

# Introduction to Tarot – Card by Card

## M Pepper Langlinais



## **The Major Arcana**

The tarot is divided into two main sets of cards: Major Arcana and Minor Arcana. The Major Arcana consists of 22 cards and explores the journey of the first card in that set, which is Card 0: The Fool. In this text we'll travel with the Fool through the Major Arcana, but here I just want to say a few things about what it means to have Major Arcana appear in a tarot reading.

The easiest way to look at it is to say that the Major Arcana are Big Things in life and the Minor Arcana are little things. Some read the Majors as signs of destiny, fate, or karma. Some read them as things that cannot be changed versus things that can (meaning the Minor Arcana). I hesitate to ever say that anything is set in stone and cannot be changed. I simply don't believe that to be true. But I think, when you see a lot of Major Arcana in a spread, some big life lessons are—if you'll forgive me—in the cards.

A surfeit of Major Arcana cards turning up means one of two things. (1) This is important so pay attention to what we [the cards] are telling you. (2) You didn't shuffle very well.

Eventually, as you learn the cards and become confident in reading them, you'll intuit what it means to have many Majors in a spread. What I don't recommend is reshuffling and asking again. Asking the same question, even rephrased, over and over is a surefire way to irritate the cards and only confuse the issue further. If you feel like you're not getting the message, set the cards aside. Or if it has been a while since you cleansed and recharged them (more on that later), do that. Then still set them aside for a few hours. The cards, like people, need breaks, and jumping from question to question wears them out.

And now, without further ado, I present the Major Arcana.

## 0. The Fool

In approaching the tarot we are all of us the Fool. Don't take it personally. The whole point of the Fool is to learn through experience.



The Fool holds no preconceived notions and has no specific destination in mind as he (for the purposes of this text, we'll stick with the masculine pronoun) sets off on whatever adventure awaits. His open nature is childlike and can sometimes be naïve. In fact, in the traditional Rider-Waite image of this card, we see a young man about to blissfully step off a cliff. He is not looking where he is going. A little dog bounces along beside him, either trying to warn him or urge him on—it's unclear which.

The essence of the Fool is one of being open-minded and open-hearted. It is also the signal to a new cycle. When this card turns up in a reading, it may be that you're ready to start something new in your life. The Fool may be urging you to take that leap of faith. Then again, he may be reminding you to look first. Context will come from (1) the question being asked, and (2) any other cards in the spread (assuming you are not doing a 1-card reading). And as you get more familiar with tarot, you'll be able to trust your intuition whenever the Fool appears.

In **relationship** readings, the Fool can signal the start of a new relationship. If there is someone you're considering, he could be telling you to give that person a chance. Then again, he may be telling you to walk away and start fresh if a relationship is not working. This is not a card of commitment, but of testing the waters. If the Fool turns up as a signifier for another person, it can mean s/he is a player and not a long-term prospect.

If your question is about your **career**, the Fool may indicate a new opportunity coming your way. Maybe it's time to start a new job if your old one has become stale or doesn't speak to your heart.

The Fool may indicate a minor accident.

The Fool is a positive, light-hearted card. He generally signals improvement in any situation about which you may ask.

**Yes/No:** The Fool is almost always a yes.

**Keywords:** risk management, new beginnings, leap of faith, look before you leap, being too hasty, restlessness, childishness, childlike wonder

**Affirmation:** *I am open to every possibility and not set on any one outcome. I acknowledge and accept the consequences of my actions.*

# 1. The Magician

Slight of hand. Card tricks. A rabbit out of a hat. A wand that sprouts a bouquet. What do you think of when you think of a magician?

Maybe you think of someone you need to watch closely. Someone you half admire and half distrust.

Traditionally, the Magician is associated with the Greek god Hermes. And while Hermes might be best known for delivering flowers (wand or no wand), he's also a bit of a trickster. He may try to redirect your attention while his other hand is busy picking your pocket.

Hermes is also the god of communication, travel, and (more modernly) technology. He's associated with the planet Mercury and the archangel Gabriel. In astrological terms, when Mercury goes retrograde—which it does three or four times a year—communication, travel, and technology break down more often.

What does all this mean for you? The Magician loves attention. He's a bit of a show-off. If he turns up in a reading, he may signify someone you know who is the same way. Or he may be telling you to show off a little and step into your personal power.

The traditional Rider-Waite card shows the Magician standing partially behind a table. On the table are four items: a cup, a sword, a pentacle, and a wand. These are the four suits of the Minor Arcana, and they are the tools of the Magician. He uses them as he sees fit to achieve his ends. But they are only tools—the power rests with and in him.



You'll notice, too, that he is holding another wand in his right hand while pointing down with his left. "As above, so below," is the common phrase used for this. I won't go into the Hermetic roots here; there are many more in-depth texts for that. I will simply say that the Magician is reminding you of your innate divinity, that you are a mirror for the divine, and that this world is likewise a mirror of our power to create—or destroy—depending on how we use that power.

Also, he has the lemniscate (infinity symbol) over his head, meaning that nothing is ever truly lost, only changed.

The Magician is all about taking ideas and making them reality. He is the patron of creative people. He is intelligent and determined, and when he turns up in a tarot reading, either someone around you has those qualities or you need to develop them yourself. Feel the divine flow through you and harness its power.

In a **career** reading, the Magician often denotes success, but only if you put in the effort. In particular, creative endeavors and/or presentations should go well. Be confident in your work! But also beware anyone trying to trick or manipulate you.

If you're reading about a **relationship**, the Magician might symbolize someone you've met or are about to meet, especially under strange or synchronic circumstances. There is something "magical" about a relationship when the Magician turns up. He often characterizes a relationship where you feel you've

known each other before (i.e., in a past life) or just somehow immediately click. There may even be a psychic connection. However, the Magician is also a demanding person and relationships with this type can be exhausting. And as with a career reading, you also need to be certain there is nothing shady going on (particularly if you see the 7 of Swords in the reading as well).

The Magician can herald miracles and magic coming into your life. But he's also an intense card. A transformative experience—or person—may be on its (or his/her) way.

**Yes/No:** The Magician is almost always a yes.

**Keywords:** power, determination, achievement, skill, focus, the need for action, effort that pays off, success, conduit for the divine, manipulation, intensity, intelligence

**Affirmation:** *I acknowledge the divine within me and channel it to my purpose. I work to make the world around me reflect the divine.*

## 2. The High Priestess

The Fool has met the Magician and been given a bit of a show. Hopefully he walked away with some new skills. But what is skill without knowledge?

If the Magician is a show-off, the High Priestess is his opposite. She is still, rather than active. Her work is within rather than without. The Fool approaches her and wants to know what she has to say, or what she will do. But she will do nothing. She sits, sphinxlike, a riddle for the Fool to solve.



The traditional Rider-Waite image of the High Priestess (sometimes also called the Papesse) shows a woman robed in blue sitting between black and white columns. She holds a Tora[h] scroll. A crescent moon rests at her feet.

The columns stand for the pillars in the Temple of Solomon (Boaz and Jachin). Therefore we assume the High Priestess sits in the entrance to the Temple, a symbol for knowledge. She also inhabits the space between black and white, meaning a gray area. The crescent moon is not only feminine but does not offer



full illumination. Some light is shed here, but much remains in darkness, not yet ready to be seen.

The pomegranates behind the High Priestess connect her not only to Jewish mysticism but the myth of Persephone. They harken back to Eden and the Fruit of Knowledge. But as with Persephone, once you partake, you are trapped. Once you know something, you cannot unknow it.

In case you haven't caught on, wisdom is the Priestess' "thing." But not just book knowledge. She's into introspection and intuition. When she turns up in a reading, she's either signifying someone you know who is wise and intuitive, or else she's telling you to look within yourself and trust the small voice inside. This can be frustrating if you just want an answer from your cards. But the Priestess is telling you that you already know the answer; you don't need any additional information.

She's also detached. The High Priestess is an unemotional card and she expects you to step back from your feelings and be objective as well. (Remember that, despite the term "gut feeling," intuition and feelings are not the same!) When we become attached to a specific outcome, we set ourselves up for disappointment and failure.

If you've been having vivid dreams and the High Priestess turns up, be sure to go back and examine those dreams. She often points to there being clues in your subconscious, in your past, or in your memories.

In a **relationship** reading, the High Priestess puts the brakes on things. She wants you to go slow and be careful. She may signal that someone is not telling you everything. As ever, she wants you to trust your gut.

In terms of **career**, the High Priestess again slows things down. What you want will come, but not quickly. She may also represent a coworker who is mysterious—someone who keeps to herself, or even someone who talks about anything and everything but herself.

