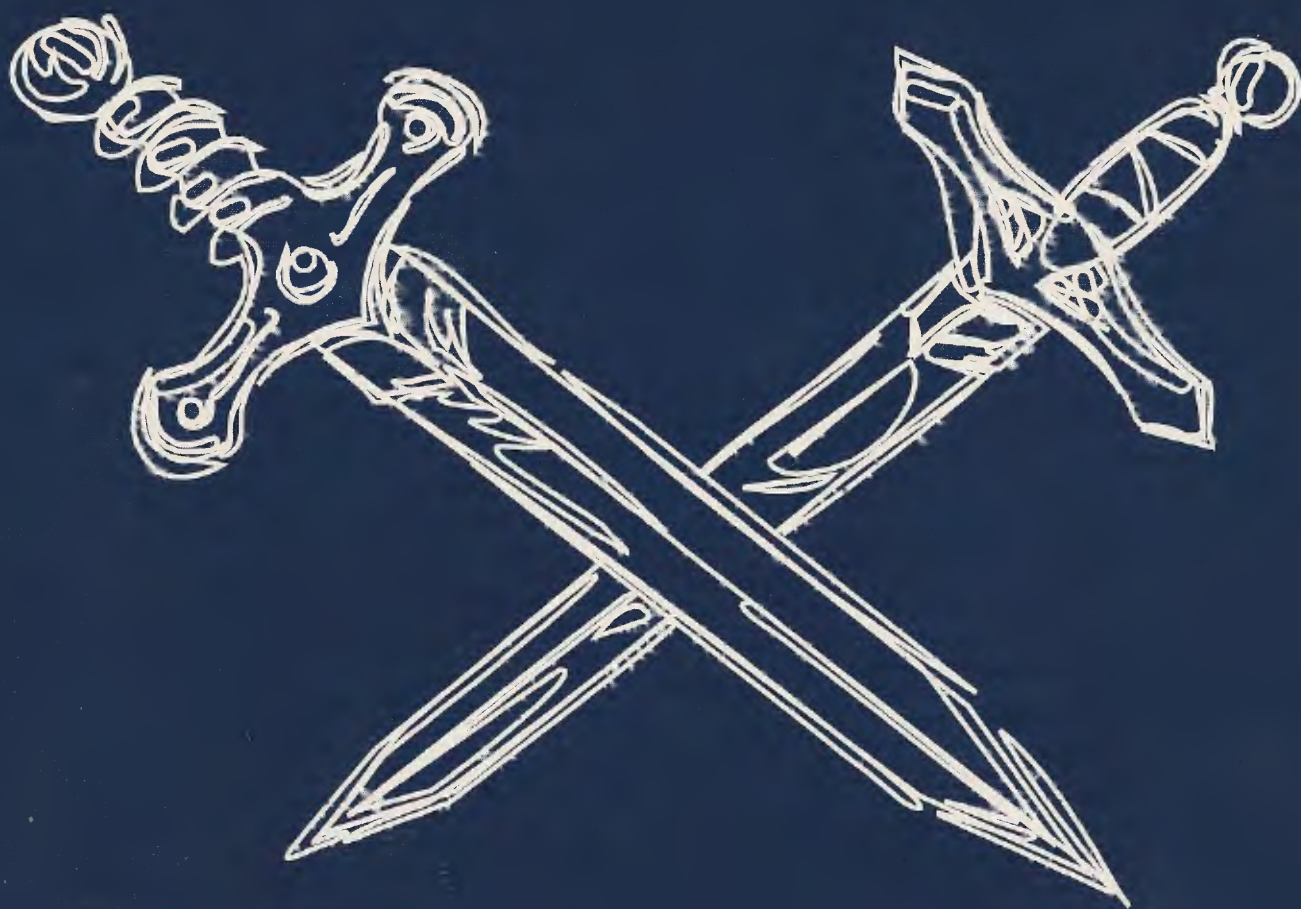


# Insight Tarot

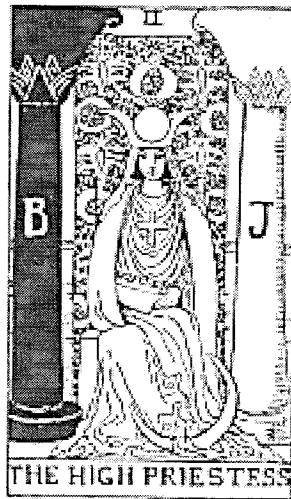


Dawn Rothwell

# INSIGHT TAROT

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By Dawn Rothwell, Certified Tarot Master Instructor



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Insight Tarot

1st Edition

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Welcome. You are ready to begin what can be the most exciting journey you have ever partaken: the Journey of the Tarot. The purpose of this book is to help you discover how to be the best Tarot reader you can be by understanding the history, archetypes, and symbols of the Tarot throughout the ages.

