

Tarot Class by Michele

Introduction to the Tarot

The course will be generic in nature and will not be keyed to any specific deck. As long as you are using a standard Tarot deck with a theme that does not cause the interpretations to stray too far from the traditional, you should be able to follow along. The interpretations given will be simple, basic and have been culled from many sources. They are by no means "the correct" interpretations, but they will be based on the "traditional" meanings. Feel free to jump in and share your insights and interpretations as well.

I will not go into a long history of the Tarot here, too many books are available which can discuss this topic much more intelligently than I can. The standard Tarot deck which is commonly in use today consists of 78 cards. They are divided into the Major Arcana, The Minor Arcana and the Court Cards. There are 22 Major Arcana or Trumps. These cards are thought to represent the Higher parts of our consciousness and have been linked with the Archetypes proposed by Jung, the 22 Letters of the Hebrew Alphabet, The paths of the Tree of Life, The I-Ching and the Runes among other things.

The Court Cards represent other people in our lives or aspects of our own personality. The Minor Arcana are concerned with the everyday, mundane affairs of day to day living such as work, school, the home and relationships. The Minors consist of four suits: Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles. In various decks these suits might be renamed, but they are usually recognizable.

Some of the more common alternate names are:

Wands - Staves

Cups - Vessels, Bowls

Swords - Crystals

Pentacles - Disks, Coins

Tarot can be used in several ways; as a means of divination, as a tool for self discovery, as an aid to spiritual or esoteric study or even as a game. Tarot is such a diverse medium that an entire lifetime can be devoted to it's study.

The Suits

There are 4 suits commonly found in Tarot decks: Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles. While they sometimes have different names, the idea behind them is usually the same. If you understand the meanings of the suits and have some knowledge of numbers, you can read the Minor Arcana of any deck of Tarot cards, or even playing cards for that matter.

I have included some basic astrological descriptions as the two systems, Astrology and Tarot seem to complement each other. I have also noticed that many Tarot readers incorporate their knowledge of astrology into their interpretations and readings and that many people who are interested in one are also interested in the other. Since a great many people have some knowledge of Astrology, I thought the descriptions might be helpful in understanding the ideas behind the suits.

Wands: Wands can be described as the suit having to do with energy, creativity, communication, action, passion, self improvement/self development, spirituality and enterprise. If you look at the suit of Wands in most decks you notice that most of the cards show some type of action in progress, or someone who appears to be reviewing or enjoying the results obtained from a recently completed action. Action and energy are two key words to this suit. Wands are usually associated with the element of fire. If you know a little of astrology, think of the personality attributes of the fire signs, the forceful Aries, the flamboyant Leo and the honest and enthusiastic Sagittarius. Additional attributes include:

Direction - South

Season - Spring (Vernal Equinox)

Masculine/Feminine - Masculine

Cups: Cups are associated with the emotions, the subconscious, relationships and intuitive or psychic abilities. Most decks try to convey emotions in this suit; happiness, love, boredom, disappointment and dejection are usually represented and easily identified. This suit is associated with the element of water and like water can be calm and serene, or turbulent and rough. Astrologically, the nurturing Cancer personality, the depth of

the Scorpio and the intuitive, dreamy Pisces could be applied.

Additional attributes:

Direction - East

Season - Summer (Summer Solstice)

Masculine/Feminine - Feminine

Swords: Swords are the suit of mental activity, rational thinking, decisions, and intellectual pursuit. Because much of the turmoil in our lives can be attributed to our thoughts, this suit often depicts conflict and struggle as well. Looking at this suit in most decks, one finds some of the more negative cards depicting nightmares, craftiness, pain and restriction. Swords are usually associated with the element of air. Astrologically one can think of the Libran desire for balance, the contradictions inherent in the Aquarian personality, and the Gemini's thirst for intellectual stimulation. Additional attributes:

Direction - West

Season - Autumn (Autumnal Equinox)

Masculine/Feminine - Masculine

Pentacles: Pentacles are the suit associated with work, money, crafts, the home, the physical body. Looking at this suit, one sees craftsman at work, business being conducted, the physical comfort and security of having material things and the physical discomfort and pain of not having them. Pentacles are associated with the element earth. Astrologically one can think of Taurean practicality and love of home, the Capricorn's financial and business prowess and the Virgo's industry, skill and productivity. Additional attributes:

Direction - South

Season - Winter (Winter Solstice)

Masculine/Feminine - Feminine

Swords and Wands are usually associated with Air and Fire respectively, however some writers have reversed these attributions assigning Fire to Swords and Air to Wands. Emily Peach does this in "The Tarot Workbook" and Ellen Cannon Reed does as well in her deck, "The Witches Tarot" and her two books "The Goddess and the Tree" and "The Witches Tarot". Arguments can be made for both points of view and you should choose whichever attributions seems to fit best to you. The same is true of the directions assigned. An alternative system for directions taken from Astrology is: Wands - East, Cups - North, Swords - West and Earth - South.

Tarot Notebook

Now is the time to make yourself a Tarot Notebook. Any notebook will do. Personally, I like a 3 ring binder, which allows me to expand as needed. As we go through the course, write down what you have learned. For instance in today's lesson we went over the suits, Set aside a page in your notebook for each of the suits and write a brief synopsis of what we covered here for each. Add any thoughts you might have or any insights from Tarot books you are using. Should additional ideas or information come to you in the future, go back and add them as well. Over time, this notebook will become a valuable resource. It will document your progress over time and be a source and record of interpretations.

Aces

Aces represent the energy of each suit in its purest and most concentrated form. They also represent beginnings, ideas, commencement, opportunity, a fresh start, inspiration, a gift.

Applying the above to what we have covered in the suits gives you the meaning of each ace.

- ?? Ace of Wands - New energy, a burst of creativity, beginning a self improvement program, the start of a spiritual quest.*
- ?? Ace of Cups - A new relationship (romantic or otherwise), awakening intuition or psychic powers, the start of happier times.*

?? *Ace of Swords - New ideas, a new intellectual interest or hobby, strength, power.*

?? *Ace of Pentacles - Beginnings on the physical plane, a new job, a new home, the start of a period of prosperity.*

Timing

Many readers use Aces as timing cards. If a question of timing comes up during a reading, write it down and put it aside. After the main reading is done, have the querent re-shuffle and cut the deck, then deal cards face up until you get an Ace. The suit of the Ace will indicate the time that the event is most likely to occur. Using the seasons from the message on suits we have:

?? *Wands - Spring*

?? *Cups - Summer*

?? *Swords - Fall*

?? *Pentacles - Winter*

Yes/No

A method for answering yes/no questions uses Aces as well. Shuffle and cut the deck while concentrating on the question. Turn one stack over periodically while shuffling in order to get reversals. Deal the cards until you get an Ace then stop. Deal a new pile until you get another Ace. Deal one last time until you get a third Ace. The direction of the Aces will give you your answer. If two or more are upright, the answer is yes. If two or more are reversed, the answer is no. Personally, I rarely use Tarot to answer yes/no questions. I believe that the answer will be correct for the conditions at that time, but as conditions change, the answer may change as well. I prefer to ask questions such as "what can I do to enhance my chances of...." or "What am I doing that is preventing me from..." . This type of question gives me some control over events rather than allowing things to just happen to me.

Twos

Twos represent duality, balance, choices, interaction, polarity, developing.

- ?? Two of Wands - A choice or balance in applying energy. The first steps have been completed, and one must decide where to apply energy from this point on. Control.*
- ?? Two of Cups - Emotional interactions. Balance between opposites. Love.*
- ?? Two of Swords - Peace (hard won), a respite from conflict, a tenuous balance. Compromise.*
- ?? Two of Pentacles - Balance in practical matters; juggling several tasks on the physical plane (home, work, hobbies, recreation, etc.). Change.*

Tarot Progression

Some readers see a progression through the Minor Arcana with Aces representing a beginning, twos further development, threes as planning, fours as practical attainment, fives as unbalance, sixes as harmony, sevens as choices, eights as changes and nines as conclusions. Tens are the ultimate fulfillment of the suit and represent a transition which leads back to the Ace. Various authors have assigned different progressions to each number. Some are based on numerology and some are not. If you are familiar with numerology, you can apply some of its concepts to Tarot as well.

A Tarot exercise

At this point we have covered 8 cards. Pull those cards from the deck, mix them thoroughly and deal them in face down in four sets of two. Do not think of a question, this exercise is for practice only. The first card in each pair represents the past and the second, the present. Now turn over the first pair and interpret the cards together.

Example: Two of Swords, Ace of Pentacles - You have just completed a fairly tumultuous period. Things were difficult, but

you worked them out, achieved a balance and are about to begin a period of material prosperity.

Do the same with the other three pairs. This exercise is designed to get you used to the idea of reading groups of cards right away. It should help you to see relationships between cards rather than viewing each card in a vacuum. If you have time, you should do this exercise every day, adding the new cards you have learned to the group you use. If you like, remix and try it again, you can't do this one too often.

Threes

Threes represent creation, abundance, group activity, building, planning, synthesis.

?? Three of Wands - planning, reflecting, aspiration

?? Three of Cups - Celebration, happiness, joy, sharing, abundance, friendship

?? Three of Swords - Sadness, heartbreak, emotional pain, sorrow

?? Three of Pentacles - creating, bringing into physical reality, work.

Centering

Most readers do some type of centering exercise before doing a reading. These exercises can be elaborate or very simple. The method I use is in the latter category. Before doing a reading I always shuffle the deck. While shuffling I ask God/Goddess to guide my words and allow me to assist the querent (or myself). Some people like to create an atmosphere by lighting candles, burning incense or doing a short meditation before reading. Whatever your belief system, it is best to approach the cards from a feeling of calm, rather than in a harried, distracted way. Pray, cast a circle, invoke the God/Goddess, meditate, do deep breathing exercises, or do whatever it is you do to get in touch with your center.

Tarot Exercise

Do the same exercise as yesterday, adding the threes and making a third column for the future. Someone here in the forum once recommended that you do all readings aloud, even those done for yourself. I think that is an excellent suggestion and recommend you do the exercises aloud as well. It is one thing to recognize the meaning of a card in your mind and an entirely different thing to articulate that meaning to another.

Reversals

In case you haven't noticed, I do not use reversals, however many people do. You can take a book and learn it's

interpretations of reversals or you can take an easier approach and chose one of the methods of reading them listed below:

- 1. A block in the upright energy of the card*
- 2. A delay*
- 3. A subconscious wish or desire*
- 4. A hidden or surreptitious energy*
- 5. A weakened version of the upright meaning*

The opposite of the upright meaning (this is the method most often seen in books, however there are exceptions. Some cards have similar meanings whether upright or reversed. Refer to the book for your deck when using this method to learn which cards it does not apply to).

There are many other methods for reading them as well. The use of reversals is not as prevalent as it once was. Many newer beginner books do not include them at all, however you must do what you feel most comfortable with. Arguments can be made for both sides. If you decide not to use them, bear in mind that each card has a full spectrum of meanings. For example, the three of cups can mean merriment and celebration, but carried to excess could mean drunkenness, or excessive partying.

Fours

Fours represent stability, structure, order and practical attainment.

?? Four of Wands - rites, inspiration, freedom, ceremony, harmony, peace

?? Four of Cups - Boredom, apathy, discontent, dissatisfaction, withdrawal, meditation

?? Four of Swords - regrouping, introspection, illness, time out, rest

?? Four of Pentacles - holding on to ones possessions, thrift, a reluctance to let go, insecurity, selfishness.

Undercurrents

This is a reading method I learned from another reader.

Whenever she does a reading, she throws whatever spread she is going to use and then looks at the card left on the bottom of the deck. She calls this card the undercurrent. The undercurrent is what underlies the question. It is the atmosphere in which events are taking place. For example if the querent had a question about a relationship and the 4 of pentacles was on the bottom of the deck, it could be interpreted as someone in the relationship not wanting to let go. Perhaps for financial reasons (very common), for selfish reasons, or for security reasons. It could be an unconscious or unexpressed desire which the querent him/herself is not even aware of. Depending on the rest of the cards thrown, letting go might be the best thing. I find the concept useful and use it in my daily readings.

