

Learning the Tarot

Welcome to *Learning the Tarot* - my course on how to read the tarot cards. The tarot is a deck of 78 picture cards that has been used for centuries to reveal hidden truths. In the past few years, interest in the tarot has grown tremendously. More and more people are seeking ways to blend inner and outer realities so they can live their lives more creatively. They have discovered in the tarot a powerful tool for personal growth and insight.

How Does This Course Work?

My main purpose in this course is to show you how to use the cards for yourself. The tarot can help you understand yourself better and teach you how to tap your inner resources more confidently. You do not have to have "psychic powers" to use the tarot successfully. All you need is the willingness to honor and develop your natural intuition.

Learning the Tarot is a self-paced series of 19 [lessons](#) that begin with the basics and then move gradually into more detailed aspects of the tarot. These lessons are geared toward beginners, but experienced tarot users will find some useful ideas and techniques as well. For each lesson there are some [exercises](#) that reinforce the ideas presented. The [Cards](#) section contains information about each of the tarot cards. You can refer to this section as you go through the lessons and later as you continue your practice. These are the main features of the course, but there are many other pages to explore here as well.

What is the History of this Course?

I began writing this course in 1989. I had been studying the tarot for some years, and I found that I was developing some ideas about the cards and how they could be used as a tool for inner guidance. In October 1998, *Learning the Tarot* was published as a paperback.

My experience with the cards is in doing readings for myself, friends, relatives and acquaintances...probably the kind of tarot you are interested in. The tarot cards are not difficult to learn, but there is always more to them that can be learned. They are deceptively simple, but surprisingly rich.

What Is Needed For the Course?

The only real requirement for this course is a tarot deck. If you don't have a deck, you can purchase a deck from US Games or you can find one on Demonoid.com in torrent form. There are many choices. This version of *Learning the Tarot* is illustrated with the popular Rider-Waite deck. This is a good deck to start with because there are pictures on every

card which helps when you are learning. If you already have a different 78 card deck, you may use it with the course. The principles of tarot work are much the same no matter what deck you use. You can buy tarot decks in many places now. Bookstores often carry them, and many internet sites offer a variety of tarot decks for sale. If you have trouble finding a deck in your area, you can [order one from me](#).

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LESSON 1

Introduction to the Tarot

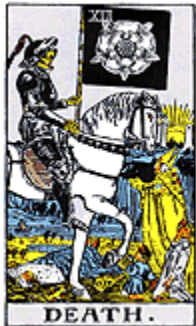
Years ago, when I told my brother I was studying the tarot, his first comment was, "How can a deck of cards possibly tell you anything about anything?" I laughed because I thought his reply summed up pretty well the common sense view of the cards. I, too, had my doubts about the tarot, but I found out that the cards can make a real difference in the way you perceive and deal with the challenges in your life. In this introduction, I'll try to explain why.

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 gentleman 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.

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.

LESSON 2

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. (See [exercise 2.2](#).) 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 ([card 0](#)) to integration and fulfillment ([card 21](#)).

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 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)? The Fool has come a long way in realizing the harmonious life.



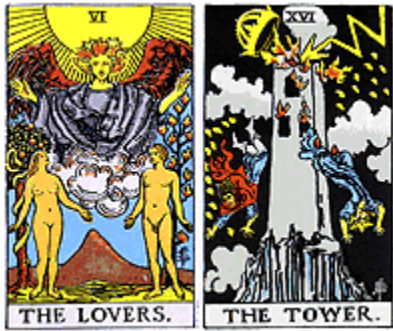
Devil

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**. 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 whole world conspires to see that his efforts are rewarded. His **accomplishments** are 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.

LESSON 3

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. 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. (See the [lists of suit qualities](#).)

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.

LESSON 4

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. (See [exercise 4.1.](#)) We'll be using this spread throughout the course.

LESSON 5

The Daily Reading

You are now ready to begin putting your tarot knowledge to work. Lesson 5 describes the Daily Reading. In this reading, you select a single card that becomes your theme for the day. The purpose is to heighten your awareness of one approach to life for a single twenty-four-hour period. It also helps you learn the tarot without strain or tedium.



Let's say you have drawn the [Two of Cups](#) for a daily reading. As you go through the day, you will watch for signs of this card's special energy. The keywords for the Two of Cups card are connection, truce and attraction. In the morning, you notice that a colleague, who has been rather hostile, comes to your office to talk. You sense a **truce**, and you take advantage of it. In the afternoon, while working on a problem, you look for the **connection** between two approaches and find your solution. Later, at a party, you talk to someone who **attracts** you. On each occasion, you access the energy of the Two of Cups and allow it to guide your decisions.

At first, you may want to choose your daily card deliberately so you can avoid repeat selections and learn the deck more quickly. (See [exercise 5.1.](#)) If you prefer, you can choose your card without conscious intervention. (See [exercise 5.2.](#)) Here is the procedure:

[Shuffle](#) the deck once or twice.

Hold the deck face down in one hand and cover it with your other hand.

Pause a moment to become calm and centered.

Ask your Inner Guide to give you the guidance you need for the day.

Place the deck face down in front of you.

Cut the deck to the left and restack it.

Turn over the top card as your card of the day.

Return this card to the deck, and shuffle once or twice.

This procedure is easy to do on a daily basis, and it gives you an opportunity to connect with your Inner Guide regularly. Choose a time that works for you. Mornings are good because you can pick a card during your wake-up routine. You can also select one at night. You will be ready to put your card to use as soon as you wake up. It isn't necessary to pick one time since your schedule may change. The main goal is to make the Daily Reading a part of your day so that your tarot work progresses.

Keep a journal of your selections. Later, you will find it interesting to trace the pattern of your choices. I started studying the tarot in earnest when I was spending my days caring for my two boys, then under five. One day I calculated the distribution of my daily cards to that point and found the following:

- Wands - 24
- Cups - 44
- Swords - 41
- Pentacles - 57
- Major Arcana - 56

How clearly this describes my life at that time - heavy on the real world ([Pentacles](#)) and basic forces ([major arcana](#)) and not so heavy on individual creativity ([Wands](#)).

In your journal, jot down a few highlights of the day next to your entry. This will help you correlate the cards with your moods and activities; but keep it simple, or you will soon tire of the effort.

I wrote my journal entries using five pens of different colors - one for each category:

- Wands = Red (Fire, passion)
- Cups = Blue (Water, moods, emotion)
- Swords = Yellow (Air, mentality)
- Pentacles = Green (Earth, growth, plants, nature, money)
- Major Arcana = Purple (spirituality, higher purpose)

Color coding helps you see at a glance the shifting tarot patterns of your weeks and months.

You will probably be surprised to find that you draw certain cards over and over. Of the fifty-seven Pentacles I recorded early on, I drew the Ace and Queen eleven times each! At home with my children, so many of my days reflected the themes of these two cards. The [Queen of Pentacles](#) is the ultimate nurturing mother. The [Ace of Pentacles](#) offers opportunities to enjoy the material side of life, and it doesn't get more material than cleaning dirty diapers!

I picked these two cards so often that I became suspicious about them. I examined them closely one day to see if I had damaged them in such a way that I would be more likely to select them. They appeared no different from the others. I was simply drawn to them because they expressed my situation at that time. The cards you select frequently will also tell you about your concerns.

The most important step in learning the tarot is to take the cards out of the box regularly. The Daily Reading is the ideal solution. If you do one each day, you will absorb the character of each card quickly and easily.

LESSON 6

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.

LESSON 7

Writing a Question

Most of the time you will want to consult the tarot because you are facing a problem or challenge. Something about your life is troubling you, and you want to understand why it is happening and what you can do about it. The best kind of tarot reading for this situation is the Question Reading. You write a question about your problem, and you receive your answer by interpreting the cards. The question helps you relate the guidance you receive to your situation in a way that makes sense. In this lesson, I describe how to create a question for a reading you do for yourself.

The first step is to review your situation thoroughly. Think about all the people involved, directly or indirectly. Go over your options for the future. Let your mind wander freely. You want to look at your problem without judging or censoring any part. Jot down the ideas that occur to you, but try not to be too systematic. You want to use your intuition, not logical analysis.

Once you have finished your review, you can write your question. Here are some suggestions:

Accept Responsibility

Write your tarot question to show that you accept responsibility for your situation. Consider these two questions:

Should I put my father in a nursing home, or take care of him in my house?

What do I need to know to decide on the best living arrangements for my father?

In the first question, the writer gives up her responsibility for making a decision. She wants the cards to **tell** her what to do. In the second question, she is simply asking the cards to give her more information. She knows the decision lies with her.

It's tempting to write the first kind of question. We all seek the certainty that we're making good choices, but the tarot can't make our decisions for us. Avoid questions that deflect responsibility, such as:

- **Questions to be answered "Yes" or "No"**

Will I get the job at the ad agency?

Can I stick to my diet this month?

Am I ready to retire?

- **Questions beginning with "Should..."**

Should I let my daughter live at home?

Should I go out with Jose?

Should I apply to more than one university?

- **Questions asking only about time**

When will George ask me to marry him?

How long will it take to find a new car?

When will I get my promotion?

Instead, begin your questions with phrases such as these:

- Can you give me insight into ...
- What do I need to understand about ...
- What is the meaning of ...
- What is the lesson or purpose of ...
- What are the circumstances underlying ...
- How can I improve my chances of ...
- How might I ...

Keep Your Options Open

Write your question to show that you are keeping your options open. Consider these:

How might I encourage my mother-in-law to move out?

What do I need to know to get along better with my mother-in-law?

In the first question, the writer is not keeping his options open. He has decided on one solution - having his mother-in-law move out. The second question is more open-ended. It's OK to narrow the scope of a question as long as you don't decide on the answer ahead of time. Both of the following are open questions, but the second is more specific:

- How would a switch to sales impact my career?
- How would a switch to a sales position at Purdue Insurance impact my career?

Find the Best Level of Detail

Seek the fine line between wording that is too vague and too detailed. Here are three questions on the same topic:

How can I improve my work situation?

How can I reorganize my desk so that Tom can find my files?

How can I improve the flow of work between Tom and me?

The first question is unfocused. It doesn't specify which work area is of interest. The second question is too detailed. It looks at one minor aspect of the problem. The third question is best because it finds the balance between the two. Include only the details necessary to make clear what you want to know.

Focus On Yourself

When you do a reading *for yourself*, you are always the central character. Your question should focus on you. There are times when questions about others are fine (see [lesson 9](#)), but not when you are concentrating on your own concerns.

Sometimes you may not realize you are orienting your question around someone else. Consider these:

What is behind Arthur's drinking problem?

How can I assist Arthur with his drinking problem?

What role do I play in Arthur's drinking problem?

The first question focuses totally on Arthur and his problem. In the second question, the writer is included, but his *attention is still on Arthur*. The third question is best because it is grounded solidly in the writer's own experience.

Stay Neutral

You want to stay as neutral as possible when writing your questions. It is easy to begin a reading convinced that your position is the right one, but if you truly want to receive guidance, you need to be open to other points of view. Consider these sets of questions:

Why am I the only one doing chores?

How can I foster a spirit of cooperation concerning the chores?

How can I make people listen when I'm talking?

What is going on when I try to communicate, but feel others aren't listening?

How can I make my boss stop asking me to do overtime?

Why have I had to do so much overtime recently?

In the first questions, the writer feels his position is the correct one - others are not

getting with the program! The second questions are more neutral and open-ended.

Be Positive

Be positive when writing your questions. Consider these:

How come I can never get my research published?

How can I locate the ideal forum in which to publish my research?

Why can't I overcome my fear of public speaking?

How can I improve my ability to speak to groups effectively?

Can you help me understand why I always blow a tournament in the last round?

Can you help me find a way to push on to victory in a tournament?

The first questions have an air of defeat. The second questions are more confident. The writer knows she will be successful given useful advice.

You may be wondering why I have gone into so much detail about writing a question. This process is a focusing exercise that prepares you for the reading that follows. Writing a question usually takes no more than three or four minutes, but, for that small investment in time, you reap big rewards. You understand your situation better and can interpret your reading with more insight.

LESSON 8

The Question Reading

In this lesson, you will finally learn how to do a full tarot reading for yourself. I describe a simple procedure you can use to explore a personal question. Having a procedure to follow is important in tarot work. When you follow the same steps over and over in a certain way, they help you center yourself in the moment. The details of the steps are not that important; in fact, you can change any of them if you wish. The goal is to maintain a spirit of mindfulness. Doing a reading with loving concentration will make your tarot practice very powerful.

Here is the procedure for a Question Tarot Reading. (See also a [step-by-step outline](#).)

Setting the Mood

Your first step is to create a conducive mood. [Lesson 6](#) offers some suggestions on how to set up a pleasing environment. You can try these ideas, if you like. Focus on what will make you feel comfortable and secure.

When you are ready, sit down on the floor or at a table leaving some empty space in front

of you. You should have your tarot cards and your question written on a piece of paper. (See [lesson 7](#) for how to write a question.) At first, a full reading will probably take at least thirty to forty minutes. Try to arrange your affairs so you won't be interrupted. With experience, you will be able to shorten this time, if you wish, but it is always better to feel unhurried.

Begin to relax and still your mind. Put aside your worries and concerns for now. (You can always get them back later!) Settle fully into the present moment. Take a few deep breaths, relax all your muscles and feel the quiet as you turn away from the outside world. Take as much time as you need for this calming process.

Asking Your Question

When you feel centered, take your cards out of their container. Hold them cupped in one hand while you place the other hand on top. Close your eyes and bring the cards into the circle of your energy.

Now, make an opening statement, if you wish. Some possibilities are:

- a prayer
- an affirmation
- a description of how you are feeling
- a simple hello to your Inner Guide

You can write a phrase to say every time, or you can speak spontaneously. It is more important to speak from your heart than to mouth an empty formula. Say your statement out loud, as sound adds energy and conviction.

Next, ask your question, either from memory or by reading it. Be sure to say your question exactly as you wrote it. One of the mysteries of the unconscious is that it is very literal; the cards you choose will often reflect the precise wording of your question.

Shuffling the Cards

Open your eyes and begin shuffling. It is important to shuffle the cards because this is how you sort through all the forms your reading could take and arrange at a subtle level the one you will receive.

There are a number of [ways to shuffle the cards](#). Each method has its pros and cons. Choose one that is most comfortable for you. Certain methods mix the cards so some are right side up (upright) and some, upside-down (reversed). If this is your first reading, do not worry about reversed cards. I will explain these in [lesson 17](#).

Concentrate on your question while you shuffle. Focus on the overall intent rather than the details. Don't strain to stay fixed, but do keep the question in mind as much as you

can.

Cutting the Cards

When you feel you have shuffled long enough, stop and place the cards face down in front of you with the short edge closest to you. Cut the deck as follows:

Grab some number of cards from the pile.

Drop this smaller pile to the left.

Grab some part of this second pile and drop it further to the left.

Regroup the cards into one pile in any fashion.

It's best to regroup the cards in one quick motion. Don't try to figure out which pile should go where. Just let your hand move where it will. The cut is an important finishing step that marks the end of the card-arranging stage. Once you have regrouped the cards, the pattern of the reading is fixed, and all that remains is to lay out the cards and see what they reveal.

Laying Out the Cards

Follow the steps for the [spread](#) you have chosen. If this is your first reading, use the Celtic Cross. (Before actually laying out the cards, read the next step, "Responding to the Cards.")

Pick up the deck and hold it in one hand with the short edge closest to you.

With your other hand, turn over the first card as you would the page of a book.

Place this card in Position 1.

(The position number corresponds to the placement order.)

Turn over the second card, and place it in Position 2.

Continue in this way until you have placed all the cards.

Turn any reversed cards around if you are not using them.

Responding to the Cards

Pay attention to your reactions to each card as you lay it out. At first, you will not know or remember the usual meaning of a card. Your thoughts and feelings will be based mainly on the images. As you practice, your reactions will become more informed, but also more predictable. Try to keep some of your original openness as much as possible. Pay attention to any responses that seem unusual or out-of-place.

When all the cards are laid out, take a moment to respond to them as a whole. Do you get

an overall impression? Do you have any new reactions? Jot down some of your thoughts, if you wish. Don't worry if you can't remember all of them. Just as with dreams, you will recall the most important. Try not to get too involved in your notes as that can break the flow of the reading. You simply want to capture a few ideas quickly.

Analyzing the Cards

In the beginning, use the [section about individual cards](#) for help. Later, you can examine the cards on your own, but you may still find this section useful. (I use it myself from time to time!)

Begin your review with Position 1 and proceed in position order. Here are the suggested steps:

Look up the card in the [Card Section](#).

Read through all the [keywords](#) and [actions](#).

Look for actions that make you say "Yes, that one really fits!" I experience a kind of jolt of recognition when I see one. Don't shy away from actions that seem less pleasant. Trust your reactions, and reserve judgment until you've seen all the cards. Note any stray thoughts or "irrelevant" feelings that come to mind.

When you've considered each card, look for relationships between them. Apply the principles of interpretation. (These are covered in [lessons 11-18](#).)

You could ponder a reading for hours without running out of insights, but, of course, this isn't practical or desirable. Do try to spend some time, however. Your reward will be equal to your effort.

Creating the Story

At some point, you need to pull everything together. I call this creating the story. (See [lesson 18](#).) Your story will help you understand your situation and give you guidance for the future - what you have been seeking all along.

I recommend that you create your story spontaneously. Once you have finished your card review, let that analytical approach go. It's no longer appropriate. Your story will be more authentic if it arises freely from within. When you feel ready, simply begin speaking your story, saying whatever comes to mind. Use any notes you have to help, but don't focus on them too much.

I encourage you to tell your story out loud. Writing is too slow, and just thinking your ideas is too vague. Your story will gather strength and power as it is spoken. If you begin to ramble or lose your train of thought, don't be concerned. Simply pause, regroup and start again. As you practice, you will get better at speaking on the fly. You may want to tape your story. When you play back the tape, you will be amazed at what you hear. You will truly feel you are your own best tarot reader.

Writing the Summary Statement

Your story is done when your words slow down and stop naturally. Your next step is to distill the main theme of your story. What is the essence of your guidance? Ask yourself these questions:

- What is the problem or conflict?
- What is my role?
- What does my Inner Guide want me to understand?
- What is the projected outcome?
- How do you feel about that?
- Do I sense any recommendations for action?

What you are doing is forming the answer to your question. Before the reading, you posed a question that had meaning for you. Your Inner Guide has responded, and now you want to capture that wisdom in a form you can remember. Try to summarize your story in one or two sentences. Concentrate on the message in the cards and not the mechanics of your interpretation.

Finishing Up

The main event is over, but, as with any ceremony, there are a few final steps to take to end your reading and leave your cards ready for next time.

If you have not already done so, write down the cards you selected and their positions. It is easy to forget them. Then, *clear the deck* to remove all traces of the energy patterns of this reading. I clear a deck by scrambling the cards together gently. It reminds me of erasing letters in the sand with a sweep of my hand. You may enjoy this technique as well, but any [shuffling method](#) will do. Take a few moments now to clear your deck. Make sure the cards are face down or turned away from you. Stop when you feel you've shuffled long enough, and gather the cards together. Your deck is now ready for your next reading.

Before putting the cards away, hold them again for just a moment. Place your deck in one hand with the other hand on top, and close your eyes. Say what you feel you have learned from this reading. Express your gratitude to your Inner Guide for helping you via the tarot cards. Gratitude is a wonderful sentiment. It provides the ideal frame of mind in which to end your reading.

When you began, you initiated a cycle. You created meaning in the form of a reading, and now you have completed that cycle by returning the cards to their resting state.

Using What You Have Learned

The reading proper is over, but the inner work is just beginning. Your goal is to integrate what you have learned into your life in some way. If you don't, your tarot practice will remain a beautiful pastime with no power to help you.

Decide on one or more actions you can take to put your guidance to work. You can reinforce what you're doing now or make some changes, either radical or minor. Specific actions are usually more helpful than vague plans.

If you are keeping a journal, write down what you intend to do. Commit only to what you know you will actually carry out. I know how easy it is to lay out some cards, look at them briefly and then never think about that reading again, especially when your reaction is less than positive!

As the days go by, think about your reading and how it meshes with your life. Ask yourself these questions:

- How meaningful was my story?
- How well did the guidance fit?
- Did I miss any clues?
- Did I carry out an action, and, if so, what happened?
- Did something unexpected occur?
- Do my Daily Readings add anything?

You may be tempted to do another reading, but it's probably best to wait until there are important changes in your situation. Assume that your first reading covers all you need to know. If you are puzzled about certain elements, mine your first reading for more insights. By going deeper, you will get closer to the heart of the matter.

Using what you have learned in a reading is probably the most important step - and the most difficult. It involves moving beyond playing with the cards. When you actually commit to integrating your tarot insights into your life, you have realized the true and lasting benefit to be gained from the cards.

This is my ideal tarot session, but, to be truthful, I don't always follow it. Sometimes I linger over these steps, sometimes I neglect quite a few of them. I encourage you to adopt whatever procedure suits your interests and needs. If you don't enjoy the cards, they'll just gather dust on the shelf. The details aren't that important; it's the intention that counts!

Shuffling Methods

Card Player's Method

The Card Player's Method is commonly used to shuffle everyday playing cards. Hold about half the cards face down in each hand and intermingle them as they drop to the surface of the table. This technique mixes the cards thoroughly, but it can be awkward because most tarot cards are bigger than normal. This method is also hard on your cards. They tend to form a bend in the middle. The Card Player's Method is effective, but somewhat mechanical in spirit.

Insertion Method

Hold about half the deck in each hand, and insert one half in a scattered fashion down through the other half. You can hold the cards on their long or short side. This method is fast, efficient and composed with a lot of hand-to-card contact. Be careful with the edges as they can fray over time.

Cowie Push/Put Method

In [Tarot for Successful Living](#), Norma Cowie describes her push/put shuffling method. Her technique thoroughly mixes the cards with maximum hand contact and little or no damage. Hold the deck face down in your dominant hand. Push some cards from the top with your thumb into the other hand. Then, push again, but this time to the bottom of the new pile. Continue alternating a push to the top, then one to the bottom until all the cards have been transferred. At this point, put the entire deck back into your dominant hand and start over. This method can be difficult at first. You may push too many or drop some, but your technique will improve with practice.

Scrambling Method

The Scrambling Method is about as basic as you can get. Spread all the cards face down on the floor or table, and start scrambling. This technique creates a good mix with few ill effects on the cards. The main drawback is that you need room. This shuffle also has a rather uncomposed feel which some find undesirable.

To Avoid Reversed Cards:	To Encourage Reversed Cards:
Start with your cards all facing the same direction. Every time you divide the deck before shuffling, make sure the two piles stay facing the same way.	Every time you divide the deck before shuffling, rotate one of the piles 180 degrees.

The Question Tarot Reading

A Step-By-Step Procedure

Here are the steps for a tarot reading you do for yourself based on a written question. (See [lesson 8](#).)

To begin, have ready:

your written question
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.

Asking your question

Remove cards from container.
Hold cards cupped in one hand. Place other hand on top.
Close your eyes.
Say an opening statement out loud, if you wish.
Read your question out loud, or say it from memory exactly as written.

Shuffling the cards

Shuffle the cards until you feel ready to stop.
Concentrate on your question while shuffling, but without strain.

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 some 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 short edge toward you.
Turn over the top card as you would turn the page of a book.

Lay out 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.

Answer your question in a written summary statement (1-2 sentences).

Finishing up

Write down the cards and their positions.

Clear the deck.

Gather the cards together.

Hold cards cupped in one hand. Place other hand on top.

Close your eyes.

Say out loud what you have learned from this reading.

Express gratitude to your Inner Guide.

Put cards back into container.

Restore environment if necessary.

Using what you have learned

Decide on one or two actions to take based on the reading.

Write down intended actions.

Relate developments in situation to the reading.

LESSON 9

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.

Except for choosing the subject, the procedure for an Other Reading is basically the same as the one in [lesson 8](#). The few differences are noted here. (There is also a [step-by-step outline](#).)

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 an Other Reading about someone who is close to you - a relative, friend or colleague. In [lesson 7](#) I talk about the importance of focusing on yourself in readings that concern you. 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?"

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.

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!)

Shuffling the Cards

Cutting the Cards

Laying Out the Cards

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!

Analyzing the Cards

In an Other 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.

Creating the Story

Writing the Summary Statement

Finishing Up

Using What You Have Learned

Even though an Other Reading focuses on someone else, there is still a lesson for you in the cards. Try to identify this lesson so you can apply it in your own life.

The Other Tarot Reading

A Step-By-Step Procedure

Here are the steps for a tarot reading you do for yourself based on a written question about another subject. (See [lesson 9](#).)

Choosing the subject

Choose the subject of your reading - person, couple, group, place, news event, and so on.

Check your involvement.

Switch to a [Question Reading](#) if you answer yes to any of these:

Do I feel *strong emotions* when I think about this subject in this situation?

Do I have a vested interest in this situation?

Do I desire a particular outcome in this situation?

Write a question focusing on what interests you about your subject.

To begin, have ready:

your written question

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.

Place a picture or object of the subject nearby, if you wish.

Sit down with some empty space in front of you.

Relax and still your mind. Breathe deeply several times.

[Asking your question](#)

Remove cards from container.

Hold cards cupped in one hand. Place other hand on top.

Close your eyes.

Say an opening statement out loud, if you wish.

Read your question out loud, or say it from memory exactly as written.

Say why you are doing an Other Reading about this subject.

Request guidance that is in the best interest of all concerned.

Mention your good intentions toward the subject.

[Shuffling the cards](#)

Shuffle the cards until you feel ready to stop.

Concentrate on your question while you shuffle, but without strain.

[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 some number of cards from the complete pile.

Drop this smaller pile to the left.

Grab part of the second pile. Drop this third pile to the left.

Regroup the 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 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 as they relate to the subject (and you).

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 about the subject's situation.

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 the story spontaneously out loud as it relates to the subject.

Tape the story, if you wish.

Writing the summary statement

Think about the theme or message in your reading.

Answer question in a written summary statement (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

Think how lesson of this reading applies to your life.

Follow subject's situation to see how it relates to reading.

LESSON 10

The Open 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.

The procedure is basically the same as the one in [lesson 8](#). The few differences are noted here. (There is also a [step-by-step outline](#).)

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.

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 at this time.

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.

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.

Cutting the Cards

Laying Out the Cards

Responding to the Cards

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.

Creating the Story

Writing the Summary Statement

Finishing Up

Using What You Have Learned

It is not necessary to commit to specific actions. Simply absorb the spirit of the message and allow it to guide you in a general way.

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. (See [lesson 10](#).)

To begin, have ready:

- 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.
- Hold cards cupped in one hand. Place 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 some 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.

Principles of Interpretation

Introduction

You're seated in front of your first tarot reading. You've shuffled, cut and laid out ten cards for the Celtic Cross. Your first thought is probably, "Now what do I do?"

When I first began learning the tarot, I sought the answer to this question everywhere - in classes, conversations, books, and practice. I was looking for the one, *true* way to interpret the cards. Of course, I never found such a system because it doesn't exist. Reading the tarot is an art, not a science. There can be no set rules that apply all the time because every person is unique. How could a system of formulas ever provide guidance that honors that uniqueness?

On the other hand, there are some ways to approach the cards that have proven valuable time and again. They work because they bring form and focus to intuitive responses. They provide a framework around which you can build the special message of each reading.

In the next eight lessons, I share some of the principles of interpretation that I have discovered. I offer these ideas as guidelines to help you develop a feel for readings and what they can tell you. Take from them what works for you and use them to create a tarot approach that is uniquely your own.

[Lesson 11 - Interpreting a Single Card](#)

[Lesson 12 - Major and Minor Arcana Cards](#)

Lesson 13 - Aces

Lesson 14 - Court Cards

Lesson 15 - Card Pairs

Lesson 16 - Position Pairs in the Celtic Cross

Lesson 17 - Reversed Cards

Lesson 18 - Creating the Story

LESSON 11

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. In this lesson, we will look at how to interpret one card in a reading on its own. There are four sources of meaning:

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.

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. My suggestions for each card are given in the [Card Section](#).

The third is the set of meanings associated with the *position* of a card. These are also based on convention and common experience. My suggestions for the [Celtic Cross](#) are given in that section.

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.

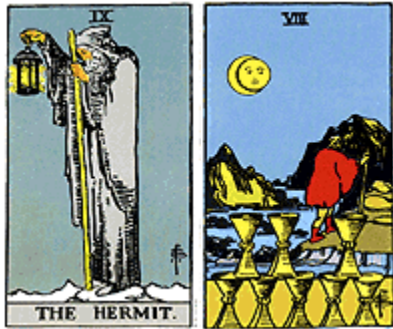
LESSON 12

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*.



If you had drawn the [Lovers](#) instead, you would have to give this attraction greater weight. As a major arcana card, the Lovers implies this relationship is not simple. The attraction is coming from a deeper place. There are elements that go beyond the casual and require more understanding.

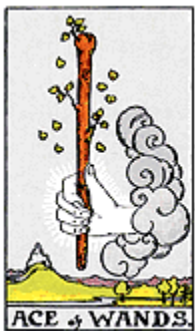
You could draw a minor arcana card in one reading and then draw a major arcana card about the same subject in a later reading. What started as *minor* has become more important over time. Similarly, a *major* matter can fade and lose its urgency as your life changes. You can assume that a major arcana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

LESSON 13

Aces

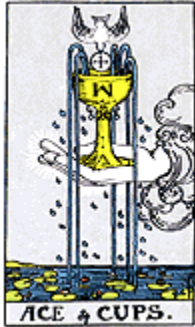
Each Ace represents the [qualities of its suit](#) in their purest form. An Ace always adds something special to a reading. It stands out from the other cards as if in a circle of its own light. The images on the Aces are all similar. A strong hand, glowing with energy, comes out of a cloud grasping 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](#)



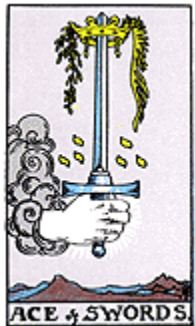
A wand is a strong, masculine object, alive with potent force. Leaves are growing as new life bursts forth. The wand reminds us of a magic wand used to perform miracles and create wonders. The gift of the Ace of Wands is creativity, enthusiasm, courage and confidence.

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

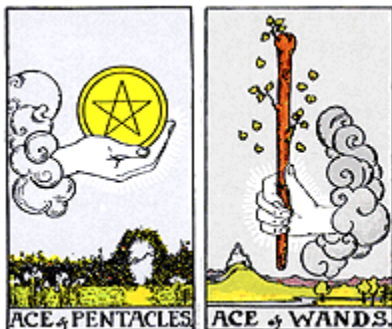


The pentacle is a magical sign for the mystery of nature and the everyday world. It is stamped on a coin, the token of material exchange. With money and raw materials, we have the wherewithal to make our dreams real. The gift of the Ace of Pentacles is prosperity, practicality, security and the ability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

LESSON 14

Court Cards

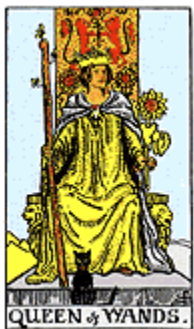
You have probably noticed that people tend to fall into types. Their traits cluster together in familiar ways. We sometimes give these clusters names, such as "loner," "dreamer" or "life of the party." Psychologists have devised elaborate systems that categorize types of people. The popular [Myers-Briggs](#)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

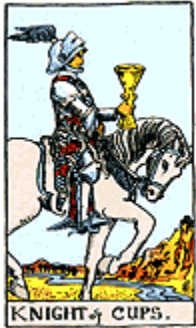
First, a court card shows you a side of you that is being expressed or seeking expression. It may be a side you value, or one you neglect. It may be an approach you recognize, or one you deny. How you view it depends on your question, the other cards and the situation.



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.

LESSON 15

Card Pairs

There is a game called *Labyrinth* that consists of a square box with a platform inside. On the platform is a maze punctuated by little holes. The object is to move a ball from one end of the maze to the other without letting it fall into one of the holes. Knobs on the outside let you guide the ball by rotating the platform in any direction.

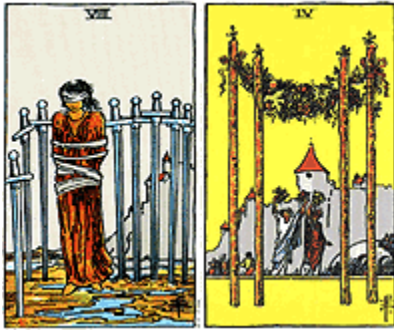
A simple game, but difficult in practice! The slightest miscalculation, and the ball goes down. If you lean the platform too far in one direction, you lose control. If you try to compensate, you lose control in the other direction. The only strategy that works is a patient shepherding of the ball along the path as you maintain a balance of movement and force in all directions.

I see in *Labyrinth* a metaphor for our navigation along the pathway of life. We travel from birth to death negotiating around the "holes" by continually balancing our approaches. We maintain steady progress forward by making countless life adjustments - first here, then there. Our actions offset each other in a dance that is sometimes delightful, often challenging.

The key is always balance. To achieve balance, we must know how to express all the energies available to us. Personal balance is never static. It comes from the ability to choose dynamically the option that will work in any given moment.

A tarot reading is a map of all the counterbalancing tendencies that are or could be operating in your life at one time. To read this map, you must understand the Law of Opposition - that any quality, once identified, implies its opposite. This is a basic principle of the material universe. The Fool discovers this principle at the very beginning of his journey when he meets the *Magician and the High Priestess*. These two show him that nothing can be defined in isolation, only as one pole of a balancing pair.

At the deepest level, opposition does not exist. There is just Oneness, but, in physical life, we perceive Oneness as broken up into countless different energies. These are the forces we navigate in our search for balance.



One way to discover your balance issues is by looking for two cards in a reading that oppose each other. One meaning of the [Eight of Swords](#) is **restriction** - being trapped in an oppressive or limiting situation. If you ponder this meaning for awhile, you realize that simply by acknowledging the idea of restriction, you imply the opposing idea of **freedom** - the breaking out of bonds and limitations. This quality is represented by the [Four of Wands](#).

In a reading, these two cards could be showing you the importance of the restriction/freedom issue in your life. They define the extreme ends of a continuum of experience from which you choose the best balance point for yourself. There are three types of card pairs.

Permanent Pairs





Certain cards form clear and obvious permanent opposites. The Eight of Swords and Four of Wands are this type of pair. The [Magician](#) and the [High Priestess](#) are another. The Magician represents action and conscious awareness; the High Priestess, nonaction and unconscious awareness.

Court Card and Ace Pairs

You can create a pair between any two court cards or two Aces. These pairs reflect the balance patterns that emerge when you contrast two suits or ranks.