While taking your Tarot journey, do not be surprised, however, if you reap deeper rewards. Learning the Tarot will reveal to you insight into your character and core being, thus propelling you further on your spiritual path.

INSIGHT TAROT was written to be a useful tool for the novice and expert alike. New seekers will encounter all the practical information, history, and substance of Tarot in a fun, easy-to-read guide. Intermediates will have the opportunity to advance their skills with numerous exercises that allow the reader to connect book knowledge with personal exploration. The advanced practitioner will discover new insight and discussion on Tarot not readily available in books.

As such, INSIGHT TAROT is suitable as a “teach yourself” guide, a group study workbook, or a formal manual for workshops and courses. Whichever path you take, you will find INSIGHT TAROT will be helpful every step of the way.

Enjoy!

Dawn Rothwell



## Acknowledgements

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To all my students past and present for your numerous requests for a full length instruction manual,

And most of all, to you, the reader, for your interest in carrying on the Tarot tradition. May these pages bring to you much knowledge and insight.

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# Lesson One

## Getting Started with Tarot

- What Exactly Is Tarot?
- Why Study Tarot?
- Choosing a Deck and Gathering Your Tools
- Preparing Mentally To Do Intuitive Work
- Grounding and Setting "Working Space"
- Working With Your First Card
- Completing Your Work

## What Exactly Is the Tarot?

The Tarot is an ancient method of teaching universal and spiritual concepts, which in turn assists the seeker in gaining insight into one's character, present circumstances, and future possibilities. The word Tarot refers to the physical deck of 78 cards with archetypal and symbolic pictures as well as the art of learning and interpreting the traditions associated with these cards.

The Tarot's history is undocumented prior to the 1400's, when the earliest existing cards were discovered. This special deck was painted to honor a marriage between the Visconti and the Sforza families, two well established noble Italian households at that time. The Visconti-Sforza Tarot is still in print and very popular even today.

It is assumed that the Tarot was kept secret to protect both its wisdom as well as its teachers. The average person was not literate, so the fact that the Tarot relied on pictures to teach spiritual exploration to the masses was likely seen as a threat to the priests and leaders of the time.

The Tarot, nonetheless, became extremely popular and was widely used. In the past, most people first encountered the Tarot as a gambling game called Tarochi, but others approached the cards for fortunetelling as well as for spiritual exploration. As time passed, the game element of Tarot has diminished but there has been much exploration of the Tarot's meanings. Modern thinkers such as Carl Jung and Walt Whitman have delved deeply into the mysteries of Tarot, and the popularity of this ancient tool skyrocketed in modern times. During the early 1960's there were only two Tarot decks that were widely distributed to bookstores. At present there are over 1200 available decks, with themes from Baseball to Hello Kitty and just about everything in between. Tarot is certainly in high demand.

A traditional Tarot deck consists of 78 cards. The first 22 cards are called the Major Arcana which depicts the Universal Journey of the Soul, and the remaining 56 cards are called the Minor Arcana which depict the day to day events of life. The Minor Arcana is separated into four groups, each represented by a suit focusing on one of the four elements, swords for air, wands for fire, cups for water, and pentacles for earth.

One of the most misunderstood points of Tarot is how it is interpreted. Many people focus solely on learning individual cards, especially the Major Arcana, and dismiss the rest of the deck. In fact, there are decks currently in print that only offer the Major Arcana. However the real understanding of the Tarot comes from understanding it as a unit and learning how the cards relate to one another. The Tarot is a story that unfolds in sequential order, with key symbols and themes following throughout. While you certainly can choose to learn or meditate on the symbols one card at a time, to truly master the Tarot you will need a working knowledge of all the cards of the deck, as every card has equal importance. It is a fallacy to think that the Major Arcana have significance over the Minor Arcana, or that Aces are inferior to Kings.

