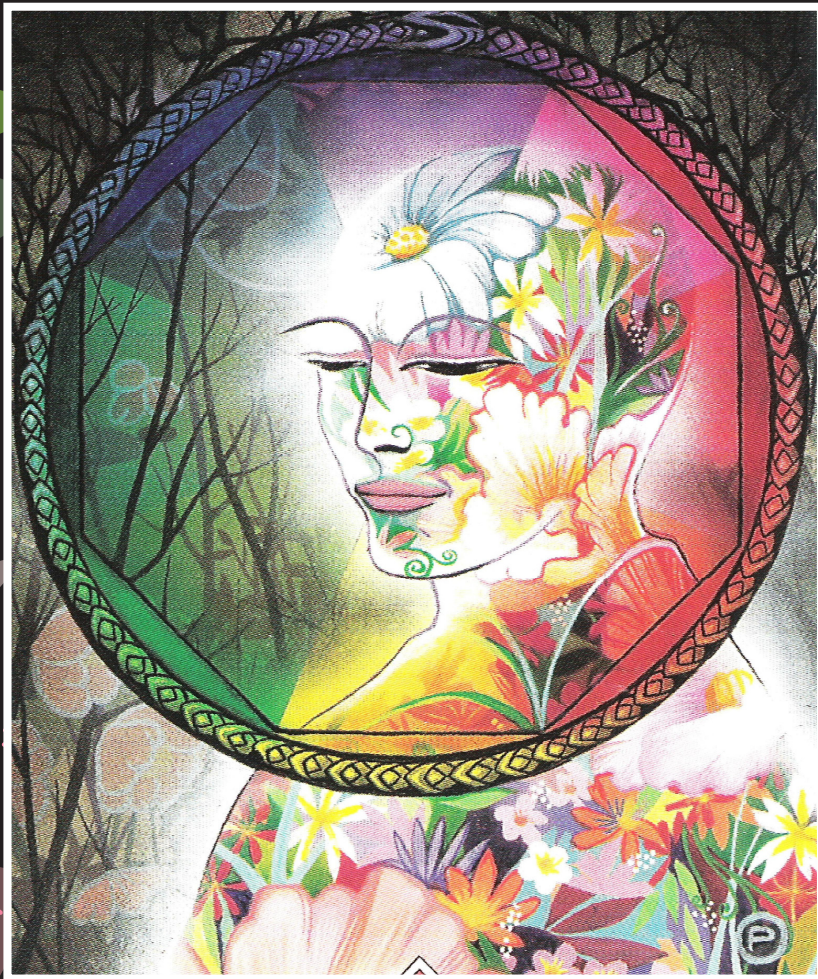


Donna van der Steeg, M.A.

Coaching with the Osho Zen Tarot



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Author: Donna van der Steeg, M.A.
Website author: www.ma-donna.nl, English edition

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Coaching with the Osho Zen Tarot

A colorful instrument for raising consciousness

Donna van der Steeg, M.A.

'The whole purpose of meditation is just to find the inner guide. Once you have found the inner guide, meditation is no longer needed; then nothing is needed. You have got your eyes open, now you can live your life with total spontaneity. You need not depend on the memory system at all, now your answers will be real responses. Your actions will be real responses, not reactions.'

Osho

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attractive
- Realistic
- Time-related

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INTRODUCTION

The Osho Zen Tarot deck is now available for about 16 years and it has reached the hearts of thousands of human beings. Many people everywhere in the world possess this special Tarot deck. People select a card regularly, because they are confronted with a question in life or simply as a daily ritual.

Moreover, a large number of people surfs regularly to the Osho Zen Tarot sites on the Internet. By clicking on one card or on a card spread one enriches oneself with the insight that appears on the screen.