The High Priestess can mean that you do not yet have all the information to make a decision. When she shows up, take a step back and give careful consideration.

**Yes/No:** She is a maybe, or "yes, but not yet." Look to other cards for more information.

**Keywords:** intuition, caution, wisdom, knowledge, objectivity, mystery, cold shoulder, hidden information, secrets

**Affirmation:** *I trust myself without need for outside confirmation. I wait patiently for answers from within and do not seek to force the issue.*

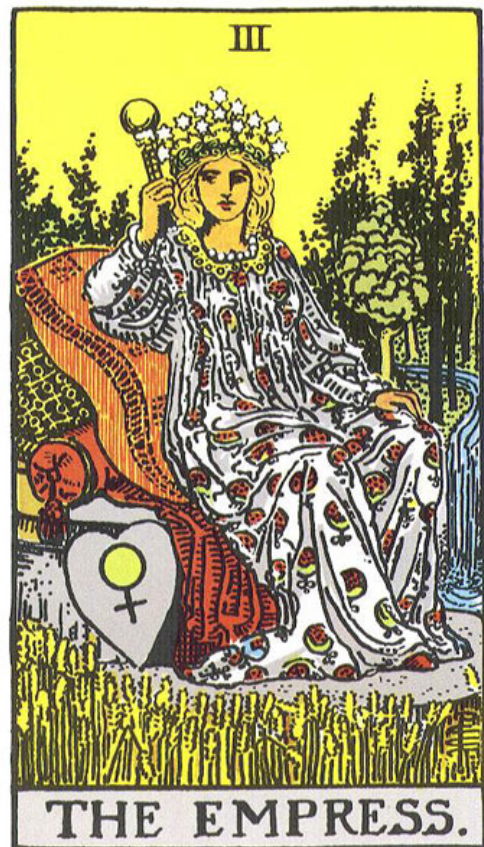
MPL BOOKS

### 3. The Empress

If the High Priestess is regal in an understated way, the Empress flaunts her power. She owns it, is proud of it, and not at all afraid to show it and use it.

An empress is a ruler, either in her own right or as a consort. Either way, she is looked to for guidance and as a symbol. Her behavior must be impeccable, and a good empress will always care for her people.

The Rider-Waite depiction of the Empress is of a fair-haired woman seated on a throne. But that throne is outdoors, and it is a comfortable throne backed with pillows. The pomegranates are there again, too, on the Empress' dress. She holds a scepter to show her office and wears a crown of stars. The symbol of Venus is prominently displayed beside her.



The card is filled with warm colors, meant to give warmth to the Empress herself. She is a mother to her people, and some consider her loose dress to mean she is pregnant. Even if she is not, in tarot the Empress is seen as fertile (Venus + the

growing things around her) and creative. She is motherly and can be gentle, but she still holds that rod—and she'll use it if she has to.

The Empress has power, and like any leader, it's how she uses it that matters.

When she turns up in a tarot reading, the Empress generally means abundance and fertility. It doesn't mean you're going to get pregnant (though it can), it just means that some area of your life is due for flow. The Empress can also be a sensual card (Venus again). She's an emotional card, too. She feels deeply. Her appearance in a reading can suggest you need to tap into your feelings and let them flow, that you need to show compassion for others.

If you're reading about **relationships**, the Empress promises passion but also warns you not to become complacent or turn into a mother hen. If you're not already in a relationship, The Empress can signal that the time is ripe for one to begin. She wants you to play up your feminine side—put effort into your clothes and makeup.

As for **career**, the Empress is a sign of success, particularly in creative occupations or if you work with children. Ideas abound. The trick will be deciding which ones to act on and how. The Empress can also indicate financial abundance of some kind—an investment pays off, a promotion or pay raise comes through.

The Empress is a nature lover. She may be telling you to spend more time outdoors.

**Yes/No:** Yes.

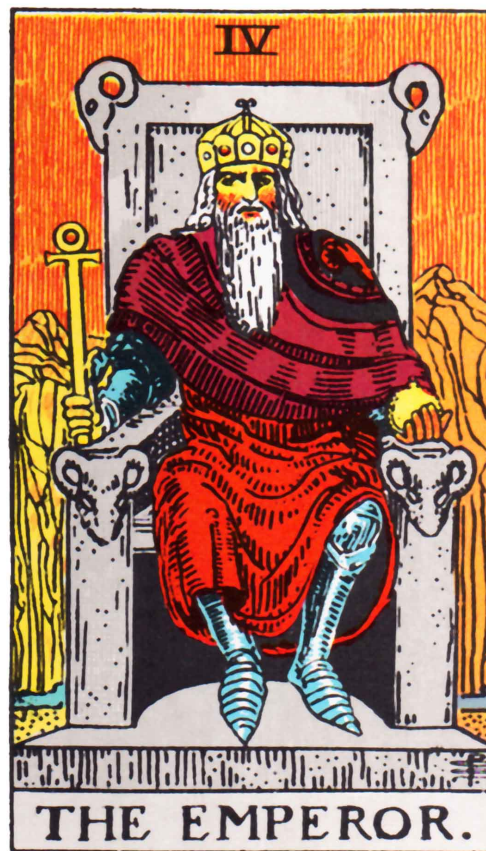
**Keywords:** abundance, fertility, creativity, flow, compassion, counsel, love, passion, beauty, nurturing, nature, motherhood, guidance

**Affirmation:** *I embrace my feminine side as part of my personal power, not in spite of it. My compassion for others does not undermine my power but strengthens it.*

## 4. The Emperor

You knew he couldn't be far behind. In fact, this is a man who likes to be ahead and in charge.

The Emperor is about control. He's firm, he's decisive. He's strong to the point of rigid. He stands his ground.



Well, okay, in the Rider-Waite deck he's sitting, but you get the idea. He's upright on his potentially uncomfortable stone throne, no slouch. That stone is representative of the Emperor's strength and how difficult he can be to move or break. The rams' heads again show a stubbornness and determination (and also represent the Emperor's link to the sign of Aries). His long, white beard suggests experience and wisdom. In his hands are a scepter and orb (some say it's a globe to show that he dominates his world), symbols of his power. The scepter itself is somewhat akin to an ankh, depicting his dominion is over life and the living. The

mountain behind him is another sign of his immobility. Note, too, that under his red robe, he is wearing armor. He's ready to do battle if necessary.

So what does it mean when the Emperor comes to call in a tarot reading? He can symbolize someone you're dealing with (or may have to deal with soon)—someone controlling and stubborn and/or an authority figure. Or he can mean that *you* need to be firm and take charge. When everything is pushing at you, you must be the mountain that cannot be moved.

The Emperor is everything orderly and authoritative. He's about systems and hierarchies. He's logical; emotions don't enter into his decision-making. Rules must be followed, and things are generally black and white in his view.

When the Emperor turns up, he's telling you to view obstacles in a detached way. Stay objective. Take on all challenges.

At the same time, he doesn't want you to be obnoxious about it. Know what you want, and state it clearly. But don't beat anyone over the head about it. The Emperor isn't one for talk. Instead, take practical action toward your goals and don't give up.

In a **romance** reading, the Emperor suggests a love interest who is older—possibly much older. Someone who may be a mentor as well as lover. This person is likely to be logical and confident, but he may not be much of a conversationalist. This is a slow burn kind of relationship; sparks aren't likely to fly at once. Instead, respect grows into love. The Emperor is also not demonstrative in public. He's very aware of what others see and think. But in private, he can be quite romantic, and he'll work to build you a nice little empire for two.

If you're reading about your **career**, the Emperor may depict a boss or other authority figure. This person may notice your hard work and reward you for it. In general, the Emperor suggests success and a possible promotion or raise.

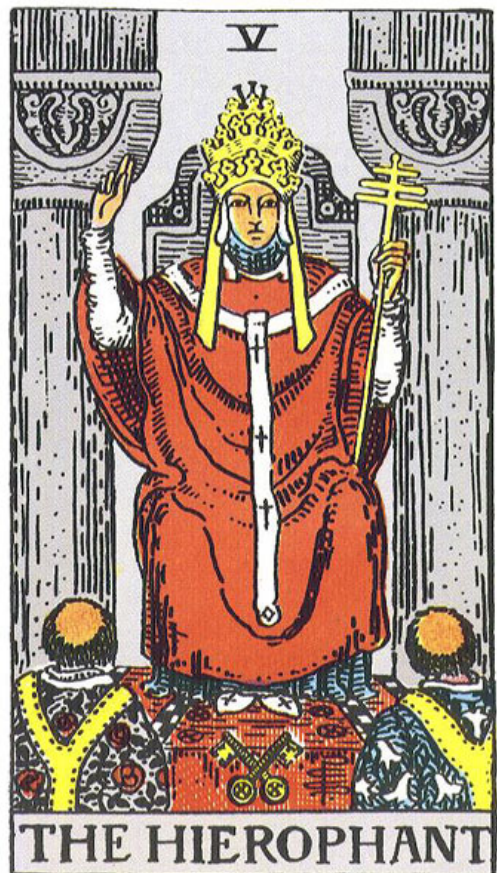
**Yes/No:** While he can appear forbidding, the Emperor is usually a yes. But not if you're planning to break any rules.

