river) to strike out on a new path. Sometimes moving on can mean searching for a deeper truth or reality. One day we wake up and realize that we have been asleep in our own lives - living a dream that no longer satisfies.

Some changes can be wearying. Endings are not always easy. One of the signs of a readiness to leave is lack of energy. When you feel tired and dispirited, you know that something is wrong, and it's time for a new direction. Reexamine your life and your priorities. You will find where in your life you need to move on.

## NINE OF CUPS



**MEANING**  
WISH FULFILLMENT  
SATISFACTION  
SENSUAL PLEASURE

**ACTIONS**  
having your wish fulfilled  
feeling satisfied  
enjoying sensual pleasure

### DESCRIPTION

The man on the Nine of Cups reminds me of "the cat who ate the canary." Now, a canary is a pet strictly off limits to hungry felines. Any cat who manages to catch one is going to feel pretty smug about it. This is the feeling tone of the Nine of Cups - pure indulgence and self-satisfaction.

At the physical level, the Nine of Cups is a sign of delight in all the senses. Sights, sounds, tastes, feelings. This card encourages you to seek out pleasure and enjoy your body in every way. You can commune with the natural world as well - the body of Mother Earth. She, too, delights in sharing her abundance.

At the personal level, the Nine of Cups indicates contentment with the way things are. Notice how the man is seated confidently with his arms folded and a smile on his face. He has everything he wants and couldn't be happier about it. "See all my cups!" he seems to say. "Aren't they great?"

Sometimes it's wonderful to sit back and revel in the knowledge that all's right with the world. But a word of caution. You may be tempted to indulge yourself at the cost of someone else (like our mischievous cat!). This may feel great at the time, but sooner or later the feathers around your mouth will be discovered, and regret will set in. Pursuit of pleasure without regard to consequences is never satisfying in the long run.

In many tarot traditions, the Nine of Cups is known as the Wish Card. It shows your wish will come true. A wonderful prospect, but remember your fairy tale lessons. You must be sure you know what you really want and accept the responsibilities that go with your wish. If that is the case, then enjoy your good fortune!

## TEN OF CUPS



### MEANING

JOY  
PEACE  
FAMILY

### ACTIONS

feeling joy  
enjoying peace  
looking to the family

### DESCRIPTION

On the Ten of Cups we see a loving couple with their carefree children. The family home is in the background, surrounded by trees and water. A rainbow of cups is overhead blessing the scene. A cynic might scoff at this romantic picture, but I see it as a symbol of what our emotional life could be at its best. The feelings represented here are an ideal that is within the reach of each of us.

First, there is joy. Joy goes beyond happiness, contentment, enjoyment. It is the feeling that comes when we know at the deepest level that we are one with all that is, and it is good.

Unfortunately, this is not exactly a common feeling! Too often we are blinded by the trials of life and overwhelmed by their challenges. Joy exists, though, and is our birthright.

Peace is another aspect of the Ten of Cups - the serenity that comes when all elements are in harmony. There is inner peace and outer peace which are reflections of each other. When you are in harmony with yourself, you *experience* harmony in your environment. When you see the Ten of Cups, know that an end to hostility is possible. If there is fighting around you, it may cease. If you are at war with yourself, you may find peace.

In readings, this card often signals a time of abundant blessings. It tells you that you can reach for the fulfillment you deserve, and it will come to you. Look for ways to realize joy and create peace. You may find the key to happiness in your family. Your family is the group of people you are attached to emotionally - for better or worse! If there is trouble in your family right now, work to restore harmony. The time is right for greater closeness.

## PAGE OF CUPS



### MEANING

BE EMOTIONAL  
BE INTUITIVE  
BE INTIMATE  
BE LOVING

### ACTIONS

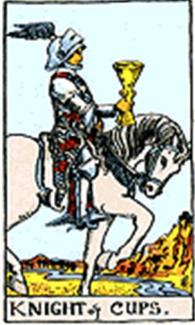
Be Emotional  
Be Intuitive  
Be Intimate  
Be Loving

### DESCRIPTION

The Page of Cups is Cupid bringing you opportunities for love. He delivers real chances to experience romance, deep feelings and the inner life - the wonders of the Cups suit. In readings, this Page suggest that an opening may appear that stirs your emotions, pulls at your heartstrings or brings you great joy. When you see such a chance, act on it!

The Page of Cups can also stand for a child or young-at-heart adult whose interactions with you involve emotional needs, moodiness, love, intimacy or spirituality. Sometimes the Page of Cups implies that your entire situation is suffused with the spirit of love and emotion. At such times, feel free to express and enjoy your feelings with light-hearted abandon.

# KNIGHT OF CUPS



Meaning  
ROMANTIC  
IMAGINATIVE  
SENSITIVE  
REFINED  
INTROSPECTIVE

ACTIONS  
ROMANTIC toward the Situation  
IMAGINATIVE to what to resolve  
SENSITIVE to hearing other  
REFINED what you seek  
INTROSPECTIVE To yourself

## DESCRIPTION

On the positive side, the Knight of Cups is a sensitive soul. He is a poet - a lover of all things romantic and refined. He uses his imagination in wondrous ways and taps the deepest levels of emotion. He knows how to create beauty and share it with others. On the negative side, this Knight is prone to flights of fancy and illusion. His melodramatic moods are legendary, and his emotions often get the better of him. He's too temperamental and takes offense easily. He can't stand unpleasantness and will always let others deal with it.

In readings, a Knight of Cups shows that his sensitive style is involved in the situation as an aspect of you, someone else or the atmosphere in general. You need to ask yourself, "Is this Knight's energy helping or hurting?"

If his style is evident, then balance is needed. Are your feelings appropriate or excessive? Are your daydreams unrealistic? Is someone's moodiness driving you crazy? Is your home life ruled by emotion rather than common sense? It may be time for a change.

If this Knight's energy is missing, a dose of poetry may be called for. Are you too restrained? Express your feelings. Do you always make the most practical choice? Go for the extravagant one instead. Do you avoid introspection? Take some time to look within and think about your life. Let the Knight of Cups introduce you to his world of romance and beauty.

# QUEEN OF CUPS



## MEANING

LOVING  
TENDERHEARTED  
INTUITIVE  
PSYCHIC  
SPIRITUAL

## ACTIONS

Loving  
Tenderhearted  
Intuitive  
Psychic  
Spiritual

## DESCRIPTION

The personality of the Queen of Cups combines the positive water energy of the Cups suit with the inward focus of a Queen. Because she has a sweet, loving and sensitive nature, the Queen of Cups has a kind word for everyone and never reacts with anger or impatience. There is a gentleness about her that soothes and calms. Compassion is her watchword. Her reactions to the world are guided by her feelings. In all matters, she lets her heart lead the way. She senses emotional currents and knows what others are experiencing without having to ask. She is never moody, but understands moods and their influence. She trusts her intuition and so is more open to knowledge that comes from within herself and beyond. She is often moved by the beauty and tragedy of life. The Queen of Cups feels deeply and has a reverence for all aspects of God's creation. Her love includes and embraces everyone and everything.

In readings, the Queen of Cups asks you to *think and feel* as she does. For example: Are you aware of the emotional climate? Are you feeling loving? Do you trust your heart? Have you received an intuitive message? Have you been moved by another's pain?

This Queen can also represent a man or woman who is like her, or an atmosphere of gentle love, acceptance and respect for feelings. In a reading, she tells you that her special energy has meaning for you at this time. Let yourself be inspired by this Queen in whatever form she appears in your life.

# KING OF CUPS



## MEANING

WISE  
CALM  
DIPLOMATIC  
CARING  
TOLERANT

## ACTIONS

Wise gives good advice  
Calm maintains his or her composure  
Diplomatic can balance the needs of many people  
Caring responds to emotional needs  
Tolerant has open and broad-minded views

## DESCRIPTION

The personality of the King of Cups is a combination of the positive water energy of the Cups suit and the active, outward focus of a King. He is wise and understanding, with a deep knowledge of the world that comes from the heart. He is a teacher and way-shower who guides his students with loving attention. He cares about others sincerely and always responds to their needs with compassion. He heals with a gentle touch and a quiet word. He is calm and relaxed in all situations, seeming to know intuitively what is called for at any moment. Others turn to him for advice because they know he will listen attentively. There is always a peacefulness around him that others respond to. He is tolerant of all points of view and shows patience in the most trying circumstances. He gives others freedom to grow and develop in their own ways without asking anything in return.

In readings, the King of Cups asks you to take the kinds of *actions* he might take. For example: responding calmly in a crisis, using diplomacy rather than force, reaching out to help, or accepting a different point of view. This King can also represent a man or woman who acts as he does, or an atmosphere of caring, tolerance and understanding. In a reading, he tells you that his special energy has meaning for you at this time. Let yourself be inspired by this King in whatever form he appears in your life.