But the Osho Zen Tarot has so much more to offer than just these elementary applications. If you can use this card deck in a professional way, the Osho Zen Tarot is a powerful and direct means for transformation. For this reason, the Osho Zen Tarot deck is very suitable for individual coaching sessions. The Osho Zen Tarot also offers a good and thorough basis to start therapeutic work of any kind in a certain direction

The book 'Coaching with the Osho Zen Tarot' gives a deeper perspective to people who are already working with the Osho Zen Tarot. Moreover, it is a provocative invitation to those who know this colourful Tarot deck only because they choose a card once in a while. And last but not least the book is a presentation of the unprecedented possibilities of the Osho Zen Tarot to everyone who works with people. Insight and becoming more aware are encouraged by the Osho Zen Tarot in an excellent way. A profound transformation process and more growing possibilities can be the result of using the Osho Zen Tarot.

During the years that I have offered courses in working with the Osho Zen Tarot and when writing articles about this card deck, I received regularly this question: 'Where I can find more tools to get started with my Osho Zen Tarot cards?' Well, you can discover these in this book.

Find your basis in meditation, follow you intuition and have the courage to follow new ways with the Osho Zen Tarot cards with the help of this guide. I wish you many enriching hours and infinite pleasure reading it. I also invite professionals who work with people with different methods, to examine the profound possibilities of the Osho Zen Tarot by consulting this book. They may want then to add this method to their existing instruments.

Donna van der Steeg, M.A.
The Hague, The Netherlands

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Chapter 1

OSHO ZEN TAROT AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND IN COACHING SESSIONS

During the years I have been offering courses and sessions, I discovered more and more the value of the Osho Zen Tarot deck. I feel this gives me the right to come to the following conclusions. The Osho Zen Tarot is a clarifying instrument for individual use in the developmental process of people. This card deck is also a fantastic help while giving coaching sessions to others.

1.1 EFFECTS OF THE OSHO ZEN TAROT ON PEOPLE

In the first place it is a fact, that the colourful paintings on the Osho Zen Tarot cards touch about anyone. People like them, dislike them or feel that they are special. Moreover, the cards have a more profound effect on people too: they are inwardly touched by the cards. Emotions, insights and glimpses of consciousness arise in people who watch the cards. Pictures appeal to the so-called analogous thinking of people. This concept means, that people perceive reality mainly by using images. The more common approach for adults is the digital way of thinking. And that concept means, that people express in words mostly what they experience. We find the analogical way of thinking in all children, because e.g. written language is not yet within their capacities. But analogous thinking continues to exist in people, even when the digital way of thinking has arisen in the meantime. It varies from person to person to what extent analogous thinking takes place in their lives.

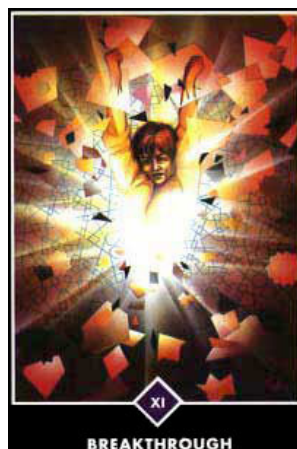
Pictures which are intrusive can bring our early childhood memories up, because in that period analogous thinking was the most important. Hence the meditatively painted Osho Zen Tarot cards of Deva Padma can touch people intensely. The woman painter Deva Padma has lived for a long time in the immediate surroundings of the enlightened mystic Osho. And this obviously had a specific effect on the paintings on the cards which are created by her. A spiritual master like Osho has a so-called Buddha-field around him which is reflecting the state of being of a master. The reflection of the surroundings of the master is conditional to add strength to his transformational work. And in exactly that environment Deva Padma has painted the Osho Zen Tarot cards.