**Keywords:** authority, logic, stubbornness, determination, force of will, government, boss, teacher, mentor, conquest, domination, structure, father figure

**Affirmation:** *When others try to sway me, I stand my ground. Regardless of my gender, I embrace my masculine side and do not hesitate to use it to my advantage. My desires are no less important than anyone else's. My will be done.*

## 5. The Hierophant

In some decks he's called "The Pope," which gives a pretty clear picture of what he represents. This card is about tradition and conformity. It's about staying within prescribed lines and following the rules. When the Hierophant turns up, he's telling you to keep doing things the way they've always been done. After all, there's a reason they're done that way—usually for the greater good, or because the tried and true method works more often than not.



It's interesting to note the Hierophant sits on a throne, similar to the Emperor. Like the Emperor's, it appears to be made of stone. The Emperor rules his empire, and the Hierophant, or Pope, rules the church—or a belief system. He interprets and imparts knowledge from "above" (God or some other authority) or "before" (ancient times or any time before the present). In this way, the Hierophant can often symbolize a teacher or mentor, someone whose advice or guidance you should listen to.

If the High Priestess keeps her knowledge to herself and instead insists you listen to your own intuition, the Hierophant does just the opposite. He will speak, sometimes at length, and expects you to listen. His goal is to integrate you into the greater congregation or community—he wants you to fit in and do your part.

In the traditional Rider-Waite card, the Hierophant is giving a benediction to two figures. He is the bridge between the divine and the earthly, and it is in his power to transfer the blessings of the divine to those on earth. The pillars on either side of him are often interpreted as Law and Liberty or Obedience and Disobedience. The crossed keys are meant to represent to conscious and unconscious. These are, perhaps, the “keys” to success as defined by the Hierophant—that is, success to him is that you become a contributing member to whatever society or organization he characterizes in your reading.

The Hierophant can signify an actual person in your life. A boss, teacher, mentor, counselor, or even a good friend who has particular knowledge about a subject and can offer sound advice. When he turns up in a reading, you’re being told to seek out that advice, or if you’ve recently been given advice or instruction, the Hierophant confirms that you should follow it. He tells you not to try anything new just now. Instead stick with the well-traveled road.

Note that the Hierophant can be jealous and protective of his position. He likes being an authority and will lash out if he thinks you are challenging him or trying to unseat him.

When it comes to **romance**, the Hierophant can sometimes mean a proposal or wedding is on the way, especially a traditional church wedding. If you’re asking about a potential love interest, he may foretell a very conservative or traditional person, or even someone religious. Or he may advise you to act in a discreet way rather than, as they say, “letting your freak flag fly.”

In a **career** reading, he of course means for you to stick to the rules and follow instructions from your superiors. Success will come, so long as you do not venture into unknown territory or try to make big changes to the workflow. Take things a step at a time.

**Yes/No:** Yes, so long as you behave according to prescribed standards. Also, “eventually” as he’s not always a fast-moving card.

**Keywords:** tradition, conformity, harmony, rules, authority, mentor, teacher, religion, beliefs, old-fashioned, groups, organizations, conservative, hierarchy



**Affirmation:** *By following in the steps of those who have gone before, I am sure to arrive at my destination. I accept the wisdom of those with greater experience and am grateful for their guidance.*

MPL BOOKS

## 6. The Lovers

Well, now. Here is one of the most popular cards in the deck. And while it *can* mean exactly what it says, rather like the Death card, the Lovers have a not-so-obvious interpretation as well.

Some of this comes from the fact that while Rider-Waite shows only a kind of “Adam and Eve” couple on the card, old Marseilles cards show a trio:



Also, there’s a decided difference between Cupid and the massive angel. So if you’re thinking, “What the what?” it’s okay. Remember that every tarot deck is unique and can bring slightly different feelings to the cards.

So—what the what indeed? The Lovers card is ruled by Gemini, which helps us understand its divided nature. Because in love we are divided. We want to remain ourselves, individual, but we also have the urge to merge and become one with

another. Can we do both? To some extent, yes, but sacrifices and choices must be made. And that's what the Lovers card is really about: choice.

In particular, you can see in the card with three people on it that the person in the middle is having his attention vied for by two women. One woman is young; she wears flowers in her hair. The other appears perhaps older and less attractive, but the laurels she wears suggests success, maybe money. The young man must make a choice, or perhaps Cupid will make it for him!

And that's why the Lovers card isn't always about love. Because while we *might* be facing a choice between two people, often our choices are about two other things: this job or that, or maybe dividing time between work and play. When this card turns up in a reading, it's reminding you that you have a choice, or telling you that you're going to have to make one.

Whenever the Lovers card turns up in a reading, you're being asked to look at both sides—sometimes (often) of yourself as well as whatever situation is at hand. This card marks a crossroads, a choice, a decision of some kind. Like in a game of chess, you should try to see a few moves ahead. You can't see how it ends, perhaps, but you can get a sense of where the situation—the job, the relationship, etc.—is going. A little foresight goes a long way.

Remember that tarot isn't designed to predict the future. It's a guide, not an outcome. You can change the direction of anything you don't like.

In a **relationship** reading, the Lovers seems like a fairly straight-forward card. And it *can* mean a new love is on the way, or that the one you have is a good one. At the very least, the Lovers card acknowledges an attraction and/or union. It may also mean that you or the other person are divided, not wholly committed. Your heart and head may not be in sync. Check the cards around this one to see if you can get a stronger vibe as to whether the Lovers is showing up as positive or negative.

If you're asking about your **career**, the Lovers can mean you've stalled out. You're probably facing a decision or choice, and until you make it and commit, you'll stay stuck. But once you pick a path, things should go well. Or it can mean that you need to team up with someone in order to achieve a common goal.

**Yes/No:** Yes, if you're doing a one-card yes/no reading. But can also mean "maybe," particularly if you're doing a yes/no reading with more than one card. The cards around the Lovers influence the answer.

**Keywords:** duality, choice, decision, heart versus head, attraction, union, feeling torn, balance (or imbalance), priorities

**Affirmation:** *I am not stuck. I have options and pursue the most promising path toward my goals. I trust myself to make the right choices. I open my heart and allow myself to be vulnerable in order to merge with another for greater purpose.*

MPL BOOKS

## 7. The Chariot

Ready to roll? The Chariot card is all about movement, and we're not talking a leisurely stroll. This guy has someplace to be; he's on a mission. And he travels in style.



There's a lot going on in the traditional Rider-Waite Chariot card. We've got a guy decked out like an emperor, pharaoh, or something of that ilk—he's got a scepter and wears a crown of stars. His chariot is pulled by one black sphinx and one white sphinx. And here's the thing—the sphinxes aren't facing entirely forward. They are each angled slightly away from one another. Which means this charioteer has his work cut out for him if he wants these two to work together so they can reach their destination.

When the Chariot turns up in a tarot reading, it means motion and movement of some kind are literally in the cards. But it also means you're going to have to expend some effort if you don't want to break your wheels while getting wherever it is you're going.

Horses—and presumably sphinxes—are bigger and stronger than people. But we can still ride them, or hitch them to carriages and chariots. It's all about keeping one's hands on the reins and knowing when to pull back and when loosen one's grip. It's also about knowing which animals to pair and which don't work well together.

The main figure here has such command of the sphinxes that he doesn't even need to harness them. Notice his lack of reins? This symbolizes his self-awareness and self-discipline—something you will need if you hope to reach your destination.

We live in a world of gray areas. Still, it's possible to go too far into the black or white. The Chariot knows this. If we give in to our shadow selves, we're letting the black sphinx take over. If we're too self-righteous and judgmental, we're letting the white sphinx lead. Instead we must acknowledge our own dark sides and also forgive others their dark moments as well.

When the Chariot rides up in a reading, it means a journey of some kind is about to get underway. This may be a physical trip (usually by car, maybe by train), or emotional, mental, spiritual, etc. The Chariot also signifies one's ambitions and determination. It may pop up when it's time for you to start making moves towards your goals.

