

# Tarot Talk

A compilation of columns run in the MoonFire newsletter

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## 0 - The Fool

This will be the first installation in an ongoing series that covers the Major Arcana of the Tarot. Discussions of tarot imagery will be based upon the Ryder-Waite deck, which seems to be the most familiar one. I'll cover one Major Arcana card a month, and add in tidbits, exercises and correspondences, as I learn them.

The Fool is card #0 of the Major Arcana. This card represents a particular type of fearlessness, which can be misunderstood as foolhardiness. It can also symbolize an unquestioning trust in Spirit. The fool character is depicted jauntily stepping off a precipice, accompanied only by his little dog and a knapsack with an open eye on the cover.

I've been told that the dog represents our instinct, or inner ways of knowing. The Fool relies on this understanding for his guidance, instead of socially constructed warnings and superstitions. The knapsack he carries contains all the other Major Arcana, which represent the entire range of human experience. The open eye on the bag represents knowledge that was once secret (a closed eye) now available for whomever would seek it. The open air he is about to step into is the unknown experience, which he knows will benefit him, despite the possible peril at the bottom of the fall.

The Fool is a good card to meditate upon when you need to feel fearless and trusting of your inner voice, or when you are beginning a spiritual journey.

## 1 - Meet the Magician

Card #1 of the Major Arcana is the Magician. The Ryder-Waite deck depicts a robed figure standing behind an altar. On the altar are the 4 suits of the minor arcana in the form of altar tools; a wand, a sword, a pentacle and a cup. The Magician is a person who is living up to his full potential, particularly in the realm of communication. He possesses all the tools there on the altar, and is able to use them proficiently. He has a strong sense of who he is in the world.

The cup represents emotions and honesty about one's feelings. The sword represents the intellect and discernment. The wand represents passion and spirituality, and the pentacle symbolizes the ability to communicate and accomplish things in the material, workaday world. The Magician uses these in equal balance to achieve his goals.

The figure in the card has one hand pointing up toward heaven and the other hand pointing down toward the ground. The message here is "As above, so below", indicating that the material and spiritual are intertwined. This is the card to strengthen you when you need to feel smart, or when you need to focus on work involving communication. The Magician can inspire us to develop and use every aspect of ourselves; the spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical.

Magician Trivia: In the Crowley (Thoth) tarot deck, the artist, Lady Frieda Harris painted 3 different versions of the Magus card; she felt the card was so richly symbolic, and couldn't decide which one to include in the final deck, so all three were included!

A tarot book I couldn't live without...

***"Tarot For Your Self: a workbook for personal transformation" by Mary K. Greer***  
*ISBN 0-87877-077-1*

*Lots of exercises, meditations, and activities to help you learn the tarot, as well as examine how the imagery can affect your life and personal journey.*

## 2 - Meet The High Priestess

Card #2 of the Major Arcana is the High Priestess, sometimes called Juno or Inanna. The Rider deck depicts her as a woman seated on a gray stone pedestal, between two pillars, a black one and a white one, with a pomegranate printed veil behind her. She wears the moon as a headdress and a blue gown. A crescent moon lies under her feet, as well. Her gaze is direct, yet enigmatic, neither smiling, nor frowning.

Her veil symbolizes hidden or occult knowledge, not to be casually revealed. The pomegranates are symbolic of Persephone, and the fruit she ate in the Underworld. This card represents hidden or esoteric knowledge, or deep inner knowing. Where the knowledge and power of the Magician springs from mastery and skillful use of all his abilities, the knowledge of the High Priestess comes from a deeply spiritual place. As she is seated between black and white; she weighs the pros and cons of every situation, and her wisdom, a gift of her journey into the darkest reaches of her soul, gives her vision and clarity.

The High Priestess is one of 3 major arcana cards that sit upon a gray stone, which symbolizes wisdom and thoughtful consideration of the matter at hand. The other cards are Justice and the Emperor, which we will visit in the future.

Crowned and cradled by the moon, this Priestess asks us to pay attention to natural rhythms and cycles around us; particularly those of our body and emotions. Understanding these ebbs and flows can lead us to greater self-reliance, as we begin to see what influences our behavior and feelings about the world around us.