The final Osho Zen Tarot set contains an accompanying textbook in which for each card two types of description are given. On the left half of the page you can find Padma's own description of each Osho Zen Tarot card. It has some parallels with the meaning in the more traditional Tarot sets. On the right side of the page there are excerpts from the lectures in which Osho comments on the Zen life stream. And it is worth knowing that Osho has devoted most of his work of over six hundred books to the Zen vision. The characteristics of Zen are discussed in chapter 2 of this book. The Osho Zen Tarot cards reveal clear and deep features of Zen in their appearance and by their content. Zen gives an invitation to penetrate in our deepest core and from there to live. That is most probably the reason too why people are immediately touched so deeply when they see the Osho Zen Tarot cards.

1.2 IMPACT OF THE OSHO ZEN TAROT IN COACHING SESSIONS

The effect of the Osho Zen Tarot on people is unpredictable, just like it is impossible to offer predictions by the Osho Zen Tarot cards themselves. From the vision of Zen there is a try to raise awareness in people. Zen is a living vision, which is as natural as life itself and which is provoking people to return to their true nature. Indeed everyone of us will admit that we have many artificial things in our lives and inside us. Over the years we have become accustomed to shielding our deepest emotions and to hiding our wounds and injuries. And the result of doing this over many years is, that we are not truly ourselves and that we have a rather forced kind of life. Usually during a psychological crisis you notice how you indeed denied your own inner being during a long time and that now you are stuck.

'The inner world is just as vast as the external world is', I heard the mystic Osho say. So, if you neglect that inner world, you are only half alive. And one day that will turn against you, as most people experience. However their psychological crisis, a breakdown, can lead them to a breakthrough. And this kind of process is depicted on the card we see next. It is card number XI of the Major Arcana of the Osho Zen Tarot deck: Breakthrough. If you get stuck in old patterns, you cannot maintain this over time and one day you will collapse. But besides that probably more things will happen.



By just inevitably taking a break for a moment, the pressure of the outside world will temporarily be gone for you. There is space to examine how it all has come to this point in your life, how you got in the present situation now. And your own role in this whole situation of course also comes up for discussion.

How have you been dealing with the things in your life, that it turned out to be like this? Probably there have been circumstances which were leading to this. And you yourself have been dealing with it in a certain way. Therefore, the overall conclusion can be, that out of the situation of breakdown glimpses of consciousness can be born. And through the new insights which arise a breakthrough to a different way of life is possible.

But, as a human being, that far you don't need to go down. The Osho Zen Tarot cards and associated card layouts can also provide you insight in your unconsciousness in life without this kind of crisis. And several hints are given about how you can introduce changes in your life yourself, so that ever returning issues are simply resolved.

If you regularly work with the Osho Zen Tarot cards for yourself and others, you will obviously develop a great familiarity with the cards. You will understand which cards frequently appear in card layouts in specific situations. They all concern human life themes which are related to recognizable experiences. In a spiritual sense the cards of the Major Arcana have the spiritual journey of people as their main theme.

It is possible to discern parallels in the life of different persons, although each human being does have a unique spiritual journey. From your experience in working with the Osho Zen Tarot cards at some point you almost can predict which cards are being revealed for you on the table. But a good reminder is: one needs to be careful with this. Recognition is a valuable source of information and can cause fundamental insights for people. An open starting point and the attitude of wonder are absolute conditions while working with the Osho Zen Tarot too. Being properly aware of this, one can add the following information about the Osho Zen Tarot card Breakthrough. This card regularly comes up in sessions with people who have dealt with a situation of burnout or who are going through this right now. These people mostly are not dealing with a temporary depression, but usually got completely stuck in a situation, for example at their work. Coming out of a state of burnout and managing to go back to work, can easily develop into a similar kind of situation. A fundamentally different way of dealing with work and life should be created. And for this reason the Osho Zen Tarot card Breakthrough frequently reveals itself for these people. If you find this card in sessions in combination with overall information about the client, a specific question regarding a possible burnout situation is in place. Is this, in fact, not the case, then you should immediately drop this idea. If this turns out to be true, it will reduce the flow of your questions to the roots of the case enormously while interpreting the Osho Zen Tarot cards. And this will make the session a practical and pleasant event: it keeps the flow and at the same time you will stick to consciousness.