If you're asking about a **relationship**, the Chariot will often indicate a fling rather than anything lasting. But it can mean a relationship that begins abruptly—or a partner who is high maintenance! Sometimes the Chariot is saying you don't have the time for a significant relationship right now because you have too many other things going on.

In a **career** reading, the Chariot promises victory—once you've run the gauntlet. Your leadership abilities will be called into service. Assembling a good team will be key. You may be dealing with unreasonable people, and you'll need to keep a firm hand on things.

If you think about the order of the tarot, you'll notice the Chariot comes after the Lovers. The dual nature of the Lovers (Gemini) is symbolized in the Chariot as the black and white sphinxes. The Chariot is in some ways about getting that dual nature under control.

**Yes/No:** Yes! And possibly soon, depending on how fast the Chariot is moving. However, remember that you will need to do some work to get the “yes” you want. The Chariot is a sign that whatever you're asking is doable.

**Keywords:** determination, ambition, victory, movement, speed, conquering, overcoming obstacles, domination, control, willpower

**Affirmation:** *I have the skill I need to achieve my goals. I am not controlled by my animal instincts but instead have willpower and control over my actions and the direction of my destiny.*

MPL BOOKS

## 8. Strength

Might makes right, some say, but the Strength card isn't about that kind of, well, strength. This isn't the Incredible Hulk. This is something inside you, that very force of will needed to guide the Chariot to its destination. The Strength card is about diplomacy and persuasion. It's about taming the lion:



What the hell is she doing? Scratching the lion under the chin like a big cat? Maybe. Whatever is going on, she's clearly not afraid and the lion seems to like it.

They say if a bee lands on you, not to fear it because it will sense your fear and, thinking it has a reason to be afraid, it will sting you. Sometimes we can't help being afraid, but we can decide how and when to show it. To use another animal example, when you see a bear you may want to run away, but it will only chase you. Instead, you should make yourself look as big as possible and make a lot of noise. Then the bear will run from you.

What does any of this have to do with the Strength card? Well, it's a card of knowing how and when to show and use your power. The woman in the



traditional card has successfully tamed the lion, not with a whip but with gentleness. Whenever I see Strength, I immediately think: *iron fist, velvet glove*. You're being told to not use overt force but other means that will have the same—or often even better—effect.

The Strength card is about respect versus fear. You can get people to do what you want either way, but which is really better?

Remember how the Chariot was about keeping the two aspects of oneself in line and under control? Or sometimes about trying to get disparate people to work together? Strength continues that trend. When you spot this card in a reading, “gentle but firm” is the order of the day.

If your question is about your **career**, Strength is warning you not to come on too strongly. It's also telling you you're going to need a certain amount of fortitude (the traditional name of this card is Fortitude) and endurance for whatever lies ahead. That said, you're in a good position for a promotion, raise, or whatever else you may desire. Don't demand, but do ask—and remember that you'll always do better to frame things in how *you* can do more for *them* if just given the opportunity.

As for **romance**, Strength is about how confidence is sexy. You may find yourself in a suddenly passionate relationship (though it may fizzle just as quickly). If you want a relationship to endure, this card is telling you to enjoy it for what it is without pushing for more too soon.

Some decks have Strength as card #11 and Justice as card #8. I actually prefer Strength as card #8; it makes more orderly sense to me.

**Yes/No:** Yes! Go for it (but again, do it in a less overt way).

**Keywords:** strength, fortitude, endurance, persuasion, patience, subtlety, confidence, passion

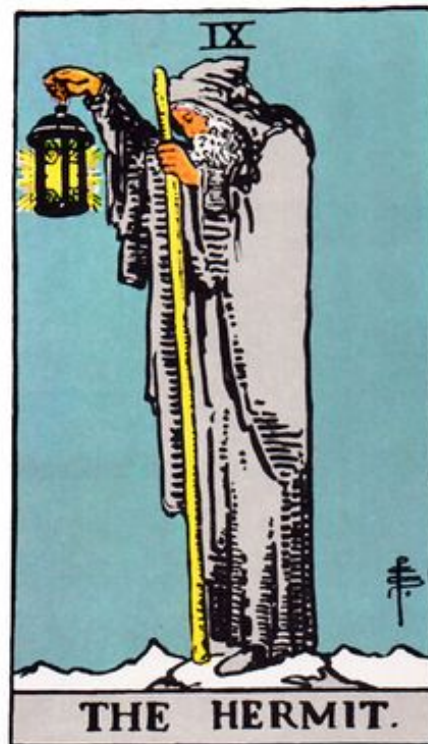
**Affirmation:** *I walk without fear, confident in my ability to master myself, others, and any situation that may arise. Patience does not mean lack of progress. I respect boundaries, even as I test them, and that respect will be what earns me the respect of others.*

## 9. The Hermit

Alone time. Some people love it, others not so much. But when the Hermit pays a visit—which is kind of weird, considering he’s a hermit—it means you’d better be ready for just that.

How are you when you’re alone? Anxious? Restless? Do you reach for your phone and text everyone you know just to feel connected? Do you turn on the television or radio just so it won’t be so quiet? Or does being alone relax you? Maybe you seek out space that’s just yours and resent intrusions into that space.

In tarot, our friendly, neighborhood hermit is about withdrawing not because of stress—or not *only* because of stress, since that might certainly be a factor—but because you need to do some navel gazing. It’s time to go inside yourself and seek enlightenment. See his lantern?



(See him looking at his navel?) Notice, too, that he’s not sitting down or resting. He’s walking. He’s actively searching. And he’s doing so without the help—or interference—of anyone else.

The landscape on this card is cold and semi-dark. There is the hush of snow. Because that's what it can feel like when being introspective. But the lantern and the staff are there, in warm yellow, to aid the Hermit on his way.

What is your lantern? Your staff? What—or who—in your life shows you the way? A belief system? A good friend whose advice you rely on? Your own intuition? Go somewhere quiet and stop and listen to that voice. As for your staff—who or what supports you? Family? A job? Whatever keeps you from slipping when you find yourself “on ice” in life, that's your staff. Even when those people aren't present, their very existence is invaluable to you.

When the Hermit comes to call in a reading, you're being advised to pause and step away. Take a breath and do some thinking. No sudden moves, else you might fall and break something. Still, progress can happen, if you step carefully and take your time. You're also being reminded that you have inner knowledge, if you just pause to listen. Trust yourself.

In a **relationship** reading, the Hermit asks you to wait and be sure you are comfortable with yourself before pairing up. You must be whole on your own before you can give any part of yourself away to someone else. Relationships may not—perhaps should not—be a priority at the moment. Self-care and self-awareness is key.

As for a **career** reading, perhaps you should consider working alone or becoming your own boss. At the very least, you're being advised to take time out to plan. Time management is important at this juncture. Don't rush your projects.

**Yes/No:** Probably not. At the very least, not any time soon.

**Keywords:** isolation, alone time, withdrawal, enlightenment, introspection, slow, self-care, inner voice, trusting oneself, quiet

**Affirmation:** *Though I am alone, I am not lonely. I have the support of my family and friends, even when they are not near. I trust myself and withdraw to where it is quiet so I can hear my inner voice.*

## 10. Wheel of Fortune

No, you can't buy a vowel.

Do you remember merry-go-rounds? Or did you ever just spin as a child, going in circles until you collapsed, dizzy and maybe a little sick?

Yeah, that.

What goes up must come down, or so they say, and this card is about the turn of the wheel. If things have been going well, prepare for a downturn. If things have been lousy, well, your luck is about to change. And if you're somewhere in the middle . . . Could go either way. Yay?



If you look at the traditional Rider-Waite version of this card, you'll see the wheel spells TARO[T]. Remember that every end is a beginning and every beginning is the end of what came before. Even death, but we'll get to him in a few more cards.

In fact, the Rider-Waite Wheel of Fortune is packed with imagery. That sphinx on top holding a sword, that weird fox thing (it's Anubis), the snake (Typhon), the creatures at the four corners . . . All reading books like they're in a library or

something . . . They're actually the four Gospels and/or the astrological signs of Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius. The sphinx, by the way, represents power; remember the ones pulling the Chariot? A sword in tarot is symbolic of the element of air, which in turn represents thought and logic. In other words, the sphinx reminds you to rise above the simple turns of fate because your mind controls your body and your thoughts color your feelings. It's sort of an ancient take on "Think Positive!"

That said, the Wheel of Fortune is generally considered a lucky card to have turn up in a reading. If contemplating a risk, the Wheel says, "Go for it!" (But only if you can afford to lose.) It's also a karmic card—that is, a card of destiny. In some readings this means that what's happening or about to happen is simply meant to be and there's no avoiding it.

Also, in tarot 10 is the number of completion. Which, again, sets one up for a brand-new cycle.

