

The Fast & Easy, Witty & Wise
Tarot Book
The Only Tarot Lessons You'll Ever Need



by
Georgelle

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CHAPTER ONE



What's This Book Gonna Teach & Who's the Author Anyway?

This work is a digest of a lifetime's study of the Tarot and the systems that are expressed through it: astrology, numerology, the Tree of Life, the I Ching, eastern philosophies and metaphysics in general. The book is meant to serve your need and desire to use the Tarot cards meaningfully *as soon as you have the deck in your possession*. In this chapter I will give you two simple card setups that you can use daily, or when a situation arises that drives you into a frenzy. The last chapters will include two in-depth card spreads to employ when you feel you have a firm grasp on the meaning of the entire deck.

The first section devotes a chapter to each of the 78 cards comprising the Tarot Deck: the 22 Major Arcana and the 56 Minor Arcana. The second section explains how to relate the cards to each other in a spread, what it means, for instance, to have a "positive" card next to a "negative" one. Of course, all the negatives in the Tarot are merely manure to help you grow gorgeous orchids and nutritious carrots. That's the way I treat the Tarot: it is for your growth, for your progress on the Path of Aware Living, and a reading represents Travel Plans, or, instructions in Gardening.

I have been studying astrology since I was 6 years old. Truly. My mother was a film actress back in the '30's, and astrology was her avocation. Metaphysics has always been my study. I began learning about the Tarot in 1956. But I wasn't a bookworm. I lived a very full

life, with many diverse experiences. I have been a secretary, a waitress, a model, a call-girl, a mother, a wife, a performance artist, a radio newscaster, a disc jockey. I've written three books and published two: *The Hate Factory* (Dell, 1982) and *Dear Writer in the Window* (Penguin, 1992) -- you can see examples of the latter on this website. Metaphysics helped me to understand and learn from all these experiences. Now I'm in my crone years, at this writing 63 years old, and have the luxury of reviewing my life's work and play, and transmitting what I've assimilated.

Since 1986, I've been a "professional" guide, doing readings that combine astrology and the Tarot, for clients first met during their travels to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where I live. Many of them now take readings over the phone, and refer me to their friends who are visiting Santa Fe. I worked publicly in several Santa Fe restaurants for nearly a decade, doing mini Tarot and astrology readings. This not only gathered clients, it was a post-graduate course in interpreting these two symbolic languages. Now, I do only in-depth readings, privately, in my studio.

If you find that you're curious to know more details and history of the Tarot than this fast and easy treatise provides, visit your local metaphysical bookstore and browse the Tarot section. So much has been written on the subject that you'll have no trouble finding something to quench your particular thirst. Use your intuition as you look through the books. Pick the one that appeals to you. I don't have to tell you of this, of course, it's just a reminder to trust yourself. I list at the end a few tomes that have been important to me through the decades. However, I learned most from *using* the cards, for myself at first, for friends as I got braver, then for the public. That was a really brave step, to put aside the book, throw my blanket down on the boardwalk in Venice Beach, California, and read for strangers. I learned on that day that the cards are a story that tell themselves -- once you've spent time listening.

Here is the first simple card setup. It's definitely simple: *One Card a Day*. Yep, just one card to begin with. It's always necessary to focus, to put your mind to the task of asking for and receiving a message. So find your serene place, geographically and mentally. Shuffle your deck. Shuffle as long as you like, and use that shuffling to consider what you want to receive a message about. Maybe you just want some general wisdom, or maybe you wonder what you need to know to understand your love life, or your next career move. But while you're shuffling, find your question. Then cut the deck into three piles, and restack them into one. You're ready now to pick your one card. There are three ways you can do this; in all three, the cards are

face down, and of course you choose only one method at a time:

- 1: fan the deck out so you can see the edges of all 78 cards. Run your hand (preferably the left) across the fanned deck, eyes closed, until you feel your fingers are over the the right card. Put your finger down, open your eyes, and pick up the card the finger is on.**
- 2. Cutting the deck. For this, you must first determine whether you're going to go for the card on top of the pile left on the table, or the bottom of the deck in your hand. When you know this, cut the deck with your left hand and pick your card.**
- 3. The simplest of all: choose the card on top of the deck. For this, you may want to do the initial cutting into three and restacking into one pile three times rather than one. Then, with your left hand, pick the card off the top.**

Once the card is picked, read about it. Think about it. Consider how it applies to you. Review your day and see what events might apply to the card. You may pick more than one card a day, of course, if you're so moved. But not more than one card in a "sitting." Get to know all 78 stories, one at a time.