1.3 SPECIFIC EFFECTS OF THE OSHO ZEN TAROT

Transformation by being Creative

In this section a description is given of the very specific effects which the Osho Zen Tarot cards had on a trainee of the Osho Zen Tarot course. Starting her own little project she felt in a kind of sad mood and the final outcome was a splendid colorful painting. The woman we talk about is a painter and she was also in a teacher training for creative teaching methods. She wanted to give painting lessons from the depths of experience, so that in the students during painting an inner process would develop. While intensely searching, the Osho Zen Tarot cards came to her attention. She decided to deepen her insight in the card deck and its effects by participating in an Osho Zen Tarot course. Meanwhile, she noticed that the Osho Zen Tarot cards were taking more and more possession of her without giving specific attention to these cards. One day she did not feel so comfortable and was slightly depressed, while just on this day her painting lesson would take place. She decided to go there anyway, but before that she took her Osho Zen Tarot deck and selected five random cards from it. She took the cards without really examining them in an envelope and brought them to her painting lesson. And only when she had arrived there, she investigated which cards she had randomly selected. There was this sequence in the selected cards she had taken with her:

1. Awareness, Major Arcana VII
2. Consciousness, ace of the suit of clouds
3. Maturity, ace of the suit of rainbows
4. Going with the Flow, ace of the suit of water
5. The Lovers, Major Arcana VI

The moment she examined the five cards faced up, she noticed them not as separate from each other any more, but she discovered an unknown unity in them. And she wanted to express that oneness in her painting. Since then she has been doing a few painting lessons while working on this. And she enjoyed very much to meet this inexplicable unity to which the Osho Zen Tarot cards were appealing during every week's painting lesson and when practicing.



At certain aspects of the painting, she experienced that she 'ought' to be in a special mood, before she could be creative. During a whole evening she tried to shape the card Consciousness, Ace of the clouds suit, and to complete it. And the result is that she created her own unique representation of the Buddha painted on the original card. The flowery card Maturity, Ace of the rainbows suit continuously gave her a happy feeling while painting. She felt all the time a strong drive to paint these five cards together even before she had really examined them. That she did only at the moment after she just had arrived at the lesson hour. Otherwise she was, as it happens, afraid that she would have possibly exchanged the cards, after she had actually seen them, for

different cards which were more easily to paint than the selected ones. But she did not want to apply a technique and just copy the cards while painting.

She longed to experience from her deepest feeling what the cards were moving in her and to express this on paper.

That was the specific impact that the Osho Zen Tarot cards had on her. The characteristics of these cards can bring you right to your heart and your essence, if you are in an open mood for this. And if you surrender to this rather deeply, as a result you can only make paintings from that space in yourself. This gives a fundamental different type of painting than paintings inspired by the great technical reproduction of the images.

This artist, upon reflecting her mood before she took the cards and after having been touched by them, discovered a fundamental difference. When she came to see the unity in the five cards, a quality of calmness arose in her on a deep level. A specific part of her life that had been brought into harmony seemed to unfold itself. The five Osho Zen Tarot cards working in this way were appealing to her capacity for transformation. From a rather depressed mood she got into a deeper experience of unity inside. From that time on she continued painting in a deeper way and has discovered that she first needed to experience a certain atmosphere, which seems to refer to surrender. The Osho Zen Tarot cards brought this woman painter very close to meditation as a state of being while painting. Also she started teaching to others from this deeper experience, transferring to them the way of meditative painting.

1.4 COACHING WITH THE OSHO ZEN TAROT DURING WORKSHOPS

In workshops many occasions occur in which participants can receive coaching based on the Osho Zen Tarot cards. In the safe spheres of a group, during which everyone selects a card and inner things are reflected, people mostly are surprisingly open. A group coach can take the chance to lead people to their deeper levels and to a growing consciousness as much as possible.

