

TAROT of DREAMS GUIDEBOOK



by LEE BURSTEN



U.S. GAMES SYSTEMS, INC.

THE TAROT OF DREAMS GUIDEBOOK



Written by Lee Bursten



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INTRODUCTION

A charioteer coalesces out of sea foam. A hooded tree-woman holds a glowing infant. An emperor looms over an unreal city, grasping poles of light. A sun god juggles planets.

If we are new to tarot, what do these beautiful, but odd, images mean? If we are familiar with tarot, how do these images fit into standard tarot paradigms? What do they bring to the table besides appealing artwork? Why should we use this deck and not another?

Asking these questions is like approaching a closed, locked door. To open the door and explore the vistas behind it, we need a key. In this case, the key is the title: *Tarot of Dreams*.

We don't mean daydreams or fantasies. We mean actual dreams—the ones that take you into another world when you sleep.

According to modern dream theory, what we perceive as dreaming is caused by activation or electrical stimulation of certain centers of the brain when we sleep. Those centers that control visualization and emotion are activated, but not the ones that control reasoning and orientation, and this accounts for the bizarre and fragmentary nature of our dreams. According to this theory, the reason we dream is to allow our memory systems to perform a sort of self-maintenance, dumping old memories and integrating new ones. So, dreams need not be interpreted as our subconscious trying to send us messages, but instead can be seen as fragments that have been randomly activated out of the complex web of visual and emotional association that belongs to each of us.

Those who look to dreams for divinatory insights might find such an explanation highly unsatisfactory. But there is actually a very interesting parallel between this theory and the tarot. According to the theory, the content of dreams isn't the result of deep psychological processes. But we can certainly use the vivid and irrational content of dreams as a means by which to gain a new perspective on ourselves and the world around us, to examine that web of associations which lies just beneath the surface of conscious thought. In fact, the vividness and irrationality of dreams makes them ideal tools for this purpose, because they shock

us out of conventional thought patterns. These reasonable, rational, “normal” thought patterns help get us through the day, but aren’t much use if we want to deeply examine ourselves and our lives. And so we turn to dreams—and the tarot—for a fresh look.

The tarot deck presents us with 78 ready-made dream images, which are more efficient self-exploration tools than the difficult-to-remember and fragmentary episodes that permeate our sleep. And because tarot cards remind us of fairy tales, myths, legends, persons, places and things that are familiar to us because of our shared experiences as humans, they are more deeply and universally satisfying than dream fragments could ever be.

Another advantage is found in the structure of the tarot deck, as opposed to the characteristic lack of structure found in dreams. In tarot, 22 images represent major life-changing forces and irresistible archetypes; 16 images provide personality types, and patterns of behavior; and 40 images show us the ups and downs of daily life. As an overarching pattern, we will focus on the 22 Major Arcana as a journey of discovery, beginning with the Fool (card zero) starting out on his journey, and ending with the World (card 22), where the Fool integrates and synthesizes all he has learned in the intervening cards.

By laying out a random selection of cards and contemplating the result in light of the particular situation you wish to examine, the potential for wisdom and insight is limitless, restricted only by the natural resistance we all have to plumbing our own depths.

So far, we have referred to the tarot as a tool for self-exploration. But the universality of the tarot also allows us to use it to counsel others and assist them in their own self-exploration and self-empowerment. When a tarot reader and a querent experience a reading together, the tarot images are not specific to either person’s psyche, as dream fragments would be, but rather are universal to both. Thus, a therapeutic dialogue can be established and a story can be woven together with meaningful input from both parties.

The driving force behind the *Tarot of Dreams* was not the desire to illustrate a specific set of esoteric ideas or to draw parallels to specific

cultures or mythologies. Instead, Ciro wanted to express what each card means to him in an intensely personal and dynamic way that would allow the reader to experience a more immediate, visceral response than is generally possible with tarot decks. Put another way, the desire was to create a set of tarot images that would have the same impact as a suddenly-remembered dream.

For this reason, you will find many elements which are puzzling or which don't yield to rational analysis. In this book we'll discuss various possible interpretations for these elements, but their final interpretation lies with you, the reader. You'll find that some elements will be best left unexplained, and treated as a dream would be, as a numinous element in a story whose function transcends the rational. Nothing in tarot is absolute, and the answers are to be found in your own mind and heart... and in your dreams.

ESOTERIC SYMBOL SYSTEMS IN THE *TAROT OF DREAMS*

On the top corners of each of the 78 cards you'll see several symbols. These refer to correspondences with esoteric systems of Kabbalah, the four elements, and astrology. While these systems have been used since the 18th century to provide a framework within which to view the tarot, they have historically been used in different ways by different people.

The artist and author of the present work do not believe that there is a single "correct" system of esoteric attributions, and we encourage interested readers to experiment with different systems. However, it can sometimes help to have a baseline from which to start. For this reason we have provided specific esoteric symbols on the cards. You may decide to study our correspondences and to use them when reading the cards or meditating with them. You may decide, after a while, to experiment with different systems. Or you may decide to ignore them altogether. Each of these is a valid choice, and we hope that you won't hesitate to experiment and find what works for you.

The *Tarot of Dreams* follows the system of Kabbalistic and astrological attributions assigned to the cards by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. This particular system was used by the creators of the Rider-Waite-Smith deck and the Crowley Thoth deck, two of the most well-known and popular tarot decks. We felt this would provide a level of comfort and familiarity which would be welcome and useful when working with the *Tarot of Dreams*.

Thus, you will find the familiar astrological and Hebrew-letter attributions for each card. We have made two changes from the standard Golden Dawn assignments. First, the three "modern" planets (Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto) were not used by the Golden Dawn; they used elements on three of the Majors instead of planets. For the *Tarot of Dreams*, we have used the three modern planets rather than the elements used by the Golden Dawn. We have also added a Tree of Life card to the deck.

HEBREW LETTERS

Each Major Arcana card is given a Hebrew letter corresponding to the Golden Dawn assignment. Besides serving as letters of the alphabet, Hebrew letters are also words, and each word can be used to elucidate the meaning of a tarot trump.

Here is a list of the Hebrew letters and their assigned trumps:

Fool.....	א	Aleph (Ox)	Justice.....	ל	Lamed (Ox-goad)
Magician.....	ב	Beth (House)	Hanging Man	מ	Mem (Water)
Priestess	ג	Gimel (Camel)	Death.....	נ	Nun (Fish)
Empress	ד	Daleth (Door)	Temperance.....	ס	Samekh (Tent peg)
Emperor.....	ה	He (Window)	Devil.....	ע	Ayin (Eye)
Faith.....	ו	Vau (Nail)	Tower.....	פ	Peh (Mouth)
Lovers.....	ז	Zain (Sword)	Star.....	צ	Tzaddi (Fish-hook)
Chariot.....	ח	Cheth (Fence)	Moon.....	ק	Qoph (Back of the head)
Strength	ט	Teth (Serpent)	Sun.....	ר	Resh (Head)
Hermit	י	Yod (Hand)	Judgment.....	ש	Shin (Tooth)
Wheel.....	כ	Kaph (Palm)	World	ת	Au (Signature)

A description of each Hebrew letter as it relates to its assigned card can be found in the Major Arcana cards section.























ASTROLOGY

For the Majors, each card is assigned either a sign or a planet. There are 12 signs and 10 planets, so assigning a sign or a planet to each card results in one symbol for each of the 22 cards. As previously mentioned, the Golden Dawn did not use the three modern planets. Instead, for

those three cards they used three of the four elements. They had Kabbalistic reasons for doing so, as follows (those who are new to these subjects may wish to skip the following paragraph):

The Hebrew letters Aleph (Fool), Mem (Hanging Man) and Shin (Judgment) are what are referred to as Mother Letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and are correlated with Air, Water, and Fire. At the same time, there are seven Double Letters, which correspond to the seven planets of antiquity (Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn). That leaves the 12 Simple Letters to represent the 12 signs of the zodiac. After much consideration, I decided to violate this system in order to make use of the three modern planets, which will be more immediately useful to beginners than the Kabbalistic correspondences between astrology and Hebrew letters. For those who prefer the traditional attributions, feel free to ignore the astrological glyphs on the Fool, Hanging Man and Judgment cards.

Here is a list of the signs and planets and their assigned trumps:

Fool.....		Uranus	Justice.....		Libra
Magician.....		Mercury	Hanging Man.....		Neptune
Priestess.....		Moon	Death.....		Scorpio
Empress.....		Venus	Temperance.....		Sagittarius
Emperor.....		Aries	Devil.....		Capricorn
Faith.....		Taurus	Tower.....		Mars
Lovers.....		Gemini	Star.....		Aquarius
Chariot.....		Cancer	Moon.....		Pisces
Strength.....		Leo	Sun.....		Sun
Hermit.....		Virgo	Judgment.....		Pluto
Wheel.....		Jupiter	World.....		Saturn

For the numbered Minors (Two through Ten), the ancient system of the Decans has been used, in accordance with the Golden Dawn. The Decan system divides each sign into three equal parts, then assigns each part to a planet. Thus, each Decan consists of a sign and the planet which rules over that portion of the sign. For example:

2 OF WANDS

Mars ♂ in Aries ♈

For the Court cards, each of the Kings, Queens and Knights are assigned a zodiac sign. The Pages are assigned three signs each, according to the element of their suits. However, according to the Golden Dawn system, the Kings, Queens and Knights are not assigned a single sign, but rather are two-thirds one sign, and one-third another. For example:

KING OF WANDS

Two-thirds Sagittarius ♐ / one-third Scorpio ♏

In the Golden Dawn system, the Pages were assigned quadrants of the Zodiac. The Page of Coins was assigned the first three signs, Aries, Gemini, and Taurus, the Page of Wands was assigned the next three signs, Cancer, Leo, and Virgo, et cetera.

A description of the astrological glyphs as they relate to their assigned cards can be found in the Cards section.

The Court cards show the standard elemental symbols.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MAJOR ARCANA

Modern tarot interpretation has placed great stock in seeing the Major Arcana as a sequential journey or voyage of consciousness, from the Fool in his innocent and undifferentiated state, to the World as the epitome of self-awareness. In this model, the voyage does not end with the World. Instead, like the circle described by the shape of the Fool's number (0), the journey starts at the beginning again, but on a new level, so that in three-dimensional terms the journey would be seen more like a spiral. This is the interpretive model we will follow, and in fact the Fool and the World cards of the *Tarot of Dreams* are specifically designed with this in mind, as we shall see.

What follows is one possible version of the voyage of the Fool:

0 Fool is our protagonist. With complete faith in himself and the world around him, he clothes himself in bright satin and prepares to embark on his journey. He is the very picture of foolish optimism. He is us.

In **I Magician** and **II Priestess**, the Fool meets his inner guides. The Magician represents that part of him that looks out for opportunities to learn and to navigate the world to his advantage. The Priestess is his intuitive sense, that inner voice which we must quiet ourselves to hear. Without these two, the Fool would be incapable of proceeding on the voyage.

III Empress and **IV Emperor** are the Fool's archetypal parents. While the Magician and the Priestess tell the Fool about himself and his abilities, the Empress and Emperor teach him about the world and ways of perceiving it. The Empress shows the Fool how the world can be seen as a never-ending bounty of life and love. The Emperor shows him the world as a blank slate, ready to have order laid upon it.

V Faith (called the Pope or the Hierophant in other decks) and **VI Lovers** demonstrate different ways of relating. In Faith, the Fool begins developing a sense of meaning, which enables him to place his own and others' actions into context. In the Lovers, he begins learning to relate to others on a one-to-one basis.

VII Chariot shows the Fool in his adolescence, confident in his power as he ventures forth into the world.

In the next six cards, the Fool encounters and learns from various challenges that life throws at him. In **VIII Strength**, the Fool begins to be aware of an inner reserve of strength and self-preservation, which he can draw upon in times of need. In later cards, he'll encounter the darker sides of this energy. In **IX Hermit**, the Fool finds that his childish need for companionship and approval gives way to a need for solitude, the time and space required for inner development, rather than the outer adventuring shown in the Chariot.

X Wheel gives our Fool a vision of the world as a machine, and himself as a small cog in the wheel. **XI Justice** reminds him that in the face of the determinism revealed by the Wheel, there must be absolutes of right and wrong if life is to have meaning.

Times turn rough for the Fool in the next two cards. In **XII Hanging Man**, the Fool encounters delays, obstructions, and the necessity for patience and self-sacrifice. In **XIII Death**, the sacrifice increases as the Fool finds himself forced to surrender old self-images and to adapt to changing circumstances. In this troubled state, **XIV Temperance** appears like an angel, showing the Fool how to accomplish the necessary adaptation.

In the next two cards, it's out of the frying pan and into the fire. In **XV Devil**, the Fool must face his shadow self—a greedy and insatiable taskmaster who will imprison the Fool in his desires, if allowed to. In **XVI Tower**, the recognition and acknowledgement of this terrible truth about himself brings about a catastrophic destruction of the illusions he has so carefully built up in the previous cards.

In the Fool's darkest hour, **XVII Star** appears, soothing his pain and fear with the cooling waters of grace and hope. **XVIII Moon** shows a landscape that is disturbing and frightening but which ultimately embodies the creative potential the Fool will need in order to become self-aware. In **XIX Sun**, that new self-awareness shines forth. In **XX Judgment**, the Fool uses this self-awareness to open his eyes to a new, brilliant perception of the universe he inhabits.

Finally, in **XXI World**, the Fool has come full circle. He is now fully aware of how naive he was at the start of his voyage, yet how necessary that naivete had been in order to start him on his way. He now acknowledges his place in the universe, his existence as a part of a larger pattern. Soon he will be ready to embark on another voyage, and the sequence will begin anew.

THE MAJOR ARCANA

0 • FOOL

Being foolish, playing the fool, making fun of something. The beginning of an endeavor or journey. An unorthodox or nonconformist approach. Being a catalyst for change.

The key to the Fool card is its subversive quality. In dreams, our minds discard the everyday thought patterns and stylized behavior imprinted on us by society, leaving us with startling juxtapositions and illogical conclusions. Likewise, the Fool announces the start of the journey like a trumpet call from the land of dreams. In the *Tarot of Dreams*, one glance at the Fool lets us know to expect the unexpected. At the same time, the Fool is the protagonist of our story, the hero who will travel across the landscape of dreams and encounter each of the characters of the Major Arcana in turn. The first thing we notice is the Fool's odd anatomy. His wide hips give him a strangely androgynous quality. Next, we see that his face is not there, except for the eyes behind the mask. We might almost suspect him of being simply an empty set of clothes, except that he clearly has hands. He is simultaneously present and absent, making him a perfectly appropriate lead character in the series of dreams that is the Major Arcana.

The Fool is literally nothing, as shown by the empty face; and everything, as shown by the medals on his breast pocket—the Sun, the Moon and the Stars. The three astronomical bodies echo the sequence (Star, Moon, Sun) of the 17th through 19th cards of the Major Arcana. They also suggest the World card, which, as we shall see, is the mirror image of the Fool card, the beginning and end of the journey.

In his hand, the Fool holds a hoop and a crystal sphere containing the world. In his innocence he believes them to be merely stage-magic tricks. A metal hoop is a standard piece of equipment in a stage magician's repertoire, and the Fool holds it at his midsection, as if he has just produced the crystal globe out of it, suggesting that he could use it to create all manner of things.

Although the Fool is less than nothing, he carries within him the seeds or potentials of everything, and brings them forth in endless supply. He is the catalyst who brings about change in the world. As such, he must necessarily be considered subversive, for one can only create the totally new by ignoring or rebelling against the old.

The crystal globe suggests, again, the potential for everything that is hidden within the Fool, and is another reminder of his twin card, the World. The fact that the globe is made of crystal indicates the fragile quality of a new idea, powerful, yet easily crushed.

The shape of the Fool's waistcoat suggests a fish. Fish have often been used as symbols of thoughts and feelings coalescing out of the murky depths of the ocean of the subconscious. Perhaps this fish is about to leap off the Fool's chest, swim through the hoop, and manifest on the material plane as an idea or a feeling that comes to us seemingly out of the blue.

The Fool's posture is quite determined, yet he stands on a ball (decorated with the same celestial bodies seen on his breast pocket medals). This is a precarious stance at best, but all the more so considering that the Fool's confident balance could be so easily undone as the kitten stretches playfully for the butterfly. If it reaches too far, then kitten, ball and Fool will plunge into the waters below. Given the likelihood of this undignified outcome, the Fool's confident posture is all the more ridiculous. The precariousness of the Fool's position mirrors the precariousness we often feel when we strike out into the unknown.

The butterfly that so fascinates the kitten is also a symbol of change and emergence into the unknown, just as the caterpillar must break through the cocoon before it can stretch its wings.

A rainbow encircles the orange ball, like the rings of Saturn. This provides yet another link to the Fool's twin card, the World, whose astrological attribution is Saturn.

There is another reason for the absence of a face. The Fool's face is your own. The Fool's voyage is your voyage, and his journey through the sequence of the Majors is only an echo of your own journey through life. It's your own eyes that you see behind the Fool's mask.

HEBREW LETTER: א

Aleph means Ox. The ox is used to till the fields, preparing them for the introduction of seeds, which will eventually grow.

ASTROLOGY: ♄

Uranus is the planet of eccentricity, originality, and anarchy.



I • MAGICIAN

Education, training, knowledge, common sense, opportunities.

Translating thoughts and plans into action.

As the Fool embarks on his voyage, the first personage he encounters is the Magician. As soon as we are born, our minds immediately begin processing sensory input, drawing conclusions about it, and learning from it, and it is this function that the Magician represents. In the language of archetypes, he is the Wise Old Man (variations of which we will encounter in a few different cards). As the Magician, he is the Teacher, the Mentor, who gives invaluable advice as we set out on our individual quest. In a reading, the Magician can represent a person who performs this function in our lives. On a more personal level, we rely on our inner Magician to help us learn new skills and abilities and to recognize opportunities. Often this happens on such a deep level that the realization or learning seems to come in a flash of inspiration, as if a real live Magician had zapped it into our heads.

And that's one way to begin to approach the *Tarot of Dreams* Magician. His sphere of power illuminates for us the four suit symbols, signifying different approaches to problem solving. Lightning crackles around the sphere, illustrating that very flash of inspiration that seems to leap into our minds just when we are at wit's end. His eyes are tired and kind, yet they also display a steely determination to shepherd the recalcitrant student toward the insights that await, if only we can apply the will and self-discipline needed to attain them.