Reading for Yourself

Many Tarot books and readers warn against reading for yourself. The common thread in this argument is that it is difficult to be objective and that one tends to see what one wants to see rather than what is really there. That is a real danger, however I think reading for yourself can be most helpful, particular in seeing options that you might not have come to on your own. You have to keep all possible meanings in mind when reading for yourself and then decide which one fits best realistically, not hopefully. Reading for yourself can help

you change the outcome of a situation, by showing you where things are headed presently and what you can do to change them.

Daily Readings

I try to read for myself everyday. It gives me an idea of where the day is headed and how things are going with me on an intellectual, physical and spiritual level. I usually use one of the two following spreads, depending on my mood.

Mind, Body, Spirit

I spread three cards from left to right, with the first representing my mental state, the second my physical state and the third my spiritual state.

Past, Present, Future

Again I spread three cards from left to right with the first representing the recent past or events that have lead up to the present, the second card representing today, and the third card representing the near future. I sometimes use this spread in reference to a problem I am working on or a project or situation I am dealing with, whether at work or at home. It is short and to the point. If I feel I need additional information, I just deal more cards on the cards to clarify the one that is giving me difficulty. For both spreads I also look at the undercurrent card.

Fives

Fives represent change, unbalance, challenge , struggle, conflict, breakdown.

- ?? Five of Wands - Competition, struggle, challenge to authority or established order*
- ?? Five of Cups - Disappointment, loss, failing to see the good in a situation*
- ?? Five of Swords - hurt, bruised ego, a small defeat, loss or embarrassment.*
- ?? Five of Pentacles - Worry, fear, financial loss, difficult times, trouble, insecurity*

Tarot Exercise

All readers have cards they dislike (some of them are fives <G>). This exercise helps one see the full potential in every card. Chose the 3 cards from the deck you dislike the most. Now brainstorm and come up with five good or positive things about each card. This is pretty difficult, but you might be surprised at the things you come up with. The first few are fairly easy. In the Waite-Smith 5 of cups for example, there are still two cups left standing, all is not lost; the person in the card has a warm cloak and good solid shoes, which seems to say his physical needs are taken care of; there is "water under a bridge", which suggests that whats done is done and that he should let go, pick up his two remaining cups and get on with his life. I'm sure you all can come up with others.

Sixes

Sixes represent Harmony, triumph, balance, a high point.

- ?? Six of Wands - Victory, self confidence, advancement, well being*
- ?? Six of Cups - Happiness, pleasant memories, ecstasy, friendship, sharing*
- ?? Six of Swords - Journey, passing through difficult times, perspective, service*
- ?? Six of Pentacles - Gifts, generosity, giving freely, an exchange of energy*

Symbols

Tarot relies heavily on symbolism. Esoteric decks, such as Thoth and to a lesser extent, the Waite-Smith make use of every symbol on every card. This is why I always recommend you purchase the book written specifically for your deck if one is available. It will usually explain the designer's use of symbolism in the deck. A dictionary of symbols is also an excellent tool for discerning deeper meanings in the cards. It is especially useful for decks which have no separate book available.

For an example where having the book enhances the interpretation, let's look at the six of wands in "The Witches Tarot" The card shows a woman kneeling in a forest clearing with six branches on the ground before her in two horizontal groups of three. If you look in the booklet that comes with the deck you find "Illumination, realization of bigger things...", but if you look in Reed's book "The Witches Tarot: The Witches Cabala Two" you read that the branches are laid in the I-Ching hexagram Ch'ien Ch'ien. This gives you further insight into what the designer was trying to convey.

Using the Waite-Smith deck, let's examine the same card. We see a man on a horse carrying a staff with a laurel wreath on top. If we look up laurel in a dictionary of symbols we find "Triumph, victory", so even if did not have Waite's book we could get an idea of what the card meant from the symbolism augmented by the picture, which also suggests a triumphant march. If we were not sure of the type of wreath, and looked up the word "wreath", we find "...glory, victory, supremacy..." which still conveys the meaning. If you look in the bibliography of most modern Tarot books, you will probably find at least one dictionary of symbols listed. They are especially useful for understanding cards that you have difficulty with.

Sevens

Sevens represent reflection, inner work, the hidden, difficulties or struggle

?? Seven of Wands - Self defense, holding a position, inner conviction

?? Seven of Cups - imagination , fantasy, choices, illusion

?? Seven of Swords - deception, stealing, strategy, secret plan

?? Seven of pentacles - waiting, patience, delay, efforts paying off

Directions

I am listing directional attributes of the suits by various authors. You should chose one that supports your personal beliefs or which feels right to you.

Wands = South, Cups = West, Swords = East, Pentacles = North (Vicki Noble, "Motherpeace Tarot", Mary Greer "Tarot for Yourself", Connelly, "Tarot a New handbook for the Apprentice", Jana Riley "The Tarot handbook")

*Wands = East, Cups = North, Swords = West, Pentacles = South
Wands = South, Cups = West, Swords = East, Pentacles = North (Witchcraft)*

*Wands = East, Cups = North, Swords = West, Pentacles = South (Astrology)
(Gail Fairfield, "Choice Centered Tarot")*

Surprisingly, these were the only lists I could find. I thought some of the older esotericists (Papus, et al) would have something since they tended to like lists of attributes, but I didn't find anything :(

Shuffling

To some this seems very elementary, but I see questions on shuffling posted quite frequently in my on-line travels. In my opinion, there is no right or wrong way to shuffle. I think the important thing is to be calm, keep your question in mind, and use whatever method you normally use to mix the

deck. Some readers feel Tarot cards should never be shuffled *per se*, but rather mixed by holding the deck in one hand and pulling cards from various parts of the deck and re-inserting them with the other over and over until you feel they are well mixed. Personally I shuffle them like a poker deck, 3 or more times. Why 3? I don't know, it just seems like a good minimum. I usually shuffle 4-5 times, but never less than 3. If the deck is new, I shuffle at least 11 times. I read somewhere that statistically speaking, it takes 11 shuffles to get a 78 card deck in random order. One day when I'm really bored, I'll do the math for myself and verify this. If you don't use reversals, you should be careful to keep the cards all in the same direction. This is difficult with some decks, because it is impossible to tell the direction from the back. Getting a few cards reversed is not a tragedy, just flip them over. If you do like to use reversals, turn one pile of the deck over once or twice while shuffling.

Cutting the deck

I have read many different ways to cut the deck. The only one I follow is to cut with your left hand. I deal with my right hand, so I feel cutting with the left gives the deal some balance. I also cut into 3 piles. The most common admonition is to cut with the left hand into 3 piles to the left. It works for me, but I don't doubt some other method would work as well, this is just the way I learned.

Large cards such as Thoth, Rohrig and Voyager present problems to those with smaller hands. You can try shuffling them from the sides, *vice* the long way. You can also try swishing them around on a table (make sure it is clean <G>), or on your bed. Like poker cards, Tarot cards wear with time. I still have my first Motherpeace deck and while it is a little "thick", I have not been able to bring myself to part with it. If you read for others though, you probably will not make a good impression with a deck so worn and fat that it is difficult to shuffle. My old friend is reserved for my personal use only.

Another question that comes up is whether to deal the cards face up or face down. I deal face up, because I like to get a feel for the spread as a whole, but some people find it distracting. They feel that they start forming impressions before they have the whole spread dealt. Dealing face down avoids this.

I think that we sometimes get too tied up in the ritual and "doing things right" and forget that Tarot should be a relaxing, enlightening experience, vice a nervous ordeal because we are trying to shuffle in a way we are not familiar with, trying to remember the right way to cut, the proper invocation etc. Relax, get the cards well mixed and read.

Eights

Eights represent balance, movement, order, change, giving and receiving.

- ?? Eight of Wands - Energy, movement, activity, speed, things happening quickly*
- ?? Eight of Cups - Withdrawal, retreat, turning your back on something and moving off into a different direction*
- ?? Eight of Swords - Restriction, feeling blocked, feeling ganged up on or attacked, frustration, waiting*
- ?? Eight of Pentacles - Craftsmanship, productivity, putting your affairs in order, mastery, being busy*

Personality and Soul Cards

Contrary to popular belief, these concepts were not developed by Mary Greer, but by Arrien Angeles in "The Tarot Handbook", a book which does not get the credit it is due in my opinion. She also presents several similar concepts in the book. such as growth cards and growth cycles.

Personality Card - this card represents your expression in the outer world, your talents, gifts, resources and how others see you. To find this card, add your birth day, month and year together. Example: Sept 9th, 1956 = 9 + 9 + 1956 = 1974 then add the digits of the result together - 1 + 9 + 7 + 4 = 21.

This is your personality card. If it is a double digit reduce it again: 2 + 1 + 3. This is your soul/spiritual card. The soul card represents the deepest core of who you are. It provides an

internal base of energy and natural resource for you to draw upon for your personality expression. If the first result is more than 21 like mine:

June 6th, 1956 - $6 + 6 + 1956 = 1968$, $1 + 9 + 6 + 8 = 24$ (note this is more than 21), reduce it again, $2 + 4 = 6$. This both my personality and soul card.

First Impressions

When laying down a spread, it is useful to take a few moments to look at the spread as a whole, before reading individual cards. Is there a preponderance of one suit? Are there several Major Arcana, or several Court Cards? These are indications that you should keep in mind when doing the reading. They are often clues as to what is going on. For example, lets say the question concerns ones love life. You throw the spread and see there are lots of pentacles, but not a cup in sight. What does this mean? It could mean that material security is a key issue in the relationship right then. It could also mean that the person should be focusing on financial matters right now, rather than the relationship. Perhaps worrying about the relationship has led to them doing poorly at work, or to spending more than they can afford to keep the other person happy. Perhaps they are telling you that the issue is love, but the thing that is really worrying them is money. Tarot sometimes tells us what we need to know vice what we want to know. You might want to ask questions to explore these issues during the reading.

Last Impressions

When I have finished interpreting each card in a spread, I like to sum up the reading. I just review the overall reading, pointing out the key points we covered. I always try to leave a reading on a high point. Even if the reading conveys bad news, I try to give the querent the tools to change events, based on the reading. A reading should be empowering for the querent, rather than a recital of things that may happen in the future. The key words are =may happen=. We have the power to influence and change the future.

Nines

Nines represent completion, conclusion, attainment, magic

- ?? Nine of Wands - Wisdom, experience, defensiveness, wariness*
- ?? Nine of Cups - Wishes coming true, fulfillment, satisfaction*
- ?? Nine of Swords - Nightmares, anxiety, mental stress, depression, guilt*
- ?? Nine of Pentacles - Abundance, material prosperity, comfort, security, reward*

Cycles

To me, nines represent the end of a cycle. An interesting idea involving cycles is the Year card. Angeles Arriens first proposed this in her book "The Tarot Handbook". Mary Greer describes it in her book "Tarot for Yourself" and derived a similar system of her own in "Tarot Constellations". James Wanless describes it in the booklet that comes with the Voyager deck. I will be using his method here. Per Wanless, the year starts for you on your birthday. There are two year cards for every year. One is the card that corresponds to your age. At birth you are The Fool. At one you are The Magician. This cycle goes through 22 years and starts again, so at ages 22, 44, and 66 you are The Fool. The other year card is calculated by adding your birthdate to the current year, then reduce, much like we did the personality and soul cards.

*For my birthday, June 6th it would be $6 + 6 + 1995 = 2007 = 9$,
The Hermit.*

For me this is a Star/Hermit year.

Tens

Tens represent the final culmination of each suit. The cycle is complete and you are ready to begin a new cycle.