1.4 POSITIVE HINTS FOR CHANGE

If someone receives the label of 'the outsider', hardly anyone will be happy about that. And yet it is a very common human experience to feel an outsider in a situation. Everyone knows the kind of party at which you, in spite of doing your best, cannot connect with anybody else. Or probably you will recognise the meeting in which you try to bring forward your point of view and it is wiped out each time. The participants in the meeting are so much involved in mutual reacting to each other and they are absolutely not listening to new input. Finally you decide to give up on it. You are not heard, possibly only if you would raise your voice. And for that you are, considering the situation, not highly motivated.

In short: you feel excluded, an outsider. And this feeling is consistent with one of our deepest experiences: that of a small and helpless child. So there is every chance that our earliest conditioning is arising now. All kinds of judgments about yourself like 'being not interesting enough', 'looking incompetent' and 'being rather unimportant' are buzzing around in your head. Similar situations in the old days will occur to you which seem to confirm these condemnations. And before you realize, you are stuck in an ongoing treadmill of disillusioning ideas.

Also there is ample space for this, because you are all by yourself: you are the outsider indeed, like card 5 of the rainbows suit is showing. But exactly this is the moment, just because you are thrown back on yourself, that you can introduce change in the way you handle this situation.



In fact, it is an ideal opportunity to step out of closed thinking. You can decide for yourself that you find currently no connection in this group. That is true. It is good to keep it to that conclusion and not to be caught in all kinds of explanations. These are pure mind games which will not deliver any positive result to you. You only will end up in old experiences which once have been hurting you. But at that time you were a child and now you have grown up and you are an adult. And in the position of being an adult you can look at this situation with awareness and deal with it in a mature way.

1.4.2 THE ZEN APPROACH

No matter which way you look at it, people are basically outsiders according to the Zen approach. And that is exactly the way we experience life in general. Life is considered as material and as something people can somehow construct. But more comprehensive than this is Existence, as an overall phenomenon, and we are a substantial part of it. Existence consists of divine energy which is the highest form of all the energy possible. And if we do not enter the divine, we continue to experience ourselves as an outsider. We are camouflaging that bad feeling by making a network of friendly relationships. We make friends, find a life partner to create a small family and we focus on the extended family we are part of. But when death announces itself, all these relationships are suddenly gone. And there we are: all alone by ourselves feeling intensely cold.

Being at home in the world without feeling excluded is only possible if you have entered the divine. You belong to the divine, to the highest energy. And only when you connect with divine energy, you will become an integral part of existence. Only in that way it can happen.

The connection with the divine will change your live radically. There will arise a totally different quality in you. Everything alive in existence, the stars, the sun, the ocean and the fish are getting more familiar to you. And otherwise they remain only objects in your surroundings which you can just observe from the outside: noting more than that.

1.4.3 CASE STUDY

During an Osho Zen Tarot workshop, I presented the functions and possibilities of the Osho Zen Tarot to the participants. I always give the people the pure experience of the cards at an early stage. And in the group people exchange continuously what touches them. I usually decorate the room of the workshop with a couple of Osho Zen Tarot cards in A4 size, which makes the experience even more lively. In this enlarged size one can see many more details of the cards and there is a more total view which is very penetrating

and alive. We were sitting in a semi-circle and people selected, one after another, a card from the Osho Zen Tarot deck. People do this with closed eyes and they use their more sensitive hand, which mostly is the left hand, to move over all the cards. The cards are spread like a fan before the one who will take the cards and they are placed in the direction of the person so that they are inviting. The sensitive hand of people is mostly the left hand as with the right hand nearly all necessary functions are performed. In short: with the right hand we move into the world and we are more businesslike. And with the left hand we live more from our intuition. If people are predominantly left-handed, a brief closer research is necessary. Now it is discussed: do these people in first instance all things in life with the left hand? Which things they do right-handed, for example: does this concern possibly the care of the body? What are these left-handed people experiencing themselves as their 'working' hand and which as their intuitive hand? After answering these questions, the left-handed person can select an Osho Zen tarot card with the left hand or with the right hand. If left-handed people indicate that it is a little uncomfortable to select the card with the right hand, it may be perfectly recommendable to just give it a try. After the Osho Zen Tarot card is selected, it has to be placed back at an unrecognizable spot. Because the next participant choosing a card, should have access to a complete Osho Zen Tarot deck. In this way all participants take a card, one after another.