If the Wheel of Fortune turns up in a reading, you're being told to brace yourself for changes, mostly likely for the better, even though they may not seem so at the time. Blessings in disguise and all that. This card can also mean that a major turning point in your life is coming—a twist of fate. Resistance is futile; go with the flow. You may notice more synchronicities at this time.

In a **romance** reading, the Wheel signals changes in your relationship(s). If you've been asked out and aren't sure, the Wheel is telling you to give it a try. If you're already in a relationship, your timing may be off or you may need to re-evaluate things. You know how wheels make ruts? Yeah, you may be stuck in one. The Wheel wants you to break out of that and take that road less traveled.

If you're asking about your **career**, the Wheel suggests it may be time to change things up. If your routine has become too settled, or your job is boring, it could be time to look for new opportunities. At the very least, the Wheel turning up in a job reading points toward a new cycle for your professional life.

**Yes/No:** Almost certainly yes.

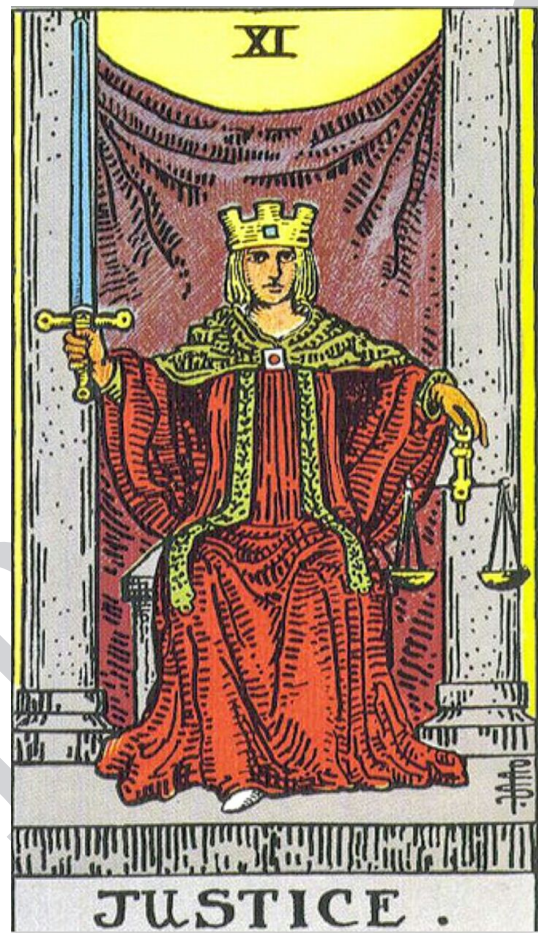
**Keywords:** change, fate/destiny, cycles, endings/beginnings, karma, good luck, turning point, new directions

**Affirmation:** *I embrace change rather than running from it. I accept my fate with equanimity, knowing that all is for the good in the long run. Though I am an agent of my own destiny, I choose now to go with the flow.*

## 11. Justice

Speaking of karma . . .

The first thing anyone ever notices about Justice is her scales. She's letting them hang out there for everyone to see. She looks serious about them, too. She probably won't let you touch them because they're perfectly balanced and you're just going to mess them up.



The Rider-Waite Justice is also brandishing a sword like, “I dare you to try touching my scales.” If you look back at the Hierophant, they have some definite similarities: red robes, stone surroundings. Remember that the Hierophant is also all about order and rules. So is the Emperor, also in red, also on a stone throne. So if you're getting a sense that Justice is about, well, *justice*—and in particular the legal, courthouse kind of way—you're not wrong. This card turning up (especially

if accompanied by the Emperor) can denote legal action of some kind. But she's also about balance, harmony, fairness, objectivity, and even compromise. Justice is a card of weighing options and making good decisions.

Libras almost always feel drawn to this card because she's the counterpart to their astrological sign.

Not only does Justice weigh you, she scrutinizes how you weigh others. "Are you being fair?" she asks, reminding you that your choices will be revisited upon you.

That's right, Justice is another karmic card. If the Wheel suggests that what goes up must come down, Justice's adage is that what goes around, comes around. Living by the golden rule and giving others the benefit of the doubt is usually a good way to play it safe.

When Justice pops in during a reading, you're being asked to examine your options and your choices. You're being reminded to be fair and objective rather than allowing emotion to get in your way. You're being told to find your balance. And you're being prompted to keep in mind that anything you do comes back to you, for good or ill.

In **relationships**, the Justice card can sometimes mean a legal marriage, separation, or divorce (especially if the Hierophant is also around). But she needn't mean anything so concrete. Justice can also simply be saying you need to balance your "me" time with your togetherness. Are you being selfish in wanting to spend so much time alone when someone needs your support? Or are you giving too much of yourself?

In a **career** reading, Justice suggests your priorities are out of whack. Once again, look for balance; in this case work-life issues may be at play, or you may simply be taking on more than you can chew in a project—or not contributing your fair share.

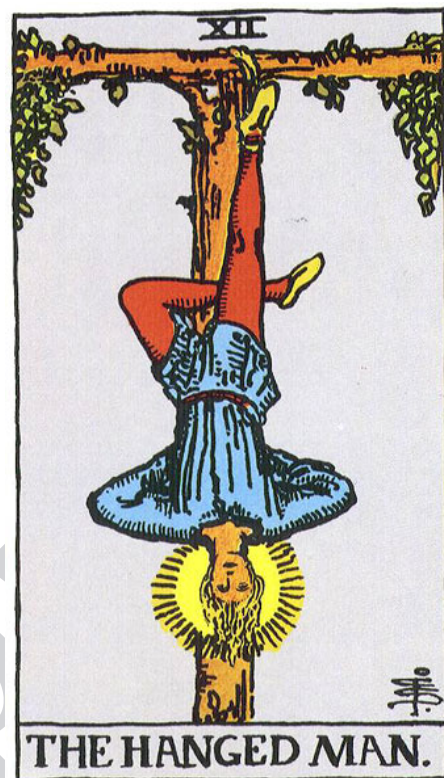
**Yes/No:** Yes.

**Keywords:** balance, fairness, karma, harmony, compromise, legality, objectivity, detachment, truth, conscience, choices, decisions

**Affirmation:** *I seek balance in my life. I strive to be fair and objective, to give as much as I get, to speak the truth, to make good decisions. I accept the consequences for my actions in the face of karmic law.*

## 12. The Hanged Man

If you go from Justice to the Hanged Man, you might be tempted to believe the trial didn't go so well and that this is the Fool's punishment. Here is this poor guy, hanging upside down from a tree . . . Well, at least not by his neck, right? There's still a chance he could be freed, change his ways, get back on track in life.



Still, he doesn't look too unhappy, does he? And in the Rider-Waite version, he's even got a halo. So is he a saint? A martyr? Just some acrobat putting on a show?

Well, some perceive the Hanged Man to be a bit like the Norse god Odin, who hung from the World Tree in order to learn the secrets of the Runes. And that's more or less what the Hanged Man card is about—patience and a new perspective. I mean, how can you *not* have a different world view if you're seeing things upside down?

When the Hanged Man pays you a visit in your reading, you're being told to step back and take another look at the situation. Try to find a different angle. And be patient. If you're in a tough spot, the Hanged Man tells you to, well, hang in there and accept where you are. Only by doing that can you then eventually take steps to



get somewhere else. The Hanged Man is a card of surrender, which isn't the same as giving up. He only wants you to admit the truth, even if that's difficult. He doesn't ask you to stop trying, though he might suggest that you (a) not try quite so hard, and/or (b) try a different tactic. Often we discover that the moment we stop searching is the moment we find what we'd been looking for all along. So let go, relax, accept what IS rather than striving for a particular outcome.

Living in the moment is key with the Hanged Man. There's no point in wishing things were different. Start from where you are.

In **relationship** readings, the Hanged Man tells you that you need a new perspective on the relationship in question, that you might be trying to force things, or force the person to be someone they aren't. If you aren't in a relationship, the Hanged Man wants you to be patient. He's saying you should make your life whole without worrying about having a significant other. Find yourself, be yourself, and then you'll be better equipped to accept the right person when he or she comes along.

As for **career** readings, the Hanged Man warns there may be delays in either finding a job or getting that promotion you so desire. If you're struggling with a project, he suggests that you come at it from another direction. Whatever you've been doing isn't working, so try something completely different.

Sometimes, the Hanged Man signifies a sacrifice of some kind. Either you're going to have to give up some free time in order to get work done, or you're going to need to cut back on work in order to give your family the attention it needs.