0

The Fool

Can Stand Before the Cause of Causes



1

The Magician

Vision



Mind with all of its attunements, all of its pathways, is the domain of the Magician. In most depictions of this card, you see the Magician standing before a table set with the symbols of the four elements: a wand, for fire; a cup, for water; a coin, for earth; a sword, for air; and above his head coils the infinity symbol. These symbols tell you that you must know about the abilities of your brain. They tell you that the mind is capable of using all the elements of life to work out a problem. The infinity symbol above the Magician's head shows his (but of course a Magician can be "her") attunement with the timeless energy of life and her connection to life's essential composition, the electrons, molecules, quarks, as we have so far named them, that flow thru and link all and everything. From this attunement, the Magician draws inspiration; as does the Fool before him. But, unlike the Fool, the Magician plans. He or she searches for correlation between idea and reality. Reality is represented by the four elements.

The first reality the Magician seeks is volition: fire. He weighs the inspiration against his true interest. The idea that lights his fire, makes him want to leap out of the chair and start working on it, that's the one he knows is his to manifest, the one he knows he'll carry out to completion.

Now the energy to move the idea is present, but that's just step one. The energized new idea must be loved and nurtured: water. The Magician must immerse the idea in the stream of her desires, she must get in touch with the passion that tells her this idea is now her Wholly Purpose, her holy grail until the idea is born.

The realities of energy and nurture, fire and water, have joined the idea. Now it's time for the intellect: air. The rational pathways of the Magician's mind bring the idea into a plan. Visioning begins, mental blueprints flow from synapse to synapse; research is conducted, phone calls made, meetings held, ideas circulated, helpers gathered.

Finally, after engaging fire, water, air -- energy, nurture, intellect -- it's time for manifestation: earth. The foundation is laid for the building, the canvas is stretched for the painting, the clay is turned for the urn, the first sentence of the novel, poem or play is written. And the Magician continues, empowered by her interest, and love and vision, to build, paint, mold, write until the original idea has been translated completely into the reality of form.

When the Magician shows up, it's a message to focus on all the elements of your being to figure things out: be aware of what fires you up and interests you; tune in to your desires; think about how to create these interests and desires; visualize the actual things you'll need to make them part of your reality. The Magician reminds you that your mind has everything you need to show you how to turn sludge into orchids.

The Magician is associated astrologically with Mercury, the planet of communication, thus adding another message from the Magician: get social, get and give information, and learn from all your interactions.

2

The High Priestess

Consummation of the Truth of Spirit



The High Priestess represents your virgin self, the part of you that belongs to no one but you. When she shows her face, you are being asked to have conversations with that virgin self, to go within and listen to the counsel of your own holy guardian angel. Bring your question to the virgin self, but not your responsibilities and worries. Ask what your path is now, but do not put conditions on the answer, like money, or preference. You can sort that out later, after the inner truth is heard. For this inward journey simply listen. Hold the stethoscope of your awareness to the membrane of the subconscious and hear the heartbeat of the path taking shape within you.

The High Priestess symbolizes the embryonic fluid that cradles the conception of new endeavor. In the days of fortunetelling, when the High Priestess card was turned up the reading was over because it meant the future had not yet been written. Now that we understand the Tarot to be a guide in the dance of life, the High Priestess calls us to prophecy, to seeing our future before it is born. She is the intuitive, wordless spiritmind, the inner guide we often name the Higher Self.

The High Priestess is associated with the Moon, astrologically a

feminine, intuitive figure with a correspondence to the nurturing element of water. She also correlates to the Hebrew letter *Gimel*, which means camel. The High Priestess, then, carries the waters that quench your thirst when travelling across the deserts of life.

When your interest is parched; when you're confused by opinions around you, and cannot hear your spirit voice, the High Priestess visits. When she does, it's time to listen **only** to your holy guardian angel within. Take time alone, set the opinions and counsel of others aside, leave practical considerations till another hour. Ask your virgin self, that self that is bonded only to your life's fulfillment, to slake your thirst and show you the future it needs. Listen. Visit the holy guardian angel within you daily, until you've heard, and thereby conceived, the answer. **Then**, and only then, figure out how to make that answer pay the rent!