It happened that in this workshop one of the participants had selected the card The Outsider, card number 5 of the rainbows suit and when it was his turn in the sharing round, he uttered this. He said: 'That little boy who is on the card standing behind the fence, is me.' The card was, enlarged to A4 format, on the wall of the space where we did the workshop. And so he pointed emphatically to the enlargement of the picture on the wall. And for this reason he indicated once more expressively to the enlargement which was there. Then he started to be a little giggly and awkwardly he said: 'But it is better to say: that boy was me. For since I visit this place and do meditations, together with others, I am actually not that boy anymore. Gosh! Actually I never thought that this was the situation and that I am beyond it now. I'm not really an outsider anymore. Because I'm with myself, with my inner self.' Meditation had clearly provided him the feeling to be at home, the only real feeling at home there is. And thanks to the Osho Zen Tarot card The Outsider he had become aware of this process that was going on in him. It was a great confirmation of his 'here and now' state.

From this example we can conclude that several cards in the Osho Zen Tarot give a somewhat negative feeling on first insight. At closer consideration they however offer an excellent opportunity for reconsideration. Because also in looking at things in life we have been conditioned. And instead of condemning ourselves because obviously things in life do not go as we expect, we should better develop a different, a more open attitude. On this basis it is possible to choose deliberately a different way of dealing with the current situation.

1.5 LIGHT ON THE SPIRITUAL PATH IN THE PROCESS OF COACHING

The Osho Zen Tarot cards can shed light on the spiritual path people are following. The cards create more awareness in people and thus shine their light .

1.5.1 LIGHT REVEALED BY THE FUNCTIONING OF THE CARDS

We will see in this chapter how the Osho Zen Tarot cards can shed light in people's life. If for example you have a task that you are motivated for but that you also dread, you will probably put it aside for some time. Besides the fact that the job is not done, it creates an uncomfortable feeling in you. You were indeed willing to do it and you stand for it. But right now you are only postponing to carry it out. And you are filling time by doing things which you are actually not even interested in. Occasionally you spend a thought on the proposed project, because it continues to challenge you, but then you shake it off rapidly. For this situation, some Osho Zen Tarot cards were selected. The card The Lovers was drawn first. This is card number VI of the Major Arcana and so we can draw the conclusion a substantial matter is concerned here. This task apparently appeals to an essential drive in you to complete it. There is no sense of duty or feeding of your ego related to it.

The Osho Zen Tarot card The Lovers is about the different levels there are in the human quality of love. We usually know love especially within the context of relationships: our parents were often the first people who loved us. And in the various more or less intimate contacts in our lives there has always been a different aspect of the comprehensive phenomenon of love going on. Love is above all a quality of ourselves as individual human beings.

This fact is often overlooked, but mystics, spiritual teachers, psychologists and psychiatrists point to it. We can only love others if we love ourselves first. If this is not the case, you are not in a situation of love, but in reality you are in a state of need. And this provides all possible relational problems and feelings of frustration for individuals which these professionals are frequently facing in their work with people. This Osho Zen Tarot card The Lovers does an appeal to work from the quality of the heart. And that is a fundamentally different way of acting than when you are dealing with things from the mind.