While there is much intellectual study of the Tarot available, it was created to be a symbolic study of images. Therefore while memorizing the symbols and their meanings has its relevance, its true mysteries lie in what insight those symbols hold for the individual reader.

Like any spiritual tool or work of art, interpretation will grow and change over time as the experience and understanding of the observer deepens. It is possible to see things in a card, even after years of intense study, that you have never seen before. For this reason it is presumptuous to state that any single card has one set meaning. Although many who have worked with the cards for a while will state that "the cards never lie" the meaning of the Wheel of Fortune may effect you slightly differently today than it did yesterday, and who knows for sure how it will greet you tomorrow.

## **Why Study Tarot?**

I am often asked this question by new students and skeptics alike and regardless of how many times I am asked, the answer is always the same. While there are countless esoteric and spiritual answers, the two most practical reasons that relate to all individuals of all backgrounds is that studying the Tarot will make you more intuitive and improve your relationships. I know this to be true from my own personal experience, as well as from the feedback of hundreds of students, clients, and gatherings I have hosted over the years.

## **Stronger Intuition**

Most Tarot practitioners, from beginners to teachers to masters, agree that intuitive talent is something that everyone is born with to some degree. It is also agreed upon by most that Tarot will increase and fine-tune this natural ability. However, this does not mean that the simple act of owning a deck, enrolling in a course, or reading (or writing) a book will dramatically improve your innate skills automatically. You may not be able to play the piano or sing in public, but most people can tap out a simple rhythm or learn to sing along with Happy Birthday. In fact, although most people will tell you they have no musical ability at all, less than 1% of the world population is actually musically impaired (unable to either distinguish between tones or follow simple rhythm.) The same holds true for the average person learning the basics of intuitive perception.

Tarot is a tool for teaching the building blocks of intuition in a fun and engaging way. It shows people the natural patterns in psychic perception and phenomenon, in a simple game-like way. By repeated exposure to Tarot images and ideas, we learn how to follow and manipulate intuitive and psychic energy patterns on our own without even realizing it is happening. This is why a great amount of Tarot readers discover after a few years that they have also become quite adept at other psychic arts without really trying. In time, Tarot readers become proficient in the language of the Tarot, the language of archetype and symbolism, and discover how to balance ancient teachings with personal intuition.

## **Better Relationships**

The second part of my answer, "studying Tarot will improve your relationships," grows out of learning the language and archetypes of Tarot. But how exactly can understanding symbols build better relationships? Simple. There are three core ingredients that everyone needs to have great relationships. Most of us have one or maybe two components, but it is the rare person that comes up with all three without hard work and careful study.

### **These ingredients are:**

- 1) A Good Relationship with Yourself
- 2) Social Skills
- 3) Appropriate Timing

If we can learn to make each of these three ingredients work for us, we can discover the joy and ease of relationships instead of focusing on the work and confusion of relationships that don't incorporate all these factors. These factors are just as true for romantic as well as platonic relationships.

## **A Process for Developing Self-Love**

We have all heard that we need to love ourselves before we can expect anyone else to love us. This one is a favorite truism of anyone dispensing advice, from professional psychotherapists and talk show hosts to late night advertisements for self-help books. It is good advice as far as it goes, but the problem is that it is rarely explained how to develop this all-important but often elusive sense of self-love. Let me demystify the process for you.

Self-love comes from the age-old desire to "Know Thy Self". Tarot can provide us with a fresh set of tools to do just that. Every time we explore a card or a specific symbol, we are in truth exploring ourselves. In addition, working with the deck gives us a fresh look at how to accomplish self-acceptance and actually enjoy our personal relationship with our self.

One of the most beautiful components of the Tarot is what is called The Fool's Journey, which depicts the important life lessons we all encounter, and offers us valuable information for making the journey of these lessons both fun and rewarding. It also helps reveal to us how we can master challenging life lessons as they come up. Knowing the map of The Fool connects us to deeper spiritual meanings and to understand that everybody, from housewife to scholar, ultimately walks the same journey. We are all on a spiritual journey. The only difference is where we are on the path at this present moment and where we choose to go from here.