# ACE OF WANDS



**MEANING**  
CREATIVE FORCE  
ENTHUSIASM  
CONFIDENCE  
COURAGE

**ACTIONS**  
using creative force  
showing enthusiasm  
having confidence  
proceeding with courage

## DESCRIPTION

The Ace of Wands is a symbol of possibility in the area of creativity, excitement, adventure, courage and personal power. In readings, it shows that a seed of bold enthusiasm has been planted in your life although you may not yet recognize it. When the seed sprouts, it could take almost any form. It might be a creative idea, surge of optimism or need to act boldly. On the outside, it could be an offer, gift, opportunity, encounter or synchronistic event.

When you see this Ace, examine your life to see how its potent, confident energy could work for you. Be daring and brave. Sometimes you have to risk to get what you want. Look for the path that will excite you and push you beyond your limits. Seize the initiative, and let your enthusiasm take you to new heights. Wands are the suit of individual power and fulfillment. This Ace tells you that a time of passion is beginning. You will be able to assert your best for all to see.

The Ace of Wands is also the card of creativity. Under its influence, you can become a conduit for inspiration and invention. Forget tired, worn-out solutions. You have the chance to be original. Trust your own creative potential, and there will be no end to what you can achieve.

## TWO OF WANDS



**MEANING**  
PERSONAL POWER  
BOLDNESS  
ORIGINALITY

**ACTIONS**  
having personal power  
being bold  
showing originality

### DESCRIPTION

The Two of Wands glorifies individual courage and greatness. This card taps the same energy as the Magician, but with one important difference. The Magician represents the archetype of power - the impersonal energy of creativity and strength. The Two of Wands stands for that power brought down to Earth and made personal. Personal power is an invigorating force that fills you up and lends you the courage to be great. A powerful person is like a magnet that attracts all those within a certain area.

True power always comes from the Divine. It passes through us and then flows out into the world. When we understand this relationship, we are blessed because this flow brings with it a tremendous feeling of expansion and fulfillment. We feel as if we can accomplish anything. Problems develop when we forget that we are not the *source* of power, only its conduit. We must be careful not to let the intoxicating feelings that come with power overwhelm our good sense and blind us to our true desires and intentions.

In readings, the Two of Wands indicates that power is a major issue in the situation. You or someone else has it or wants it. When you see this card, look carefully at your goals and activities to make sure you are using power wisely. Don't support power for its own sake, but enjoy it when it serves your worthwhile purposes. Take this gift and use it to mold your environment in positive ways.

The Two of Wands can also stand for an extra dose of daring and inventiveness. When you see this card, trust that the time is right for the bold, creative move that will knock their socks off. Forget subtlety and old, tired approaches. Allow yourself free rein and you'll be amazed at the results.

# THREE OF WANDS



**MEANING**  
EXPLORATION  
FORESIGHT  
LEADERSHIP

**ACTIONS**  
exploring the unknown  
having foresight  
demonstrating leadership

## DESCRIPTION

On the Three of Wands, we see a figure standing on a cliff looking out over the sea to distant mountains. From this height, he sees all that lies ahead. This is a card of vision and foresight. When we want to see farther, we climb higher. By going up, we increase our range and remove ourselves from the immediate situation. We detach and gain perspective.

In readings, the Three of Wands can tell you to take the long view. Don't react to the heat of the moment, but step back and reconsider. See how the present fits into the greater picture. This card asks you to be a visionary - to dream beyond current limitations. It can indicate premonitions or other intuitions about what is to come.

Taking the long view is an aspect of leadership - another meaning of the Three of Wands. When we see far, we have the knowledge to guide others to their best future. Someone who knows the way can show it to those who follow. When you see the Three of Wands, know that now is the time to accept your vision and be confident that you can lead others to it.

A leader not only sees far, but he is willing to go there first, if necessary. The Three of Wands is also a card of exploration. Compare this figure to the Fool who is also on a cliff edge. The Fool steps out in innocence, not realizing he is going to fall to his fate. The adventurer on the Three of Wands is also willing to step out, but with full awareness of what he is doing. His courage is more informed, if less spontaneous. The Three of Wands encourages you to move fearlessly into new areas. Let the ships on your horizon take you far out into unknown seas.

## FOUR OF WANDS



**MEANING**  
CELEBRATION  
FREEDOM  
EXCITEMENT

**ACTIONS**  
celebrating rejoicing over a happy event  
seeking freedom  
feeling excited

### DESCRIPTION

Do you remember the thrill you felt as a child seeing your birthday cake alight with candles? Or waiting to get on a roller coaster? Or slow-dancing with your first love? This bubbly, high-as-a-kite feeling lies at the heart of the Four of Wands. As a toddler, my son expressed it through his "Happy Dance." He'd run in place faster and faster, barely able to control his delight. Of course, as mature(!) adults, we contain this feeling, but it never leaves completely. Each of us still has an excited, little kid inside waiting to come out.

In readings, the Four of Wands often represents the events and experiences that generate excitement. These vary from person to person, but the stirring feelings are the same. Sometimes such times arrive unexpectedly. The Four of Wands can signal a surprise or spontaneous thrill. Other times this card represents planned celebrations, such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, and victory parties. These events have their solemn side, but they are also a chance to feel the joy of living.

The Four of Wands often means freedom. Freedom can take many forms, but it always brings with it an exhilarating feeling. When we break the bonds that bind us, whether physical, mental or emotional, we feel triumphant and able to move on to a new period of growth and happiness. If you feel trapped or restricted right now, use the energy of the Four of Wands to launch you into freedom. Do not be afraid to claim the open vistas that are rightfully yours.

## FIVE OF WANDS



**MEANING**  
DISAGREEMENT  
COMPETITION  
HASSLES

**ACTIONS**  
disagreeing feeling everyone is at cross-purposes  
experiencing competition  
experiencing hassles

### DESCRIPTION

You wake up and stub your toe going to the bathroom. You're in the shower and find out there's no soap. At breakfast, you get juice on your shirt. When you get to the car, your battery is dead. It's going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day [\[note\]](#). You're beset by hassles - those petty annoyances that are infuriating because they are so minor.

The Five of Wands stands for times when your environment seems to be fighting you. Nothing flows smoothly; everyone is working at cross-purposes. The figures on this card are all battling at each other. There is no coordinated effort, no agreement. When this card shows up, be prepared for a bumpy ride. You're going to need extra patience and perseverance to get to the point where you can accomplish something. The Five of Wands does not represent major blockages, just many small, irritating ones.

This card also stands for competition. In the right circumstances, competition is useful. It fosters extra effort, generates excitement and encourages the best. When the Five of Wands appears in a reading, check for competitive elements. You may be involved in a contest, race or game. You may discover you have rivals who are opposing you or challenging your position. You may feel disheartened (or invigorated!) by the dog-eat-dog environment you find yourself in. At its heart, competition is divisive. Make sure it is helping you and others reach your true goals. Otherwise, work toward cooperation.

## SIX OF WANDS



**MEANING**  
TRIUMPH  
ACCLAIM  
PRIDE

**ACTIONS**  
triumphing having your day in the sun  
receiving acclaim  
feeling pride

### DESCRIPTION

The Six of Wands is the minor arcana counterpart of the Chariot. Both of these cards represent moments of victory and triumph. Sometimes in life, all we want to do is win - to be number one. You can see this dream in the faces of athletes, politicians, and other champions as they step into the winner's circle. It's all been worthwhile. I'm the best. I've won!

In readings, the Six of Wands appears when you have been working hard toward a goal, and success is finally within reach. The recognition you have sought so long is yours. Now you can receive the acclaim, honor and reward that you deserve. If you do not feel close to victory now, know that it is on its way provided you are doing all you can to make it happen. The victory of this card does not have to involve beating someone else. You can triumph over yourself, the environment, or the odds.

The Six of Wands also represents a healthy self-esteem. Feeling good about your accomplishments is an important part of success, but too much pride can lead to arrogance and self-inflation. When you see this card, check that you are not feeling superior to others. It is easy to forget that individual achievement is not really individual at all. Our talents begin in the Divine, develop with the love and support of others, and only in the end express *through* us. How can we indulge in excess pride?

In *The Purgatorio* Dante considers pride the first and greatest sin that must be overcome by souls reaching toward heaven. When the Six of Wands appears, enjoy your triumph, feel good about yourself, but remember Dante's words:

O gifted men, vainglorious for first place,  
how short a time the laurel crown stays green  
A breath of wind is all there is to fame  
here upon earth: it blows this way and that,  
and when it changes quarter it changes name.

## SEVEN OF WANDS



MEANING  
AGGRESSION  
DEFIANCE  
CONVICTION

ACTIONS  
being aggressive  
being defiant  
showing conviction

### DESCRIPTION

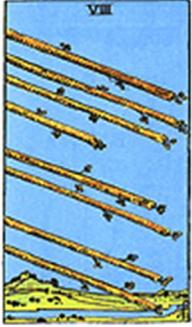
The Seven of Wands is all about taking a stand. Taking a stand is a forceful act that changes the energy flow of the world for good or ill. Most of the time we flow with our lives as if on a river. Events and feelings carry us forward with little effort. Sometimes, though, we are not content to drift. We want to resist the flow, or change its course entirely!