Consider the King of Pentacles and the Queen of Cups. Here are the keywords for these cards:

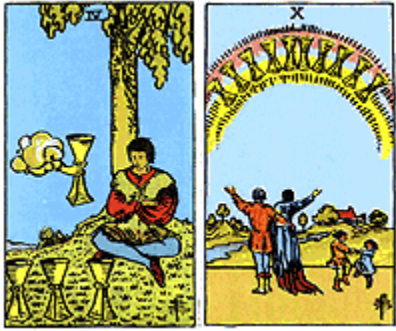
Card	Meanings	Picture
King of Pentacles	enterprising adept reliable supporting steady	
Queen of Cups	emotional tenderhearted intuitive psychic	

The King of Pentacles acts outwardly (King) in an enterprising, adept way based on his interest in the material world (Pentacles). The Queen of Cups has an inner focus (Queen) that is emotional and intuitive based on her concern with feelings (Cups).

In a reading, this pair could represent a conflict between two people - a can-do type who wants to get the job done, and a dreamer who first wants to see how everyone feels. This pair could also represent a dual approach within you - perhaps a need to focus on worldly concerns vs. a desire to concentrate on the spiritual. There are many possibilities, all based on the dynamic between these two styles. Check the [court card](#) and [suit pair](#) charts for some ideas on how the suits and ranks interact.

Occasional Pairs

You can interpret any two cards as a pair, even if their meanings are not clearly opposites. There is so much meaning in every card that useful comparisons can almost always be made. Occasional pairs arise by chance, and their relationship lasts for only that one instance.



The [Four of Cups](#) shows a solitary man sitting under a tree. The [Ten of Cups](#) shows a happy family celebrating together. *If the idea were meaningful to you*, you might see these two cards as defining the opposites of "being alone" vs "being with others." This understanding might occur to you *out of the blue* as a possibility.

Reinforcing Pairs



Two cards do not have to oppose each other to form a pair. They can reinforce each other. Both the [Empress](#) and the [Nine of Cups](#) suggest pleasure, sensuality and physical enjoyment. Reinforcing pairs show that a certain energy is or could be having an extra impact. Sometimes we have to face circumstances in an unbalanced way for the moment in order to achieve our goals.

Balance issues are everywhere. Your tarot readings can help you identify them through the action of card pairs. In the next lesson, we will see how these pairs operate in the Celtic Cross.

LESSON 16

Position Pairs in the Celtic Cross Spread

The Celtic Cross is a powerful spread because it contains many natural pairings. Certain positions complement each other, so the cards that fall there relate in meaningful ways.

[Position 1](#) and [Position 2](#) - The Core Situation

The 1-2 Pair is at the very center of the Celtic Cross. These cards form an obvious pair because Card 2 sits right on top of Card 1, turned 90 degrees! The 1-2 pair symbolizes the heart of a situation. It shows two factors coming together, either on a collision course [[example 1](#)] or for mutual support [[example 2](#)]. Sometimes Card 1 shows the central issue and Card 2 what you must do about it. [[example 3](#)]

Position 3 and Position 5 - Levels of Consciousness

Cards 3 and 5 represent two levels of awareness. You can learn much about a situation by comparing your innermost knowledge with your conscious attitudes. You can find out:

Card 3	Card 5	
real feelings	expected feelings	example 1
deeper truth	surface appearances	example 2
wisdom of higher self	beliefs of ego-self	example 3

Position 4 and Position 6 - Time

Cards 4 and 6 are mirror images. Time is the theme of these two cards. Card 4 the past, and Card 6, the near future. Together they form the two halves of the circle of time that surrounds the present (Card 1). These two cards can show something that is:

Card 4	Card 6	
moving away	approaching	example 1
to be released	to be embraced	example 2
already experienced	to be experienced	example 3

Position 7 and Position 8 - Self and Other

We may experience ourselves as separate from an outside world, but we are linked to our environment by countless threads of cause and effect, emotion and thought. The 7-8 Pair can show us these connections. Card 7 represents you; Card 8, the other. Card 8 can stand for another person [[example 1](#)], a group [[example 2](#)], or the environment in general [[example 3](#)].

Position 5 and Position 10 - Possible Futures

Three cards refer to the future: Card 6 (near future), Card 10 (long-range future), and Card 5 (possible alternate future). The 5-10 pair lets you compare what you *think* will happen (5) with what is actually projected to happen (10), if all energies continue as they are. There are several possibilities:

Card 5	Matches?	Card 10	
positive vision	does not match	negative outcome	example 1
negative vision	does not match	positive outcome	example 2
vision	matches/reinforces	projected outcome	example 3

When Card 5 reinforces Card 10, your beliefs are flowing with the thrust of events. If you react positively to both cards, you can stay the course. If you react negatively, you can change your beliefs to change the outcome.

Position 9 - Wild Card

Traditionally, Card 9 represents your "hopes and fears," but it can also be a guidance card. When you read the cards for yourself, you need a card that can help you put everything together. Card 9 can explain and integrate the other cards by showing:

- approach to take or way to proceed [[example 1](#)]
- key person, problem or obstacle [[example 2](#)]
- element of surprise [[example 3](#)]

The cards in a reading do not always form pairs. Looking for them is just one technique among many. The pairings in this lesson are only suggestions. Let your intuition guide you to combinations that are meaningful to you.

LESSON 17

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.

All life is energy - currents of force that mix and blend to form the patterns of our lives. Each tarot card symbolizes a particular energy, and a tarot reading shows the collective energies that make up a situation. 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.

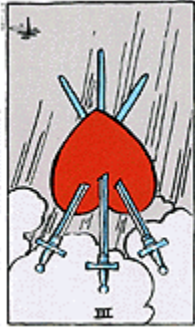


The [Sun's](#) energy is just what you would imagine - expansive and enlightening. An upright Sun shows the energy of *vitality* is openly available. You feel confident and successful. Now is your chance to shine. A reversed Sun shows this same energy is present, but at a lower level. The vitality is 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.

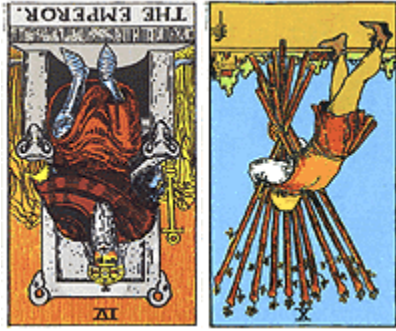


The [Three of Swords](#) represents the energy of heartbreak and betrayal. If this card is upright, hurtful feelings are a feature of the situation. Reversed, they are also present, but reduced. Perhaps the intensity of a painful episode is fading, or you are feeling lonely, but just a little. A reversed 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.



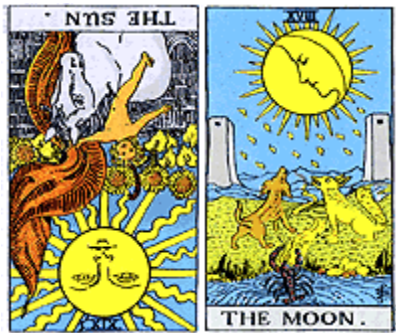
Sometimes a card is reversed even though you are experiencing a high level of its energy. In this case, the reversal hints that you can improve your situation by making a conscious effort to lower the energy.

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. (Of course, it's possible that the energy is low because your defiance is being squelched! Only you can tell which interpretation is best.)



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 *toppled 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.

You can form pairs that contain reversed cards. Here is an example:



The **Sun** and **Moon** are opposites in the area of clarity - the Sun is enlightenment, the Moon, confusion. In a reading, a reversed Sun/upright Moon could show that certainty is low (Sun), and uncertainty is high (Moon), or you are bewildered now (Moon), but greater clarity is possible (Sun).

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.

LESSON 18

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.

Your tarot story ends when your talking begins to wind down and come to a stop. A few stray thoughts may still occur to you, but the main theme will have been established. You will know the essential message of the reading.

Stream-of-consciousness talking is an effective style for me, but you may not like it. You may prefer to sit quietly and absorb the meaning of the cards. Some people like to write out their reactions or create charts that cross-correlate the cards in a systematic way. Each of us is different, and our approaches to the tarot will be different too.

I'd like to leave you with one final thought about tarot stories. **Trust yourself and your intuition completely.** Banish right now any concerns you have about reading the cards correctly. You really can't make mistakes. Your tarot realizations are always the right

ones for you at a given time and place. They are meaningful *because* they are yours. Know that you are truly connected to all that is. You can access an understanding that is far greater than your everyday awareness. Trust that this is so.

LESSON 19

Final Thoughts

My family loves horse racing. They pour over the statistics on the horses to see if they can pick the winner for each race. Sometimes I go with them and bring a friend who has never been to the races before. Invariably, I wind up sitting between my family, picking winners from experience, and my friend, picking winners from beginner's luck. I'm in the middle with no winners and just enough knowledge to be ineffective!

If you feel the same way right now about the tarot, don't be discouraged. At this point, you have a firm foundation of knowledge about the cards that will sustain you in the days ahead. If you continue to practice, you'll find the techniques become more and more invisible as your intuition takes over. Eventually you will reach a point where you can rely on your tarot abilities consistently. You won't have to continue working with the cards as intensely unless you want to. These days I go to the cards only when I have a puzzling problem or situation that I know they can help me with. The tarot is a tool I can count on.



I'm sure you've found already that you do not feel neutral about your readings. No matter what the situation, as you lay out the cards, you hope for ones that will be positive and encouraging. This is only natural. In my experience, people want to know right away if their situation looks good. They respond cheerfully to the pleasant cards, but recoil in disappointment if a nasty one appears. Indeed, it *is* difficult to look at a card such as the [Tower](#) and accept it calmly. We don't want something scary to happen; we want the good!

In fact, the good and the bad are so mixed in life that these terms finally become meaningless. If you were to lose a leg in an accident, but then develop great inner strength during recovery, could you really say the accident was completely bad? If you were to be fired from your job, but then find a better one on the rebound, where is the

positive and negative in this situation?

The cards in the tarot are not good or bad in themselves. They only describe certain energies or influences. It is up to you to use this information to make conscious choices about your life. Although the Tower can show a shattering breakup or downfall of some kind, you do not have to view this negatively. Sometimes an explosion of feeling or dramatic shakeup provides welcome relief, clearing the air and freeing up new energy.

It is your concentrated clarity about a situation that gives you the power to mold events along the lines of your choosing. This clarity comes from the wisdom of your Inner Guide paired with the fearless confidence you have in yourself. A reading does not deliver news to you as a passive victim, but as a powerful agent who can use that information creatively. It gives you a picture of the energy patterns in and around you so that you can work with them as you see fit.

Always remember that the outcome pictured in a reading is the one projected *for now* from all the influences of the present moment. If you can identify those forces, you can alter or encourage them as you wish. The future is never fixed. The outcome of your story is not a certainty, but a possibility. You can always embrace or change a direction provided you have the desire and courage to take the necessary steps. At the deepest level, you know what your situation is all about. Your tarot story simply lets you recognize what you already know so you can act consciously.

Perhaps you are concerned that you aren't objective enough when reading the cards. You suspect that you only see in a reading what you want to see, and not the truth. In fact, that is exactly the point! The tarot helps you find out what it is you *do* believe, so you can acknowledge it. Your unconscious becomes conscious. You can't interpret falsely, but you *can* fail to perceive all that is there. The tarot is a mirror that reflects your own consciousness back to you. As you learn, that mirror becomes clearer, and you perceive at ever deeper levels.

A tarot practice is based on the understanding that wisdom from some Source will come to you through the cards. At first, you may have to accept this on faith, but after awhile you will receive the "proof" you need in the results you experience in your life. If you can approach the cards with trust, your tarot practice will take off. Good luck!

Introduction to Exercises

These exercises give you a chance to practice the concepts presented in the lessons. Do the ones that appeal to you, and take them at your own pace. You don't have to do any exercises before continuing with the lessons. They are completely optional. The later exercises do build on earlier lessons, so it's best not to skip ahead.

For some exercises, I give examples of possible responses. The sentence "You can check my suggestions, if you wish" lets you know when this is the case. My suggestions are *not* answers. They are simply examples of the kinds of insights you can get from the cards. In the tarot, whatever your intuition tells you is valid. Everyone sees the world through a different lens. Your goal is to learn how your own particular lens works.

Exercises - Lesson 1

Introduction to the Tarot

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 1.1 - What Do I Believe?

Think over the ideas presented in lesson 1. Write down briefly what you do and do not believe at this time about the tarot. Assign a percentage to your beliefs where:

- 0% = "I am totally skeptical about using the tarot for anything but fun."
- 100% = "I am absolutely convinced that the tarot can give me specific, personal guidance."

Exercise 1.2 - Getting to Know a Card

Shuffle your tarot deck and choose a card. Look at the image for a while. Ask yourself these questions:

- What story do I see in the picture?
- What emotions do I feel?
- How do the details in the picture reinforce those ideas?
- What is the overall mood?
- What do I think this card might mean?

When you are through, go to the [information page](#) for that card and read through the [actions](#). Compare these to your impressions. Do not be concerned if your ideas do not match mine. Your intuition is working and already giving you some unique insights! You can repeat this exercise with as many cards as you like.

Exercise 1.3 - How Do I Contribute to "Random" Events?

Choose an event from your past in which you felt victimized by forces over which you had little control. List ways you actually did contribute to this event. My camera and

typewriter were once stolen from my apartment. I didn't give the robber a map, but I:

- did rent an accessible 1st floor apartment;
- did leave my items lying around;
- did invest my money in expensive items;
- did not invest in a burglar-alarm system;
- did not investigate when I thought I heard someone.

This list include choices I made and those I failed to make. Some relate to the robbery and some to bigger issues. None of these choices is wrong, but they all have effects that contribute to "random" events.

Exercise 1.4 - Answers from Nowhere

Try this exercise when you're in a library or bookstore. Think about a problem that concerns you. Close your eyes, and suggest silently to your Inner Guide that you are seeking advice. Ask it to help you learn what you need to know.

Now, wander freely through the aisles. Avoid noticing where you are; just trust your inner promptings to guide you. When you feel ready, pick up a book and open to a page. Read the entire page, and try to relate what is there to your problem. You may be surprised to find just what you needed. If the information doesn't seem related, pretend the message is in a code that you must decipher. Look for a subtle meaning. Meaning is everywhere - literally at your fingertips - but you must seek it out.

Exercise 1.5 - You Can Get What You Need

Before going to bed, take a five dollar bill in your hand, close your eyes and ask that you be shown during the day how to use this five dollars to benefit yourself or the world. (A five dollar bill is a practical symbol of the means by which we carry out our purposes in life.)

Place the money under your pillow. In the morning, repeat your request, and then take the bill with you. During the day, keep alert for a sign of how to use it. Stay focused so you don't miss the slightest clue. You will recognize the moment when you feel a little jolt. If nothing strikes you the first day, continue for one week. Give the world a good chance to respond. Try not to forget your morning and evening requests. The strength of your intent and commitment is important.

Later, think about the implications of this approach to the world. Life will bring you what you seek if you ask and trust, but the answer may not be in the form you expect!

Exercises - Lesson 2

The Major Arcana

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 2.1 - Studying the Major Arcana cards

Spend a few minutes looking at the [Card Section](#) so you understand [how to use it](#). Become familiar with [keywords](#) and [actions](#) as I use these terms in the lessons. Don't worry about memorizing anything. The goal is simply to get comfortable with the information.

Now, choose a major arcana card from the deck and go to its information page. Notice how the keywords reinforce each other to create a certain kind of energy or focus. Note also how the actions flesh out the keywords. Read the [description](#), but just glance at the ["opposing"](#) and ["reinforcing"](#) sections for now. You will learn more about these in lesson 15. You can repeat this exercise for as many major arcana cards as you like.

Exercise 2.2 - Fool's Journey

The [Fool's Journey](#) is an interpretation of how the major arcana symbolizes the stages of inner growth. Read this description now. It may deepen your understanding of the major arcana cards and help you appreciate their power as archetypes of the human condition. As you continue the lessons, keep in mind how these 22 cards work together as a unit. Be open to the possibility that you may develop your own ideas about these cards and what they mean.

Exercises - Lesson 3

The Minor Arcana

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 3.1 - What are the Suit Qualities?

Review the [lists of suit qualities](#). They describe some positive and negative expressions of each suit. Don't try to memorize these lists. They are simply designed to give you a first feel for the energy of each suit. When you're ready, go through the word pairs below. For each pair, give the suit and expression (+ or -) that seems most appropriate *to you*. For "dependable and careful" you might say "Pentacles - positive." You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish. When your choices are different from mine, try to figure out

why. In this way, you begin refining your own understanding of each suit. You can also have a friend quiz you using new two-word combinations from the lists.

sullen and lazy

prim and humorless

witty and well-informed

judgmental and controlling

cheerful and bold

thorough and practical

calm and sympathetic

logical and outspoken

irresponsible and cocky

loyal and down-to-earth

critical and arrogant

whole-hearted and passionate

temperamental and sulky

sensitive and loving

foolhardy and rash

moody and frail

stubborn and gloomy

honest and objective

persistent and firm

aloof and domineering

spiritual and intuitive

hasty and unprepared

creative and adventurous

overcautious and rigid

Exercise 3.2 - Suit Qualities - Clear-cut Examples

Many aspects of daily life reflect the energy of one suit in particular. For each activity

below, state the suit and expression you believe fits that activity best, and name a few qualities that support your choice. Going skydiving might be a "Wands-positive" activity because you must be "daring, energetic and confident." (or a Wands-negative activity because it is "foolhardy and reckless!") You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish.

always needing to have everything just so

getting drunk the night before an important exam

being where you say you will, every time

solving a math problem

using the tarot cards

cheering your team on to victory

listening to a friend talk about her troubles

making a cruel, sarcastic remark

refusing to apologize when you're wrong

treating those "beneath" you with disdain

seeing a project through to the end

brooding over a perceived slight

volunteering for a dangerous, but vital mission

quitting your job in a moment of anger

arbitrating a dispute

finding dirty work distasteful

Exercise 3.3 - Suit Qualities - Blended Examples

In most events, the four suit qualities blend together. For each activity below, name two positive suit qualities that would contribute to success and two negative ones that would take away from it. Do this for each suit. For example:

to keep love alive....

- **Wands:** be passionate and enthusiastic, but not impatient and hot-tempered
- **Cups:** be romantic and loving, but not broody and touchy
- **Swords:** be honest and honorable, but not cold and judgmental
- **Pentacles:** be loyal and dependable, but not unexciting and inflexible

managing a project

creating a work of art

raising a child

closing a sale

Exercise 3.4 - Suit Qualities in Yourself

The different suit qualities combine in each person to create his or her personality. Examine yourself in light of the four suits. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is one suit quality dominant?
- Is one quality less familiar?
- In what situations do I take on each quality?
- Do I reflect the positive or negative side?
- Do I attract people of the same type, or different?

You can repeat this exercise with another person as the subject.

Suggestions for Exercises - Lesson 3

Exercise 3.1 - What are the Suit Qualities?

Cups - negative

Pentacles - negative

Swords - positive

Swords - negative

Wands - positive

Pentacles - positive

Cups - positive

Swords - positive

Wands - negative

Pentacles - positive

Swords - negative

Wands - positive

Cups - negative

Cups - positive

Wands - negative

Cups - negative

Pentacles - negative

Swords - positive

Pentacles - positive

Swords - negative

Cups - positive

Wands - negative

Wands - positive

Pentacles - negative

Exercise 3.2 - Clear-Cut Examples

Pentacles - negative

compulsive, overorganized, rigid

Wands - negative

imprudent, irresponsible, unprepared

Pentacles - positive

dependable, reliable, responsible

Swords - positive

logical, mental, analytical

Cups - positive

intuitive, spiritual, quiet

Wands - positive

enthusiastic, exuberant, wholehearted

Cups - positive

caring, kind, sympathetic, concerned

Swords - negative

biting, critical, insensitive

Pentacles - negative

stubborn, obstinate, unbending

Swords - negative

arrogant, condescending, highhanded, patronizing

Pentacles - positive

dogged, tenacious, thorough, persistent

Cups - negative

hypersensitive, sulky, temperamental, touchy

Wands - positive

brave, heroic, self-confident, valiant

Wands - negative

hasty, rash, hot-tempered, impulsive

Swords - positive

objective, equitable, impartial, just, discerning

Cups - negative

overrefined, frail, fragile, lazy

Exercises - Lesson 4

The Spread

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 4.1 - Celtic Cross Spread

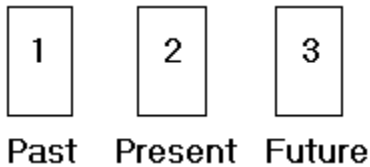
Spend a few minutes looking at the [Celtic Cross Section](#) so you understand how it is set up. Don't worry about memorizing anything. The goal is simply to get comfortable with the information.

Now, lay out ten cards of your choice using this spread. Read the page for each position one by one. Think about the meaning each card takes on because it falls in a certain position. You will learn more about this later, but just speculate for now.

Exercise 4.2 - Designing a Spread

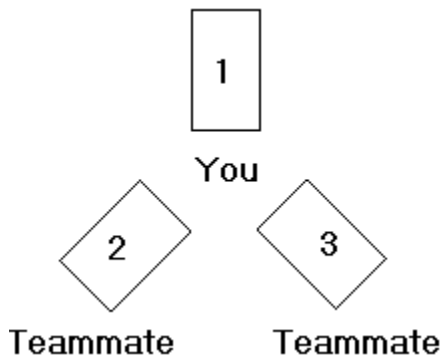
You can design spreads yourself to suit your needs. Create for yourself now a three-card tarot spread. Follow these steps:

- Draw a picture of the physical layout - where the cards should go.
- Number the positions to show order of placement.
- Write a short phrase or two describing the meaning of each position.



This is a basic three-card spread that covers events in time.

Here's a spread to use when you belong to a three-person team and want to know the expectations of the members (including yourself). The cards form a "Y" with the tops facing inward. This pattern suggests a meeting of the minds.



Design your layout so it reflects the meanings of the positions. To expand on this exercise, work with four, five or more cards.

Exercises - Lesson 5

The Daily Reading

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#)).

Exercise 5.1 - Learning the Cards One By One

You can become more familiar with each tarot card by concentrating on a different one each day. This exercise takes a minimum of seventy-eight days, so it is quite a commitment, but, if you stick with it, you will know the tarot deck very well when you are done.

Decide now how you will choose your daily card during this learning phase. You can be systematic (first the Wands, then the Cups, etc.) or spontaneous. You can pick a card that catches your eye, or one that seems fitting for the day's events. A single day on each card is enough, but you can take longer, if you wish.

When you have selected a card, read its [information page](#) at least once. Write down the keywords, and try to memorize them. They will help you remember the meanings of a card quickly. Study the details of the card's picture as well. You may want to make a copy of the information page to refer to during the day. I don't recommend carrying your card around as it could get lost or damaged. Start a journal, if you wish.

Exercise 5.2 - Establishing a Daily Reading Practice

When you have studied all the tarot cards at least once, begin drawing your cards without conscious deliberation. Follow the steps listed in lesson 5. Continue to make entries in your journal, if you have one. After a month or so, calculate the distribution of suits and major arcana cards. Do you notice a pattern that reflects your situation? Do certain card (s) show up frequently? Ask yourself why this might be so.

Exercises - Lesson 6

The Environment

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 6.1 - Creating a Place To Do Your Readings

Spend some time thinking about where you will do your tarot readings. Consider some of the [suggestions in lesson 6](#), or use your own ideas. Don't feel that you have to create a showcase location. Just see what you can do to create a setting that is pleasing and comfortable.

Exercise 6.2 - Quest for a Symbol

In this exercise, you will be announcing your intent to find or create an object that will be a personal symbol of your tarot practice. You can buy, find or make this object yourself. Once you have it, place it in your tarot spot as an inspiration for your work.

Read over the description of [the Fool](#). This card often stands for the feeling of joy and freedom that comes from beginning a new adventure. It is in this spirit that you will seek your object. This quest symbolizes the quest for greater understanding you are

undertaking by learning the tarot.

Hold the Fool in your hands, and close your eyes. Announce your desire to find or create a tarot symbol. Commit to working until you have it. The value you place on this quest will reinforce the value of your larger quest. Once you have affirmed your intent, let it go. You will find what you are looking for.

This exercise will strengthen your faith and commitment and leave you with a tangible symbol of your purpose. It will also help you learn that hidden within seemingly foolish acts is the experience of life as an adventure.

Exercises - Lesson 7

Writing a Question

(See [Introduction to Exercises.](#))

Exercise 7.1 - Writing a Tarot Question

You are going to write a question for your first tarot reading. Think about your life for a moment, and choose an area in which you are having some difficulty. (We all have one of these!) Avoid general concerns such as finding a life partner. Pick a specific everyday problem that is troubling you right now in your home or workplace. Choose something that involves you directly and that you care about personally. Follow the recommendations in lesson 7 for writing an effective question. Take notes as you go. We will be using these notes and your question in the next lesson.

Exercise 7.2 - Practicing Question Writing

Life will offer you many opportunities to practice writing questions. Any time you face a problem, take a moment to create a question about it. Work on it while you're doing routine activities, such as riding in a car or doing housework.

Writing practice questions helps you learn to analyze a personal problem quickly and recognize what you want in various situations. Also, if you decide to do a reading about the problem, you have your question ready.

Exercise - Lesson 8

The Question Reading

(See [Introduction to Exercises.](#))

Exercise 8.1 - Doing a Question Reading

You are going to do a Celtic Cross Question Reading from start to finish. Follow the procedure outlined in lesson 8. (Also refer to the [step-by-step outline](#).) You will need a question to be answered. You can use the question you wrote in [Exercise 7.1](#) or write a new one. Interpret the cards as best you can using your intuition and the [Card](#) and [Celtic Cross](#) Sections.

You may feel a little at sea this first time - not sure whether or not you're doing everything right. Remember there is no one correct interpretation. What you see in the cards is right for you *by definition*, and, no matter what, you will come away with something of value. In future lessons, you will learn some principles of interpretation that will help you feel more confident. At that point, we'll revisit this reading to see what else you can learn from it.

Exercises - Lesson 9

The Other Reading

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 9.1 - Doing a Reading About a News Event

Go through today's newspaper and choose a topic that interests you. Look for one that is intriguing and somewhat controversial. A short-term media event is a good choice because you will get feedback on the situation quickly. Read over the facts that are available, and write a question that covers one aspect of the situation. Do an Other Reading following the procedure described in lesson 9. (You can also refer to the [step-by-step outline](#).) Write down your interpretation and what you predict the outcome will be.

Later, when the situation has resolved somewhat, go over your reading and relate it to what happened. If your interpretation doesn't seem to fit, look at the cards again to see if you can find something new in them.

Exercise 9.2 - Am I Involved?

Think of a problem that is bothering a close friend, relative or colleague. Choose a person whose concerns are important to you. Write a question about the problem as if you were doing an Other Reading. Deliberately keep yourself out of the question. When you are done, ask yourself these 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 you answered yes to any of these questions, rewrite your original question so that it is centered on you. The goal of this exercise is to help you learn to tell when a problem involves you directly and when it doesn't.

Exercise 9.3 - Imaginary Situations

You can create a troubling set of circumstances for an imaginary person, and then do an Other Reading about it. You can also borrow a situation from the advice columns in the newspapers. These are great resources for problems of all kinds.

Exercises - Lesson 10

The Open Reading

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 10.1 - Doing an Open Reading

During the next few weeks, look for an opportunity to try an Open Reading. I recommend a fairly quiet day when you feel at peace with your life and attuned to the moment. It should be a day when you have the time and inclination to step back a little and look at the larger patterns that are influencing you at this time. If a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion happens to fall during this period, use it as the basis for your reading. Follow the procedure described in lesson 10. (You can also refer to the [step-by-step outline](#).)

Exercises - Lesson 11

Interpreting a Single Card

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 11.1 - Your Personal Reactions to a Card

Choose any card from the tarot deck. Look at it carefully and then write down your response. It doesn't matter if you are already familiar with this card and know its meanings. Consider whatever comes to mind to be your personal reaction. Some elements to think about are:

What feeling do I sense in the card scene?*

What feeling do I sense in myself when I see this card?*

Am I attracted, repelled or neutral about this card?

What aspect of my life comes to mind when I see this card?

Does this card remind me of someone?

What details seem important in this card, and why?

*These two feelings may be the same or different.

You may not feel any reaction to the card, or perhaps just a mild one. Try to notice any quick thought, feeling or image that comes to mind, no matter how slight.

Exercise 11.2 - Combining Sources of Meaning

In this exercise, you will practice blending card and position meanings. Choose a card from the tarot deck, and read over its keywords and actions. Try to get a feel for the card's essential meaning.

Imagine that your card has appeared in [Position 1](#) of a Celtic Cross reading. How does being here refine the meaning of this card? How do the card and position meanings work together to create a composite?

Write one sentence that sums up your interpretation. Don't try to figure out the right answer because there isn't one. Select a possibility that appeals to you and makes sense. Your sentence doesn't have to relate to your own life in any way as this exercise is simply for practice.

For example, the [Emperor](#) stands for

- fathering
- structure
- authority
- regulation

Some choices for this card in Position 1 might be:

- Right now, the *heart of the matter* (Position 1) is that there is too much **structure** (Emperor) in my life.
- My *present environment* (Position 1) is very **regulated and controlled** (Emperor).
- Right now the issue of becoming a **father** (Emperor) is the *primary factor* in my life (Position 1).

These sentences are all different, but each one blends the meanings of the Emperor and

	- 1 -	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -	- 5 -	- 6 -	- 7 -	- 8 -	- 9 -	- 10 -
Layout One	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Major
Layout Two	Minor	Minor	Minor	Major	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
Layout Three	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Major	Minor	Minor
Layout Four	Minor	Minor	Major	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
Layout Five	Major	Major	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor
Layout Six	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Minor	Minor

Exercise 12.2 - Comparing the Arcanas Separately

Remove all the major arcana cards from the deck and place them in a pile. Choose a minor arcana card for each one that has a similar meaning. You can choose on your own, or you can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish. Put the minor arcana cards you have chosen in a separate pile.

Shuffle and cut the cards in the major arcana pile, and lay out ten in the [Celtic Cross](#). Find the matching minor arcana cards, and form a second Celtic Cross next to the first. Compare your impressions of these two layouts. Ask yourself these questions:

What is the overall feeling conveyed by each layout?

Is this feeling the same or different?

Does one reading seem easier to understand?

Does one reading seem more accessible?

Does one reading seem more compelling?

You can repeat this exercise with a different set of cards, if you wish.

Exercise 12.3 - Readings Using Only Major Arcana Cards

In the next week or so, try doing a reading using just the major arcana cards. I recommend doing an [Open Reading](#) as major arcana cards offer the expansive guidance that suits this type of reading. You may find this technique works well for you. Some people prefer using only the major arcana at all times. Major arcana readings clarify the main, decisive themes at work in your life.

Suggestions for Exercises - Lesson 12

Exercise 12.1 - Arcana Cards in the Celtic Cross

Layout One: All cards are minor except the outcome (**Position 10**). This situation is a temporary personal drama, but its impact will be powerful and significant in some way. (See [Jill's first reading](#).)

Layout Two: The only major arcana card is in the Past (**Position 4**). The circumstances of the moment are the result of some major event from the past, or what was once of major significance is now fading.

Layout Three: **Position 8** - the environment - is the only major arcana card. This situation may be part of a larger undertaking, or the outside influence may be especially strong.

Layout Four: Since **Position 3** is the only major arcana card, the hidden, underlying energy here is strong. Things may be minor on the surface, but the force sustaining them is powerful.

Layout Five: Two major arcana cards are at the center of the reading (**Positions 1 and 2**). Two powerful forces are coming together for better or worse. The minor factors circling around are an offshoot of this core dynamic.

Layout Six: Someone *thinks* (**Position 5**) that his *role* (**Position 7**) in the situation is major, but the actual circumstances do not bear this out.

Exercise 12.2 - Comparing the Arcanas

Fool.....[Three of Wands](#) (going into unexplored territory)

Magician.....[Two of Wands](#) (having personal power)

High Priestess.....[Four of Swords](#) (resting quietly)

Empress.....[Ten of Pentacles](#) (affluence, luxury)

Emperor.....[Four of Pentacles](#) (control)

Hierophant.....[Eight of Pentacles](#) (learning, studying)

Lovers.....[Nine of Cups](#) (sexual pleasure)

Chariot.....[Nine of Pentacles](#) (self-control, discipline)

Strength.....[Nine of Wands](#) (stamina, strength to endure, heart)

Hermit.....[Seven of Swords](#) (being alone)

Wheel of Fortune.....[Eight of Wands](#) (rapid pace, quick developments)

Justice.....Ten of Wands (accepting responsibility)
Hanged Man.....Ten of Swords (martyrdom, sacrifice)
Death.....Five of Cups (loss, good-byes)
Temperance.....Two of Pentacles (balance)
Devil.....Nine of Swords (despair, lack of joy)
Tower.....Five of Pentacles (hard times)
Star.....Six of Cups (good will, sharing)
Moon.....Two of Swords (self-deception)
Sun.....Six of Wands (acclaim, prominence)
Judgement.....Seven of Pentacles (decision point)
World.....Ten of Cups (happiness, fulfillment)

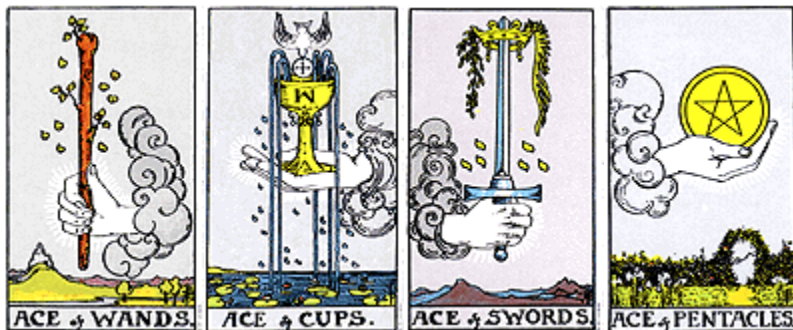
Exercises - Lesson 13

Aces

(See [Introduction to Exercises.](#))

Exercise 13.1 - The Energy of the Aces

The Aces have a clear energy that is undiluted by situational factors. This exercise will help you experience that energy. Remove the four Aces from your deck and place them in a row in front of you as follows:



Write the four keywords for each Ace on a piece of paper and place it below the card. Now, concentrate on the Aces one at a time until you feel you know them well. Try to get to a point where you can see an Ace and immediately feel its powerful presence. (The

first keyword for each Ace includes the word *force!*) Look at the details on the cards, especially the suit icons. Notice how each icon captures the qualities of its Ace.

Exercise 13.2 - Visualizing with the Aces

The Aces are excellent images for visualization practice. When you want to feel the qualities of an Ace, picture its image with your inner eye. Simplify the image by visualizing just the hand holding the suit icon. Feel yourself calling down the power of the Ace as a lightning rod calls down the energy of a storm. Some qualities you can tap are:

Ace of Wands	Ace of Cups	Ace of Swords	Ace of Pentacles
courage confidence creativity enthusiasm	love forgiveness insight faith	intellect fortitude honesty clarity	security prosperity trust competence

As you learn more about the Aces, you will know which one is appropriate for any situation and will have a technique for accessing its energy whenever you wish.