?? Ten of Wands - burden, responsibility

?? Ten of Cups - Joy, happiness, optimism, family

?? Ten of Swords - Sacrifice, hitting bottom, release, letting go

?? Ten of Pentacles - Wealth , abundance, inheritance, prosperity.

Numbers

At this point we have gone through all the numbered cards. When we started with the Aces, I mentioned that different authors assigned different qualities to each of the numbers. Here are a few for comparison:

Card	Noble	Gordon	Ozaniec
1	Gifts	Beginnings, creation, willpower	Unity
2	Balance	Love ,harmony, cooperation, polarity, duality, choice, balance	Polarity, duality
3	Synthesis	Creation, abundance, imagination joy, artistic expression	Development, growth
4	Stability	Organization, structure, discipline, work, order	Measurement
5	Struggle	Freedom, progress, change, courage, versatility	Motion, adaptation
6	Exuberance	Service, truth, responsibility, beauty, harmony	Balance, equilibrium
7	Inner work	Spirituality, wisdom	Creative synthesis
8	Change	Giving and receiving in balance	Rhythm, alternate cycles
9	Completion	Completion, brotherhood universal love	Transition
10	Transformation	New beginnings	Manifestation, completion, fulfillment

Noble, Vicki - Motherpeace Tarot, ISBN 06-066300-6

Gordon, Richard - The Intuitive Tarot, ISBN 0-931892-84-8

Ozaniec, Naomi - The Element Tarot Handbook, ISBN 1-85230-488-X

Court Cards

Court Cards represent one of the greatest challenges to new readers. I think this is because they force us to rely on our intuition, and we are usually afraid of being wrong. I have found though, that when I went against my intuition in an effort to "play it safe", I was usually wrong and my intuitive answer was the correct one.

Court cards obviously represent personalities, but whose? They can be read as aspects of the querent, or as other people in the querent's life. One thing that helps is to ask the querent. As readers we sometimes think we have to know all the answers and feel shy about asking the querent for help, but the reading is about the querent. Who knows better what is going on in that person's life than they do? Should you come upon a Court Card in a reading and feel stumped, describe the personality traits associated with the card and ask the querent, "Do you know anyone like this?" If the answer is no, then it would be safe to assume that these are qualities the querent has manifested or needs to manifest in this situation.

A few months ago there was a very interesting thread here on Court Cards. If you participated, you will recognize the next four lessons <G>. I would love to post the views of others who participated as well, as I gained some valuable insights into court cards from them, however space precludes this. You can get the whole thread from the library. It is a file called "CC.txt". These posts are excerpts from the file with a little new info added in. We will be covering the Pages and Knights tomorrow and the Queens and Kings the next day, then on to the Majors. Many Tarot books tend to gloss over Court Cards, or to say they represent certain physical characteristics. I disagree with this approach. Because Court Cards give so many readers difficulty, I am posting the views of several Tarot authors as well as my own. You can look them over and choose a way of dealing with them that feels right to you.

A Spread

It seems that many questions querents seek answers to involve relationships. A simple spread that I find useful is called "The

Relationship Path Spread". It was designed by two friends, Nina-Lee Braden and Patsy Haggerty.

6
1 3 5 4 2

The cards are dealt in the pattern shown above. Should you need more information on a card, don't be shy about throwing a few more cards in that position for clarification.

Card 1 - How you see the other person

Card 2 - How the other person sees you

Card 3 - How you see the relationship

Card 4 - How the other person sees the relationship

Card 5 - Something about the relationship the querent needs to know

Card 6 - Where the relationship is going

More Than One Deck

Most of the readers I know have several Tarot decks. The reasons for this are many. Some collect decks. Some bought a deck they found interesting at the time of purchase, but subsequently found they didn't "click" with. Some learned to read with a certain deck and then branched out on their own.

Acquiring a new deck is a scary business. For one thing, Tarot decks are not cheap and you don't want to spend \$14.00 and up for something you will end up throwing in a drawer, not to mention the large investment in time and study required to learn it.

I recommend that when you are starting out you find a deck you like and stick with it for a while, at least until you are comfortable reading it without the book sitting by your side. If you find the going rough, don't be tricked into thinking that a new deck will be easier to learn. While this is sometimes the case, particularly if you really dislike your current deck, more often it is not. A new deck won't be any easier unless you have a good base of interpretations to build upon. Once you have that, a new deck can be exciting and can revitalize a "stale" period. Don't feel you have to have the newest deck that everyone is talking about. A Tarot deck is like a friend.

You don't (or at least shouldn't) discard old friends every time you make a new one. I read with the Waite-Smith exclusively (on and off) for almost 20 years. I branched out to Motherpeace with much trepidation, remembering how painful it had been to learn the Waite-Smith, but I found that it wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be because I had a good foundation in Waite-Smith. Learning my next deck was easier still. Remembering that I have the rest of my life to learn made it much easier and less stressful. You don't have to learn 3 cards a day, or even one card a day. If you are following this course, print the messages and go at your own pace. Spend a day on the Aces Lesson or spend a week on it. No one is judging you, there are no exams. Take your time, develop a rapport with your deck, record what you learn and in a few months you will feel quite comfortable reading Tarot.

Pages

- ?? Page of Wands - Active, energetic, enthusiastic, playful and passionate*
- ?? Page of Cups - Affectionate, dreamy, intuitive, sweet*
- ?? Page of Swords - quick witted, takes risks, sometimes brooding or thoughtless*
- ?? Page of Pentacles - Practical, thrifty, wise for age, physical*

Pages are considered the children or young people of the deck. I personally think they have many characteristics in common with The Fool. They are inquisitive, impulsive, playful and

eager to learn. To me they indicate a person who has these characteristics regardless of age or sex. In reading for myself I interpret them as a need to utilize these qualities (instead of being my usual serious self). I then expand on that meaning by applying the qualities of the suit and their position in the spread.

Mary Greer in "Tarot for yourself" says "Pages signal the need to look into a matter - to study it, to be open to messages or new ways and ideas. They act as catalysts for change".

Gail Fairfield in "Choice Centered Tarot" associates Pages with risk taking. "With pages you are setting out to take the risks that you've contemplated or avoided in the tens...you have all the experiences of the ace through ten behind you, so your risk is a calculated one, but there are no guarantees!" Most authors attribute Pages to the element of earth (I do too), so they have the attributes of that element as well.

Angeles Arrien in "The Tarot Handbook" says "..the Princess (page) of any suit indicate(s) consciousness that is centered and in the process of deepening...the suit will indicate where the processes of centering and deepening are occurring."

Carl Japiske in "Exploring the Tarot" says the court cards are "the 4 faces of the minor Arcana and they represent the different stages of maturity the aspirant or The Fool attains as he learns the lessons of the path. The Page represents the novice in working with the energy of the suit. He is the student, the learner, and cannot be trusted with any responsibility. Whenever the Page appears in a layout it is an indication of immaturity and the need to grow in understanding and expertise."

Several authors state that the Page means a message, phone call or some other type of communication. Most agree that it is a young person as well.

Other Court Cards Systems

Some decks have different systems for their court cards. Two I know of have key word systems and one uses the court cards to modify other cards in the spread. "The Witches Tarot" by Ellen Cannon Reed uses court cards as modifiers. When you get a court card in a spread you deal another card on top of it which will be modified by the Court Card. Her reasoning is based on the Cabala. In Reed's system:

- ?? Kings represent the creative urge, (choosing the seeds to plant)*
- ?? Queens represent taking the first step, (planting the seeds)*
- ?? Princes represent the results of our planning taking shape, (plants sprout and grow)*
- ?? Princesses represent the final form, (harvesting what we have sown)*

For example "Queen of Cups is dealt, followed by the Two of Wands. The Two of Wands represents ideas taking on energy...,the Queen means the energy is at the concept stage - not yet taking on form, but on it's way to formation." ("The Witches Tarot", pg 149). Reed's system is quite different from any other, but makes sense Cabalistically and certainly tames the messy problem of interpreting Court Cards.

Knights

- ?? Knight of Wands - Searching, spiritual, enthusiastic*
- ?? Knight of Cups - Romantic, sensitive, caring, moody jealous*
- ?? Knight of Swords - Aggressive, communicative, interested in ideas and their expression*
- ?? Knight of Pentacles - Secure, stable, reliable, patient*

To me the Knights are the querents peers. They are seekers on a quest which I interpret to be finding their place in the great scheme of things, therefore they are like most of us, who are on the same quest.

Richard Gordon in "The Intuitive Tarot" states that "court cards represent an individuals level of awareness, or their age (child, adolescent, or adult)...(knights) represent the period of trying out new ideas while still making quite a few mistakes, just as adolescents do in their attempt to master maturity."

Rosemary Guilley in "The Mystical Tarot" says that "court cards reflect the influence of aspects of personality in our lives - either from ourselves or other people:... Knight: Energy, Drive".

Paul Foster Case in "The Tarot" says that "Knights sometimes represent the coming or going of a matter, depending on which direction they face."

Mueller and Echols in "The Lovers Tarot" state "As warriors, the knights symbolize strength, service, mobility, courage, victory with honor, and acting as champions for high ideals. Always ready to do battle with the forces to be overcome, knights suggest action, sometimes hasty (knight of swords) which will need to be tempered with with prudence or caution. Both men and women can make good use of the constructive forces symbolized by their knight cards."

Knights are associated with fire or air depending upon the author (I associate them with air). At this point I'm trying not to quote the same book/author twice <BG>, but if you are interested in the views of a particular author, let me know and I will post it if I have a reference.

Queens

- ?? Queen of Wands - Self confident, powerful, generous, quick tempered
- ?? Queen of Cups - Nurturing, psychic, emotional, empathetic
- ?? Queen of Swords - Articulate, critical, aloof, distant
- ?? Queen of Pentacles - Practical, trustworthy, earthy, comforting

Queens in my opinion are women who wield some power over the querent, whether positional or emotional. I see Queens and Kings as very similar, though I feel Queens are more subtle in their power. IMO men can be Queens and woman can be Kings depending on how they use and wield their power.

Gareth Knight in "The Magical World of the Tarot" states that "The Queens and Kings may represent older people according to sex, but this is by no means universal...they represent people in established positions of authority, but this may well be in the totally domestic context of father or mother - or indeed something that takes the place of father or mother. It could be a company, committee, social worker or peer group."

Pamela Eakins in "Tarot of the Spirit" says "...all Mothers (Queens) are related to the element of water. Regardless of the suit in which they appear, although they are conditioned or refined by the attributes of that suit, it can be said that all Mothers personify the qualities of emotion and understanding. The Mothers in their exalted state are receptive, loving, and nurturing."

Eden Gray in "The Tarot Revealed" states "In readings, the the King often symbolizes the spirit; the Queen, the soul; the Knight, the ego; and the Page, the body." I found this interesting because in "Mastering the Tarot" she uses the physical charecteristics method and says they are people.

I'll stretch a bit here and discuss the Voyager deck. In my interpretation, the Women of that deck are not the same as Queens, but he has some interesting correspondences which I

wanted to include. In "Voyager Tarot, Way of the Great Oracle" he has the following correspondences:

- ?? Woman of Crystals (swords) - The Priestess, Justice
- ?? Woman of Cups - The Moon, The Star
- ?? Woman of Worlds (disks) - The Empress
- ?? Woman of Wands - The Priestess, Strength He states "the Woman cards are the human expressions of their archetypical seeds, which are symbolized by the Major Arcana Archetypes."

Tarot Exercise

One way to get familiar with the Court Cards is to personalize them. This exercise Based on "Tarot for Yourself" may help you to remember the Court Cards.

We each show several faces to the world each day. We are mothers, fathers, co-workers, bosses, subordinates, siblings, children, friends, students and teachers. We are viewed differently in each of these roles. Divide a sheet of paper in half. On one side write down the roles you play each day. On the other side, write the court card which you feel corresponds to this role.