**Yes/No:** Not any time soon, if at all. (He leans towards no.)

**Keywords:** postponement, delay, shift, sacrifice, letting go, acceptance, perception, reversal, patience

**Affirmation:** *I step back from this situation in order to see the bigger picture, the grander plan. I accept what is, in the knowledge that only through acceptance and surrender can I change my circumstances. I give myself up for the greater good.*

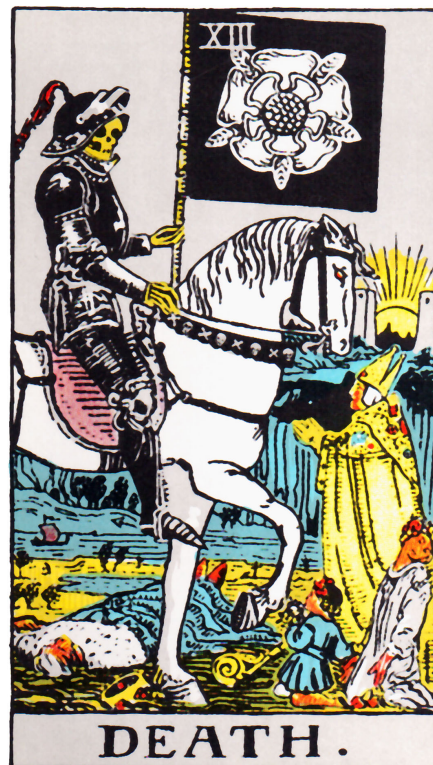
## 13. Death

Here's everyone's favorite card! Coming on the heels of the Hanged Man's sacrifice, one might think he's given his life for . . . something . . . And in truth he kind of has. But it's not what you think.

After gaining a new perspective on his situation, the Hanged Man has changed. His old life is behind him, and fresh new horizons lie ahead. That's what the Death card symbolizes. It's the end of a chapter, or even the closing of an entire book. It's a major transition.

We don't remember the womb, and Death is just another kind of birth in which we don't know what we'll be born into. We just have to trust in the natural cycle.

Still, look at this guy:



Probably not the face you want to see at your “delivery.” He’s cutting down everything in his path: young, kingly, holy, you name it. He’s indiscriminate. And he doesn’t do it for gain—he’s not taking any of the gold or jewels—he does it

because that's his purpose. He culls what is past its time to make way for whatever is to come.

When Death comes to call, you'll be tempted to cry, "Why me?!" But he comes to everyone eventually and not out of malice. There's no bargaining with him, either. He'll do what he's come to do, and it will seem terrible and frightening. He'll rip people out of your life, he'll force you to change and transform. It might hurt, but you'll be reborn.

So when you see Death in a reading, don't panic, but do prepare. If you fear change, you're being told to hold on to the lap bar and wait for the roller coaster to begin moving. It's okay to scream during the ride, but you can't stay in the womb forever. Time to be born into a new self.

If you've asked about a **relationship**, well, this is probably the end of one. And you most likely have known that for a while but haven't wanted to face it. Death says that in order to find the partnership you need, you have to let go of the one that isn't working for you. Don't settle, and don't be afraid to take that step. If you aren't in a relationship and are asking about the potential for one, Death promises major changes are on the way. However, you need to purge any preconceived notions or past relationship baggage before you can enter into a healthy partnership.

In a **career** reading, Death denotes major changes in your workplace as well. There may be layoffs, a merger, restructuring, or some other big news. If you have a job you don't love but have been too lazy or scared to try leaving, you'll probably be prompted to do so now, possibly by becoming a casualty to downsizing. And if you're looking for work, an opportunity may open up. You might feel unsure about it, but Death tells you to embrace the change. He also warns you, however, of an impact to your financial situation. Plan accordingly.

**Yes/No:** No.

**Keywords:** change, transition, transformation, endings, rebirth, new horizons

**Affirmation:** *Like a baby in the womb, I do not know what waits for me on the other side. However, I trust God/the Universe/the natural process. Whatever comes, however painful, I know I will be better for it in the end.*

## 14. Temperance

After a couple of difficult cards, Temperance appears rather soothing. Look, an angel!



(At least on the Rider-Waite card.) After undergoing major transformation, it becomes time to regain one's balance. That's what this angel is doing—pouring water from one cup into another so that neither is too full nor empty. Specifically, in the language of the tarot, water and cups are symbols of emotions. So on the heels of Death, which can cause great tides of emotion, Temperance comes along to calm the waters.

In fact, the angel here has one foot on land and one in the water. He (or she) is grounded yet partially immersed in the emotional realm. And that's what Temperance is truly about: balancing your emotions and intuition against logic and practicality. Also, being aware of your conscious and subconscious. Some introspection may be merited.

When Temperance turns up in a reading, you're being told to find that balance. Chances are you're listing to one side or another—either you're too emotional or trying to apply logic at a time when you should be listening to your gut. "Everything in moderation!" says Temperance. Don't go whole hog, and beware putting all your eggs in one basket. Impulsive action is a no-no now.

If you're reading about a **relationship**, Temperance wants you to chill. If there has been discord between you and another person, this card asks you to seek common ground and find harmony. If you're looking for love, questioning a friendship, or even just wondering how you might get on with a new co-worker, Temperance flags you to take it slow, feel things out, and trust your instincts.

As for **career** readings, Temperance could be warning you that you're in danger of acting too rashly. If your workplace has been stressful, this card suggests you need to find pockets of calm, or at least balance your chaotic work life with peace at home. Bring yoga and meditation into your office if you can, even if it means small breaks of closing your eyes to breathe and/or recite a mantra.

**Yes/No:** If you're asking whether something will happen, usually yes, though not right away. But if you're asking for permission to do something, then Temperance says to put the brakes on.

**Keywords:** balance, harmony, yin-yang energy, moderation, caution, peace, calm, flow

**Affirmation:** *I bring myself into balance. I trust my intuition but marry it to logic and do not act on impulse. I release anger and forgive those who have hurt me. I acknowledge both my male and female sides and recognize that neither is more important or more influential than the other. I am a spot of calm in a raging world.*

## 15. The Devil

Speaking of spots of calm, Temperance is surrounded by chaotic cards. Following a stop at the oasis pictured on the Temperance card, we find ourselves face to face with the Devil himself.



You may notice the similarities to the Lovers card. Yet here, instead of the angel, we have the Devil. And now the lovers are in chains. What happened?

The Devil shows the consequences of obsession and addiction. This card is the symbol of how too much of a good thing can be very bad indeed. If you do not heed Temperance, if you give in to temptation or act on impulse, the Devil may be the result.

In that sense, the Devil is a warning. If it turns up in a reading, consider it a big, red flag. Either you're on the path to being enslaved—by a person or thing—or perhaps you're already a prisoner, in which case the Devil is saying it to your face. Consider it an intervention.

Still, notice the chains around the man and woman are not tight. They may be heavy, but they could easily be lifted over their heads if only they would try. While at first glance the Devil card may seem fearsome and soul-crushing, in truth it gives hope and tells you not to despair.

In a **relationship** reading, the Devil warns that you may be getting in too deep. Are you fixated on someone? Are you making big sacrifices to be with this person and/or make them happy? At the most extreme, the Devil card warns that someone you're seeing or are interested in may be abusive. Or perhaps they have addiction issues of their own. If you're being abused—physically, mentally, emotionally—the Devil wants you to stop denying it or making excuses. Find an exit.

As for your **career**, the Devil can mean that the company you work for, or the one you're interested in working for, has a cult-like mentality that will suck you in and bleed you dry. Alternatively, you may be more ambitious than strictly necessary, a slave to your goals or desire for money. Take a step back and consider what you want and why. Remember that money is not the sole indicator of success, and that many “successful” people end up unhappy and alone because they never found balance and/or hurt others in their pursuit of fame and fortune. Don't be one of those people.

**Yes/No:** No!

**Keywords:** obsession, enslavement, addiction, temptation, ambition, abuse, depression, hate, fear, bigotry, narrow-mindedness, co-dependency

**Affirmation:** *I break the chains that hold me. I am stronger than whatever and whoever attempts to hold me back.*

## 16. The Tower

Whee! More fun than a ride at Disneyland?



Maybe not. I'm pretty sure it wouldn't pass the safety board.

The Rider-Waite Tower card shows two people falling from the titular tower as lightning strikes. Which would be worse? Being stuck in a burning tower or falling from it?

Neither situation is ideal, and the Tower reminds us that, no matter how high we build ourselves up, and however we try to protect ourselves from calamity, we're



never 100% secure. It's a daunting thought, to be sure, but the Tower signals a warning: our best-laid plans may yet go awry.

Sometimes the Tower shows up when things are already going wrong, in which case, consider it confirmation. (Thanks a lot, tarot!) The cards around it will give more information about the situation, depending on your question and the layout you've used.