Exercises - Lesson 14

Court Cards

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 14.1 - Reviewing the Court Cards

Remove all 16 court cards from the deck, and place them in a four-by-four square as follows:

Page Wands	Knight Wands	Queen Wands	King Wands
Page Cups	Knight Cups	Queen Cups	King Cups
Page Swords	Knight Swords	Queen Swords	King Swords
Page Pentacles	Knight Pentacles	Queen Pentacles	King Pentacles

Take a moment to look at these royal figures together in one place. They are unique individuals, but they also share commonalities with the other cards in their suit (row) and rank (column). Review the [lists of suit qualities](#) and the [information page](#) for each card. Look for patterns among the cards.

Exercise 14.2 - Kings

For each item below, decide on an *action* you might take that reflects the personality of the King. You can [check my suggestions](#) if you wish. Here's an example:

Possible Action: I would confront my accuser boldly and ask for proof.

King of Cups: Your spouse complains that you're never home on weekends.

King of Pentacles: A panhandler asks you for one dollar.

King of Swords: You find a marijuana cigarette in your daughter's coat pocket.

King of Wands: Your roommate keeps borrowing your car without asking.

King of Pentacles: Your friend begs you to skip work and go fishing with him.

King of Swords: You get an invitation to speak at a conference.

King of Cups: A waiter gets your order wrong twice in a row.

King of Wands: You're discouraged because your team is playing badly.

Exercise 14.3 - Queens

For each item below, decide on a *feeling or thought* that reflects the personality of the Queen. You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish. Here's an example:

Queen of Wands: You've been accused of cheating on an exam, but you know you're innocent.

Possible Feeling/Thought: I'm confident that I can prove my innocence.

Queen of Cups: You find out your cousin has cancer.

Queen of Pentacles: You lock your keys in the car.

Queen of Swords: You're asked to take over a failing project at work.

Queen of Wands: You begin Day One of your new diet.

Queen of Pentacles: Your best friend admits to having an affair.

Queen of Swords: You interview a promising new employee.

Queen of Cups: You decide to take a long walk after lunch.

Queen of Wands: You go to a party where you only know the hostess.

Exercise 14.4 - Knights

For each scenario, decide which Knight best reflects the situation. Then, give a few phrases that describe that Knight's warning message. You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish. Here's an example:

You've been working 12 hours-a-day for six months. There's so much to do.

Knight of Pentacles: You're working too hard. You're too compulsive. You never play.

You feel depressed and weepy all the time. No one seems to care how you feel.

You've bragged that you know lots of important people, but you really don't.
The stock market keeps going up. All your money is in a risk-free savings account.
You're always yelling at the kids. Their constant fighting is driving you crazy.
You told your new assistant that his work is hopelessly sloppy and incomplete.
You think your partner is always flirting with others. You don't like it at all.
Your son disobeyed you. You won't tolerate that! Your word is law in your house.
You refuse to consider retiring even though your spouse wants to discuss it.

Exercise 14.5 - Pages

Remove the four Pages from the deck, and place them *face down* in front of you. Mix them together, then turn over one card. Assume this Page represents an opportunity available to you right now, one that reflects the magic of his suit. What do you think it might be? Does this possibility excite you? Is something holding you back? If nothing comes to mind, watch for an inspiration in the next few days.

Exercise 14.6 - Court Cards are People

The more you understand your fellow humans, the more you will understand the court cards. Over the next few weeks, observe your relatives, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. Consider celebrities, historical figures, and characters from books, TV and films. Ask yourself:

- What qualities does this person have? Not have?
- What qualities are helpful to this person? Not helpful?
- What court card is this person most like? Least like?
- How is this person unique...unlike any type at all?
- What court card types are common in my life? Uncommon?

Exercise 14.7 - Court Card Families

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." [Shakespeare](#) recognized that each of us is an actor with many roles. Our roles are not who we really are - that is a profound mystery. They are the changing personalities we assume as we take part in this show called life.

Create a cast of characters using the personalities of the court cards in four families - the Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles. Each family has a father (King), mother (Queen), teenager (Knight) and young child (Page) of either sex.

Describe these four families so their unique styles are revealed. The members of each

family share an approach to life (suit), but have separate positions within the family (rank). What vacation would the Pentacles family take? Would the Knight of Wands drive a Buick or a red Mustang? Here are some props you can use to flesh out your characters:

- **physical characteristics** - body type, hair color/style, features
- **home** - location, type, furnishings
- **education and occupation**
- **possessions** - clothes, car, toys
- **free time** - vacations, hobbies, sports
- **favorites** - foods, movies, songs, books, colors
- **habits** - strengths, weaknesses, peculiarities

Exercise 14.8 - Court Cards in Action

For each scenario below, write down one or two interpretations for the first court card listed. Consider the meaning of the card, the position and the situation. For extra practice, repeat the exercise using the second court card. Don't consider the court cards together. Simply imagine you drew them in separate readings. You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish.

You're getting married in three months. Your future father-in-law is critical of the arrangements and wants to change them.

[Knight of Swords - Position 5](#)

[King of Wands- Position 9](#)

You're planning to buy a new car. You're not looking forward to haggling with a pushy salesperson.

[Queen of Cups - Position 6](#)

[King of Swords - Position 7](#)

Your friend has asked you to watch her kids for a weekend. You want to help, but her children are a handful.

[Queen of Pentacles - Position 1](#)

[Page of Cups - Position 2](#)

You've just met someone attractive who has only been divorced for four months. You worry about getting involved in a messy situation.

[Queen of Wands - Position 4](#)

[Knight of Cups - Position 8](#)

You've been feeling a pain in your chest for several weeks. It's getting worse, but you don't want to go to a doctor.

[Knight of Pentacles - Position 10](#)

[Page of Swords - Position 3](#)

You have an idea for an improvement at work that could be very profitable. You suspect your boss will try to take credit for the idea.

[Knight of Wands - Position 2](#)

[King of Pentacles - Position 9](#)

For the past year, you've felt restless and dissatisfied. Activities that used to be rewarding now seem pointless.

[Queen of Swords - Position 3](#)

[Page of Wands - Position 7](#)

Six months ago a friend borrowed \$200 for an emergency. Now he's asking for another \$100.

[Page of Pentacles - Position 8](#)

[King of Cups - Position 1](#)

Suggestions for Exercises - Lesson 14

Exercise 14.2 - Kings

[King of Cups](#): I would sit down with my spouse to discuss his/her concerns. --
(caring)

[King of Pentacles](#): I would give him five dollars. He probably needs it more than I do.
-- (supporting)

[King of Swords](#): I would ask my daughter for her story before making any judgments.
-- (just)

[King of Wands](#): I would booby trap my car so an alarm goes off if my roommate starts it. -- (creative)

[King of Pentacles](#): I would tell my friend "Sorry, they need me at work." -- (reliable)

[King of Swords](#): I would accept the invitation because I'm an excellent public speaker. -- (articulate)

[King of Cups](#): I would smile and patiently give my order a third time. -- (patient)

[King of Wands](#): I would call a huddle and get everyone fired up again. -- (inspiring)

Exercise 14.3 - Queens

Queen of Cups: My cousin is going to need extra love and support. -- (loving)

Queen of Pentacles: I can figure out a way to get the keys if I put my mind to it. -- (resourceful)

Queen of Swords: What's the *real* reason I was given this hopeless project? -- (astute)

Queen of Wands: I'll have extra energy when I lose weight. -- (energetic)

Queen of Pentacles: I'll keep this secret since my friend entrusted me with it. -- (trustworthy)

Queen of Swords: I'll be open and honest in this interview so there are no misunderstandings. -- (honest)

Queen of Cups: I can use this time to meditate and recenter myself. -- (spiritual)

Queen of Wands: I know I can make new friends easily. -- (self-assured)

Exercise 14.4 - Knights

Knight of Cups: You're too sulky. You're oversensitive. Your emotions are ruling you.

Knight of Wands: You're boasting. Bragging doesn't impress. You're too focused on appearances.

Knight of Pentacles: You're too cautious. You're settling for less. You're afraid to risk.

Knight of Wands: You act without thinking. You're too angry. You're adding to the fighting.

Knight of Swords: You're too blunt. You're too critical. People have feelings.

Knight of Cups: You're too jealous. You're overemotional. You're imagining things.

Knight of Swords: You're too domineering. You're insensitive. Your son isn't your slave.

Knight of Pentacles: You're too stubborn. You won't compromise. You're afraid to change.

Exercise 14.8 - Court Cards in Action

Two interpretations are given for each card. **Bold** phrases are card meanings. *Italic* phrases are position meanings.

Knight of Swords - Position 5

- My father-in-law is **too critical and overbearing**. He's *all I can think about right now*.
- My *preference* is to tell my father-in-law **exactly what I think** of his interference...to **really tell him off!**

King of Wands - Position 9

- The *key* is to recognize that my father-in-law is used to **being the center of attention**.
- The *best way for me to proceed* is to **project my own authority naturally**.

Queen of Cups - Position 6

- A salesperson who is **patient and caring** may show up *in the near future*.
- The purchase may *go more smoothly in the future* if I **let my intuition guide me**.

King of Swords - Position 7

- I can be successful if I *follow the model* of the King of Swords - **research the facts so I know what I'm talking about**.
- *If I take a stance* that is **honest**, the car dealership may do likewise.

Queen of Pentacles - Position 1

- This situation *revolves around* the talents of the Queen of Pentacles: to **give love and care to children**.
- The *heart of the matter* is that I need to be **loyal and trustworthy**.

Page of Cups - Position 2

- A *secondary factor* is that this situation is an **opportunity** to make a **loving, thoughtful gesture** for a friend.
- The **kids** (Pages) may *surprise me* by **being sweet and loving**.

Queen of Wands - Position 4

- I've met **someone who is sexy and attractive**, but I *need to stop focusing on that right now*.
- This situation is risky, but *in the past*, I've always **been able to handle just about anything**.

Knight of Cups - Position 8

- I must be careful because I'm caught up in an *atmosphere* of **romance** that may overwhelm my better judgment.
- This *person* has just been through an **emotional** breakup and will be **extra vulnerable and needy**.

Knight of Pentacles - Position 10

- My body is telling me that *I am going to have to be* **extra cautious**.
- Even if I avoid this problem now, I will *eventually* have to **be realistic about it**.

Page of Swords - Position 3

- The *source of the problem* is that I need to **face the truth** about my health.
- *Fundamentally*, this situation is a **challenge** that I must meet with **fortitude and resolve**.

Knight of Wands - Position 2

- I must keep an eye on my boss who is **brash and nervy**; he could *oppose* me in this situation.
- I need to *reinforce myself* with an **extra dose of confidence**.

King of Pentacles - Position 9

- My *hope* is that my idea **will work and make money** for the company.
- I need to find *someone I can turn to* for **reliable** information on handling this situation **competently**.

Queen of Swords - Position 3

- I probably have an *unrecognized need*; I must **face what needs to be faced, even if unpleasant**.
- The *deeper reason* why I'm dissatisfied is that I'm beginning to see **through the false promises** of my old way of life.

Page of Wands - Position 7

- I've lost my **sense of adventure**; *I* want to feel **passionate about life** again.
- My **high-energy, creative persona** may not be serving me any longer.

[Page of Pentacles - Position 8](#)

- *My friend expects me* to be the one he can **always count on**.
- The *context of this situation* is a **practical, money matter**.

[King of Cups - Position 1](#)

- The *most important consideration* is **to help a friend in need**.
- It's *crucial* that I make a **wise** decision about what to do.

Exercises - Lesson 15

Card Pairs

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 15.1 - Permanent Pairs in the Major Arcana

Below are two scrambled lists of major arcana cards. Match each card in list 1 with the card in list 2 that you feel is its permanent opposing pair. Give a short meaning for each card that shows the balancing relationship. Try this exercise before looking at the card pages. You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish. For example: Magician (Action) - High Priestess (Nonaction).

LIST ONE	LIST TWO
Devil	Death
Sun	Lovers
Chariot	Star
Empress	World
Fool	Hanged Man
Hermit	Moon
Hierophant	Emperor

Exercise 15.2 - Other Permanent Pairs

For each minor arcana card below:

- Choose one meaning for the card.
- Think of a meaning that is the opposite.
- Find another card (major or minor) that suggests this *opposite* meaning.
- For ideas, scan the [keyword summary charts](#) and the [opposing cards section](#) of each card.

[Two of Wands](#)

[Ten of Pentacles](#)

Seven of Swords

Two of Cups

Five of Wands

Five of Swords

Eight of Pentacles

Eight of Wands

Nine of Cups

Exercise 15.3 - Court Card Pairs

People both help *and* annoy each other because of their differences. Below are twelve court card pairs. For each one:

- Choose a personality trait for person A that is typical of that court card.
- Describe one way A might *help* person B because of that trait.
- Describe one way A might *annoy* person B because of that trait.

You can **check my suggestions**, if you wish. See the [court card](#) and [suit pair](#) charts for ideas. Here's an example:

Knight of Swords: direct/blunt

helps the [Queen of Pentacles](#) to learn to say no.

annoys the Queen of Pentacles when he is rude to strangers.

	PERSON A	PERSON B
PAIR 1	Knight of Cups	Queen of Wands
PAIR 2	King of Wands	Queen of Cups
PAIR 3	King of Pentacles	Knight of Cups
PAIR 4	Queen of Pentacles	King of Wands
PAIR 5	King of Swords	King of Pentacles
PAIR 6	King of Cups	King of Swords
PAIR 7	Queen of Cups	Queen of Swords
PAIR 8	Knight of Wands	Queen of Pentacles
PAIR 9	Queen of Wands	Knight of Swords
PAIR 10	Knight of Pentacles	King of Cups
PAIR 11	Queen of Swords	Knight of Wands

PAIR 12	Knight of Swords	Knight of Pentacles
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Exercise 15.4 - Reinforcing Pairs

For each card below:

- Choose one meaning for the card.
- Find a card (major or minor) that suggests a *similar* meaning.
- For ideas, scan the [keyword summary charts](#) and the [reinforcing cards section](#) of each card.

[Three of Wands](#)

[Four of Pentacles](#)

[Temperance](#)

[Three of Swords](#)

[Five of Cups](#)

[Eight of Wands](#)

[Nine of Pentacles](#)

[Justice](#)

[Six of Cups](#)

Exercise 15.5 - Occasional Pairs

For each pair in the chart below, place the two cards side by side in front of you and gaze at them lightly for a few moments. Find some way to interpret the cards so they either **oppose** or **reinforce** each other. You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish. Here are two possibilities for the Empress and the Three of Cups:

Empress - A lone woman focused on herself.

Three of Cups - A group of women focused on each other.

Empress - A seated woman who is rather serious and inactive.

Three of Cups - Dancing women who are lively and lighthearted.

For extra practice, deal out two cards at random on your own.

	CARD 1	CARD 2
PAIR 1	Hermit	Justice
PAIR 2	Nine of Swords	Four of Swords
PAIR 3	Two of Pentacles	Hanged Man
PAIR 4	Chariot	Death

PAIR 5	Four of Pentacles	Six of Wands
PAIR 6	Lovers	Six of Swords
PAIR 7	Hierophant	Devil
PAIR 8	Nine of Wands	Seven of Pentacles
PAIR 9	Sun	Ten of Swords

Exercise 15.6 - Your Balance Issues

Identify a balance issue that is meaningful to you at this time. Here are some possibilities:

- controlling---letting go
- being free---being restricted
- feeling joy---feeling sadness
- creating peace---creating conflict
- working---playing
- playing it safe---risking
- moving slow---moving fast
- acting---waiting
- coming together---moving apart
- feeling victorious---feeling defeated

Identify two cards that represent the opposite ends of your issue. In the next few weeks, think about these cards from time to time. Are you closer to one of these cards, or in the middle? Watch for these cards to show up in your readings.

Suggestions for Exercises - Lesson 15

Exercise 15.1 - Permanent Pairs in the Major Arcana

Devil (hopelessness).....Star (hope)

Sun (enlightenment).....Moon (bewilderment)

Chariot (hard control).....Hanged Man (letting go)

Empress (mothering).....Emperor (fathering)

Fool (beginning).....Death (ending)

Hermit (disengaging).....World (engaging)

Hierophant (group beliefs).....Lovers (personal beliefs)

Exercise 15.3 - Court Card Pairs

Knigh of Cups: introspective/introverted

helps the **Queen of Wands** care more about her inner life

annoys the Queen of Wands because he obsesses about his feelings

King of Wands: forceful

helps the **Queen of Cups** be more assertive

annoys the Queen of Cups because he assumes she will follow him

King of Pentacles: steady

helps the **Knigh of Cups** be calm under pressure

annoys the Knigh of Cups because he (KgP) is so consistent

Queen of Pentacles: down-to-earth

helps the **King of Wands** enjoy the simple things of life

annoys the King of Wands when she rejects anything showy

King of Swords: intellectual

helps the **King of Pentacles** by explaining issues well

annoys the King of Pentacles when he (KgS) is too theoretical

King of Cups: tolerant

helps the **King of Swords** temper justice with mercy

annoys the King of Swords when he (KgC) forgives unjust behavior

Queen of Cups: loving

helps the **Queen of Swords** be more sensitive

annoys the Queen of Swords because she (QnC) is not tough enough

Knigh of Wands: adventurous/restless

helps the **Queen of Pentacles** go a little crazy sometimes

annoys the Queen of Pentacles when he's constantly on the go

Queen of Wands: cheerful

helps the **Knigh of Swords** be warm and outgoing

annoys the Knigh of Swords when she is unfazed by incompetence

Knigh of Pentacles: hardworking/grinding

helps the **King of Cups** to focus on the task as well as people
annoys the King of Cups when he (KnP) drives people too hard

Queen of Swords: honest

helps the **Knight of Wands** be up-front with everyone
annoys the Knight of Wands by seeing through his charm

Knight of Swords: incisive/cutting

helps the **Knight of Pentacles** get to the point
annoys the Knight of Pentacles by refusing to discuss details

Exercise 15.5 - Occasional Pairs

Hermit: someone hiding from the law

Justice: a representative of the law

Nine of Swords: not being able to rest

Four of Swords: being able to rest peacefully

Two of Pentacles: both figures have a bent leg...perhaps a knee problem?

Hanged Man

Chariot: both cards show powerful figures ready to crush anything in their paths

Death

Four of Pentacles: someone who is alone and loves money.

Six of Wands: someone who loves people and is surrounded by them

Lovers: enjoying the delights of paradise

Six of Swords: cast out of paradise to suffer and toil

Hierophant: good

Devil: evil

Nine of Wands: two workers who have stopped their labors to rest

Seven of Pentacles

Sun: sunrise

Ten of Swords: sunset

Exercises - Lesson 16

Position Pairs in the Celtic Cross

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 16.1 - Traditional Position Pairs in the Celtic Cross

Create a [Celtic Cross](#) layout using any ten cards from the deck placed *face down*. For each of the six situations below, do the following:

- Imagine you are doing a Celtic Cross reading, and you have drawn the two cards listed under (A).
- Find these cards and place them *face up* in the positions indicated. (Remove the cards that are there.)
- Write a short interpretation of these two cards as a pair. Use the examples in [lesson 16](#) as a model.
- Turn these cards face down.
- For extra practice, repeat steps 1-4 using the second set of cards (B).

You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish.

Your 8-year-old has come home from school in tears. His teacher tore up his homework because he didn't follow directions and his handwriting was sloppy.

	(A)	(B)
Position 1	Page of Cups	Two of Pentacles
Position 2	Knight of Pentacles	Judgement

You're afraid your partner is having an affair. You want to believe it isn't true, but you're suspicious.

	(A)	(B)
Position 3	Six of Cups	Seven of Cups
Position 5	Moon	King of Swords

One member of your work team is not pulling his weight. You've let the problem go in the past, but now his laziness is really hurting the group.

	(A)	(B)
Position 4	Two of Swords	Ten of Wands
Position 6	Three of Wands	Strength

For seven years, you've owned and operated a store with a partner. Now, she wants to leave with her share. You will have to sell the store to buy her out.

	(A)	(B)
Position 7	Ten of Pentacles	Queen of Cups

Position 8	Death	Queen of Pentacles
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You've fallen in love with someone that your parents would not find acceptable. So far, you've kept your relationship secret, but you can't continue hiding forever.

	(A)	(B)
Position 5	Three of Swords	Wheel of Fortune
Position 10	World	Fool

You've done an [Other Reading](#) about a public figure who is being investigated for financial improprieties. (Note the different positions for the second card of each set).

	(A)	(B)
Position 9	Two of Wands	Eight of Wands
Position 4	Seven of Swords	
Position 8		Emperor

Exercise 16.2 - Other Pairings in the Celtic Cross

Below are some new Celtic Cross pairings. For each one, write a brief description of what you could learn from that pair. You can [check my suggestions](#), if you wish. For example:

Position 1 - Position 4 = how something from the past (4) is influencing the present (1)

[Position 1 - Position 6](#)

[Position 1 - Position 7](#)

[Position 2 - Position 5](#)

[Position 2 - Position 8](#)

[Position 3 - Position 4](#)

[Position 3 - Position 10](#)

[Position 4 - Position 8](#)

[Position 5 - Position 7](#)

[Position 6 - Position 10](#)

Exercise 16.3 - Re-examining your Celtic Cross Readings for Pairs

Reexamine the reading you did in [exercise 8.1](#) in light of your new understanding of pairs in the Celtic Cross. Can you discover any new insights? Check the obvious pair positions.

but look for others as well. You may be surprised at what you find...or you may not notice anything new at all. Review other readings in this way for extra practice.

Suggestions for Exercises - Lesson 16

Exercise 16.1 - Traditional Position Pairs in the Celtic Cross

Bold phrases refer to card meanings. *Italic* phrases refer to position meanings.

Position 1 -- Position 2

(A) Page of Cups -- Knight of Pentacles

My son is a **sweet, sensitive** guy who **takes everything to heart**. *His teacher* is too **inflexible** and **grim**. She's **driving my son too hard** by insisting on an **unreasonable level of perfection**.

(B) Two of Pentacles -- Judgement

The *central conflict* is that school should be **fun** and **enjoyable**, not a place for harsh, public **Judgement**. I can help my son learn to **cope** better and be more **resilient** at school. I must make sure my own **judgments** are fair.

Position 3 -- Position 5

(A) Six of Cups -- Moon

On the surface, I'm beset by **fears** and **doubts**. Perhaps I'm **deluding** myself. The *deeper truth* may be that there is **good will**. My partner is probably **innocent**.

(B) Seven of Cups -- King of Swords

The *source of the problem* is that I'm letting my **imagination run wild**. I **can't separate fact from fiction**. I must find out the **facts**. Be **fair** and **honest**. Refuse to let emotion cloud my **reason**. On the other hand, have I forgotten to be loving in my **concern with the truth**?

Position 4 -- Position 6

(A) Two of Swords -- Three of Wands

I've **ignored the warning signs** of trouble in the *past*. I've **avoided** the problem because **dealing with it would be unpleasant**. I'm *going to* have to demonstrate **leadership**. My team is counting on me to **take charge** and **provide direction**.

(B) Ten of Wands -- Strength

I've *been covering* for this employee. It's been **hard** on everyone having to **shoulder his share** of the load, but if I'm **patient**, he may yet become an asset. It will take **extra resolve** on my part.

Position 7 -- Position 8

(A) Ten of Pentacles -- Death

I want to **continue as I am**. The store is **successful** and **well-established**, and *I feel* **secure** and happy there. *My partner wants* to **end** our collaboration and **move on** to something else.

(B) [Queen of Cups](#) -- [Queen of Pentacles](#)

To me, the store is more than just a job. I have **put my heart into it**. I feel the same way about my partner, but she has a more **practical, matter-of-fact** point of view. To her, a business is a business. Moving on is **not a big, emotional deal**.

Position 5 -- Position 10

(A) [Three of Swords](#) -- [World](#)

I'm **worried** there will be a **horrible scene** that might lead to a **break-up**. In fact, my fears may be groundless. We may **all come together in the end**. I may yet **achieve my heart's desire**.

(B) [Wheel of Fortune](#) -- [Fool](#)

Both cards suggest there is a **mysterious element** to this love that I must honor. *I think* this relationship is a major **turning point**, one that is **destined** to be. If I have **faith** in my choice and **trust my heart**, all *will be* well. It *will be* a new **beginning** for me.

Position 9 -- Position 4

(A) [Two of Wands](#) -- [Seven of Swords](#)

This politician was involved in something **shady** in the *past*. There is some **hidden dishonor**. The *key* appears to be his desire for **personal power** and **influence**. This politician is **bold** and **direct** in going after what he wants.

Position 9 -- Position 8

(B) [Eight of Wands](#) - [Emperor](#)

The investigation will likely move into **high gear** soon as **new information** comes to light. This politician is *running up against* the power and authority of the **Justice System**.

Exercise 16.2 - Other Pairings in the Celtic Cross

Position 1 - Position 6

how the current situation (1) is drawing people or events to you (6)

how the present (1) will evolve in the near future (6)

Position 1 - Position 7

how some aspect of you (7) is influencing the current situation (1)

how an ideal aspect of you (7) could alter the present environment (1)

Position 2 - Position 5

how a factor for change (2) is affecting your point of view (5)

how an opposing force (2) could cause an alternate outcome (5)

Position 2 - Position 8

two sources of information about an opposing factor (2) in the environment (8)

how another's point of view (8) might act as a supporting element (2)

Position 3 - Position 4

how something from the past (4) is the root cause of the situation (3)

how something that needs to be discarded (4) is still an unacknowledged goal (3)

Position 3 - Position 10

how an unconscious influence (3) is impacting the projected outcome (10)

how some hidden agenda (3) is dictating the projected outcome (10)

Position 4 - Position 8

how a person from the past (4) is still part of the environment (8)

how others (8) are still expecting you to be the way you were in the past (4)

Position 5 - Position 7

how your self-image (7) is affecting your attitudes (5)

how the role you've given yourself (7) is shaping your expectations for the future (5)

Position 6 - Position 10

what the future will hold both in the short-term (6) and long-term (10)

what could eventually happen (10) if you embrace a certain way of being (6)

Exercises - Lesson 17

Reversed Cards

(See [Introduction to Exercises.](#))

Exercise 17.1 - The Energy of a Card

Shuffle the cards so there is a mixture of upright and reversed cards. Hold the deck face down in one hand. Turn over the first card, and lay it in front of you. Answer these questions:

What is the energy of this card for me at this moment?

Listen for a word or phrase to pop into your mind. Don't try to remember an official meaning; simply wait for an idea to enter awareness. Let the energy of the card present itself to you on its own.

What is the level of this energy as shown by the card's orientation?

An upright card represents high energy; a reversed card represents low energy.

How am I experiencing this energy at this level?

Again, let an idea come to mind on its own.

Here are two examples:

Nine of Wands - upright

1. perseverance
2. high level
3. I'm determined to get good grades at school.

Queen of Swords - reversed:

1. sitting in judgment (based on the image)
2. low level
3. I'm trying not to judge my sister very much.

Continue this exercise by turning over new cards one by one. Stop if you feel any strain or restlessness. You want to feel relaxed and pleasantly engaged. There are no right answers, so feel free to accept whatever comes.

Exercise 17.2 - Interpreting Reversed Cards

For each scenario below, imagine that you have drawn the given reversed card. Write a brief interpretation. Show how the usual energy of the card is either at a low level or *needs to be* at a low level. You can **check my suggestions**, if you wish. Here are two examples. The card's meaning is in **bold**, and the reversal effect is in *italics*:

Situation: I've hurt my back in a car accident. I'm in a lot of pain.

Card: **Queen of Wands** - reversed

Interpretation: I've *lost* much of my **robust good health** because of this accident.

Situation: I'll never finish this assignment on time even if I work all night.

Card: **Nine of Pentacles**- reversed

Interpretation: I should *stop trying* to **handle everything myself**.

I wonder why my love life has been stalled for so long.

Three of Wands - reversed

I finally got my promotion, but my family doesn't want to move.

Chariot - reversed

My friend wants me to join her protest against the new landfill.

Ace of Swords - reversed

I've been making one sale after another! I've got the golden touch right now.

Tower - reversed

My cousin wants me to invest in his new company, but I'm hesitating.

Knight of Swords - reversed

I don't want to see my boyfriend any more. I'm not sure why.

Four of Cups - reversed

My daughter is divorcing and wants to live with me for a while.

Six of Pentacles - reversed

I love my new baby, but I'm so worn out from lack of sleep.

Page of Cups - reversed

I can't stand school. I want to quit when the semester's over.

Temperance - reversed

My meditations are getting more powerful. It scares me a little.

Death - reversed

Exercise 17.3 - Upside-Down Meanings

For each card in the list below write a brief interpretation that reverses the regular meaning in some way. Use ideas based on twisting, flipping, changing, rejecting, denying and the like. The interpretation doesn't have to relate to your life; any possibility will do. Look at the reversed card while you work for inspiration. You can **check my suggestions**, if you wish. Here are some examples with the upside-down meanings in italics:

World - reversed:

My whole world has been *turned upside-down*.

She's *rejecting* the outside world. She wants to stay *isolated in her own circle*. (See image.)

King of Cups - reversed:

I don't trust her. Something's *not on the up-and-up*.

I'm *tired* of being diplomatic! I want to say what I think.

Justice - reversed

Page of Swords - reversed

Hanged Man - reversed

Four of Wands - reversed

Ace of Pentacles - reversed

Knight of Cups - reversed

Six of Swords - reversed

Hierophant - reversed

Three of Pentacles - reversed

Suggestions for Exercises - Lesson 17

Exercise 17.2 - Interpreting Reversed Cards

Three of Wands - reversed

I'm in a rut. I *rarely* **break out of my normal routine** to seek new experiences.

Chariot - reversed

My **desire to get my own way** is being *thwarted*, but **my win** at work will *mean little* if my family is unhappy.

Ace of Swords - reversed

I *don't feel like getting too involved* in this **cause**.

Tower - reversed

There is a *small chance* my run of good fortune could **end suddenly**.

Knight of Swords - reversed

My cousin is a **great talker**, but he's *not* that **knowledgeable** about the technical aspects of this field.

Four of Cups - reversed

I'm *beginning* to **lose interest** in this relationship. I feel a *small, but growing urge* to **withdraw**.

Six of Pentacles - reversed

I'm *not sure I have enough* **physical and emotional resources** to support my daughter through this crisis in my home.

Page of Cups - reversed

My feelings of **love** and **tenderness** for my baby are begin *drowned out* by my need for sleep!

Temperance - reversed

I'm *pretty low* on **patience** right now. I'm tempted to take **drastic action**.

Death - reversed

An **important inner change** is *struggling to happen*, but my fears are *blocking* it.

Exercise 17.3 - Upside-Down Meanings

The effect of the reversal is in *italics*.

Justice - reversed

This verdict is crazy! Justice has been *turned on its head*.

This decision has *tipped the scales* against me. (See image.)

Page of Swords - reversed

This child is so *contrary*. She *defies me at every turn!*

These results are illogical - the *opposite of what we expected*.

Hanged Man - reversed

I *don't know if I'm up or down*. Nothing is the way it seems.

I sacrificed everything, but look at me now! I'm *back on my feet*. (See image.)

Four of Wands - reversed

The celebration wasn't what I expected. It *turned sour* on me.

I *mustn't get too excited*. I've got to play it cool.

Ace of Pentacles - reversed

I *can't seem to hold onto* my money. It *just slips through my fingers*. (See image.)

I don't feel stable. The *ground keeps shifting* under me.

Knight of Cups - reversed

One day *I'm up*, the next day *I'm down*. These mood swings are difficult.

I *pretend* I don't have strong feelings, but I do.

Six of Swords - reversed

This "boat" is going to *capsize*. (See image.)

I *refuse* to stay depressed. I'm going to have some fun.

Hierophant - reversed

I'm *dropping out* of school.

I *don't see my religion the same way* anymore.

Three of Pentacles - reversed

The team's *reversed direction*.

I'm *not going to plan*. I'm just going to be spontaneous.

Exercises - Lesson 18

Creating the Story

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 18.1 - Stream-of-Consciousness Talking

You can practice stream-of-consciousness talking anytime you feel comfortable speaking your thoughts out loud. (For most of us, this means being alone!) Say every thought as it occurs to you. The idea is to "hear" a thought inwardly and then vocalize it. As you finish speaking one thought, listen for the next one.

In the next few weeks, try this exercise whenever you can. Work toward being able to speak naturally with no sense of urgency. Try to get to the point where thoughts about the process don't intrude too much. This is not an easy state to achieve, but it is well worth the effort.

Exercise 18.2 - Tarot Improvisation

In theater improvisation, members of the audience call out the names of a few objects, and the actors must assemble a skit based on those elements. In this exercise, the cards are the elements, and you are the actor who must bring them together on the fly.

Shuffle and cut the cards in the usual way. Hold the deck face down in one hand. Turn over the first three cards, and lay them in a row. Now, create a story around the cards. Don't try to come up with a clever scenario. Just allow any tale to unfold. In [The Castle of Crossed Destinies](#) by Italo Calvino, the characters tell their tales to each other using only tarot card images.

When you are through, set the first three cards aside, and deal three more for a new story. Or, if you like, keep the first three cards and lay out a fourth. Incorporate this card into the original tale. Continue developing the story by laying out new cards one at a time. The spirit of this exercise is spontaneous play. Stop if you feel any pressure or strain.

Exercise 18.3 - The Structure of the Celtic Cross

Lay out any ten cards in the usual Celtic Cross format. Read the [interpretation procedure](#) for this spread in the Celtic Cross section. Create a story following these steps. How well does this approach work for you? What changes would you make?

Next, lay out a new set of ten cards. Experiment with different story structures. Try starting with the outcome card (10) and working backward or building a story around a striking card pair. Explore new approaches with different sets of cards. For your readings, you will probably settle on a favorite approach, but it helps to know of other possibilities that you can draw on as needed.

Exercise - Lesson 19

Some Final Thoughts

(See [Introduction to Exercises](#).)

Exercise 19.1 - Return of What do I Believe?

In [exercise 1.1](#), I asked you to write down briefly what you do and do not believe about the tarot and to assign a percentage to those beliefs where:

- 0% = "I am totally skeptical about using the tarot for anything but fun."
- 100% = "I am absolutely convinced that the tarot can give me specific, personal guidance."

Repeat this exercise now *before rereading what you wrote earlier*. When you're done, go back and look at your original answer. Pause to reflect on all that you have learned and experienced since you began this course of study.

Introduction to the Card Descriptions

Name and Picture

The name of the card with a small picture of its image from the [Rider-Waite deck](#).

Keywords

Keywords are 3-5 words or phrases that capture the main themes of a card. They are listed at the top of the page. There are also three [keyword summary charts](#) for reference.

Actions

Actions are phrases describing how the energy of each keyword manifests. Two sample actions for the [High Priestess](#) are "looking beyond the obvious" and "sensing the secret and hidden." These are ways to experience **mystery**. The active form is used to emphasize how a card represents dynamic energy.