## **A Tool for Developing Social Skills**

There are some people for whom communication and relationships come natural, whereas most would say that people skills are not as easy or natural as it appears. All of us have encountered some people with whom we instantly resonate with, and others that no matter how hard we try we just can't.

The reasons for this are embodied in the Tarot. The Minor Arcana, and particularly the Court Cards, have hidden in their symbolism important clues to learning our own relationship techniques; through understanding what type of person we are and how we best interact with other types of people. The information is there, we simply need to learn to unlock it.

## **Tarot and Free Will**

There has been much controversy about whether or not Tarot violates free will by revealing future events. This so-called predictive ability has become THE advertising ploy by many 900 lines and fortunetellers, but it simply is not the true manner in which the Tarot works. The Tarot is not a fortunetelling device in the way they have been presented but a symbolic tool for self-discovery. However, these archetypal images do reveal to us our patterns and obstacles, so when Tarot "predicts" it does so by showing us if we do not change our behavior we are likely to be in the same situations again and again. People are creatures of habit and almost always react the same way every time presented with the same set of circumstances.

Therefore, the Tarot shows us what road we are on. Just because our behavior has been revealed to us does not mean it takes away our free will. What the Tarot does is give us the insight, and the choice of whether or not to take that insight into consideration. The cards are there to point out the issues, but we are ultimately responsible for discovering the solutions. Those fortunetellers who work with fear and control see these patterns, and rather than inform their client, use that information against them to try to persuade them to purchase more readings, additional services, remove hexes, or other such ploys for additional cash. So it is not the Tarot itself but the ethics of the reader that can compromise free will. Don't fall for false promises and flashing neon lights.

## **Help With the All-Important Question of Timing**

Timing is perhaps the most overlooked relationship skill of all. Expressing appreciation, asking for a favor, sharing a concern, or even going out and having some fun can backfire if the timing is wrong. Too often when this happens we either blame the relationship or blame ourselves. We decide that Jane turned us down for that important favor because she does not value the friendship, or that we had a lousy time on the date because we were with the wrong person (or that we are somehow undesirable). These ideas are certainly possibilities, but they are not the only possibilities. Often the case is that we simply exercised poor timing. Jane was preoccupied with work problems, or

our outing was scheduled during a time of family conflict. This is where the Tarot can be of assistance. As a mirror of the self, it can reveal to us optimum timing for such events, or help us see that we are preoccupied or not ready to give our full attention to an event or issue. So if used correctly, the Tarot is a tool for transforming your relationship with yourself and the world by reclaiming your intuitive and practical power.

## **Choosing a Deck**

Now that you understand a bit about what Tarot is and what its study can bring to you, you will need to get a Tarot Deck. Unlike many Tarot courses this class is designed to work with almost any 78 card deck because it teaches the structure and deeper meanings of the cards, rather than discussing the cards one by one and symbol by symbol. If you have already worked with Tarot and have a deck you like, please use that deck. If you are new to Tarot and do not have a deck, here are some suggestions on choosing your deck:

- Make sure it is really a Tarot deck. There are many other divination decks on the market, as well as decks with the name Tarot by a publisher who does not know what Tarot really is. Oracle decks such as those depicting angels, key words, or motivational phrases are wonderful tools, but are not Tarot decks and will not be suitable for this program. However, it is not complicated to Tarot deck that you will like and will work for you. As mentioned earlier, a true Tarot deck almost always has 78 cards, so counting the cards is your first clue. Beyond that there should be obvious groupings of the cards into “suit” cards and a series of 22 other cards usually referred to as Major Arcana or Greater Secrets or some other special title. (I am not being vague here on purpose as there are literally hundreds of decks with varying titles for the Major Arcana and suits). When in doubt ask the shopkeeper or your instructor whether the deck you are considering is truly a traditional Tarot deck. While many of the themed decks might be fun to collect, you may have difficulty using the deck if the chosen theme is foreign to you. This is how I have acquired decks such as the Shakespearean Tarot, the Lord of the Rings Tarot, and the Wizard of Oz Tarot. Don't choose it by the title, or you might have twice the work ahead of you.
- Make sure it has full pictures on all the cards. Some older, more “occult” decks will have pictures of people or events on the Major Arcana cards but not the Minor Arcana. They will instead simply have the number and then a geometrical drawing showing that many of that suit's symbol. These decks might be fine once you have mastered the Tarot, but to learn how to use the Tarot you need full understanding of their symbols, so blank or otherwise incomplete cards will not work for this stage of your learning. If the shop does not have a sample card to view, go online and do your research. Then you can purchase or special order your deck with the merchant of your choice.