The four suit symbols—Wand, Cup, Sword and Coin— symbolize different ways of perception, or different methods of action. Wands alert us to take an active role, to be creative, and to forge ahead despite difficulties. Cups murmur to us to consider others' feelings and to examine our own, and to take an intuitive approach. Swords propose that we analyze the situation. And Coins tell us that we need to consider the consequences to our actions, the material results that we will be left with. Any situation will require a combination of some or all of these modes of action, and the Magician, whether as another person or as our own inner faculties, can help us choose the right mixture for the job.

The necessity to be flexible in choosing one suit energy over another and combining them according to the task at hand is shown by the pink infinity symbol (the sideways 8) floating between the suit symbols. Like the shape of the symbol itself, we must be able to bend and twist our approach as circumstances change (this theme will reappear in more depth in the Temperance card). The infinity symbol also tells us that the ability to learn from our mistakes and to find inspiration is always with us, even in the darkest times.

The Magician's throne sits on a stone disk, which floats above the clouds, showing us that he is not grounded in any particular place or time. On an inner level, we can always learn from our surroundings and circumstances and devise new ways of dealing with them. On an outer level, our capacity to learn from a teacher or mentor does not stop at childhood, but can be invoked at any time, no matter our age, whenever we meet someone who knows something we would like to learn. The floating disk also reminds us to avoid being too set in our ways, and to remember the flexibility and adaptability needed in order to fully implement the Magician's teachings.

In his hands he holds a long staff, topped with a complicated curling design. If the curls are seen as snakes, then the staff is reminiscent of the caduceus, which in ancient Greek symbology represents a herald. The Magician could certainly be seen as a herald, bringing us word of conclusions reached by subconscious processes in our minds. The caduceus is also a common symbol for Hermes, messenger god of the ancient Greeks,

whom the Romans called Mercury. Mercury is the astrological symbol assigned to the Magician in this and many other decks. In astrology, the planet Mercury symbolizes communication and the actions of the mind. Hermes also serves as a guide of souls or psychopomp, who upon our deaths escorts us to the afterlife. This theme is echoed in several examples of the Wise Old Man/Teacher archetype in popular culture, where at the end of the quest, the teacher reappears to guide his former student to a new plane of existence.

HEBREW LETTER:

Beth means House. The Magician allows us to begin building a rudimentary mental dwelling from which we can observe and learn from the world.

ASTROLOGY:

Mercury is the planet of thinking and communicating.



II • PRIESTESS

Intuitive insight. Reconciling of opposites. An indirect approach.

Withdrawal from everyday activities.

Under a hazy night sky, the Priestess sits in her temple drawing down some mysterious force from the moon. As he watches her, the Fool can see the moonlight literally descending upon her, and stars, suns, and moons nestle in her hair. Her moon-shaped headgear provides a powerful sympathetic magic.

We all know that there is more to our selves than our conscious minds can perceive. When we find ourselves making an unexpected emotional outburst, or when an image that we come across seems to speak to us in startling ways (as tarot cards can do), then we know that there are currents beneath the surface of our conscious minds. But the structure of our minds prevents us from apprehending these currents directly. How

can we ever hope to see what we are incapable of seeing? The answer is the Priestess. She allows communication to travel back and forth between the conscious and unconscious worlds, and she maintains the integrity of both worlds by sharply limiting and filtering that communication. This is why the material we receive from our subconscious speaks in riddles, dreams, and metaphors.

The two pillars on the card represent duality, as do the different colored spheres atop the pillars. Duality is the way our conscious minds are structured, and how our minds, in turn, structure our perceptions. From the time we are born, we learn to categorize everything we perceive: good or bad, pleasurable or painful, light or dark. Later in life, the categories grow more sophisticated, but the dualities remain: responsible or carefree, well- or ill-intentioned, passive or aggressive. These distinctions make it possible for us to live in and make our way in this world. But they are a hindrance if we want to navigate our way through the subconscious, whose nature reflects the primordial, murky waters of oneness rather than the sharply delineated opposites of everyday, waking life.

The Priestess's eyes are closed, shutting herself off from the sensory input that threatens to seduce her back into the conscious world. She has her back to the pillars, indicating that she has gone beyond the dualities. She has stepped through them, as if they were merely a doorway to different kinds of perception. Significantly, she holds her intricate lens so that it frames her heart chakra. The heart chakra reconciles opposites, bringing them together into an organic whole and healing the rift between them. Thus, we experience the Priestess's energy as a calming one. The night and the moon on this card symbolize the uncertainty and uneasiness that our conscious minds feel when faced with evidence of the existence of the subconscious. In order to enter the waters of the subconscious, the Priestess (or that part of our mind which she represents) must embrace the symbols of night and moon. Then, when she has relaxed and allowed subconscious material to permeate her being, she will turn to us and hold up her magic lens, through which we can catch a few hints of intuitive insight.

HEBREW LETTER: ך

Gimel means Camel. A camel is used to cross desert regions, in the same way that the Priestess helps us cross the gulf between the conscious and the subconscious.

ASTROLOGY: ☾

The Moon is the planet of the subconscious mind.



III • EMPRESS

Motherhood and the mothering principle; nurturing, protecting, raising, growing. Giving birth to a child, a project, or an idea. Creation. Self-care.

After his stay in the Priestess's quiet temple, the Fool emerges into the light of day and finds the Empress. She is a dryad or wood nymph, a female spirit who inhabits a tree. In the card she seems half-woman, half-tree, and the change from woman to tree is so gradual that one can't define precisely where the one leaves off and the other begins. In her hands she reverently holds a glowing infant.

The best way to approach the Empress is to contrast her with the cards on either side of her in the sequence, the Priestess on the one side and the Emperor on the other.

While the Priestess's temple sits in perpetual twilight, the Empress dwells in a forest clearing in the daytime, although the light is still a bit muted as it filters through the trees. The Priestess needs silence before she can attune herself to the mysteries of the unseen, but the Empress enjoys the activity of the forest, the hustle and bustle of the various woodland creatures that inhabit it. While the Priestess integrates opposites into a whole, which can only be intuitively sensed, the Empress brings forth her creations into the light of day. The Priestess would represent conception and gestation, when the strands of being begin to knit together in their mysterious fashion, hidden in the womb. The Empress is the birth finally made manifest.

The Emperor, on the other hand, represents the stabilizing effects of civilization: straight roads, buildings, monuments, armies in formation. While the Emperor is the ordering principle, the Empress is the growing principle. Life emanates from the Empress, in the same way that it emanates from the Fool's hoop. The Emperor takes that life and gives it shape and form so that it may exist efficiently. The Empress symbolizes the simple fact of wheat growing in a field. The Emperor provides the orderly planting of the seeds in rows, and the harvesting of the stalks when they are grown. Both energies are necessary if life is to exist.

The Empress represents a very strong and easily understood archetype—the Mother. Anything maternal would fall under this card's purview, both your mother and your own mothering abilities. And this energy applies as much to men as women. (All the cards, in fact, can apply to anyone regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation.)

But it need not apply only to literal motherhood. It could indicate gardening or landscaping. It could represent a creative project that must be carefully nurtured and protected.

As Mother Nature, the Empress has been worshipped since before recorded time as the source of nature's bounty, and at the same time feared for her destructive rages. Thus, this card (like every card) has a dark side. That which has the power to create also has the power to destroy. And while the Empress always encourages growth, she does not always encourage individuality. Her maternal instinct is to keep her creations close to her.

Sometimes this card can simply mean that you need to take better care of yourself, and to make sure that you aren't denying yourself the creature comforts we all need occasionally.

HEBREW LETTER: 7

Daleth means Door. A creation must pass through one or several doors, literally or metaphorically, as it leaves its place of gestation and manifests in the world.

ASTROLOGY: ♀

Venus is the planet of marriage and female reproductive organs.



IV • EMPEROR

Fatherhood and the fathering principle. Authority. Laws and regulations.

Social and government institutions. Social responsibility. Tyranny.

On the Emperor card, we see a dream city, complete with buildings, towers, and avenues lined with trees. Looming over the city is a powerful male figure, who holds two scepters. Each of these is topped with a glowing spiral, which shows us the object of his allegiance and also the ultimate source of his power: the regenerative power of life itself. We can also deduce this from the sun-like spheres atop the spirals, and from the sunburst pattern on his breastplate.

The Emperor is quite a solid-looking figure, yet at the same time he seems a bit unreal, almost as if he is being projected onto the night sky from the city below. Thus, he doesn't really represent one specific person as much as he does a concept. The Emperor is a graphic and archetypal representation of the civic functions of society.

The Emperor asks us to examine the role of power in our lives. How effective are we in dealing, as we all must, with institutions and powerful people? In what parts of our own lives are we exerting appropriate power, and in which areas are we abdicating our proper roles through a reluctance to use power?

As we all know, power can be misused. The laws can be biased, the institutions can be self-serving, the army can engage in wars whose sole purpose is to increase the size of the army. In the end, a nation can be reduced to a barren wasteland if the Emperor goes too far. Likewise, in our own lives, we can become tyrannical or dictatorial, or allow others to wield this power over us.

On a deeper level, we must acknowledge that power is neither all good nor all evil, but is always a mixture of the two. The military action

that protects the public also results in civilian casualties. To be a leader is to perpetually make judgments about who or what should benefit, and who or what should be sacrificed. But a leader's role is not simply to increase the power of the powerful. He or she is also a steward for the powerless and vulnerable.

As the Emperor of the *Tarot of Dreams* holds out his scepters of power to us, he seems to be encouraging us to take hold of and use our own power, and to carefully consider the ramifications of that use.

HEBREW LETTER: ך

He means Window. Just as a landscape appears more ordered and organized when seen through a window, so the Emperor sees the potential for organization and structure in all things.

ASTROLOGY: ♈

Aries is the sign of pioneers who venture into untamed territory in order to impose civilization and structure.

V • FAITH

Believing deeply in something. Finding meaning above and beyond the material world. Ethics and morality. Philosophy. Religious teachings and traditions. A conceptual framework against which things can be placed in context.

In the preceding cards, the Fool has discovered the underpinnings of consciousness. The Magician and the Priestess provide mechanisms which enable him to function in the world, while the Empress and Emperor teach him rudimentary ways of seeing that world. But as these mechanisms grow in sophistication and complexity, they also present multiplying challenges. Under the Magician's tutelage, we may fall prey to unscrupulous mentors. The Priestess may mislead us with illusions, chimeras and wishful thinking. The Empress can smother and stifle our individuality, and the Emperor can exemplify the worst that humanity has to offer, as evidenced by mankind's tragic history.

To avoid succumbing to the endless dangers inherent in the previous four cards, the Fool must now develop a larger sense of meaning that supersedes the imperatives of the Empress and Emperor. This sense is usually thought of as religious in nature, although, as we shall see, it need not encompass a specific religious ideology. This sense of meaning is what allows us to develop a feeling for concepts of right and wrong, which can help keep the worst excesses of the previous cards at bay. It gives us a sense of balance, so we can apportion the energies of the previous cards even-handedly. The sense of meaning shown by the Faith card can comfort us in difficult times, by giving us a higher ideal to believe in, to make us feel as if our lives have a larger purpose.

On the card, a robed figure clasps his hands in contemplation. In most tarot decks, this card is called the Pope or the Hierophant, and shows a specifically male leader, often of a specific religion. In this card, a generic figure was chosen to represent the concept of faith, without tying it to a specific gender or religion. The figure's robes could be emblematic of any of several religions, or none. One may have faith in a code of ethics or an ideal way of being without necessarily believing in the supernatural. Although some religious orders require shaving one's head, in this card the baldness may simply have occurred naturally, and in any event, symbolizes an openness to larger considerations than the mundane world.

The Faith card represents that part of ourselves which is capable of placing the events, thoughts and emotions of our lives into a greater context, giving pattern and structure to them and providing a framework with which to place them in a context. This can include traditional religions and their trappings, but can also include personal philosophies and beliefs that are unconnected with what we usually think of as "religion."

While this card helps us deal with the shadow elements of the other cards, Faith has its own shadows. The human tendency to avoid change leads us to invest our moral frameworks with the aura of infallibility, thus leading to bias and prejudice, which leads to bigotry. Much insight can be gained by carefully observing the actions of the leaders of organizations with even the most enlightened-seeming goals. Undoubtedly, you'll find

that at least a few of them demonstrate intolerance, inflexibility, and a desire to use others' faith as a pawn to gain personal power.

It is partly for this reason that the nine symbols shown on the card are spaced evenly around the image and are connected by a glowing circle. No one outlook or framework can possibly define or explain the whole of reality. Each religion or philosophy is one facet out of endless possibilities, and none can lay claim to infallibility or exclusivity.

HEBREW LETTER: ך

Vau means Nail. In the Faith card we seek to "nail down" philosophies and beliefs through intellectual means. As a nail penetrates, so we attempt to penetrate the unknown through the power of conscious thought.

ASTROLOGY: ♉

Taurus is the sign of creating practical, conservative routines. This relates to the aspects of Faith that deal with creating and then remaining faithful to frameworks and structures of meaning.



VI • LOVERS

A relationship of any kind, or specifically a love relationship. Sharing one's viewpoint with another, successfully or unsuccessfully. Revealing vulnerabilities.

A partially-revealed mystery. Attraction of opposites.

Having assembled the building blocks of his personality in the previous cards, the Fool is now ready for the final piece that enables him to interact with others. In the *Tarot of Dreams*, that interaction is symbolized by an intimate pair of lovers. Of course the entire gamut of relationships may be referred to, not just romance. Any situation in which two or more people are dealing with each other can be represented by this card.

A love relationship is used to illustrate this concept because a love affair encompasses all the tendencies and feelings that occur in any

human relationship, but in a heightened and more dramatic way. Thus, all the small and large kindnesses, sacrifices, petty jealousies, and insecurities that characterize a platonic friendship or business relationship are magnified in a romance. Any sharing of oneself with another can be painful; we're forced to consider someone else's point of view rather than our own. But each time we do so, we emerge with a broadened consciousness and a deeper and more sophisticated worldview.

On this card we see the eponymous Lovers in a scene of physical intimacy. They do not look at each other; both the woman's and the man's eyes are closed. Thus, even though they are pressed together, there is still a barrier between them. No matter how close two people may feel, they still have two separate minds locked away inside two different heads, and thus there will always be a barrier between them, which they can never breach. The story of human relationship is imbued with heroism, because despite these barriers, we still manage to work with, like, and love each other. While the wall cannot be breached, it can be transcended; and this is the miracle and the poignancy of the human condition.

The Lovers are nude. Nudity itself can symbolize being honest with each other, the "naked truth," exposing one's vulnerabilities and dropping one's defenses. Again, this need not relate to an amorous relationship; in a business relationship, for example, it could simply refer to the two parties being honest and above-board with each other.

Our Lovers are seen through diaphanous curtains being blown open by a breeze. The seed or heart of a relationship, particularly a love relationship, is difficult to examine in strictly rational terms. The mystery of love is just that, a mystery. We can appreciate it, talk about it, use it as inspiration for art, be thankful for the sense of grace it bestows upon our lives; but at a certain point, we must let the gauzy curtains close back over it, so that we don't chase it away altogether.

Through the window we can barely see the beginning of dawn breaking. Day and night are opposites, and any relationship must contain a certain amount of opposition in order to succeed. The "attraction of opposites" is a cliché, but a true one. Even when two people seem to be

very similar, there are always differences under the surface to provide depth and an opportunity for growth.

There are six lit candles shown on the card. The couple has lit these candles as a way of creating a sacred space for themselves. To the more spiritually inclined, the candles could represent divine grace, a generous blessing upon the couple from a higher reality. Traditional tarot decks show an angel hovering above the couple, and the same set of associations could apply to the small, warm pools of light created by the candle flames.

HEBREW LETTER: **ז**

Zain means Sword. The sword represents that aspect of human relationships that always maintains a barrier between any two people, so that complete union, which seems always in reach, is never quite attained.

ASTROLOGY: **♊**

Gemini is the sign of communication between people, and of understanding the relationships between things.



VII • CHARIOT

*A confident approach to life. Willpower. A youthful, inexperienced energy.
Pride and arrogance. Anger caused by insecurity.*

Now that the Fool has explored each major personality component in turn, he is finally ready to set off on his voyage. His vehicle is his personality, or *persona* (Latin for “mask”), the term used in archetypal psychology to denote how one presents oneself to the world. In the Chariot card, this vehicle is a literal vehicle—a chariot. Each of the previous cards serves as a component in the chariot’s construction. However, the previous cards are not simply static concepts. They are also energies, and these energies have their own preferred directions and agendas, which often contradict each other. The cards as concepts are represented by the chariot, but the cards as energies are represented

by the horses. Together, these energies pull the chariot forward, but left unguided they would pull the chariot apart. Therefore the charioteer, representing that part of you that is most quintessentially You, must hold fast to the reins and use the horses' energies to move the chariot forward in the direction he chooses.

In the *Tarot of Dreams*, chariot, charioteer, and horses all emerge from an ocean wave. White horses arising out of sea foam are frequently used as a poetic image, and in fact "white horses" is a meteorological term for white-capped waves. The image is perfect for the Chariot card, because we actually see the personality in the very act of coalescing out of a turbulent sea (a common symbol for the subconscious).

The charioteer's stance effectively shows his attitude of strength, pride, adventurousness, and perhaps a bit of arrogance as he sets forth on his journey. It must be remembered that the charioteer has only just recently assembled his personality and decided on a direction for his journey, and he is certainly not a seasoned or mature traveler. He might be likened to an adolescent, confident in his newfound stature but lacking in the experience that leads to wisdom. Perhaps the best definition of a mature person is one who knows that he does not know. The charioteer has not yet attained this self-knowledge of his own ignorance. The true value of the charioteer lies in his indomitable willpower, his belief in his own ability to move forward and succeed, despite obstacles and his own insecurities. His is a powerful, optimistic energy that is always available to us.

The structure in the background symbolizes the Fool's first attempts at constructing his own mental framework. He does not yet have the power of the Emperor to create an entire city, yet the structure is still impressive in its own way. These are the Fool's first attempts at placing things in context, at assembling a mental map that will enable him to navigate his way through life. A blue jewel shines atop the structure, like a sun. This is a clue that the scene we are witnessing is not meant to illustrate concrete reality, but is rather, like all the cards, a dreamscape illustrating the inner workings of our own psyches.

HEBREW LETTER: ן

Cheth means Fence. Like the chariot, a fence is a structure designed to contain and give shape and protection to what is inside.

ASTROLOGY: ♋

Cancer is the sign of domestic security. This might seem a poor fit with the martial image of a chariot, but not when one considers that patriotism and protection of the home are often motivating factors behind the desire to venture out into the world.



VIII • STRENGTH

Adrenaline, the “fight or flight” response. Channeling inner desires into positive outlets. A balance between civilization and the inner beast.