The figure on the Seven of Wands appears to be in a battle. He's either attacking or under attack, probably both. When we decide to take a stand, we set in motion an energy of resistance. When we take up a firm position, others do the same. The Seven of Wands stands for aggression *and* defiance because they are two sides of the same coin. You attack; your opponent defends. He counterattacks; you defend.

Some battles are worth fighting, others just cause trouble. If you are involved in a conflict, ask yourself if it's worth the struggle. Is it important? Does it have value? Will the outcome serve you or others? If so, be bold and aggressive. Defend your position. Refuse to yield! If not, then consider letting the conflict go. Be honest with yourself about this. You will be tempted to hold onto your position, especially if you have invested much time and energy into it. Don't let battle lines be drawn unless the war is worth fighting.

The Seven of Wands can also indicate strong convictions. In order to take a firm stand, you must believe in your position and yourself. You'll need integrity and strength of character to see you through. If your cause is just, use the energy of the Seven of Wands to make a difference.

# EIGHT OF WANDS



**MEANING**  
QUICK ACTION  
CONCLUSION  
NEWS

**ACTIONS**  
taking quick action  
coming to a conclusion  
receiving news

## DESCRIPTION

In the film *The Ten Commandments*, Moses touches his staff to water to set a plague in motion. His staff is the agent of power that initiates events. Moses' staff reminds me of the wands on this card. They are a symbol of the onset of action and its effects. Before acting, we think, imagine, speculate, talk and dream. This is the realm of air - the sky. Then, finally, we decide to make our move. We bring our ideas down to earth and put them into action.

In readings, the Eight of Wands is often a sign that *now* is the time to declare yourself. All the elements are ready and will work for you as long as you don't hesitate. The iron is hot - so strike! If events are in motion, they will proceed rapidly. You may feel caught in a whirlwind, but soon the dust will settle, and you see how your plans have fared.

The Eight of Wands also stands for the arrival of news or information. You may see or hear something important. The news could show up in a disguised form, so stay alert. Pay attention to everything that comes your way for a while.

This card also signifies endings. Sooner or later all activities run their course. The eight wands on this card not only symbolize putting events into motion, but also bringing them to a close. They appear to be ending their flight by coming down to earth. If you see the Eight of Wands in a reading, it may be time to conclude whatever you have been doing. Celebrate the past, but prepare to move on to something new.

## NINE OF WANDS



### MEANING

DEFENSIVENESS  
PERSEVERANCE  
STAMINA

### ACTIONS

defending yourself  
persevering  
showing stamina

### DESCRIPTION

The figure on the Nine of Wands has definitely been through tough times. His head and arm are bandaged, and he's leaning on a "crutch." This fighter has seen some battles, but he's still standing! He's hurt, but he's not down. When we have had a bad experience, we feel weary and battle-scarred. Even if we aren't hurt physically, our psyches are wounded. Our openness, innocence and trust are gone, replaced by wary defensiveness.

In readings, the Nine of Wands can be a warning that you must proceed carefully. Keep a watchful eye because there is the possibility that you will be hurt. If you have already been burned, you know what this man is feeling. Life's lessons can be hard sometimes, especially when hopes have been dashed. It is natural to feel defensive at such times, but try to avoid becoming bitter. Your experience has wounded you, but it has strengthened you as well.

Strength is the other aspect of the Nine of Wands. This fighter is tough! He has the physical stamina and the inner drive to persist despite all setbacks. In *The Terminator*, Arnold Schwarzenegger plays an android from the future who never gives up. In the end he is nothing but a wire framework with glowing eyes, but he still keeps coming - dragging himself along the floor to his goal. This is the spirit of the Nine of Wands. This card tells you to keep going no matter what. Even if everyone and everything seems to be against you right now, don't give up. Within you are the hidden reserves you need to prevail.

## TEN OF WANDS



**MEANING**  
OVEREXTENDING  
BURDENS  
STRUGGLE

**ACTIONS**  
overextending  
feeling burdened  
struggling

### DESCRIPTION

On the Ten of Wands, we see a bent figure trying to carry ten heavy poles. They are ranged so closely in front of him that he can't even see where he's going. Nothing exists for this man except his burdens and responsibilities. How true this is for so many today! We take on so much, trying to do all the things that need to be done. We think that if we can hang on until the weekend (or vacation, or end of the semester) then we can finally relax. The weekend comes, and the overload continues.

In readings, the Ten of Wands can be a sign that you are pushing yourself too hard. If your days are an endless round of duties and tasks, then you need to lighten up for the sake of your health and well-being. Cut back, and take on only those activities that give you pleasure. If you love your work, but it's all-consuming, you may be too narrowly focused in one area. Balance your life with other interests.

The Ten of Wands can also stand for times when you have to assume the lion's share of responsibility. You may be blamed or left holding the bag. On the other hand, you may have to step forward and take charge because you are the only one capable enough. Rightly or wrongly, the cleanup will fall to you.

The Ten of Wands indicates that your life is going to be tougher than usual for a time. You will have to fight uphill for every little gain. Each step will feel like a struggle. When you see this card, be kind to yourself. Lighten the load wherever you can, and let others help you. You don't have to handle everything yourself.

## PAGE OF WANDS



### MEANING

BE CREATIVE  
BE ENTHUSIASTIC  
BE CONFIDENT  
BE COURAGEOUS

### ACTIONS

Be Creative take a novel approach  
Be Enthusiastic jump in wholeheartedly  
Be Confident tackle a challenge  
Be Courageous take a risk

### DESCRIPTION

The Page of Wands is a messenger bringing you opportunities for passion. He delivers real chances to experience creativity, courage, charm and inspiration - the wonders of the Wands suit. In readings, this Page suggests that an opening may appear that excites you, feeds your talents, or dares you to be great. When you see such a chance, act on it!

The Page of Wands can also stand for a child or young-at-heart adult whose interactions with you involve independence, high energy, risky behavior, or shared enthusiasms. Sometimes the Page of Wands implies that your entire situation is suffused with the spirit of excitement and adventure. At such times, feel free to express your individuality and power with light-hearted abandon.

# KNIGHT OF WANDS



## MEANING

CHARMING  
SELF-CONFIDENT  
DARING  
ADVENTUROUS  
PASSIONATE

## ACTIONS

Charming is physically attractive  
Self-confident. lacks self-doubt  
Daring is reckless and rash  
Adventurous.... and new experiences  
Passionate angers easily

## DESCRIPTION

On the positive side, the Knight of Wands is full of energy and life. He's never afraid to try something new and will reach for all the gusto he can. Others may shake their heads at his crazy stunts, but they still admire his courage and passion. He's sexy and irresistible...always the charmer. On the negative side, this Knight is a little too sure of himself and his abilities. He tends to be shallow and thoughtless. Don't expect a deep commitment from him. He's also reckless and irresponsible. He acts without thinking and constantly gets in trouble because of his temper.

In readings, a Knight of Wands shows that his confident, passionate style is involved in the situation as an aspect of you, someone else or the atmosphere in general. You need to ask yourself, "Is this Knight's energy helping or hurting?"

If his style is evident, then balance is needed. Is your confidence really cockiness? Are you angry and impatient all the time? Are you crazy about someone whom you know is going to break your heart? Is your company rushing into something risky with no preparation? It may be time for a change.

If this Knight's energy is missing, a dose of passion and daring may be called for. Are you in a rut? Try something new. Are you always planning every last detail? Wing it next time. Are you working too hard? Go out and have some fun. Let the Knight of Wands introduce you to his world of adventure, excitement and risk.

# QUEEN OF WANDS



## MEANING

ATTRACTIVE  
WHOLEHEARTED  
ENERGETIC  
CHEERFUL  
SELF-ASSURED

## ACTIONS

Attractive  
is appealing and popular  
Wholehearted  
is loaded with enthusiasm  
Energetic  
leads a busy and active life  
Cheerful  
is optimistic and upbeat  
Self-Assured  
quietly demonstrates self-confidence

## DESCRIPTION

The personality of the Queen of Wands combines the positive fire energy of the Wands suit with the inward focus of a Queen. She is the one voted most popular in her class. She is always attractive and often good-looking in the classical sense. Her warm smile and easygoing manner bring her lots of friends and admirers. Her energy is contagious, and her enthusiasm, total. No matter what the task, she tackles it with wholehearted dedication and commitment. Nothing gets her down. She is always upbeat and cheerful - ready to look for the positive in the situation. Her life is full and busy, and she prefers it that way. She loves to be going and doing. She keeps up this pace because she is radiantly healthy and fit. She is often a good athlete, being naturally strong and coordinated. Although she's never arrogant, the Queen of Wands has a deep faith in her own abilities. Her quiet self-assurance comes from the knowledge that she can accomplish whatever she sets her mind to.

In readings, the Queen of Wands asks you to *think and feel* as she does. For example: Do you feel attractive? Do you believe in yourself? Are you full of energy? Can you shake off the blues? Are you gung ho about life?

This Queen can also represent a man or woman who is like her, or an atmosphere of cheerful and confident enthusiasm. In a reading, she tells you that her special energy has meaning for you at this time. Let yourself be inspired by this Queen in whatever form she appears in your life.