Opposing Cards

An opposing pair consists of two cards with meanings that can be opposites. Some cards are listed that might form an opposing pair with the given card under some circumstances. These are only some of the possibilities. See [lesson 15](#) and the [suit and court card summary charts](#) for more on opposing cards.

Reinforcing Cards

A reinforcing pair consists of two cards with meanings that can be similar. Some cards are listed that might form a reinforcing pair with the given card under certain circumstances. These are only some of the possibilities. See [lesson 15](#) for more on reinforcing pairs.

Court Card Pairs

Court cards form natural pairs because of their distinctive personalities. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to understand the interaction. See [lesson 15](#) and the [suit and court card summary charts](#) for more on court card pairs.

Ace-Ace Pairs

An Ace-Ace pair does not show an opposition, but a unique chance to grow in a new direction that taps the energy of both suits.

Description

The description consists of a few paragraphs of extra information about a card and what it implies in a reading. The major arcana descriptions tend to be general and philosophical. The minor arcana descriptions are more concrete and everyday.

Reversed?

There are no separate explanations for reversed cards. The meaning of a reversed card depends on what the card would mean if upright. A reversed card shows that a card's energy is present, but at a lower level. For some reason, the energy cannot express freely, normally or completely. It may be:

- still in its early stages
- losing force and power
- blocked or restricted
- incomplete
- inappropriate
- being denied
- only present in appearance

See [lesson 17](#) for more information on reversed cards.

Individual Tarot Cards

Tarot Summary Charts

CARD KEYWORDS			
Major Arcana		Minor Arcana	
All		Ace-Ten	Court Cards

SUIT PAIRS						
Wands/Cups	Wands/Swords	Swords/Cups	Swords/Pentacles	Pentacles/Cups	Pentacles/Wands	Same Suit

COURT CARD PAIRS							
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SPREAD POSITION MEANINGS			
Celtic Cross			

SUIT QUALITIES			
Wands	Cups	Swords	Pentacles

MAJOR ARCANA---

THE FOOL



- BEGINNING
- SPONTANEITY
- FAITH
- APPARENT FOLLY

ACTIONS

beginning

entering a new phase
 striking out on a new path
 expanding horizons
 starting something new
 beginning an adventure

going on a journey
heading into the unknown

being **spontaneous**

living in the moment
letting go of expectations
doing the unexpected
acting on impulse
feeling uninhibited
surprising someone
feeling carefree

having **faith**

trusting the flow
staying open
letting go of worry and fear
feeling protected and loved
living in joy
recapturing innocence
believing

embracing **folly**

accepting your choices
taking the "foolish" path
pursuing a pipe dream
being true to yourself
taking a "crazy" chance
trusting your heart's desire

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hierophant** - following convention, routine
- **Death** - ending, closing down
- **Devil** - feeling cynical, lacking faith
- **Two of Swords** - blocking off experience, feeling tense, holding back
- **Four of Pentacles** - order and regularity

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hanged Man** - having faith in what is, going with the flow

- [Star](#) - innocence, faith, trust
- [Judgement](#) - rebirth, new starts
- [Three of Wands](#) - expanding horizons, going into unexplored territory

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.

See also the [Fool's Journey](#).

THE MAGICIAN



- **ACTION**
- **CONSCIOUS AWARENESS**
- **CONCENTRATION**
- **POWER**

ACTIONS

taking action

doing what needs to be done
realizing your potential
making what's possible real
practicing what you preach
carrying out plans
producing magical results
using your talents

acting consciously

knowing what you are doing and why
acknowledging your motivations
understanding your intentions
examining the known situation

concentrating

having singleness of purpose
being totally committed
applying the force of your will
feeling centered
setting aside distractions
focusing on a goal

experiencing power

making a strong impact
having vitality
creating miracles
becoming energized
feeling vigorous
being creative

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **High Priestess** - nonaction, intuition, accessing the unconscious
- **Hanged Man** - suspending action, not doing
- **Seven of Cups** - lacking focus and commitment
- **Four of Swords** - resting quietly, storing energy
- **Eight of Swords** - confused and uncertain, powerless

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Chariot** - focusing, concentrating, being forceful
- **Two of Wands** - personal power, wielding a strong force
- **Eight of Wands** - quick action, making your move
- **Eight of Pentacles** - focus and concentration

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 lightning 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



- **NONACTION**
- **UNCONSCIOUS AWARENESS**

- **POTENTIAL**
- **MYSTERY**

ACTIONS

staying **nonactive**

withdrawing from involvement
 allowing events to proceed without intervention
 being receptive to influence
 becoming calm
 being passive
 waiting patiently

accessing the **unconscious**

using your intuition
 seeking guidance from within
 trusting your inner voice
 opening to dreams and the imagination
 being aware of a larger reality

seeing the **potential**

understanding the possibilities
 opening to what could be
 seeing your hidden talents
 allowing development
 letting what is there flower

sensing the **mystery**

looking beyond the obvious
 approaching a closed off area
 opening to the unknown
 remembering something important
 sensing the secret and hidden
 seeking what is concealed
 acknowledging the Shadow

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Magician** - acting consciously, thinking, the known and obvious
- **Two of Wands** - acting boldly
- **Seven of Wands** - being aggressive

- [Eight of Wands](#) - putting plans into action

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Hermit](#) - looking inward, withdrawing, seeking guidance
- [Hanged Man](#) - suspending activity, waiting
- [Four of Swords](#) - resting quietly, contemplating

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



- **MOTHERING**
- **ABUNDANCE**

- **SENSES**
- **NATURE**

ACTIONS

mothering

giving birth
 nourishing life
 nurturing and caring for others
 cherishing the world
 expressing tenderness
 working with children

welcoming **abundance**

enjoying extravagance
 receiving lavish reward
 luxuriating in plenty
 having more than enough
 feeling rich

experiencing the **senses**

giving and receiving pleasure
 focusing on the body
 appreciating beauty
 feeling vibrantly healthy
 being earthy
 doing physical activity

responding to **Nature**

relating to plants and animals
 embracing the natural
 feeling connected to the Earth
 going outdoors
 harmonizing with natural rhythms

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Emperor** - fathering, order and discipline, regularity
- **Death** - principle of death
- **Four of Pentacles** - miserly possessiveness

- [Nine of Pentacles](#) - refinement, sophistication

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Lovers](#) - sexual fulfillment, pleasure
- [Star](#) - generosity, free-flowing love
- [Nine of Cups](#) - enjoying the senses
- [Seven of Pentacles](#) - material reward
- [Ten of Pentacles](#) - affluence, luxury, physical comfort

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



- **FATHERING**
- **STRUCTURE**
- **AUTHORITY**
- **REGULATION**

ACTIONS

fathering

establishing a family line
setting direction and tone
protecting and defending
guiding growth
bringing security and comfort
offering explanations

emphasizing **structure**

creating order out of chaos
categorizing
being systematic
providing shape and form
being organized
applying reason
coordinating
sticking to a plan

exercising **authority**

taking a leadership role
commanding
exerting control
representing the establishment
being in a position of strength
coming in contact with officials
setting direction

regulating

establishing law and order
operating from sound principles
applying rules or guidelines
working within the legal system
setting standards of behavior
following a regimen

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Empress](#) - mothering, free-flowing abundance
- [Seven of Cups](#) - dissipation, lack of order
- [Five of Swords](#) - bending the rules, breaking the law

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Hierophant](#) - conforming to rules
- [Justice](#) - concerns of justice and legality
- [Two of Wands](#) - having authority
- [Three of Wands](#) - assuming leadership
- [Four of Pentacles](#) - control, structure, order

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



- **EDUCATION**
- **BELIEF SYSTEMS**
- **CONFORMITY**
- **GROUP IDENTIFICATION**

ACTIONS

getting an **education**

pursuing knowledge
becoming informed
increasing understanding
studying and learning
seeking a deeper meaning
finding out more

having a **belief system**

sharing a cultural heritage
learning a religious tradition
honoring ritual and ceremony
identifying a world view
following a discipline
knowing where to put your faith

conforming

following the rules
taking an orthodox approach
staying within conventional bounds
adapting to the system
fitting in
going along with the program
doing what's expected

being part of the Establishment

identifying with a **group**

being committed to a cause
devoting energy to a group
joining an organization
working as part of a team
feeling loyal to others
being in an institutionalized setting

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - being "crazy" and unorthodox
- **Lovers** - *personal* beliefs
- **Two of Wands** - diverging from the crowd, being a pioneer
- **Seven of Swords** - being a lone wolf
- **Two of Pentacles** - being flexible, changing with the times

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Emperor** - following rules
- **Three of Cups** - focusing on the group
- **Three of Pentacles** - working in a team or group
- **Eight of Pentacles** - learning, studying
- **Ten of Pentacles** - conforming, following rules, conservative

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



- **RELATIONSHIP**
- **SEXUALITY**
- **PERSONAL BELIEFS**
- **VALUES**

ACTIONS

relating to others

establishing bonds
feeling love
forming a union or marriage
acknowledging kinship
sympathizing with another
getting closer
making a connection
being intimate

being **sexual**

seeking union
experiencing desire

making love
opening to another
responding with passion
feeling a physical attraction
tapping inner energy

establishing **personal beliefs**

questioning received opinions
figuring out where you stand
staying true to yourself
setting your own philosophy
going by your own standards
making up your own mind

determining **values**

struggling with temptation
choosing between right and wrong
facing an ethical or moral choice
refusing to let ends justify means
finding out what you care about

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hierophant** - established beliefs
- **Hermit** - being alone, not relating, less sexuality
- **Five of Cups** - loss in relationships
- **Three of Swords** - rejection, separation

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Empress** - sexual fulfillment, pleasure
- **Two of Cups** - union, marriage, connection
- **Nine of Cups** - sexual pleasure
- **Ten of Cups** - family relationships, bonding
- **Ten of Pentacles** - permanent unions, family ties

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



- **VICTORY**
- **WILL**
- **SELF-ASSERTION**
- **HARD CONTROL**

ACTIONS

achieving **victory**

reaching your goal
winning
being successful

dominating
coming out on top
beating the competition

using your **will**

being determined to succeed
focusing your intent
rising above temptation
letting nothing distract you
sustaining an effort
concentrating your energies
fixing on a goal

asserting yourself

being ego-focused
establishing an identify
knowing who you are
feeling self-confident
having faith in yourself
looking out for your interests

achieving **hard control**

mastering emotions
curbing impulses
maintaining discipline
holding in anger
getting your way
assuming the reins of power
showing authority

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Strength** - soft control
- **Hanged Man** - accepting God's will, putting others first
- **Tower** - defeat, humbling experience
- **Eight of Swords** - confusion, self-doubt
- **Ten of Swords** - powerless, in the pits, putting others first

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Magician** - using your will, concentrating

- [Two of Wands](#) - being in authority, dominating
- [Six of Wands](#) - triumph, self-confidence
- [Four of Pentacles](#) - control
- [Nine of Pentacles](#) - self-control, discipline

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



- **STRENGTH**
- **PATIENCE**
- **COMPASSION**
- **SOFT CONTROL**

ACTIONS

showing **strength**

knowing you can endure
having a gallant spirit
feeling an unshakable resolve
taking heart despite setbacks
having stamina
being a rock

being **patient**

dealing calmly with frustration
accepting others
taking time
maintaining composure
refusing to get angry
showing forbearance

being **compassionate**

giving others lots of space
tolerating
understanding what others are feeling
accepting
forgiving imperfection
being kind

achieving **soft control**

persuading
working with
guiding indirectly
being able to influence
tempering force with benevolence
demonstrating the strength of love

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Chariot** - hard control
- **Eight of Cups** - weariness, lack of strength
- **Six of Swords** - being listless, lacking heart
- **Five of Pentacles** - ill-health, weakness

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Hanged Man](#) - taking time, patience
- [Nine of Wands](#) - stamina, strength to endure

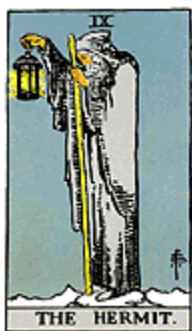
DESCRIPTION

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



- INTROSPECTION
- SEARCHING
- GUIDANCE
- SOLITUDE

ACTIONS

being **introspective**

thinking things over
focusing inward
concentrating less on the senses
quieting yourself
looking for answers within
needing to understand

searching

seeking greater understanding
looking for something
wanting the truth at all costs
going on a personal quest
needing more
desiring a new direction

receiving/giving **guidance**

going to/being a mentor
accepting/offering wise counsel
learning from/being a guru
turning to/being a trusted teacher
being helped/helping

seeking **solitude**

needing to be alone
desiring stillness
withdrawing from the world
experiencing seclusion
giving up distractions
retreating into a private world

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Lovers** - being in a relationship, sexuality
- **World** - involvement with the world
- **Two of Cups** - making connections, partnerships
- **Three of Cups** - being in a group, being with others

- **Nine of Cups** - sensual pleasure

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **High Priestess** - looking inward, withdrawing
- **Four of Cups** - withdrawing, being introverted
- **Eight of Cups** - searching for deeper meaning
- **Four of Swords** - contemplating, being quiet
- **Seven of Swords** - being alone, staying away from others

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



- **DESTINY**
- **TURNING POINT**
- **MOVEMENT**
- **PERSONAL VISION**

ACTIONS

feeling a sense of **destiny**

using what chance offers
seeing life's threads weave together
finding opportunity in an accident
opening to luck
sensing the action of fate
witnessing miracles

being at a **turning point**

reversing
moving in a different direction
turning things around
having a change in fortune
altering the present course
being surprised at a turn of events

feeling **movement**

experiencing change
having the tempo of life speed up
being swept up in new developments
rejoining the world of activity
getting involved

having a **personal vision**

seeing how everything connects
becoming more aware
uncovering patterns and cycles
expanding your outlook
gaining greater perspective
discovering your role and purpose

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Two of Swords** - being stuck, at an impasse
- **Four of Swords** - rest, quiet, slow pace
- **Four of Pentacles** - blocked change, no movement
- **Seven of Pentacles** - assessment before direction change

REINFORCING CARDS...some possibilities

- **Eight of Wands** - rapid pace, quick developments

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



- JUSTICE
- RESPONSIBILITY
- DECISION
- CAUSE AND EFFECT

ACTIONS

respecting **justice**

insisting on fairness
acting on ethical principles
being involved in legal concerns
committing to honesty
seeking equality
being impartial
trying to do what is right

assuming **responsibility**

settling old accounts and debts
being accountable
acknowledging the truth
admitting involvement
handling the situation
doing what has to be done

preparing for a **decision**

weighing all sides of an issue
setting a course for the future
balancing all factors
determining right action

choosing with full awareness

understanding **cause and effect**

accepting the results you created
seeing how you chose your situation
recognizing the action of karma
knowing that what is makes sense
making connections between events

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Two of Swords** - avoiding the truth, disavowing your role
- **Five of Swords** - lack of integrity, not doing what is right
- **Seven of Swords** - shirking responsibility

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Emperor** - justice, regulations, legal issues
- **Judgement** - deciding, accepting past actions/mistakes
- **Ten of Wands** - accepting responsibility, being accountable
- **Nine of Swords** - guilt over the past, acknowledging mistakes
- **Seven of Pentacles** - assessing where you are, deciding a future course

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



- **LETTING GO**
- **REVERSAL**
- **SUSPENSION**
- **SACRIFICE**

ACTIONS

letting go

having an emotional release
accepting what is
surrendering to experience
ending the struggle
being vulnerable and open
giving up control
accepting God's will

reversing

turning the world around
changing your mind
overturning old priorities
seeing from a new angle
upending the old order
doing an about-face

suspending action

pausing to reflect
feeling outside of time
taking time to just be
giving up urgency
living in the moment
waiting for the best opportunity

sacrificing

being a martyr
renouncing a claim
putting self-interest aside
going one step back to go two steps forward
giving up for a higher cause
putting others first

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Magician** - acting, doing
- **Chariot** - self-assertion
- **Seven of Wands** - defiance, struggling against
- **Ten of Wands** - struggle
- **Four of Pentacles** - holding on, control

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - faith in what is, going with the flow
- **High Priestess** - suspending activity, waiting
- **Strength** - patience, taking time
- **Four of Swords** - rest, suspended activity
- **Ten of Swords** - sacrifice, martyrdom

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



- **ENDING**
- **TRANSITION**
- **ELIMINATION**
- **INEXORABLE FORCES**

ACTIONS

ending

closing one door to open another
bringing something to a close
completing a chapter
concluding unfinished business
putting the past behind you
having a parting of the ways

going through **transition**

changing status
moving from the known to the unknown
being cast adrift
waiting in an in-between state
being in the middle

eliminating excess

cutting out what isn't necessary
shedding old attitudes
getting down to bare bones
concentrating on essentials
getting back to basics

experiencing **inexorable forces**

being in the path of sweeping change
being caught in the inescapable
going through what cannot be avoided
being part of a powerful movement
riding your fate
accepting the inevitable

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- Fool - beginning
- Empress - birth
- Judgement - rebirth, fresh start

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- Tower - sweeping impact, powerful forces
- Eight of Wands - conclusion, ending
- Five of Cups - loss, good-byes
- Eight of Cups - moving on, finishing up

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



- TEMPERANCE
- BALANCE
- HEALTH
- COMBINATION

ACTIONS

being **temperate**

finding the middle ground
showing moderation
avoiding excess
mitigating a harsh position
looking for the golden mean

reaching a compromise
offsetting an extreme

maintaining **balance**

experiencing harmony
achieving equilibrium
bringing together opposites
recognizing all sides
fostering cooperation
feeling centered and secure

experiencing **health**

renewing energy and vigor
healing
enjoying well-being
recovering
flourishing

combining forces

gathering together what is needed
joining with others
consolidating
finding the right mix
creating synthesis
getting it all together

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Tower** - extremes, exploding apart
- **Five of Wands** - disagreement, competition, imbalance
- **Seven of Cups** - excess, overindulgence
- **Five of Swords** - discord, lack of harmony
- **Five of Pentacles** - ill-health

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **World** - integration, synthesis, combination
- **Two of Cups** - connection, working together
- **Three of Cups** - joining forces, working together

- **Two of Pentacles** - balance, finding the right mix
- **Three of Pentacles** - teamwork, combining

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



- **BONDAGE**
- **MATERIALISM**
- **IGNORANCE**
- **HOPELESSNESS**

ACTIONS

experiencing **bondage**

accepting an unwanted situation
being obsessed
feeling tied down against your will
losing independence
allowing yourself to be controlled
being addicted and enslaved
submitting to another

focusing on the **material**

being caught up in appearances
believing only in the physical
forgetting the spiritual
getting and spending
overindulging the senses

staying in **ignorance**

being unaware
operating within a narrow range
experiencing limitation
choosing to stay in the dark
fearing the unknown
being taken in by appearances

feeling **hopeless**

believing the worst
despairing
lacking faith
seeing a cold world
thinking negatively
foreseeing a bleak future
doubting

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - having faith, believing
- **Star** - hope, faith, optimism
- **Four of Wands** - freedom, release
- **Six of Cups** - good will, innocence, simple joys

- **Ten of Cups** - joy, peace, blessings

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Seven of Cups** - overindulgence, dissipation
- **Eight of Swords** - confusion, restriction
- **Nine of Swords** - despair, lack of joy

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



- **SUDDEN CHANGE**
- **RELEASE**
- **DOWNFALL**
- **REVELATION**

ACTIONS

going through **sudden change**

experiencing upheaval
having plans disrupted
being surprised
undergoing a crisis
having routines shaken up
being in chaos

releasing

exploding
having an emotional outburst
erupting in anger
crashing through ego defenses
breaking through pretense
letting everything go

falling down

being humbled
experiencing a crash
toppling from the heights
having a downturn in fortune
suffering a blow to the ego

having a **revelation**

suddenly realizing the truth
exposing what was hidden
having a burst of insight
seeing through illusions
getting the answer
seeing everything in a flash

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Chariot** - victory, control
- **Temperance** - middle ground, staying together, contained
- **Star** - serenity, calm
- **Six of Wands** - acclaim, pride
- **Ten of Cups** - peace, serenity

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Death** - sweeping impact, powerful forces
- **Sun** - enlightenment, revelation
- **Five of Pentacles** - hard times

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



- **HOPE**
- **INSPIRATION**
- **GENEROSITY**
- **SERENITY**

ACTIONS

regaining **hope**

having faith in the future
thinking positively
believing
counting your blessings
seeing the light at the end of the tunnel
feeling great expectation
looking forward to success

being **inspired**

regaining motivation
realizing an inner strength
seeing the way clear
being stimulated to a higher level
creating
receiving the answer

being **generous**

wanting to give or share
spreading the wealth
opening your heart
giving back what you have received

letting love flow freely
offering with no reservations
holding nothing back

feeling **serene**

experiencing peace of mind
relaxing
finding your still center
remaining untroubled
savoring perfect calm
being tranquil amid trouble
enjoying harmony

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Devil** - hopelessness, lack of faith, pessimism
- **Tower** - upheaval, chaos
- **Moon** - being troubled, disturbed, anxious
- **Two of Swords** - blocked flow of feelings
- **Nine of Swords** - guilt, anguish

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - innocence, faith, trust
- **Empress** - generosity, free-flowing love
- **Six of Cups** - good will, sharing
- **Ten of Cups** - joy, positive feelings, blessings

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



- FEAR
- ILLUSION
- IMAGINATION
- BEWILDERMENT

ACTIONS

feeling **fear**

releasing inner demons
feeling a nameless apprehension
suffering from phobias
giving in to the shadow self
lacking courage
being overcome by anxieties

believing **illusions**

accepting a false picture
deceiving yourself
having unrealistic ideas
misapprehending the truth

experiencing distortions
chasing after a fantasy

stimulating the **imagination**

having vivid dreams or visions
opening to fantasy
plumbing the unconscious
entertaining unusual thoughts
being outlandish and bizarre

feeling **bewildered**

losing direction and purpose
having trouble thinking clearly
becoming confused
being easily distracted
feeling disoriented
wandering aimlessly

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Star** - being serene, untroubled, at peace
- **Sun** - assurance, clarity, enlightenment

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Seven of Cups** - illusions, unrealistic ideas, fantasy
- **Two of Swords** - self-deception, not seeing the truth
- **Eight of Swords** - confusion, lack of clarity

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



- ENLIGHTENMENT
- GREATNESS
- VITALITY
- ASSURANCE

ACTIONS

becoming **enlightened**

understanding
finding the sense behind the chaos
attaining a new level of insight
having an intellectual breakthrough
getting to the heart of the matter
realizing the truth

experiencing **greatness**

achieving prominence
being singled out for notice

having a personal moment of glory
setting an outstanding example
shining forth brilliantly
demonstrating distinction
becoming the center of attention

feeling **vitality**

becoming radiantly energized
bursting with enthusiasm
experiencing joy
feeling invigorated
getting charged up
enjoying great health

having **assurance**

feeling free and expansive
honoring your true self
knowing you can succeed
being confident
believing in your worth
trusting your abilities
forgiving yourself

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Moon** - confusion, disorientation, illusion
- **Eight of Cups** - weariness
- **Six of Swords** - depressed, listless
- **Five of Pentacles** - being rundown, tired

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Tower** - enlightenment, revelation
- **World** - accomplishment, great achievement
- **Two of Wands** - personal power, vitality, brilliance
- **Six of Wands** - acclaim, prominence

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



- JUDGMENT
- REBIRTH
- INNER CALLING
- ABSOLUTION

ACTIONS

making a **judgment**

having a day of reckoning
separating the wheat from the chaff
making an honest appraisal
getting off the fence
using critical faculties
taking a stand

making hard choices

feeling **reborn**

awakening to possibilities
transforming
enjoying renewed hope
making a fresh start
seeing everything in a new light
discovering joy

hearing a **call**

recognizing your true vocation
feeling inner conviction
feeling an impulse to act
deciding to make a difference
feeling drawn in a new direction
knowing what you must do
answering a need

finding **absolution**

feeling cleansed and refreshed
releasing guilts and sorrows
forgiving yourself and others
atoning for past mistakes
unburdening yourself
feeling sins washed away

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Death** - death, endings
- **Five of Cups** - regret, mistakes
- **Nine of Swords** - guilt, blame, feelings of sinfulness

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - rebirth, new starts
- **Justice** - deciding, accepting past mistakes/actions
- **Seven of Pentacles** - decision point

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



- INTEGRATION
- ACCOMPLISHMENT
- INVOLVEMENT
- FULFILLMENT

ACTIONS

integrating

experiencing wholeness
bringing parts together
achieving dynamic balance
combining
creating synthesis
joining together
working in unison

accomplishing

realizing your goals
prospering
achieving your heart's desire
seeing dreams come true
flourishing
finding a beautiful solution

becoming **involved**

contributing
healing
rendering a service
using a gift or talent
sharing what you have
giving of yourself
feeling engaged
being active

feeling **fulfilled**

savoring the present
taking pleasure in life
enjoying peace of mind
getting satisfaction
finding contentment
counting your blessings

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hermit** - isolation
- **Four of Cups** - lack of involvement, apathy, withdrawal
- **Five of Wands** - working at cross-purposes, lack of integration

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Temperance** - integration, synthesis, combination
- **Sun** - accomplishment, achievements
- **Nine of Cups** - achieving your heart's desire
- **Ten of Cups** - happiness, emotional fulfillment
- **Ten of Pentacles** - affluence, material fulfillment

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.

WANDS---

ACE OF WANDS



- **CREATIVE FORCE**
- **ENTHUSIASM**
- **CONFIDENCE**
- **COURAGE**

ACTIONS

using **creative force**

inventing a better way
expanding your potential
opening to greater possibilities
conceiving a dream
expressing yourself
stimulating your imagination
allowing a talent to unfold
coming up with a solution

showing **enthusiasm**

feeling fired up and eager
creating an aura of excitement
being ready to tackle the world
inspiring others
sustaining optimism
giving 110%

having **confidence**

believing in yourself
feeling assured of your abilities
being sure of success
having high self-esteem
having faith in your path

knowing things will work out

proceeding with **courage**

tackling a challenging task
going beyond your limits
being true to your beliefs
daring to take a stand
facing your fears
going for it

ACE-ACE PAIRS

An Ace-Ace pair shows that a new spirit is entering your life.

It draws on the energy of the Ace of Wands:

--- **creativity, excitement, adventure, courage, personal power**

plus one of these:

--- **Ace of Cups**: deep feelings, intimacy, attunement, compassion, love

--- **Ace of Swords**: intelligence, reason, justice, truth, clarity, perseverance

--- **Ace of Pentacles**: prosperity, abundance, trust, security, groundedness

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



- **PERSONAL POWER**
- **BOLDNESS**
- **ORIGINALITY**

ACTIONS

having **personal power**

commanding attention and respect
directing those around you
holding the world in your hands
wielding influence
calling the shots
having authority
swaying others to your position
being able to achieve your goals

being **bold**

daring to do what you want
taking a risk
gambling events will go your way
confronting the situation head-on
taking the initiative
speaking your mind
facing fear directly
taking the bull by the horns
seizing the day

showing **originality**

doing what no one else has done
creating your own style
being a pioneer
taking a different approach

inventing something new
diverging from the crowd
marching to a different drummer

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **High Priestess** - being passive, staying in the background
- **Hierophant** - conforming, going along with the group
- **Eight of Swords** - powerlessness, fear of action
- **Ten of Swords** - victim mentality, powerlessness
- **Ten of Pentacles** - going by the rules, being conventional

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Magician** - personal power, wielding a strong force
- **Emperor** - authority
- **Chariot** - personal power, command
- **Sun** - vitality, brilliance, greatness

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



- **EXPLORATION**
- **FORESIGHT**
- **LEADERSHIP**

ACTIONS

exploring the unknown

seeking out uncharted areas
going in quest of new adventure
expanding horizons
leaving the secure behind
tackling something different

having **foresight**

being visionary
looking for greater possibilities
planning ahead
knowing what to expect
getting a premonition
anticipating obstacles
taking the long view

demonstrating **leadership**

showing others the way
taking the main role

providing needed direction
rallying the group behind you
assuming a responsible position
setting an example
serving as a representative

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Two of Swords** - avoiding the facts, staying stuck
- **Ten of Pentacles** - being conservative, focusing on security

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - expanding horizons, going into unexplored territory
- **Emperor** - leadership, providing direction
- **Eight of Cups** - going on a trip, starting a journey
- **Three of Pentacles** - planning, preparing for the future

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



- **CELEBRATION**
- **FREEDOM**
- **EXCITEMENT**

ACTIONS

celebrating

rejoicing over a happy event
recognizing a success
observing an anniversary, milestone or special time
congratulating on a job well-done
reflecting on accomplishments
enjoying some well-deserved rewards
taking part in a ceremony or rite

seeking **freedom**

getting out of an oppressive situation
breaking free of bonds
cutting loose
opening to new possibilities
escaping unhappy circumstances
claiming self-determination
letting go of limitations

feeling **excited**

bubbling over with delight
feeling thrilled
look forward expectantly

getting caught up in the moment
feeling jubilant
relishing the moment
being surprised

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Devil** - bondage, lack of freedom
- **Ten of Wands** - burdens, being in an oppressive situation
- **Four of Cups** - apathy, lack of excitement, flat feeling
- **Six of Swords** - mild depression, little to celebrate
- **Eight of Swords** - restriction, lack of freedom

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Three of Cups** - excitement, high spirits, celebration
- **Two of Pentacles** - fun, excitement, parties

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



- **DISAGREEMENT**
- **COMPETITION**
- **HASSLES**

ACTIONS

disagreeing

feeling everyone is at cross-purposes
being torn by dissension
quarreling, arguing and bickering
becoming embroiled in a debate
being at odds with others
quibbling over details

experiencing competition

feeling the thrill of the contest
going against an opponent
rising to the challenge
being involved in a game or sport
trying to outdo yourself
going for the gold
looking for a fight
having a rival
being challenged by an upstart

experiencing hassles

getting annoyed by demands
having minor setbacks
needing to take care of details
suffering from irritations

being bothered by trivialities

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Temperance** - balance, agreement, working together
- **World** - integration, working together
- **Two of Cups** - truce, agreement, coming together
- **Two of Pentacles** - working smoothly, getting people together
- **Three of Pentacles** - teamwork, cooperation

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Seven of Wands** - opposition, fighting
- **Ten of Wands** - struggle, hassles, meeting resistance
- **Five of Swords** - discord, people set against each other

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



- **TRIUMPH**
- **ACCLAIM**
- **PRIDE**

ACTIONS

triumphing

having your day in the sun
being vindicated
walking away with the prize
prevailing against all comers
coming out on top
achieving success

receiving **acclaim**

being acknowledged
getting a pat on the back
receiving an award or citation
getting praise or a compliment
earning applause
achieving recognition

feeling **pride**

enjoying healthy self-esteem
strutting your stuff
holding your head up high
feeling worthy of notice
having a high opinion of yourself
putting yourself above others
being arrogant
condescending
feeling self-important

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Tower](#) - humility, loss of acclaim
- [Five of Cups](#) - loss, defeat
- [Ten of Swords](#) - self-deprecating, in the pits
- [Five of Pentacles](#) - rejection, lack of recognition

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Chariot](#) - triumph, self-confidence
- [Sun](#) - acclaim, prominence
- [Nine of Cups](#) - self-satisfaction, achieving what you want

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



- **AGGRESSION**
- **DEFIANCE**
- **CONVICTION**

ACTIONS

being **aggressive**

going after what you want
asserting yourself
taking the offensive
firing the first shot
fighting
making your point forcefully
seizing the advantage

being **defiant**

holding out against pressure
defending your position
opposing all challengers
combating criticism
refusing to yield
saying "No!"
resisting authority

showing **conviction**

being sure

having a fixed position
demonstrating strong character
standing up for what you believe
knowing you are right
acting resolutely
being firm

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **High Priestess** - being passive, holding back
- **Hanged Man** - waiting, letting go
- **Three of Pentacles** - teamwork

REINFORCING CARDS...some possibilities

- **Five of Wands** - opposition, fighting
- **Nine of Wands** - defending your position, refusing to yield
- **Five of Swords** - conflict, "me-against-them" mentality

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



- **QUICK ACTION**
- **CONCLUSION**
- **NEWS**

ACTIONS

taking **quick action**

making your move
striking while the iron is hot
declaring yourself openly
putting plans into action
rushing into a new area
moving into high gear
getting caught up in change

coming to a **conclusion**

culminating an effort
having all elements come together
closing out an activity
experiencing a grand finale
finding a successful resolution
completing unfinished business

receiving **news**

getting an important message
obtaining a needed bit of information
finding the missing puzzle piece

discovering the truth
having a meaningful conversation
learning more

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **High Priestess** - waiting, holding off
- **Four of Swords** - not rushing in, preparing
- **Seven of Pentacles** - assessment, taking stock before action

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Magician** - taking action, carrying out plans
- **Wheel of Fortune** - rapid pace, quick developments
- **Death** - conclusion, endings
- **Eight of Cups** - finishing up, ending a chapter

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



- **DEFENSIVENESS**
- **PERSEVERANCE**
- **STAMINA**

ACTIONS

defending yourself

assuming ill will
expecting the worst
taking extra precautions
being paranoid
feeling wary and guarded
protecting others
remembering past attacks

persevering

persisting despite all setbacks
refusing to take "no" for an answer
seeing something through to the end
getting knocked down, then standing up
keeping your resolve
trying repeatedly

showing **stamina**

continuing despite fatigue
holding fast
drawing on hidden reserves
holding together through force of will
demonstrating physical strength

keeping up the pace

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Three of Cups](#) - friendship, trusting someone
- [Six of Cups](#) - innocence, believing the best
- [Eight of Cups](#) - weariness, fatigue

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Strength](#) - endurance, resolve, heart
- [Seven of Wands](#) - defending a position, holding out
- [Two of Swords](#) - being defensive, closing yourself off
- [Eight of Pentacles](#) - persistence

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



- **OVEREXTENDING**
- **BURDENS**
- **STRUGGLE**

ACTIONS

overextending

trying to do too much
refusing to say "no"
taking all the blame
assuming another's debt
doing the lion's share
having to work overtime
shouldering all the work
being saddled with an extra load

feeling burdened

never having time to relax
feeling tied to a treadmill
being taxed to the limit
assuming responsibility
being held accountable
carrying out an unpleasant duty
cleaning up a messy situation
being left holding the bag

struggling

fighting uphill
doing everything the hard way
experiencing resistance
pushing against the current
having to work for every gain

finding that nothing comes easily
laboring

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - carefree, living in the moment
- **Hanged Man** - letting go
- **Four of Wands** - free of burdens, escaping oppression
- **Four of Swords** - relaxing, resting
- **Seven of Swords** - avoiding responsibility

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Justice** - accepting responsibility, being accountable
- **Five of Wands** - struggle, hassles, resistance
- **Six of Swords** - getting by, struggling along
- **Nine of Swords** - worrying
- **Five of Pentacles** - struggling, hard times

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



- **BE CREATIVE**
- **BE ENTHUSIASTIC**
- **BE CONFIDENT**
- **BE COURAGEOUS**

ACTIONS

Be Creative

take a novel approach
be original
invent
find a new area of self-expression
use your art
come up with a solution
go in a new direction

Be Enthusiastic

jump in wholeheartedly
get excited
show optimism
be the first to volunteer
be passionate
get your blood flowing

Be Confident

tackle a challenge
say "yes, I can"
believe in yourself
stretch your envelope
move beyond doubts
focus on success
know that where there's a will, there's a way

Be Courageous

take a risk
be daring
have an adventure
avoid the sure thing
take assertive action
be a leader
overcome a fear

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Page of Wands can form a pair with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Page of Wands/King of Pentacles, go to [King-Page] and [Wands-Pentacles]

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



- **CHARMING.....SUPERFICIAL**
- **SELF-CONFIDENT.....COCKY**
- **DARING.....FOOLHARDY**
- **ADVENTUROUS.....RESTLESS**
- **PASSIONATE.....HOT-TEMPERED**

ACTIONS

Charming.....Superficial

is physically attractive.....focuses on style and appearance
disarms opposition with a smile.....can be thoughtless and insensitive
is sexy and seductive.....pursues sexual conquests
generates glamour and excitement.....avoids deep or serious matters
is honey-tongued.....may say or do what's expedient

Self-confident.....Cocky

totally lacks self-doubt.....overestimates abilities
has a can-do attitude.....may boast and brag
is convinced of his or her talent.....exaggerates accomplishments
is self-assured at all times.....is brash and nervy
doesn't sweat the small stuff.....is sometimes presumptuous

Daring.....Foolhardy

will risk anything without fear.....is reckless and rash
will tackle what others avoid.....will endanger self and others
is the first to volunteer for danger.....doesn't give danger due respect
loves being a hero.....is impetuous
boldly goes where no one has gone before.....is a daredevil

Adventurous.....Restless

loves travel and new experiences.....is never content to be still
seeks novelty and change.....can't set down roots or make ties
makes things happen.....lacks inner peace and serenity
rises to every challenge.....won't stop to smell the roses
is footloose and fancy-free.....must have constant stimulation

Passionate.....Hot-tempered

is easily roused to action.....angers easily
feels strong loyalties.....is too ready for a fight
feels everything powerfully.....lashes out when riled
takes a vocal stand.....often acts without thinking
jumps in with both feet.....may have a chip on his or her shoulder

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Knight of Wands can form a **pair** with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Knight of Wands/King of Cups, go to [King-Knight] and [Wands-Cups]

DESCRIPTION

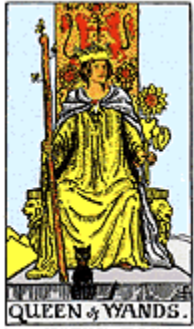
On the **positive side**, the Knight of Wands is full of energy and life. He's never afraid to try something new and will reach for all the gusto he can. Others may shake their heads at his crazy stunts, but they still admire his courage and passion. He's sexy and irresistible...always the charmer. On 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



- **ATTRACTIVE**
- **WHOLEHEARTED**
- **ENERGETIC**
- **CHEERFUL**
- **SELF-ASSURED**

ACTIONS

Attractive

is appealing and popular
creates a powerful first impression
makes friends easily
has great sex appeal
is warm and outgoing

Wholehearted

is loaded with enthusiasm
tackles a task with total dedication
gives the utmost in any situation
is open and sincere
doesn't hold anything back

Energetic

leads a busy and active life
is vigorous and strong
radiates health and vitality
has an inner vibrancy
is a natural athlete

Cheerful

is optimistic and upbeat
has an encouraging word for all
brightens whatever room he or she is in
has a warm and sunny disposition
can shake off the blues easily

Self-Assured

quietly demonstrates self-confidence
handles any situation with aplomb
can't be easily rattled or provoked
is spontaneous and gracious in defeat
has faith in his or her abilities

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Queen of Wands can form a **pair** with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Queen of Wands/Knight of Cups, go to [Queen-Knight] and [Wands-Cups]

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



- **CREATIVE**
- **INSPIRING**
- **FORCEFUL**
- **CHARISMATIC**
- **BOLD**

ACTIONS

Creative

develops innovative projects and ideas
opens up new areas of experience
has natural artistic ability
uses self-expression for useful purposes
masterminds new strategies
is original and inventive

Inspiring

communicates enthusiasm
creates an atmosphere of excitement
sets an example others want to follow
instills confidence
is a powerful, natural leader

Forceful

seems to dominate the environment
has a commanding presence
is assertive when necessary
earns respect and willing compliance
carries authority naturally

Charismatic

is often showy and theatrical
enjoys making the gesture with flair
naturally becomes the focus of attention
magnetically attracts others
is watched, imitated and talked about

Bold

is intrepid
is willing to take chances when the stakes are high
confronts opposition directly
dares to stand and be different
is unconcerned with what others think
has the courage of his or her convictions

COURT CARD PAIRS

The King of Wands can form a [pair](#) with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the King of Wands/Knight of Cups, go to [King-Knight] and [Wands-Cups]

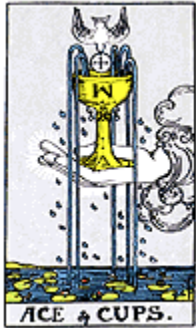
DESCRIPTION

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.