After the first seven cards, the Fool's voyage now enters a deeper phase. The Fool must now take all the lessons he has learned so far and apply them to the problems and challenges that we all face at some time in our lives, some of them over and over again.

In Strength, the Fool must acknowledge the existence of a power within him that embodies great strength but that also seems to have a mind and desires of its own. This theme is familiar from the previous card, the Chariot, with its powerful, yet willful horses.

In fact, the Chariot, Strength, and a third card, the Devil, form a triumvirate with a common theme. Each deals with an ambivalent inner force that can help us but also has the potential for great harm if we don't harness it properly. This card shows Strength as a tiger that has been mastered by a woman. In biological terms, the tiger would represent adrenaline, a hormone that increases heart rate and blood pressure, triggered by mental or physical stress. This helps us deal with crisis situations by putting the body in a “fight or flight” mode, where it can perform feats it would normally be incapable of. The end result may be fortunate or unfortunate, depending on the circumstances. In one case, you might find yourself lifting the front end of a car to rescue someone

trapped underneath. In another case, you might find yourself physically attacking someone simply because you're angry at them. It's important to understand that the inner tiger doesn't make a moral distinction between these two situations. That's why we have a counterbalancing element in our psyches—the woman on the card, who controls the tiger (as shown by the chain which encircles it) and is able to use its energy constructively, while keeping it reigned in when appropriate.

Balance is a key issue when dealing with the energies shown on this card. If we let the tiger have its way, there will obviously be many unfortunate outcomes, as we'll see later in the Devil card.

The woman on the card is a person of great beauty, self-possession and strength of character. She is adorned with stars and her face bears the elemental sign of Fire. The moon hanging from her ear suggests she controls the tiger from her intuitive center. She is a powerful figure yet she dominates the tiger not by brute strength, but by intelligence, sympathy, and love, and provides a civilizing influence to tame the beast.

HEBREW LETTER: ט

Teth means Serpent. The serpent here represents the same untamed, animal energy symbolized by the tiger.

ASTROLOGY: ♌

Leo is the sign of physical strength, as well as dominating and dramatic energies.



IX • HERMIT

Self-imposed isolation and seclusion. Separating oneself from a situation to gain perspective. Meditation and self-examination. Seclusion as a form of escapism.

At this point in the sequence, the Fool realizes that there are so many voices clamoring inside his head that he needs to halt his journey and sort out the confusion. And so he finds a place where he can focus on

his inner explorations undisturbed.

At its most basic level the Hermit means isolation, usually self-imposed. Even the most gregarious among us need some “down time” to recharge their social batteries. Then there are those who are intro-spective by nature, and for them this card is more an illustration of their essential being.

This card has some superficial similarities to both the Priestess and Faith cards. All three cards show an individual who is alone and who is searching for enlightenment. The kinds of enlightenment they search for, however, differ. The Priestess ritualistically opens herself up to receive input from the subconscious. The figure on the Faith card endeavors to place his or her observations into a moral framework, whether religious, spiritual or ethical, and to find some guiding principle or ultimate truth to believe in.

The Hermit, on the other hand, is engaged in a strictly rational, empirical activity. He is contemplating his own actions, thoughts and feelings, in an effort to gain wisdom. He isolates himself in order to gain perspective on his situation. The isolation is usually more effective when it requires some effort to achieve it, and thus on the card we see that the Hermit must have gone to some trouble to attain his position. On the card, a bearded man in robes sits on a rocky promontory. His long beard suggests that he has been sitting there a long, long time. His white robes signify the purity of his attention as he focuses it on his own psyche. Significantly, the rock he sits on juts out over a deep valley, symbolizing that while he probes his own mind with a surgeon's skill and focus, he also holds himself apart from it, unlike the Priestess who submerges herself in it.

The Hermit's lantern is a wand topped with a radiant jewel. The jewel represents the illuminating power of the conscious mind. With this lantern, the Hermit brings light to the shadowy corners of his mind and penetrates its mysteries.

As with all the cards, the energy shown on the Hermit can be over-done. When one finds oneself using seclusion or meditation as an escape rather than an exploration, then it is time to use our Hermit energy to

discover why we're behaving this way. This card should be a tool to help us on the road of life, but it's not the end of the road.

HEBREW LETTER: ך

Yod means Hand. The Hermit has left behind devices and tools, and instead relies wholly on himself to reach his goal, just as there have been actual hermits who forsake the use of man-made tools and rely only on their own hands for survival.

ASTROLOGY: ♍

Virgo is the sign of careful, deliberate and prudent thought and action.



X • WHEEL

Change. A mechanistic view of life.

Abdicating responsibility by railing against the fates.

The Wheel contains a very simple metaphor: the wheel of fate, the feeling that our destinies are determined by the turnings and workings of some cosmic machine.

Interestingly, counterparts of this concept occur in both science and religion. In the scientific revolution of the 17th century, the doctrine of mechanism was widely accepted. According to this view, everything that occurs in the universe is determined by the laws governing the motion of matter. Theoretically it should be possible, given an intellect vast enough to gather and analyze the necessary data, to predict every occurrence from the beginning to the end of time.

Likewise, in religion we have the doctrine of predestination, according to which God has predetermined the ultimate destiny of every soul, that is, whether it will be saved or damned, regardless of what we may have to say about the matter. Both the religious and the scientific versions of this doctrine subtract personal choice and potential from the equation.

We often allow ourselves to succumb to this kind of thinking, sometimes without even realizing it. How often do we abdicate responsibility

for our lives by railing against the fates or other impersonal authorities such as the government? The lesson inherent in the Wheel is that this kind of thinking is only an attitude, although certainly a seductive one. Although there is much in our lives that is beyond our control, there is also much that is well within it. Much of what seems out of our control can be managed with creative thinking and determination.

In a reading, the Wheel card can represent feeling helpless on Fate's wheel. On the other hand, it might simply represent change. If things aren't going well, the Wheel can be a source of comfort, for it can signify that things will be changing for the better.

On the card we see a complex mechanism. In the *Tarot of Dreams*, devices and machinery often represent the complicated structures built by our minds, and this once again suggests that the mechanistic view of the world is more a construct of our own minds than an accurate picture of reality.

Around the main wheel we can see the signs of the zodiac. At present, mainstream astrology does not see the planets as controlling or strictly predicting human life, but such was not always the case. For most of astrological history, it was thought that our activities and destinies could be read in the planets' motions without fail.

In the bottom half of the image, symbols appear on white balls, suggesting a Las Vegas slot machine. Indeed, gambling is another example of people voluntarily submitting themselves to the whims of fate. The four symbols at the bottom of the wheel are ancient alchemical symbols representing the seasons, from left to right; autumn, summer, spring and winter.

The presence of the two dolphins can be considered to ameliorate the mechanistic qualities of the card. Dolphins are playful creatures, and one can hardly think of anything less mechanistic than a dolphin gliding through the waves. In dreams, dolphins often symbolize protection, serenity, and guidance to unknown worlds. If we begin to feel too much like a cog in a wheel, perhaps the antidote is to imagine ourselves allowing the two dolphins to guide us out of the machine and into a delightful ocean of adventure and potential.

HEBREW LETTER: כ

Kaph means Palm. The Wheel of Fortune spins and proclaims our destiny, which some believe can be foreseen by divination such as palm reading.

ASTROLOGY: ♃

Jupiter is the planet of optimism and abundance—things we hope the spin of the Wheel will bring us.



XI • JUSTICE

Justice. The principle of fairness. Being too judgmental. Fighting for the disenfranchised or the dispossessed. Lack of bias.

In the Faith card, the Fool searches for a moral compass, a belief system about the nature of right and wrong that he can use in order to reach conclusions and make judgments about the things that happen in everyday life.

In Justice, the Fool will use that belief system and the conclusions and judgments that flow from it in order to change the world around him and make it a better place for its inhabitants. In other words, he will take the concepts he learned in the Faith card and put them into action.

In Justice, the world is governed by belief in an underlying fairness. That fairness can be established by a deity or organizing intelligence, or it might be up to humankind to provide whatever fairness there is in this world. Either way, fairness, equity, and justice become the overriding principles by which we live our lives. Without this energy, life would be reduced to pure savagery. In many ways, this card represents the essence of what it means to be human.

The image shows an armored woman who floats in the sky, and who seems to be half-machine. Rather than holding a scale as in other decks, in the *Tarot of Dreams* she actually is the scale. As in other cards, devices or mechanisms signify mental activity. Thus Justice is seen as a

rational, intellectual force that sets itself in opposition to the intuitive or the instinctual. In matters of fairness or law, it is the rational side of our minds that must prevail, if we wish to avoid bias in our judgments. Of course, if we take the concept to its extreme, we have overly cold judgments that lack any human considerations. In a reading this card may indicate that someone is being too judgmental.

The woman is armored because often in life we must fight to be treated fairly, or to win fair treatment for the disenfranchised or dispossessed. Participants in our systems of law must often fight to avoid being influenced by the powerful. She holds the two pans of her scale with complete equilibrium. The ideal of Justice is that it be applied evenhandedly. Although this ideal is rarely achieved, it is still the ideal and a cause for hope.

The most striking feature of this card is that the figure of Justice is eyeless. Traditionally, Justice wears a blindfold to indicate that she applies the law without bias. The eyelessness of the *Tarot of Dreams* figure tells us that in this deck, the figure of Justice is so committed to this concept that it has become a part of her, rather than merely a blindfold which she can take on and off at will. We know that this Justice will judge us fairly, and not be peeking out from beneath her blindfold to favor the rich or well-connected. It also reminds us that figures illustrating archetypal concepts need not be perfect physical specimens. Those who lack sight or hearing or who have other disabilities can serve as powerful representations of basic life energies just as effectively. In fact, this idea is in keeping with the whole point of the Justice card.

HEBREW LETTER:

Lamed means Ox-goat. The doctrines of Justice will remain purely theoretical without the means for some kind of discipline (the ox-goat) to enforce them.

ASTROLOGY:

Libra is the sign of the balanced, harmonious environment, which is the natural goal of the laws of Justice.

XII • HANGING MAN

*Self-sacrifice. Ignoring societal expectations.
Gaining new perspectives. Playing the martyr.*

Up until this point, the Fool has identified the primary archetypal functions of his own mind, as well as larger moral and ethical considerations, as he sets out on his voyage. Now, he comes to the conclusion that at this stage of the journey, these personages and experiences are not enough to carry him to his destination. He must engage in the self-exploration that he began in the Hermit card, but this time he must go deeper. It is not enough to explore the hidden caves and crevices of the inner landscape. Now he must relinquish the conscious world, and dive deep within himself.

It is the relinquishing that forms the main concern of this card. As the Hanging Man (called the Hanged Man in traditional decks), the Fool no longer concerns himself with the approval of society or of the people around him, but instead sacrifices his social standing in order to more fully explore his inner self.

The man is nude, and is bald. As in the Lovers, nudity suggests honesty and voluntarily exposing one's vulnerabilities. As in Faith, baldness implies an openness to other points of view and a broadening of horizons. When we examine the figure's feet, we find that the feet are unbound, with the toes pointed as if to suggest a competitive diver who has just launched himself from the diving board. All of these elements suggest a voluntary giving up of one's present position in life.

The machinery at the top of the card, as in other cards, represents the workings of our conscious minds. The water at the bottom suggests the depths of the subconscious. Our Hanging Man is seen in the act of diving from his conscious into his subconscious. The Hanging Man is not simply plunging off the deep end into his subconscious mind, but rather is making a deliberate and well-planned foray into new territory. The rules of the waking mind and the everyday world won't work in this inner landscape, but he is still making an essentially rational decision to venture there.

The Hanging Man's tattoos provide another interesting clue. Obtaining a tattoo involves undergoing a painful procedure, so there is certainly an element of sacrifice there. Since tattoos are usually permanent, a person who gets one is forever and indelibly allying themselves with an ideological or artistic statement. Here, the tattoos are completely symmetrical between the right and left sides of his body. This could suggest that the Hanging Man is leaving behind the prejudices and biases of his conscious mind to enter a world where there are no such distinctions. The tattoos are of stars, moon and suns, bringing to mind the medals on the Fool's breast pocket, which symbolize the goal of the Fool's journey, to attain a larger, more complete, and more cosmic awareness and integration.

The Hanging Man, unlike in most decks, is not only upside-down but also backwards, facing away from us. He is literally turning his back on societal expectations and on the mental structures he has already created for himself. In a reading, this card may simply mean that someone is seeking a new perspective on things.

The energy shown in this card can be taken to extremes. Sometimes we find ourselves being self-sacrificing to a fault, in other words playing the martyr. At other times, we may swim against the tide simply because we like to play the role of the nonconformist.

The Hanging Man is one of the most mysterious and evocative images in the tarot deck. Any attempt at interpretation will fall short of the visceral impact of this deceptively simple image. When dealing with this card, written interpretations can help, but in the end, the best way to unravel the image is to use its own mystery.

HEBREW LETTER:

Mem means Water. The Hanging Man hangs over the deep waters of the subconscious.

ASTROLOGY:

Neptune is the planet of separating oneself from individual distinctions and merging with the collective unconscious.

XIII • DEATH

*Something has outlived its usefulness. A situation or condition ends,
in order to make way for the new. Sadness at the ending,
yet hopefulness for new beginnings.*

What can we say about Death? This subject above all others has fascinated and perplexed us from before recorded time. The mystery of what happens to us after we die has prompted philosophical speculation and religious fervor alike, and thus has done much to shape human affairs.

A strange figure looms on this card. Its skin is smooth, yet one can discern the outlines of the skull beneath the skin. Its gaze is dead yet oddly intent. Its mouth is open, revealing a blackness that threatens to engulf us. A tree spreads its bare limbs across the dusky sky. Its leaves litter the ground like bones, and entwines among them is a snake, a symbol of all that is inhuman. Yet at the same time, because of its ability to shed its skin, the snake is a symbol of new life. And this is the paradox and the key to interpreting the Death card. It encompasses our terror of change and our emotional reactions to the irrevocability of death, and simultaneously it heralds new potentials and opportunities. Simply put, something must die in order to make room for new life. Although we prefer to see ourselves as unchanging beings, we are in fact subject to life as a series of cycles of death and birth, ending and beginning, symbolized on the card by the zodiac signs on the snake's skin.

This card, like all the others, is allegorical and not to be taken literally. As countless tarot readers have discovered, it rarely refers to the physical death of the querent, although it can sometimes refer to the querent's feelings regarding death. When the Death card comes up in a reading, it generally indicates that some situation has outworn its welcome or outlived its usefulness. As an example, let us imagine a mother whose only child is about to leave home to go to college. The way of life she has become accustomed to is about to end; her role as the matriarch of a household that includes the child is over. Doubtless the mother will

feel a sense of loss as her child leaves the nest. At the same time, the situation heralds a new beginning for both mother and child.

While we may certainly see this card as an ultimately positive one, we must nevertheless not lose sight of the fact that there will always be an air of melancholy involved. The Fool's experience at this stage of the game is bittersweet. While he looks forward to the next chapter, his heart aches for the passing away of what once was.

HEBREW LETTER: ך

Nun means Fish. Fish symbolize fertility and regeneration, which always occur in the wake of Death.

ASTROLOGY: ♏

Scorpio is the sign of death and birth.



XIV • TEMPERANCE

Finding a balance between active and passive. Combining elements to create something new, whether in life or in art. Moderation. A middle course between extremes. Experiencing a healing presence, or embodying that presence for others.

After undergoing a symbolic death in the previous card, the Fool now experiences a moment of grace, a gentle touch of angel wings. A beautiful winged woman hovers within a rainbow disk, controlling the movements of two golden hoops. In one, a purifying fire burns; in the other, water ripples. As the two hoops orbit the angel they create a rainbow path, outlining a zone of perfect balance and moderation.

Fire and water have long been seen as two elements that “don’t mix.” Water extinguishes fire, and fire will turn water to steam. Yet in order for the universe to exist, we need both fire’s aggressive *yang* energy and water’s receptive *yin* energy. The trick is finding the proper balance between them, and it is this balance that the Temperance angel symbolizes.

The traditional image for this card is a winged, clothed woman who pours liquid from one cup to another. Together with the title, it refers to the ancient practice of watering down, or tempering, wine. It may also have alchemical significance, as the alchemist carefully extracts, purifies, and mixes compounds in her search for spiritual gold. The *Tarot of Dreams* Temperance card is a development of the traditional image. Here, the angel is almost nude, indicating a lack of human artifice. Instead of the two cups, the angel juggles the two hoops. And taking the place of the liquid is the rainbow, an artful blending of the fire and water energies.

The concept on this card can be applied to many different areas of life. On a mundane level, the ability to successfully combine different elements is vital to all sorts of endeavors, from cooking a meal to building a better mousetrap. Emotionally, in life one hopes to demonstrate a proper balance between initiative and sensitivity. And the card shows the very essence of artistic creation, as we attempt to temper our fiery enthusiasm with inspiration culled from the waters of the subconscious. As well, an artist combines disparate elements to create something unexpected and new.

To temper also means to moderate, and thus the card can refer to moderation, a middle course between extremes. The angel can serve as a reminder for us to hold in our hearts the idea that for every fiery desert, there is a cooling oasis; for every cold, rainy day there is a roaring fireplace ready to comfort us. Hopefully, we will not only enjoy these creature comforts, but also use them as models of behavior, so that we may act as a warm welcome or a cooling oasis for others.

HEBREW LETTER:

Samekh means tent peg. This device that simultaneously contacts heaven and earth is an apt symbol for the balancing properties of Temperance.

ASTROLOGY:

Sagittarius is the sign of broadening one's mind through religion and philosophy, which can potentially help us achieve the balance and harmony of Temperance.

XV • DEVIL

A primitive, savage inner energy. Hidden desires and aggressions. Addiction. Obsession. Anger. The result of repressing one's vital energy. Avoiding responsibility by pretending to be helpless. Materialism.

Throughout the sequence so far, the Fool has taken advantage of a primitive energy, which when carefully monitored, helped him to accomplish difficult tasks. He first became aware of this energy in the Chariot, as he struggled to control the willful horses needed to carry him forward on his journey. In Strength, the Fool focused more precisely on this energy and worked to develop a mutually beneficial relationship with it.

In the Devil, the Fool must face the true enormity of this voracious entity, which is, distressingly, a part of his own personality. What had been a mostly benign if rambunctious helper is now in the driver's seat, imprisoning our poor Fool, who cowers in fear and helplessness. The Fool's own hidden desires and aggressions have become his masters.