3

The Empress

Concealed Ideas and Their Preparation



The Empress is the symbol for the Feminine aspect of existence.

All things given the appellation She and Mother are referred to in The Empress. She is the *yin* side of the Chinese *yin* and *yang* polarity, the spiraling life force *Shakti* in relation to *Shiva*, the male Godhead in the Hindu pantheon. She is an avid appreciator of Life. In her three distinct stages of expression -- virginity, motherhood, menopause -- she mirrors nature's trinity of phases: emergence, blossom, death. The Empress is the doorway through which we all are born. She is both Mother and Warrior. She will nurture her children with her own heart's blood if that is all there is to sustain them, and protect them with it too. She is the archetype of creativity itself: the root of 'create' is **ker**₂- to grow, which comes from *ker-es*, cereal, which derives from Ceres, Goddess of Agriculture.

The 13th Century statue, *Vierge Ouvrante* (Virgin that Opens), expresses perfectly the all-encompassing creativity of the Feminine. The outside of the painted wood figure shows the Virgin with her child Jesus in her lap. When the two doors of the

statue are opened, three stages of Jesus' life are shown within the Virgin's body, revealing her as the Mother of Existence, or, as religion stated it, the Life of the World.

The prominence of creativity in the feminine nature is symbolized in astrology by the planet Venus, which is given affinity not only with the feminine, but with art, joy, and love; and with The Empress. In these affinities lies the answer to the often-asked question, *What does Woman want?* Woman wants relationship, not just with a lover but with all of life. Woman wants beauty to surround her, she wants to create harmony in form, in love, in her actions and interactions.

This is the message of The Empress when she shows herself to you: love life, create, embrace all in life, solve your dilemmas with the creative force of love. Another word for love is *affinity*. The Empress, like our Mother Earth, Gaia, as some now call her, reminds us of our affinity with all life's creatures -- rock, spider, saint and murderer. The Empress resolves by caring. She is the salt of the earth. She sees every emotional wall as a door to be opened. When you choose The Empress from the deck, consider the ways you can create -- "cause to exist, bring into being, produce"* -- your vision, your truth, your vitality and your path.

*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition Houghton Mifflin 1992

4

The Emperor

Building Up Earth Light From Cosmos' Darkness



The Emperor represents all things masculine. He corresponds to the *yang* side of the Chinese *yin* and *yang* polarity, to codes of behavior, maintenance of order, focused attention.

The Emperor is principle itself, in that the Latin origin of principle, *princeps*, means leader, emperor. And what is principle? It is "A basic...law...: the principles of democracy....A rule or standard, especially of good behavior: a man of principal....The collectivity of moral or ethical standards of judgments....A fixed...policy or mode of action....Principle and principal....both...go back to the same Latin word, *princeps*, meaning 'first, as in time, position, or authority.' "* The Emperor pertains to the principles of patriarchy, and, in its association with the **first** sign of the zodiac, Aries, to the historical **beginning** of male dominance.

Many negativities have been charged against the patriarchy since that beginning, especially after the onset of the women's liberation and anti-war movements of the 1960's. These

charges have evoked slow but steady alterations in the behavior of men and in the way they see their roles as lovers, husbands and leaders. The Emperor of the 21st Century will be more Father than Ruler. The new Emperor **husbands** the family, the business, the nation into full flowering. As there is a feminine component to the word "husband," so there is a *yin*, nurturing component active in the 21st Century Emperor. (The Old English word, *husbonde* meant "mistress of the house.") He will use the talent for concentration his brain's unique structure gives him to focus on invention, science, building, and exploration. The Emperor as Father will care for the safety of the people, and direct his attention to making war our history, not our current affair.

When The Emperor card is picked, it is a message to study the nature of the male principle in society, in your life and in your self. Regardless of your gender, the male and female, the *yin* and *yang*, both dwell within you: are they balanced? If you are a woman, are you schmaltzing out too much in emotional outbreaks? Do you need to bring your mind into focus on the things you want to achieve? If you are a man, are you being too authoritarian, or too rational? Do you need to bring your feelings of care and nurture into your relationships? The Aries aspect of The Emperor is to be considered too. Aries, the beginning of Spring correlates with fresh starts, initiative, commencement of the new book, business, or outlook. The **Aries** Emperor's advice is: raise the curtain, inaugurate your empire, focus on it completely.