CUPS---

ACE OF CUPS



- **EMOTIONAL FORCE**
- **INTUITION**
- **INTIMACY**
- **LOVE**

ACTIONS

using **emotional force**

getting in touch with your feelings
letting your heart lead the way
empathizing with others
expressing deep feelings
responding viscerally

developing **intuition**

trusting your inner voice
responding to messages from within
experiencing direct knowing
enhancing your psychic awareness
getting in tune with yourself
going with your gut reaction

experiencing **intimacy**

feeling an attraction grow
falling in love
establishing a bond with another
developing a relationship
getting close to someone

going to a deeper level

proceeding with **love**

expressing affection
opening yourself to others
responding sympathetically
letting your love light shine
giving to those in need
getting rid of negativity
forgiving and forgetting

ACE-ACE PAIRS

An Ace-Ace pair shows that a new spirit is entering your life. It draws on the energy of the Ace of Cups:

--- **deep feelings, intimacy, attunement, compassion, love**
plus one of these:

- **Ace of Wands**: creativity, excitement, adventure, courage, personal power
- **Ace of Swords**: intelligence, reason, justice, truth, clarity, perseverance
- **Ace of Pentacles**: prosperity, abundance, trust, security, groundedness -

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.

See also [Lesson 13](#).

TWO OF CUPS



- CONNECTION
- TRUCE
- ATTRACTION

ACTIONS

making a **connection**

joining with another
celebrating a marriage or union
cementing a friendship
establishing a partnership
working together
sharing
helping and being helped
seeing commonalities

calling a **truce**

healing a severed relationship
bringing together opposites
letting bygones be bygones
coming to a satisfactory agreement
declaring peace
forgiving and forgetting

acknowledging an **attraction**

recognizing a bond that is developing
accepting your preferences
letting yourself be drawn in
moving toward
feeling a positive response

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hermit** - needing to be alone, solitude
- **Five of Wands** - disagreement, staying apart, no peace
- **Four of Cups** - self-absorbed, being alone
- **Five of Cups** - broken relationship

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Lovers** - union, marriage, connection
- **Temperance** - connection, working together
- **Ten of Cups** - kinship, family ties, connections

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



- **EXUBERANCE**
- **FRIENDSHIP**
- **COMMUNITY**

ACTIONS

feeling **exuberant**

bursting with energy
being in the flow
celebrating
overflowing with high spirits
feeling on top of the world
dancing and singing
putting yourself out there

enjoying **friendship**

getting together with people you like
experiencing camaraderie
extending/receiving hospitality
sharing
finding companions
trusting others
relying on outside help

valuing **community**

taking part in a support group
developing a team spirit
working together
uniting with others
forming a group bond
helping each other
discovering a common goal

being neighborly

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hermit** - being solitary, withdrawing from the group
- **Nine of Wands** - lack of trust, wariness
- **Three of Swords** - lonely, isolated, hurting
- **Six of Swords** - sad, depressed
- **Nine of Swords** - anguished, joyless

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hierophant** - focusing on the group
- **Temperance** - joining forces, working together
- **Four of Wands** - excitement, high spirits, celebration
- **Three of Pentacles** - working in a group

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



- **SELF-ABSORPTION**
- **APATHY**
- **GOING WITHIN**

ACTIONS

being **self-absorbed**

concentrating on your own feelings
wanting for yourself
being unaware of others
giving out little
withholding affection
seeing only your point of view
ignoring gifts and blessings

feeling **apathetic**

passively accepting
losing interest
feeling disengaged
making little effort
finding life stale and flat
lacking motivation
feeling little desire

going within

being introspective
meditating
dreaming

contemplating
pausing to reflect
getting lost in reverie
withdrawing from involvement
losing outer awareness

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **World** - involvement, caring, taking part
- **Four of Wands** - excitement, high energy, optimism
- **Two of Cups** - connection, sharing with others
- **Eight of Pentacles** - making an effort, working hard

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hermit** - withdrawing, being introverted
- **Four of Swords** - contemplating, taking time alone
- **Six of Swords** - listless, depressed

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



- **LOSS**
- **BEREAVEMENT**
- **REGRET**

ACTIONS

suffering a **loss**

letting go of a hope
giving up the win
experiencing a setback
being defeated
having a possession taken away
saying good-bye

feeling **bereft**

breaking up a relationship
feeling deprived of love
longing to be reunited
grieving
feeling sorrow

feeling **regret**

being disappointed by events
crying over spilt milk
wanting to turn back the clock
wishing for what might have been
believing you made the wrong choice
acknowledging mistakes

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Lovers** - establishing a relationship
- **Judgement** - absolving yourself, releasing regret
- **Six of Wands** - triumph, winning
- **Two of Cups** - relationship
- **Nine of Cups** - contentment, satisfaction

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Death** - loss, good-byes
- **Three of Swords** - separation, loss of love, heartache
- **Six of Swords** - sadness
- **Five of Pentacles** - rejection, lack of support, loss of approval

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



- **GOOD WILL**
- **INNOCENCE**
- **CHILDHOOD**

ACTIONS

experiencing **good will**

acting kindly or charitably
doing a good turn for another
sharing what you have
having a noble impulse
receiving a gift
feeling blessed
being well-intentioned

enjoying **innocence**

feeling simple contentment
surrounding yourself with goodness
being blissfully unaware
having a clear conscience
shunning corruption
being acquitted
appreciating simple joys

focusing on **childhood**

being with a child or young person
feeling carefree
being taken care of

feeling nostalgic
indulging in play
enjoying youthful activities
having a baby

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Devil** - negativity, corruption, coveting
- **Nine of Wands** - lack of innocence, believing the worst
- **Five of Swords** - cynical, hostile, selfish
- **Seven of Swords** - deceiving, manipulating
- **Nine of Swords** - guilty

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Star** - good will, sharing
- **Ten of Cups** - feeling blessed, happy, joyful

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



- **WISHFUL THINKING**
- **OPTIONS**
- **DISSIPATION**

ACTIONS

indulging in **wishful thinking**

creating fantasies
dreaming
getting caught up in illusions
letting your imagination run wild
kidding yourself about the facts
building castles in the air
waiting for your ship to come in
lacking focus and commitment
avoiding putting ideas to the test

having many **options**

being offered many alternatives
facing an array of choices
believing in limitless possibilities
looking at a wide open field
getting to pick and choose

falling into **dissipation**

overindulging
letting everything go
becoming disorganized

eating/drinking/partying to excess
neglecting your health
entering into addictive patterns
being inclined toward indolence
being lazy
procrastinating

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Magician** - focus and commitment
- **Emperor** - discipline, structure
- **Temperance** - balance, moderation
- **Four of Pentacles** - order, control
- **Eight of Pentacles** - working hard, applying yourself
- **Nine of Pentacles** - discipline, restraint, refinement

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Devil** - overindulgence, dissipation
- **Moon** - illusions, unrealistic ideas, fantasy
- **Nine of Cups** - sensual excess

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



- **DEEPER MEANING**
- **MOVING ON**
- **WEARINESS**

ACTIONS

seeking **deeper meaning**

focusing on personal truth
leaving the rat race
looking for answers
concentrating on what is important
starting on a journey of discovery
finding out the facts
devoting more time to the spiritual

moving on

realizing the current cycle is over
abandoning a hopeless situation
disentangling yourself
starting on a trip of unknown length
letting go
finishing up and walking away

growing **weary**

feeling drained by demands
dragging through the day
feeling tired and listless
lacking energy
losing hope
getting weighed down by worries
becoming burned out

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Strength** - endurance, strength
- **Sun** - vitality, high energy
- **Nine of Wands** - hanging on, persevering

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hermit** - searching for deeper meaning
- **Death** - moving on, leaving
- **Three of Wands** - going on a trip, going into new territory
- **Eight of Wands** - finishing up, ending a chapter
- **Six of Swords** - moving on, going on a trip

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



- **WISH FULFILLMENT**
- **SATISFACTION**
- **SENSUAL PLEASURE**

ACTIONS

having your **wish fulfilled**

achieving what you desire
obtaining your goal
getting what you *think* you want
having your dream come true

feeling **satisfied**

indulging in a little smugness
enjoying the situation just as it is
feeling pleased as punch
getting the results you hoped for
feeling all's well with the world
being contented

enjoying **sensual pleasure**

experiencing luxury

savoring a delicious meal
appreciating the arts
making love
relaxing
experiencing beauty
enjoying physical exertion

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hermit** - focusing less on the senses
- **Five of Cups** - regret

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Empress** - enjoying the senses
- **Lovers** - sexual pleasure
- **World** - achieving your heart's desire
- **Six of Wands** - pride in self, achieving what you want
- **Seven of Cups** - sensual excess

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



- **JOY**
- **PEACE**
- **FAMILY**

ACTIONS

feeling **joy**

embracing happiness
having a sense of well-being
radiating love
delighting in good fortune
counting your blessings
expressing delight

enjoying **peace**

experiencing serenity
doing away with hostilities
restoring harmony
reducing stress and tension
feeling contented and at ease
calling a truce
relaxing

looking to the **family**

working for peace in the home

going on a family event
reaffirming a family commitment
supporting a relative in need
bonding with family members
forgiving someone in the family

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Devil** - lack of joy or peace
- **Tower** - upheaval, chaos
- **Three of Swords** - heartbreak, loneliness
- **Nine of Swords** - anguish, sorrow, despair
- **Ten of Swords** - down in the pits, feeling victimized

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Lovers** - family relationships, bonding
- **Star** - joy, positive feelings, blessings
- **World** - happiness, emotional fulfillment
- **Six of Cups** - feeling blessed, happy, joyful

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



- **BE EMOTIONAL**
- **BE INTUITIVE**
- **BE INTIMATE**
- **BE LOVING**

ACTIONS

Be Emotional

be moved or touched
let your feelings show
respond to beauty
be sentimental or romantic
shed your detachment
let your heart lead the way

Be Intuitive

receive guidance from within
act on a hunch
remember your dreams
have a psychic experience
experience direct knowing
trust your gut reaction

Be Intimate

start or renew a love affair
meet someone you're attracted to
get closer to someone
go beyond formalities
have a special moment of togetherness
solidify a friendship
share something personal

Be Loving

make a thoughtful gesture
express sympathy and understanding
forgive yourself
forgive someone who has hurt you
apologize to someone you have hurt
reach out and touch someone
mend a broken relationship
brighten someone's day
respond with caring rather than anger
refuse to judge or condemn

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Page of Cups can form a [pair](#) with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Page of Cups/King of Pentacles, go to [[King-Page](#)] and [[Cups-Pentacles](#)]

[[King-Page](#)] [[Queen-Page](#)] [[Knight-Page](#)] [[Page-Page](#)]

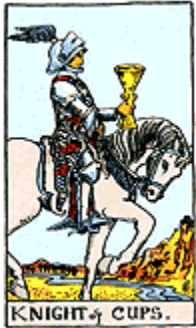
[[Cups-Wands](#)] [[Cups-Cups](#)] [[Cups-Swords](#)] [[Cups-Pentacles](#)]

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



- **ROMANTIC.....OVEREMOTIONAL**
- **IMAGINATIVE.....FANCIFUL**
- **SENSITIVE.....TEMPERAMENTAL**
- **REFINED.....OVERREFINED**
- **INTROSPECTIVE.....INTROVERTED**

ACTIONS

Romantic.....Overemotional

idealizes love.....lacks self-restraint
emphasizes feelings.....is often jealous
concentrates on the poetry of life.....tends to be gushy and melodramatic
remembers special occasions.....blows hot and cold in affections
expresses sentiments beautifully.....brings flowers, but forgets to put gas in the car

Imaginative.....Fanciful

can tap the fertile unconscious.....indulges in idle daydreams
looks beyond the obvious.....has big ideas that come to nothing
never takes the mundane path.....has an unrealistic approach
spins marvelous tales.....has an overactive imagination
is visionary.....can shade the truth

Sensitive.....Temperamental

is aware of moods and feelings.....is prone to mood swings
helps others open up.....can be petulant and sulky
responds deeply to life.....gets melancholy and depressed
understands the pains of others.....broods excessively
is tactful and diplomatic.....takes offense easily

Refined.....Over-refined

appreciates beauty in all forms.....leaves dirty work to others
seeks the finest.....can't face unpleasantness
creates a pleasing environment.....lacks robust good health
understands subtlety.....emphasizes style over substance
is suave and gracious.....gets overwhelmed by pressure

Introspective.....Introverted

values the inner life.....focuses inward to excess
tries to understand why.....avoids active participation
questions motivations.....is driven to self-examination
seeks self-improvement.....exaggerates personal failings
sees below the surface.....can't relax around others

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Knight of Cups can form a pair with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Knight of Cups/King of Swords, go to [King-Knight] and [Cups-Swords]

[King-Knight] [Queen-Knight] [Knight-Knight] [Knight-Page]

[Cups-Wands] [Cups-Cups] [Cups-Swords] [Cups-Pentacles]

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



- **LOVING**
- **TENDERHEARTED**
- **INTUITIVE**
- **PSYCHIC**
- **SPIRITUAL**

ACTIONS

Loving

turns away wrath with caring
is unconditionally accepting
is sensitive to the feelings of others
dispels anger and hate
has infinite patience

Tenderhearted

is easily moved by another's pain
reacts with sensitivity and compassion
is kind and gentle with all creatures
can never turn away someone in need
feels what others are feeling

Intuitive

is always tuned to emotional undercurrents
senses the climate of a situation
is guided by the heart

trusts an inner sense of what is true
understands without having to ask

Psychic

is open to the unconscious
has a well-developed sixth sense
can have a telepathic bond with another
has a finely-tuned sensibility
is a natural medium

Spiritual

feels oneness with God and the universe
has reverence for all life
finds joy in communion
appreciates the deeper meanings of life
sees the world as a holy place

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Queen of Cups can form **a pair** with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Queen of Cups/Knight of Wands, go to [Queen-Knight] and [Cups-Wands]

[**Queen-King**] [**Queen-Queen**] [**Queen-Knight**] [**Queen-Page**]

[**Cups-Wands**] [**Cups-Cups**] [**Cups-Swords**] [**Cups-Pentacles**]

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



- WISE
- CALM
- DIPLOMATIC
- CARING
- TOLERANT

ACTIONS

Wise

gives good advice
has a deep grasp of human nature
teaches through loving attention
knows what others need for growth
sees right to the heart of the matter
understands many levels of experience

Calm

maintains his or her composure
has a quieting influence on others
is emotionally stable and secure
keeps his or her head in a crisis
never seems nervous or tense

Diplomatic

can balance the needs of many people

keeps everyone working together happily
can diffuse a tense situation
achieves goals through subtle influence
says just the right word at the right time

Caring

responds to emotional needs
is a natural healer and therapist
takes action to help those in need
feels compassion for the less fortunate
does volunteer and charity work

Tolerant

has open and broad-minded views
accepts the limitations of others
is comfortable with all types of people
allows others their freedom
is patient in trying circumstances

COURT CARD PAIRS

The King of Cups can form a [pair](#) with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the King of Cups/Knight of Pentacles, go to [King-Knight] and [Cups-Pentacles]

[[King-King](#)] [[King-Queen](#)] [[King-Knight](#)] [[King-Page](#)]

[[Cups-Wands](#)] [[Cups-Cups](#)] [[Cups-Swords](#)] [[Cups-Pentacles](#)]

DESCRIPTION

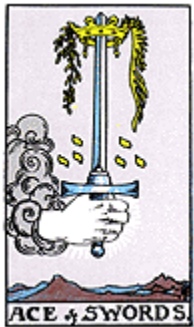
The personality of the King of Cups is a combination of the positive water energy of the [Cups suit](#) and the active, outward [focus of a King](#). He is wise and understanding, with a deep knowledge of the world that comes from the heart. He is a teacher and way-shower who guides his students with 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.

SWORDS---

ACE OF SWORDS



- **MENTAL FORCE**
- **TRUTH**
- **JUSTICE**
- **FORTITUDE**

ACTIONS

using **mental force**

being objective
thinking your way through
finding out the facts
analyzing the situation
using your intellect
applying logic and reason

having **fortitude**

overcoming adversity
facing problems
resolving a situation
finding the strength to overcome
surmounting obstacles

being undaunted by setbacks

seeking **justice**

righting a wrong
championing a cause
doing what is right
establishing the truth
accepting responsibility
wanting what is fair

proceeding with **truth**

dispelling doubts
cutting through confusion
seeing through illusions
having clear understanding
being honest
finding out what is real

ACE-ACE PAIRS

An Ace-Ace pair shows that a new spirit is entering your life.

It draws on the energy of the Ace of Swords:

--- **intelligence, reason, justice, truth, clarity, perseverance**

plus one of these:

--- **Ace of Wands:** creativity, excitement, adventure, courage, personal power

--- **Ace of Cups:** deep feelings, intimacy, attunement, compassion, love

--- **Ace of Pentacles:** prosperity, abundance, trust, security, groundedness

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.

See also [Lesson 13](#).

TWO OF SWORDS



- **BLOCKED EMOTIONS**
- **AVOIDANCE**
- **STALEMATE**

ACTIONS

blocking emotions

denying true feelings
stifling a natural response
keeping another at arm's length
hiding distress
turning a deaf ear
being defensive
maintaining your cool

avoiding the truth

refusing to look at facts
pretending everything's fine
ignoring the warning signs
closing your eyes to what's going on
avoiding an unpleasantness
choosing not to know

being at a stalemate

feeling afraid to act
reaching an impasse
staying stuck

refusing to decide
being unwilling to rock the boat
staying on the fence

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - opening up, uninhibited
- **Wheel of Fortune** - moving, getting things going
- **Justice** - accepting the truth, accepting responsibility
- **Star** - free flow of positive feelings
- **Three of Wands** - moving forward, looking at the facts

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Moon** - self-deception, not seeing the truth
- **Nine of Wands** - being defensive, closing yourself off
- **Seven of Swords** - running away from the truth
- **Four of Pentacles** - stalemate, blockage

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.

FOUR OF SWORDS



- **REST**
- **CONTEMPLATION**
- **QUIET PREPARATION**

ACTIONS

resting

taking a break
giving your body time to heal
avoiding overexertion
finding peace and quiet
relaxing body and soul
taking life easy

contemplating

gaining a better perspective
listening for your Inner Voice
taking time alone to think
standing back from the situation
examining your motivations
reviewing where you are

quietly preparing

consolidating inner resources

making sure your base is secure
getting ready for the future
coming to terms with what is
tying up loose ends
stabilizing

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Magician** - being active, focusing outward
- **Wheel of Fortune** - rapid pace, lots of movement
- **Eight of Wands** - making your move, rushing
- **Ten of Wands** - overexerting, taking on too much
- **Two of Pentacles** - having fun, balancing many activities

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **High Priestess** - resting quietly, contemplating
- **Hermit** - contemplating, being quiet
- **Hanged Man** - rest, suspended activity
- **Four of Cups** - contemplating, taking time alone
- **Six of Swords** - rest, recovery
- **Seven of Pentacles** - pausing to reflect, assess

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



- **SELF-INTEREST**
- **DISCORD**
- **OPEN DISHONOR**

ACTIONS

acting in your own **self-interest**

setting aside the concerns of others
looking out for number one
thinking of your own needs
knowing you must concentrate on yourself
encountering selfishness
indulging in power plays
gloating
going for the win-lose result

experiencing **discord**

being in a hostile environment
feeling people are set against each other
choosing to battle

having an "us-against-them" mentality
creating ill will
experiencing conflict

witnessing **open dishonor**

losing your moral compass
letting ends justify means
sacrificing integrity
losing sight of what is right
achieving a dubious victory
knowing of criminal activity

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Emperor** - following the rules, obeying the law
- **Justice** - having integrity, doing what is right
- **Temperance** - working with others, harmony, cooperation
- **Six of Cups** - innocent, well-intentioned, kind

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Five of Wands** - discord, people set against each other
- **Seven of Wands** - "me-against-them" mentality, conflict
- **Seven of Swords** - dishonor, separation from others

DESCRIPTION

The Five of Swords is about self-interest. Society tells us to think of others, yet we resist. How can we 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



- **THE BLUES**
- **RECOVERY**
- **TRAVEL**

ACTIONS

feeling the blues

experiencing a low-level sadness
just keeping your head above water
working to get through the day
feeling somewhat depressed
avoiding the lows, but also the highs
feeling listless
functioning, but not much more

recovering

dealing with the effects of trauma
getting over a tough time
picking up the pieces
starting to cope
beginning to get your health back

heading toward a more positive place
feeling hope again

traveling

changing location
moving from one place to another
taking a trip
experiencing a change of scene
being uprooted
going on a journey
entering into a new frame of mind

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Strength** - having heart, unshakable resolve
- **Sun** - vitality, enthusiasm
- **Four of Wands** - excitement, celebration
- **Three of Cups** - high spirits, exuberance
- **Two of Pentacles** - fun

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Ten of Wands** - getting by, struggling along
- **Four of Cups** - feeling listless, depressed, uncaring
- **Five of Cups** - sadness
- **Eight of Cups** - moving on, going on a trip
- **Four of Swords** - rest, recovery
- **Nine of Swords** - depression, sadness

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



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

ACTIONS

running away

shirking responsibility
sneaking off
leaving
avoiding obligations
being afraid to face the music
taking the easy way out

hiding from the truth
procrastinating

being a **lone wolf**

feeling you don't need anyone else
wanting independence
deciding not to help
keeping something to yourself
preferring solitude
staying aloof
wanting to go it alone
holding people at arm's length

choosing **hidden dishonor**

deceiving or being deceived
covering your tracks
maneuvering behind the scenes
being two-faced
seeing others take the rap
controlling without appearing to
avoiding a shameful secret
lying or stealing

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hierophant** - working within the group
- **Justice** - - accepting responsibility, being above board
- **Ten of Wands** - meeting obligations, being responsible
- **Six of Cups** - innocent, kind, open, noble

REINFORCING CARDS: Some possibilities

- **Hermit** - being alone, staying away from others
- **Two of Swords** - running from the truth
- **Five of Swords** - dishonor, separation from others
- **Nine of Pentacles** - relying on yourself, acting on your own

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



- **RESTRICTION**
- **CONFUSION**
- **POWERLESSNESS**

ACTIONS

feeling **restricted**

being fenced in by obstacles
staying in a limited situation
feeling trapped by circumstances
experiencing few options
being blind to freedom
feeling persecuted

feeling **confused**

being unsure which way to turn
feeling at a loss
lacking direction
feeling overwhelmed
floundering around
needing guidance and clarity
not understanding what is happening

feeling **powerless**

waiting for outside rescue
doubting anything you do will help
avoiding responsibility
looking for a white knight
feeling victimized
accepting inaction

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Magician** - feeling powerful, knowing what's going on
- **Chariot** - self-confidence, focus
- **Two of Wands** - power, boldness
- **Four of Wands** - freedom, lack of restriction
- **Three of Pentacles** - competence, know-how, planning

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Devil** - confusion, restriction
- **Moon** - confusion, lack of clarity

- **Ten of Swords** - victim mentality, powerlessness

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



- **WORRY**
- **GUILT**
- **ANGUISH**

ACTIONS

worrying

doubting all will go well
brooding
making yourself sick over your troubles
going over and over an issue
feeling anxious and tense
getting worked up

feeling **guilty**

regretting some offense
refusing to forgive yourself
wanting to turn back the clock
focusing on your "sins"
being hard on yourself
denying that you did your best
getting overwhelmed by remorse

suffering **anguish**

despairing
feeling you've reached your limits
having sleepless nights
feeling depressed
going through a dark night of the soul
forgetting joy
wanting to cry

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Star** - serenity, peace of mind
- **Judgement** - lack of guilt, absolution
- **Three of Cups** - being on top of the world, in the flow
- **Six of Cups** - innocence
- **Ten of Cups** - joy, peace, delight

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Devil** - despair, lack of joy

- [Ten of Wands](#) - worrying
- [Three of Swords](#) - anguish, heartbreak
- [Six of Swords](#) - depression, sadness

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



- **BOTTOMING OUT**

- **VICTIM MENTALITY**
- **MARTYRDOM**

ACTIONS

bottoming out

having nowhere to go but up
 knowing it's darkest before the dawn
 being at the lowest point
 feeling things can't get worse
 preparing for an upturn
 reaching the pits

feeling like a **victim**

bemoaning your fate
 feeling powerless
 seeing life as hostile
 suffering from an attack
 wondering "Why me?"
 feeling self-pity
 being on the receiving end

being a **martyr**

putting your own interests last
 being self-deprecating
 feeling like a doormat
 taking a back seat
 letting others go first
 sacrificing

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Chariot** - self-assertion, power, victory
- **Two of Wands** - power, self-confidence
- **Six of Wands** - self-promotion, being on top of the world
- **Nine of Cups** - satisfaction, happy with conditions

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Hanged Man](#) - sacrifice, martyrdom
- [Eight of Swords](#) - victim mentality, powerlessness

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.

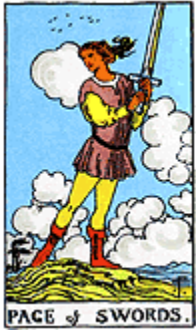
One meaning of the Ten of Swords is hitting rock bottom. When one disaster follows another, we feel devastated at first, but eventually we throw up our hands and laugh. It's so bad, it's funny! In films, the hero says, "What else could possibly go wrong?" and we know that's a signal for the bucket of 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



- **USE YOUR MIND**
- **BE TRUTHFUL**
- **BE JUST**
- **HAVE FORTITUDE**

ACTIONS

Use Your Mind

analyze the problem
use logic and reason
reexamine beliefs
develop an idea or plan
study or research the facts
learn or teach
think everything through

Be Truthful

act honestly
face the facts
stop deceiving
clear up any confusion
expose what is hidden
speak directly

Be Just

right a wrong
act ethically
treat others equally
champion a cause
try to be fair
do what you know is right
accept responsibility

acknowledge the other point of view

Have Fortitude

face problems squarely
refuse to be discouraged
meet setbacks with renewed energy
keep a firm resolve
move out of depression
keep your chin up and head high
keep trying

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Page of Swords can form a pair with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Page of Swords/King of Pentacles, go to [King-Page] and [Swords-Pentacles]

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



- **DIRECT.....BLUNT**
- **AUTHORITATIVE.....OVERBEARING**
- **INCISIVE.....CUTTING**
- **KNOWLEDGEABLE.....OPINIONATED**
- **LOGICAL.....UNFEELING**

ACTIONS

Direct.....Blunt

is frank and outspoken.....is tactless and rude
gets straight to the point.....may have a brusque manner
does not mince words.....does not spare the feelings of others
lets others know where they stand.....can't hold his or her tongue
gives an honest answer.....shows little discretion

Authoritative.....Overbearing

speaks with assurance.....tends to be domineering
commands attention.....forces a position on others
acts with total certainty.....expects immediate compliance
gives orders naturally.....does not welcome dissent
has great influence.....acts in a high-handed manner

Incisive.....Cutting

has a keen, forceful intellect.....is prone to biting sarcasm
penetrates to the core.....lacks sensitivity
expresses ideas succinctly.....can be critical
is sharp and alert.....has a barbed wit
debates and argues well.....derides stupidity

Knowledgeable.....Opinionated

knows what he or she is talking about.....believes he or she is always right
can expound on any topic.....lacks tolerance of other viewpoints
is sought as an expert.....must have the last word
has well-reasoned positions.....is arrogant
is highly intelligent.....can be dogmatic and close-minded

Logical.....Unfeeling

reasons clearly.....undervalues intuition
analyzes information well.....treats people like numbers
concentrates on what is correct.....doesn't temper justice with mercy
can set aside emotional factors.....is cut off from emotions
makes sense out of confusion.....is cold and aloof

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Knight of Swords can form a **pair** with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Knight of Swords/King of Cups, go to [King-Knight] and [Swords-Cups]

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



- **HONEST**
- **ASTUTE**
- **FORTHRIGHT**
- **WITTY**
- **EXPERIENCED**

ACTIONS

Honest

faces the truth, even if unpleasant
is up front with everyone
likes everything on the table
plays by the rules
avoids lies and deception

Astute

sizes up a situation quickly
understands hidden motives and desires
is difficult to fool, trick or con
figures out the unspoken rules and agendas
is quick on the uptake

Forthright

is direct and open in all dealings
gets to the heart of the matter
acts without pretense or guile
is straightforward and no-nonsense
can be candid when necessary

Witty

has a delightful sense of humor
diffuses awkward situations with a funny remark
never takes anything too seriously
laughs at everything, including him or herself

Experienced

has seen and done it all
has strength due to life's hard knocks
is free of self-righteous judgments
has realistic expectations

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Queen of Swords can form a [pair](#) with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.
Example: for the Queen of Swords/Knight of Cups, go to [Queen-Knight] and [Swords-Cups]

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



- **INTELLECTUAL**
- **ANALYTICAL**
- **ARTICULATE**
- **JUST**
- **ETHICAL**

ACTIONS

Intellectual

is comfortable in the world of the mind
uses thought creatively
grasps information quickly and completely
inspires and challenges through ideas
ably carries out research
is knowledgeable

Analytical

cuts through confusion and mental fog
applies reason and logic
is talented with games and other mental challenges
easily breaks up complicated subjects
is adept at argument and debate
understands a problem quickly

Articulate

is adept at language and verbal skills
communicates ideas successfully
is a stimulating conversationalist
often serves as a group spokesperson
is a lucid writer and speaker

Just

renders honest, insightful judgments
understands and honors all sides of an issue
is concerned about truth and fairness
views situations with a dispassionate eye
is impartial and objective

Ethical

is a moral/ethical leader
encourages high standards
works against corruption and dishonesty
takes the high road in all dealings
lives by his or her highest principles

COURT CARD PAIRS

The King of Swords can form a [pair](#) with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the King of Swords/Knight of Cups, go to [King-Knight] and [Swords-Cups]

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.