- Make sure you like it. You will be looking at your deck a lot. If you find the pictures too disturbing, depicting too much nudity, or so vague that you really can't decipher the meaning from the image, move on to another. Get one that speaks to you and that you find inspiring and interesting to look at. Just because one person swears by the Hanson-Roberts deck or your favorite reader uses the Osho Zen does not mean this will provide you the same level of accuracy. Use your insight and get what works, and discard what doesn't.

You may have heard that you must have your Tarot deck given to you for it to work, and this is far from the truth. This tradition stems from when learning Tarot was an apprenticed skill, and your deck was hand made and given to you by your teacher. These days, decks are readily available, and most of us learn from books and self-study. Gifts of Tarot are nice, but rarely do other people know us and the Tarot well enough to pick out the perfect deck for us. It is absolutely fine to get one for yourself and is actually encouraged.

You will also want a special bag or container to keep your cards so that they stay clean and feel special. I personally have a box with an assortment of crystals and gemstones in it, which I believe enhance my intuition and help absorb the energies of the clients. Many books discuss wrapping the cards in silk or another natural fabric. All of these suggestions will work if you are in agreement with them. If toting your cards around in a brown paper bag calls to you, then do it. If you want to invest in an elaborate jewelry box or container, that's fine too. Just honor your insight.

In addition to your deck you will also need a notebook where you can record your class exercises and where you can also write down notes about your own spiritual thoughts and readings. This we will refer to in class as your Tarot journal. While this text offers several exercises with blank spaces to write your answers, some exercises are just too personal or far too in-depth to fit in the spaces provided. Plus, you are likely to do some exercises over and over again, so having a formal journal is very helpful. Also, it's a great learning tool to record your readings, then in the future see if they were truly accurate.

## **Shuffling Your Deck**

Many new readers ask about the right way to shuffle. Since we are working with Reversed cards in this course, you will need to truly scatter the cards up and down, taking some out of the deck and putting them back in so that you know there will be the possibility of reversed cards. You should shuffle in any way that is convenient for you, but it needs to be consistent. If for instance your shuffling routine is to shuffle them for a set number of times, tell that to your deck to set your intention. If you choose to shuffle, then cut the cards, tell your deck that from now on this deck will be used in this way. It really doesn't matter so long as it stays the same.

Just as there is a lot of talk about whether or not you should buy your own deck, there is a lot of discussion as to whether or not you should let others touch or shuffle your cards. I know that for me, when I am giving a reading to a client I simply must have their energy on the cards, otherwise I get a reading suited more for myself than them. I found that the energy of the last person that touched them is the energy that attracts the reading.

Keeping this in mind, you need to thoroughly shuffle cards in between readings so that the previous client's energy is removed. My trick for this is to knock on the cards three or more times, then shuffle the cards until the deck does not want to smoothly go back together. I call this when the cards "fight with me". I see this as my signal to turn the cards over to my client. If I am doing a reading for myself, I cut the deck, and proceed to lay them out into the spread of my choice.

If having another person touching your cards simply doesn't feel right to you, I advise having a separate deck for your personal readings and another for professional use. It can be the same exact deck or another deck.

When it comes to flipping the cards over once placed in a spread, be very careful to flip them from side to side and not up to down. Since in this course we will be working with Reversed cards, you cannot flip the cards from up to down, as this will interfere with their position, making upright cards into reversed, and vice versa.

## **Preparing To Do Intuitive Work**

The first step in working intuitively with the Tarot, whether you are a beginner or an old pro is to mentally prepare. You will want to do this every time you work with the cards from now on. Be sure to take time to do the exercise in this section several times until you feel completely comfortable with it.

The most important element to opening up and learning how to use your own psychic abilities, which is a major requirement for learning Tarot, is the sincere and deep felt belief that you have psychic talents. Skepticism is valuable when exploring the hows and whys of those abilities, but it is a major stumbling block to really getting them in gear. If you can understand that the Universe is, first and foremost, energy, and that you are not just connected to the energy but are a part of it, it makes it much easier to trust your abilities that come from this Source.