* American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition, Houghton Mifflin 1992

5

The Hierophant

Hearing the Paradise of the Righteous



The Hierophant is the provider of the tools of the spiritual trade, the tools being the mantra, yoga, chant, prayer, meditation, visualization, the techniques that lead you back to your connection with All and Everything. The Hierophant represents the spiritual guide: the guru, the priest, the shaman who instructs in the disciplines necessary for uncovering the link between body and spirit.

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition, defines hierophant as "an ancient Greek priest who interpreted sacred mysteries, especially the priest of the Eleusinian mysteries; an interpreter of sacred mysteries or arcane knowledge....from the Greek *hieros*, holy...plus *phantes*, one who shows." The root of *phantes* means beacon. So, the Hierophant represents a holy beacon that guides your ship thru the storm and keeps you from crashing against the rocky shores. The Sanskrit word *Guru* expresses perfectly the holy beacon nature of the Hierophant: the syllable *gu* means darkness and *ru*, light. The

Guru/Hierophant is said to bring the supreme knowledge that destroys the darkness in one's life.

But the Hierophant is a beacon only, the vehicle thru which the Holy Light shines. The guru, the shaman, the priest, these are the lamplighters of the Holy Light within each of us, they are not the Source of the Holy Light, except as we all are. Respect your Guide, your Hierophant, but don't worship him or her; except as you worship Life as it dwells within everything. Accept the wisdom offered, the techniques, use the tools the Hierophant provides, the shovels to clear the snow from the path to soul's home. These tools and their use will keep you sane and centered and strong when everything else in your life is boring, on hold, or in chaos.

When the Hierophant turns up, the message is: Practice discipline. Meditate, get thee to your Teacher, either an outer one or the one within yourself. Take out that old chanting book, and chant; remember the mantra you received ten years ago and use it; pay attention to your attraction to that poster announcing that Sri Omigod is speaking on Friday night and go there. On the worldly plane, exert self discipline: focus your mind on the book you're writing, the taxes you need to figure, the things you need to accomplish in your life, and seek a teacher or a course of study if you need to develop better techniques. If you want to succeed in getting your ideas into the world arena, in making a mark in your part of the world, then you need to learn how to make your vision be accepted. Look at the meaning of the word Discipline: 1. *Training* expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior; esp. training that produces moral or mental improvement. 2. Controlled behavior resulting from disciplinary *training*....5. A set of rules or methods....From Latin *disciplina*, from *discere* [root of 'disciple'], to learn. Root: **dek-** to take, accept. From Latin *decere*, to be fitting, to be acceptable; from Latin *docere*, to teach, to cause to accept....From Greek *dokos*, beam, support. **[American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.]**

Taurus is the astrological sign associated with the Hierophant.

At first thought, this is a strange correlation, the sensual earthy nature of Taurus and the holy beacon of the Guru. But the Hierophant relates to the fully realized love of Life that is inherent in the Taurus personality. Buddha was a Taurus, as was Swami Muktananda, a powerful energy transmitter, and Wavy Gravy. Ah, you laugh: Wavy Gravy, aka Hugh Romney, of the sixties' Hog Farm? Wavy Gravy a spiritual beacon? Yes, in his works in life with the Seva Foundation (Seva means service) and in his jovial loving presence during his performances as a jester. **Taurus**'s affiliation with the Hierophant is a reminder that the Essence we have called God dwells within each of us and expresses as a beacon whenever we tune in and turn on the Light.

6

The Lovers

Consciousness Manifested



The Lovers represents the exchange of qualities and the discovery of potential, the learning, inherent in all interactions. In the majority of depictions of The Lovers, there is not only a couple, but a figure above them, a Higher Power observing and guiding the relationship. This figure symbolizes the need to share a common vision and purpose if the union is to last beyond the initial stages of dazzling attraction.