Do the same thing for other people you know, friends and relatives. For example, I see my favorite aunt as the Queen of Swords. My current boss is a Knight of Wands, though my previous boss was the King of Cups (he was also the Emperor!). My husband is usually the King of Wands. My mother is usually the Queen of Cups.

Kings

- ?? *King of Wands - Forceful, domineering, risk taker, creative, sets high goals*
- ?? *King of Cups - Romantic, charming, fun, sensitive*
- ?? *King of Swords - Analytical, intellectual, ruthless,*
- ?? *King of Pentacles - Down to earth. sensual, secure, stubborn*

Kings IMO are similar to Queens in that they represent someone with power over the querent. They are different in that they manifest the characteristics of their suits in a stronger, more raw manner. They can be excessive, or heavy handed where the Queen is usually more balanced and reserved.

Richard Gordon in "Intuitive Tarot" states that "Kings represent a great deal of awareness, combined with an assertive nature, or an adult man."

Sharman-Burke and Green in "The Mythic Tarot" writes "Kings in all four suits are images of the dynamic, outgoing, directive qualities of the particular suit. These powerful masculine figures represent the full use of the energies of this sphere of life in building and concretizing in the outer world."

Mary Greer in "Tarot Constellations says"...(court cards) primarily represent the roles, masks or subpersonalities we wear as our "identities" in life....The kings demonstrate their talents, which are outer and public. They seem confident of their expertise and secure in their positions. As a king you administer, judge, take charge and handle your affairs competently. You establish procedures and build empires. Kings show where you have developed mastery, but also where you can be inflexible, and where you think you have nothing more to learn. Kings are much like the Emperor. They are usually related to the element air, but may be considered fire by some." I personally consider them fire.

Other Court Card Systems

The Gill Tarot deck and the Voyager each use key words on their court cards. They are as follows:

Voya ger	Wands	Cups	Crystals	Worlds
<i>Child</i>	<i>Seeker</i>	<i>Feeler</i>	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Player</i>
<i>Man</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Surfer</i>	<i>Inventor</i>	<i>Achieve r</i>
<i>Wom an</i>	<i>Sensor</i>	<i>Rejoicer</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Preserve r</i>
<i>Sage</i>	<i>Seer</i>	<i>Regenera tor</i>	<i>Knower</i>	<i>Master</i>

Gill	Wands	Cups	Swords	Disks
<i>King</i>	<i>Innovatio n</i>	<i>Inspirati on</i>	<i>Intuition</i>	<i>Concept ion</i>
<i>Queen</i>	<i>Reflection</i>	<i>Contempl ation</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>Nurtur e</i>
<i>Prince</i>	<i>Aspiratio n</i>	<i>Creativit y</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Constru ction</i>
<i>Prince ss</i>	<i>Transform ation</i>	<i>Evolution</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Growth</i>

As can be seen from these posts, court card interpretations vary greatly among authors and readers. My advice is to chose a method that you feel comfortable with, master it and use it consistently. There are several more court card interpretations that I found interesting, but did not include because they were too lengthy to explain adequately. Among them are Jana Riley's interpretations in "The Tarot Book" which is psychological (primarily Jungian) in approach and Rose Gwain's "Discovering Yourself through the Tarot" which she describes as "drawn from the traditional Tarot literature as well as mythological and psychological sources...further amplified by the I Ching". Many authors were not included because their descriptions were too skimpy or were of the "physical characteristics" school of thought, which is well known and need not be repeated here.

The Major Arcana

The Minor Arcana and Court Cards represent the everyday; our physical and emotional concerns, our environment, friends and relatives. The Major Arcana represent our higher selves, the spiritual and the outside forces that influence our lives. Many Tarot authors consider the Major Arcana to be the only important cards in the deck, relegating the Minor Arcana to divination.

I have several books which address the Majors only relating them to Psychology, Cabala, Numerology, Astrology, Alchemy, the Bible and Christian Hermeticism. There are also many Majors only Tarot decks available on the market. These are usually what I call "art decks", but they highlight the fact that the Major Arcana can stand on it's own. I have never seen a Minors only deck <G>. Some authors recommend you do readings with just the Major Arcana, though it has been my experience that most querents seek answers to the everyday problems they face, vice the spiritual ones.

Many beginning readers are somewhat afraid of the Major Arcana. I have seen many posts saying "I got 6 Majors in my Celtic Cross, what does it mean?". The Majors are nothing to fear. To me they indicate that powerful forces are at work in the situation, some of which may be beyond your control.

Knowing they are at work however, helps you prepare to deal with them in the most effective way possible. Some of the more frightening cards in the deck are in the Majors. The Devil, Death, The Tower, usually present fearsome images which we react to on a gut level. Again I want to emphasize that each card has a full spectrum of meaning. The nurturing Empress can be a maternal tyrant, The Devil has a fun side, and the drastic change indicated by the Tower is often for the better in the long run. Keep these things in mind when we discuss the Major Arcana.

These interpretations have been kept brief and simple. The symbolism of different decks varies according to how the designer interprets each card. Each set of Majors has it's own style and flavor. Use these interpretations as a jumping off

point for further study. Become familiar with the symbolism and idiosyncracies of your own deck.

The Magician I

The Magician represents directing your energies to some purpose. He is creative, skillfull, clever and capable. Most decks show the Magician with the four suits somewhere in the picture, most commonly on a table before him. They represent the four elements, the tools he uses to make magic. When we think of a Magician, we commonly think of the rabbit in the hat trick or pulling a coin from ones ear; the illusion of pulling something from thin air. The Tarot Magician does the same thing, only it isn't illusion; he uses his knowledge, power, creativity and force of will to transform the elements; to create. When you get this card it is an indication that you are focused, confident, and ready for the task at hand, or that you need to become so. It is a time of creativity and purposefulness. The Magician is associated with the planet Mercury (communication), the musical note E and the color yellow.

Archetypes

The word archetype is used in conjunction with Tarot to describe how the cards fit into a universal symbology. Carl Jung developed the idea of the archetype as a symbol which all human beings understand at birth. My dictionary defines it as follows:

"2. (In Jungian psychology) an unconscious idea, pattern of thought, image etc., inherited from the ancestors of the race and universally present in individual psyches.". Some of the more common archetypes are "the shadow" which represents things we fear or wish to deny in ourselves; "The animus/anima which is the internal representation of the opposite sex (anima -female within a male, animus - male within a female); "the wise old man", "the great mother", "the trickster", and "the shaman". Per Jung, every culture, society and individual recognizes these archetypical figures. They are in our myths, our history and our legends. They have the ability to elicit strong emotional reactions.

Tarot relies heavily on symbolism and pairing it with a system like the archetypes was a natural. Do you need to understand

the archetypes and Jungian psychology to read Tarot? No you don't, but learning this material will give you additional insights into the interpretation and meaning of the cards. I recommend you first master the basic meanings of the cards. If you have a background in psychology and are familiar with Jung, by all means use this knowledge to add depth to your interpretations, but if you are not familiar with it, don't fret, there are readers who know nothing about archetypes and do quite well. The same can be said for Kabala, Astrology, Numerology and other systems which are often linked with Tarot. Learning them adds depth, but not knowing them will not prevent you from being a competent reader. Different Tarot authors assign different archetypes to the various cards. I have seen the Magician described as an aspect of the wise old man, an aspect of the trickster and as an aspect of the shaman. Obviously any worthwhile discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this course. I am still learning about this subject myself. I just wanted to mention it so that when you hear the word archetype discussed in relation to Tarot, you have some idea of what is being talked about.

The High Priestess II

The High Priestess represents inner knowledge and wisdom. The card often shows a woman seated or standing between two pillars, wearing a crescent Moon headdress and sometimes bearing a scroll. She is wise, pure (virginal), and possesses "hidden knowledge". Receptive and composed, she prefers seclusion to the limelight, but she is willing to share her knowledge should the student seek it. When you get this card it suggests that you already have the knowledge necessary to deal with what faces you. It may be buried deep within you and may be difficult to call to the surface, but it is there. You may be more receptive, intuitive, or in touch with yourself at this time. The High Priestess is associated with the Moon (mystery, intuition, compassion), the color blue and the musical note G#.

Significators

A signifier is a card chosen from the deck to represent the querent, whether it be you or someone else. Most commonly a Court Card is chosen, but some people use a Major Arcana card and some just deal a card randomly from the deck. Some spreads require a signifier, some do not. Personally, if a signifier is called for, I just deal a card from the deck into that position, rather than choosing a specific Court Card. Whatever card falls in that position represents me or the querent in relation to the question at hand. I feel pulling a specific card from the deck to use as a signifier removes that card and prevents it from being dealt into another position in the spread where it might be more informative. Many readers feel a signifier provides focus to the spread however, and choose them carefully, feeling that the deck will choose another card to convey the same message if it is called for. In this, as in most things, you have to choose what feels right for you.

A Spread

This is a general purpose spread from the book "Tarot and Individuation", which has 78 spreads in the appendix. It is similar to the Celtic Cross in scope, but is linear, allowing the relationships to be more apparent, and shorter.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- ?? Card 1 - Distant past - the basic events and influences that may have created the present outlook and attitude
- ?? Card 2 - Immediate past - recent events that may have had a specific influence and may be on their way out;
- ?? Card 3 - Present influences - read with the previous card, it indicates what may modify the present outlook;
- ?? Card 4 - Present obstacles, hazards - even if a favorable card, in this position (it) may mean a diversion from the true goal;
- ?? Card 5 - Present outlook - usually an extension of cards 3 and 4, it often indicates the way the current situation extends into the future;
- ?? Card 6 - Future influences - a summary of all the preceding cards; shows the way they combine to create coming events;
- ?? Card 7 - Ultimate result; the culmination brought about by all the preceding suggested interactions between past attitudes and the present.

The Empress III

The Empress represents the maternal. The card usually shows a woman (sometimes pregnant) in a lush field or garden scene. She is fruitful, nurturing, creative and has an appreciation of the finer things. She is indulgent and is in touch with herself and her environment. When you get this card in a reading it is an indication that you are or need to be nurturing or creative. It is a time when you can bring ideas to fruition. The Empress is associated with the planet Venus (love and beauty), the color green, the musical note F#.

Color

I have been including the color associated with each Major. Most color correspondences are based on the Cabala, and they work well in terms of Tarot. Yellow (The Magician) is a bright, vibrant happy color; Blue (The High Priestess) is cool and soothing; Green (The Empress) suggests fertility and abundance. Colors have the ability to affect our mood and thinking a few minutes about the color associated with each Major Arcana card will give you clues about the mood of the card.

The Emperor IV

The Emperor represents authority, a father figure, power, leadership, building, protection, ambition, order, organization and confidence. He is usually depicted as a stately looking older man on a throne. When you get the Emperor, it indicates a need to set things in order, to organize and plan how to meet your goals. It could be a time when your ambitions are driving you or are being felt more keenly than usual. You are in a position to take charge and guide things on their proper course. The planet associated with the Emperor is Aries (action, assertion, courage), the color red, the musical note C.

Another Spread

This spread is a simplification of a 15 card spread. It is a good general purpose spread which can be applied to a variety of situation or be used as a general "where am I headed" spread. The spread is laid as follows:

5		4
2	1	3
6		7

Card 1 - The Significator

Card 2 - Inner Situation

Card 3 - Outer Situation

Card 4 - Direction things will take without outside intervention

Card 5 - Potential alternative action (what you can do to change the course of the situation)

Card 6 - Information which will assist in the decision making process

Card 7 - Forces beyond control that can not be changed

If you have some time to spend, you can expand it to it's full 15 card configuration as follows:

13	9	5		4	8	12
	2		1		3	
14	10	6		7	11	15

Cards 1,2 and 3 remain the same, cards 4, 8 and 12 are read the same way as card 4 was in the 7 card configuration, cards 5, 9

and 13 the same as 5 etc. If you use the larger version, remember to look for the relationships between the cards.