### **Exercise 1A: Sensing Energy**

Sit quietly and let yourself feel the energy flowing through your body. You may think of this energy as light or heat or simply sensations. However you experience it is fine. If you have to imagine feeling it, that's fine. After a while the imagination shifts and becomes real. After you are comfortable with the flow, feel it coming in through the top of your head and going out at the soles of your feet. If you wish you can imagine that on the way through your body this



energy picks up and takes with it any counterproductive energy you may be holding in your body such as tiredness or destructive emotions or just mental "junk". Note: this exercise is also helpful for quieting anxiety and stress. Record your experience in the spaces provided or in your journal.

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### **Exercise 1B: Setting Your "Working Space"**

Once you have begun to feel what it is like to "turn on your intuitive radio" you are ready to begin your Tarot study in earnest. The first step to working with the Tarot is always to ground and set a working space, also referred to as a "sacred space" in many traditions.

Setting your sacred space is a simple concept. Essentially it is the process of allowing your unconscious mind to understand that "now" is the time to be intuitively and spiritually open. Despite the perceived glamour of suddenly getting intuitive impressions, there are times when you just do not want to get insight into the people and situations around you. Grocery shopping, riding the bus, standing in line, and a host of other daily activities are much easier if you are not psychically "tuned in" to those around you. Furthermore it is rude and inappropriate to be receiving intuitive insight about others without first obtaining specific permission. For this reason it is imperative that before you start working to open up your intuitive abilities you give your inner-self a clear sense of the rules. Essentially, telling it when and when not to open up to intuitive and spiritual impressions is one of the best guidelines to follow in the beginning. As your gift matures you can modify this process to enhance your psychic skills.

For now, simply set your "now" or "on" signal by setting aside the time and space in which you work on learning Tarot as special and ideally set aside only for this work. If you do not have a space that you can dedicate only to Tarot and spiritual study that is fine. You can be creative by gathering a nice tablecloth that is only set out for readings for instance. Either way, the first step is to make sure that you are physically comfortable and relatively free of interruptions. This sounds amazingly simple but you would be amazed at how often we are

tempted to just whip out our Tarot cards while sitting around the kitchen table chatting with friends and family. This might be tempting but don't do it. It will set you up for psychic complications you don't want down the road. There is a reason the old style card readers made such a big production of the silk scarf on the head, the special carved box, and the incense. It sets up a ceremony and creates the transition from mundane into spiritual. It also signals to friends and family that consulting the cards is a sacred act and not a game to be played on a whim.

- 1) Make sure that you are in an area where you are uninterrupted and either alone or with people who support what you are doing. Make sure it is "your" space. Turn off the phone, shoo away the kids and roommates, etc., and make sure that they will not burst in on your session.
- 2) Make sure you are physically comfortable and the space is clean, and contains no distractions such as a pile of bills or "to do" things in sight. These distractions could pull you mentally off track and diminish the clarity of your reading, as well as distract your client. I will never forget when I did readings in a room that doubled as an art gallery and one artist's work was so unusual to clients that their focus was more on trying to figure out her art than their own readings.
- 3) Make sure you are ready and in the right frame of mind to do a reading. Poor health can interfere with your focus, but so can a client who is not taking the Tarot seriously, has unrealistic demands, etc.
- 4) It is very helpful to have a specific physical signal for your Higher Self to take as the "start" cue. Your cue can be something "traditional" like laying a special cloth out, lighting a candle, or it can be something entirely personal like placing objects of personal power near you. Your special cue will be very helpful later on when you are having a bad day and it is not as easy as normal to tune in. By repeating your signal you automatically shift your brain waves to a similar state as last time you used the signal- remember Pavlov? For this reason do not abuse your signal. Pick something unique and use it only when you do Tarot. Record your choice(s) below.