Though this card is titled The Lovers, it has also been called The Brothers, emphasizing the interaction aspect of the symbol; and the interaction aspect of learning. Whether in romance or in friendship, we are changed by our companions. We can all testify that our lovers teach us our deepest lessons and summon our most difficult transformations. Love makes us bleed after it brings us to ecstasy. Cupid, or Eros, depicted above the Higher Power figure in the Thoth deck, shoots his elixir-tipped arrow into our hearts and pinions us to the crucifix of love's education. So it is too with close friends, and with our social circle of acquaintances. We are attracted, we seem to

share interests in common, everything is tra-la fine and cheery at first. Then the familiarity begins and we have to deal with others' foibles, jealousies and fears, which of course evoke our own; and there we are, no more commonality, clinking glasses and light conversation. Instead we're exchanging cold glances or barbed comments and finding too many faults.

We're mirrors for each other, and when the mirror cracks, we get cut, we bleed, we see a distorted image of ourselves. If we're interested in understanding, we use the distorted view to investigate self and psyche. We tend the cut. And sometimes we throw out the broken mirror and get a new one. That's the way of love and friendship and all interaction among humans: "For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning." (*The Prophet*, by Kahlil Gibran, Alfred A Knopf)

The founder of the Theosophical Society, Madame Blavatsky, posited that the mutable astrological signs, being the communicators of the zodiac, held the key to how we humans evolve: through interaction and communication, rather than through books and instruction. The first of the four mutable signs, **Gemini**, the messenger, is associated with The Lovers. And the message The Lovers is delivering is this: love is not just for hugs, kisses and orgasms: it's for knowing and growing yourself through the other.

When The Lovers card is chosen, it's telling you to go out into the milling throng and interact, bleed a little, get your buttons pushed, push some yourself. If indeed love with a significant other is happening, look at the purpose of your relationship, know it as a you-unfolding experience. And be sure to consider what vision and purpose you share, because after the erotica cools down and the bills start nagging, that shared vision will be the only doorway to a future together.

7

The Chariot

Initiation Across the Abyss



Put on your galoshes and overcoat, get a tune-up, get centered, you're going to march into hell for your heavenly cause. That's the message the Chariot brings.

Life is about carrying your Holy Grail, your best-beloved projects and aspirations into completion. Therefore, focus the fire of your life energy and the nurture of your love on the purpose at hand. Bring your desire-nature into alignment with that purpose so your thoughts are not scattered in fantasies of romance, hankerings for a drink or the inclination to watch TV. Gather your desires around your goal so they can be the horses that pull you ever onward to the chosen destination. This is the meaning of the unreigned beasts you always see in depictions of the Chariot card: they are your desires, unrestrained because you have concentrated them completely on the road being traveled, on the career.

Career? Yes, hear how well *career* joins with the Chariot: the word comes from the Old French *carriere*, racecourse, from Old

Provençal *carriera*, street, from Medieval Latin (*via*) *carraria*, (road) for carts, from Latin *carrus*, a Gallic type of wagon. The root is *kers-* to run.

When the Chariot rolls your way, the message is: life's a bitch, the racecourse is potholed, and you are the vehicle -- get it ready! It's association with the astrological sign Cancer, the Crab, amplifies the message. The crab carries it's soft, vulnerable body inside the chariot of its hard shell, protecting itself from the bashings of storm and predators. Way of the world: wear your helmet!

8*

Lust*The Edge of the Abyss*

Ride your lion, make your life ecstasy -- that's the message **Lust**** brings. The right use of Ego is the instruction it offers. Lust and Ego, two concepts despised in spiritual circles and abused in everyday living. Two experiences we cannot live fully without, however.

This is not the lust of sexual passion. This is the lust for life, the second meaning of lust, which the dictionary describes as "Intense eagerness or enthusiasm."*** The root of the word lust, **las-**, means *to be eager*. Are you eager to get up each morning and go to work? No? Then your work is not enough of an expression of your uniqueness to make you eager to do it. You're not riding your ego lion.

The root of ego, **eg**, simply means "I." Ego is defined as "The self, especially as distinct from the world and other selves."**** Ego is the vehicle by which you make yourself known and effective. Expressing your distinctiveness in all you do stimulates a constant interest in, a lust for, life; and for fine

tuning your unique talents. Without the vehicle, the lion, of ego, you go nowhere. But, who's driving that vehicle, who's riding the lion? Too often in human history the ego has been driven by intellect alone, with no grace from Spirit. Spirit? What's that?