You do not realize this state of being easily by brushing a number of thoughts temporarily aside. It goes much deeper than just to utter your feelings. This quality reaches you from the continuity of your meditations. If you are at that level of love, there is simply no space for thoughts. In the Osho Zen Tarot workshops which I offer in different cities, I always do meditation as a part of the program. In this way at least we refer to the quality of the heart and one has practiced meditation during this workshop.

After that experience it is up to the participants if they are ready to strengthen and deepen their meditation. But I will continue encouraging them to do this, at any moment we are in connection later on. Also I bring meditation in by the way I invite the participants to select the Osho Zen Tarot cards. According to the working method which I support, it is important, that the participants make contact with the cards from their inner self. It is not about how the cards accidentally lie on the table or that a certain card is partly hidden, that one will (not) select it. It is about what one experiences when one moves the hand over all the cards in a sensitive manner. And it is not necessary that you experience something special. Some people indicate that they feel warmth at a certain card. Others say they experience wind blowing from a certain card. Still others express that they feel at a certain moment that the time is ripe to take a card. In that respect, there are no laws or guidelines. It is important that one gives a chance to the chemistry which may arise between the cards and the person who will choose them.

Concerning the postponed task we face in this context, you can interpret the card 'The Lovers' as follows. If you undertake the work from the quality of the heart, there will be a very different experience. It is not about a sense of duty and feeling guilty if you do not execute what you have imposed on yourself. No, it goes together with a sense of responsibility that comes from within. From that space the work will go much easier, since there is no burden of all kind of panicky thoughts. This is the area of experience and experience will allow you to do the work. After some time, while continuing your meditations, you will experience a creative flow. And that force will make you do your job, that you will continue and finish it at last. In this way there will be joy doing it, because there is no pressure and it is going rather easy. Where you quit your work today because for this day the work is enough, you continue the next day full of energy. You make it more like a play and that is all according to the quality of the heart. The heart can be playful and the mind is more serious. In the field of the heart things go in a flexible way and smoothly. Within the frameworks of the mind everything goes according to fixed patterns and rules. Here you experience what is expressed in the beautiful Zen Saying: 'Right is easy, easy is right.'

Next card in the selected Osho Zen Tarot cards connected to this situation was the card Sadness, number 9 of the clouds suit in the Minor Arcana. The picture on this card shows a person sitting with the head in the hands. He is in a depressing situation and seems to see no way out of the situation. These things are happening when you try to come beyond this situation by the way of the mind. That does not help you to come ahead, on the contrary: you will find yourself more stuck every moment.

In the background you see the world of the person splits in two parts. He is getting all the time more divided by pondering over how to proceed with the job he has undertaken. And from disunion you will not reach to fertile action. The energy is going in too many different directions. We also see the numerous clouds from which the person is looking at his

This book unfolds the potential of the Osho Zen Tarot as a coaching tool and as a colorful method for self-development. Topics such as: ‘a proper question, the bandwidth of cards, the choice of card layout patterns and the ways of interpreting, specific cards for coaching, the way towards a total human being, crisis and rebellion and in the world but not of the world’ come into the limelight.

Anyone who has been touched by the Osho Zen Tarot cards, may take advantage of the many suggestions that are given. Various aspects of coaching with this card deck are discussed and also the contemporary of it is explained. Furthermore, inter alia, the life stream of Zen and the importance of meditation are exposed. And to the meaning of ‘Coaching with the Osho Zen Tarot’ in our world and in our time, a separate chapter is dedicated. The book has been created on the basis of giving many workshops and courses in working with the Osho Zen Tarot and at the request of students who loved to have available the suggestions in a book format.

Donna van der Steeg is a psychologist and she is mainly inspired by active meditation too. She works as a teacher ‘Psychology and Coaching’, psychosocial therapist and tarot professional. At various places in the world she offers courses and workshops. This book is about the special effects of the Osho Zen Tarot on people and the possibility of mirroring the unconscious. Information, insights and practical suggestions are given for working with the Osho Zen Tarot.