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5) The next step to setting your space is to formally acknowledge your intent. This helps keep you from getting any conflicting or disturbing psychic energy that you do not need. Say it, write it, or think it strongly. It really does not matter how you do it, simply that you do it. Setting intent is a powerful technique and it works, but the power is in the fact that you set a clear intent, not in how you set it. Intention is the same power behind prayer, ceremonies, even Feng Shui, and practitioners of all of these will insist that it is not actually the system but the intent in harnessing the energy that creates the desired outcome. If you do not have any idea about intent, or do not know how to form a psychic intent do not worry. We will talk more about this later in the book, but for now you can simply state something like the following: "May this reading be for the good of all, respect the free will of all, and provide exactly what is needed to assist this client at this time. Any energies or intents that are not in agreement with this intent are not welcome here." What is your intention, and how will you reinforce it in your space? Record your answers here.

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### **Exercise 1C: Grounding**

Grounding is a process of casting aside your personal "mental clutter" so that you will have an easier time recognizing and properly interpreting information that comes to you through psychic means. This is one of the most important steps in any type of psychic work, and doing it properly can help you to avoid many pitfalls and mistakes that are common for Tarot readers. We will be discussing it in depth throughout the class, so for now just take some time to get comfortable with this simple grounding exercise. Don't forget to do this or another grounding technique you have learned elsewhere before and after each Tarot session.

- 1) Confirm that you have set up your working space and that you will be reasonably undisturbed.
- 2) Confirm and re-state your intention for the work that you are doing.
- 3) Do the energy feeling exercise described above in the "mentally preparing for psychic work" section.
- 4) Take a few deep breaths and when you exhale imagine any and all unwanted energy, thoughts, emotions, physical stress, or distraction flowing into the earth. As you breathe allow yourself to fill with fresh clean energy and to release any and all distracting energy. If you are new to this type of thing it might help you to visualize the energy as light moving through your body, or to imagine feeling it as a light humming vibration working its way through your body. It does not matter if you "feel" it. If you imagine it with sincerity this energetic shift will come with time and practice.
- 5) Very clearly imagine, or tell yourself mentally, or both, that you have an energetic "root" that channels energy from you to the earth. All energies, pieces of information, and insights that come to you through your work with the Tarot will move through this channel. You can reach into it and obtain any information or energy you need, but you do not have to directly experience this energy if you do not choose to do so. This helps you to stay fresh and not burn out your personal energy to do readings. If you are reading for others, or doing a particularly long and in-depth reading for your self, this can be especially helpful. Once you have imagined this, simply tell yourself that the process will continue throughout your entire session. Write down your experience and how you felt during each step of the process.

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## Exercise 1D: Working With Your First Card

A final step in your introduction to working with the Tarot is to learn how to deeply observe the symbols on each card. In later lessons we will delve more into traditional associations for the cards, but they will be most meaningful to you if you have already learned to explore and understand the cards for yourself. The Tarot is by definition an art form that draws on universal symbols and archetypes that we can all relate to on some personal and spiritual level. Giving yourself the gift of deeply exploring the artwork will open up your intuition and imagination, even if you never look at another deck again. Please note that this will be harder for those with experience than those who are more a beginner. If you are an experienced reader, challenge yourself to look at each card with fresh eyes and allow yourself to find visual proof of the information that you believe you "know". You may benefit more if you use a different, newer deck should you find this is your situation.

All you need to do is shuffle your deck, choose a card, study it intently, and create a meaning. You can create a meaning for the card in general, or you can tailor it to a concern or question you are currently struggling with in your own life. The key however is to really look at every single detail, color, symbol, action, and the card number or title. Often people make the mistake of thinking more about what a card "should" mean than allowing the card to shown them what it really does mean for them.

Most people approach the Tarot by trying to learn and memorize set meanings for each of the cards. While there may be some validity to establishing keywords or phrases, most readers try to pick their meaning way too soon before getting to really know the cards first. This also holds true of those who have received many card readings and are assuming the interpretations of their reader. As a result they never really see their cards except through the lenses of preconception.

The best thing you can do to get the most out of your Tarot experience is to get used to looking for the symbolic clues right from the beginning. Also remember that no matter what meaning you find for a card someone at some time created that meaning from their own experience and observation. The person who came up with the meaning became the "expert" by studying the card and then sharing that meaning with others. Allow yourself to be your own expert and study the cards just as carefully.

- 1) Perform your grounding procedure. Next, spend time in your reading space studying your deck or web page of Tarot Cards. Examine each card thoroughly.

- 2) Choose a card at random to carefully study. Write down everything you notice: including the color, the details, what is in the background, and any symbols whether you understand them or not.