The key to the Tower card is that, though the tower is burning and falling, the foundation below remains solid. Usually, when things go wrong it's because you took a wrong turn or made a wrong choice somewhere down the line. However, somewhere in your past is a firm foundation. You may need to burn down part of your life to get back to safe ground.

It seems counterintuitive in some ways, and the Tower is hardly a welcome card in a reading. Either things have gone off the rails or they're about to . . . Unless you knock down whatever part of your life isn't up to code and start rebuilding *before* it falls down around you and traps you in the rubble.

In some ways, the Tower is quite similar to Death. However, the Tower is far more sudden and violent. Death is inevitable, but not swift. The Tower is fast and abrupt, but not inevitable.

It's not all bad, either. The Tower can also bring enlightenment and new perspective. Being forced backward sometimes allows you to see the bigger picture and make more informed choices.

For **relationships**, the Tower can mean a breakup or separation, even divorce. Some terrible revelation or bad news may be coming from a loved one. If you already sense that your relationship with someone is unstable, the Tower confirms it. Better fix the cracks if you can! Though often the Tower highlights situations that are past saving.

In a **career** reading, the Tower promises upheaval. Layoffs, restructuring, and the like. Perhaps a project you've worked hard on is abruptly cancelled or given to someone else. It's back to square one, either in a job search or a project.

**Yes/No:** NO.

**Keywords:** upheaval, chaos, revelation, loss, reduction, change, enlightenment, perspective, foundation

**Affirmation:** *Though I fall, I will bounce back. This setback is for my own good. Not getting what I want means that something even better awaits me.*

## 17. The Star

Breathe in the fresh air. Look up—that place where the Tower stood, that roof that used to be over your head, that false security . . . That's gone now, but what you have is an unimpeded view of the sky. The night sky, to be exact. And here is the Star to guide you.



The Star is hope in the face of adverse circumstances. Like the biblical Star of Bethlehem, this Star likewise leads you to something wonderful, a potential miracle.

The oasis depicted in the Rider-Waite card feels familiar. As with the Temperance card, the Star offers calm and peace after much chaos and upheaval. Here, however, instead of an angel, we get a woman—in fact, we get the zodiac's water-bearer, Aquarius. She is pouring out not one but two jugs of water, one into the pool, and

one onto the land. Like Temperance's angel, she has one foot in the water and one on land as well. Knowing that water symbolizes emotion, the Star card shows the channeling of one's emotions. This woman is not splashing around; she's intent on her task. The water being poured onto the land will help things to grow—just as emotions added to logic help the mind grow and give us fulfilling lives. But why pour water into water? To create ripples. Still waters run deep, but it's equally important to stir up our subconscious from time to time. Turbulence isn't something we normally enjoy, but stagnant water is bad. Given other options, animals won't drink from a stagnant pool. Likewise, complacency eventually leads to living in a rut. While there's nothing wrong with being comfortable, it is possible to be so comfortable, so set in your ways, that you become toxic to those around you.

The Star is largely a card of hope and renewal. After the Tower, the Star is a fresh start. And note that starlight is not too bright—it is soft, soothing. Stars are for wishing on, and when the Star turns up in a reading, those wishes may be on course to come true. Be optimistic.

In a **relationship** reading, the Star can signal a new friend or lover on the horizon. Some kind of soul mate may be about to sail into your life. In any case, prepare for an uplifting encounter of some sort.

When asking about your **career**, the Star again is a promising sign. A turn for the better is coming—either your dull job gets more interesting, you get promoted, or you find a new and exciting opportunity.

**Yes/No:** Yes.

**Keywords:** optimism, hope, faith, adaptation, renewal

**Affirmation:** *As I venture into untested waters, I trust that all will be well. I keep my eyes fixed on the Star that guides me and do not fear what lies ahead.*

## 18. The Moon

One may use stars for navigation, but they aren't much for illumination. When it's dark out and there are no other sources of light, the Moon is your best friend.



Sure, she appears indifferent. Moody, even. The Moon is changeable and inconstant, but that doesn't make her worthless. When she deigns to appear, she can light the way so that you stay safe on the path.

As you exit the pool of the Star, you find yourself surrounded by potential hazards. But there is nothing to fear. Everything looks scarier in the shadows and the dark, but the Moon is here to show you nothing is as bad as you think.

The crayfish (or lobster) on the Moon card suggests the subconscious emerging into the conscious. The dog and the wolf express the dichotomy of our tame and wild selves, each reacting as canines do to the Moon: by howling. The Moon brings out our doubts and worries, even as she tries to dispel them. She's showing the way, but we're too afraid to start the journey.

When the Moon rises in a reading, she's trying to illuminate something hidden, either about yourself—subconscious thoughts, limiting beliefs—or someone or something around you. Start paying attention to signs, symbols, and synchronicities. Don't doubt or deny your intuition. Your dreams may have important messages for you at this time, and you may even be a bit psychic.

The Moon also wants you to face your fears. The path on the card is a long one, stretching far into the distance. If you have any hope of getting to your destination, you can't let worries prevent you from taking those first steps. Stop waiting for the exact right moment; you can always find another reason to postpone. Accept that you are ready and get moving.

In a **relationship** reading, the Moon may indicate someone you're interested in is hiding something. Don't discard any red flags. If you are already in a relationship, you may be transitioning from one phase to another. Remember that, if you're in a tough spot, no phase of the Moon lasts forever. You may also be feeling a strong emotional, spiritual, or even psychic connection with someone.

When asking about **career**, the Moon points to the possibility of hidden enemies working against your interests. Someone who has been smiling to your face may be stabbing you in the back. Then again, the coworker you see as cold and aloof may turn out to be an unexpected ally. The Moon is also a strong card for those working in creative and imaginative fields; she encourages you to come up with unique new ways to approach a problem or project.

Keep in mind that the Moon's light is reflective. If you can see her, the Sun is somewhere nearby and often on his way.

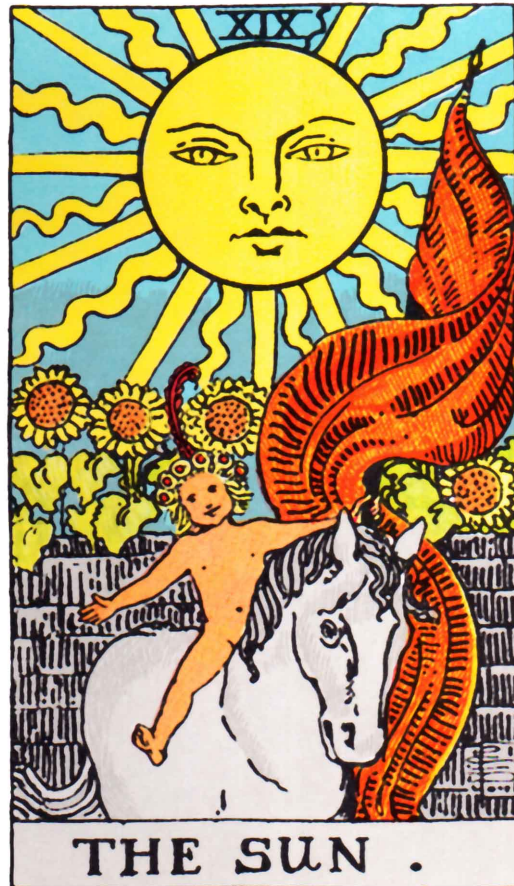
**Yes/No:** Most likely no. Something you can't or don't see stands in the way, or you may be holding yourself back.

**Keywords:** doubts, fears, anxiety, illusion, dreams, psychic abilities, hidden enemies, moodiness, phases, inconstancy, insecurity, the subconscious

**Affirmation:** *I step out of my fears and onto the path of rationality. I trust my instincts without letting anxiety rule me. My conscious and subconscious are joined, and I am whole. Illusion and imagination have their places, and I know when, where, and how to use them.*

## 19. The Sun

At last! Light and warmth begin to flood the sky, and the shadows, doubts, and fears retreat.



The joy in this card cannot be denied, from the child on the horse, to the pennant he (or she) carries, to the sunflowers in the background, and of course the sun itself. This is a grand day out. It's not surprising that the Sun is considered one of the most positive cards in the deck.

The entire world relies on the sun for survival. We need its warmth, its light, and we appreciate how consistent it is in giving those things to us. The sun is a caregiver, but not completely without risk. Ever had a sunburn? Or ventured to a place that is dealing with 24 hours of daylight? It is possible to have too much of a good thing.