# KING OF WANDS



## MEANING

CREATIVE  
INSPIRING  
FORCEFUL  
CHARISMATIC  
BOLD

## ACTIONS

Creative develops innovative projects and ideas  
Inspiring communicates enthusiasm  
Forceful seems to dominate the environment  
Charismatic is often showy and theatrical  
Bold is intrepid

## DESCRIPTION

The personality of the King of Wands is a combination of the positive fire energy of the Wands suit and the active, outward focus of a King. He is creative and never settles for old, tired approaches. He trusts his originality and allows his inspirations to take form. He's enthusiastic. He steps forward and takes the lead if the opportunity presents itself. Others follow when he shows them the way with confidence. He's forceful in pursuing his goals. He's not a quiet, passive observer unless that suits his purposes. He jumps in and creates results. He's dramatic and exciting. This King is never a wallflower, more often the center of attention. He's bold and daring. He avoids the safe, easy route because he has the energy and assurance to take risks and win. The King of Wands has the courage of his convictions and always believes in himself.

In readings, the King of Wands asks you to take the kinds of *actions* he might take. For example: creating a masterpiece, leading the way, taking a risk, or making a splash. This King can also represent a man or woman who is acting as he does, or an atmosphere of excitement, daring and drama. In a reading, he tells you that his special energy has meaning for you at this time. Let yourself be inspired by this King in whatever form he appears in your life.

# ACE OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
MENTAL FORCE  
TRUTH  
JUSTICE  
FORTITUDE

**ACTIONS**  
using mental force  
having fortitude  
seeking justice  
proceeding with truth

## DESCRIPTION

The Ace of Swords is a symbol of possibility in the area of intelligence, reason, justice, truth, clarity and fortitude. In readings, it shows that a seed of clear understanding has been planted in your life although you may not yet recognize it. When the seed sprouts, it could take almost any form. It might be a compelling idea, desire for the truth, call to justice, or a need to be honest. On the outside, it could be an offer, gift, opportunity, encounter or synchronistic event.

Sometimes this Ace stands for a challenge that will test you in some way. Life never goes smoothly for long. Sooner or later a hurdle shows up, and the Ace of Swords can tell you when one is coming. This card is also a reminder to you to face your challenge, whatever it is, with courage, honesty and a firm resolve. In every challenge, there is opportunity.

When you see the Ace of Swords, examine your life to see how its clean, sharp energy could work for you. Think about your problem objectively. Look for situations that are unjust or confusing and resolve to set them right. Above all else, commit to being honest and ethical. This card tells you that you do have the inner resources to overcome all obstacles and find the truth of your situation. That is the promise of the Ace of Swords.

## TWO OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
BLOCKED EMOTIONS  
AVOIDANCE  
STALEMATE

**ACTIONS**  
blocking emotions  
avoiding the truth  
being at a stalemate

### DESCRIPTION

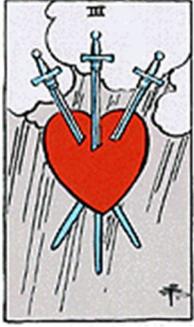
On the Two of Swords, we see a young woman who has put a barrier of swords across her heart. Her rigid posture tells us of her struggle to keep her feelings under control. She is fending off any approach from the outside. "Nothing comes in, and nothing goes out," she seems to say.

The Two of Swords is about the barriers we put up between ourselves and others and those we create within ourselves. Internally, we block off emotions and refuse to feel them. We avoid looking at the truth and pretend that everything's OK. We think one way, but feel another. In countless ways, we divide off parts of ourselves and try to maintain them even when we know they need to be reconciled.

In readings, the Two of Swords often appears when you are not willing to accept some truth about yourself or the situation. What are you really feeling? Are you resisting tender feelings because you might be hurt? Are you furious even though you're smiling? What are you refusing to look at? Notice the blindfold on this woman. She can't look at the truth or even acknowledge that there is trouble.

The most common barrier is a closed heart. When we *cut* ourselves off emotionally, we *sever* the connection that allows our love to flow outward. Sometimes this action is necessary, but it always comes at a great price. Every time we close off our heart, we find it more difficult to open again. Another barrier between people is a deadlocked situation. When two parties are set in their positions - *cut off* from each other - there is a stalemate. To break it, the "opponents" must come out from behind their swords and listen to each other. The lesson of the Two of Swords is that barriers are not the answer. We must stay open if we are to find peace and wholeness.

## THREE OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
HEARTBREAK  
LONELINESS  
BETRAYAL

**ACTIONS**  
feeling heartbreak  
feeling lonely  
experiencing betrayal

### DESCRIPTION

You open the door to find your partner in the arms of someone else. You overhear your best friend laughing at you behind your back. You find out your business partner has been cheating you for years. All of a sudden your world is turned upside-down. You're stunned, disbelieving and finally heartbroken.

The image on the 3 of Swords clearly describes this sudden pain. You literally feel as if someone has taken a sharp object and jabbed it through your heart. Even something as minor as a snippy remark can feel this way. Notice how this contains just a heart and three swords. When your heart is breaking, you feel as if that is all you are - an open wound.

In readings, the Three of Swords often represents the nasty little curve balls that life can throw sometimes. Betrayal, abandonment, rejection, separation, a reversal of fortune. These hurts are painful because they hit you when you least expect them. If you have drawn this card, you may know what it refers to, but if not, the Three of Swords is a valuable warning. It is likely there is something amiss in your life that you are unaware of or unwilling to acknowledge. Curve balls hit us when we're looking the other way. Examine your situation carefully. Talk to the people in your life. Don't take anything for granted. Listen to your inner voice; it will help you locate the problem.

It is also possible that you are contemplating hurting someone else. With this card I think it is important to remember that each of us is capable of cruelty. We're all human, and we all make mistakes, sometimes serious ones. In the end, all we can do is trust in the goodness of life and try to live up to that ideal. When you slip, forgive yourself, and try to forgive others in turn, but, even better, head off trouble before it arrives.

# FOUR OF SWORDS



## MEANING

REST  
CONTEMPLATION  
QUIET PREPARATION

## ACTIONS

resting taking a break  
contemplating gaining a better perspective  
quietly preparing consolidating inner resources

## DESCRIPTION

The Swords cards all stand for trials of some kind, but the Four suggests feelings of peace and stillness. Why is this card different? Because it represents the challenge to be quiet! Sometimes resting and doing nothing is the ultimate challenge. Activity can be a habit that is very difficult to break. There is always so much to do, and modern society beguiles us with its attractions and distractions. The result is we forget to stop and be still.

In readings, the Four of Swords is often a sign that you need to slow down and get some rest. If you are recovering from an illness, allow yourself quiet time to heal. Even if you feel completely healthy, you are risking getting sick if you don't take a break.

The Four of Swords also represents taking the time to think things over without hurry. It is important to step back and gain perspective. This is especially true when you are facing an ordeal or big event. You need quiet preparation time to gather your strength and center your energy. Picture an Olympic diver on the high board. She doesn't climb the ladder and then dash out. She stops, motionless as she readies herself for the burst of activity to come. This is the only way to bring the best to our endeavors.

Sometimes the Four of Swords implies that you are or could be shifting focus from the external to the internal. When we are silent, we can more easily go within. The knight in the picture appears to be praying or meditating deeply. Actually, he appears to be dead! For those who are addicted to activity, rest and quiet can seem like death, but that is certainly not the case. Stillness holds its own rewards, but they must be recognized and sought.

## FIVE OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
SELF-INTEREST  
DISCORD  
OPEN DISHONOR

**ACTIONS**  
acting in your own self-interest  
experiencing discord  
witnessing open dishonor

### DESCRIPTION

The Five of Swords is about self-interest. Society tells us to think of others, yet we resist. How we can ignore our own concerns and still survive? This dilemma comes from our definition of self. If we view our self as our personality/body, our interests become those that relate to that self. Do I have enough to eat? Am I happy? Do I have all I want?

We may expand our concern to those we love, but, then, how can we stop there? We are connected to everyone in the long run. In truth, our self *is* the world. What we do to that world, we do to ourselves. This understanding is so basic, but so infuriatingly easy to forget day-to-day.

In readings, the Five of Swords can mean that you or someone else is forgetting this larger view of self. You are defining your interests too narrowly. If you try to get ahead in isolation, your actions will come back to haunt you later, one way or the other.

Sometimes this card implies a *need* to put your own interests first. If you are being abused or taken advantage of, you must get free. If you are worn out by demands, take care of yourself. If it is your turn, step forward and claim your due. Just be aware that if you hurt others in the process, your victory will not feel complete.

The Five of Swords also represents hostility - from a cross word to warfare. When the cords that bind us are broken, we experience dis-cord. This card can signify dishonors that are fairly open. Cheats, lies, tricks, deceits, even crimes. You may be on the receiving end, or be the perpetrator. Either way, hold to a larger view of who you are. Find the solution that is best for everyone...including yourself.