There are so many names for Spirit, and even more dogmas and meanings put to those names, that we've each begun to find our own title for the underlying experience these names describe. What I mean by Spirit is the Intelligence within and composing everything, from quark to star. As I see it, that Intelligence become conscious through us, experiences through us, expresses through us. That Intelligence, Spirit, uses our talents to create yet again: a ballet, a poem, a computer, a bridge, a community. This Intelligence, Spirit, seeks to be our Muse. When we listen and let Spirit be the rider of our lion, we experience the right use of ego and life. **Lust** represents the eagerness this partnership of ego and Spirit brings, the delight in expressing uniqueness, the joy in dedication to the Spirit of Life.

Not surprisingly, **Lust** is associated astrologically with Leo, the sign of ego and self expression. As well as being the artist, Leo is often seen as the patron of the arts: the director of the museum, the producer of the film, the financial backer of the show. There is an old Hindu chant about the Sun, the ruler of Leo, that roughly translated means: "Let me be like the sun, shining on all things to assist their growth, not burning so hot they are scorched." This is the motivation of **Leo** as the the patron of the arts, working with a lust that's dedicated to nurturing uniqueness in everyone.

When **Lust** shows its face to you, you're receiving a message to do your own thing, to appreciate your talents and ride them into life, to dedicate your existence to your truest expression. Whether a patron, a politician or an artist, love your uniqueness, don't whip it down because it's too wild and strong for the culture. Entertain them with your eccentricity, make 'em smile and applaud: ride your ego lion, and let Life Spirit hold the reins!

* I'm using the original number given to this Major Arcana card -- 8 -- though Aleister Crowley, the creator of this Thoth Deck, chose to number it 11. The numbering of the Major Arcana cards is based on the Paths allotted to them on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. Crowley decided that the Path of Lust (8) and the Path of Adjustment (11) should be switched. This change continues to stimulate argument and controversy.. Crowley put forth well-developed reasons for this break from tradition, but he was a renegade in the mystical schools of his time. His main concern was to make the Tarot expressive of the new age and the new human. In my opinion, he was successful in doing this; that's why I use his deck exclusively. Many women consider Crowley to be a male chauvinist pig of the highest order. I'm sure he was, but I forgive him this because it was the way of all men of his era, and because he was a serious metaphysical thinker whose innovations and understandings have increased my own. However, I don't agree with this numbering change. First, it places the sign of Libra/Autumn (Adjustment) before the sign of Leo/Summer (Lust), which is not their natural or astrological order. Second, I find the Paths of the Tree of Life unnecessary affiliations for use of the cards as guides. I do, however, use the Tree of Life as reference for the basic numbers 1 thru 10 as they are expressed in the Minor Arcana cards.

**Strength was the original name for this card. Crowley changed the names of several cards, and I note these changes as they arise throughout this book. Crowley felt that Strength did not fully express the joy inherent in the card's meaning. Indeed, whereas lust is rooted in eagerness, strength relates mainly to being physically powerful. I agree with his reasons for this name change, and in fact with all of the name changes he made.

*** **American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language**, 3rd Edition, Houghton Mifflin, NYC 1992
****Ibid.

9

The Hermit

The Means of Knowing the Existence of Primordial Wisdom



The Hermit symbolizes introspection, shining the light of consciousness into the deepest aspects of oneself; knowing self, healing self, and then helping others do the same.

One of the mystical descriptions given to The Hermit is *Sexual Love*, a strange correlation for the hermit, "A person who has withdrawn from society and lives a solitary existence; a recluse."* But this is the sexual love of microcosm and macrocosm, of spirit and matter that sages and seekers throughout time have gone alone into the desert to find. [Hermit....from Greek *eremia*, desert, from *eremos*, solitary.] The "sexual love" of The Hermit illustrates the fruitfulness of introspection, the fecundation that results when you unite with Spirit and let It move freely through you. This is a marriage that you seal by tallying the dowry of talents and tendencies you bring to it, and by aligning them with Purpose, the offspring of your joining with Spirit.

Such Purpose acts as a guiding light to all with whom you come in contact. It also requires your constant nurture. This is the significance of Cerberus, the three-headed Hound of Hell, nipping at the heels of The Hermit. Whether dancing the tango, touring Disneyland or being stuck in rush hour traffic, introspection is active, noticing and clearing your petty devils. The Hermit shows by example that Spirit doesn't get lost in the shopping malls.