The Hierophant V

The Hierophant is a teacher. He represents spiritual training and discipline, convention, tradition and dogma. In older decks this card is called "The Pope" (The High Priestess was called "The Papess" or female Pope"). In most decks this card depicts a male figure in religious robes, sometimes with followers around him, sometimes not. When you get this card it could indicate that you are bound in some way by tradition or orthodoxy. Perhaps it is time to examine your belief system to see if it still serves your needs. Perhaps you are seeking a teacher or leader, a new path to follow. The sign associated with the Hierophant is Taurus, the color red-orange and the musical note C#.

Qabala, Cabala, Kabala, Qabalah, Kabbalah

The Qabala is a system of Jewish mysticism. Eliphas Levi, a 19th century occultist was the first to link the Tarot with the Qabala, specifically linking the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet with the 22 Major

Arcana. Subsequent occultists siezed this idea and expanded upon it, including A.E. Waite of the Waite-Smith or Rider deck, Paul Foster Case of B.O.T.A. (Builders of the Adytum) and Aleister Crowley.

The major symbol in the Qabala is the Tree of Life. It is thought to be a blueprint for the Universe. Most Tarot books have a picture of the tree and I believe there is at least one available for download in the library here on CIS. The Tree of life consists of four worlds, each of which corresponds to one of the four Hebrew letters in the symbol for the name of God, IHVH. The four Worlds are:

Atziluth - The Archetypal World - This is the world of pure Spirit or pure ideas. All other worlds originate here. It is assigned the element Fire and corresponds to the letter I (Yod) in IHVH.

Briah - The Creative World - This is the world where the idea is given form or a pattern. It is assigned the element water and corresponds to the first letter H (Heh).

Yetzirah - The Formative World - This is the world where the pattern is given expression. It is assigned the element air and corresponds to the letter V (Vau).

Assiah - The Active or Material World - This is the world where the idea is given physical form. It also contains the unseen energies of matter. It is assigned the element earth and corresponds to the second letter H (Heh).

The four suits and the four court cards are assigned to the four worlds.

Atziluth - Fire - Kings

Briah - Water - Queens

Yetzirah - Air - Knights

Assiah - Earth - Pages

Knowing these attributions will help you interpret the Court Cards. The King of Wands for example is Fire of Fire (obviously a Firery personality!); the King of Cups, Fire of Water etc. "The Witches Tarot" takes the assignments one step further by using the attributes of each world as the way the court card modifies the card following it (if you go back to the lesson which discusses the Witches Tarot system, you'll see what I mean.

The Lovers VI

The most obvious meaning of the Lovers is a relationship, attraction or love, however this is only a secondary meaning of the card. This card usually shows a couple with an angel or Cupid overhead, however older decks often showed a man standing between two women, looking as though he were trying to choose between the two. This illustrates the primary meaning of the card which is often overlooked. The Lovers represents a choice. It can also represent the coming together of opposites. When you get this card it indicates a choice. You must use your powers of discrimination to unite or choose between two opposing energies. Included in this is the idea of relationships, which are also a form of uniting two different energies.

The sign associated with the Lovers is Gemini (twins, duality, synthesis), the color orange, the musical note D.

Qabala, Part 2

Each Major Arcana is associated with a Hebrew letter of the alphabet, although different authors have made different assignments. A common (though not the only) listing is given below:

Card	Letter	Meaning
<i>Fool</i>	<i>Aleph</i>	<i>Ox</i>
<i>Magician</i>	<i>Beth</i>	<i>House</i>
<i>High Priestess</i>	<i>Gimel</i>	<i>Camel</i>
<i>Empress</i>	<i>Daleth</i>	<i>Door</i>
<i>Emperor</i>	<i>Heh</i>	<i>Window</i>
<i>Hierophant</i>	<i>Vau</i>	<i>Nail or Hook</i>
<i>Lovers</i>	<i>Zain</i>	<i>Sword</i>
<i>Chariot</i>	<i>Cheth</i>	<i>Fence</i>
<i>Strength</i>	<i>Teth</i>	<i>Serpent</i>
<i>Hermit</i>	<i>Yod</i>	<i>Open Hand</i>
<i>Wheel of Fortune</i>	<i>Kaph</i>	<i>Closed or Grasping Hand</i>
<i>Justice</i>	<i>Lamed</i>	<i>Ox Goad</i>
<i>Hanged Man</i>	<i>Mem</i>	<i>Water</i>
<i>Death</i>	<i>Nun</i>	<i>Fish</i>

<i>Temperance</i>	<i>Samekh</i>	<i>Prop</i>
<i>Devil</i>	<i>Ayin</i>	<i>Eye</i>
<i>Tower</i>	<i>Peh</i>	<i>Mouth</i>
<i>Star</i>	<i>Tzaddi</i>	<i>Fish hook</i>
<i>Moon</i>	<i>Qoph</i>	<i>Back of the Head</i>
<i>Sun</i>	<i>Resh</i>	<i>Head</i>
<i>Judgment</i>	<i>Shin</i>	<i>Tooth</i>
<i>World</i>	<i>Tau</i>	<i>Mark</i>

Each letter also represents a Hebrew word. These words are also clues to the meaning of the card. The Lovers for example is Zain or Sword. The sword is a tool of division or separation and is viewed as cutting cleanly through to the heart of the matter. It cuts off what is no longer necessary, thus it implies a choice between what is to be kept and what is to be discarded. Amber Jayanti calls it "the sword of discrimination".

Tarot Dreams

If there is a card you want to know more about on an intuitive level, you can try dreaming about the card. Before you go to sleep spend a few moments reading about the card you wish to dream about. Pull the card from the deck and spend a few moments looking at it. Close your eyes and try to recall the details. Repeat if necessary until you feel comfortable that you have an impression of the card in mind. Some people like to put the card under their pillow. You may not dream of the card at first, it might take several days of repeating this before you have a dream which includes the card. You may not be successful at all, but if you do dream of the card, record everything that happens in the dream in your Tarot Journal. The dream can give you some additional insights into the card and what it means to you. The meaning may not be clear to you at the time but don't fret, later events might shed some light on the dream. That is why it is important to write it down.

Sometimes we dream of cards without trying. When this happens I try to see how the card or cards play out in my life over the next few days. I also pay particular attention to the cards dreamt of if they show up in subsequent readings. Even if we can not figure out what the dream meant, just trying to interpret what the dream meant is enlightening.

The Chariot VII

The Chariot represents controlled force, discipline and victory. It is a card of confidence, action and will. This card usually shows an armored soldier riding a chariot pulled by two horses or other creatures. He must push these creatures to their fastest speed while maintaining control of them. When you get this card in a reading it indicates controlling a situation through the strength of your personality and will. You are marshalling all your forces towards victory. It is a time for action and for moving ahead with your plans. It can also indicate travel. The sign associated with the Chariot is Cancer (tenacious, compassionate), the color orange-yellow and the musical note D.

Qabala Part III

The tree of Life is divided into three pillars; Severity, Mildness and Mercy. On the pillars are arranged the ten Sephiroth. They are:

*Kether - The Crown - Aces
Chokmah - Wisdom - Twos, Kings
Binah - Understanding - Threes, Queens
Chesed - Mercy - Fours
Geburah - Strength - Fives
Tiphareth - Beauty - Sixes, Knights
Netzach - Victory - Sevens
Hod - Splendor - Eights
Yesod - Foundation - Nines
Malkuth - The Kingdom - Tens, Pages*

Each Sephiroth is on a pillar of the tree. They are arranged in such a way that there are 22 paths between them. The Major Arcana have been assigned to these paths. The Chariot for example, is assigned the path between Geburah (Strength) and Binah (Understanding), both of which are on the Pillar of Severity. The Sephiroth are the underpinning of the Minor Arcana interpretations. The fifth Sephiroth (Strength), is the Sephiroth of destruction or tearing down. Its influence is seen in the fives, which are all about strife and conflict, byproducts of tearing down. Understanding the Sephiroth will help you to understand why the Minors have the interpretations they have.

I will not bore you any further with the Qabala. As previously stated, it is a subject to which one could devote a lifetime of study on it's own. It does have a major influence on modern Tarot, however and now when you hear the terms sephiroth, or paths, you will have an idea of what is being discussed. If you wish to pursue this topic further, an excellent book is "Living the Tarot" by Amber Jayanti. This book incorporates the Qabala into the interpretation of the Major Arcana in a clear manner, and provides affirmations, personal anecdotes from Jayanti and her students, and a series of questions for each Major card. Very readable.

Strength VIII

Strength represents the ability to persevere in the face of obstacles. It is about subduing the passions or delaying pleasure for a higher goal. This card usually depicts a woman with a Lion. She has no weapons, yet shows no fear or apprehension. This card is not about physical strength, it is mental or spiritual strength. When you get this card in a reading it can indicate the need to face a situation and see it through to its conclusion. You may need courage and mental strength to overcome something. The sign associated with Strength is Leo (protective, bold, passionate), the color yellow, the musical note E.

A Tarot Exercise

This exercise is just an expansion of the technique used to dream about a card. Chose a card that you like. Look at the card carefully and try to imprint the details of the card on your mind. Close your eyes and see if you can recall the card in detail. If not, try again. You may have to do this several times to get all of the details. You will be surprised at the things you notice when you do this that you hadn't noticed before. Once you can recall the card in detail, put the card down and do something else. Periodically throughout the day try to recall the card again. You can carry the card with you if you like to check your progress, or wait till the end of the day, try once more and compare your results.

Once you can recall the card easily and in detail the next step is entering the card. To enter the card recall the card in your mind and place yourself in the picture. This may take some practice, so don't be disappointed if you have difficulty with this. Just keep trying. If there is a person in the card you chose, try talking to him/her, if not, just look around and enjoy the scenery. Note how you feel, what the weather is, any sounds, smells or colors that stand out or any other detail that strikes you. Write down what you have observed. Again, don't be discouraged if this doesn't come to you easily. It didn't for me either. I find I can do it best when I am in a monotonous situation, like riding (not driving!) on a long trip, or waiting for an appointment (I am usually early and have to wait), or when lying in bed, before going to sleep.

The Hermit IX

The Hermit represents solitude, and inner work. The Hermit has withdrawn from society in search of truth, whether it be spiritual truth or the truth about himself. It can also represent a teacher or a guide. In most decks, the Hermit is a solitary figure, often on a road with a lantern to light his way. When you get this card in a reading it can indicate a need to withdraw, to take stock and review where you are going and where you have been. It can also indicate a preoccupation with details, a mastery of details, finding a teacher or guide or being a guide for others. The sign associated with the Hermit is Virgo (practical, productive, orderly), the color yellow-green and the musical note F.

Soothing Time Out

This exercise is from "Tarot for Everyday" by Cait Johnson (pg 111). It is short, simple and comforting. You might want to sit on your bed or in a comfortable chair. Breathe deeply, close your eyes and relax. Pull 3 cards from the deck at random and turn them over. Look for pictures of the problem, advice on remedying the situation and general comfort.

The Wheel of Fortune X

The Wheel of Fortune represents karma, cycles and destiny. It can indicate a change in fortune for the better or worse. Most decks show this card as a wheel of some sort, though the designs around the wheel vary according to the deck. When you get this card in a reading your luck may be ready to change, usually for the better. It can mean a new opportunity is about to present itself, or that an old project is about to take a turn. It could indicate an unexpected windfall. This is a time to be flexible and alert for new opportunities in order to take advantage of them. The Wheel of Fortune is associated with the planet Jupiter (good fortune, rewards, opportunities), the color violet and the musical note A#.

The Celtic Cross

Yesterday I asked for each of us to draw a card as a contribution to a Celtic Cross Spread. This spread has many variations, so many that when one says they did a Celtic Cross, I always ask them what positions they used. I am listing what is believed to be the original Celtic Cross, by A.E. Waite and some variations for comparison.