Analogies to everyday life are easy to find. Have you ever felt yourself in the grip of an all-encompassing rage, so potent that you lost all control? Has your fondness for a person, a substance, or activity ever crossed the line and become an addiction? In each of these situations, the inner, savage, primal energy has gained control of your life and is running the show, and all you can do, it seems, is watch the train wreck your life is about to become.

On this card, the Fool is shown in two different ways. The persona, the normal, everyday consciousness of the Fool is inside a cage. He huddles in a fetal position, incapable of functioning or even of raising his head. Above the cage floats the Fool's inner devil. Seen as a sort of horror-movie version of the Fool, he holds the chains to the Fool's cage.

The Devil's main power is that he is able to convince us that we have no power. As soon as we see through the illusion, we are free. It's all a matter of perception, which can be changed. If we look carefully at the card, we notice that the cage door is open. Of course, the Fool can't see the open door because he hides his face in despair. Then we notice the

chains, which are loosely attached to the cage but which don't actually touch the Fool, and which wouldn't prevent him from escaping.

The Fool seems to have abdicated responsibility for his life and placed the reins in the hands of his inner Devil. In all such situations, there is a hard road and an easy road. The hard road is to lift up one's eyes, take the helping hand, and extricate oneself from the loosely bound chains. The easy road is to simply continue the *status quo*. The Devil is powerful and weak at the same time; powerful because his illusions are so convincing, and weak because all we need do is open our eyes.

All of the tarot cards, including this one, show extreme situations in order to make their points. Even the title, "Devil," is a melodramatic tag for a concept that doesn't refer to the Devil of the Christian religion at all, but rather to an archetype that is part of each of us, or what Carl Jung referred to as the "shadow." In a reading, the Devil may refer to obsessions and self-delusions. It may also simply signify that you are being tempted to reach for something not because you really want it, but because your inner Devil wants it, and that taking it may set you on a road that ends in the Devil's cage.

In reality, the archetypes are not so sharply categorized as they appear in the Major Arcana. Several of the cards show different facets of the same archetypal energies. The Devil, for instance, can be seen as an aspect of our inner child. The inner child is the source of our innocence, but it can also be the source of greedy desires and temper tantrums when it doesn't get its way. Thus, the Devil can signify anger.

Also, the greedy inner child tends to value only the material, ignoring philosophical or spiritual considerations. For this reason, this card has often been interpreted as materialism.

We don't need to look at the Devil as an inherently frightening thing. We need this hidden and difficult-to-deal-with part of our personality for survival and for strength. He is, after all, a part of us, and he will serve us well if we treat him gently but keep him on a short leash. He only becomes frightening when we try to deny his reality, thus giving him more power than is good for him.

HEBREW LETTER: ע

Ayin means Eye. Focusing on the materialism interpretation, usually the visual perception of material things is what instigates the desire to own them.

ASTROLOGY: ♄

Capricorn is the sign of materialism.



XVI • TOWER

A sudden revelation of the inadequacy of our thoughts, attitudes, assumptions and worldviews. Creative inspiration. Realization of a new way to solve a problem.

Traditionally in the tarot, the Tower card always meant calamity and destruction. This interpretation is confirmed by the usual image of two people falling headfirst through the air from a lightning-blasted tower. In the *Tarot of Dreams* the hapless victims are absent, which is one indication that we need to take a deeper look at this dramatic card.

In the previous cards, machinery and architecture have been used to symbolize the complex structures created by our conscious minds or egos. On this card, the tendency of these structures to feed on themselves and grow ever more complicated is taken to its logical conclusion: a towering edifice looming over the landscape, dwarfing trees and other natural elements. Likewise, our minds often create ever more intricate rationalizations that in the end entrap us quite as much as the Devil does with his desires and ambitions.

On the largest dome, we can see a repeating heart-shaped design. These hearts symbolize both positive and negative emotions. We often distinguish between thoughts and emotions, but in actuality many of our emotions are based on assumptions made by our intellect.

The tower is built of gold, symbolizing how materialistic and acquisitive our conscious minds are. The tower seems secure, just as our thoughts and our attitudes seem rock solid to us. In fact they may be

built on very shaky assumptions indeed. They are the result of years and years of calcification, which can only be penetrated by intense self-examination or by a flash of inspiration.

And that is what this card is really about: a lightning flash of revelation, in which the true nature of our thoughts, attitudes, and world-views is seen for what it is, a poor construct of the mind based on faulty assumptions. The old interpretation of calamity is still valid, because emotionally, this kind of awakening can feel like quite the disaster, as we watch our cherished assumptions, attitudes and biases go up in flames.

Another valid interpretation would be a flash of inspiration. This meaning fits well with the above interpretation, because usually creative inspiration connotes something radically and excitingly different, as in the case of an artist who paints a scene in a way which no one has quite done before. In this interpretation, as in the previous one, the *status quo* is ripped away in order to allow for a new perspective. And, of course, the inspiration needn't be only artistic. You may have a sudden realization of a new way to handle a problem at work or a difficulty in communicating with someone, in other words, the proverbial light bulb over the head.

The shaft of sunlight which beams down across the card gives us cause for optimism and prefigures the Major Arcana card XVIII (Sun).

HEBREW LETTER:

Peh means Mouth. One function of a mouth is for speech. Speech and communication are some of the ways we get so tangled up in our own cleverness that we start to topple over, like the Tower of Babel.

ASTROLOGY:

Mars is the planet of rage, conflict and war, which all serve to break down the *status quo*.

XVII • STAR

*Calmness. A meditative state, quieting the mind so that one may gain clarity.
Hope. Seeing the next appropriate step.*

After the frying pan of the Devil and the fire of the Tower, the Fool at this point surely deserves some comfort, and in the Star he gets it. In this gentle, serene picture a nude woman pours water from two pitchers. In the traditional image, water flows from one pitcher into a stream and from another pitcher onto the land on which the woman kneels. On the *Tarot of Dreams* card, the woman instead hovers over a boundless body of water, and rainbow streams emerge from her pitchers.

One can glean much about this card by simply immersing oneself in it. Imagine yourself floating at night under a starry sky, above the ocean. Before you, a beautiful woman gradually comes into view. Stars sparkle like fireflies around her, on her forehead, and in her hair. The waves are calm, and the rainbow streams converge to form a shining star. How does this picture make you feel?

This card, more than any other in the deck, has a quality of timelessness that serves to quiet the mind. It could suggest a meditative state, or simply the peaceful feeling that comes after a huge upheaval (such as that pictured on the previous card, the Tower). The cool, crisp air, the starlight, and the transparent pitchers suggest clarity and clear-headedness. These are crucial concepts, because it's important to understand that the atmosphere evoked by the Star isn't one of fantasy or escapism, but rather a cool-headed alertness and aliveness. If you've ever meditated, you know that after you're done, your mind feels calm, at rest, yet clear, with your perceptions sharpened. For at least a little while, your mind has shed its grandiose daydreams, as well as its irrational fears and insecurities, and instead is able to look at life as it truly is.

This kind of clear perception is necessary for the meaning that most readers give this card, which is hope. The kind of hope addressed on this card is a realistic hope, where your calm state of mind and your clear vision are able to discern possibilities available to you. But "realistic"

doesn't mean we should only hope for small things. If your hope is to become a rock star, this might be a very realistic goal indeed, if you have the talent, temperament and self-discipline for it. The Star card encourages you to take the next logical step toward your goals.

This inspiration is often felt as a kind of grace, as if we had been touched by an angel's feather—or by a rainbow stream from a Star-woman's pitcher.

HEBREW LETTER: ז

Tzaddi means fish-hook. An angler must maintain a quiet demeanor while he casts his line, so that he doesn't scare away the fish.

ASTROLOGY: ♒

Aquarius is the sign of unconventional thinking, which enables you to perceive options and opportunities not usually discernible.



XVIII • MOON

Creative gestation. Changes, cycles, evolution. Illusion.

The 17th through 19th cards in the Major Arcana form an obvious progression: Star, Moon and Sun, all astronomical objects, from smallest to largest and from weakest to brightest, when seen from the Earth. This sequence suggests that the Fool is nearing the end of his voyage, and that the focus is shifting away from mundane affairs and psychological verities to a more cosmological viewpoint.

In the Moon, as in the previous card, a timeless mood is evoked, but with a very different flavor than that of the Star. Towards the beginning of the sequence, in the Empress, a regal female figure displays her infant child, the product of her womb. Now, in the Moon, we've been transported into the womb itself, a fetus's-eye-view, so to speak. Before anything can be born, whether a living thing or a concept, it must undergo a period of gestation in a dark place, hidden away from conscious awareness or interference. Creation, whether physical or conceptual, cannot

rely solely on the intellect, but must also draw on subconscious, instinctual energies in order to attain true life.

But if one's waking mind were indeed to be suddenly transported to this cool, dark place, imagine how uneasy that mind would be. The Moon card is a place of mysterious changes, slow evolutions, unfathomable cycles, and tectonic shifts in perception. The conscious mind is worse than useless here. In fact, for our waking mind, the Moon can be a terrifying place, the home of disquieting dreams and nightmares. Thus, in a reading, besides suggesting creative gestation, the Moon card could also suggest a general feeling of uneasiness and difficulty in distinguishing truth from illusion.

On the card, the mountain stream, like other bodies of water in the tarot, represents the depths of the subconscious. The stream is active, crashing over rocks, because in this card we aren't looking at the smooth, unruffled surface of the subconscious, but instead are plunged into the roiling depths.

The dog and the wolf stare at us from the card. The wolf's gaze is baleful; the dog's is kindly. These animals symbolize the different ways we relate to the subconscious. As we saw on the Strength and Devil cards, at times the subconscious manifests in our lives as a wild, uncontrollable thing, but at other times it enters our lives as an energy which can be tamed and used to help further our goals. The animals watch us expectantly, as if asking us how we will react to them, which will determine whether it will be the wild wolf or tame dog that will leap at us from this card.

The moon itself could suggest many things. One might see it as the luminous self which shines from within, and which cloaks itself with the dreams, visions and intuitions that reach out to us from the subconscious. As we saw in the Priestess card, we cannot see this self if we look at it directly. Thus, a huge lens has been erected between two columns. This lens allows our conscious minds to have some awareness of the inner self. But remember, what we see in the lens is not an accurate image of the self, but simply something constructed by our conscious minds to give us a rough approximation as to how the inner self would appear.

Because of the limitations of our conscious minds, this is the most we can expect to perceive of the elusive, and illusive, inner self. However, even a projected image can have a profound impact on our lives.

On older decks, the Moon card usually includes a crab or lobster or crayfish struggling out of the water. The *Tarot of Dreams* image drives home the idea that you are the crustacean. After having your pretensions and assumptions ripped away by the Tower and Devil cards, you have become a small, vulnerable, primordial creature that must struggle out of the waters of the collective unconscious and build a new self-identity. Guarding the way are the dog and the wolf. You must somehow, in your devolved state, approach them in just the right manner in order to be allowed to continue on your way. Then, like a salmon, you must navigate the waterfall and swim upstream so that you may finally find your way back to the sunlight. If you succeed, just imagine what insights and creative inspirations you'll bring back from the Moon.

HEBREW LETTER: פ

Oph means back of the head. "Back of the head" can clearly be taken as a metaphor for the subconscious.

ASTROLOGY: ♊

Pisces is the sign of transcending ordinary reality.



XIX • SUN

Awareness, consciousness, reason and order. Confidence, optimism. Intelligence.

After the disruption of the Tower, the enslavement to the Devil, and the uneasiness of the Moon, the Fool finally emerges into the Sun. He has undergone the dismantlement of his personality and has constructed a new one that is more sophisticated, more reflective of his inner self, and more effective. The inner self, which in the past appeared to him as a dimly-perceived moon, now glows with the incandescent power of a sun.

On the card we see a bright, powerful figure suggestive of Apollo, the Greek god associated with light, healing, order and reason. This card signifies the ultimate flowering of consciousness, in sharp contrast to the Moon, which illuminates the depths of the subconscious. But the awareness and intellectualism shown in the Sun card is quite different than the mental constructs that have been represented in previous cards by machinery and architecture. The order and reason shown in the Sun are built upon the hard-won, unshakeable connection between the Fool's conscious mind and his inner self, which he forged by virtue of his experiences in the previous cards.

This new, more structurally sound awareness gives the Fool a deep-rooted confidence and optimism which contrasts strikingly with the paper-thin arrogance he displayed in the Chariot. In that card, the Fool acted as if he could juggle planets. In the Sun, he really can. The image of the sun god juggling planets suggests that, although on one level the universe is governed by physical laws, on a deeper level the universe's motivating forces are actually our own attitudes and actions.

Below the sun god, we see a sundial. The means to tell time can be taken in a wider sense to suggest the ability to orient oneself in time and space, and has often been used as a symbol of capability and intelligence.

HEBREW LETTER: ך

Resh means front of the head (or face). Things that face the back of the head are hidden and out of sight. Things that face the front of the head, i.e. the face, are in full view and we can be fully aware of them. While the Moon is esoteric (available only to the initiated), the Sun is knowledge and awareness available to all.

ASTROLOGY: ☼

The Sun is the heavenly body of self-esteem and self-integration.

XX • JUDGMENT

The gaining of a higher or wider perspective. Seeing oneself as part of a larger whole rather than as an isolated individual. Heeding a call to follow a path or take an action.

The Fool might reasonably have thought that his voyage through the tarot trumps had ended upon attaining new awareness and confidence in the Sun. But there are two more cards to go. The deeper and stronger consciousness must now be broadened to encompass more than simply individual concerns. Simply put, the Judgment card shows the Fool's awareness undergoing this broadening process; and in the World card, the Fool abides in the boundless enlightenment that results.

Traditional decks show an angel blowing a trumpet while resurrected corpses emerge from their coffins, a scene right out of Christian iconology. This refers to the Resurrection and Last Judgment, when the souls of the dead will be reunited with their physical bodies prior to receiving their final disposition in Heaven or Hell. In the *Tarot of Dreams* card we see an angel, but here she represents the Fool's inner self, who is after all only a part of the awareness or motivating force of the universe. On the Judgment card, the angel calls on us to widen our perspective and to awaken to our existence as a part of all that is. We are called upon to identify ourselves with the universe as a whole rather than as a solitary ego.

On the card, the angel stares out at us expectantly, with infinite wisdom and patience. Beneath her, two golden men hold up a golden hoop, through which we see the progressive stages of a woman's ascension. On the Judgment card, the circle is seen in its ultimate incarnation. Passing through it, we finally cross the boundaries of our egos to join the world consciousness that awaits.

The four female figures show a progression of awareness. At the lowest position, the woman floats with her attention directed downward. At the middle positions, she feels herself being tugged upward and through the transformative hoop. Finally, she passes through the transformative circle, ready to face the purifying fire of universal awareness.

In the tarot, gender is often used as a symbol, and it can be instruc-

tive to consider the gender of the figures on each card, as long as we remember that those genders are meant to be thought of in a symbolic sense only, and do not refer to anyone's actual gender. On the Judgment card, the two male figures might signify the same kind of reason, order and intellectual harmony that we saw on the Sun card. This solar reason acts to channel the lunar, subconscious energy of our inner selves (the female figures), in order to bring it into a more cosmic awareness. Thus, what we see is essentially an energy diagram that shows a pleasing symbiosis between the yang or solar energy and the yin or lunar energy. Each needs the other; neither can attain the goal without the other.

In a reading, as with the other cards, we must often bring the cosmological or spiritual implications down to earth in order to relate them to a querent's situation. The Judgment card can simply refer to gaining a wider or higher perspective, or heeding a call to follow a particular path or take a particular action.

HEBREW LETTER:

Shin means tooth. As the shedding of baby teeth and the growing of adult teeth signals a new phase of maturity, so the Judgment card initiates us into a new phase of awareness.

ASTROLOGY:

Pluto is the planet of transformation and regeneration.



XXI • WORLD

Enlightenment. Attainment. Completion, but at the same time, a new beginning. Seeing things as they really are. Something that had seemed silly is now seen as profound. Being inured to life's inequities. Dancing on your limitations.

Here, the Fool finally reaches journey's end. The state of ultimate enlightenment that he has now attained is of course unimaginable for us mortals. It can, however, serve as a symbol for the accomplishment

and awareness we experience in our lives, albeit fleetingly. As the final card in the sequence, it naturally signifies endings and completions.

We see the Fool in the same position he was in on card number 0. What had seemed then to be ridiculous posturing can now be seen in a different light. With a flourish, the stage magician reveals, to our surprise and wonder, those miracles that had seemed on card 0 to be empty promises. The potential for fulfillment was of course present from the very beginning, but without the experiences of the intervening cards, we were unable to see it. And it was those very experiences that enabled the Fool to produce the proverbial rabbit from out of the hat. The Earth, which the Fool had held in his hand, encased in a crystal globe, has grown huge and now holds the Fool within it, and is itself held secure by the golden frame.

In the four corners of the card we see the four elements: fire, earth, water and air. These are the same four elements symbolized by the wand, coin, cup, and sword that appear on the Magician card, and that comprise the four suits of the Minor Arcana. Here, we see the reality behind the symbols, or the symbols translated into their real-life counterparts. In the World card, our vision is so all-encompassing that we no longer need the symbols. Instead, we see things as they really are.

The inclusion of the elements also suggests that ultimate enlightenment does not mean that we will be literally pulled into the sky (like the woman on the Judgment card), nor will those around us see us simply vanish. Instead, enlightenment brings us back into everyday reality. We are as we were, only with some kind of indescribable, subtle difference. Or, as the Zen proverb has it:

Before enlightenment, chop wood and carry water.

After enlightenment, chop wood and carry water.

The many transformative circles we've seen on previous cards are echoed once more on this final card by the Earth itself. Here is another indication that enlightenment does not carry us to some cloud-covered Olympus, but instead simply returns us to daily, or earthly, life. Yet at the

same time it reminds us of the vision of the Judgment card, which encouraged us to enlarge our meaning of 'self' beyond the individual to encompass the universal.

The Fool is surrounded by an intricate metal frame. One who has truly reached enlightenment is often seen as somehow protected or inured against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. The winds may blow, the fire may blaze, but the sage rests secure in his knowledge that his innermost self is not reliant upon the physical body for its existence.

While the metallic frame protects the Fool (and the Earth), it can also be seen as a limiting agent that restricts him. Part of being enlightened is the knowledge that one cannot do everything. The truly enlightened person does what they can within the confines that life hands them. Tarot author Mary K. Greer refers to this as "dancing on your limitations."

The circular form can suggest an egg, thus leading us to the implication that the Fool, having attained limitless enlightenment, is at the same time merely an embryo, and will eventually hatch, thus beginning the journey again on the Fool card. In this way the voyage never really ends, but rather spirals ever onward and outward, through successive stages of existence and awareness, just as the circular frame never ends but rather continues around and around. The circle also suggests the Fool's signature numeral, 0, which, as we now see, symbolizes nothing, and, simultaneously, the potential for everything.