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- 3) Now create a meaning. Do not look one up or try to remember what you might have already been told it means. After studying the features in the card, what makes a logical definition for the card? Just make it up like you were using it to tell a story to a child. **HINT:** If you cannot come up with anything you probably skipped steps or worked through them too fast.

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- 4) Finally, but only if you want, you can now compare your meaning to what others define the card as. If you do not have access to Tarot books this can be found on the Internet. Remember the point of this final step is not to decide if you were right or wrong, but rather just to see how well you were able on first attempt to open up your intuition and allow the card to speak to you. Remember, in Tarot it is much better to go with your own intuition than to take the word of another as truth just because they tell you they know more about it than you do. You decide. For those of you who have researched your definition, how did your intuitive definition compare to the commonly recognized meaning? Record below.

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## **Working Deeply with the Cards: An Example**

The following is an example of the useful information you can get from a Tarot card when you work with it personally and directly vs. trying to memorize a set meaning.

This is a reading for myself I did several years ago about my life path. The question was: "What do I need to know at this point of my spiritual journey?" At the time I was using the Rider Waite Smith deck. I drew the Fool.

The interpretation listed in the companion book for the Fool is new beginnings and innovative ideas. While I could identify with this definition to some extent, I felt it lacked the deeper interpretation and details that I was used to receiving from one of my readings. I then decided to use my normal method of working deeply with the details and symbols I saw within the card. The following is what I discovered:

### **Example of Examining a Card Closely**

Fool Upright, Rider Waite Smith Deck, Reading About Life Path:

List of the details I notice in the card:

- Person almost walking off of the cliff, head high, showing no worry of falling
- Yellow Sky
- White Sun

- Person's shirt sleeves look like wings ( red) and various symbols on shirt
- White mountains in background
- White dog at Fool's feet as if to get his/her attention
- White rose in left hand
- A red hobo bag on a stick over his right shoulder
- Card number 0
- There is no snow on the cliff he/she is on, but there is snow on the mountains in background
- Green laurel wreath worn as a crown

This card reminds me of Kierkegaard's "Leap of Faith" philosophy that I studied in college. I see the Fool as the most confident and faith-filled person of the Tarot because he/she has the courage to move full speed ahead on his spiritual path, knowing full well he/she will not fall and that anything he encounters was meant to be. The Fool is someone who is innovative and doesn't allow the pack because he/she has the ability to connect to an inner knowing and doesn't need to follow the leader. The Fool is not someone in the mainstream, nor can he truly be happy trying to live that way. He/she has evolved to the point where true inspiration comes from within.

The above interpretation, although highly personal, was also highly meaningful to me. It helped me think through my situation, open up my intuition and see things from my own unique perspective. In doing so, I discovered that it was not only the best card to answer my question, but because I had developed my own definition, I knew exactly where to go from there.

### **Exercise 1E: Completing Your Work**

Each and every time you study the cards or do a reading you should end your session with a formal completion process. This will keep you from feeling spacey or wired after the session and will make sure that what you have learned integrates more fully. In my experience, I have learned first hand how important this step can be. I often do readings by appointment at my metaphysical store, and I often need to go from client to sales floor, especially when a client then wants assistance in making purchases. If I do not do a short grounding procedure, I simply cannot focus well enough to offer the assistance he or she really needs, and I come across as a silly girl rather than a Tarot expert.



- 1) Start by taking a moment to acknowledge out loud or silently that you are done and to briefly acknowledge what you have learned from this particular working session.
- 2) Do the grounding exercise again. This time as you become aware of your body make sure that you release any extra energy you may have picked up during the reading that you do not need. An alternate option which I often do at the store is to quickly shuffle the deck, place them in their box, then rub my hands together to break the energetic connection between me and the deck.
- 3) Take a moment to re-focus on your space and express thanks for new insight. This is also a good time for prayers of gratitude to your spiritual guides if you feel so moved.
- 4) "Release your space" by undoing any physical modifications (blow out the candle, remove the do not disturb sign, tell the kids they can ask you questions now, etc.) As you are doing this make sure you are changing gears mentally. If you find that your memory is unusually bad this is a sign that you are not fully grounded and you need to go back and complete that step before you finish releasing your working space.