A.E. Waite "The Pictorial Key to the Tarot"

Significator

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----|---|----|
| 1. What covers him. | | | | |
| 2. What crosses him. | | 3 | | 10 |
| 3. What crowns him. | 6 | 1,2 | 5 | 9 |
| 4. What is beneath him. | | 4 | | 8 |
| 5. What is behind him. | | | | 7 |
| 6. What is before him. | | | | |
| 7. Himself | | | | |
| 8. His house. | | | | |
| 9. His hopes or fears | | | | |
| 10. What will come. | | | | |

Mary K. Greer "Tarot for Yourself"

1. What covers - general environment or atmosphere
2. What crosses - conflicts and obstacles
3. What is below - The foundation or basis of the situation
4. What is behind - The past

- | | | |
|--|---------|----|
| 5. What is above - your goals | 5 | 10 |
| 6. What is before - the future | 4 1,2 6 | 9 |
| 7. You as you see yourself | 3 | 8 |
| 8. Your environment (home, work family etc.) | | 7 |
| 9. Hopes and Fears | | |
| 10. The outcome | | |

James Wanless "Voyager Tarot" (This spread is called the Whole Self Mandala)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Spirit: Archetypal Personality | |
| 2. Head: Mental State | |
| 3. Heart: Emotional State | 7 |
| 4. Legs: Physical State | 2 |
| 5. Left Side: Feminine | 9 5 1,3 6 8 |
| 6. Right Side: Masculine | 4 |
| 7. Finances | 10 |
| 8. Work | |
| 9. Home | |
| 10. Relationships | |

Justice XI

Justice usually indicates that a decision of some type will be or needs to be made. It is a card of balance and equilibrium. In most decks the card shows a woman holding a set of balancing scales. Interestingly she is not blindfolded as the familiar statue is. When you get this card in a reading it can indicate a decision of some sort. It can also indicate that the querent will be the facilitator or judge in some issue. This is a time to be fair and even handed; to weigh all the options and consider carefully before making a decision. The sign associated with Justice is Libra (balance, harmony), the color green, the musical note F#.

Group Reading

Whenever I lay a spread, I take a moment to look it over and see if anything catches my eye. In the cards we drew, the first thing I noticed was a lot of cups and wands, but only one pentacle. Since the question is about a career change, I would expect to see more pentacles. In the Celtic Cross spread, the first two cards (what covers and what crosses) are usually the most important cards in the reading. Lets look at them.

1. What covers her: the general atmosphere or environment - The Hierophant.

Let's review what we know about the Hierophant:

- ?? It is a Major Arcana Card, so it could represent outside forces beyond our control.*
- ?? Convention*
- ?? Tradition*
- ?? Orthodoxy*
- ?? A teacher, leader or Guru*
- ?? Dogma*
- ?? Examining one's belief system*
- ?? Seeking a new leader or path*
- ?? Associated with Taurus: secure, practical sometimes obstinate and resistant to change*

2. What covers her: obstacles or blocks in her path - 8 of Wands

?? Energy
 ?? Movement
 ?? Activity
 ?? Speed
 ?? Things happening quickly

We don't know what Carla's present career is, but looking at the first two cards in this spread we could say several things about her present job situation:

The job is secure, probably pays well enough and she has built up a support group or found a mentor. The workplace may be traditional and the company has its own ways of doing things; it's own dogma so to speak. Carla may not be happy there, but she has probably grown comfortable.

The obstacle is energy, movement, activity, and things happening quickly. Perhaps Carla feels that things are moving too slowly on her present job. She may not be advancing as quickly as she would like. She may have ideas and plans for which she can find no outlet. There is a block to her moving ahead. Conversely this card could be interpreted as changes taking place in the workplace which Carla finds unsettling. Things may be moving too quickly and she might be having difficulty adjusting. The traditions she has grown comfortable with may be in the process of being replaced with new and unfamiliar ideas. We will decide which interpretation fits best as we interpret the rest of the spread.

In these two cards we have a conflict - the Hierophant is a stuffy, slow to change card and the 8 of wands is a fast moving, high energy card. Carla is in a position where she has to decide which direction to take. This validates and gives some background to her question: should she change careers?

Any other thoughts or interpretations would be welcome. We are doing this as a group and the more ideas and points of view, the better. Please share your thoughts on these first two cards.

A Tarot Tidbit

The Major Arcana represent many ideals which we can aspire to. The serenity of the High Priestess, the creative will of the Magician, and the inner work of the Hermit are just a few. If there is a card which represents ideals which we would like to nurture in ourselves, it is sometime helpful to take this card out and place it where we can see it frequently during the day as a reminder of our aspirations. You can simply lay the card on your desk or work area, place it on your bathroom mirror, put it on your refrigerator with a magnet, or even matte and frame it elaborately. The idea is to place it where you will see it often and to take a few moments when you see it to think about how you can manifest it's qualities during the day. After a few days, you will notice the card's qualities manifesting in your life more and more. Do this as long as you like, and change cards when you have noticed a change or can see the qualities in your day to day life. This is a kind of mini-meditation which gives good results over time.

The Hanged Man XII

The Hanged Man represents a state of suspension. It can also represent self-sacrifice or martyrdom. Most decks illustrate this card with a man (or woman) hanging by his foot from a tree. In most decks, his facial expression is serene or even smiling. This suggests that he is at peace with his position, even though it appears awkward or painful to others. This card can mean unconventionality, or marching to your own drummer. This is a time when things seem to be moving slowly. You can allow yourself to become frustrated by this or you can use this time wisely. The planet associated with the Hanged man is Neptune (gradual change, dreams, visions and self sacrifice), the color dark blue, the musical note G#.

Group Reading

3. What is below - The foundation or basis of the situation - The World

We haven't discussed this card yet, but this is a happy card, a card of release, of unlimited potential. Taken in conjunction with what we have so far, I would say Carla has outgrown her present job and is ready to move on. She is feeling stifled (Hierophant), impatient (8 of Wands) and longs for freedom to express herself and fulfill her potential (The World).

4. What is behind - The past - Queen of Wands

This could be Carla, or it could be someone else. It is a woman who is self confident, energetic, creative and enthusiastic. In the past position this could represent Carla herself and the way she used to feel about her job. It could also be someone who Carla knew and respected at her job who is no longer there. I think it is Carla herself though. It fits with the other cards that way (she was enthusiastic, but no longer feels that way). When in doubt, ask the querent.

5. What is above - your goals - 9 of Cups

This is the "wish" card. It represents satisfaction, and happiness. Again in conjunction with the other cards it shows that Carla wants a feeling of satisfaction from her work. She wants to be doing something she loves, rather than just earning a living. She also wants to be compensated fairly for it.

6. What is before - the future - 4 of Wands R

The 4 of wands is inspiration, harmony, freedom and peace. I no longer read reversed cards, but when I did I interpreted them as a subconscious wish, a block or a delay. In this case subconscious wish doesn't seem to apply. The wish is obviously conscious as shown by her goals. I would then interpret this as a block or delay. Something is stopping Carla from reaching her goal. We'll see if the other cards tell us what this could be.

Tarot and Crystals

The list is from the book "Tarot for Everyday" by Cait Johnson.

Wands - Amber, carnelian, citrine, diamond, garnet, gold, ruby, red tourmaline, tigereye, topaz

Swords - Agate, aventurine, feathers, mica, mottled jasper

Cups - Amethyst, aquamarine, azurite, moonstone, mother of pearl, pearl, sapphire, seashells, selenium, silver, sodalite

Pentacles - Black Tourmaline, copper, emerald, fossils, geodes, granite, green agate, green jasper, jade, hermatite, iron, jet, lodestone, malachite, obsidian, onyx, peridot, roots

Death XIII

Possibly the most feared, hated and misunderstood cards in the Tarot, Death represents change. It usually does not mean physical death, though it can. It is about transformation, renewal, breaking free of old patterns and structures, metamorphosis, letting go and growth. Most decks illustrate this card with a skeleton, riding on a horse looking like the grim reaper. When you get this card in a reading, it means that you are about to experience a change of some sort. It is time to move on, to let go of the past and start fresh. This is not a card of sudden, cataclysmic change, it is a slower, more gradual and natural change. This change comes because you have been headed in this direction for some time. It is the right way to go or thing to do. Change is often frightening to us, but it is a necessary and natural part of life. I view this as a positive card. I think of it as a butterfly emerging from its cocoon, or the cycles of the seasons; each has its own time and its own purpose and beauty. The sign associated with Death is Scorpio (intensity, commitment, depth), the color blue-green, the musical note G.

Tarot Ethics

This is a subject that is hotly debated, but is really quite simple. As readers we have an obligation to tell the truth as we see it in the cards. The querent has come to you because they want to know something. I don't feel that it is my place to decide what the querent can or can not handle. If I see negative things, I tell the querent what I see, but I also look for ways the querent can work with the problem to change or influence the outcome.

I often see questions about whether it is right to accept money for reading, whether one should read for a 3rd party who is not present, or whether one should discuss the 3 D's (death, divorce and 'dultery (adultery)), if not specifically asked about them. These questions must be answered by each reader based on their comfort level. What I feel comfortable doing may not be what you feel comfortable doing. The key is to do what =you= think is right, not necessarily what you think is best (we tend to want to spare the querents feelings and soften bad news), but what you think you think is right in

accordance with your beliefs. I also think that readings should end on a positive note. If you see bad things, tell the querent what you see, but also tell them what they can do about it or why things are headed the way they are. Give them the tools to change. This is why reading the whole spread and looking for relationships between the cards is so important. You can show the querent how things got to this point, and where they are headed if no change or action is taken. Knowing what caused our present situation shows us how we can prevent it's recurrence. We hopefully learn from our mistakes and you as a reader are in an excellent position to point out things the querent can not see because he/she is so close to the situation.

As for charging for a reading, I see nothing wrong with being compensated for your time and effort whether it be by money, a loaf of homebaked bread or in exchange for something else. Tarot is hard work. You have invested a lot of time in study and practice. To be compensated in some way is only fair IMHO.

Bottom line, be truthful to the querent and true to your beliefs. Reading for others is not always fun or comfortable. It is a huge responsibility that should not be taken lightly. What you tell the querent will affect his/her life and probably the lives of those around him or her. Keep this in mind.

Temperance XIV

Temperance represents a blending or melding together of diverse elements or ideas. The card is usually illustrated with an angel holding two cups and pouring liquid from one to the other. The angel usually has one foot on dry land and one foot in the water. This card is usually a good indication that you are handling things well. You are able to take diverse elements and make them work together to form a stronger whole. You are adaptable, confident, flexible and are creating harmony. This is also viewed as a card of healing, whether it be healing others or yourself. The sign associated with Temperance is Sagittarius (reconciling opposites, enthusiasm, optimism), the color blue, the musical note G.

Group Reading

7. You as you see yourself - Queen of Cups

*Questioner (Queen Water/Cups) Receptivity: She's open to the flow of new ideas and will winnow them out using her intuition and innate sensitivity. This *might* point to heading into a field where she'll be able to use those traits as well as her compassion. But I think it mainly relates to how she's going to evaluate all the possibilities for change that the other cards highlight.*

8. Your environment (home, work family etc.) - 10 of Swords

8. The Ten of Swords portrays the way that people close to Carla feel about the possible forthcoming situation. They are not happy at all and feel that Carla about to make a grave mistake. They are all very worried for her.

Tarot and Creativity

I believe that most people who are attracted to Tarot are creative in some way. We are visually stimulated by the cards, they capture our imagination and speak to us. Tarot has certainly enhanced my creativity. Here are some suggestions for combining your creativity with your Tarot studies:

Draw your own deck - This sounds quite daunting: 78 pictures, but you don't have to draw an entire deck. Start by drawing just your favorite cards. Try making a Majors only deck. If you are like me and have difficulty with drawing even stick people, you can color a deck rather than starting from scratch. The following books have uncolored cards specifically designed for you to color: "The Mythic Tarot Workbook", and "Living the Tarot". These books both encourage you to color the pictures provided for this purpose. You can also order a deck designed to be colored which comes complete with instructions for doing so from B.O.T.A. (Builders of the Adytum), 5105 North Figueroa St, Los Angeles CA. They make decks in two sizes for this purpose. You can also Xerox cards from books just for coloring.