HEBREW LETTER: ט

Tau means signature or seal. The universe bestows its diploma signed, sealed and delivered.

ASTROLOGY: ♄

Saturn is the planet of restriction.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MINOR ARCANA

As noted in the Introduction to the Major Arcana, the Minor Arcana consists of 56 numbered cards in four suits of 14 cards each. The 14 cards in each suit are Ace through Ten, followed by four Court or Royalty cards (Page, Knight, Queen and King).

Unlike the Majors, which each represent a complex of mythological, psychological and spiritual associations and profundities, the Minors give us an opportunity to examine the mundane, down-to-earth realities that comprise our daily life. If the Majors are comparable to complex sagas with limitless depths, like Homer's epics, the Minors would be more like a simple clay bowl or jar found in an ancient Greek home. In readings, the Minors help humanize the Major concepts and bring them down to a level where we can more easily explore them and identify with them.

THE NUMBERED MINORS

The four suits of the tarot are Wands, Cups, Swords and Coins, based on the traditional Italian suits of the first tarot decks: Batons, Cups, Swords and Coins. In modern tarot traditions, each suit covers an area of life, while each number within that suit represents a particular stage in a cycle of that area of life. Since the 19th century, the areas of life assigned to the suits have been based on the correlation of the suits with the four ancient elements, as follows:

Wands = Fire
Swords = Air

Cups = Water
Coins = Earth

This is the most common set of attributions and was used by the Order of the Golden Dawn. The suit of **WANDS** represents fiery energy and the spirit of endeavor; the suit of **CUPS** represents watery emotions and intuitions; the suit of **SWORDS** represents airy thought; and the suit of **COINS** (called **PENTACLES** in some decks) represents earthy, material reality.

The sequence of Ace through Ten in each suit can be seen as a complete cycle in that area of life, from its beginnings as an idea (Ace) to its ultimate conclusion (Ten). Seen in this way, no card represents a final and unchanging state of affairs, but rather simply a stage in the cycle or a step on the journey. Even the Tens, representing completion or conclusion, are simply a way station on the way to the birth of a new cycle in the Ace.

Having assigned meanings to the suits and to the numbers, we can begin to interpret the cards by combining the suit meaning with the number meaning: we are experiencing THIS energy (number) in THIS area of life (suit).

The founders of the Golden Dawn, however, added another layer of symbolism: the astrological Decans, in which the Two through Ten cards of each suit are each assigned a planet and a sign. For example, the Eight of Wands is assigned Mercury in Sagittarius. In his book *Mystical Origins of the Tarot*, Paul Huson presents convincing evidence that the Golden Dawn incorporated Decan interpretations from Picatrix, a book of astrological magic dating from the 14th century or earlier. In Picatrix, each Decan is assigned a talismanic image, and each image is given an idiosyncratic interpretation. In a rather bizarre mixture, the Golden Dawn combined these ancient interpretations of the Decans with numerological meanings derived from the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, and with fortune-telling meanings created for playing cards and tarot cards by Etteilla, a French cartomancer, to synthesize a set of divinatory meanings for the numbered Minors. A.E. Waite drew from this set of meanings when he directed Pamela Colman Smith in the design of the Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot Deck in 1910. (Previous to the RWS deck, most decks lacked scenes on the numbered Minors).

Waite's and Smith's evocative scenes took on a life of their own, beyond the tradition established by the Golden Dawn, and established a standard for illustration for the numbered Minors which continues to this day. For the most part, the *Tarot of Dreams* adheres to this standard. In fact, most people read the decks which follow the RWS standard by referencing only the illustrations, without regard to their astrological

attributions, much less the medieval Decan interpretations. Using only the pictures is of course a perfectly valid way to read tarot, but Ciro and I have chosen to put the astrological attributions on the numbered Minors so that the reader who is interested in astrology has the choice to take these correlations into account when interpreting the cards. If you're interested in exploring how the Picatrix Decan interpretations and Etteilla's divinatory meanings influenced the Golden Dawn system, Huson's book is a good resource.

THE COURT CARDS

The Court cards are a little more difficult to deal with than the numbered Minors. What are we to make of all these Pages, Knights, Queens and Kings? An approach more oriented toward fortune-telling will treat these cards as representing other people in the querent's life, often according to physical characteristics (i.e., Coin cards are red-headed, so the King of Coins is a red-haired man, the Queen of Coins a red-haired woman, et cetera). Currently, in an era when we tend to read the cards with a more psychological approach, the Court cards can be seen as aspects of our own selves, or of sub-personalities within us. Many readers nowadays interpret the Court cards as representing both people around us and our own selves, according to the context of the other cards and of the question.

This book presents the Court cards from three different perspectives: a) as specific personalities; b) as stages of development; and c) as specific approaches to life and to situations.

For the "personality" approach, we'll uncover each Court figure's personality by exploring the images and traditional meanings. Keep in mind that the people shown on the cards represent "pure" personalities, but this purity doesn't exist in real life. Real people embody a complex mixture of traits and characteristics. Each of us might be represented by any of the cards in one particular context, and at the same time by any other of the cards in a different context.

The "stages of development" approach looks at the Court ranks

(Page, Knight, Queen and King) as a sequence or hierarchy of development. The Page is seen as undeveloped and immature; the Knight, as focused, determined, and headstrong; the Queen, as a mature and serene “power behind the throne”; and the King as the authority figure. (I should point out that I don’t assign significance to the genders of the figures. In other words, a woman is just as likely as a man to be the authority figure represented by a King card, and a man is just as likely as a woman to be the “power behind the throne” represented by a Queen card.) In this approach, the Page of Swords could mean an idea which is still in its infancy or which hasn’t been completely thought through.

For the “specific approaches to life and to situations” perspective, I’ve borrowed (with permission) tarot author Mark McElroy’s categories (although not his individual card meanings) from his Bright Idea Deck and *Putting the Tarot to Work*. He calls the Court cards “Approach Cards,” and in his system, Pages are Learning, Knights are Doing, Queens are Feeling, and Kings are Controlling. According to this approach, if you were doing a reading about a conflict with another person, the Page of Swords could be suggesting that you take the approach of trying to learn about that person’s mindset, where they’re coming from, which might help defuse the conflict.

In a reading, of course, you may find yourself using any of these approaches, or, more likely, a combination of all of them. Readings also offer an opportunity to draw connections between different Court cards that may appear in a layout. Pages are sometimes seen as heralds or messengers, perhaps sent to accomplish some purpose of the willful Knights, who in turn are given directions by the Queens and Kings.

THE PALACE CARDS

After the first edition of the *Tarot of Dreams* was published, Ciro created four “palace” images, one for each of the suits. He described them as “*Tarot of Dreams* real estate” and speculated on how they would appear in real estate agent listings: “Cups, prime waterfront property. Coins, offering mountain views, and close to protected parkland. Swords, the ulti-

mate penthouse. Wands, glorious sunsets, in warm lush garden settings.” “Unfortunately,” *Ciro* noted, “there are no vacancies at this time.”

Fortunately for us, *Ciro* had decided to include these four cards in this new edition of the *Tarot of Dreams*, thus expanding the deck to 83 cards (if including the Tree of Life card). There are now vacancies, it seems, and we can explore each of the Palaces at our leisure.

I like to think of each Palace as a fifth Court card, an opportunity to give the King, Queen, Knight, and Page a place to interact and a context in which to express themselves. In a reading, the Palace cards indicate the energies of the suit expressed as an environment. It could be an environment where you currently find yourself, or it could show a potential or opportunity for you to create that environment. For example, in a spread position relating to the future, the Palace of Swords could indicate that you will find yourself in an environment where you’ll be intellectually challenged (and that you’ll rise to the challenge). Alternatively, it could show that your negative attitudes in the present will cause you to find yourself in an overly judgmental environment in the future.

If a Page, Knight, Queen, or King appear in a layout with a Palace of a different suit, it could signify that the qualities of the Page, Knight, Queen or King are modified by the environmental effects of the Palace’s suit.

THE MINOR ARCANA

ACE OF WANDS

Energy. The desire to change something in our life or in our environment.

A volcano erupts, tinting the sky red. Lava flows towards us across the rocky plain. A lizard perches in the round metal hoop of creation. The lizard is reminiscent of the salamander, the elemental creature of Fire. A crystal-topped wand glows with a yellow light.

The Wands tell us a story about energy and its utilization. Life in general is about change, and often when we speak of wisdom, we refer to acceptance of the transitory nature of life. But with Wands energy, we get to turn the tables and effect our own changes on our environment. In the Ace of Wands, we become aware of a desire to change something, and the rest of the suit describes our efforts and experiences as we apply energy to make the change.

The Ace of Wands may be experienced at differing levels of intensity. Sometimes, you may get a small niggling of dissatisfaction and desire to make something in your environment different than it is. At the other end of the spectrum, you may find yourself overwhelmed with the desire to save the world or to run off and join the Foreign Legion.

Either way, the Ace represents an opportunity to feel this fire running through your veins, like the lava on the card. When involved in a project or endeavor, success will often depend on your ability to remember this primal feeling that inspired you to begin in the first place.

TWO OF WANDS

Power held in reserve while evaluating options.

Marble steps climb into a starry sky. Two wands float against the stars, each pointing towards a window. Through one window, we see pink-tinged clouds; through the other, a sky tinged with blue.

The Two of Wands is a card of power, which we were given in the Ace.

But the power isn't being used yet; instead, we hold it in reserve, weighing where it will be best put to use. We know we want to change or create something, and we have an idea of the general direction, but the full plan of exactly how and where we will effect the change is not yet clear. We know we want to go forward, but have not yet chosen the pink window or the blue. Like a branch heavy with blooms, we feel heavy with power, a power that hangs in the balance, and we wait for the perfect moment of ripeness before we put it to use.

ASTROLOGY: Mars ♂ in Aries ♈

The tremendous energy of Mars is in its initiatory stage in Aries.

THREE OF WANDS

Waiting for the first signs of success after having taken initial action.

Waiting for a return on one's initial investment of energy. Replaying one's initial success and thus failing to progress to the next level.

A naked man sits on a rocky promontory, watching a fabulous sailing ship that floats among the clouds, shining with an uncanny light.

After considering possible directions in the Two of Wands, in the Three we have taken an initial action, given the first shove against the resistance of apathy, and now wait to see what results will occur so that we can plan the next step. The project or endeavor is shown as a floating ship with a sun pattern on its sails, thus illustrating the miraculous nature of Wands energy as it heroically struggles against the complacency and inertia, which drag us down. The ship could be seen as embarking, symbolizing the project or endeavor set in motion, or alternatively as returning, so that the man is waiting for his ship to come in, so to speak, or waiting for a return on his initial investment of energy. The man is nude because he is sincere and honest in his motivations.

ASTROLOGY: Sun ☉ in Aries ♈

You take charge of the situation (Sun) by taking direct action to influence events to your liking (Aries).

FOUR OF WANDS

Safety, security.

Taking concrete action in order to create the changes you desire.

As we stand in a forest, we see looming above the treetops a striking vision: four towering wands or columns reaching to the sky, and an enormous wooden door swinging slowly open, revealing a blinding light. Behind the columns and the door, a huge red moon hangs in the sky.

The columns suggest sturdiness and stability, especially when we consider that there are four of them, since the number four traditionally symbolizes solidity and security. The doors also suggest stability, since they imply a structure that provides safety from the elements and from an attack.

This safety and stability is juxtaposed in the card with elements of extreme unreality. This demonstrates that all endeavors and projects, which begin as dreams or visualizations of change, must, at some point in their progress, begin to manifest themselves in the real world, or else be doomed to remain as airy visions. When this card appears in a reading, now is the time to open the door, in other words to take concrete action to create the change you desire.

ASTROLOGY: Venus ♀ in Aries ♈

Venus in Aries. You create an environment to your liking (Venus) in a direct and forceful way (Aries).

FIVE OF WANDS

*A battle or struggle. Teaming up against a common foe.
Cooperative creative work. People who are isolated from each other
yet work toward common or opposing goals.*

Against a fiery dawn sky, four male figures wield wands. In the center of the card, two disembodied hands wield a fifth wand. Five is typically a number of instability and also of great opportunity. The five men on the card can most easily be seen as fighting with each other. Thus, the most obvious meaning would be a battle or struggle. However, there are other possibilities. The men could all be on the same side, for example, teaming up against a common foe that surrounds them. In this case, the meaning would be a team of allies under attack. Another possibility is that the men aren't fighting at all, but rather are constructing something together. Cooperative creative manifestation would then be the emphasis.

If you look carefully, the men seem to each inhabit their own world and are not relating to each other. In this interpretation, the card could mean several people who are working alone, isolated from each other, who are nonetheless working toward the same goal or opposing goals, depending on if you see the men as cooperating or fighting. Any of these meanings could apply, depending on the context of a specific reading.

ASTROLOGY: Saturn ♄ in Leo ♌

The creative and self-confident Leo faces restrictions from the limiting effects of Saturn.

SIX OF WANDS

Victory

A battle leader appears on a balcony, proclaiming his victory. Five wands are being held up below him in obeisance; the sixth, held as a scepter by the leader, is the only one topped by a glowing crystal. On his

breastplate are dragons and the elemental symbol for Fire. The dragon motif is repeated on the banners hanging over the balcony's edge.

This is a straightforward and simple card: it means victory. Victory itself, however, is far from straightforward and simple. The man has won his battle, but notice how his face, set in lines of determination, already shows some signs of hardness, which makes us wonder how long it will be before he starts exhibiting some of the more negative sides of the Emperor. And how long will it be before the five lower wands, and their bearers, begin to covet the majestic light of the crystal brandished so confidently by their leader? We may also notice that that crystal provides the only light in the scene. For the moment, all is seen in the light of the battle and the victory. For a split second, the earth stands still and the victory is the only reality. Only later will the Wheel of Fortune's inevitable motion be felt once again, and then the victor may see his fortunes change.

ASTROLOGY: Jupiter ♃ in Leo ♌

Upon attaining long-sought goals, we feel a heady rush of pleasure and confidence (Leo) as we receive the universe's bounty (Jupiter).

SEVEN OF WANDS

*An extreme situation. The need for courage and resolve.
You have the power to change circumstances in your favor.*



A man wielding a wand holds off six attacking wands, whose bearers are beyond the frame of the picture. The protagonist of this card could be the same person as in the Six of Wands. The soldiers who banded together to vanquish a common enemy now turn on their leader, or perhaps he has turned on them. Either way, he now finds himself in a fight to the death with the very forces he had led to victory.

When you receive this card in a reading, you are in an extreme situation. It could be because you let things develop in the way they have,

or it could be because of circumstances over which you had no control. Courage and resolve are called for now.

While the odds may seem stacked against you, there is still a chance you can prevail. Notice on the card that the protagonist still retains the wand with the giant yellow crystal. He is still connected with the source of his power.

The floor on which he stands is composed of a checkerboard pattern of dark and light tiles, representing the eternal conflict of evenly matched forces. But directly underneath him there is a starburst pattern, showing that through action and faith, we can change the equation in our favor.

ASTROLOGY: Mars  in Leo 

Mars in Leo. A proud and authoritative leader (Leo) will inevitably find that being under attack (Mars) goes with the territory.

EIGHT OF WANDS

*Great energy and speed. Efficient and productive mental processes.
Inspiration. A great surge of energy.*

Eight upward-pointing wands appear against a cloudy sky. The tops of the wands pierce the clouds and emerge into space. The flight of the wands has disrupted a flock of birds, which circles confusedly in the wands' wake.

The Eight of Wands is a card of great energy and speed. The wands are shooting up from the earth's surface and attaining space flight. The energy and speed could refer to things going on around you, but more likely they refer to your own mental processes, which at this moment are remarkably efficient and productive. The wands are cooperating with each other, moving in the same direction, so that they become a single entity, a fleet of wands. Inspiration strikes, and you suddenly see the path that will take you over, around, under, or through your obstacles. You are firing on all cylinders, and your goals appear to be within your grasp.

As an alternative, you may be experiencing a great surge of energy. Now is not the time to hesitate; rather, take advantage of this newfound energy to take you closer to your desires. Be careful, though; your energy may interfere with others', as the wands have disrupted the flock of birds.

ASTROLOGY: Mercury ♀ in Sagittarius ♂

The far-ranging and expansive effects (Sagittarius) that are felt when your mind is working at its peak capacity (Mercury).

NINE OF WANDS

A great struggle nears its conclusion. Stay alert for unforeseen weaknesses. Defensiveness.

Here we see a soldier, sitting on a series of steps that float in the air and ascend into the heavens. He has removed most of his armor, but not all. Although the battle is almost over, he remains in a state of readiness, in case the situation changes and the struggle resumes. He guards nine wands, and holds one as a weapon to warn off marauders. Behind him, the sun begins to set in an expansive sky.

In this card, some great struggle is nearing its conclusion. The final victory is yet to be achieved, but the goal is in sight. Now is the time to stay alert; inattention at the crucial moment has proved the downfall of many an endeavor. Rejoice in having come so far, but take a moment to examine the battlefield for unforeseen weaknesses. Is your desire to achieve your goal blinding you to the one thing that could prevent you from doing so?

Or, you may be taking vigilance to an unhealthy extreme. The situation pictured on the card is appropriate at certain important junctures in the course of an endeavor, but you don't want to live this way permanently. You might drive others away, and ultimately prevent the fulfillment of your own goals, if you make defensiveness a way of life.

ASTROLOGY: Moon ☾ in Sagittarius ✎

Having invested so much time and energy into cultivating your dreams (Moon), you now go to extraordinary lengths to guard and protect your cherished goals (Sagittarius).

TEN OF WANDS

An endeavor has progressed to the point where complications, obstacles and pressures weigh you down. Being a slave to one's ambitions. A project has run its course and it may be time to progress to something new.

A man kneels, head down. He bears on his back the weight of ten wands in a criss cross pattern. A triangle, the elemental symbol of fire, casts a yellow light.

There comes a point in every endeavor or project when it simply collapses under its own weight. The original fire and inspiration that sparked the endeavor are all but extinguished under the weight of the complications, obstacles, and intricacies needed to keep the endeavor going.

In the Ten of Wands, the man seems to be overcome with despair. His ambition and vision have brought him to an honored place. But that position, while exalted, is also quite uncomfortable, and the pressures represented by the wands press down on him.

Alternatively, the man could be seen as bowing in obeisance to his goals, which have become his taskmasters. He is no longer an autonomous individual, but instead has become a slave to his ambitions.