## SIX OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
THE BLUES  
RECOVERY  
TRAVEL

**ACTIONS**  
feeling the blues  
recovering dealing with the effects of trauma  
traveling changing location  
moving from one place to another  
taking a trip

### DESCRIPTION

At one point in The Pilgrim's Progress, the hero Christian (who is also on a Fool's Journey) becomes mired in the Slough of Despond. He struggles for a time until drawn out by Help. Help tells him that "...many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions...settle in this place."

The Slough of Despond is a good name for the Six of Swords. Sometimes this card represents a dull, listless state. Nothing is seriously wrong, but nothing is really right either. You're getting by, but not thriving. In the picture the figures in the boat seem sad and disengaged. Life is indeed uninteresting when we feel the blues.

In a more positive vein, the Six of Swords can indicate recovery. This is especially true when you have just experienced a tough time or psychological blow. During the crisis, you felt numb and disconnected; nothing mattered at all. Now you are beginning to heal and pick up the pieces of your life. The travelers in our boat are at least moving forward. They are headed toward a new place, even if they are not yet ready to eagerly embrace those shores.

In fact, the Six of Swords can indicate travel and moves of all kinds. This could mean an actual change of scene, relocation or trip, but not necessarily. A journey can also take place on the inner planes as we move from one frame of mind to another.

Although the Six of Swords does not promise great joy, it also avoids the depths of despair. A slough is not a bottomless pit, but simply a hollow or depression. When you see this card, know that even though the situation is not ideal, you are moving toward a more positive place. Change is in the air, and new, more hopeful conditions lie ahead.

## SEVEN OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
RUNNING AWAY  
LONE WOLF STYLE  
HIDDEN DISHONOR

**ACTIONS**  
running away shirking responsibility  
being a lone wolf  
choosing hidden dishonor

### DESCRIPTION

The Seven of Swords is tied to the Five of Swords because both cards involve separation from others. On the Seven we see a man tiptoeing away from society (the colorful pavilions). He's taken some swords and seems rather pleased with his successful heist. He gives the impression of having secret, solitary plans.

This card sometimes represents the "lone-wolf" style - the desire to run lone and free. In films, the lone-wolf hero always acts totally on his own. He discovers, investigates and solves every problem using only his own wits and resources. He believes he's successful because he ignores the fumbling efforts of ordinary people.

In readings, the Seven of Swords can be a sign that you or someone else wants to be a lone wolf. You feel that you will be more effective and comfortable on your own. This approach is useful when you need to bypass an ineffectual group or assert your independence, but it can also be troubling. We cannot be happy and productive for long without some commitment to others. If you feel inclined to act alone, be sure this isolation is really working for you.

Sometimes the Seven of Swords means that you are running from something - commitment, responsibility, hard work, love. You may be procrastinating, letting problems slip because you don't want to deal with them. Sometimes we just have to face what has to be faced. The Seven of Swords lets you know when you might be making things worse for yourself and others by running away.

The Seven of Swords can also indicate a hidden dishonor - a choice you or another has made that does not do justice to the highest. We all make wrong choices that we want to hide. Some of these are minor, some serious. Your inner voice will tell you when this is happening. When you see the Seven of Swords, take a good look at what you're doing because hidden dishonors will eat away at your happiness and self-respect.

## EIGHT OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
RESTRICTION  
CONFUSION  
POWERLESSNESS

**ACTIONS**  
feeling restricted  
feeling confused  
feeling powerless

### DESCRIPTION

The woman on the Eight of Swords is lost and alone. She can't see because she is blindfolded. She can't reach out because she is bound. She can't move freely because she is caught in a prison of swords. It seems she has wandered far from home - her place of security far away on the hill. How can she get back? She doesn't even know which way to go. The Eight of Swords stands for those times when we feel lost, confused and powerless. Help and relief seems very far away.

Sometimes we feel restricted by circumstances. We wake up one day in an impossible situation. A dead end job. A troubled relationship. Mountains of debt. How did this happen? We have no idea. Even little problems can make us feel trapped. There just doesn't seem to be a way out. Sometimes life seems fine - on the surface. "I have everything I want. I should be happy, so what's the problem?" We just don't know. We're confused and unsure.

In readings, the Eight of Swords is often a sign that you are heading toward (or already in) a situation in which you will feel a lack of freedom and choice. Such situations are tricky because the more you get into them, the more restricted you feel. At each step, your options seem to narrow until you feel completely stuck.

When you see this card, remember that you do have choices, and you do have power. No matter how trapped you feel, you can find a way out if you believe it is possible. The young girl in the picture could free herself. She could wriggle free, tear off the blindfold, and kick down those swords. Solutions are not always easy, but they exist. Find your clarity of thought and purpose (the Swords ideal) and use them to take that first step toward home.

# NINE OF SWORDS



## MEANING

WORRY  
GUILT  
ANGUISH

## ACTIONS

worrying doubting all will go well  
feeling guilty  
suffering anguish

## DESCRIPTION

It makes sense that the figure on the Nine of Swords is in bed because it is during the night that our griefs and regrets come to mind most intensely. The quiet darkness strips away the distractions of the day, leaving us alone with our thoughts. Who has not lain awake at 4 A.M. filled with worries that refuse to go away? The Nine of Swords represents this unhappiness which can strike us at any time.

Unlike the pain of the Three of Swords which *seems* to come from without, the Nine of Swords represents the pain that we generate from within. What tortures we put ourselves through when our fears and doubts overwhelm us. Worry is probably the most common. Have I done enough? Will everything work out OK? What am I going to do? The thoughts go round and round - impossible to turn off.

Guilt is another source of pain. When we have done something that we feel is wrong or hurtful - or failed to do something we think we should have - the distress can be very real. It is worse when nothing we do relieves the bad feelings or makes them go away. Finally, there is just pure anguish. Sometimes the pain of life is so total that all we feel like doing is crying into our hands.

Needless to say, the Nine of Swords is not the most pleasant of cards, but it doesn't always indicate major distress. Often it is just a sign of some element of unhappiness or trouble - a vulnerable spot in your life. This card is often a warning from your Inner Guide that the path you are going down may be a difficult one. If you approach the Nine of Swords in this spirit - as a caution sign - you will be able to use it constructively. Examine your situation carefully to be sure you are making the best choices. Even a small change can make all the difference.

## TEN OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
BOTTOMING OUT  
VICTIM MENTALITY  
MARTYRDOM

**ACTIONS**  
bottoming out  
feeling like a victim  
being a martyr

### DESCRIPTION

The Ten of Swords appears to be a card of terrible misfortune, but surprisingly, it often represents troubles that are more melodramatic than real. The man on this card has quite a few swords in his back. Wouldn't one be enough? Isn't ten a little excessive? Perhaps this gentleman's suffering - though sincere - is exaggerated as well.

One meaning of the Ten of Swords is hitting rock bottom. When one disaster follows another, we feel devastated at first, but eventually we throw up our hands and laugh. It's so bad, it's funny! In films, the hero says, "What else could possibly go wrong?" and we know that's a signal for the bucket of water to fall on his head. When you see the Ten of Swords, know that the last bucket has fallen, and you can expect a turn for the better.

This card can also show when you're in victim mentality. You're certain that the whole world is picking on you just to make your life difficult. I picture the man lifting his head and saying, "You think you've got it bad...a cut on the finger. I've got ten swords in my back...count 'em - ten!" Then he drops his head back down with a sigh. When we're in victim mentality, we think everything is horrible, hopeless and impossibly unfair.

Being a martyr is also a favorite Ten of Swords activity. In this case, the man would say with a weak wave of his hand, "No...you go on. Have fun. Don't think about me. I'll just stay here with these swords in my back...but I want you to enjoy yourself." Being a martyr in this sense is not the same as making a sacrifice for another with no strings attached. With the Ten of Swords, either is possible, but doing a good turn for someone else is more satisfying without the strings.

I don't mean to make light of misfortunes because, of course, there are many real tragedies in the world. Sometimes the Ten of Swords indicates a sad event, but you know when this is the case. There is not even a hint of laughter in your heart. Most of the time the Ten of Swords has a lighter side. It is as if your Inner Guide is gently kidding you about how you are handling your own personal tale of woe. When you see the Ten of Swords, check your attitude and know you've reached the point where things will definitely begin to look up.

## PAGE OF SWORDS



## MEANING

USE YOUR MIND  
BE TRUTHFUL  
BE JUST  
HAVE FORTITUDE

## ACTIONS

Use Your Mind analyze the problem  
Be Truthful act honestly  
Be Just right a wrong  
Have Fortitude face problems squarely

## DESCRIPTION

The Page of Swords is a messenger bringing you challenges. He suggests that an opportunity for growth may come your way in the guise of a problem or dilemma. These challenges may not be your favorites. In fact, you probably will want to say "Thanks...but no thanks."

The Page of Swords asks you to embrace these difficult situations. Think of them as trials designed to test your mettle. If you accept and prevail, you will become stronger and more resilient. In meeting these challenges, you are encouraged to use the tools of the Swords suit - honest, reason, integrity and fortitude.