PENTACLES---

ACE OF PENTACLES



- MATERIAL FORCE
- PROSPERITY
- PRACTICALITY
- TRUST

ACTIONS

using **material force**

focusing on concrete results
having a real-world impact
working with the physical
achieving tangible results
improving the body/health
becoming involved with nature

prospering

having the means to reach a goal
enjoying abundance
drawing to you what you need
flourishing
seeing efforts rewarded
increasing assets
experiencing growth

being **practical**

using common sense
getting down-to-earth
taking advantage of what works
being realistic

grounding yourself in the real world
accepting the tools at hand

proceeding with **trust**

believing in the good faith of others
feeling safe and protected
knowing you have total security
operating from a known position
having a support system
knowing the situation is stable
consolidating a firm base

ACE-ACE PAIRS

An Ace-Ace pair shows that a new spirit is entering your life.
It draws on the energy of the Ace of Pentacles:

--- **prosperity, abundance, trust, security, groundedness**

plus one of these:

--- **Ace of Wands:** creativity, excitement, adventure, courage, personal power

--- **Ace of Cups:** deep feelings, intimacy, attunement, compassion, love

--- **Ace of Swords:** intelligence, reason, justice, truth, clarity, perseverance

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.

See also [Lesson 13](#).

TWO OF PENTACLES



- **JUGGLING**
- **FLEXIBILITY**
- **FUN**

ACTIONS

juggling

keeping everything in balance
coping with demands
getting people to work together
making sure all areas are covered
having a lot of irons in the fire
moving forward smoothly
emphasizing all aspects equally

being flexible

adapting quickly
feeling free to try new approaches
going with the flow
refusing to let change throw you
opening to developments
seeing the possibilities
handling challenges
changing directions easily

having fun

doing something you enjoy
getting a kick out of life
taking time to play
feeling in high spirits
whistling while you work
seeing the humor in the situation

kicking back

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hierophant** - following the program, being conventional
- **Five of Wands** - being at cross-purposes, not working out
- **Four of Swords** - rest, quiet, low activity
- **Six of Swords**"> - the blues, feeling listless

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Temperance** - balance, finding the right mix
- **Four of Wands** - fun, excitement, parties

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



- **TEAMWORK**
- **PLANNING**
- **COMPETENCE**

ACTIONS

working as a **team**

coordinating with others
finding all the needed elements
functioning as a unit
getting the job done together
contributing to the group
cooperating
combining efforts

planning

organizing resources
following a schedule
operating in the know
nailing down the details
being an ant, not a grasshopper
reviewing beforehand
going over possible problems
being prepared

being **competent**

getting the job done
carrying out an assignment well

meeting your goals
proving your ability
achieving more than what's expected
knowing what to do and how to do it
being up to the job

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Five of Wands** - lack of teamwork, no cooperation
- **Seven of Wands** - opposition, dissension
- **Eight of Swords** - not feeling up to the job, lacking direction
- **Nine of Pentacles** - doing it yourself, not focusing on teamwork

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Hierophant** - working in a team or group
- **Temperance** - combining forces
- **Three of Wands** - planning, preparing for the future
- **Three of Cups** - working in a group

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



- **POSSESSIVENESS**
- **CONTROL**
- **BLOCKED CHANGE**

ACTIONS

wanting to **possess**

keeping what you have
getting your share
acquiring material goods
hanging on to someone
being greedy
penny-pinching
declaring ownership
saving

maintaining **control**

wanting to be in charge
denying weakness
directing
demanding compliance
insisting on your own way
imposing structure
setting limits and rules
creating order

blocking change

maintaining the status quo
wanting everything to stay the same
refusing to look at new approaches
stagnating
obstructing new developments
holding on to the present
resisting the flow

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Fool** - being spontaneous, impulsive
- **Empress** - openhearted, lavish
- **Wheel of Fortune** - movement, rapid changes
- **Hanged Man** - letting go, not trying to control

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Emperor** - control, structure, order
- **Chariot** - control
- **Two of Swords** - stalemate, blockage
- **Ten of Pentacles** - liking the status quo, conserving

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



- **HARD TIMES**
- **ILL HEALTH**
- **REJECTION**

ACTIONS

experiencing **hard times**

running into material troubles
losing a job or income
feeling insecure
going through a period of hardship
lacking what you need
struggling to make ends meet

suffering **ill health**

feeling run down and tired
refusing to take care of yourself
neglecting your body and its needs
feeling ragged around the edges
getting medical attention
abusing your body

being **rejected**

lacking support
having the door slammed in your face
taking an unpopular position
being ostracized
feeling excluded
standing alone
receiving disapproval

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Strength** - strength, stamina
- **Temperance** - good health
- **Sun** - vitality, strong constitution
- **Six of Wands** - acclaim, recognition
- **Seven of Pentacles** - material reward

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Tower** - hard times
- **Ten of Wands** - struggling to make ends meet, hard times
- **Five of Cups** - rejection, lack of support, loss of approval
- **Three of Swords** - rejection, separation, lack of support

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



HAVING/NOT HAVING:

- RESOURCES
- KNOWLEDGE
- POWER

ACTIONS

having/not having **resources**

giving/receiving
taking care of/being taken care of
sponsoring/being sponsored
supporting/being supported
offering/receiving a gift or reward
acquiring/not acquiring what you need

having/not having **knowledge**

teaching/learning
imparting/receiving information
becoming/finding a mentor
offering/taking advice
showing/being shown the ropes
knowing/not knowing a secret

having/not having **power**

leading/following
dominating/submitting
acting with authority/deference
asserting/denying your wishes
coercing/being coerced
doing all the talking/listening

OPPOSING CARDS and REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

Opposing and reinforcing cards do not work in the usual way with the Six of Pentacles because this card can mean either (or both) sides of the same issue - having or not having. The other cards in a reading can help you figure out which side applies for the moment in your case. The following cards also deal with this issue:

- **Empress** - abundance, physical comfort
- **World** - affluence, material fulfillment
- **Ten Wands** - struggling to make ends meet, hard times
- **Five Pentacles** - lack, not having
- **Seven Pentacles** - material reward, having
- **Ten Pentacles** - affluence, having

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



- ASSESSMENT
- REWARD
- DIRECTION CHANGE

ACTIONS

assessing

evaluating the status
reflecting on progress to date
reviewing what's been done
pausing to check results
making sure you're on course
finding out where you stand
taking stock

reaping a **reward**

finally seeing some results
enjoying the first fruits
getting returns on investments
receiving payoffs
being able to let up a bit
reaching a milestone

considering a **direction change**

weighing a different approach
pondering alternatives
thinking about change
opening to a new strategy
questioning your choices
standing at a crossroads

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Wheel of Fortune](#) - movement, action, direction change
- [Eight of Wands](#) - rapid action
- [Five of Pentacles](#) - lack of reward, hardship

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Empress](#) - material reward
- [Justice](#) - assessing where you are, deciding a future course
- [Judgement](#) - decision point
- [Four of Swords](#) - rest, thinking things over

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



- **DILIGENCE**
- **KNOWLEDGE**
- **DETAIL**

ACTIONS

showing **diligence**

making an effort
working hard
applying yourself totally
being absorbed in a project
dedicating yourself to a task
plugging away
producing steady results

increasing **knowledge**

taking a course
learning a new craft or skill
receiving training
pursuing greater understanding
researching
finding out the facts
increasing expertise

paying attention to **detail**

being painstaking
being extra careful
approaching a task methodically
getting down to the nitty-gritty
handling all the loose ends
checking and rechecking
noticing the fine points

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Four of Cups** - lacking interest, not caring, apathetic
- **Seven of Cups** - lazy, lacking drive

REINFORCING CARDS...some possibilities

- **Magician** - focus and concentration
- **Hierophant** - learning, studying
- **Nine of Wands** - keeping at it, persistence

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



- **DISCIPLINE**
- **SELF-RELIANCE**
- **REFINEMENT**

ACTIONS

being **disciplined**

- exercising self-control
- showing restraint
- reining in impulses
- sacrificing to reach a goal
- sticking to a program
- taking a step-by-step approach

relying on yourself

handling the situation alone
acting on your own
falling back on your own resources
doing it all by yourself
wanting to be alone
feeling sure your way is best

pursuing **refinement**

achieving a comfortable lifestyle
avoiding the coarse and unsavory
being tactful and diplomatic
seeking high-minded activities
enjoying the finer things of life
remembering to be gracious
enjoying leisure

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Empress](#) - earthy sensuality
- [Seven of Cups](#) - being undisciplined, self-indulgent
- [Three of Pentacles](#) - working in a team, doing with others

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- [Chariot](#) - self-control, discipline
- [Seven of Swords](#) - relying on yourself, acting on your own

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



- **AFFLUENCE**
- **PERMANENCE**
- **CONVENTION**

ACTIONS

enjoying **affluence**

having material abundance
being free from money problems
enjoying business success
feeling financially secure
seeing your ventures flourish
having a run of good fortune

seeking **permanence**

looking for a solution that will last
creating a lasting foundation
feeling secure as things are
being concerned with the long-term

having an orderly family life
moving beyond makeshift arrangements
nailing down the plan

following **convention**

staying within established guidelines
proceeding according to the rules
taking part in traditions
becoming part of the Establishment
being conservative
trusting in the tried-and-true
continuing in known patterns

OPPOSING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Two of Wands** - being original, avoiding convention
- **Three of Wands** - exploring, going into untested areas
- **Five of Pentacles** - hard times, material lack

REINFORCING CARDS: Some Possibilities

- **Empress** - affluence, luxury, physical comfort
- **Hierophant** - conforming, following rules, conservative
- **Lovers** - permanent unions, family ties
- **World** - affluence, material fulfillment
- **Four of Pentacles** - enjoying the status quo, conserving

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



- **HAVE AN EFFECT**
- **BE PRACTICAL**
- **BE PROSPEROUS**
- **BE TRUSTING/TRUSTWORTHY**

ACTIONS

Have an Effect

make your plans real
mold the physical world
use your body
experience nature
achieve tangible results
act on your dreams
get events in motion

Be Practical

take a realistic approach

apply the tools at hand
find a solution that works
use common sense
stop daydreaming
work with what you have
concentrate on what's effective

Be Prosperous

draw to you what you need
increase your means
grow and expand
enrich yourself
go out to meet success
seek abundance
become secure

Be Trusting/Trustworthy

accept that the solution is well in hand
have faith in others
accommodate uncertainty
accept others at their word
keep your word
prove yourself dependable
stick by your commitments
establish credibility

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Page of Pentacles can form a pair with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Page of Pentacles/King of Cups, go to [King-Page] and [Pentacles-Cups]

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



- UNWAVERING.....STUBBORN
- CAUTIOUS.....UNADVENTUROUS
- THOROUGH.....OBSESSIVE
- REALISTIC.....PESSIMISTIC
- HARDWORKING.....GRINDING

ACTIONS

Unwavering.....Stubborn

is dogged in pursuit of a goal.....is hardheaded and obstinate
will not quit.....digs into a position
stands firm against opposition.....must have his or her own way
stays fixed to a chosen course.....refuses to listen to reason
keeps true to personal convictions.....resists compromise

Cautious.....Unadventurous

checks and double-checks.....is too conservative
examines all angles beforehand.....misses chances by waiting
proceeds slowly and carefully.....is reluctant to try something new
prefers the safe, known path.....settles for safe, small gains
is prudent and careful.....is afraid of risking

Thorough.....Obsessive

takes care of every detail.....does not know when to quit
is meticulous.....is too picky
wraps up all loose ends.....must have everything just so
never leaves a job half done.....is inflexible and compulsive

is painstaking.....insists on perfection
completes anything started.....can't leave well enough alone

Realistic.....Pessimistic

is willing to look at the facts.....concentrates on what's wrong
faces the truth.....thinks others are dreamers
is not lured by false hopes.....sees a glass as half empty, not half full
assesses circumstances candidly.....takes the gloomy view
predicts problems in advance.....dooms a project from the start

Hard-Working.....Grinding

becomes dedicated to a task.....focuses too narrowly on work
is diligent and industrious.....can be humorless and grim
produces as much as two people.....sees playtime as wasteful
tackles any chore vigorously.....drives everyone too hard
is tireless and unflagging.....forgets life should be fun

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Knight of Pentacles can form a **pair** with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Knight of Pentacles/King of Cups, go to [King-Knight] and [Pentacles-Cups]

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



- **NURTURING**
- **BIGHEARTED**
- **DOWN-TO-EARTH**
- **RESOURCEFUL**
- **TRUSTWORTHY**

ACTIONS

Nurturing

gives love and support
creates a warm, secure environment
makes people feel better
responds to the natural world
has a green thumb
has a way with children and animals

Bighearted

will do any service for others
is a soft touch
always has an open door and welcoming smile
gives freely and abundantly
is warm, generous and unselfish

Down-to-Earth

handles problems matter-of-factly

allows others to be themselves
has no pretensions or affectations
takes a simple, sensible approach
appreciates all the senses

Resourceful

finds a use for whatever's at hand
is handy and versatile
makes a little go a long way
gets around every obstacle
comes up with what's needed

Trustworthy

keeps confidences and secrets
is loyal and steadfast
comes through in a pinch
keeps faith with others
is true to his or her word

COURT CARD PAIRS

The Queen of Pentacles can form a [pair](#) with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the Queen of Pentacles/King of Cups, go to [Queen-King] and [Pentacles-Cups]

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



- **ENTERPRISING**
- **ADEPT**
- **RELIABLE**
- **SUPPORTING**
- **STEADY**

ACTIONS

Enterprising

makes any venture successful
finds opportunity everywhere
attracts wealth
takes an idea and makes it work
is a natural manager and businessperson
has the Midas touch

Adept

is informed about practical matters
has a wide range of natural abilities
has quick reflexes
is skillful with his or her hands
handles any situation competently

Reliable

meets all commitments and promises
assumes responsibility
is dependable and unfailing
can be counted on in a crisis
serves as a rock for others to lean on

Supporting

encourages the accomplishments of others
readily jumps in to help
is a philanthropist
gives generously of time and attention
sponsors worthwhile projects

Steady

works toward a goal with firm resolve
avoids mood and behavior swings
has regular habits and activities
maintains a calm, even approach
is a stabilizing influence

COURT CARD PAIRS

The King of Pentacles can form a [pair](#) with any other court card. Compare the ranks and suits of the two cards to see what such a pair might mean.

Example: for the King of Pentacles/Knight of Cups, go to [King-Knight] and [Pentacles-Cups]

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.

Introduction to Position Pages

Here are the features you will find on the position pages:

Position Number and Picture

The position number is given with a small picture of the spread. The shaded area is where the position is located in the spread.

Keywords

Keywords are 4 phrases that capture the main themes of a position. They are listed at the top of the page. There is also a [spread position summary chart](#).

Meanings

For each keyword, there are other phrases describing the shades of meaning for that position.

Tarot Spreads

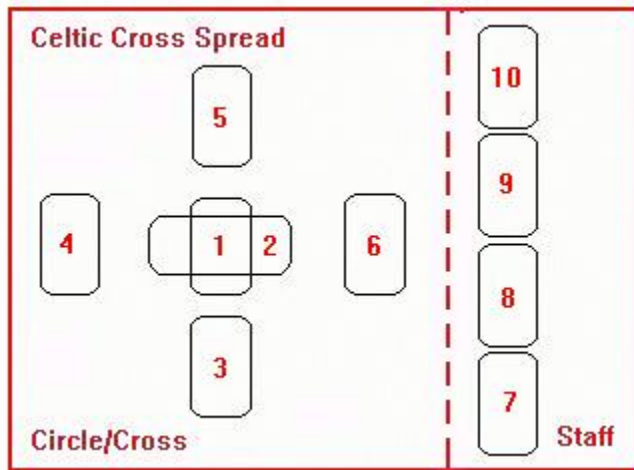
This section contains information on tarot spreads. (See [Lesson 4](#) for a definition of a spread).

I hope to add more spreads in the future. In the meantime, look at the [FAQ for tarot spreads](#).

[The Celtic Cross Spread](#)

[The Yin Yang Spread](#)

The Celtic Cross



Keyword Chart

Description

Positions

Interpretation

Example - Jill's Tale

KEYWORDS

CELTIC CROSS SPREAD

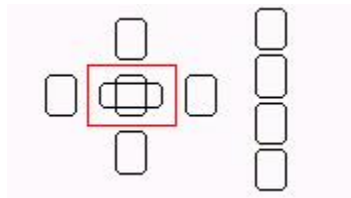
POSITION 1	POSITION 2	POSITION 3
Heart of the Matter Present Environment (Outer) Present Environment (Inner) Primary Factor	Oposing Factor Factor for Change Secondary Factor Reinforcing Factor	Root Cause Unconscious Influence Deeper Meaning Unknown Factor
POSITION 4	POSITION 5	POSITION 6
Past Receding Influence Resolved Factor Quality to Let Go	Attitudes and Beliefs Conscious Influence Goal or Purpose Alternate Future	Future Approaching Influence Unresolved Factor Quality to Embrace
POSITION 7	POSITION 8	POSITION 9
You as You Are You as You Could Be You as You Present Yourself You as You See Yourself	Outside Environment Another's Point of View Another's Expectations You as Others See You	Guidance Key Factor Hopes and Fears Overlooked Factor
	POSITION 10	

Description

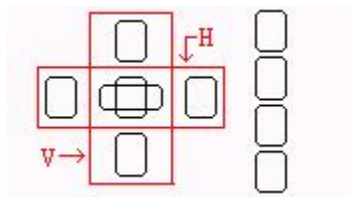
The Celtic Cross is probably the oldest and most popular pattern for reading the tarot. It has survived so long because the layout of the cards is simple, but powerful. A strong energy has built up around this spread due to its use by so many people over the years.

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.

Positions

This section contains pages of information about each of the ten positions in the Celtic Cross.

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:

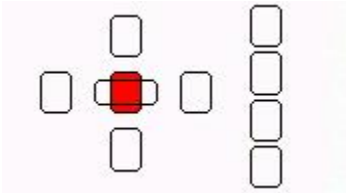
- Look at [Cards 7 and 8](#) to find out how more about the relationship between you and your environment.
- Look at [Card 10](#) - the projected outcome. How do you feel about it? What does it say to you?

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

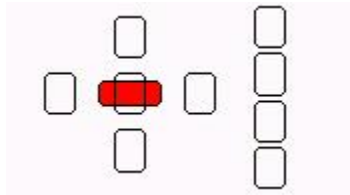
present environment (inner)

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

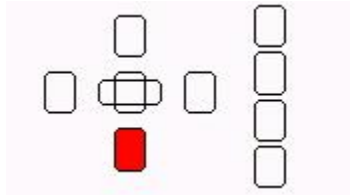
reinforcing factor

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

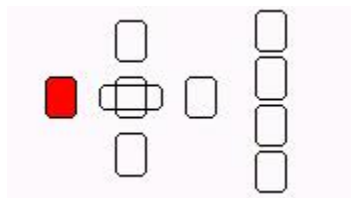
deeper meaning

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

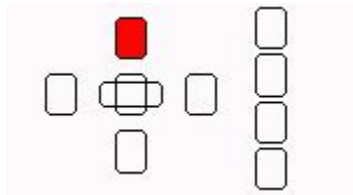
resolved factor

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

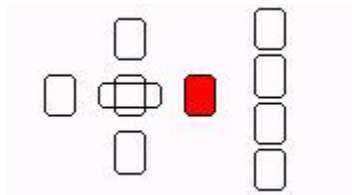
goal or purpose

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

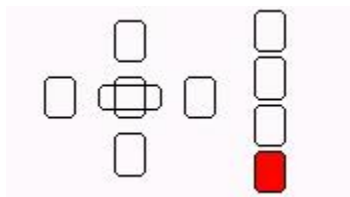
unresolved factor

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

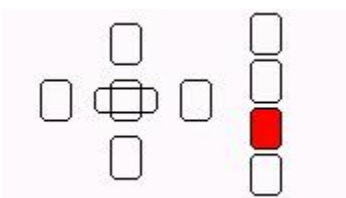
you as you present yourself

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 8



- **OUTSIDE ENVIRONMENT**

- **ANOTHER'S POINT OF VIEW**
- **ANOTHER'S EXPECTATIONS**
- **YOU AS OTHERS SEE YOU**

outside environment

"that which surrounds you" - traditional
 atmosphere
 emotional climate
 physical and social milieu
 setting for the situation
 playing field
 context in which you must operate

another's point of view

how another sees the situation
 the other person's side
 another slant on the problem
 different outlook
 an objective opinion

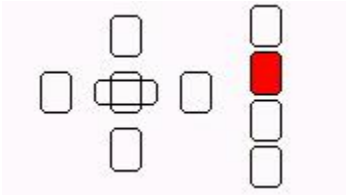
another's expectations

what others want from you
 demands placed on you
 what another thinks you should be or do
 claims of others on you
 outside restrictions imposed on you
 your assigned role

you as others see you

"how others see you" - traditional
 how you are coming across
 how you're being assessed
 public opinion about you
 impression you create
 effect you have on others

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)

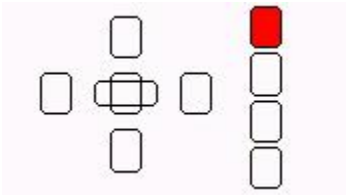
what you're afraid of
what you suspect is true
what you're avoiding
personal demon
what you long for
your dream
your ideal
your secret desire

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

Example

[Jill's Tale](#) is a series of three complete Celtic Cross readings.

Jill's Readings - Introduction

Jill's tale is a series of three readings I did for a friend over the course of a year. These readings illustrate how the tarot can reflect developments over time. Every reading is a snapshot of a given moment. As events unfold, the snapshots change, but there is a common thread that connects them. In this series about one woman's experience, you can see how new elements interact with those that endure. (Reverse cards were not used.)

In the interpretations, the **bold** phrases are meanings taken from the [card information pages](#). *Italic* phrases are taken from [position pages](#). I recommend laying out the cards selected so you can experience these readings too.

- [First Reading](#)
- [Second Reading](#)
- [Third Reading](#)

Jill's First Tarot Reading

This first reading took place in January 1990 as an [Open Reading](#) for "Jill." Jill had been adopted at eleven months. She wanted to learn all she could about her first year. For several months, she had been trying to gain information about her birth mother and, to a lesser extent, her birth father.

Jill tried to go through the agency that handled her adoption, but found that most of the information was closed to her. At the time of the reading, she had decided to pursue legal

options to gain access. These are the cards she drew:

Visual Layout

	Position									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cards Drawn	Page Pentacles	Knigh t Cups	Three of Swords	Quee n Cups	Six of Wand s	Eight of Swords	King Swords	Knight Pentacles	Five of Cups	Magicia n

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position page](#).

When these cards were laid down, both of us were immediately drawn to the Three of Swords - the *root cause* of the situation. This card perfectly symbolizes the **heartbreak** and **loneliness** Jill must have felt as a baby being abruptly separated from her birth parents and foster family. Note the three swords - Jill and her two parents - piercing their communal heart.

The **betrayal** meaning is also important. At some level, Jill feels betrayed by many people: her adoptive parents who deny her search, the agency who thwarts it, and her birth parents whom Jill may *unconsciously* resent for leaving her.

The many court cards suggest a need for balance. First, there is the central Cups/Pentacles pair (Cards 1 and 2). They symbolize the conflict between Jill's wish to fantasize about the future (Cups) and her need to be realistic (Pentacles). This theme will turn out to be a *primary focus* for Jill in the months to come.

The Page of Pentacles shows Jill's need to focus on **practical** matters in order to win her legal case and learn about her origins. The Knight of Cups shows her countertendency to dream **unrealistically** about what finding her birth mother will be like. He suggests that Jill lacks moderation in her emotions. As a Knight, he shows that her hopes are overly romantic.

This idea is reinforced by the Queen of Cups as Card 4. The word "mother" popped into my mind in relation to this card. It occurred to me that the Queen of Cups had a special meaning in this case. She is the dream mother Jill hopes to find; one who is completely **loving** and **tenderhearted**. This desire from the *past* is propelling Jill into her current situation.

Another important pair is the King of Swords as Card 7 and the Knight of Pentacles as Card 8. The King of Swords suggests that Jill *sees herself* as the agent of **honesty** and **justice** in this situation. She feels it is her right to learn the truth about her first year of life. Also, in the week before the reading, Jill had prepared a position paper for the court. She used the talents of the King of Swords - his keen **analytical ability**, **intellect** and **writing skills**.

The Knight of Pentacles suggests that *other people may be seeing* Jill as **too serious** and **driven**. Since they do not appreciate her intensity, they *judge* her as **too obsessed** to

compromise. Whether or not this view is justified, it is valuable information. If Jill alienates the agency and the legal system, she reduces her chances for success. The Knight of Pentacles hints that Jill should temper any appearance of **inflexibility** with a moderated, reasonable approach.

The Five of Cups as Card 9 is the *key to the whole situation*. It represents **loss**, beginning with the original loss of her birth parents. Now, Jill must be willing to let go of her dream mother so a true relationship can form with her actual birth mother, whoever she may be. She is also *afraid* that she may **lose** her court case.

The Eight of Swords suggests that some confusing moments *lie ahead*. There will be times when Jill feels **powerless** as she tries to balance her conflicting feelings. Also, outside forces may temporarily **restrict** her search.

On the other hand, the Six of Wands as Card 5 and the Magician as Card 10 could not be more positive. The Six of Wands shows the strength of Jill's *conscious belief* in her ability to overcome her legal obstacles and emerge **triumphant**. She knows she can achieve the victory *predicted* by the Magician. As the only major arcana card in the reading, the Magician shows the extra dimension of **power** waiting for Jill when she realizes her goal. If she can consolidate her inner strengths and accept her losses consciously, she will meet with great success.

Jill's Second Reading

In June 1990, I did an Other Reading about Jill and her situation. The events which had transpired were so dramatic that I felt drawn to see what the tarot would say about them.

In March, Jill met with a judge who was so convinced by the validity of her search that she ruled the adoption files should be opened. Through hard work, Jill located her birth parents within three weeks. Her father was reluctant to speak with her at first, but her mother welcomed her warmly after a surprise meeting in a distant city.

I truly felt that Jill had realized the positive outcome projected for her in the first reading. She trusted her abilities and accomplished all her goals in a very short time; however, this drama was about to take an unexpected turn.

Jill and her birth mother quickly formed a close relationship. While Jill was staying with her mother, her birth father reestablished contact. Her parents spoke to each other for the first time in over thirty years, and soon they renewed their original romantic relationship! It was at this time that I decided to do a reading. I wanted to understand the highly charged energy that surrounded this situation. The question I wrote was:

What is the nature and cause of the intertwining life dramas of Jill, her birth mother and her birth father?

Here are the cards I chose:

Visual Layout

	Position									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cards Drawn	Page Swords	Four of Swords	Five of Cups	Three of Pentacles	Queen of Cups	Four of Wands	Lovers	Moon	Nine of Wands	Five of Pentacles

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position page](#).

We again see a Page as Card 1. Jill's *situation* is still an *opportunity to act*, but this time she is facing a **challenge**. Jill must be **truthful** with herself and approach this situation with **fortitude** and **clarity of thought** (Swords).

The Four of Swords as Card 2 tells her how to *support* herself through this period. She must **examine her actions and motivations** scrupulously. She must also **nurture a still, quiet center** in herself so that she can ride this emotional roller coaster.

In Cards 3 and 5 we see the links between this reading and the first. In Card 5, we again see the "dream mother" - the Queen of Cups. It seems that Jill has not let this ideal go, but has instead placed it firmly *in her conscious mind*. She is *thinking and feeling about* her birth mother most of the time.

In January, the Five of Cups showed that transmuting emotional loss is a *key lesson* for Jill in this drama. Now, this card has moved to Card 3. The **regret** Jill feels about her birth has become lodged firmly in her *unconscious*. At a *deep level*, she is mourning the loss of her loved ones and the dream of what might have been. This reenactment of her birth is also triggering a fear that she will **lose** her parents again.

The Three of Pentacles as Card 4 suggests that the **teamwork** Jill has enjoyed with her birth parents may become *a thing of the past*. The position of the figures on this card is revealing. Two are together while the other stands alone. The solitary figure is half turned away as if she can't decide if she is part of the twosome or not. In studying this card, I noticed for the first time the tipped cup in the right hand of the lone figure. How clearly it echoes the overturned cups in the Five of Cups and the losses they represent!

The Four of Wands as Card 6 is cause for **celebration**. Whatever else Jill's situation may bring, it seems that the *near future* will be **exciting**.

Cards 7 and 8 carry extra weight because they are major arcana cards. They spell out an important conflict between Jill and her environment. *Jill's point of view* is the Lovers. She wants to forge the bonds of **love** and **relationship** that were denied her originally. She is also coming to terms with the fact that her parents are becoming lovers *literally*.

Unfortunately, *Jill's environment* is one of **fear** and **illusion**. The Moon symbolizes the **uncertainties** that arise when events are not what they seem and people do not mean what they say. In this case, there is no willful deceit, just lack of clarity. No one means any harm, but everyone is unsure of their real needs.

It appears that Jill is heading toward some **rejection** as pictured in the Five of Pentacles

(Card 10). The lack of unity showing up throughout this reading suggests that Jill could *find herself left out in the cold, shunned* as the odd person out.

Jill's strength lies with the **truth**. The Page of Swords (Card 1) reminds her of the central need for **clarity and honesty**. In the meantime, Jill should prepare for the worse. The Nine of Wands as Card 9 *tells her* she must be **defensive** and prepare to draw on her hidden reserves. There may be **celebration** in the *near future*, but there will also be hard times as Jill seeks to find her way with truth in her new relationships.

Jill's Third Reading

The third reading for Jill was held in her presence in November 1990. In July, Jill's birth father visited her mother, and the budding romance between the two blossomed. In August, Jill and her mother traveled to the distant state where her father lived. There were positive aspects to the trip, but the visit took a troubling turn toward the end. Jill experienced the rejection anticipated in the second reading when her father's door was literally slammed in her face one night. She was turned out onto the street when the tensions between them reached a climax.

Jill's mother never returned from that trip. She left her husband and all her belongings to move in with Jill's father. From that point on, Jill's interaction with the two was often tense. There were several dramatic, even frightening, occurrences that were very upsetting to Jill. At the time of the reading, she wanted very much to find out where this situation was heading. The question she wrote was:

How will my relationship with my birth mother and birth father develop in the future?

Here are the cards she drew:

Visual Layout

	Position									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cards Drawn	Eight of Wands	King Pentacles	Eight of Swords	Four of Wands	Nine of Wands	Death	Ten of Pentacles	Devil	Page Pentacles	Empress

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position page](#).

We can see that the energies of Jill's situation are still in evidence. There are four repeat cards. The Eight of Swords has moved from Card 6 (reading 1) to Card 3. The **restriction** that was in *the future* is now *the basis of the situation*. The emotional events of the past year have been so turbulent that Jill feels **powerless** at a *fundamental level*.

The Nine of Wands has moved from Card 9 (reading 2) to Card 5. This card was a warning to Jill to take care of herself and **prepare for the worst**. Well, she has certainly

started to *think along those lines!* Having been burned, she knows she has to be strong and **defensive** emotionally.

The Four of Wands has moved from Card 6 (reading 2) to Card 4. The **celebration** over the reunion *is fading*. The excitement of the good times has *moved through* Jill's life and is now *way behind her*.

Cards 7 and 8 show that *Jill's expectations* still do not match *her parents'*. Jill longs for a **secure, orderly** family life (Ten of Pentacles). She wants a solution that will **endure** - nothing more than the chance to experience the **ordinary routines** of a normal family.

Her parents, however, are locked into the **obsessive relationship** symbolized by the Devil. What Jill viewed as the Lovers in reading 2 is really the **bondage** of two souls who do not have enough self-understanding to create a love that includes their daughter.

Jill needs a resolution, and there are two cards that suggest it is coming. First is the Eight of Wands as Card 1. It shows that a **conclusion** is likely. Jill will be able to **complete unfinished business** if she takes **quick, decisive action**.

Death shows that an **ending** is approaching in the *near future*. Perhaps the three will suffer a **parting of the ways**. Maybe Jill will make a **transition** into a new kind of relationship with her parents.

The Empress as the *outcome* or *resolution* is a positive sign because it shows that the ideal of the Mother is the understanding awaiting Jill in this situation. The Empress is the archetype of **Mothering** - the ability to love, cherish and nurture despite all temptations away from that response. Jill felt this card also meant a refocusing on her role as a mother.

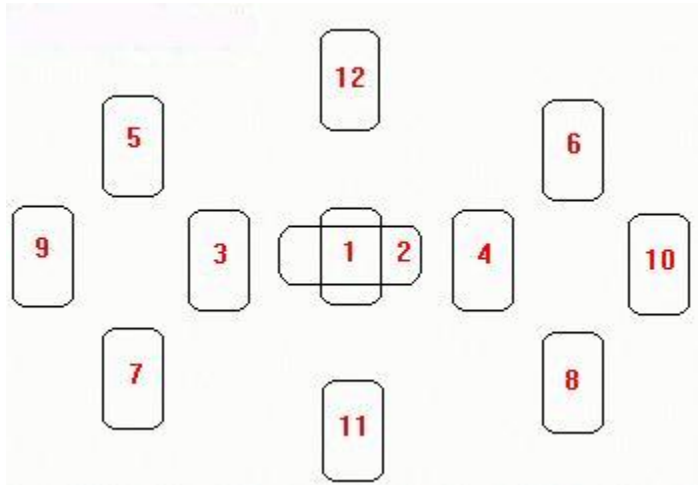
How is Jill to proceed if she wants to bring about this positive resolution? The key lies in the two Pentacles court cards. The Page as Card 9 is the fourth repeat card; it appeared first as Card 1 (reading 1). It reinforces the idea that *Jill's lesson* is about **trust** and the **ability to act on your dreams**.

Jill found her birth parents despite many formidable obstacles, but she discovered that the reality was not the same as her fantasy. She learned to trust herself and not rely on the support of others to see her through. The King of Pentacles as Card 2 tells Jill not to seek salvation through other people. She must develop within herself the mature (kingly) Pentacles qualities of **steadiness and dependability**.

The Page is *encouraging her* to claim her power and **find a solution that works**. She must release her dream of an ideal family once and for all so she can relate to her actual parents with all their faults and limitations.

Although this reading is about love and the ties that bind people from birth, there is not a single Cups card. These cards of love and emotion are totally absent. The lessons of love are not always easy. For Jill, they have taken the form of challenges that have drawn out her inner reserves and made her a stronger and wiser person.

YIN YANG SPREAD



Description

Positions

Interpretation

Example

Description

The Yin Yang spread sheds light on any situation where two parties do not see eye-to-eye on a given issue. These could be any two individuals, groups, organizations, teams or some combination. The parties disagree, but they are not necessarily hostile to each other. They are simply (!) stuck on a problem that needs resolution. The Yin Yang spread is based on the familiar circular symbol made up of two shapes - one black and one white - defined by a central line. In his translation of the [I Ching or Book of Changes](#), Richard Wilhelm states that

With this line, which in itself represents oneness, duality comes into the world, for the line at the same time posits an above and a below, a right and left, front and back - in a word, the world of the opposites.