Implied in all of this is a growing conviction that the endeavor has run its useful course and has now become more trouble than it is worth. It may be advantageous to start thinking about bringing this project to a close and letting something new spark your interest.

ASTROLOGY: Saturn ♄ in Sagittarius ✎

The expansive and freedom-loving tendencies of Sagittarius are limited by Saturn.

PAGE OF WANDS

PERSONALITY

The Page of Wands has a mischievous twinkle in her eye. The checker-board floor and the four columns suggest a stage set or a chessboard, indicating that she enjoys drama, whether as an audience member or as an instigator. She is easily bored, and likes to stir up the pot wherever she can. She looks as if she has just hatched some improbable plot, which will no doubt provide her with much amusement.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Page heralds a new beginning in an endeavor or project. It is the nature of energy to exist not as a constant but rather as cycles or waves. Thus, just when the current crisis is over and we finally settle down to enjoy some stability, invariably a new idea will pop into our heads and whisper seductively to us, and the cycle begins anew.

APPROACH

Pages are “Learning”. The Page of Wands suggests that you learn as much as you can about your project or endeavor before diving into it head first.

KNIGHT OF WANDS

PERSONALITY

The Knight of Wands is the essence of impetuosity; he is headstrong and impulsive. He is single-minded; he only has room for one focus, one cause at a time. This is not to say, however, that he will always be faithful to that particular cause. Just as the Knight of Cups is in love with being in love, so the Knight of Wands is in love with being something or someone's champion, and possibly cares more about his role than whatever it is he's championing. Notice how he bears a standard that is blank, showing that it could just as easily represent one cause as another.

He pursues his passions with a tremendous amount of energy, indicated by the dragon he rides, but he has a short attention span. We often find

him abandoning one cause for another, which he champions with just as much energy as he did the first one. Without this intense but short-lived commitment, we probably would never rouse ourselves to accomplish anything.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

A precarious stage of a project or endeavor, where we must invest our complete attention and loyalty if we want to have any hope of succeeding.

APPROACH

Knights are “Doing”. The Knight of Wands suggests that you put your plans into action so that they take on a greater reality than simply as daydreams.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Leo ♌ / one-third Cancer ♋

The Knight loves his flamboyant role (Leo), and he will go to any means to protect that to which he owes allegiance (Cancer).

QUEEN OF WANDS

PERSONALITY

The Queen of Wands is a strong personality. In the picture she looks like an actress, posing for a publicity photograph. With her proud, charismatic demeanor and intense gaze, she challenges us to give our all in whatever endeavors we choose to pursue. Her red and gold costume, related to the elemental sign for Fire, is very dramatic, but she has the aristocratic bearing to carry it off. The mask suggests that behind her very public face, she maintains a small part of herself that she keeps private.

The life of an actor or actress is not an easy one and requires determination and perseverance, qualities that are necessary if we are to see a project through to its conclusion.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

Something is left on the back burner, a flame kept lit in the background to be accessed in the future, allowed neither to die out nor to burn out of control.

APPROACH

Queens are “Feeling”. The Queen of Wands suggests that you pursue your goals by following your heart. If things look bleak but your heart tells you to keep going, then keep going. Stay loyal to your own intuitions.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Aries ♈ / one-third Pisces ♉

The Queen of Wands is able to maintain a direct and forceful commitment to her goals (Aries) because of her belief in the validity of her intuitions (Pisces).

KING OF WANDS

PERSONALITY

The King of Wands makes a difference in the world. He does whatever is necessary to change his environment into what he thinks it should be, and this includes winning others over to his vision so they can help bring his ideals into reality. Any kind of leader, ruler, or politician would fall into this category. In this leader's gaze we see a steely determination, and his face is set in lines that have been etched by long experience.

Like the Queen, he has a tremendous amount of charisma; but while she uses her charisma for self-expression, the King uses his to convince others to help him remake the world in his own image. He has a large ego, a necessary ingredient in someone who wishes to replace existing structures with those of his own design. This is shown by his imposing crown, which symbolizes lines of power radiating from his mind into the world.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

A project or endeavor has reached a stage of peak strength and is ready to have its results manifested in the real world.

APPROACH

Kings are “Controlling”. The King of Wands seeks to control his environment and others in his life so that he can realize his ideals.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Sagittarius ♐ / one-third Scorpio ♏

Two-thirds Sagittarius, one-third Scorpio. The King of Wands uses his powerful and intense charisma (Scorpio) to accomplish his expansive and idealistic goals (Sagittarius).

PALACE OF WANDS

This card shows a warm environment that encourages creative inspiration and the launching of plans and projects. The structures are built into a mountaintop, suggesting both the long climb ahead and also the attainability of the goal. Butterflies symbolize transformation of dreams into reality, and red roses signify passion. The structures are lit from within with the fires of the heart. Statues portraying the Knight of Wands symbolize forward momentum and focus.

ACE OF CUPS

A new emotion or relationship surfaces. The potentials and opportunities that such emotions can bring us. A gift of goodwill in the middle of a conflict.

An elaborately designed cup is seen floating on an endless expanse of water. The cup is composed of four golden mermaids who support the crystal bowl. A metallic ball, bearing the elemental sign of Water, floats in the sky like a sun.

In the Ace of Cups, we are presented with a gift from the subcon-

scious, like a cup being handed to us. The cup may contain love, happiness, jealousy, fear, even hate. We generally can't stop ourselves from feeling an emotion, but we certainly have something to say about how we will act or react, and how we see ourselves as a result of the emotion. The rest of the cards in the suit of Cups describe these different ways of responding to the gift handed to us in the Ace.

In a reading, the Ace of Cups tells us that we are about to experience the beginning of a new emotion or relationship. It also stands for the potentials and opportunities that emotional considerations can give us. If we are in conflict with someone, the Ace of Cups tells us that goodwill can always prevail. We do not have to search for it; it is always there, an inexhaustible supply, waiting for us to take up the cup of loving kindness.

TWO OF CUPS

The beginning of a relationship, whether a love affair, friendship, or business partnership. An equal relationship. People who are comfortable, easy and warm with each other. Sharing.

Two cups float in the air, against a dramatic dawn sky. The two cups seem to toast each other in celebration of their shared affection. Below them, two swans meet face to face, the curve of their necks forming a heart shape.

After receiving the cup handed to us in the Ace, we seek others with whom to share it. In the Two of Cups, emotional energy is expressed as relationship. It could be any kind of relationship, personal or professional. Every relationship has its own cycle, and this card shows the beginning of that cycle, when both parties are still getting to know each other. The most important thing to know about this card is that it describes a relationship, or a phase of a relationship, in which the people consider themselves to be equals. They feel comfortable and make no demands of each other, yet they feel free to express themselves and share with each other. The red base of each cup shows the warmth and

optimism of the couple. The stars at the top of the picture remind us of the wonder inherent in all human relationships; that together we can create what would be impossible for one person alone.

ASTROLOGY: Venus ♀ in Cancer ♋

Your impulse to relate (Venus) tries to find a home port, a secure and dependable focus for its attention (Cancer).

THREE OF CUPS

*Good times, celebrations, parties. Good fortune. Forced cheer.
Excessive partying. Overindulgence.*

Three wine-filled cups form a pyramid within a golden gazebo. Masks, golden stars and multi-colored strands of pearls are draped and scattered over the scene.

Good times are obviously in progress. This card symbolizes celebrations, both formal ones, such as a wedding or a party, or informal ones, as when we treat ourselves to something special just for the enjoyment of it or to celebrate good fortune.

In this card, the sun is not seen in the sky, but rather its warmth and optimism are reflected in the floor tiles, suggesting the ritualized aspects of formal celebrations (for example, the many small rituals enacted during a wedding). The masks also suggest ritual; for a brief while, we lay aside our cares and concerns as individuals, and wear the face of merriment (the face mask on the left). Parties and celebrations also help us place in context the mysteries of life (the domino mask on the right) by providing comforting social rituals to humanize such unfathomable passages as birth, maturity, joining, and death.

As in all the cards, the good times shown on the Three of Cups can be taken to extremes, as when someone tries to cram as much partying into their lives as possible. Or it could simply indicate overindulgence.

ASTROLOGY: Mercury ♀ in Cancer ☊

The setting of a celebration allows you communicate to others (Mercury) your feelings of well-being and rootedness (Cancer).

FOUR OF CUPS

Dissatisfaction. Focusing on what you lack. The desire to better your circumstances. Inability to appreciate that which is available to you.

A nude man sits in a field. Three empty cups are on the ground before him, but his attention is fixed on a wine-filled fourth cup, hovering in midair. Behind the airborne cup, the sun is breaking through the clouds, so that the cup appears to shine with an unearthly light, mesmerizing the man.

When this card appears in a reading, you are dissatisfied with your lot in life. Regardless of whatever benefits you may enjoy from what you presently have, your attention is focused on what you lack. Seen in a positive light, the card could represent the desire to better your life or your circumstances. In a negative light, it could mean an inability to appreciate the good things in life that are already available to you.

ASTROLOGY: Moon ☾ in Cancer ☊

Having attained a secure and comfortable environment (Cancer), you have an instinctual tendency (Moon) to begin looking for greener pastures.

FIVE OF CUPS

Disappointment and dejection, with a hint of exaggeration and self-dramatization. A learning experience. A negative attitude.

A dejected woman sits against a wall, with her head in her hand. On the ground before her are three cups, broken and in disarray. Behind

her float two wine-filled cups.

In our various endeavors and adventures in life, there comes a point when the reality of the situation clashes with our hopes and desires. There is often a tension between how things are and how we would like them to be, and the result is the disappointment and desolation that we see in the Five of Cups. This effect is heightened by our tendency to exaggerate and dramatize, so that we feel, like the woman in the picture, as if the end of the world is at hand. In fact, such disappointments are learning experiences, the cornerstone of emotional growth, and without them life would lack substance and depth.

The three cups on the ground certainly give a gloomy impression. They are empty, and one of the glass bowls is broken. The mermaids on the cups appear tumbled and chaotic, as opposed to their cool orderliness on the other cards. This woman could be the poster child for the Negative Attitude. She is so busy being miserable that she has failed to notice the two full cups floating behind her.

ASTROLOGY: Mars  in Scorpio 

Like a bull in a china shop, reality stampedes across your fragile map of reality (Mars), painfully forcing you to re-examine and redraw the map (Scorpio).

SIX OF CUPS

*Fond memories. Child-like simplicity and innocence. Living in the past.
Avoiding a painful reality by seeing it through rose-colored glasses.*

We see two children, a young girl and an older boy. Before them are six cups, brimming with flowers.

In this card, after the disappointments suffered in the Five, a measure of contentment and pleasure is found in the quiet contemplation of happy memories. Of course, not all childhood memories are happy, but children tend to look on the world with a simplicity and directness, which

as adults we might envy. So the Six of Cups refers not only to nostalgia, but also to applying this same child-like clarity, simplicity and innocence to our lives today.

Negatively, we may be living too much in the past, or else we may be avoiding dealing with a painful reality by seeing it through rose-colored (or flower-filled) glasses.

ASTROLOGY: Sun ☉ in Scorpio ♏

You have an intense longing (Scorpio) to feel once more the self-confidence and optimism (Sun) which you felt in the past.

SEVEN OF CUPS

A significant decision. Indecision. Inaction, daydreaming. Addictive behavior.

Seven cups float in a rose-colored sky. Each cup holds different contents. This card may have a few different meanings. First, it can indicate that you are facing a myriad of choices. Each cup represents a different path, and the choice you make could have far-reaching consequences.

Another interpretation is that you are so bedazzled with the possibilities that you are hypnotized into indecision. Each cup is so beguiling that you cannot choose one, for fear of shutting out the others. It is as if you were standing before a signpost, with a sign for each of seven roads. If you do not decide which road to walk, you will stand there forever.

In yet another interpretation, the card represents inaction. You may be idly daydreaming, letting your mind drift in pretty but empty fantasies. A certain amount of daydreaming is healthy, but you may be using fantasy as an escape hatch to avoid the more difficult sides of life. In extreme cases, you may be indulging in addictive behavior to avoid dealing with things.

Finally, any of the cups' contents can be focused on in the context of a specific question or reading. Just as examples, the nautilus shell could

mean you need to come out of your shell. The snake could mean immortality. The crossed keys could mean a search for wisdom. The wings could mean freedom. In folklore, ladybugs often symbolize good luck. The fruit tree might represent abundance. The jewels can symbolize spiritual richness. All the symbols could just as easily have entirely different meanings. Go with what your intuition tells you for that particular reading.

ASTROLOGY: Venus ♀ in Scorpio ♏

Venus governs preferences, and Scorpio suggests that those preferences are rooted in deep-seated and intense feelings.

EIGHT OF CUPS

Abandoning a path, and using your intuition to help determine a new path.

Returning to the source. Examining hidden aspects. Restlessness.

Feeling called to abandon something.

Any time we choose a path to follow, it necessarily means abandoning another path. On the card, a figure walks away from an orderly collection of eight cups. He walks on a series of columns, which climbs into the sky and ends (or begins) on the moon.

The cups that he abandons could stand for a project, endeavor, relationship or situation, which began with a hunch or intuitive leap, represented by the moon. The chessboard pattern on which the cups rest represents the conscious plan or strategy he followed and is now abandoning. The game of chess suggests strategizing, while the squares denote the mind's tendency to separate experiences and observations into black and white categories. The man is nude, indicating he has left behind the trappings of rational justifications and, like the figure on the Star, has returned to a primal connection with his intuition.

When this card appears in a reading, it indicates that you have traveled that path as far as it will take you. You are now turning about and once again facing the moon, in other words returning to the source of your intuition, so that you can be inspired anew, this time to follow a different path.

ASTROLOGY: Saturn ♄ in Pisces ♷

Something, you're not sure what, an ephemeral, hard-to-pin-down feeling (Pisces), guides you to bring your current activities or preoccupations to an end (Saturn).

NINE OF CUPS

Enjoyment of simple pleasures. Simplicity. Self-indulgence.

Nine wine-filled cups surround a joyful young man. Bread and fruit spill forth from a cornucopia.

Like the Three of Cups, the Nine focuses on enjoyment and good times. But while the Three has an element of forced cheer and can suggest an overly determined partier, the Nine is more honest and down-to-earth. This card advocates the enjoyment of simple pleasures: fruit, bread, wine, anything that refreshes us. It could be a walk through the neighborhood, or a trip to the movies. The card could also mean simplicity. Are you making things too complicated? Focus on the essentials.

Again, like the Three, this card can be taken to extremes of self-indulgence.

ASTROLOGY: Jupiter ♃ in Pisces ♷

Pisces allows us to glimpse deeper realities behind the simple abundance we receive from Jupiter.

TEN OF CUPS

Peak emotional fulfillment. A happy family life (whether a biological family or simply a group of friends). Happy family occasions or interactions. Pleasant home activities. Having too high expectations. Wishful thinking.

Ten cups line a path made of flagstones. They lead to a door, which is swinging open. The image of a joyous family glows in the doorway, filling the card with a warm light. A friendly dog greets us on the path.

In this card we find the experience of peak emotional fulfillment—a happy family life. Of course, it need not be a biological family. Whenever we form lasting bonds of friendship and love with others, we forge another link in the daisy chain of human solidarity, stretching from the distant past to the distant future. No matter what wars or prejudices may divide us, in the end we are all human. We are all one family. Thus, forming emotional ties to others is, in a way, a sacred act.

In a reading, this card could simply mean happy family occasions or interactions, or pleasant occurrences related to the home.

The image on the card can also be seen as a somewhat idealized one. Perhaps you're setting your expectations too high, or indulging in wishful thinking. Family life can be messy as well as joyous, and you will probably be better off if you have realistic expectations rather than assuming everything will always be rosy.

ASTROLOGY: Mars  in Pisces 

The drive to establish one's domain or territory (Mars) is tempered by compassion and an awareness of a higher reality (Pisces) underlying everyday family events.

PAGE OF CUPS

PERSONALITY

The Page of Cups is a young woman who is sensitive to emotional and intuitional undercurrents. Although she is too inexperienced to grasp the

full meaning of these messages or to put them to practical use, she can perceive that something is there. Thus in the picture she floats underwater but still near the surface. Her hat acts as a sort of antenna that allows her to pick up on vibrations that others might miss. Likewise, the cups seen on the other Cups cards have here evolved into columns, conveying psychic messages from the water's depths to the surface. These messages can sometimes be disturbing, but the Page, while vulnerable, faces them with bravery.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Page augurs beginnings in emotional matters. A new relationship, or a new phase of a relationship, is often indicated.

APPROACH

Pages are "Learning". The Page of Cups is suggesting that you remain open to the possibility of learning something from an emotional experience. If an emotional situation seems hopeless, try approaching it with the heart of a child. Be flexible and see if you can learn a new way of relating.

KNIGHT OF CUPS

PERSONALITY

While the Page floats near the surface, the Knight plunges straight into the depths. A figure of fantasy, he rides a seahorse, and on his shield he bears the Cup motif. He is a champion of love. He lives and dies for love. He is in love with love. Many think this Knight would be the perfect lover, but a steady diet of his romanticism would probably become tiresome after a while. Nonetheless, without his energy the world would be a dull place indeed.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Knight of Cups represents a stage when one's focus is on emotional matters. Care must be taken that this focus does not turn into obsession.

APPROACH

Knights are “Doing”. The Knight of Cups recommends that you take emotional matters into your own hands. All too often we find ourselves paralyzed in relationships, indecisive and incapable of responding. The Knight tells us to dive into the deep end of the pool.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Scorpio ♏ / one-third Libra ♎

The Knight of Cups appreciates the beauty of his beloved (Libra), which he worships with an extravagant intensity (Scorpio).

QUEEN OF CUPS

PERSONALITY

The Queen of Cups is a creature of pure emotion. A water nymph, her gold dress suggests fish scales and her headdress a clamshell. Unlike the Page, Knight and King, who all maintain some connection to the surface, the Queen lives entirely in the depths, pacing the ocean's floor. Everyone knows someone like this, who is completely non-rational in their thinking, and who sees things only in emotional terms.

She is attended by dolphins, who, as creatures who live both above and below the water's surface, are able to relay the Queen's messages to those who live in air. She wears as a pendant the sign of Pisces, a dreamy, watery, non-rational sign.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Queen of Cups indicates a period when an emotional matter has become so entrenched that it takes on a life of its own and must be dealt with on its own terms.