Virgo is the part of the zodiac assigned to The Hermit. Virgo is associated with the traits of analysis and practicality, two characteristics that easily turn into their shadows, criticism and stinginess! *Serve or suffer* is an old astrological rule of conduct for Virgo. When critiquing is rampant, *serve*: find the way to cure what is criticized. *Serve the Purpose*: support it with what is saved by penny-pinching. Otherwise, body and mind shrivel into sickness; they *suffer*. **Virgo** turns ill-will into disease.

When The Hermit faces you, the message is: shine the light of your mind into the deepest recesses of your soul and psyche, recognize your talents and purpose and align yourself with them. Examine the tendencies that block your action and analyze the ways of redirecting them. Acknowledge your connection to the Electrons and Molecules within and all around you. Ask yourself: if your soul were poised on the brink of entering life, what would you decide you wanted to do with this new existence?

*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition 1992, Houghton Mifflin

10

Fortune

Riches - Poverty



The wheel of Fortune goes spinning around, the old country-western song told us. Fortune, as this card is named, represents the constant flux and flow, waxing and waning of the rhythms of existence. This week you're up and optimistic, next week you're down in a funk, this year you're in love, next you're divorced, this decade you've got money, next you're using food stamps. You might say that the wheel of Fortune is civilization's biorhythm. From one season to another, hems go from thigh to ankle, hair from shoulder to mohawk, politics from conservative to liberal, international relations from peaceful to warring. So how is a person to cope with all this spinning around? Grab on to the golden cord that connects you to your eternal roots. Chant *om, om, I love change* (to the tune of "Home Home on the Range"). Laugh.

Jovial Jupiter is Fortune's associate, so humor in the midst of the turning of the wheel of Life and Fortune is definitely advised. Jupiter is also the purveyor of wisdom. It rules the realm of philosophy and religion, and in Hindu astrology is called the

Guru planet. Chanting, omming, visualization, all are helpful when the wheel is spinning a new web for your experience.

When the wheel of Fortune shows it's face to you, know that it's time for your night to turn to day, for your poverty to turn to riches, for your laziness to turn to ambition, for your solitude to turn to companionship. The wheel of Fortune's appearance alerts you to the need to spin your Self a new web.

An effective way to ponder the changes Fortune brings is to create a consideration circle. You may already have your own method for casting such a circle, but if you don't, the basics are as follows. Pick a calm and special place. Light some candles and incense, hold a favorite stone or crystal. Acknowledge the spirits of each direction -- North, South, East, West -- and call on them to aid and protect your sacred circle of space. Once the circle is so cast, you can meditate in it, or chant, or pray or whatever you feel called upon to do in contemplating how to spin the wheel of your Fortune.

Fortune means *chance*; chance at the root means **to fall**. Don't put your future in the hands of blind chance, the wheel of Fortune reminds you: visualize where you want the turn of the wheel to take you -- or at least where the pillow needs to be to cushion your fall!

11*

Adjustment

Energy in Pattern



Adjustment illustrates the centering required if we are to keep our balance in the midst of the storms and demands of everyday existence. Adjustment advocates: learn to walk the tightrope in the midst of the hurricane. And don't just walk it without falling, but dance across it with joy, adjusting your weight with every gust of chaos. As a dancer is one with the music, changing rhythms as the music does, not missing a beat, so must we become one with the alternating pulse of life.

Adjust means: "To change so as to match or fit; cause to correspond.To achieve a psychological balance in one's life with regard to one's own needs and the needs of others." ** The root of the word, *yeug*, means "to join" and has origins in the Sanskrit word for yoga, *youg-o*, *yogah*. Adjustment can therefore be seen as an instruction in the yoga of living!

Adjustment is said to be partner to The Fool, Lord of Chaos, signifying the centering needed to handle times of wild disorder.