In a conflict, there are two opposites that together form a whole which is the situation itself. The Yin Yang spread has two sections that correspond to the positions or sides of the conflict (call them Sides "A" and "B"). They mirror each other and are separated by a line of cards.

The Two Sides - Cards 3-10

In this spread, Cards 3-5-7-9 represent Side A, and Cards 4-6-8-10 represent Side B. When the Yin Yang spread is laid out, these cards are placed alternately - one on the left,

then one on the right - until all eight have been placed. Before you do a Yin Yang spread you should decide which person or group is Side A and which is Side B. If you are one of the parties, then you should be Side A.

The Dividing Line

The dividing line is where the opposing positions meet. Cards 1 and 2 define the heart of the matter - the fundamental conflict. These cards describe the dynamic between A and B that has created the specific problem. Card 11 holds the key to the conflict as a whole. It offers guidance to both parties on how to resolve their differences mutually. Card 12 is the projected outcome if matters continue as they are.

Positions

Many of the cards in the Yin Yang spread are similar to those in the [Celtic Cross spread](#). Links to these cards are given when appropriate.

- **Position 1** - factor contributing to the problem (see [Card 1](#))
- **Position 2** - factor contributing to the problem (see [Card 2](#))
- **Position 3** - official or public position for Side A. Impression A wants to make. How **Side B** perceives Side A.
- **Position 4** - official or public stance for Side B. Impression B wants to make. How **Side A** perceives Side B.
- **Position 5** - what Side A consciously thinks and feels. Side A's ideal outcome. (see [Card 5](#))
- **Position 6** - what Side B consciously thinks and feels. Side B's ideal outcome. (see [Card 5](#))
- **Position 7** - what Side A unconsciously thinks and feels. Deeper motivation. (see [Card 3](#))
- **Position 8** - what Side B unconsciously thinks and feels. Deeper motivation. (see [Card 3](#))
- **Position 9** - guidance for Side A. What A should do to reach **its** ideal. (see [Card 9](#))
- **Position 10** - guidance for Side B. What B should do to reach **its** ideal. (see [Card 9](#))
- **Position 11** - guidance for both Sides A and B. Key to understanding the conflict. How they might compromise. (see [Card 9](#))
- **Position 12** - outcome if situation continues as is. (see [Card 10](#))

Interpreting the Yin Yang Spread

Here is one possible approach to interpreting the Yin Yang spread:

Look at Cards 1 and 2 to get an idea of the basic conflict.

Examine each side separately so that you understand them. For Side A, look at Cards 3-5-7 first. For Side B, look at Cards 4-6-8. Consider these pairs:

- Cards 3+5 (and 4+6) to see how each side's public stand compares to its real agenda
- Cards 5+7 (and 6+8) to see how each side's conscious thoughts and feelings compare to its unconscious ones

Compare the two sides. Consider these pairs:

- Cards 3+4 to see how each side may view the other
- Cards 5+6 to see what both sides are really thinking and feeling
- Cards 7+8 to see what the deeper motivation is for each side

Compare the outcomes (cards 5, 6 and 12). Who will be happy, who will be disappointed?

- Card 12 - where the conflict is headed currently.
- Cards 5+12 - how Side A's ideal compares to the actual outcome.
- Cards 6+12 - how Side B's ideal compares to the actual outcome.

Consider the guidance. (Cards 9, 10 and 11). What does each side need to do to reach its goal and achieve a mutually satisfactory conclusion?

Example

[Sample Reading - Budget Crisis](#)

Sample Tarot Reading - Budget Crisis

In this reading I use a spread I developed to cover a very common situation. It occurred to me that so many problems fall into the same pattern - a disagreement or conflict between two people or groups. Before continuing, you might want to look at this [new spread](#) to understand how it works.

Right now, in the United States, there is a major conflict between President Clinton and the conservative members of Congress led by the Republicans in the House. The Republicans are insisting on a balanced budget to be achieved within 7 years. They have definite ideas on what needs to be done and how to measure success. President Clinton is willing to work toward balancing the budget, but refuses to OK the severe measures recommended by the Republicans. He also objects to the proposed accounting methods. He has vowed to veto any bill that is not acceptable.

To complicate matters, many parts of the government have been shutdown since December 15, 1995 because no resolution has been passed to provide funds for paying federal workers. Even though this is not directly related to the balanced budget conflict, it keeps the pressure on because House Republicans refuse to arrange for funds until they have an acceptable agreement. Nevertheless, Clinton has shown that he will not agree to any measure simply to end the shutdown.

So, early on January 2, 1996, I did a [Yin Yang Reading](#) based on the following statement of interest:

I am seeking insight into the conflict between House Republicans and the Clinton Administration. They disagree on how best to balance the budget and reopen the federal government so that furloughed workers can return to work.

Cards Chosen

	Position					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cards Drawn	<i>Temperance Reversed</i>	<i>9 Wands</i>	<i>Ace Cups</i>	<i>Page Wands</i>	<i>2 Cups</i>	<i>Hanged Man</i>
	Position					
	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cards Drawn	<i>10 Swords Reversed</i>	<i>5 Swords</i>	<i>8 Swords Reversed</i>	<i>Knight Swords</i>	<i>2 Wands</i>	<i>9 Swords</i>

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases stand for the meaning assigned to the card position. (See [Yin Yang spread](#) for position meanings.)

In this conflict, there are many people and groups involved, but I feel the two main parties are President Clinton (and his Administration) and the House Republicans. Clinton is key, of course, because he has the power of the veto. He also seems to represent the idea that fiscal responsibility is important, but not at all costs. The House Republicans stand at the opposite extreme because of the fervor of their commitment to conservative fiscal policies. (I'll try to keep my liberal bias at bay, but forgive me if it starts to rear its ugly head from time to time.)

Let's first consider the nature of this conflict as shown by Cards 1 and 2. At the center is

Temperance Reversed. I don't think I could come up with a better symbol of the *heart of this matter - the dominant factor*. In a sense, it is **not avoiding excess** that got us into this mess in the first place. If we had been more **moderate** during the 80s, we would not face such a budget problem now. As for the immediate conflict, however, Card 14 shows us that both sides are guilty of **not fostering cooperation, not combining forces and not recognizing all sides**. When **balance** is blocked, nothing can be accomplished.

The 9 of Wands is an interesting selection for Card 2 because it has two different meanings in this case - one discouraging, one hopeful. As the *opposing factor*, the 9 of Wands represents **defensiveness**. This conflict is lasting longer than it should because both parties are **wary** and **assuming ill will**. Both **remember past attacks** and don't quite feel they can trust the other side. However, the 9 of Wands also stands for **perseverance**. This could be the *factor for change* in this situation. Both parties do seem committed to **seeing it through to the end** and **persisting despite all setbacks**. They certainly are **keeping up the pace** - reluctantly or not.

With this as background, let's consider the two sides. Before laying out this spread, I decided to consider Clinton on the left (naturally!) and the House Republicans on the right. So, Clinton is represented by Cards 3-5-7-9. Card 3 represents Clinton's *public face - the image he wants to project*. When I saw the Ace of Cups, I gave a little start because this symbol of **love and emotional force** seems somehow out of place in a budget conflict. What could it mean? I decided that this card stands for Clinton's desire to be seen as **caring and sympathetic** toward those who will suffer the most under a harsh balanced budget. He wants to be viewed as the champion of the less privileged. Now the House Republicans see this as too much emphasis on **giving**.

Now what is Clinton *really thinking*? The 2 of Cups implies that he is sincere in his desire to work out this problem. He wants to **establish a partnership** with Congress and truly **heal their severed relationship**. He has **truce on his mind** and is *holding out the hope* that the two sides can resolve this conflict by **working together**. On the other hand, Clinton *unconsciously* is **not willing to sacrifice himself** to accomplish this partnership. The 10 of Swords Reversed as Card 7 shows that he is **not going to put his own interests last** and **let himself be walked on** by the Republicans. A deeper motivation may be that he does **not want to feel powerless**.

Now let's consider the Republicans - Cards 4-6-8-10. The Page of Wands as Card 4 shows us that the Republicans want *to be perceived* as those who are **willing to go in a new direction**. They feel this is their chance to **tackle this challenge, take assertive action** and **be a leader**. In their minds, no one until now has been willing to meet this problem head on. They *want others to know* they are the ones with the **courage and confidence** to do it.

At first glance, this would not appear to be consistent with the Hanged Man as Card 6. He usually stands for an accepting, vulnerable approach with little action, but perhaps here the less common meaning of this card applies - **reversal**. The Hanged Man suggests that the true hope of the Republicans is to **upend the old order**. (I think they would like to get a Democrat out of the White House.) They want to **turn the world around** and **overturn old priorities**. I also get the sense that the Republicans *see themselves* as

willing to **sacrifice** in order to see the changes they support put into effect.

However, based on Card 8, the Republicans do seem to have another *concealed agenda* - an *unacknowledged goal* that may or may not be *unconscious*. It seems that they are **going for the win-lose result** as shown by the 5 of Swords. This is not a particularly savory card as you will see if you read through the action phrases - **being insensitive, indulging in power plays, gloating, setting people against each other, choosing to battle**. The excitement of **discord** may be playing a role in this conflict.

So, what does it all mean? Let's look at the three cards that represent the *guidance* in this situation - the *keys to how to resolve this conflict successfully*. Clinton's is to be found in Card 9 - the 8 of Swords Reversed. This card reinforces Card 7. The 10 of Swords Reversed showed that Clinton has a deep need **not to feel powerless** in this situation. The 8 suggests that he should keep this thought as he negotiates. He should **not give in to feelings of persecution and limitation**, but instead feel confident in his understanding of what is happening. He should **not second guess the direction he has charted**, but pursue it with clarity.

For the Republicans, the Knight of Swords as Card 10 is their *key to success*. This Knight is **outspoken, knowledgeable and authoritative**. He knows what he's talking about and has done his homework. Unfortunately, he is also **domineering, critical and close-minded**. He **forces his position on others** and tends to **treat people as numbers**. I think we can safely say that these strengths and weaknesses describe the House Republicans fairly well. This Knight's approach may help them reach their goal, but that goal appears to be, in part, fomenting **discord**.

Card 1 (Temperance Reversed) told us that a failure to seek the middle ground is at the very center of this conflict. What is needed is to take the best of both sides (isn't it always?). On Clinton's side are the Cups - cards of **love, compassion and mercy**. These must be kept a part of the equation, and Clinton must keep his resolve to do so. On the Republican side is the ability to **analyze information** and crunch the numbers **knowledgeably**. They also have the **courage** of their convictions to push this effort forward, but they must stop **gloating** and begin to truly understand that we're all in this together. A balanced budget is not going to help if we're at each other's throats.

Card 11 - the 2 of Wands - suggests that **personal power** is the *key to understanding this situation*. Both sides want it; both sides are going to try to get it. Notice that even though this conflict is ostensibly about money, there is not a single Pentacles card. It is **power and influence** that is the real issue. Well ...OK. Both sides should acknowledge this fact and agree to share the power productively. The 2 of Wands also suggests that a **bold, original** approach may help. Perhaps both sides should **take a risk, abandon their old stale approaches** and use this conflict as an opportunity to forge a better working alliance.

A tall order, and the *outcome* (Card 12) does not look promising. The 9 of Swords predicts **worry, anxiety and sleepless nights**. It suggests that we will be **going over and over this issue** for a while. To me it also conveys a sense of **sadness and despair**. Many people are going to suffer because of this impasse. Both parties need to **persevere** (9 of Wands) in looking for a **compromise** (Temperance). Then, maybe, we can replace

anguish (9 of Swords) with **partnership** (2 of Cups).

BIAS - My conservative friends have told me in no uncertain terms that I have not really succeeded in "keeping my liberal bias at bay." On reexamining this reading, I see what they mean. I have painted the Republican point of view in a unnecessarily harsh light. Let me just say that I have tried to stick to the cards and their meanings as much as possible, but my choice of words may have been influenced (nice word) by my own feelings. I do admire the Republicans for their commitment to their ideals and their willingness to fight for them (as seen in the Page of Wands/Hanged Man). Both points of view have merit (isn't that always the case?). Let's just hope we can find a reasonable solution that works.

Some Sample Tarot Readings

Here are some sample readings I did to give you an idea of how the Tarot can shed light on general interest questions. In the interpretations, the **bold phrases** are meanings taken directly from the [information page](#) for the card. The *italic phrases* are taken from the [position page](#).

Readings

President Clinton/Monica Lewinsky - August 1998

An update on the Clinton/Monica Lewinsky situation.

President Clinton/Monica Lewinsky - February 1998

Can you give me insight into the relationship between President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky and the impact the investigation into this relationship will have on the presidency and world opinion?

Presidential Election 1996

What does the presidential election mean to the American people, and how will it likely unfold in the next 4-6 weeks?

Budget Crisis

I am seeking insight into the conflict between House Republicans and the Clinton Administration. They disagree on how best to balance the budget and reopen the federal government so that furloughed workers can return to work.

Bosnia

"How will the situation develop in Bosnia over the next 6 months and what are the prospects for a lasting peace there?"

Earth Changes

"Many have predicted that the next 5 years will be a time of great change, turmoil and opportunity. What is the meaning and purpose of these changes and how can each of us best prepare for them?"

O. J. Simpson

"What is the O. J. Simpson trial telling us, as Americans, about ourselves, our legal system and our society?"

Sample Tarot Reading President Clinton/Monica Lewinsky - Reading 1

In January 1998, it was reported that Monica Lewinsky, a former intern in the White House, may have had an affair with President Clinton. It was also alleged that President Clinton urged her to lie about the affair in her deposition for the Paula Jones suit against him. The President has emphatically denied any wrong-doing. On Wednesday morning, February 11, 1998, I decided to explore this situation in an Other Reading based on the following question:

Can you give me insight into the relationship between President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky and the impact the investigation into this relationship will have on the presidency and world opinion?

Cards Chosen -

Position 1 - Emperor Reversed

Position 2 - Queen of Pentacles

Position 3 - 7 of Pentacles

Position 4 - 7 of Wands Reversed

Position 5 - Star

Position 6 - 6 of Swords Reversed

Position 7 - 2 of Cups Reversed

Position 8 - 7 of Swords

Position 9 - 9 of Cups

Position 10 - Judgement

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position](#)

page.

In writing my question, I realized I was curious about two aspects of the situation. I wanted to know more about the actual relationship between the President and Miss Lewinsky, and also its larger implications. My question became rather long as I tried to fit in both these issues. Later, it dawned on me that the cards I drew address these two subjects at different levels that overlap and reinforce each other.

At the very *center of the reading*, is the President **toppled from his throne** (Emperor Reversed). [See below] In a sense, the President is a **father figure** for the nation - a **leader who sets direction and tone**. Now Clinton's **authority** has come into question, as shown by the reversal. The *factor that has led to this change* is Monica Lewinsky (the Queen of Pentacles). This Queen *crosses* the Emperor, literally and symbolically. The **description** of this card seems to fit Miss Lewinsky quite well.

At a different level, the Emperor Reversed shows that **justice is being obstructed** here in many different ways. Accepted **standards of behavior** have been ignored, and **the legal system** played with by all parties. The Queen of Pentacles is a symbol of the issue of **trust** that is involved *across the board*.

Complicating this situation for Clinton is the fact that he has a *reputation* for **changing his beliefs easily**. The 7 of Wands Reversed as Card 4 suggests that he is perceived as **lacking strong character**; the public has **little conviction** of his honesty because of troubles in *his past*.

Card 3 shows us that the *fundamental* approach of Clinton and his team is a practical one: to continually **check their status** and **ponder alternatives** (7 of Pentacles). This strategy is based on **finding out where Clinton stands** with the public and **adapting accordingly**. On *the surface* (Card 5), Clinton *hopes for harmony* and *strives to project openness* - the Star - but this card seems oddly out of place in this reading. Its purity and idealism is in sharp contrast to the pragmatism of the 7 of Pentacles.

At another level, these two cards suggest a way of operating that is so common in public life we don't even question it now. We assume that everyone **plots and schemes below the surface** (7 of Pentacles) while presenting an *official story* that is **sweetness and light** (Star).

This standoff is clearly shown in Cards 7 and 8. The 2 of Cups Reversed shows Clinton's *position or stance*: he **denies the relationship**. "There is **no twosome**," he claims, but is he believed? Does this card actually represent the *mask he shows the world*? It would seem that Clinton's denial is met with skepticism. *The public sees Clinton* as **denying a shameful secret, taking the easy way out, and letting someone else take the rap** (7 of Swords). In fact, the *entire atmosphere* of this situation reflects the energy of the 7 of Swords. There appears to be **lying** and **behind-the-scenes maneuvering** on everyone's part.

As *the truth of the matter* (Card 9), the 9 of Cups suggests that a sexual relationship did exist between these two. One meaning of this card is **sensual enjoyment**, often in the

sense of **pursuit of pleasure without regard to consequences**.

The 6 of Swords Reversed tells us that for the *near future*, the public will continue to avoid any **depressing feelings**. People do not want to deal with the **aftermath** of this situation; they just want the incident to go away. Clinton's support is high at the moment despite the allegations; however as Card 10, Judgement implies that a **Day of Reckoning is coming**. Everyone is going to have to **get off the fence** and **make some hard choices**. Not only Clinton, but many people and institutions will be **judged**.

Perhaps the President and Miss Lewinsky will be forgiven for any mistakes they may have made. The Judgement card also implies **absolution**. Indeed, the best *outcome* might be to use this situation as an opportunity to **assess and judge** our legal, political, and journalistic practices, not as an excuse for a witch hunt.

Emperor Toppled

I have been reworking many of the lessons for this course. In early December, I added this example to Lesson 17: "[The Emperor Reversed might show a powerful authority figure toppled from his "throne."](#) In October 1997, I wrote the following for [Exercise 16.1.6](#): "It does appear from the 7 of Swords that this politician was involved in something **shady** in the *past*. There is some **hidden dishonor**...." How striking that these cards showed up in this reading! Such odd connections and synchronicities are common in tarot work.

Absolution

On April 1, 1998, Judge Susan Webber Wright dismissed the Paula Jones case against President Clinton. It now seems that the Judgement card captures this development perfectly. It combines the two elements of a legal judgement being rendered **and** the resulting "absolution" for the President - at least for now. When I was interpreting this reading in February, I felt curiously drawn to the absolution outcome, but it didn't seem to fit with the other cards and the mood at the time, so I downplayed it in my own mind. This is a good example of how important it is to trust your intuitive impulses..even when they don't seem to make sense at the time. This also shows the value of reviewing old readings as new events occur. Each such review gives you the chance to add to your understanding of how the cards reflect reality *to you*.

Update

August 1998 - The absolution issue is certainly not settled! You may want to look over my [update reading](#) about this situation.

Sample Tarot Reading

President Clinton/Monica Lewinsky -

Reading 2

On August 18 1998, President Clinton admitted on national TV that he had in fact had an inappropriate relationship with Monica Lewinsky. Up until that time, the President had denied such a relationship (see the [February 1998 Sample Reading](#)). The night before the broadcast, I did an Other Reading to see what would happen during this address and afterward. I asked about the lesson in this matter for Clinton and the American people. (This interpretation was written on August 20, 1998.)

Cards Chosen -

Position 1 - King of Wands

Position 2 - 10 of Swords

Position 3 - Page of Swords

Position 4 - 6 of Pentacles

Position 5 - 3 of Swords

Position 6 - 8 of Pentacles Reversed

Position 7 - 4 of Wands

Position 8 - 10 of Wands

Position 9 - Star Reversed

Position 10 - 2 of Pentacles

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position page](#).

As I laid down these cards, I was struck by how clearly the meaning of each one presented itself, except for the two future cards in Positions 6 and 10. Let's consider the others first, then come back to these two.

Cards 1 and 2 show *the heart of the situation*. They capture the *essence of what is going on*. Here we see a **powerful, charismatic leader** (King of Wands) who has reached the **lowest point** of his career (10 of Swords). The King of Wands is someone who is **dynamic and forceful**. He prefers to **take chances when the stakes are high** and **confront opposition directly** rather than back down. Now, he is **facing his darkest hour**. The 10 of Swords implies that Clinton will **take this hit**, but he will also **deny his contribution** at some level. He **feels victimized** and **put upon**.

This is not an easy situation for Clinton. He is in **emotional pain** (3 of Swords). He feels **isolated from those he loves** and *knows* he has **let them down** and **broken his word**. This card shows how Clinton is *aware* that he has **betrayed others**. The three swords remind me of Clinton, his wife and daughter, and also the classic triangle created by an

affair.

Up to this point there has been a lot of **jockeying for power** between Clinton and the independent counsel Kenneth Starr (6 of Pentacles in Position 4). Each one has **tried to get the upper hand** - to **coerce the other into submission**. There has also been a lot of playing with information - **trying to keep and give away knowledge** in strategic ways.

Cards 7 shows *how Clinton views his dilemma, how he sees himself*. The 4 of Wands indicates that he is trying to **get out of an oppressive situation**. He wants to **escape these unhappy circumstances** and go on with his life in relative **freedom**. *The rest of the country sees the situation differently* (10 of Wands). *The American people want and expect* Clinton to **take the blame** and **assume responsibility**. They want him to **clean up this messy situation** and **hold himself accountable**.

The Page of Swords as Card 3 tells us very clearly *the source of the problem*. This card often stands for a **challenge** that holds powerful lessons relating to honesty and integrity. Many [action phrases](#) for this card fit: **stop deceit, speak directly, expose what is hidden, right a wrong, do what is right, face problems squarely** and **accept responsibility**. I think Clinton's challenge is personal, but it is also a symbolic wake-up call to all of us to reestablish accountability and honesty within our own lives and our nation. That is the *deeper message* in this reading.

The Star reversed in Position 9 is a *key card* and also a repeat from the [February reading](#). At that time, the Star was in Position 5 and represented Clinton's desire to **project openness and goodwill** - to give the **appearance of innocence**. Here the Star represents **inspiration, hope** and **faith**. Since it is reversed, the *truth of the matter* seems to be that Clinton's hopes have been dashed, and we have all **lost our faith**.

The 8 of Pentacles reversed (Card 6) and the 2 of Pentacles (Card 10) were not cards I expected. Their meaning seemed obscure to me. I spent a day or two thinking about them and finally arrived at a tentative conclusion. The 8 of Pentacles can stand for a **diligent focused effort** that is **painstaking** and **methodical**. Every "i" must be dotted and "t" crossed. Reversed, this card suggests that we *may want to reject this approach* in the *near future*. Few people care at this point to waste a lot of time and energy on unearthing all the **details** of this story. We know what we need to know and that's enough.

What we will have to do is create an environment that **keeps everything in balance** and **gets people working together** (2 of Pentacles). Countless forces are going to be pulling the nation in different directions, so we need to be **flexible** and **open to new ways of handling this challenge**. It would be easy to play out this situation in a rigid way, but alternatives exist. It may be too much to expect the process to be **fun** - another meaning of the 2 of Pentacles - but we will **ride it out better** if we keep the original offense in perspective. It would also be nice to get some Cups energy into this situation! Note that not one appears in this reading.

Is Clinton's lapse a world-shaking crime of major proportions? I have to say I don't think so. All the cards here are minor except for the reversed Star. We have indeed suffered a *major* loss of faith and inspiration which we will need to work hard to restore. But it is time to turn to more important matters.

Future cards

Sometimes the energies of a situation are so strong and sure that the direction of the future comes across clearly. There seems to be one obvious path. Although change is possible in any situation, it is not always likely! Other times energies are more diffuse and malleable - open to change. When the meaning of future cards is not obvious, it can mean that a single, most likely outcome has not yet declared itself.

Update

September 11, 1998 - As I sit here listening to the news about Starr's report to Congress with all the **details** of this situation, I realize that perhaps the 8 of Pentacles reversed had another meaning in this case. Clinton chose in his speech of August 18 **not to reveal the details of his affair...not to apply himself totally** to the task of explaining himself and his actions. Now, of course, these details are coming out, and, for better or worse, this matter is here to stay for a while. This interpretation fits better, but just didn't present itself to me at the time. Finding the meaning in a card is not always easy!

Sample Tarot Reading Presidential Election 1996

The election for president of the U.S. is only four weeks away. This election is to be decided between Bill Clinton (the Democratic incumbent), Bob Dole (the Republican challenger) and Ross Perot, the independent. Tonight (10/6/96) is the night of the first debate between the two main candidates, so there is a sense that we are entering the last lap of this race. I was tempted to ask the most obvious question, "Who will win the election?" but I decided to avoid this limited, either/or question and look at a larger issue. On October 5, 1996, I did a [Celtic Cross Reading](#) to consider the following:

What does the presidential election mean to the American people, and how will it likely unfold in the next 4-6 weeks?

Cards Chosen -

Position 1 - [Ace of Cups Reversed](#)

Position 2 - [2 of Pentacles](#)

Position 3 - [7 of Pentacles Reversed](#)

Position 4 - [5 of Swords](#)

Position 5 - [6 of Swords](#)

Position 6 - [Queen of Cups](#)

Position 7 - King of Swords

Position 8 - 10 of Pentacles

Position 9 - Page of Swords Reversed

Position 10 - Sun

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position page](#).

The meanings of some readings hit you right away. Bam! Others require a little more digging and thought. That is the case with this reading. There are some curious surprises in it that I'm not yet sure I completely understand. Let's see what they are.

Cards 3 and 5 tell us a great deal about the present state of mind of the American people concerning this election. Card 5 suggests that collectively we are rather **depressed** and apathetic. We have low *expectations for the future* and feel unenthusiastic about both of the candidates. Mainly we're *focused on* just **trying to get by** day-to-day, **keeping our heads above water**. We *believe* that the election won't make a big difference one way or the other. Who cares?

Card 3 reinforces this idea, but also adds a new understanding. The 7 of Pentacles Reversed suggests that at a *deep level* we do not really want to seriously **take stock** of our society and do something about changing it. We may say we want a **direction change** and maybe we actually believe it, but *unconsciously* we don't really have the energy or will to do what's required. Our *unrecognized motivation* is to leave things the way they are. Real change is just too scary and too demanding.

Card 8 is also important here because it shows us what we want as Americans - what *our expectations* are for the president. The 10 of Pentacles stands for the ideal *atmosphere* of a prosperous, growing economy. Our culture is essentially a commercial one...we're happy and contented when the business of our lives is **flourishing**. We seek the security and comfort of **affluence**. As a people, we are also basically **conservative**. We may say we want change, but that's not really the case. We only want change that will bring us back to the **prosperity** that we feel should be ours. (It is interesting that the 10 of Pentacles also shows us the current state of the American economy. *Objectively*, the economic news is fairly positive...even if we don't recognize that fact.)

So, given the listlessness of our interest in the election (6 of Swords) and our unconscious resistance to change (7 of Pentacles Reversed/10 of Pentacles), our projected choice becomes fairly clear - Bill Clinton. He is represented by the King of Swords as Card 7 - *what we think we should do* and *our approach to the problem*.

The King of Swords is an interesting example of how a personal association to a card impacts the interpretation of a reading. The King of Swords represents Bill Clinton to me because of an article I read in Time Magazine while waiting in a doctor's office several months ago. In this article, Nicolas Lemann identified 3 paths to success in America: the

[Lifers, Mandarins and Talents](#) with Dole, Clinton and Pat Buchanan representing these types respectively. While I was reading, I was struck by how closely the King of Pentacles, King of Swords and King of Wands correspond to these types. (Tarot ideas are never far from my mind.) I wondered how I could develop this interesting correlation and use it in my course. So, now, months later, I see the King of Swords in this reading and know that he represents Clinton. (And I get a chance to introduce this article in my course - an example of the ingenuity of the Inner Guide in meeting our needs.)

So far, we have learned where we as Americans stand and who our projected president will be. How will this play out in the next few weeks, and what does it mean? Let's look at the rest of the cards to find out. The 5 of Swords as Card 4 suggests that maybe, just maybe we have put **open discord, power plays** and other **dirty tricks** *behind us*. They certainly represent a *quality we can let go of* and maybe the candidates will GET the fact that the American people don't want negative campaigns and other nastiness.

I think what we do want is to **rid ourselves of negativity** as shown by the Ace of Cups in Position One. This card shows that there is the seed of a feeling in our society that we absolutely have to **establish a bond with each other** and reintroduce civility into public life. This is the *central issue* and *fundamental problem* we face in this election whether we know it or not. To put it in basic terms, we have to begin loving and forgiving each other. This may sound mushy, but bottom line, love is our only salvation. Unfortunately, right now this impulse is being blocked (reversed). Love in Politics - forget it. Not going to happen, but....the seed IS there. Can we take advantage of it and help it to grow. That's the question.

The Page of Swords Reversed hints that perhaps the answer is "No." As Card 9, he tells us that *the bottom line* is that we just don't have the **resolve** to **face our problems squarely**. Our candidates don't **speak directly, act ethically** or **embrace the truth**. And as our representatives, they remind us that we don't do these things either, or not often enough to make a difference. Pages tell us to take certain kinds of actions. We expect our leaders to act with honesty and justice, but we don't really support them when they do.

So, the prognosis would seem to be poor. We would expect more lies and little sense of connectedness to come out of this election, but amazingly, the future cards don't show this at all. The Queen of Cups as Card 6 in the *Near Future* is one that strikes me as completely unexpected and out-of-place. This Queen is the ultimate expression of an inner state of **love, sensitivity** and **caring**. She is the embodiment of the spirit reflected in the Ace of Cups. I see her appearance here as a unequivocal sign that this is the *quality we need to embrace* in our future. I can only hope too that she is a sign that her **gentle spirit** and **reverence for life** will become more and more evident in our political dialogue. Too impossible, you say? Maybe not.

There is another possibility as well - that a person or group with this Queen's focus will appear and help us go in this direction as a nation. I remember when I read the Time article I chuckled to myself because I saw that there was no candidate to represent the [King of Cups](#). It seems that wise, caring and compassionate leaders don't go into politics. Perhaps this Queen is telling us that this is a shame. Of course, it's too late to find such a candidate, but maybe the ones we have will wake up to this missing aspect of the

election.

In either case (or both) I think that this Queen is somehow the key to turning us around, and if we can incorporate her loving nature into our politics and economic life the result will be glorious - the Sun! **Vitality, health, greatness, success, confidence.** We couldn't ask for a better outcome, and it is within our grasp if we heed the signs and take the necessary measures. Maybe the future will be pretty good after all, despite our apathy . The secret is to **see the possibilities** and be ready to **change directions** even if it's challenging. The 2 of Pentacles as Card 2 - the *balancing factor* - tells us that we can **move forward smoothly** if we are **flexible** and **open to change**. By putting hostility behind us and embracing a more positive acceptance of each other, we can restore the meaning of this election and enjoy a very positive outcome.

Description of Three Paths to Success in the US

These descriptions are taken verbatim from a Time Magazine article dated 2/26/96 by Nicholas Lemann. Pages 42-44. I've added the King that I feel represents each type.

- **LIFERS**
Strengths: Loyal, tough, realistic, competent, has the common touch
Weaknesses: Cautious, can't see the forest for the trees, not temperamentally disposed toward radical change, can't articulate "new ideas" or passionate moral convictions
Famous Examples: Bob Dole, John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO, Pope John Paul II, Colin Powell, Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower, most corporate CEOs
Symbol: King of Pentacles
- **MANDARINS**
Strengths: Intelligent, well-educated, thinks conceptually, wants to create a moral order
Weaknesses: Risk-averse, clannish, conceited, doesn't understand Middle America, often serves merely as high-level advisor
Famous Examples: Bill and Hillary Clinton, Lamar Alexander, John Sununu, Robert Reich, Robert Rubin, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Cyrus Vance, Vernon Jordan
Symbol: King of Swords
- **TALENTS**
Strengths: Willingness to take risks, determination, single-mindedness, ability to come up with a "vision" and stick to it
Weaknesses: Moody, egomaniacal, generates more devotion at a distance than close up, Attracted to extreme or wacky theories
Famous Examples: Pat Buchanan, Madonna, Michael Jordan, Ronald and Nancy Reagan, Ross Perot, Oliver Stone, Louis Farrakhan
Symbol: King of Wands

Queen of Cups

October 30, 1996 - After the first debate, many commented that Dole and Clinton were surprisingly civil to each other. There was little name-calling and finger-pointing. Perhaps the Queen of Cups represented this period of good will that was to come in the near future. Now, of course, this "nice" period has been abandoned.

Sample Tarot Reading - Budget Crisis

In this reading I use a spread I developed to cover a very common situation. It occurred to me that so many problems fall into the same pattern - a disagreement or conflict between two people or groups. Before continuing, you might want to look at this [new spread](#) to understand how it works.

Right now, in the United States, there is a major conflict between President Clinton and the conservative members of Congress led by the Republicans in the House. The Republicans are insisting on a balanced budget to be achieved within 7 years. They have definite ideas on what needs to be done and how to measure success. President Clinton is willing to work toward balancing the budget, but refuses to OK the severe measures recommended by the Republicans. He also objects to the proposed accounting methods. He has vowed to veto any bill that is not acceptable.

To complicate matters, many parts of the government have been shutdown since December 15, 1995 because no resolution has been passed to provide funds for paying federal workers. Even though this is not directly related to the balanced budget conflict, it keeps the pressure on because House Republicans refuse to arrange for funds until they have an acceptable agreement. Nevertheless, Clinton has shown that he will not agree to any measure simply to end the shutdown.

So, early on January 2, 1996, I did a [Yin Yang Reading](#) based on the following statement of interest:

I am seeking insight into the conflict between House Republicans and the Clinton Administration. They disagree on how best to balance the budget and reopen the federal government so that furloughed workers can return to work.

Cards Chosen

	Position					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cards Drawn	Temperance Reversed	9 Wands	Ace Cups	Page Wands	2 Cups	Hanged Man
	Position					

	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cards Drawn	10 Swords Reversed	5 Swords	8 Swords Reversed	Knight Swords	2 Wands	9 Swords

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases stand for the meaning assigned to the card position. (See [Yin Yang spread](#) for position meanings.)

In this conflict, there are many people and groups involved, but I feel the two main parties are President Clinton (and his Administration) and the House Republicans. Clinton is key, of course, because he has the power of the veto. He also seems to represent the idea that fiscal responsibility is important, but not at all costs. The House Republicans stand at the opposite extreme because of the fervor of their commitment to conservative fiscal policies. (I'll try to keep my liberal bias at bay, but forgive me if it starts to rear its ugly head from time to time.)

Let's first consider the nature of this conflict as shown by Cards 1 and 2. At the center is Temperance Reversed. I don't think I could come up with a better symbol of the *heart of this matter - the dominant factor*. In a sense, it is **not avoiding excess** that got us into this mess in the first place. If we had been more **moderate** during the 80s, we would not face such a budget problem now. As for the immediate conflict, however, Card 14 shows us that both sides are guilty of **not fostering cooperation, not combining forces and not recognizing all sides**. When **balance** is blocked, nothing can be accomplished.