APPROACH

Queens are “Feeling”. Cups is the suit of feeling, and thus the Queen of Cups is doubly emotional. While the Knight of Cups is focused on feeling, the Queen is completely immersed in it, and therefore is somewhat

mysterious to the rest of us. Because the Queen inhabits the realms of emotion, she is not thrown off balance by feelings the way most of us are. She calmly takes them in her stride and rides them like currents to help her get to where she wants to go. The Queen suggests that for the moment, we forget about rational plans and analyses and instead live with our hearts instead of our heads.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Cancer ♋ / one-third Gemini ♊

The Queen of Cups thinks (Gemini) only in emotional terms (Cancer).

KING OF CUPS

PERSONALITY

Unlike the other Cup Courts, the King must live both below and above the water's surface. In the picture, he seems to be emerging from the waves, yet we can still see the water's surface above him. It is his job to take the feelings and intuitions received from the depths and translate them into actions in the real world. He acts as a mediator or a counselor in emotional matters. His extraordinary ability to empathize with those who come to him, and to place himself in their shoes, makes him an invaluable member of society. Unlike the other Kings, the King of Cups wears a circlet but no crown, because he emotionally identifies with those he seeks to help.

He stares intently at a single empty cup. He knows that we can have all the emotional fantasies we want, but unless we take concrete actions and encourage others to do the same, those fantasies will never emerge into the real world and will never become a significant part of our lives.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

An emotional matter has reached a stage where it is ready to manifest itself as a relationship or a development in a relationship. You are ready to communicate something that you feel. You are mature enough to counsel or help mediate others.

APPROACH

Kings are “Controlling”. The King of Cups suggests you take charge of your emotional life. Don’t be afraid to communicate your feelings or to offer advice to others in need.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Pisces ♫ / one-third Aquarius ♒

The King has a full understanding of the non-rational and non-linear patterns of emotional life (Pisces), yet desires to use this understanding to help society in general (Aquarius).

PALACE OF CUPS

A cool, serene environment where subtle moods can be explored. The plants on the sea floor represent mysterious processes in our subconscious, which can only be revealed in quiet and gentle circumstances. The jellyfish indicate messages and dreams, which slowly rise from the ocean’s depths. Knights of Cups stand guard to protect the vulnerable, delicately-formed flora and fauna.

ACE OF SWORDS

*A new idea or inspiration. An “aha!” moment,
which brings tremendous opportunities.*

Here we see a composite figure—a woman who is also a sword. She brings to mind Minerva, the Roman goddess of reason and wisdom. Minerva was well known for her clear-sightedness and fairness, as is indicated by the sun gleaming through the sword. The wings represent the freedom of pure thought, as does the elemental glyph of air. No matter how weighted down we may be by heavy emotions or confining circumstances, we are always free to let our thoughts soar.

However, Minerva was also known as a goddess of battle, and this is reflected in the combative and uncomfortable mood of several of the cards in the Swords suit.

In a reading, the Ace of Swords suggests a new idea or inspiration that lights the way to a revolutionary new understanding of our world and what path to take in it. As an Ace, it represents tremendous opportunity for change and growth.

TWO OF SWORDS

Taking a new idea and comparing and contrasting it with other ideas or contexts in order to determine its validity. Overanalyzing or overintellectualizing a situation. Blinding oneself to that which is truly important.

A woman stands blindfolded, grasping a sword in either hand. Behind her, the sun beams out from behind the clouds that partially obscure it.

In this card, the idea that we received in the Ace is compared and contrasted with competing approaches. The woman weighs two ideas, having blindfolded herself so that she can more readily determine the subtle differences between them without distraction. In Buddhist philosophy, clouds are often used as symbols of the mind obscured (or clouded) by self-perpetuating thoughts. As we take an idea and weigh it against other ideas in order to test its validity, we also run the risk of overanalyzing the idea and rationalizing it to death before it has a chance to grow and flourish.

When this card appears in a reading, you are at a turning point. You are balanced on the razor's edge; you might find just the right combination of factors to allow the idea to go forward, or you might go a bit too far and over-intellectualize the situation so that the mental clouds overcome the clarity of the original idea.

Another viewpoint is that all too often we retreat from difficult or unpleasant situations by choosing to focus our minds inward on some unimportant and nonthreatening matter. The ideas represented by the two swords may be less important than some larger issue that the woman is refusing to see.

ASTROLOGY: Moon ☾ in Libra ♎

Our natural tendency (Moon) to weigh, compare and analyze everything (Libra).

THREE OF SWORDS

Heartbreak, disappointment and suffering result when a person, thing or situation acts according to its own nature rather than how we expect or desire it to. Projecting our own desires and assumptions onto others results in pain and resentment when we discover that the world doesn't always work the way we want it to.

Under storm clouds, an elaborately furred and bejeweled woman weeps and holds her hands to her heart, while three swords hover, also pointed toward her heart.

This woman is suffering heartbreak. The suit of Swords signifies mental activity, and the elaborate patterns of her jewelry also suggest that her problems are of a mental nature rather than an emotional one. The woman has become too invested in a particular viewpoint. In a reading, this card signifies that you are facing disappointment and grief because your experiences do not match your expectations. This is a life lesson we often find ourselves learning over and over again.

ASTROLOGY: Saturn ♄ in Libra ♎

Limitations (Saturn) are experienced in a fair and balanced way (Libra), i.e., no one is exempt from disappointment.

FOUR OF SWORDS

Mental rest: sleep, meditation, turning the mind elsewhere.

Allowing intuitive processes to take over.

A warrior has laid aside his helmet and laid himself down to rest, with his sword tucked beneath him. As he sleeps, he floats in a starry sky that suggests that one's creative potential is limitless if one observes this basic rule of human nature.

In any mental endeavor there comes a time when the mind must stop working and rest itself, thus allowing one's intuitive processes to take over. There are countless anecdotes of scientists and artists going to sleep, or turning their attention to something else, and suddenly being struck with an inspiration that solves the very problem they had been struggling with. When this card appears in a reading, it is time for you to retreat and rest. Sleep, or meditate, or go for a walk, or engage in a pastime that takes your mind off whatever it is you're preoccupied with.

ASTROLOGY: Jupiter ♃ in Libra ♎

Creative abundance (Jupiter) will flourish in a peaceful and harmonious environment (Libra).

FIVE OF SWORDS

A humiliating defeat, either our own or one which we inflict on someone else.

The kind of person who must always be right. A defeat that life or circumstance hands us, which we are helpless against.

An apparition appears before us, looming out of the mist, bearing an upraised sword. His expression suggests contempt and mercilessness. In most battles or disagreements, there is a winner and a loser. Here, the sword bearer has won a victory, and the small stricken figure has suffered inexorable defeat.

This card is about the person who always needs to win. Everyone knows or has met this kind of person. In fact, you yourself may exhibit this tendency on occasion! The man's facial tattoos suggest that he is operating from primitive, savage instincts. When this card comes up in a reading, someone has defeated you handily and has taken great pleasure in doing so, or you yourself have defeated someone else. In this card, the fact of winning has become more important than the prize that was won. Such a victory is likely to become ephemeral, and will eventually vanish into thin air, like the fog and mist out of which the victor on the card emerges.

Sometimes it is not another person but life itself that hands us a humiliating defeat.

This interpretation is supported by the planetary symbols on the man's fingers, as if the stars themselves have conspired to do us in. In this case we can do nothing but accept our loss and move on.

ASTROLOGY: Venus ♀ in Aquarius ♒

Venus shows what we value. In Aquarius we value the cause we are championing, with little or no empathy or compassion for the individuals whose lives are affected by our actions.

SIX OF SWORDS

*Quiet, steady, cautious progress. Diplomacy, tact, guile.
Calmly exploring the subconscious mind.*

A masked and hooded figure stands in a red boat, which quietly slips through the water, carrying her through a golden archway.

In this card, progress is being made. But this is not the heady victory of the Six of Wands; instead, it shows a slow, steady, thoughtful advancement. Rather than jumping into the fray, the woman is

proceeding cautiously, having learned the harsh lessons taught by the Five of Swords. She is hooded and masked to hide her identity, which suggests the use of diplomacy or even guile. The boat is well protected with the six interleaved swords.

In a reading, this card suggests you may be better off proceeding slowly, cautiously, and discreetly, rather than declaring yourself openly and loudly. If you are in disagreement with someone, a bit of tact is called for. Perhaps the situation calls for you to not reveal the whole truth about something (as opposed to outright lying).

ASTROLOGY: Mercury ♀ in Aquarius ♒

We create effective and inventive strategies (Mercury) to accomplish our goals in unorthodox and non-direct ways (Aquarius).

SEVEN OF SWORDS

Sneakiness, cleverness, audacity and dishonesty.

A cat burglar is climbing a stone edifice, burdened by the five valuable swords he has just stolen. His hold on the stone is precarious. He is taking great risks and employing great cleverness to attain his goal. He'd better hurry, because the sun is swiftly rising and will soon expose him in his vulnerable position. Two unclaimed swords hover nearby, mocking him.

The figure on the card is simply being too clever for his own good. He wanted the swords so badly that he developed elaborate strategies to steal them. In truth, he took the easy way out, by stealing them as opposed to working and saving for them. But taking the easy path has led him to a more difficult path than he bargained for. He may get away with it, or he may drop the swords (or himself) in his attempt to escape undiscovered.

This card suggests sneakiness, cleverness, audacity and dishonesty. The degree of the dishonesty depends on the context of the reading. It could range all the way from a white lie to a major deception.

ASTROLOGY: Moon ☾ in Aquarius ♒

We all have a tendency (Moon) at times to rebel (Aquarius) against ethical laws by simply appropriating what we want, despite the fact that deep down, we know better.

EIGHT OF SWORDS

Being restricted by one's own assumptions, biases and prejudices.

A woman floats inside a bubble that rests upon eight sword points. She has constructed such an inflexible mental map of reality that she is now restricted by it. She is a prisoner of her own biases and prejudices. Perhaps she has decided she doesn't like someone, and so now she always sees that person in a negative light, thus denying herself the opportunities and potentials that could result from establishing friendly relations with the person.

The bubble looks fragile, with its crystalline or cracked-eggshell surface, but it holds her as steadfastly as if it were an iron chain. If, however, she were to challenge her own assumptions and try to see things from a different point of view, the bubble would pop and the swords would vanish.

ASTROLOGY: Jupiter ♃ in Gemini ♊

The mind has been too active (Jupiter) and has woven the complicated web (Gemini), which now imprisons it.

NINE OF SWORDS

Stress, tension, anxiety, all caused by the obsessive tendencies of one's own mind.

A woman reclines in a darkened room, which opens out onto an ominous night scene. A tree limb looks almost like threatening claws. The woman obviously has a long, anxious night ahead of her.

When this card appears in a reading, it signifies that you are occupying a mental landscape full of tension and anxiety, and it is your own mind that has taken you there. Step by step, thought by thought, your conscious mind has constructed a maze to entrap you, a nightmarish funhouse in which even something as innocent as a tree limb takes on an ominous aspect.

The nine swords that are mounted on the column seem to be channeling the negative energy directly at her head, specifically at her eyes, suggesting that how we think about things directly affects how we perceive them. Or perhaps the negative energy is being channeled upward and outward from the woman's mind, through the swords and into the scene, graphically demonstrating the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy—if we expect bad things to happen, then they probably will. The obsessive tendencies of the human mind that bring us to this bleak landscape can be avoided, if we exercise vigilance.

ASTROLOGY: Mars  in Gemini 

An overactive imagination (Gemini) becomes preoccupied with conflict and struggle (Mars).

TEN OF SWORDS

Anguish and pain, but also relief. An hysterical overreaction.

A man kneels and covers his head in anguish. On his back he bears a circular tattoo, and ten swords surround the tattoo, barely piercing the man's skin.

In this card we see the limits of the conscious mind. We can plan, strategize and rationalize to our heart's (or our mind's) content, but in the end, true satisfaction is to be found not in pure mentality but rather in a balance of mind, heart, soul, and body. Here, the mind has become so enraptured with its own convolutions that they actually appear on the man's skin, in the form of the circular tattoo (suggestive of circular reasoning).

The ten swords can be seen as the mind in the process of carving the tattoo. Or they could also represent the larger mind or higher self at work, pricking the conscious mind's pretensions and releasing the negative energy that has been built up. While the image is a dire one, this can be seen as a positive card. In a reading, it suggests that you have come to the end of the road, and are now ready to become aware of new opportunities and the ever-present potential for change and growth.

ASTROLOGY: Sun ☉ in Gemini ♊

Here, we see the end result of identifying too closely with our ego consciousness (Sun), what Buddhists refer to as the "Monkey Mind", which chatters endlessly and obsessively so that true perception is obscured (Gemini).

PAGE OF SWORDS

PERSONALITY

The Page of Swords is a quick-witted, somewhat mercurial young woman. She's curious about the world around her, but she lacks the Page of Coin's

patient and responsible attitude, and instead her attention playfully hops from one thing to another. She has an insatiable hunger for knowledge, and is not above a little discreet snooping in order to gain that knowledge.

Her elaborate headdress, with the white feathers, symbolize the airy qualities of her mind. The hilts and tips of the four sword blades are hidden from view, indicating that her thought processes are not grounded in empirical evidence (the hilts), nor are they yet developed to the point where she is able to glimpse overlying structures and motivations (the tips).

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Page represents a stage or phase of an idea or of a strategy that is in its infancy. The basic outlines are there, but it will require much fleshing out and development before it can be put to use.

APPROACH

Pages are Learning. The Page of Swords recommends you focus your attention on gaining knowledge or learning information about the matter at hand. This could include receiving information by messages, newspapers, television, or e-mail.

KNIGHT OF SWORDS

PERSONALITY

The Knight of Swords is mounted on a white, winged steed. He represents the soaring flights the mind is capable of, whether flights of fancy or of invention. To accomplish these flights, he must put aside the restrictions and inhibitions that his conscious mind has placed on him, so that he can develop the original and unorthodox patterns necessary for his flight. He must also focus entirely on his goal, without being distracted, for he is defying gravity (that is, the inertia against which we all struggle) by sheer force of will.

His ability to focus is shown by the winged helmet, in contrast to the Page's hat, which bore only feathers. Of course, such single-minded focus means that he won't be the most tolerant or empathetic person you'll ever meet. He may be quick to jump to conclusions or to take offense.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

Knights represent a stage or phase where focus, attention and determination are necessary. In the Knight of Swords, this means a focus of the mind, where success depends on your ability to patiently and carefully work out a solution to the problem at hand.

APPROACH

Knights are "Doing". The Knight of Swords suggests that you take action based on your plans and ideas. He also recommends that you let your mind take wing, like the horse on the card, so that you can escape earth-bound modes of thinking. In other words, try thinking "outside the box."

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Aquarius ♒ / one-third Capricorn ♐

The Knight of Swords narrows and limits (Capricorn) his focus so that he can obtain unconventional results in intellectual matters (Aquarius).

QUEEN OF SWORDS

PERSONALITY

The Queen of Swords is an interesting character. She bears white wings, like those of the Knight's steed, indicating her considerable intellectual abilities, and her headdress includes wing shapes over the ears. Yet where the headdress covers the head, it resembles a net that seems to be restricting her freedom, so that she seems almost like a hooded hunting bird. This tells us that the Queen is a perfectionist, and thus to some extent she restricts herself with her exacting standards. When these standards aren't met, the Queen responds ruthlessly with scorn. Where the headdress covers her eyes, it resembles a mask, showing that she is

in some ways isolated from those around her.

With her left hand she holds the hilt of a sword, showing that she has a firm grasp of the subject at hand. With her right hand she grasps the sword's blade, indicating that she is unstintingly honest, most of all with herself. The Queen's honesty and perfectionism may make her seem like a stern taskmaster, but this energy is necessary in any plan or endeavor. It is what drives us to be better.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

A plan or endeavor has reached a stage where it runs of its own accord and no longer needs tremendous willpower to launch it into the world. One should keep the integrity and purity of the original idea in mind, however, to serve as a guiding light for the future.

APPROACH

Queens are "Feeling". The Queen of Swords suggests you use your intuition when deciding whether something measures up to your original plan. If you feel like something doesn't make the grade, don't be afraid to jettison it. People may call you picky, but you'll be remaining true to your ideals.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Libra ♎ / one-third Virgo ♍

The Queen of Swords can be meticulous (Virgo) about adhering to her refined ideals (Libra).

KING OF SWORDS

PERSONALITY

The King of Swords is himself a symbol of the fully developed mind. Unlike the Page, Knight, and Queen, his head needs no hair, wings or feathers, and is instead completely bald, so as to allow for maximum mental input and output, illustrated by the complex metallic swirls and

shapes that surround him. Notice how the swirls radiate into space, and together with the four sword blades form a sort of temple to the mind. Such a solid and elaborate mental structure is quite an achievement, but it can have its drawbacks too.

The King must be vigilant lest his mental structure calcify into narrow-mindedness. He must strive to maintain the Page's childlike curiosity and mental flexibility.

The King could be a scientist, someone who changes the world by studying it, analyzing it, and reaching new conclusions about it. In contrast to the Page, whose swords lacked tips, the tips of two of the King's blades are visible, indicating that he has the capability to follow lines of thought to their logical conclusions. The two remaining blades still lack tips, to show that there is always something more to learn.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

A plan or strategy has reached a peak stage of effectiveness and is ready to be put into practice.

APPROACH

Kings are "Controlling". The King of Swords suggests that you establish and authoritatively state your beliefs and attitudes, rather than simply going with the flow or letting others do your thinking for you.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Gemini ♊ / one-third Taurus ♉

The King of Swords studies and understands the relationships between things (Gemini) in a thorough and painstaking way (Taurus).

PALACE OF SWORDS

This card shows an environment that promotes clear thinking in the cold, crisp air. The structures rise above the obscuring mists that usually cloud our thinking, and are built as observation decks, for the

purpose of efficient perception rather than luxurious living. The many wings suggest the mind's ability to overcome emotional biases and attain a global perspective.



ACE OF COINS

*A new opportunity or interest in material matters such as money, health, exercise, food, constructing something physical.
The resources to make progress in these areas.*

An immensely strong, bearded man coalesces out of the mist in a forest setting. On his breastplate is the elemental glyph for earth. He holds up a huge coin. In the foreground stands a stag. The image suggests Vulcan, the Roman god of the forge, who created physical objects out of raw materials mined from the earth. Coins in general stand for material values, and the Ace of Coins represents a new start in material matters. Perhaps you have developed a new interest in something having to do with money or health. Aces often indicate unexpected opportunities, so you may find (or be gifted with) the raw materials you need to make progress in these areas.



TWO OF COINS

Juggling many things at once. Having too many balls in the air. Awareness of the cyclical patterns of life, and using those patterns to one's advantage.