The Page of Swords can also stand for a child or young-at-heart adult whose interactions with you involve truthfulness, ethical behavior, discouragement or matters of the mind. This relationship is likely to be troubled or difficult in keeping with the challenges of the Swords suit.

Sometimes the Page of Swords implies that your entire situation is one suffused with the spirit of learning, discovery, and mental activities of all kinds. At such times, use your mind and enjoy the delights of the intellect.

# KNIGHT OF SWORDS



## MEANING

DIRECT  
AUTHORITATIVE  
INCISIVE  
KNOWLEDGEABLE  
LOGICAL

## ACTIONS

is frank and outspoken  
has a keen, forceful intellect  
knows what he or she is talking about  
undervalues intuition

## DESCRIPTION

On the positive side, the Knight of Swords is a master of logic and reason. He has a keen intellect that grasps the fine points of any subject. He speaks clearly, directly and always with authority. His judgments are sure and free of emotion. Others rely on his lucid analyses of problems and solutions. On the negative side, this Knight is not a master of diplomacy. He can be downright tactless and rude. When he thinks you are wrong, you'll know it. He's convinced of his own superiority and has little tolerance for stupidity. He expects others to comply with his views. To him, feelings are irrelevant and illogical.

In readings, a Knight of Swords shows that his penetrating style is involved in the situation as an aspect of you, someone else or the atmosphere in general. you need to ask yourself, "Is this Knight's energy helping or hurting?"

If his style is evident, then balance is needed. Are you always forcing your position on others? Do you get in trouble for saying what you think? Is your partner too cold and aloof? Do your colleagues tend to be critical rather than supportive? It may be time for a change.

If this Knight's energy is missing, a dose of clear-sightedness may be called for. Are you too emotional? Let your head rule your heart next time. Do you overvalue the opinions of others? Trust your own authority. Are you afraid to offend? Speak your mind. Let the Knight of Swords introduce you to his world of reason and self-assurance.

# QUEEN OF SWORDS



**MEANING**  
HONEST  
ASTUTE  
FORTHRIGHT  
WITTY  
EXPERIENCED

## ACTIONS

Honest faces the truth, even if unpleasant  
Astute sizes up a situation quickly  
Forthright is direct and open in all dealings  
Witty has a delightful sense of humor  
Experienced has seen and done it all

## DESCRIPTION

The personality of the Queen of Swords combines the positive air energy of the Swords suit with the inward focus of a Queen. You can always count on her to tell you exactly how it is. Above all else she admires honesty, and she lives by her commitment to being truthful. Lies, tricks and games are of no interest to her, but she's not easy to fool. She is experienced in the ways of the world, good and bad. The Queen of Swords can size up a situation quickly. She understands human folly, but doesn't condemn it. She knows when cow manure is being thrown around and simply finds clever ways around it. She prefers being straightforward and direct. Her observations are candid, but never hurtful. In fact, this Queen has a delightful sense of humor. She likes a good laugh and always has a witty comeback ready-to-hand. She knows that life isn't meant to be taken too seriously. The Queen of Swords is refreshing in her candor and lack of pretense.

In readings, the Queen of Swords asks you to *think and feel* as she does. For example: Are you being completely honest? (Check this one first!) Do you see the humor in the situation? Are you getting right to the point? Have you figured out what's really going on? Are you letting yourself be fooled?

This Queen can also represent a man or woman who is like her, or an atmosphere of honest, direct communication. In a reading, she tells you that her special energy has meaning for you at this time. Let yourself be inspired by this Queen in whatever form she appears in your life.

# KING OF SWORDS



MEANING  
INTELLECTUAL  
ANALYTICAL  
ARTICULATE  
JUST  
ETHICAL

ACTIONS  
Intellectual is comfortable in the world of the mind  
Analytical cuts through confusion and mental fog  
Articulate is adept at language and verbal skills  
Just renders honest, insightful judgments  
Ethical is a moral/ethical leader

## DESCRIPTION

The personality of the King of Swords is a combination of the positive air energy of the Swords suit and the active, outward focus of a King. He is a man of intellect who can absorb and work with information of all kinds. As a master of reason and logic, he analyzes any problem with ease. He can work out solutions quickly and explain them lucidly to others. In a chaotic situation, he cuts through the confusion and provides the clarity needed to move forward. Others seek him out to present their case as he speaks with eloquence and insight. He is always truthful and can be relied on to handle any situation fairly and honorably. When a judgment is called for, he can render an impartial but just decision. He is incorruptible and lives by the highest ethical standards. He encourages those around him to do the same, and they often live up to his expectations.

In readings, the King of Swords asks you to take the kinds of *actions* he might take. For example: telling the truth, thinking up a solution, communicating well, or judging fairly. This King can also represent a man or woman who is acting as he does, or an atmosphere of reason, honesty and high standards. In a reading, he tells you that his special energy has meaning for you at this time. Let yourself be inspired by this King in whatever form he appears in your life.

# ACE OF PENTACLES



**MEANING**  
MATERIAL FORCE  
PROSPERITY  
PRACTICALITY  
TRUST

**ACTIONS**  
using material force  
prospering having the means to reach a goal  
being practical  
proceeding with trust

## DESCRIPTION

The Ace of Pentacles is a symbol of possibility in the area of prosperity, abundance, trust, security and groundedness. In readings, it shows that a seed of productivity has been planted in your life although you may not yet recognize it. When the seed sprouts, it could take almost any form. It might be a feeling of centeredness, desire for results or need to focus on practical matters. On the outside, it could be an offer, gift, opportunity, encounter or synchronistic event.

When you see this Ace, examine your life to see how its solid energy could work for you. Now is not the time for fantasy, drama or daring. It is a time to be real and centered. Seek out comfortable, reliable experiences that make you feel secure. Build a foundation of trust in your life both within and without. Your common sense will tell you what to do. Focus also on the natural world to help you stay grounded. Enjoy your body and all the joys of material existence.

The Ace of Pentacles can be a sign that you will be able to make your dreams real. Your ideas are ready to be turned into something tangible. Figure out what will work and make it a reality. You can now attract all the wealth you need to get your projects going. Tap into the material force of the Ace of Pentacles, and all your enterprises will flourish.

## TWO OF PENTACLES



**MEANING**  
JUGGLING  
FLEXIBILITY  
FUN

**ACTIONS**  
juggling keeping everything in balance  
being flexible adapting quickly  
having fun doing something you enjoy

### DESCRIPTION

In the film *First Knight*, Lancelot takes on a challenge - to move down a line of swinging blades crossing in front of him at random intervals. He succeeds because he is alert, agile and patient. He knows when to move and when to stay still. He glides through the dangers enjoying every moment of this deadly obstacle course. Lancelot has tapped the energy of the Two of Pentacles.

There is nothing quite like the feeling of being graceful and effective at the same time. On the Two of Pentacles we see a young man dancing as he juggles his worldly concerns. The infinity sign loops around the two pentacles to suggest that he can handle unlimited problems. In the background we see two ships riding the waves easily - cruising the ups and downs of life.

In readings, the Two of Pentacles lets you know that you can juggle all demands made upon you. In fact, you will relish the excitement of every hurdle. If you do not feel this level of confidence right now, this card asks you to believe in yourself. You have all you need to meet your every goal and more. Embrace the challenge.

The Two of Pentacles also reminds you to be flexible. Lancelot could not have navigated the swords walking in a straight line. He had to move freely and lightly in all directions as needed. You too must be supple if you want to prevail. Don't force your way through or you will be cut down. Now is not the time to be rigid. Know that sometimes a side step, or even a back step is the surest way forward.

The Two of Pentacles is also a symbol of fun, laughter and good times. It is definitely a high-energy card. If you are feeling tired or depressed, this card may be a sign that greater vitality will be yours. If you are feeling revved already, the Two of Pentacles could be a warning against overstimulation. Be sure you get the rest you need so that you can enjoy the up energy of this card.

# THREE OF PENTACLES



MEANING  
TEAMWORK  
PLANNING  
COMPETENCE

ACTIONS  
working as a team  
planning organizing resources  
being competent

## DESCRIPTION

In the opening of the film *Mission Impossible*, a crack team of specialists is working on a dangerous assignment. The members of the team are mapping out a strategy, coordinating resources and drawing on their skills and ingenuity to complete the mission. This is the Three of Pentacles in action: teamwork, planning and competence.

The Three of Pentacles is one of the cards in the Tarot that focuses on the group. (The Three of Cups and the Hierophant are the others.) As Pentacles are grounded and practical, this card represents a task-oriented team - people who are working cooperatively toward a common goal. There are few jobs that can be accomplished alone. We need the help of others to achieve our goals. Sometimes the Three of Pentacles is a sign that you will be more productive if you work with others. You don't have to do it all by yourself.

This card can also show a need for planning and preparation. Now is not the time to rush into something or begin a project with only a vague idea of what it's about. You need to think everything through, go over all the possibilities and make sure you work out the details. Do your homework, and your undertaking will flourish.

Another feature of the Three of Pentacles is competence - the ability to get the job done. How rare this is nowadays! This card tells you that you have the skills and knowledge you need. You can attract capable people and create a successful environment. Know that the situation is (or will be) in good hands, but be sure to concentrate on excellence in your work. Be proud of what you do and how you do it. Then you will accomplish your "impossible" mission.