This centering is developed through self awareness practices: meditation, the many yogas, Tai Chi, dance itself, in fact all the forms of art. However, it may be that self awareness *arises* only out of the kind of catalytic event chaos delivers. Author Greg Bear proposes this in his novel ***Queen of Angels:*** **"...self awareness is not strictly a function of complexity, nor even of design...; self-awareness may be a kind of accident, catalyzed by some internal or external event or process that we do not understand....if self awareness does not automatically follow from complexity, a significant percentage of human beings may also be little more than convincing automatons. Perhaps every human being must undergo this mysterious 'catalysis' to experience self awareness, and not all of us do."******

If, then, we *need* the shock of a catalytic event to become self aware, how much more important it is that we keep up the tightrope-walking practice!

One of the most catalytic events of a person's lifetime is marriage -- and we all know what a balancing act *that* is! It's apt, then, that the the sign of relationship, Libra, is the astrological associate of Adjustment. For the secret to keeping centered while doing the tango of living with another, look again at the definition of *adjust*: "To achieve a psychological balance in one's life with regard to one's own needs and the needs of others." This equilibrium is the meaning of the scale pictured in the card, and the scale in the glyph for [Libra](#).

Visualize those scales: a central pillar with a balancing arm on top, a tray hanging from each end of the arm. When laundry is put in one tray and nothing in the other, the arm tilts radically from the weight of the laundry, and balance is lost. To reestablish equilibrium, something of equal weight must be put in the empty tray. So it is with our lives. Our centered Self is the central pillar. We hold out our hands to receive career, love, offspring, playtime. The career hand can't be full and the playtime hand empty without radically tilting the scale.

When Adjustment shows up, the message is: make sure you're not overloaded in one endeavor and underloaded in another. Get centered, balance all your options with the counterweight of

your core truth. Act from that core, merge with the rhythms of change and DANCE across the razor's edge!

*The original number of this Major Arcana card is 11, but Aleister Crowley, who created the Thoth Deck, decided it should be 8, switching it with *Lust*, which Crowley numbered 11. The reasons for this, and for my changing it back to 11, are given in the chapter describing the *Lust* card. Another change made by Crowley is the name of this card. *Adjustment* is known in most other decks as Justice.

****American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language**, 3rd Edition, Houghton Mifflin, 1992

*****Queen of Angels**, Greg Bear, Warner Books, 1990

12

The Hanged Man

Baptism into Consciousness



The Hanged Man represents the way you are perceived when you dance to the rhythm of a different drummer. The process of finding that drummer entails going within, recognizing the distortion existing in existing in your life, then searching more deeply for the truth you want to live; and the certainty that living that truth is the only way you can live at this point in your life. The Hanged Man brings the message: know yourself and your way, discover the courage to walk that path, regardless of the opinions of others.

13

Death

The Secret of Secrets



Death is what we spend all our lives getting ready for. The little deaths teach us how to face the big one, how to let go and go on. It is these little let-go-and-go-on lessons that the Death card represents. The Death card is also a reminder to let go of what no longer serves your life.

Death's other title is "the secret of secrets," and the secret is *change equals stability* -- birds know it, trees know it, seasons know it, and we humans need to accept it. Change is not a human favorite. We have, in fact, designed our lives to avoid and safeguard against change. How silly, how unnatural, how rigid; and how unstable we have become therefore!

The Death card represents molting, letting go of the old feathers, enduring until the new ones grow back. It tells us to mutate now, enjoy the rush. And the rush of endurance is one we know often in life. In fact, the ability to endure is one of the two most important qualities for living (a sense of humor is the other!) The trusty **American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language** tells us that 'endure' means: "To carry on through, despite hardships. To bear with tolerance....To suffer patiently without yielding....To continue in existence....From Latin *indurare*, to make hard....Root: **deru-** to be firm, solid,

steadfast; hence...derivatives of wood, tree, true trim, druid..."
The Death card asks you to endure change, not to run off wanting to slit your wrists over a devastating turn of events, but to continue in existence, to bear it with tolerance, to make yourself firm as a tree in a storm, steadfast as a druid at the stake; while you adjust to letting go and going on.

Scorpio is the astrological sign associated with Death, and like Death, Scorpio's work is to strip away the moldy facade and uncover the foundation, and to make that stripping a seasonal constant: when the sewers are filled, empty them, when the relationship is stagnant, release yourself from it.

When the Death card comes to you, reflect on what is outmoded in your current experience, and prepare to let it go. Another way to phrase the secret of secrets that Death whispers is: *Death is a vital part of Life.*