The 9 of Wands is an interesting selection for Card 2 because it has two different meanings in this case - one discouraging, one hopeful. As the *opposing factor*, the 9 of Wands represents **defensiveness**. This conflict is lasting longer than it should because both parties are **wary and assuming ill will**. Both **remember past attacks** and don't quite feel they can trust the other side. However, the 9 of Wands also stands for **perseverance**. This could be the *factor for change* in this situation. Both parties do seem committed to **seeing it through to the end and persisting despite all setbacks**. They certainly are **keeping up the pace** - reluctantly or not.

With this as background, let's consider the two sides. Before laying out this spread, I decided to consider Clinton on the left (naturally!) and the House Republicans on the right. So, Clinton is represented by Cards 3-5-7-9. Card 3 represents Clinton's *public face - the image he wants to project*. When I saw the Ace of Cups, I gave a little start because this symbol of **love and emotional force** seems somehow out of place in a budget conflict. What could it mean? I decided that this card stands for Clinton's desire to be seen as **caring and sympathetic** toward those who will suffer the most under a harsh balanced budget. He wants to be viewed as the champion of the less privileged. Now the House Republicans see this as too much emphasis on **giving**.

Now what is Clinton *really thinking*? The 2 of Cups implies that he is sincere in his desire to work out this problem. He wants to **establish a partnership** with Congress and truly **heal their severed relationship**. He has **truce on his mind** and is *holding out the hope* that the two sides can resolve this conflict by **working together**. On the other hand, Clinton *unconsciously* is **not willing to sacrifice himself** to accomplish this partnership.

The 10 of Swords Reversed as Card 7 shows that he is **not going to put his own interests last** and **let himself be walked on** by the Republicans. A deeper motivation may be that he does **not want to feel powerless**.

Now let's consider the Republicans - Cards 4-6-8-10. The Page of Wands as Card 4 shows us that the Republicans want *to be perceived* as those who are **willing to go in a new direction**. They feel this is their chance to **tackle this challenge, take assertive action and be a leader**. In their minds, no one until now has been willing to meet this problem head on. They *want others to know* they are the ones with the **courage and confidence** to do it.

At first glance, this would not appear to be consistent with the Hanged Man as Card 6. He usually stands for an accepting, vulnerable approach with little action, but perhaps here the less common meaning of this card applies - **reversal**. The Hanged Man suggests that the true hope of the Republicans is to **upend the old order**. (I think they would like to get a Democrat out of the White House.) They want to **turn the world around and overturn old priorities**. I also get the sense that the Republicans *see themselves* as willing to **sacrifice** in order to see the changes they support put into effect.

However, based on Card 8, the Republicans do seem to have another *concealed agenda* - an *unacknowledged goal* that may or may not be *unconscious*. It seems that they are **going for the win-lose result** as shown by the 5 of Swords. This is not a particularly savory card as you will see if you read through the action phrases - **being insensitive, indulging in power plays, gloating, setting people against each other, choosing to battle**. The excitement of **discord** may be playing a role in this conflict.

So, what does it all mean? Let's look at the three cards that represent the *guidance* in this situation - the *keys to how to resolve this conflict successfully*. Clinton's is to be found in Card 9 - the 8 of Swords Reversed. This card reinforces Card 7. The 10 of Swords Reversed showed that Clinton has a deep need **not to feel powerless** in this situation. The 8 suggests that he should keep this thought as he negotiates. He should **not give in to feelings of persecution and limitation**, but instead feel confident in his understanding of what is happening. He should **not second guess the direction he has charted**, but pursue it with clarity.

For the Republicans, the Knight of Swords as Card 10 is their *key to success*. This Knight is **outspoken, knowledgeable and authoritative**. He knows what he's talking about and has done his homework. Unfortunately, he is also **domineering, critical and close-minded**. He **forces his position on others** and tends to **treat people as numbers**. I think we can safely say that these strengths and weaknesses describe the House Republicans fairly well. This Knight's approach may help them reach their goal, but that goal appears to be, in part, fomenting **discord**.

Card 1 (Temperance Reversed) told us that a failure to seek the middle ground is at the very center of this conflict. What is needed is to take the best of both sides (isn't it always?). On Clinton's side are the Cups - cards of **love, compassion and mercy**. These must be kept a part of the equation, and Clinton must keep his resolve to do so. On the Republican side is the ability to **analyze information** and crunch the numbers **knowledgeably**. They also have the **courage** of their convictions to push this effort

forward, but they must stop **gloating** and begin to truly understand that we're all in this together. A balanced budget is not going to help if we're at each other's throats.

Card 11 - the 2 of Wands - suggests that **personal power** is the *key to understanding this situation*. Both sides want it; both sides are going to try to get it. Notice that even though this conflict is ostensibly about money, there is not a single Pentacles card. It is **power and influence** that is the real issue. Well ...OK. Both sides should acknowledge this fact and agree to share the power productively. The 2 of Wands also suggests that a **bold, original** approach may help. Perhaps both sides should **take a risk, abandon their old stale approaches** and use this conflict as an opportunity to forge a better working alliance.

A tall order, and the *outcome* (Card 12) does not look promising. The 9 of Swords predicts **worry, anxiety** and **sleepless nights**. It suggests that we will be **going over and over this issue** for a while. To me it also conveys a sense of **sadness and despair**. Many people are going to suffer because of this impasse. Both parties need to **persevere** (9 of Wands) in looking for a **compromise** (Temperance). Then, maybe, we can replace **anguish** (9 of Swords) with **partnership** (2 of Cups).

BIAS - My conservative friends have told me in no uncertain terms that I have not really succeeded in "keeping my liberal bias at bay." On reexamining this reading, I see what they mean. I have painted the Republican point of view in a unnecessarily harsh light. Let me just say that I have tried to stick to the cards and their meanings as much as possible, but my choice of words may have been influenced (nice word) by my own feelings. I do admire the Republicans for their commitment to their ideals and their willingness to fight for them (as seen in the Page of Wands/Hanged Man). Both points of view have merit (isn't that always the case?). Let's just hope we can find a reasonable solution that works.

Sample Tarot Reading - Bosnia

I decided to do this reading after Clinton announced plans to send troops to Bosnia. It seems to me that this decision and the Dayton peace agreement represent a turning point in the Balkan conflict, and I was curious to see what the cards might say about these developments.

Tensions have long been a problem in the Balkans because of the uneasy mix of ethnic groups - Serbs, Croats and Muslims. They reached a head when war broke out in June 1991 after the breakup of Yugoslavia. Rebel Serbs refused to recognize the new states and fought to expand their area of control, particularly in Bosnia. Now the warring parties have come to a tentative agreement, but there is still unrest. A multi-national peace implementation force is planning to move in to assure that the settlement is carried out successfully. (See [War in Bosnia Index](#) and [Bosnia Homepage](#).)

I decided to focus my question on the critical next six months, so on December 1, 1995, I

did a [Celtic Cross Reading](#) based on the following:

How will the situation develop in Bosnia over the next 6 months and what are the prospects for a lasting peace there?

Cards Chosen -

Position 1 - Page of Wands

Position 2 - World Reversed

Position 3 - Magician Reversed

Position 4 - 3 of Wands

Position 5 - 10 of Cups

Position 6 - Knight of Cups

Position 7 - 7 of Pentacles Reversed

Position 8 - 7 of Cups

Position 9 - Emperor Reversed

Position 10 - 3 of Cups Reversed

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position page](#).

This reading is a good example of how much we can learn by looking at the overall distribution of suits. Nine out of 10 cards are either Wands (2), Cups (4) or Major Arcana (3) which suggests that we are dealing with a situation heavily steeped in action and emotions. There is a noticeable lack of thought (not one Swords card) and practical grounding (one Pentacles card). Let's see how this plays out in the individual cards. (I use the term "we" below to mean all those involved in the Balkan conflict whether actively or as concerned witnesses.)

When I placed Card 1 - the Page of Wands - I felt an inner "Yes!" I saw this card as representing the golden opportunity we have created with this peace agreement. We finally **took assertive action, tackled the challenge, and came up with a solution.** Quite a positive sign for a card showing the *dominant characteristic (primary factor)* in a situation.

I think this is due to the changes in the tides of war that occurred over the *Past* year. This created an opening for negotiation that was seized by the parties involved. The 3 of Wands represents the **leadership** that was shown; the participants **looked for the possibilities and rallied their groups behind them**, even if only long enough to reach an agreement. Positive, strong Wands energy in action.

Unfortunately, Card 2 - the World Reversed - definitely puts a damper on things. As the *opposing factor*, it suggests that the **integration** of these warring groups is not going to be easy. Although there is a movement to **bring parts together** and **work in unison**, the **dynamic balance** necessary to achieve this goal is going to be blocked. I thought of the phrase "world community" when I placed this card. The world community is going to be frustrated in its attempts to intervene here. We may **not find a beautiful solution** immediately.

Why is this? Let's look at the strong Cups energy first. When I placed the 10 of Cups in Position 5, I was surprised at my reaction. Normally, I like this beautiful card, but somehow it struck a false note. In this context, it looked too pretty, too perfect. (Dancing children in Bosnia?) This card is our *ideal - what we hope to achieve* - but also our *illusion*. The 10 of Cups is our dream of **peace**, pure and simple; an **end to the hostilities** in a lasting **truce**. We're **seeking harmony within the "family"** of ethnic groups/countries. Of course we desire this, but it must be a robust hope. One based on reality as well as a sweet dream.

The Knight of Cups in Position 6 reinforces this understanding. He shows us that there is an excess of high emotion in this situation. The participants are all very **temperamental** and **moody** right now - **blowing hot and cold** and **ready to take offense at the least slight**. It is not a solid cease fire. In the *near future*, we will be marching into Bosnia, just as the Knight appears to be. We must do so with an awareness that the negative side of this Knight is in the air - a tendency to indulge in **unrealistic hopes** and **big ideas that come to nothing**.

By the time I placed the third Cups card - the 7 in Position 8 - I was not at all surprised to see this sign of **wishful thinking**. We are operating in an *emotional climate* that is based on **illusion**. Are we **kidding ourselves about the facts**? Do we **lack the focus and commitment** to release our **addictive patterns** of hostility? It's not wrong to hope for peace, of course, but this dream must be grounded in the knowledge that this is a tough problem without easy solutions. Note that these three Cups cards are all upright. Emotions are being given free rein here, and the only Pentacles card - the 7 in Position 7 - is reversed.

The 7 of Pentacles gives us a *sense of where we are* - what our *approach to the problem* is. To me, it says that perhaps we are not properly **assessing** the challenges. It is important to **take stock** of the true situation in order to make the necessary choices. The 7 of Pentacles can also indicate a **direction change**. We certainly have **opened to a new strategy**, but reversed, this card suggests that we are not **evaluating** the circumstances adequately. The figure on this card is clearly taking the time to pause and reflect. There is a need for this, but it is not being recognized.

Indeed, there are many energies being blocked in this situation (reversed cards). The Magician in Position 3 describes the *source of the problem*. It is the failure of the world community to **take meaningful action** up to now. We have had a *deep fear* of involvement and have avoided any **bold** moves toward intervention. We also lacked the **singleness of purpose** and **commitment** needed to take **effective action**.

The Emperor Reversed in Position 9 shows us the fundamental *truth of the matter*. We want **structure**; we want **rules**; we want to establish **law and order**, but it appears that for the next 6 months at least, this goal will not be easily obtained. The peacekeeping forces will probably have **difficulty establishing authority** and **gaining control**.

The sense I have about the Bosnia conflict based on this reading is that we have made an important first step toward peace by finally taking action, but there are many obstacles yet to overcome. Nevertheless, I feel that they are not insurmountable. After all, there are no Swords in this reading which suggests that the major armed conflicts and serious fighting may be behind us. The 3 of Cups Reversed as the *outcome* is disappointing, but not crushing. It holds out the promise that the parties involved will be able to **work as a unit** and **help each other** toward a **common goal** if only the blocks can be removed. (**Friendship** may be too much to hope for, however.). This card also implies that there will be some **resistance to relying on outside help** and **showing "hospitality"** to the peace-keeping forces. We should be prepared for this.

I think this reading describes what we can expect in the next half year - obstacles. The sense I get is of a tide of action running up against a wall of resistance. Unfortunately, the cards did not give us a clear idea of what can be done to remove these blocks. (Normally I try to include a request for guidance in my question, but I did not do that this time.) It does seem that we can improve our chances for success if we stay aware that emotions are running high and so pursue our mission with steadiness and realistic expectations. We must have persistence and confidence that we are moving in the right direction.

On December 2, I had the following thought:

****World**

As I was reading about the current problems in Sarajevo, I remembered that just a few years ago the Olympics were held there. The woman on the World reminds me of an Olympic runner carrying the baton at the games - a symbol of cooperation and harmony among nations. We **will** see this again in the Balkans, but maybe Sarajevo will be a major stumbling block before that can be realized.

** From December 5, these thoughts -

Knight of Cups

It occurred to me that the Knight of Cups could also represent the de facto mood of the American people. We are marching in to assist, but we also seem to be reluctant to "face this unpleasantness" and "get our hands dirty." We fear another Vietnam. (Not a criticism, must an observation.)

Reversed Cards

Note that reversed cards are not necessarily negative. When a card appears in a reading, even if reversed, it usually means that its energy is present in the situation somehow. It may be blocked or thwarted, but it **is** there. Here the energy of effective action (Magician), Order/Respect for the Law (Emperor) and Group Harmony (3 of Cups) are all potentially available. We just have to find the means to allow them free expression.

Sample Tarot Reading - Earth Changes

On October 30, 1995, I did a [Celtic Cross Reading](#) based on the following question:

Many have predicted that the next 5 years will be a time of great change, turmoil and opportunity. What is the meaning and purpose of these changes and how can each of us best prepare for them?

For years, even centuries, many prophets and seers have predicted that the closing years of the 20th Century will be turbulent. Similar descriptions of these "Earth Changes" come from the Native American tradition (especially the [Hopi](#)) and the writings of [Nostradamus](#), [Edgar Cayce](#) and many others. Also, [many who have had near-death experiences](#) report such visions of the future.

Last weekend, I attended a conference on these prophecies in Philadelphia where many of these ideas were shared and discussed. I left curious about what the Tarot would say about these times. Here is the result.

Cards Chosen -

Position 1 - Emperor

Position 2 - 8 of Wands

Position 3 - Sun Reversed

Position 4 - 3 of Cups Reversed

Position 5 - Page of Wands Reversed

Position 6 - Empress

Position 7 - 2 of Cups

Position 8 - 4 of Wands

Position 9 - Hierophant

Position 10 - Chariot Reversed

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position page](#).

When I look at the cards in this reading, I'm struck by their weight and solemnity. There are five Major Arcana cards, all in key positions. This reading conveys an important message; let's consider what it might be.

I see the key to this reading in the three cards at the center: the Emperor (Position 1), the 8 of Wands (Position 2) and the Empress (Position 6). The core tension is between the

Emperor and Empress - a [permanent opposing pair](#). These two represent the archetypal dynamic between the masculine and feminine, Man and Nature, Structure and Chaos.

When I placed the first card - always an exciting moment - I felt a jolt and recoiled slightly. The Emperor is such a stern, commanding figure. He makes me want to sit up straight and come to order - the Father is about to speak! In Position 1, *the dominant characteristic of the situation* - I believe he stands for the masculine **control-oriented** philosophy that so completely dominates modern civilization. His directive is to **create order out of chaos**, to **command** and to **bring security and comfort**. This mission has been the primary focus of mankind for countless generations - perhaps rightly so - but, unfortunately, without the balancing energy of the Empress.

The Empress represents **Mother Earth** and the **expansive, free-flowing abundance of the feminine**. The Empress **nourishes life, cherishes the world**, understands the **rhythms of Nature** and recognizes that the blessings of the Earth will always provide us with **more than enough** if we live in harmony.

Of course, the energies of the Emperor and the Empress are both necessary in life, but only in balance. Since we have focused too long on the Emperor, we are now faced with a resurrection of the Empress as a *quality we must embrace* in our *near future* - the next five years. In a perfectly natural process of rebirth, the Earth will begin changes that will correct the imbalance and create an opportunity for mankind to discover new ways to celebrate life.

The 8 of Wands in Position 2 (*balancing tendency*) suggests that events will happen **quickly**. We will all be **rushing into new areas**, as we get **caught up in change**. In a sense, all **elements are coming together** now to **conclude** one era as we usher in the next.

Why has this situation developed as it has? Do we understand what is happening? Three cards - all reversed - give us part of the answer. The Sun is an extremely powerful card; its energy is brilliant, magnificent and radiantly vital. To me, this is the energy we are meant to experience as souls enjoying life on Earth, but how rarely this happens. We block our energy in countless ways through **not honoring our true selves** and **not truly trusting our abilities**. Our "light" is hidden, so to speak. The Sun Reversed shows us the *source of the problem* and tells us **how little we understand the situation**. We are **not yet enlightened**, both mentally and spiritually.

The Page of Wands Reversed in Position 5 reinforces this idea as it shows us *what we accept as true consciously*. When you truly internalize the energy of the Sun, you naturally find **opportunities to be creative**. Life is **an adventure, full of promise**, but, with our source (the Sun) cut off, we cannot feel this way. In truth, we are meant to be co-creators with God on this beautiful planet, but we **lack courage and confidence in ourselves**. Especially in these crazy times, we feel confused and full of doubt.

The 3 of Cups Reversed in Position 4 gives us one more clue to our situation. This card shows three women dancing together in joy. In this reading, it suggests the feminine in its aspect of **shared love, free-flowing delight** and **communal celebration**. In the *past*, we have neglected and denied this approach to life. We embraced the Emperor and forgot

how to **be in the flow**. We severed our connection to the group to live individualistic lives - choosing competition and aggression.

These three reversed cards tell us that something is not as it should be. Clearly, it is time for a change. In our hearts, we know it, even if we fear it. At some level we realize we can't go on the way we are, and we want to find a way out. Fortunately, the Empress is returning. Her spirit will guide us in a new direction, but... how can we best prepare to receive her? Again, three cards show us the way.

First, the 2 of Cups in Position 7. This card tells us that it's very important that we reach out to others. We must **join together** and **see our commonalities**. For too long we have denied our connections (as we saw in the 3 of Cups Reversed). Now we must **declare peace** and, in a deeper sense, **bring together the opposites** (Emperor and Empress). This is *how we can be*, the *standards we must try to live up to*. We are going to need each other in the days to come.

Second, we must view the changes, not with fear, but from a *different point of view* (Position 8). We must welcome them with **celebration** and **excitement** (4 of Wands) for truly it is through these changes that we will **find our freedom** and **escape our unhappy circumstances**. Even though the next five years may be difficult, we must try to create an *atmosphere* of acceptance, recognizing that at last we are **breaking out of our oppressive situation**.

Finally, there is the Hierophant - a *key to how best to proceed* (Position 9). In a sense, the 2 of Cups and 4 of Wands are "happy" cards, easy to accept. The Hierophant is not so accessible. He is serious and awe-inspiring because of his **knowledge of the deeper mysteries**. He reminds us that powerful forces are at work here, and we must align ourselves with them if we are to endure. We need to **increase our understanding by studying and learning** so that we can appreciate what is happening and will happen. The Sun Reversed showed our lack of clarity; this needs to be corrected.

We also need to reestablish a spiritual base - some kind of **belief system** that we can trust and that will sustain us. Some of the answers we need may come if we seek the **hidden knowledge within ourselves** and in **esoteric studies**. Finally, we need to begin **working with others**. This idea is very important as it has been echoed in the 2 of Cups and the 3 of Cups Reversed (indicating a lack).

Now, what about the *outcome*? Before I laid down the tenth card, I hesitated. I wanted to see a warm, fuzzy card that would tell me everything was going to be OK, but this was not to be. Again we see a stern, commanding figure in a Major Arcana card. The Chariot is the third card (with the Emperor and Hierophant) in a heavy and solemn triad. These cards in key positions tell us very clearly that the next five-year period will not be light-hearted. Although the 2 of Cups and 4 of Wands encouraged us to view this period as positive and beneficial, these years will also be challenging and difficult.

The Chariot Reversed in Position 10 tells us that the **ego-based, self-assertive approach** to life based on "**hard control**" of ourselves and the Earth is not going to be acceptable any longer. It will be rejected. For too long we have sought to **dominate** everything around us, and we **will** change. This is the message of this card and the reading. Let us

welcome the change and look to the next century with hope and relief that we're putting our madness behind us.

**The following thoughts were added on November 2, 1995:

I have been mulling over the meaning of the Page of Wands Reversed and the Sun Reversed because somehow the interpretation of these cards did not seem complete to me. I felt satisfied with the other cards, but not these two. It then occurred to me that the Sun Reversed could also represent very literally a **reversal** of the Sun.

Many Earth Change prophecies include a prediction of a polar shift - a movement of the Earth to a new position vis a vis the Sun. Such a change would obviously result in a massive geophysical disruptions - earthquakes, flooding, new weather patterns, etc. The Sun Reversed may symbolize this "up-ending" of our physical environment. Also, some say that a period of darkness may result at this time because of the ash in the atmosphere from volcanic eruptions and other disturbances. Thus a literal **blocking of the Sun's energy**.

I believe the spiritual/psychology interpretation already given for this card is still valid, but, to me, the physical meaning feels right too, difficult as it may be to accept.

I also now see additional meaning in the Page of Wands Reversed. Position 5 sometimes shows us a *possible alternate future*. In this case, this card **reinforces the outcome - the Chariot Reversed. Both of these cards suggest a similar future - one in which the confident, masculine, action-oriented philosophy will be balanced by the Empress.

On 1/29/96, G.T.L. sent a message suggesting that the Hierophant really stands for someone who is "a conformist in the extreme...steeped in dogma & superstition even at his best." A good point. Perhaps, then, the Hierophant also implies that for too long we have continued blindly in our habitual paths, stuck in religious and scientific dogma that no longer serves us. We need to break free and find ways to connect that are more creative and life-enhancing.

Sample Tarot Reading - O. J. Simpson

On September 21, 1995, I did a [Celtic Cross Reading](#) based on the following question:

What is the O. J. Simpson trial telling us, as Americans, about ourselves, our legal system and our society?

O. J. Simpson is accused of murdering his ex-wife and her friend in June 1994. His trial has been an ongoing source of interest, conjecture and debate since its inception in January 1995. At the time of this reading, the trial is winding down with closing arguments due shortly.

I chose to do a reading about the O. J. Simpson trial because it has been such a riveting drama for the American people. In many ways, it captures the conflicts and uncertainties that are rampant in our society. What are these and what do they say about our current situation?

Cards Chosen -

Position 1 - 2 of Swords

Position 2 - 3 of Wands

Position 3 - Knight of Swords

Position 4 - 8 of Cups Reversed

Position 5 - Queen of Swords

Position 6 - 6 of Cups

Position 7 - 5 of Swords

Position 8 - Knight of Pentacles Reversed

Position 9 - King of Swords

Position 10 - Queen of Pentacles

Bold phrases are from the [information page](#) for the card, *italic* phrases from the [position page](#).

The first thing I noticed about this reading was the total dominance of the [Swords suit](#). There are five, including 3 of the 4 court cards - an unusual occurrence. The Swords are the suit of justice, fairness and integrity, so their presence makes sense; however, Swords also represent challenges and difficulties. Let's see what that means in this case.

[Card 1](#) represents the *central issue* or *fundamental problem*. The [2 of Swords](#) in this position is telling us that we are **avoiding the truth**. Many people have commented that this trial has become a farce. We are **refusing to consider the facts** and, instead, indulging in game-playing and media hype. We are also at an **impasse - stuck** in a mire of details and conflicts.

In a larger sense, the 2 of Swords suggests that we, as a society, are **choosing "not to know."** We sense there is something very wrong, but we don't want to look at it and deal with it honestly. **We are keeping each other at arm's length**; that is, adopting a cynical, **defensive posture** that separates us from each other. The woman on the 2 of Swords reminds me of the figure of Justice who is normally shown with a scale in one hand and a sword in the other. In this case, the scales are gone, and Justice is blind, not because she is impartial, but because she doesn't want to see the truth.

This central theme of avoiding the truth is reinforced by many cards in this reading. First, let's look at the *environment* of the trial as shown by the [Knight of Pentacles Reversed \(Card 8\)](#). In the upright position, this Knight represents **dogged persistence**, **meticulous concern for details**, and a **sloooow and careful methodology**. These are certainly features of this trial, but why then is the Knight reversed?

A reversed card sometimes means that its energy is only present in a pseudo-sense. The card's qualities appear to be in effect, but are not actually present or serving their intended purpose. I take this to mean that the **stubborn thoroughness** of this trial masks the lack of any real pursuit of truth.

The [Knight of Swords \(Card 3\)](#) also gives us some clues. He represents the *source of the problem*. Why did this murder happen in the first place, and why are we failing to deal with it appropriately? I feel the Knight is telling us that as a people we have become too **arrogant, judgmental and unfeeling**. We are becoming cold and insensitive - **treating people as numbers and cutting ourselves off from the softer impulses of tolerance and mercy**. We're more concerned with finger-pointing, than truth. I'm right - you're wrong. He did this - you did that. We really don't like each other very much.

Also, we can see that in the *Past (Card 4)* we have **not concentrated on what's important** in this trial and in our collective lives. We have **not looked sincerely for the answers** to our questions. The 8 of Cups Reversed suggests that we have **refused to consider the deeper meaning and purpose** of justice in regards to our fellow man.

Consider also the [Queen of Swords \(Card 5\)](#) - *how we view what is happening* and our *expectations for the future*. Not a pretty sight. The Queen of Swords is someone who is **honest and forthright**. She **faces the truth and plays by the rules**. She **gets to the heart of the matter quickly without pretense or guile**. Here, however, she is reversed. Her approach is blocked or rejected.

Is there anyone left who has faith in this trial? We know the process has gone seriously astray. We accept that it is full of **lies and deception** and we also accept that these are pervasive in our society as well. Look at our *self-image*, the [5 of Swords \(Card 7\)](#). We see ourselves as **selfish and dishonest**. We are **set against each other - choosing discord** over harmony. Collectively, we've **lost our moral compass** and have **sacrificed our integrity**. In the context of the trial, we're **looking for the win-lose result**, and, be assured, the **"winners" will gloat** when the verdict is in.

I have rarely seen such a consistently bleak and cynical picture as the one painted in this reading. I would be very discouraged if it were not for the rest of the cards which present a surprisingly positive hope for the future.

First, there is [Card 2](#) - a *factor for change*. The [3 of Wands](#) suggests that if we are to turn around our view of ourselves and our system, we need **leadership and foresight**. We need people who can **take the long view** - look beyond the self-serving actions of the moment to find new solutions. Each one of us needs to **set an example of what is possible**. The figure on the 2 of Swords refuses to see, while the figure on the 3 of Wands gazes far ahead; he is a **visionary**.

[Card 9](#) also shows us *a key factor*. We have already examined the Swords cards that describe the perversion of justice - the 2, the 5, the Knight and the Queen Reversed. Now, the [King of Swords](#) calls on us to rediscover the true spirit of the law. This King is a key representative of truth and justice in the Tarot. He suggests that we must return to highest principles in our legal system and our lives. Each of us must become **a moral/ethical leader** within our own sphere.

More is required, however. Look carefully at [Card 6 - the 6 of Cups](#). This card is riveting in the context of this reading. It shows two children sharing a gift of flowers. Even though they are surrounded by "Swords," their simple goodness and innocence shine forth. What a beautiful beacon of hope in the midst of gloom.

The 6 of Cups could suggest that Simpson **will be acquitted and found innocent** in the *near future*. That is one possibility. In a larger sense, though, I see this card as saying that we can and *should embrace* the love these two children demonstrate. We need to reestablish basic **good will toward one another** - to share what we have and remember **kindliness**. These ideas may seem simplistic, but they are powerful nonetheless. Remember that the Knight of Swords suggested that our problems are due in part to our **loss of fellow-feeling**.

The avowed goal of this trial is to determine Simpson's **innocence** or guilt, but, more generally, don't we all need to look at this theme in our own lives? We cannot let this trial draw us into further conflict and self-interest because that path will only lead to a further breakdown of our community. We can instead choose to **acquit ourselves** and move on.

The [Queen of Pentacles \(Card 10\)](#) presents an unexpected, but welcome *outcome*. She suggests that even though our society seems to be mired in selfishness and dishonesty, we can move toward a more positive environment. If we make the decision to **explore new approaches** (2 of Wands), **return to true ethical standards** (King of Swords) and **begin to care for one another again**, we can create a society that is **nurturing, secure and worthy of trust**.

The following thoughts were added on October 1, 1995:

****6 of Cups:** On 9/29, I was thinking about the striking quality of the 6 of Cups when I suddenly saw this card as an almost perfect [visual representation](#) of Nicole Simpson and Ronald Goldman before the murder. A boy/man is handing a girl/woman something (a pair of glasses?) while standing outside a house. There is an atmosphere of caring and friendship. Surrounding them is a "circle of knives" - all the Sword cards in positions 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9. This reading contains within itself the image of the crime.

****Knight of Swords:** As I was driving on 9/30, I started thinking again about this card. It struck me that it also represents Simpson himself in his relationship to his wife Nicole as presented by the prosecution during the trial. Certainly he **expected immediate compliance**, was **overbearing** and **insensitive**. Simpson's **domineering** pattern is the immediate *basis of the situation*. In a larger sense, he is a symbol of a greater *fundamental pattern* that leads to so much suffering in our world.

TAROT KEYWORDS
MAJOR ARCANA

FOOL (0)	MAGICIAN (1)	HIGH PRIESTESS (2)	EMPRESS (3)
Beginning Spontaneity Faith Apparent Folly	Action Conscious Awareness Concentration Power	NonAction Unconscious Awareness Potential Mystery	Motherhood Abundance Senses Nature
EMPEROR (4)	HIEROPHANT (5)	LOVERS (6)	CHARIOT (7)
Fatherhood Structure Authority Regulation	Education Belief Systems Conformity Group Identification	Relationship Sexuality Personal Beliefs Values	Victory Will Self-Assertion Hard Control
STRENGTH (8)	HERMIT (9)	WHEEL OF FORTUNE (10)	JUSTICE (11)
Strength Patience Compassion Soft Control	Introspection Searching Guidance Solitude	Destiny Turning Point Movement Personal Vision	Justice Responsibility Decision Cause and Effect
HANGED MAN (12)	DEATH (13)	TEMPERANCE (14)	DEVIL (15)
Letting Go Reversal Suspension Sacrifice	Ending Transition Elimination Inexorable Forces	Temperance Balance Health Combination	Bondage Materialism Ignorance Hopelessness
TOWER (16)	STAR (17)	MOON (18)	SUN (19)
Sudden Change Release Downfall Revelation	Hope Inspiration Generosity Serenity	Fear Illusion Imagination Bewilderment	Enlightenment Greatness Vitality Assurance
	JUDGEMENT (20)	WORLD (21)	
	Judgment Rebirth Inner Calling Absolution	Integration Accomplishment Involvement Fulfillment	

TAROT KEYWORDS
MINOR ARCANA --- ACE-TEN

	WANDS	CUPS	SWORDS	PENTACLES
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TAROT KEYWORDS

MINOR ARCANA --- COURT CARDS

	WANDS	CUPS	SWORDS	PENTACLES
PAGE	Be Creative Be Enthusiastic Be Courageous Be Confident	Be Emotional Be Intuitive Be Intimate Be Loving	Use Your Mind Be Truthful Be Just Have Fortitude	Have an Effect Be Practical Be Prosperous Be Trusting/Trustworthy
KNIGHT T Positive	Charming Self-Confident Daring Adventurous Passionate	Romantic Imaginative Sensitive Refined Introspective	Direct Authoritative Incisive Knowledgeable Logical	Unwavering Cautious Thorough Realistic Hardworking
KNIGHT T Negative	Superficial Cocky Foolhardy Restless Hot-Tempered	Overemotional Fanciful Temperamental Overrefined Introverted	Blunt Overbearing Cutting Opinionated Unfeeling	Stubborn Unadventurous Obsessive Pessimistic Grinding
QUEEN	Attractive Wholehearted Energetic Cheerful Self-Assured	Loving Tenderhearted Intuitive Psychic Spiritual	Honest Astute Forthright Witty Experienced	Nurturing Bighearted Down-to-Earth Resourceful Trustworthy
KING	Creative Inspiring Forceful Charismatic Bold	Wise Calm Diplomatic Caring Tolerant	Intellectual Analytical Articulate Just Ethical	Enterprising Adept Reliable Supporting Steady

KEYWORDS

CELTIC CROSS SPREAD

POSITION 1	POSITION 2	POSITION 3
Heart of the Matter Present Environment (Outer) Present Environment (Inner) Primary Factor	Opposing Factor Factor for Change Secondary Factor Reinforcing Factor	Root Cause Unconscious Influence Deeper Meaning Unknown Factor
POSITION 4	POSITION 5	POSITION 6
Past Receding Influence Resolved Factor Quality to Let Go	Attitudes and Beliefs Conscious Influence Goal or Purpose Alternate Future	Future Approaching Influence Unresolved Factor Quality to Embrace

Suit Qualities SWORDS	
Positive	Negative
analytical articulate astute authoritative clearheaded clever dignified direct discerning dispassionate equitable ethical evenhanded forthright frank honest honorable impartial incisive intellectual just keen-minded knowledgeable learned literate logical lucid magisterial mental moral objective observant outspoken penetrating perspicacious quick-witted rational reasonable smart trenchant truthful unbiased unprejudiced well-informed witty	abstruse aloof arrogant autocratic biting blunt cold condescending controlling cool critical cutting detached distant dogmatic domineering high-handed imperious insensitive intolerant judgmental opinionated overbearing overintellectualizing patronizing remote standoffish thoughtless unaffectionate unfeeling unresponsive unsparing

Suit Qualities PENTACLES		
Positive		Negative
able adept adroit assiduous		bullheaded colorless compulsive conventional

SUIT PAIR MEANINGS - PART 2

	CUPS	WANDS
PENTACLES	earth.....water matter.....spirit science.....religion down-to-earth.....dreamy reality.....fantasy tough.....delicate firm.....flexible hard.....soft practical.....romantic matter-of-fact.....sentimental work.....play	earth.....fire sedate.....showy old.....new security.....risk deliberate.....impetuous perspiration.....inspiration cautious.....adventurous conservative.....liberal traditional.....original detail.....big picture thorough.....cursory slow.....fast pessimistic.....optimistic

WANDS/WANDS	CUPS/CUPS	SWORDS/SWORDS	PENTACLES/PENTACLES
Double the fire energy	Double the water energy	Double the air energy	Double the earth energy

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The Rider-Waite tarot card images (.gif files) were scanned by Paul Caskey from the Rider-Waite deck in both big and small versions. He has graciously allowed me to use them on my website. Thanks, Paul. Please note that these images are reproduced in this

astral projection and the esoteric sciences.

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I'll be away from June 16 until June 26 and won't be able to fill orders during that time.
I'd be happy to help you when I get back.

Thanks!

Joan