# FOUR OF PENTACLES



**MEANING**  
POSSESSIVENESS  
CONTROL  
BLOCKED CHANGE

**ACTIONS**  
wanting to possess  
maintaining control  
blocking change maintaining the status quo

## DESCRIPTION

Spend time with a 2-year-old, and you will soon hear the sounds of the Four of Pentacles: "No!" and "Mine!" These are the cries of the ego, which is just developing in the young child. The ego tries to guarantee power by imposing its will. The desire for control is the hallmark of the Four of Pentacles.

Some control *is* valuable. In chaotic situations, a firm hand is needed to provide structure and organization. Too often, however, the urge for control gets out of hand, stifling creativity and individual expression. In readings, this card asks you to weigh carefully the level of control in your situation.

The Four of Pentacles can stand for issues of ownership. You may be involved in getting and keeping money or some other commodity. You may be having problems with possessiveness or jealousy. Use the energy of this card to preserve and defend, but not to lay claim. People need to be free to determine their own lives.

The Four of Pentacles also implies blocked change. It's as if the stubborn little man on the card is thwarting your every move. Opposition may come from those who want to maintain the status quo. It may also come from within yourself. Are you resisting change that is truly needed? We often cling to the familiar even when we know it's not for the best.

The lesson of the Four of Pentacles is that control is impossible. We stand in the world as in a great ocean. Who could manage or possess such power? The only way to keep from drowning is to ride the currents. The ocean will support us as long as we swim with the flow.

## FIVE OF PENTACLES



### MEANING

HARD TIMES  
ILL HEALTH  
REJECTION

### ACTIONS

experiencing hard times  
suffering ill health  
being rejected

### DESCRIPTION

The two figures on the Five of Pentacles are cold, hungry, tired, sick and poor. They show us what it feels like to be without - to lack the basic ingredients of life. This is the specter that haunts so many in our world - a reality that is all too immediate. Those of us who are more fortunate may not have experienced this extreme, but we still recognize suffering. When we do not have what we want and need, it hurts.

In readings, the Five of Pentacles can represent several kinds of lack. First, there is poor health. It is hard to tackle life's challenges when we do not have our vitality and strength. This card can be a signal that you are neglecting the needs of your body. You are moving away from complete physical well-being, so you must take steps to discover and correct the problem.

This card can also be a sign of material and economic setbacks. There is no doubt that life is harder when we lack money or a decent job. When we are struggling to make ends meet, all other problems are magnified. Even if we are comfortable, we can still feel insecure, afraid that misfortune will take away all that we have worked for.

The Five of Pentacles can also represent rejection or lack of acceptance. We are social animals and feel pain when excluded from our group. We want to be included, not only for our emotional well-being, but also for mutual support. Being rejected can mean physical hardship as well.

The Five of Pentacles relates to material lack, but it also has a spiritual component. From the stained glass window, we can guess that these two figures are outside of a church. Comfort is so close at hand, but they fail to see it. The church symbolizes our spirits which are perfect and whole in every way. We are meant to enjoy abundance in all areas of life, but sometimes we forget that this is our birthright. Whenever you experience hardship, know that it is only temporary. Look for the spiritual center that will take you in and give you shelter.

## SIX OF PENTACLES



### MEANING

HAVING/NOT HAVING:  
RESOURCES  
KNOWLEDGE  
POWER

### ACTIONS

having/not having resources  
having/not having knowledge  
having/not having power

### DESCRIPTION

The Six of Pentacles is a difficult card to describe because it falls in the shadowy area between the lack of the Five of Pentacles and the affluence of the Ten of Pentacles. These two cards represent the extremes of not having and having. The Six of Pentacles covers the huge middle ground where it is not clear exactly who has what.

On this card, a well-to-do gentleman is tossing a few coins to a beggar while another supplicant waits to the side. The giver holds the scales of justice as if claiming the right to decide who deserves blessings and who does not. In this picture we see both sides: what it means to give *and* to receive, to dominate *and* to submit, to be on top *and* to be on the bottom. It seems clear who has and who hasn't, but is it? Life is not that simple, and how quickly fortunes change.

In readings, the Six of Pentacles asks you to look very deeply into the whole issue of what *having* really means both materially (resources) and immaterially (knowledge, power, love). You may see yourself on one side or the other, but this card asks you to reconsider. Think of the successful businessman who suddenly declares bankruptcy. The tyrannical invalid who dominates through weakness. The teacher who learns from her students. The parent who controls by giving money.

The keywords for the Six of Pentacles include both the have and have not sides of each meaning. Sometimes this card is a clear sign one way or the other. You *will* get the gift you want. You *will* have to defer to another. In all cases, though, you should question the obvious and go deeper. Why are you in the situation you're in, and where is it leading? Who is really in charge? What's really going on?

# SEVEN OF PENTACLES



**MEANING**  
ASSESSMENT  
REWARD  
DIRECTION CHANGE

**ACTIONS**  
assessing evaluating the status  
reaping a reward  
considering a direction change

## DESCRIPTION

On the Seven of Pentacles we see a man who has labored long and hard in his garden. The foliage is full, the blossoms are out - it seems that his work has paid off. Now he's taking a break to admire his handiwork. How satisfying it is to see such fine results! How rewarding is sweet success!

The Seven of Pentacles is a time-out card. It represents those moments after a rush of activity when we stop to catch our breath and look around. The man in the picture has paused to contemplate the fruits of his own labors, but he could also pick that fruit. In readings, the Seven of Pentacles can indicate a reward that will come your way, particularly as a result of your own efforts. Take it and enjoy.

This card is also a call for assessment. When we're busy, we don't always have time to reflect on what we're doing and why. Are we still on course? Are we getting the results we want? Serious problems can develop if you don't take stock at key moments. In readings, this card suggests that you take the time to be sure you're meeting your goals.

The Seven of Pentacles can also indicate a crossroads. In life, there's a tendency to continue with familiar routines. To go in a new direction isn't easy. The Seven of Pentacles may be telling you to figure out if you need a course correction, or even a complete about-face. You're not yet committed to a certain path, but you could be soon. Change is still possible.

The Seven of Pentacles is not a card of endings or final decisions. The game is not over, but only on hold for a moment. Once you've gotten your breath back and checked your strategy, be ready to jump back in and work even harder than before.

# EIGHT OF PENTACLES



**MEANING**  
DILIGENCE  
KNOWLEDGE  
DETAIL

**ACTIONS**  
showing diligence  
increasing knowledge  
paying attention to detail

## DESCRIPTION

On the Eight of Pentacles we see a young man who is hammering away at a coin. He has finished six and has another coin to go. It is clear that he is in the middle of a project that absorbs all his attention. He's isolated himself from others (the town in the background) in order to concentrate. In this scene we see the essential elements of the Eight of Pentacles: hard work and attention to detail.

This card often implies a time of great diligence and focus. It advises you to *hammer away* at the business of the moment, whether a work project, family difficulty, personal goal or unpleasant duty. Sometimes blessings fall into our laps to be enjoyed. Other times we must put out great effort to obtain them. The Eight of Pentacles represents moments when you must give 110%. Just buckle down and do it. Fortunately, this kind of work is invigorating and leads to superb results. The labor of the Eight of Pentacles is deeply satisfying and productive.

The Eight of Pentacles can also symbolize the impulse to learn - to broaden horizons (to use an old-fashioned term). Sometimes we need to develop new skills. We do research, dig out facts or search for expertise. The Hermit is looking for inner knowledge. The man on the Eight of Pentacles seeks external knowledge - the how and why of the material world.

This card can also show the need for meticulous attention. People who are painstaking are often dismissed as nit-pickers, but their extra effort ensures everything is as it should be. It's a matter of caring - taking the time to check the little details. Now is not the time to be slipshod or casual. Look for errors, and tie up loose ends. The key to success is an extraordinary effort. Whatever your task, the Eight of Pentacles tells you to give it your all in every way.

# NINE OF PENTACLES



**MEANING**  
DISCIPLINE  
SELF-RELIANCE  
REFINEMENT

**ACTIONS**  
being disciplined  
relying on yourself  
pursuing refinement

## DESCRIPTION

The woman on the Nine of Pentacles is taking a leisurely stroll through the gardens of her estate. She is clearly a lady of refinement and grace, so it is incongruous to see on her left hand a bird trained to hunt and kill on command. Falconry is an unusual hobby for a gentlewoman, but it is the key to the special nature of this card.

On one hand, the Nine of Pentacles represents all that is most gracious, high-minded and civilized. Art, music and other forms of beauty are very much part of our physical world (Pentacles). Coins are present in this scene, but they are toward the ground. The business of life is important, but we don't have to focus on practical matters all the time. We can also enjoy the finer things of life. In readings, the Nine of Pentacles can imply an interest in these areas. It is also a sign that you may need to reject the coarse or offensive and seek the highest.