Writing - You can write short stories about particular cards, or spreads. You can try your hand at poetry. Just writing in your Tarot journal is a form of creative writing.

Crafts - You can make your own Tarot deck bags, or create a reading cloth, perhaps with embroidery or cross stitch. You can decorate boxes to hold your cards, make Tarot dolls, or design a Tarot card in quilt form.

Music - If you are musically trained you can try your hand at composing Tarot Music. There is at least one tape of such music on the market, though I have not heard it. Write a song about a card.

The Devil XV

Another card that makes many people uncomfortable, the Devil represents feeling bound, oppressed or limited. Most decks illustrate this card with a fearful looking creature, part man and part beast. There are also people in the card who are chained or bound in some way. If you look closely though, the people usually have a way to remove the chains. In the Waite-Smith card for example, the couple's hands are free and the chain is loose enough around their necks to be lifted over their heads. They are bound because they chose to be. This card represents self imposed limitations, often due to fear. The Devil can also represent addictions, all of the seven deadly sins (pride, greed, gluttony, lust, envy, wrath and sloth), and deceit. We are often comfortable with our problems and faults; they are familiar and safe. Breaking free entails venturing into unknown territory. The Devil warns us to avoid excess, that many of our limitations are self imposed and that we have the power to break free and change things at any time. The sign associated with the Devil is Capricorn (practical, materialistic, serious and cautious), the color indigo, the musical note A.

9. Hopes and Fears - 7 of Cups

Hopes/Fears (7 Water/Cups) Projections: I'm not sure whether this is a hope, a fear, or both. But reality may not be as it appears. Anything that looks too good to be true probably is. Conversely, anything that looks awful is a cloud with a silver lining.

10. The outcome - 7 of Pentacles

10. Finally, The Outcome - The seven of pentacles represents that there may be a small financial reward if the opportunity is seized, however this may well be at the cost of the present stability and happiness which Carla has so far enjoyed.

This works well also. It could indicate that Carla has decided not to make any decision. She may just content herself with thinking about the change (7 of cups) and may put off or delay making a move right now (7 of pentacles). A change may

jeopardize her present stability, but may be more rewarding to her, if not financially, then at least in terms of her happiness.

Undercurrent - Child of Worlds (Page of Pentacles)

This card indicates that underlying these plans is a thought to practicality. Carla is not going to do anything rash. She wants to do work that will satisfy her creativity and be fulfilling, but she is not the type to disrupt everything and everyone in this quest.

A Tarot Exercise

Over time we tend to change our views and interpretations of each cards. We learn new things, hear other points of view and perhaps experience the card in our lives. An interesting way to see this is to chose a card and think about how this card applied to us at various points in our lives; as a child, as an adolescent, as a young adult and right now. At each point in our life we see that what that card stood for is a little different. As we progress in our studies and become more experienced and practiced with the cards, we will continue to see an evolution in what each card means to us. I would write this exercise in my Tarot Journal and come back and look at it again in a few months. See if you would change any of the experiences you related to the card in light of your understanding at that point.

The Tower XVI

The Tower represents sudden change. This is not a natural gradual change like Death, but a cataclysmic change which we are often unprepared for. Most decks illustrate this card with a Tower being struck by lightening, with people falling from it. When you get this card you can expect events to happen quickly, usually too fast for you to do anything about them. Often associated with loss, this card can signal a change in livelihood or lifestyle, a change in beliefs changes from nature (natural disasters). My mother always says "everything happens for the best". The changes brought about by the Tower are usually uncomfortable and unsettling, but they are survivable and will make us stronger. The lightening, burns off what is not essential, forcing us to make a fresh start. I always believe that the changes caused by the Tower are in some way necessary to our growth. In the long term they help us, even though it doesn't feel that way when they are happening. The planet associated with the Tower is Mars (energy, action, self assertion, heat, violence), the color scarlet red, the musical note C.

Tarot Paraphernalia

There has been a surge in the market recently of what I call "Tarot Paraphernalia". I thought I'd mention a few of the things available. Most of these items are from the "Pyramid Catalog".

Tarot Tray - A glass tray to sit your cards on. I don't know why you'd want to do this, but if you do, it's available.

Tarot Stones - This is a set of 22 stones with simple glyphs representing the Major Arcana. You pull the stones from the bag to make your spread rather than use cards. The original release of this item was on black Marble, but the newer version is on a purple stone or stone-like plastic.

High Priestess Mousepad - This is a mousepad for your computer desk with a picture of the Waite-Smith High Priestess.

Tarot Decoder - This item is not available in the Pyramid catalog. It is a small piece of folding plastic with Tarot card interpretations. There are wheels attached with cut-outs and you rotate the wheel to the card you want to interpret and read the interpretation through the cut out. I found it clumsy to use and the interpretations trite, but it is available and it's easier to carry than a book I suppose.

Tarot Card Tee Shirts - "Any image from the Rider-Waite deck on a 100% cotton shirt! Full Color!" say the ad.

Tarot Card Counted Cross Stitch Patterns - Each Major Arcana of the Waite-Smith deck is available separately or you can buy the entire set.

Tarot Software - There is a quite a bit available. Commercial programs include "Virtual Tarot CD", "Cyber Tarot" by Harper Collins, a CD Version of Axis Mundi's "Cyber Tarot" and a CD version of "World of Tarot". There are also many shareware titles available including shareware versions of Axis Mundi's "Cyber Tarot" and "World of Tarot" (both are available here on CIS).

I have a nice assortment of other shareware titles as well including an Egyptian Tarot Card reading program, a couple of programs with original (though primitive) Tarot art and a nice little learning tool that sits on your Windows Desktop as a small icon. When you open it you can get the interpretation of any card you need. It is not illustrated, but you can edit the interpretations to suit yourself. It is sort of a memory aid.

Original Tarot Decks - There are a lot of limited edition Tarot decks being produced. You need to subscribe to some Tarot publications to find them though. I recently got a beautiful black and white deck done from linoleum block carving. It is from a limited edition of 120 and was only \$40.00, cheap for original art in signed and numbered editions, particularly when you consider that you get 78 pictures (or 22) ,vice 1 for the price. There are original decks and cards available here on CIS as well.

The Star XVII

The Star is usually viewed as a positive card in any position in any spread. The Star is a card of hope, renewal and inspiration. In most decks this card shows a woman at the edge of a body of water with a pitcher. There is usually a large star or group of stars in the background. She always looks serene and peaceful. It signifies good health, serenity and peace. It can also represent spiritual enlightenment. It is the light at the end of the tunnel. When you get this card in a reading it means a period of optimism and well being. It is a card of looking to the future. The sign associated with the Star is Aquarius (new ideas, personal freedom, unconventionality), the color violet and the musical note A#.

Group Reading

Carla was kind enough to give us some feedback and we seem to have drawn the right cards for her in her present situation. She had questions about the interpretation of the outcome. Now that we have more information perhaps we should look at it again. The 7 of pentacles can be a delay, a reward for work done (reaping what you sow), patience or evaluating the results of your work. Since Carla has just started this job, the 7 of pentacles probably indicates her future. She will look back over his period with pride and a sense of accomplishment. Delay is probably not the best interpretation here. With her comments perhaps a better interpretation would be having her dream job, yet being scared about whether she could do it (7 of cups) and reaping the satisfaction of knowing that she rose to the occasion and did a great job (7 of pentacles). I think the disruption of stability still fits because Carla has probably had to make some adjustments to juggle home, kids and the job. Because she is obviously thrilled with her new job, she probably doesn't see the changes as onerous. I would change my interpretation of the Page of Pentacles accordingly. She has the practical skills necessary to make this transition smoothly and with as little disruption as possible.

Were we doing this reading face to face with Carla, we would have been getting feedback throughout and could have made corrections as we went. That is one of the disadvantages of non-

face to face readings. On the plus side, we have had time to consider our interpretations carefully and at our leisure, and to look at how the spread fit together as a whole. I have this spread under the clear cover of my mousepad and have been looking at it for several days. Tomorrow we will play with the spread to see what else we can glean from it and we will probably summarize it the next day.

Errata

The Celtic Cross is usually considered to be a long term reading covering a period of six months to a year. Throwing this spread everyday will probably confuse more than clarify what is going on <G>. Mary Greer points out some interesting things in "Tarot for Yourself", though she doesn't really develop them. Per Greer, card 2 links cards 4 and 6. I see this as the things in the past that have led to or created your present obstacle, and that coupled with this obstacle will lead to the next turn of events if no action is taken change the course of events. She also points out that card 1 links cards 3 and 5. I see this as where you are coming from (card 3), where you are now (card 1) and where you want to be (card 5).

I don't use significators, so I interpret card 1 as the querent. This card is who the querent really is now, as opposed to card 7, which shows how the querent views herself. Card 1 is her true, inner self, card 7 is the face she shows the world. Another thing I sometimes do is to deal cards for the last position until a Major Arcana card turns up. These cards are all parts of the outcome and by dealing until I reach a Major Arcana I feel I am reading up to the point where the outcome can no longer be influenced by the

querent; where things are out of her hands. I did not do that in this spread in order to keep it simple. You can sometimes draw quite a few cards before you get a Major. I use this method in freestyle spreads as well, dealing cards for each position until I reach a Major Arcana. This method can make a simple 3 or 4 card spread quite full and revealing.

The Moon XVIII

The Moon represents mystery, the subconscious, the unknown, intuition and dreams. In many decks this card depicts a night scene with two towers, two dogs, a lobster climbing out of the ocean, and of course the Moon. Many people feel the Moon is a somewhat sinister or negative card, but I prefer to interpret it as getting in touch with your deepest self, facing your fears and exploring the unknown. Many of us tend to shy away from our subconscious. We are frightened of what we might find there. When we have what we perceive as "negative" thoughts we try to push them back down under the surface into the subconscious. Perhaps we should examine them before we shut them away. Try to determine why we think these thoughts and what they might mean. When you get the Moon in a reading it can indicate that you are ready to explore the hidden aspects of yourself. You can face your fears and examine them. This card can indicate developing your intuitive or psychic powers, exploring your dreams or fantasies, and exploring psychic realms by means of O.B.E., channeling, past life regression or other means. This card can indicate a highly emotional period when you may feel as if you are being pushed or pulled against your will. Some interpret it as deception or disillusionment as well. The sign associated with The Moon is Pisces (perceptive, imaginative, unworldly), the color red-violet and the musical note B.

Permutations

Another idea borrowed from "Tarot for Yourself" is permutations. Permutation involve moving the cards from the spread into different positions and re-evaluating them. She presents several ways of doing this, but the one I use is probably the simplest. Once you have read the spread, separate the cards into 5 piles, one for each suit and one for the Major Arcana. Then arrange each pile into numerical sequence. When we do this with Carla's spread we get the following:

*4 of Wands (R), 8 of Wands, Queen of Wands
7 of Cups, 9 of Cups, Queen of Cups
10 of Swords
7 of pentacles, Page of Pentacles
The Hierophant, The World*

Viewed this way we see freedom and creativity blocked or delayed (4 of wands R) and a high energy and a desire for things to move more quickly (8 of wands). These are aspects of Carla herself (the Queen of Wands).

Emotionally, Carla has dreams and hopes which seemed out of reach (7 of cups), but which can be realized and satisfied (9 of Cups). These may indicate Carla's emotions in this matter (Queen of Cups).