So don't take the good times for granted. Enjoy them when they come. Soak up that sun and heat—or those compliments that warm your heart. The Sun asks you to live in the moment, if it's a good one, and promises that if you're having a hard time, something better is on the horizon. But he also reminds you that if all we had were good times, they wouldn't be very special.

When the Sun shines on your reading, he's telling you to be grateful for all the good in your life. Take note of even the small blessings. If you're struggling, he's promising things will get better. He might also be suggesting you take a vacation, preferably to somewhere warm. Or that you tend to your garden—whether it be physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. The Sun reminds you that, just as you rely on him, there are others that rely on you. Be a light in the lives of your pets, family, friends, coworkers, or even just your houseplants. Joy is, after all, contagious.

If you're asking about a **relationship**, the Sun indicates warmth, even passion. This is a good time to go out and meet people. If you already have someone, your relationship is in a good place, and you're being reminded yet again to be grateful and not take it for granted. If things have become a bit rote, inject some fun and spontaneity into things.

In a **career** reading, the Sun wants you to “make hay” while it is shining, meaning you should take advantage of the coming opportunities. If you do, success is sure to be the result: you get the job, the presentation goes even better than expected, you're tapped for a raise and/or promotion. You gain support from those around you. You may also end up going on a business trip or relocating to an interesting new location that you will love. These things don't happen every day, so enjoy the sunshine while it lasts.

**Yes/No:** YES!

**Keywords:** enthusiasm, joy, warmth, passion, clarity, success, luck, opportunity, gratitude, support, fun, good health, blessings

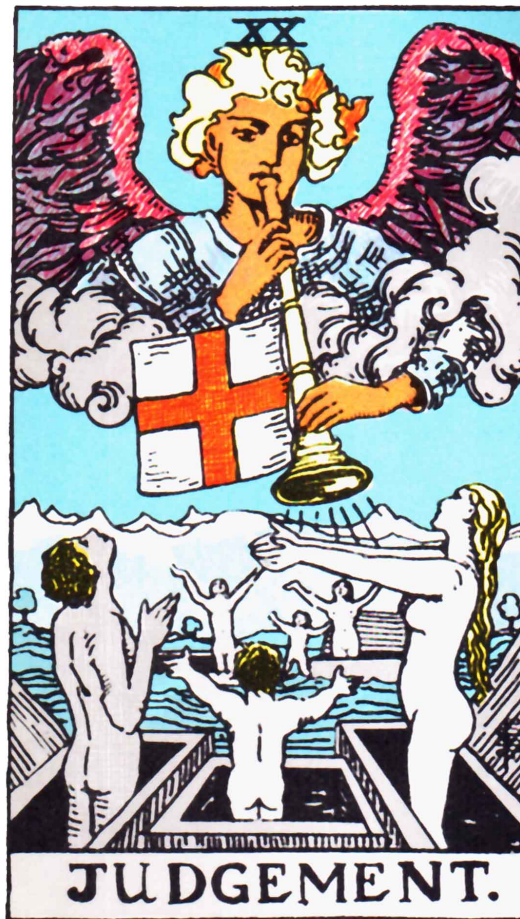
**Affirmation:** *I recognize and appreciate all the good around me and strive to contribute to the greater good. Just as the sun brings light and warmth to the world, I work to bring light and warmth to the people in my life. I am grateful for what I have and accept with open arms all the blessings offered to me.*

## 20. Judgement

Picture it: you're happily basking in the Sun's warmth, relaxing in your garden, at the park, by a pool... Suddenly, your peace is broken by the blare of a trumpet.

This isn't some street corner musician. No one has their stereo blasting Miles Davis. This is the kind of overwhelming blast one associates with some kind of warning or announcement. A siren. An alarm.

This is your wake-up call.



Anyone familiar with biblical imagery might recognize the Last Judgement. Gabriel arrives to awaken the souls from their coffins, and they reach out, ready to ascend.

It's easy to get comfortable, especially if you are having a Sun moment. But being content with where you are can prevent you from making progress. The Judgement



is here to motivate you into moving up—ideally, ascending. It’s reminding you that, though you’ve come a long way, you haven’t quite made it to the final round. It is also here to provide clarity. Judgement often presages an a-ha moment, and you begin to make connections between things you once thought of as unrelated. Judgement is especially good at making your past clear. When it turns up, you may start to realize how past experiences are influencing your present behavior—and may also impact your future.

Judgement brings a higher level of wisdom and insight, especially on a personal level. When it arrives, it can sometimes indicate that you are about to find a new purpose in life. It promises that you are “nearly there” in regards to a situation. Like a detective in a book or movie, you have all the clues, and it’s all about to fall into place in your mind.

When Judgement sounds in a reading, the cards are asking you to be honest with yourself. If you feel like you’ve had a recent epiphany, Judgement is confirming it. This card may also be urging you to forgive someone from your past, or to forgive yourself for past mistakes. Holding on to anger and disappointment weighs you down, and doesn’t allow you to reach greater heights. Judgement wants you to heal and be whole; only then will you be ready and able to finish a major cycle in your life.

In a **career** reading, Judgement indicates that you’re very close to finished with something, whether that be a major project, a particular job level, or even with working at a certain company. It’s time to move onward and upward in some way—so long as you’ve acknowledged all the lesson you’ve learned on the job up to this point.

It may also be that you are feeling a new calling in life, in which case Judgement recognizes that and prompts you to follow your fresh sense of purpose.

If you’re asking about a **relationship**, Judgement wants you to be clear and honest about the situation, both with yourself and the other person. The relationship cannot make progress until you are.

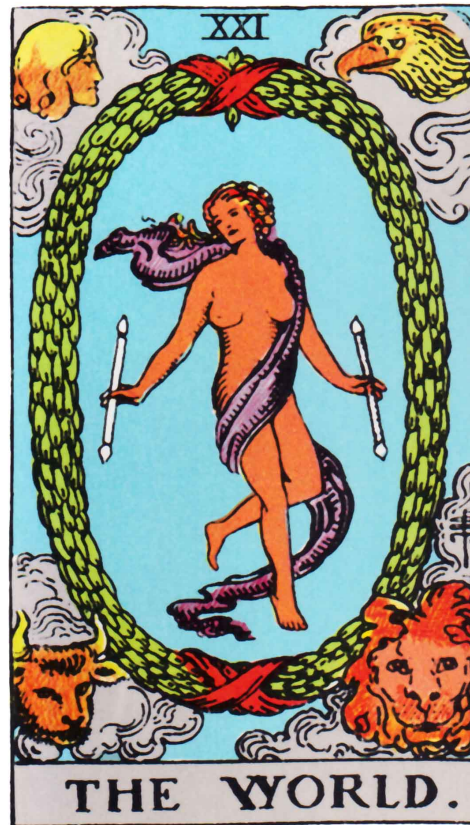
**Yes/No:** Most likely yes.

**Keywords:** clarity, awakening, epiphany, inner calling, forgiveness, ascension, penultimate stage, acceptance

**Affirmation:** *Like a phoenix, I rise from the ashes of my past. Only by accepting my past and forgiving myself and others can I make progress and ascend. I heed the call, embrace my purpose, and meet my future with clear sight and an honest heart.*

## 21. The World

Ascension achieved.



Take a look at this woman. She is literally walking—maybe even dancing—on air. Whatever she set out to achieve, she's done it. She's encircled by a wreath that denotes her success and victory. And she carries not one wand but two, in a display of power and skill and a show of balance.

The World card mimics to some extent the Wheel of Fortune. Different depictions of the same four creatures lurk in the corners of this card, representing the four fixed signs of the zodiac (Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius). The more things change, the more they stay the same, after all. And the red ribbons on the wreath are knotted in symbols of infinity, reminding us that every end is a new start.

The World card arrives when you have completed or achieved something. That may be a physical thing, or it may be an emotional, mental, or spiritual accomplishment. You have successfully integrated parts of your life, and that has

led to a fresh understanding, a new start of some kind. This may be reflected outwardly—a new job, a major move—but it may only be internal. No matter what, in some way you have expanded and celebration is in order. Your hard work in some area has paid off.

In a **career** reading, the World indicates recognition for your work is coming. You may find yourself with a new title, raise, or promotion soon. The World is also a card of travel, so you may be handling foreign contracts, assigned business trips, or even offered a position abroad.

As far as **relationships** go, the World denotes the end of a cycle. Either a relationship has run its course, or it's moving to the next level. If you are seeking a partner, you may find one in a foreign country. In any case, your time as a single person might be coming to a close.

**Yes/No:** Yes.

**Keywords:** completion, conclusion, accomplishment, achievement, success, travel, full circle

**Affirmation:** *Even as I celebrate all that I have achieved, I know there is more to do. I acknowledge how far I have come and embrace every ending as a new beginning.*