Aman stands on a wave, juggling two coins. Before him, a great, filigreed metal sphere (which also appears on the Ace of Cups) floats on the water. The man is juggling as he walks on a path toward the sphere, representing his heart's desire.

In a reading this card indicates that you are juggling many things at once. The man could be seen as effectively handling the different facets of his life, or this could mean he has "too many balls in the air." The metal

sphere suggests the cyclical patterns of life and how it is often necessary to be aware of these cycles, to lightly dance among and between them, and to use them to one's advantage rather than being ruled by them.

Sometimes keeping the balls in the air can seem an arduous task. Yet the man on the card is miraculously accomplishing the impossible, and is even walking on water while he does it. We are capable of more than we know, and the only way to test the limits of our potential is to continually challenge ourselves.

ASTROLOGY: Jupiter ♃ in Capricorn ♑

Channeling the unlimited potential of Jupiter through the structure and discipline of Capricorn so that you may accomplish more than you had thought yourself capable of.

THREE OF COINS

*Attaining mastery and knowledge of a particular field. The act of creation.
Making something refined out of rough, raw materials.*

A glassblower works at his furnace, creating beautiful, refined forms from rough raw materials. Like the Ace of Coins, this image brings to mind the god Vulcan at his forge. This card shows a master craftsman, someone who had paid his dues and now commands respect as an expert in his field. He takes pride in his work, and is eager to pass on his knowledge to a new generation. In a reading, the card indicates that you have attained mastery of a particular subject. It could also represent the act of creation, taking the raw materials and transforming them into exciting, new shapes.

ASTROLOGY: Mars ♂ in Capricorn ♑

You have the power (Mars) to harness (Capricorn) transformative energies (like the fire in the craftsman's kiln) to give shape to refined creations.

FOUR OF COINS

*Good fortune. Alternatively, a high price paid for good fortune.
Fears that what one has will be stolen. Miserliness or greed.*

Four is the number of material manifestation, and Coins are the suit of the material. Thus, before we even look at the picture, we know that the Four of Coins will be a materialistic, heavy card. Our attention shifts from creation (as seen in the Three of Coins) to acquisition and maintenance.

The card shows simply a rich man with his acquisitions. How we interpret this image depends on the context of the reading. It could mean simply good fortune; our ship comes in, we hit the jackpot.

But look closely at the man's face. His lips curve in a slight smile, because he is pleased with his hoard. But there is strain around his eyes, as if attaining and maintaining his riches is more difficult than he thought it would be. Perhaps he has had to pay a price for his good fortune, a price that for many would be too high. Perhaps the key around his neck is a burden that weighs him down. The mere fact that the box requires a lock tells us that he lives in fear that the coins will be stolen. Perhaps the fear is justified, perhaps not; either way, it has become clear to him that these coins have two sides.

ASTROLOGY: Sun ☉ in Capricorn ♑

Your ego (Sun) can all too easily find itself creating its own prison (Capricorn).

FIVE OF COINS

*Misfortune. Going to extremes to protect loved ones.
Being let down by social institutions. A "poor me" frame of mind.*

A woman dressed in rags stands outside a church in a driving snow-storm. In one arm she holds a bundled-up infant, and with the

other she holds out a cup with which she begs for alms. This is a complex card, which can have several interpretations. It could simply mean misfortune. No matter how well off we may be at present, the possibility always exists that the Wheel of Fortune will turn and leave us disenfranchised. And the misfortune need not be physical; we could be dealing with emotional, mental or creative misfortune.

On the other hand, we could see the image in a positive light. The woman is doing everything in her power to provide for her child, even if it means accepting assistance at the expense of her dignity. We might focus on the church window. Here again, there are several possibilities. The card could be seen as in indictment of the church, or, more generally, of social institutions which often fail to fulfill their mandate to help the disadvantaged. Or we could place the blame on the woman, who begs for physical help yet refuses the spiritual assistance offered just a few steps away. In this case, the woman insists on seeing the glass as half-empty rather than half-full, and cultivates a “poor me” frame of mind in order to garner sympathy from those around her. This interpretation implies that our success or failure in life can often be due more to our own attitudes than anything else.

You will need to carefully examine the card in the context of the question and other cards in the spread to determine which meaning is the most appropriate.

ASTROLOGY: Mercury ♀ in Taurus ♂

Your mind (Mercury) is placing too much emphasis on physical comforts (or the lack thereof) (Taurus).

SIX OF COINS

Charity. Sharing. Establishing balance.

An unequal relationship in which one person gives and the other takes.

A richly dressed young man holds a set of scales in one hand, and with the other hand offers us the astrological glyph for Libra, also representing scales.

This card means charity, or an effort to reestablish fairness and equity in an unfair world. In material endeavors, we often get caught up in the effort to acquire as much as possible.

In the Six of Coins, we experience the pleasures of sharing what we have acquired. The evenly balanced scales show us the importance of balance and fairness in material matters. Do we have too much? Does someone else not have enough? The answers to these questions will differ for everyone, but this card encourages us to at least ask the questions.

On an intrapersonal level, this card might suggest an unequal relationship in which one person always gives and the other person always takes. While the man seems to be handing out equality with one hand, notice that the scales in his other hand are still unbalanced.

ASTROLOGY: Moon ☾ in Taurus ♉

We all have a natural tendency (Moon), which can be either encouraged or resisted according to our personalities, to express our maternal, compassionate, and protective instincts in a patient and tireless way (Taurus).

SEVEN OF COINS

Patience. Evaluation. Something you have nurtured can now grow on its own.

This card is about the virtue of patience, i.e. waiting until the right moment before taking action. The woman in the picture has undergone the dynamic and exciting creative processes shown in the previous Coins cards, and is now prepared to harvest the fruit of her labor, but is waiting until the perfect moment of ripeness. Often, the proper timing can make all the difference in our endeavors.

The card could also indicate that you have nurtured something and it has now grown to the point where it no longer requires your constant attention. Now you can sit back and watch it grow. Alternatively, the woman could be seen as at a crossroads, evaluating the situation to determine what her next move will be. Will she pick the fruit? Will she fertilize the tree? Will she cut the tree down and plant something else? She stares out of the card at us as if asking, "What would you do?"

The woman's companion sits in her lap, eager to help harvest!

ASTROLOGY: Saturn ♄ in Taurus ♉

Taurus wishes to immediately enjoy the sensual experience of eating the fruit, but Saturn cautions patience and self-discipline.

EIGHT OF COINS

Slow, steady work. A labor-intensive project. A sincere and committed effort.

A wizard (or scientist, depending on your point of view) sits in his library, busily constructing an orrery (a clockwork device that replicates the relative movements of the solar system). The man has a goal, and is working slowly and steadily to achieve it.

This is not the time for impetuous moves or grandiose schemes. Instead, now is the time to buckle down and get one's hands dirty, doing all the tedious but necessary tasks that can no longer be avoided. He is carefully following his written plans and delicately fitting together the jewels and gears that will make his orrery run smoothly and accurately. Although he seems to be quite the expert, we know that he is still an apprentice rather than a master, because despite his capability, he still requires an instruction manual to build his machine.

He must also rely on seemingly supernatural inspiration, as evidenced by the coins and crystals, which suggest that the man-made mechanical components are driven by some undefined energy that lies

outside the scientist's direct control. Thus, the machine is essentially a mystical one that straddles the physical world of science and reality on the one hand, and the mystical world of magic on the other.

In a reading, this card describes a labor-intensive project. This is not a time to look for instant gratification, but rather the rewards that come from a sincere and committed effort.

ASTROLOGY: Sun ☉ in Virgo ♍

The best way to get through a labor-intensive project is to identify (Sun) with the work, to become one with it, to place oneself in its service (Virgo).

NINE OF COINS

*Enjoying the results of hard work. Creating a satisfying environment.
Peace. Retreating into your own shell.*

A young woman in her garden caresses a dove, while another flies above. The flowers are heavy with blooms, and a trellis gateway shuts out the outer world.

This card suggests that you have succeeded in creating an environment around yourself that is truly satisfying. You have worked hard, and now you deserve to enjoy the results. The woman is alone, indicating that she has accomplished this feat on her own, relying on no one else. Doves traditionally symbolize peace, and when this card appears in a reading it indicates that you have attained the peace you sought.

In a negative sense, you may be shutting the world out and retreating too much into your own shell.

ASTROLOGY: Venus ♀ in Virgo ♍

A perfectly ordered environment (Virgo) contains its own beauty (Venus).

TEN OF COINS

Sensing the magic that resides in the ordinary. The beauty and potential hidden in the material things around us. The light at the end of the tunnel.

In a dark forest we see a stone archway covered with ivy, and an open gate, through which we can glimpse a scene filled with golden light. A stone path wanders through sunlit trees and ten coins float down from the sky. Two carved faces adorn the archway.

The theme of this card could be condensed into a single phrase: “Magic in the Ordinary.” The material things around us, both those provided by nature and those we build ourselves, including our own bodies, are things of beauty and potential, although we too often take them for granted. The image on the card is really a quite ordinary scene—a stone path viewed through a stone archway. However, looking through an artist’s eyes reveals a magical wonderland bathed in grace.

When you receive this card, you are indeed fortunate. You are being reminded of the ineffable beauty and goodness inhabiting the world around us. Of course, life is difficult, and of course, we must all struggle at times. This card reminds us of what it is we struggle for.

The card may also be seen as the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, a spark of hope and optimism that presages an end to a gloomy situation. The stone faces reflect back to us our own fears and resistances. But the gate lies open; all we need do is step through.

ASTROLOGY: Mercury ♿ in Virgo ♍

A mental attitude (Mercury) of appreciation for the humble, the modest, the ordinary (Virgo).

PAGE OF COINS

PERSONALITY

The Page of Coins is a young woman who gazes at the world with curi-

ous eyes. Having not yet attained practical experience in the world, she strives instead to study what resources she can find that will prepare her for her future endeavors. She has not wandered yet in the green meadow pictured on the card, but is studying it from afar. The two pillars behind her represent knowledge that so far exists only as abstract concepts.

Her serious expression and her cool, even gaze denote a professional and responsible attitude toward her studies and an analytical scientist's approach to the world and to those around her.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

This card represents the beginning stages of a material endeavor. You could be starting to construct a physical object, or beginning a project involving gardening, nutrition, diet or exercise. You could be thinking about becoming a parent. Taking the suit of Coins more literally, you could be embarking on a new savings plan or investment.

APPROACH

Pages are "Learning". The Page of Coins is learning about material reality. The approach suggested would be to learn about the physical processes going on around you.

KNIGHT OF COINS

PERSONALITY

The Knight of Coins is ready to rush in and tackle the task at hand. Unlike other decks, which show this Knight sitting quietly on his horse, the *Tarot of Dreams* Knight of Coins is charging into the fray, thus staying true to the impetuosity of the Knights. He is capable of patience when engaged in long, tedious projects, as is evidenced by the huge, red rock mountain his horse is about to climb. But once he decides on his direction, he is anxious to begin.

Knights are completely focused on their tasks. The Knight of Coins takes pleasure in his work for the work's sake, and thus is often found fully

engrossed in what might seem to others to be a menial or tedious chore. He could perhaps be an athlete who has the determination and self-discipline to succeed at his sport.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

A stage in a task or project when one must buckle down and get one's hands dirty.

APPROACH

Knights are "Doing". Rather than desiring, planning or directing that something of a physical nature be built, changed or worked with, the Knight of Coins suggests that you actually go out and do it. If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Taurus ♉ / one-third Aries ♈

Slow, steady, and responsible (Taurus), the Knight is nevertheless eager to begin (Aries).

QUEEN OF COINS

PERSONALITY

Richly dressed and bejeweled, the Queen of Coins obviously enjoys the finer things in life. She enjoys them not because of status or the admiration of others, but because she truly appreciates such things for their own sake. She could be a gourmet chef who enjoys culinary creations, or someone who exercises for the sheer pleasure of physical challenges. She enjoys nurturing others as well as herself. She holds a spray of flowers, with which she intends to decorate her home for the pleasure of her family.

Like all Queens, the Queen of Coins is a mature and serene presence. She is more likely to try to train a branch to grow in a different direction rather than to lop it off. Without making a fuss, she quietly plans her environment and nurtures her loved ones.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

A period of quiet enjoyment of material pleasures. A time to give to others and allow others to give to you.

APPROACH

Queens are “Feeling”. The suit of Coins deals with the material world, and the Queen suggests that you appreciate and enjoy physical things and sensations, including sensuality and sexuality.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Capricorn ♄ / one-third Sagittarius ♐

The Queen applies gentle discipline (Capricorn) in order to provide the ideal home base from which her loved ones can expand their horizons (Sagittarius).

KING OF COINS

PERSONALITY

The King of Coins appears as a tribal chieftain, his face showing his long years of experience in working with and sometimes wrestling with his physical environment for the benefit of the tribe. The two pillars behind the Page, representing abstract knowledge, are now closer to the King, thus becoming the wisdom of experience. The King uses this experience to guide him, as we can see from the guiding light that shines from the top of the left tower. He could be a merchant or a businessman, able to use his long experience to create a secure environment. His intuitive understanding of the cycles of growth permits him to look with a tolerant eye on the foibles of others and on the ups and downs of commerce.

Kings are mature and decisive. The King of Coins must sometimes make hard decisions, and would be more likely, for example, to lop off that branch that the Queen of Coins would have simply trained to grow in another direction.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

A task or endeavor reaches a peak stage of operation. An example would be a business that has grown to the point where it can basically run itself.

APPROACH

Kings are “Controlling”. The King of Coins suggests that you do not simply accept the physical environment and constraints you are given, but that you take the initiative to change them to suit your own goals.

ASTROLOGY: Two-thirds Virgo ♍ / one-third Leo ♌

The King works quietly and patiently to build up his resources (Virgo), while at the same time willingly taking his place as a leader in the eyes of those he leads and cares for (Leo).

PALACE OF COINS

The other palaces are fun places to visit, but the Palace of Coins is where we live. Here is where we feel safe and secure, where we can tend to our earthly needs, where we can be kings and queens of our own castle. Here also we can experience the four elemental energies as fully human attributes: the intellectual (owl), the impetuous (deer), the moody (frog), and the mundane (mouse). The mountains in the background are more distant than in the Palace of Wands. The dreams and goals remain, but home is always waiting when we need a rest from the journey.

READING THE CARDS

The procedure of laying out the cards and interpreting them, for oneself or for others, is a very personal process. Everyone has his/her own way of doing it, and when you read a particular author's method, it's important to keep in mind that it is merely that author's method, and it has no greater validity than another author's, or your own. No one method is intrinsically better than any other; the best advice is simply to try them all, and use the ones you feel most comfortable with. Even after you find a method you like, experiment with something new every once in a while. This will keep your reading style fresh.

When I read the cards, after formulating a question and shuffling, I generally lay them out in a preselected spread. I turn each card face up as I lay it in its position, so that the card's image is visible. Then I survey the lay of the land. I note the proportion of Majors to Minors, and the predominance or lack of suits within the Minors. I look for several cards of the same rank or number (three Knights, for instance, or four Sevens). These factors can lend a tone or perspective, something to keep in mind to help make sense of the reading. My next step is to go through the cards one by one, interpreting each card in light of its spread position and in light of the question.

The only way you can get it to make sense is to begin to play with the meanings, adapt them, massage them so that they start to make sense in the context of your life. So if you receive the Sun card, and some book gives you a meaning of "Optimism," and optimism has nothing to do with the situation you're doing the reading on, you can think about how you can make it fit. Perhaps the card stands for too much optimism, or the rosy scenario, seeing life through rose-colored glasses (card meanings are often very well expressed by clichés and truisms).

It is this kind of adaptive procedure that is the very essence of tarot interpretation. As you look at the card from different angles, you'll begin to access that intuitive pool of meanings that underlies every good tarot reading. After you gain more experience, you'll begin to do this automati-

cally, without having to make it such a conscious process. You'll find after a while that as your interpretive choices become more intuitive, it will seem as if the cards are speaking to you.



THE STORY SPREAD

Designed especially for the *Tarot of Dreams*, the Story Spread encourages you to think of your life and your situation as a story. It also provides a method of investigating and challenging the stories told to us by our conscious minds. Often, our ultimate happiness depends on our willingness to constantly question these egocentric stories and see if they are really true, or if our ego is telling us something that only serves to cause us more stress.

The first card position is called the Story, and this card is a microcosm of the reading as a whole. The remaining cards are the Rest of the Story, and serve to amplify and expand upon themes found in the first card.

THE STORY

Position 1: The Story. This card provides an overview of the chapter of the story that you are presently living.

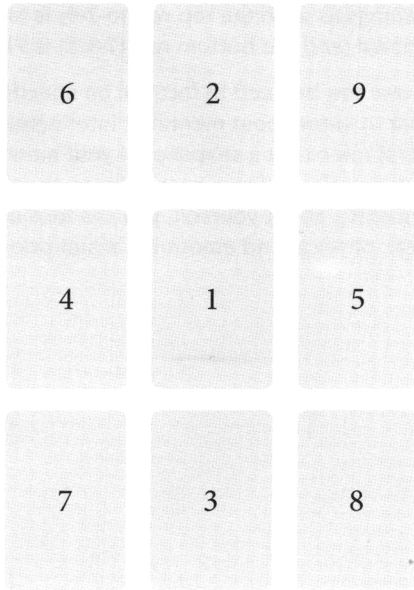
THE REST OF THE STORY

Position 2: What You Think. This card describes your conscious mind or your ego, what it thinks about the story, and what it thinks the story is, in the final analysis.

Position 3: What You Get. This describes the physical circumstances in which you will find yourself if your story continues on its present path.

Position 4: What You Feel. This card explores the emotional roots and foundations of your present circumstance. This is where you'll find hidden emotional motivations.

Position 5: What You Deserve. This card shows what you expect on an emotional level.



Turn over the first card and place it in the “1” position;
the second card is placed in the “2” position, etc.

Position 6: What You Tell. This shows how you present yourself to others and how you express yourself.

Position 7: What You Are. The parts of yourself that have been determined by the physical circumstances of your upbringing.

Position 8: What You Need. This card shows what you feel you need to be happy on a physical level; in other words, what level of physical comfort or security you need, or what level of risk.

Position 9: What You Expect. This shows what your conscious mind or ego expects for the future.

The rows have meanings as well: the top row (6-2-9) is Mental; the middle row (4-1-5) is Emotional; and the bottom row (7-3-8) is Physical.

The columns and rows can be used to focus in on specific issues. For example, if you want to know about mental or intellectual concerns, you could look to the first row to get a snapshot of your mental assumptions, conclusions, and expectations. If you want to learn about various assumptions you've been making about yourself, you can look at the first column and see your mental, physical and emotional assumptions.



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