Mentally she feels a need for release and to start fresh (10 of swords)

Materially she wants to be rewarded monetarily, but that is secondary to her desire for a feeling of accomplishment (7 of pentacles). She has the practicality and stamina to make this transition smoothly and not be carried away by fantasy; she is also highly capable, even though she is somewhat a novice in her present field (Page of Pentacles).

Finally she felt constrained in the past (The Hierophant), but now feels free (the World).

The many Wands and Cups indicate that this is important to Carla on a spiritual and emotional level. Although she has indicated that this job is a financial necessity as well, I think the sense of accomplishment and self worth are even more important to her. This is just one set of possible interpretations. I like to do this at the end of a spread and use it as a summary of the reading.

The Sun XIX

The Sun represents success, wholeness, joy, warmth, perfection. This card often depicts a scene with a child or children. They are usually laughing and there is a large sun in the background. This card usually signifies the beginnings of a period of happiness and good fortune. The Sun is associated with the astrological Sun (energy, power, life), the color orange and the musical note D.

Correspondences

Here are a couple of interesting correspondence lists from "Tarot for Everyday" by Cait Johnson.

Tarot and Clothing (Fabrics)

Wands - any fabric with a golden metallic sheen or warm color.

Swords - Chiffon, gauze, batiste, anything thin, sheer or floaty.

Cups - Irridescent or shiny brocades, satin, silk.

Pentacles - Fake fur, heavy linen or cotton, leather, velvet, wool.

Aromatherapy

Wands - Allspice, amber, bay, carnation, cinnamon, clove, frankincense, ginger, honeysuckle, lemon, myrrh, orange, sandalwood

Swords - lavender, mint, neroli, rosemary, sandalwood, thyme

Cups - eucalyptus, gardenia, jasmine, lavender, lilac, lotus, rose, musk, sandalwood, violet

Pentacles - cedar, cypress, honeysuckle, patchouli, pine, sandalwood.

If you are interested in Tarot and aromatherapy, Mary Greer has written an entire book on the subject: "The Essence of Magick". It also discusses herbology and Tarot.

Astrological Spread Variation

If you use the astrological spread (12 houses), you can get a much more detailed reading by using the Majors approach I described previously. Deal the cards for each house, then deal around the circle into each house until you get a Major Arcana. Once a Major appears in a house, stop dealing cards into it. Keep

dealing around the circle until each house ends in a Major Arcana card. You can read the cards in each house as a single group, or you can use each concentric ring of cards to represent a time period; a week, a month, a season etc. This is my favorite large spread which I usually do on New Years Day and my birthday (since my birthday is in June, this works well).

Judgment XX

Judgment represents resurrection, choosing a new direction, a judgment of some type (legal decision, arbitration), repentance, apology, and possibly criticism. This card is often depicted with an Angel blowing his trumpet and the dead rising from the ground below him, reminiscent of "the last judgment".

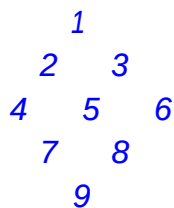
When you get this card in a reading it can indicate that a decision has been made or a course of action has been decided upon. It could indicate that you have decided to make a commitment to change, to repent or to right wrongs which you have committed or which have been committed against you. The planet associated with Judgment is Pluto (transformation, changes, the underworld, mysteries of life), the color red and the musical note C.

Creating your own Spreads

Many readers create their own spreads. You can do this by modifying an existing spread, or design your own from scratch. Gail Fairfield in "Choice Centered Tarot" provides some useful guidelines for designing your own spreads, which I have borrowed from for this lesson. First you have to decide what you want to know in general terms. Tarot questions are best framed with the words "what, why or how" rather than questions that have yes/no answers. Once you have decided what you want to know in general, break it down into specific things you want to know about the general area. Then design a spread to answer those specific questions. Determine the number of cards you want for each question, the total number of card the spread will contain and a shape for it if you like your spreads to have a particular shape. I like to base spreads on a "past, present future theme" asking what past events have been important in this issue, where do things stand now and where are things likely to head if no action is taken to change them. I might also ask what I can do to influence events and what effects those actions will have on the outcome. I might throw from one to three cards for each question, with more for clarification if needed. Fairfield provides the following summary for designing a spread:

1. *Discuss/brainstorm what the person wants to know in the form of questions or issues.*
2. *Organize what they want to know in a list of questions or issues.*
3. *Make adjustments to the questions/issues as needed adding new ones or rewording what you have, until you and the readee both feel that you have the appropriate questions and issues identified.*
4. *Draw out a layout plan for addressing the issues and questions, deciding how many cards should be allocated for each one and deciding on a design shape that appeals to both of you.*
5. *Number the layout positions on your plan.*

The Blues Spread



Card 1 - Who I am right at this moment

Cards 2 & 3 - Why I'm feeling blue - the actual events that have made me feel this way or the thought processes which have led me to this mood.

Cards 4,5 & 6 - Additional factors contributing to this mood - additional issues that are contributing to this down feeling

Cards 7 & 8 - Activities for myself - things I can do right now to improve this mood or take my mind off it

Card 9 - What I can look forward to or hope for - A thought about the future to focus on, a dream or wish for the future.

Cards 7 & 8 are especially important for me because when I feel down, my first

impulse is to go shopping! This spread has spared my checkbook more than once

The World XXI

The World represents the closing of a chapter and the start of a new one, completion, victory over obstacles, freedom, and infinite potential. This card is usually depicted as a woman dancing joyously in a wreath of some sort. When you get this card in a reading it indicates that everything is falling into place for you, things will come to a successful conclusion and end on a positive note. The planet associate with The World is Saturn (loyalty, self discipline, hard work), the color blue-violet and the musical note A.

A few more Spreads

The Horseshoe Spread

- 3
 2 4
 1 5
- 1 - Present position;
 - 2 - Present expectations;
 - 3 - The unexpected;
 - 4 - The immediate future;
 - 5 - Long term future.

This is a short and simple spread that can be modified by adding more cards to each position. This is one of many, many Horseshoe shaped spreads.

The Six Card Cross

- 6
 5 1,2 3
 4

Cards 1 and two are laid out like the Celtic Cross, with card 2 crossing card 1.

- 1 - The role the questioner plays in the current situation;
- 2 - The true nature of the situation;
- 3 - What created it;
- 4 - How it affects the questioner;
- 5 - Where it can lead;
- 6 - The key to the situation.

Four Card Spread

- 1

3 4
2

- 1 - One aspect or force at work in the situation;
- 2 - Another aspect or force at work;
- 3 - Critical assessment of the situation or attitude toward it;
- 4 - Decision based on all factors; prognosis.

The 5 Pointed Star Prosperity Spread

3
2 4
1
6 5

- 1 - What the universe can contribute to the querent's needs;
- 2 - What can help the questioner be relaxed and at ease;
- 3 - What will bring prosperity and contentment;
- 4 - What will counterbalance the questioner's negative feelings;
- 5 - What can provide rewards, positive feedback, reinforcement;
- 6 - What prosperity could mean to the questioner.

The Fool 0

The Fool represents being open to new experiences, spontaneity, curiosity, enthusiasm and innocence. The Fool is usually shown as a youth on a journey, knapsack thrown over his shoulder on a stick and sometimes ready to take a step off of a cliff. There is some disagreement about the Fool's sequence in the deck. Some authors feel it is card), some feel it belongs between cards 21 and 22, and some feel that it is unnumbered and has no special sequence in the Majors. The Fool has faith and trust in the Universe. He knows that he will be provided for and that things will work themselves out along the way. When you get this card in a reading, it indicates that you are ready to embark on a journey of your own. You want to explore the world and discover it's secrets. You are ready for a change and open to new experiences and ideas. The planet associated with the Fool is Uranus (tears down established systems, individualistic, independent, progressive), the color pale yellow and the musical note E.

Summary

This is the last lesson in the course, but I hope it is not the last Tarot study you do. This course presents the ideas of myself and others. If you continue your Tarot studies you will formulate your own ideas over time which will be just as valid, in fact more valid than the ones presented here or in any other class or book. Tarot is a fascinating tool which will reward the time you invest in study and practice by allowing you to get in touch with yourself and the universe around you. There are so many books, decks and ideas about Tarot that you can never exhaust them or get through them all. I find it a challenging discipline, but one that never ceases to fascinate and amaze me. If nothing else, I hope this course has sparked your curiosity and thirst for more.

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Tarot Cards for Spells

INTRODUCTION

This page is not an introduction to the tarot for readings. It is rather a manual for the person who tends to put the tarot cards to use for spells. It is a how-to page where you will find exact instruction on how to set up the tarot cards to get the desired effect.

Most people know the tarot only as a tool for divination. Each of the tarot cards represents a field of experience and/or a function in life. In a tarot reading you shuffle the cards then you lay them out in a specific manner such as the celtic cross method or the tree of life method. Then you judge each card by its position in the layout and how it relates to the other cards. From this you can then divine important facts about the person for whom you are reading.

All the following is about tarot spells.

When you give a tarot reading you channel energies from the universe towards yourself. You use the cards as indicators of what the universe tells you. If you do a spell with the tarot you use the cards as energy filters. They represent the energies that you are about to send off. I have mentioned above that each tarot card is a archetypal symbol that represents a field of experience or a function or an idea. To combine tarot cards means to combine ideas. Consequently the tarot cards are an ideal tool to creatively act upon your universe in magical operations.

A magical operation is any action at a distance that involves the use of structural links and life energy, or psychic power. Therefore, to be effective in magical work, you need a source of life energy, a psychic link to the target of your magical operation (unless the target of the magical operation is present), and a structural link that represents the specific action that you desire. The success of every magical work depends on these three key factors.

** The better the psychic link to your target is, the easier you can influence it with a magical operation, or spell. Psychic links for targetting are structural links that are near identical with the target. Hair and fingernails contain genetic code that is unique for every individual, therefore, these items are an excellent structural or psychic link to the target. This genetic code allows you to connect with every cell in the body of the target person. Clothing has a similar effect. This is so because clothing has skin rubbings in it even after it went through the washer and drier. Other good psychic links with the target are visualization, the writing down of the name (which involves visualiztion), and radionic settings. These psychic links are not of the identical kind, but of an "equivalent nature."*

Equivalent structural links are an excellent substitute in cases where near identical links are missing. Photos are somewhat in between two extremes that we have just described. There is more information on structural links in the course Magic of the Future.

** For a strong effect of the spell, you need a strong source of life energy. Many magicians create their own energy as they need it. The creating of psychic energy, or life energy, is an integral part of every magical ritual. Magicians use a variety of methods to create life energy. These methods range from chanting, dancing, sex magical practices, and processes of visualization all the way to the sacrificing of animals. A most effective way to generate life energy continuously is the Welz Generator which we promote highly here (see Gadgets & Gizmos).*

** The third, equally important, factor is the "energy filter." This energy filter is a structural representation of a desired action or of an energy (entity) that works toward a desired result. The structural link to the action, or energy filter, needs to be a correct representation of the intention of the magician. Otherwise the spell may not be effective or it may have an unexpected outcome. (We will be using tarot cards as our "energy filters").*

For all these reasons, to be a good magician means years of training, practice and study.

Many of the spell books on the market make the task of casting effective spells seem easy. However all too often would-be magicians get only meager results. This is so because they are not capable of creating the psychic connection with the target or they cannot generate a sufficiently large amount of psychic energy for the spell.

With the invention of the WELZ GENERATOR this situation has changed dramatically. Now even a beginner can cast effective spells. The Welz Generator creates sufficient psychic energy to lock on to the target, and to actively effect the outcome of every spell AT THE TURN OF A DIAL!

To do magical work successfully you need to have the following:

- * A good structural link to the target of your work.*
- * A good power source for life energy.*
- * An appropriate filter that correctly represents the energy that you send to the target of your work.*

It is up to you to find a good structural link. It may be hair, a photo, or a transfer design that the person whom you help carries with him/her. For the life energy you have one of the Welz Generators, or energy charged within some sort of battery such as a crystal.

[Image] The Tarot Spells

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