The Nine of Pentacles can also be a sign of discipline and self-control. This woman enjoys her cultured life because she has mastered her baser instincts. Her impulses work for her because they do not rule her. The falcon symbolizes all that is dark and unruly in human nature. Our shadow side can serve us well, but only when it is directed. Sometimes the Nine of Pentacles suggests that you must show restraint and self-control if you are to achieve your best efforts. You may have to "sacrifice" for the moment, but the results will be worth it.

This card is also a sign of self-reliance. Sometimes you must trust our own ability to handle a situation. Resist the temptation to let others do for you. You need to take matters into your own hands. Our elegant lady has done just that. She trusted in her own grit and determination, and now she enjoys all the best life has to offer.

# TEN OF PENTACLES



**MEANING**  
AFFLUENCE  
PERMANENCE  
CONVENTION

**ACTIONS**  
enjoying affluence  
seeking permanence  
following convention

## DESCRIPTION

On many cards, we see a cluster of buildings off in the distance. In the Ten of Pentacles, we finally arrive in that village - in the middle of the marketplace. The family we see is carrying on the affairs of everyday life. A patriarch, dressed in a luxurious robe, pats his hounds as he watches over the younger generations. A man and woman converse in passing as their child plays at their feet. Coins (money) are in the air.

The Ten of Pentacles stands for the ultimate in worldly and material success. Sometimes I jokingly call it the "fat cat" card because it reminds me of the aura of prosperity that surrounds wealthy men and women of business. This is the card you want to see if you are wondering how your latest enterprise will turn out. Wealth and affluence are yours.

When we achieve material success, we naturally want it to last. This is the conservative, Establishment side of the Ten of Pentacles. Why rock the boat when life is fine just the way it is? In readings, this card often stands for convention - following established guidelines and maintaining the status quo. Fat cats are rarely radicals; they love tradition and the tried-and-true. Sometimes it is important to trust the known ways, but only when change is inadvisable.

The Ten of Pentacles is also concerned with permanence. Change is an unavoidable part of life, but constant change is uncomfortable. We need stability and the chance to work for a secure foundation in life. In readings, this card may be telling you to concentrate on the long-term. Work toward a lasting solution. Now may be the time to settle down and make the arrangements that will work for you far into the future.

## PAGE OF PENTACLES



### MEANING

HAVE AN EFFECT  
BE PRACTICAL  
BE PROSPEROUS  
BE TRUSTING OR  
TRUSTWORTHY

### ACTIONS

Have an Effect make your plans real  
Be Practical take a realistic approach  
Be Prosperous draw to you what you need  
Be Trusting/Trustworthy accept that the solution is well in hand

### DESCRIPTION

The Page of Pentacles is a messenger bringing you opportunities for prosperity. He delivers real chances to experience wealth, abundance, security and solid achievement - the wonders of the Pentacles suit. In your readings, this Page suggests that an opening may appear that promises enrichment, comfort, trust or the chance to make your dreams real. When you see such a chance, act on it!

The Page of Pentacles can also stand for a child or young-at-heart adult whose interactions with you involve stability, trust, commitment, safety and material needs. Sometimes the Page of Pentacles implies that your entire situation is suffused with the spirit of physical enjoyment. At such times, feel free to have fun with your body, skills and possessions in a lighthearted way. Revel in the delights of being alive on Earth at this time.

## KNIGHT OF PENTACLES



MEANING  
UNWAVERING  
CAUTIOUS  
THOROUGH  
REALISTIC  
HARDWORKING

ACTIONS  
Unwavering, Stubborn  
is dogged in pursuit of a goal  
Cautious.....Unadventurous  
takes care of every detail  
Realistic.  
Grinding becomes dedicated to a task

### DESCRIPTION

On the positive side, the Knight of Pentacles is like a bulldog. Once he bites down, you can be sure he won't let go. He's *dogged* in pursuit of his goals. A hard-worker, he has tremendous stamina and dedication. Every job is always completed down to the last detail. He's careful and prudent, never wasteful. He knows the facts and is immune to false promises. On the negative side, this Knight is a bit stodgy and dull. He's not known for his playful sense of humor. Work always comes first. He tends to be inflexible and obsessive about little details. Stubborn to a fault, he refuses to give in even when wrong, something he'll never admit. He doesn't like change or risk and will always take the gloomiest view.

In readings, a Knight of Pentacles shows that his cautious style is involved in the situation as an aspect of you, someone else or the atmosphere in general. You need to ask yourself, "Is this Knight's energy helping or hurting?"

If his style is evident, then balance is needed. Are you working too hard? Do you refuse to listen to reason? Do you have a perfectionist in your life? Is the atmosphere around you one of gloom and doom? It may be time for a change.

If this Knight's energy is missing, a dose of prudence may be called for. Are you spending too much? Maybe it's time to slow down. Do you give up too soon? Dig in and refuse to quit. Is your work often careless, late or incomplete? Next time resolve to work up a sweat and get the job done. Let the Knight of Pentacles introduce you to his world of care and persistence.

## QUEEN OF PENTACLES



MEANING  
NURTURING  
BIGHEARTED  
DOWN-TO-EARTH  
RESOURCEFUL  
TRUSTWORTHY

## ACTIONS

Nurturing gives love and support  
Bighearted will do any service for others  
Down-to-Earth handles problems matter-of-factly  
Resourceful finds a use for whatever's at hand  
Trustworthy keeps confidences and secrets

## DESCRIPTION

The personality of the Queen of Pentacles combines the positive earth energy of the Pentacles suit with the inward focus of a Queen. If you were to visit the Queen of Pentacles, the first thing she would say is, "Come in, come in. It's great to see you. Have a bowl of soup!" No one is more welcoming and nurturing than she. Her greatest pleasure is to care for others - making sure they are happy and secure. Her home is always overflowing with children, pets, plants and footloose friends. She is warm and generous to all. In day-to-day matters, she is sensible and practical. She doesn't have a lot of time for elaborate plans and other craziness. If something needs doing, she just takes care of it without a lot of fuss and bother. If necessary, she makes do with little and always comes through in a pinch. There is a down-to-earth, matter-of-factness about her. She is always loyal and steadfast. Because she is trusting by nature, others trust her completely. When you are hurting or in need, the Queen of Pentacles will calm your fears and share your troubles.

In readings, the Queen of Pentacles asks you to *think and feel* as she does. For example: Are you feeling warm and caring toward others? Are you being sensible? Have you been true to your word? Do you feel generous? Can you be counted on when times are tough?

This Queen can also represent a man or woman who is like her, or an atmosphere of warmth, trust and security. In a reading, she tells you that her special energy has meaning for you at this time. Let yourself be inspired by this Queen in whatever form she appears in your life.

# KING OF PENTACLES



**MEANING**  
ENTERPRISING  
ADEPT  
RELIABLE  
SUPPORTING  
STEADY

## ACTIONS

Enterprising makes any venture successful  
Adept is informed about practical matters  
Reliable meets all commitments and promises  
Supporting encourages the accomplishments of others  
Steady works toward a goal with firm resolve

## DESCRIPTION

The personality of the King of Pentacles is a combination of the positive earth energy of the Pentacles suit and the active, outward focus of a King. He might as well be called King Midas as he turns everything he touches to gold (riches of all kinds). He finds opportunity everywhere and succeeds at whatever he sets his mind to. He is enterprising and adept. Whatever the task, he handles it competently, drawing on his wide range of skills and practical knowledge. He's a jack-of-all-trades - and master of all as well. He is always dependable and responsible. Others rely on him completely because he never fails them. He gives generously of his time and resources because he knows that by giving more, you receive more. He encourages others in their accomplishments and lends his support whenever it is needed. He has a steady and even temperament that adds an element of stability to any situation. When he has set a goal for himself, he pursues it with firm resolve until he's successful.

In readings, the King of Pentacles asks you to take the kinds of *actions* he might take. For example: keeping a commitment, fixing something that's broken, making money, or sponsoring a new enterprise. This King can also represent a man or woman who is acting as he does, or an atmosphere of steady, reliable competence. In a reading, he tells you that his special energy has meaning for you at this time. Let yourself be inspired by this King in whatever form he appears in your life.



Aeson Knight

Master Psychic



# TAROT 101

Journey of the Fools: Level I

Workbook



# THE FOOL'S JOURNEY

Looking at your life reflect on the step that has brought you to this class comparing them the Journey of the fool can you connect the experiences to that of the fool

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## The Magician and the High Priestess

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## The Empress

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## PAGE OF PENTACLES

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YOUR MEANING:

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# TAROT READING JOURNAL

Name of querent:

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Date:

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Question:

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Card 1:

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Card 2:

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Meaning:

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Card 3:

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Meaning:

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Card 5:

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Card 6:

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Meaning:

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Meaning:

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Card 7:

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Card8:

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Meaning:

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Meaning:

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Card 9:

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Card 10:

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Meaning:

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Meaning:

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Overview Of Reading

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Meaning:

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Meaning:

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Card 9:

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Meaning:

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Overview Of Reading

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Name of querent:

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Date:

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Question:

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Card 1:

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Card 2:

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Meaning:

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Overview Of Reading

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