Just as the High Priestess represents our own natural cycles, she also represents, and can be used to invoke and strengthen psychic ability, and dreaming ability. Sleep with this card under your pillow or carry her with you for a lunar cycle to build your connection to the world of non-ordinary reality.

In a reading, this card can represent a female mentor or guide, the need to pay attention to patterns and cycles, hidden knowledge, or the anima or female sense of self.

### **A daily tarot exercise:**

Draw one card a day. You can look up or consider its meaning as soon as you draw it, or wait until the end of the day to do so. Carry the card with you, or leave it on your altar, until the end of the day. Try and review your day's events in light of the meaning of the card. This, done over time, provides a way to track patterns in your life, as well as learn, rather painlessly, the meanings of the tarot cards.

### 3 - Meet The Empress

This month, our tarot journey brings us to card #3, The Empress. Ryder-Waite depicts her as a regal woman, sitting outside, encircled by ripened grain. The universal symbol of woman, topped by a heart instead of a traditional circle, is by her side, and she wears a gown of roses and lilies.

The Empress represents fertility, in all its forms. She is the fruitful earth, growing food for sustenance, and housing all flora and fauna. She represents motherhood, relationships with mother figures, and motherly mentoring. She is also represents fertility of the mind and the creative process. Sensuality, beauty, nurturing and creative industry are all aspects of this marvelous lady.

My favorite depiction of the Empress is that of the Mother Peace round tarot deck. It shows the Empress as a voluptuous woman, lounging, smelling a rose, and draped in a jaguar skin. This aspect is surrounded by other images; the ancient Venus of Willendorf, and a Minoan woman with a bull and grain. It seems to me to sum up all the beauty, power and ancientness this image.

The principle of the Empress is that of Love With Wisdom. Her power is from a place of love and compassion, tempered with wisdom and sound judgment. She recognizes and supports the basic human need for physical nourishment as well as spiritual and aesthetic nourishment in the form of beauty and creativity.

If this card appears in a reading, it can signal to us that we should examine our ideas about motherhood, or our relationships with our own mothers. What are we creating, nurturing and bringing into fruition? What is beautiful in our lives? What feels good? Whom do we love? For men, this card can also signify the anima, or feminine aspect of the spirit. Use the Empress to inspire and sustain your work in any inspirational, creative direction, or in beautifying your physical surroundings.

And now for something somewhat related...did you know that both the Ryder Waite and the Aleister Crowley Thoth tarot decks were illustrated by women? Pamela Coleman Smith and Lady Frieda Harris, respectively. Surely these women were working closely with the Empress!

## 4 - Meet The Emperor

The Emperor is the 4th card of the Major Arcana. He is depicted in the Ryder deck as a mature man, seated on a stone base, wearing ruler's robes, holding a scepter. Where last month's Empress represented "love tempered by wisdom", the Emperor represents power tempered by wisdom, and the principle of ethical leadership. He is the strength that provides stability, the structure, which nurtures growth and healthy functioning.

The Emperor can symbolize organization and planning, and action toward a particular goal or desire in one's life. He is a great image to invoke when trying to get your life in order, manage finances or plan and complete a huge project. In a reading, this card can also represent a significant older male, or in women, the animus.

This is one of those cards that seem to be clearest when viewed with its complementary card, in this case, the Empress. The Empress is the creative inspiration for growth; however, it is the Emperor's sustained focus, which completes the growth. Both types of energy are necessary for progress; too much or too little of one, and everything is thrown out of balance. Working with the Emperor is sure to make you more aware of your own power, and how you use it.

### **Tarot Tip: Reversals**

In a reading, as you're laying out cards, you're almost guaranteed to get some cards turning out upside down. Some people say the meaning of the card is reversed, i.e. the opposite meaning, but I like to look at it in a slightly different way. I think that a reversed card means that the potential of the meaning is not fully developed, or that it may be over-developed. An example would be turning up the Emperor card in a reversed position. It could mean that a quality of leadership or structure is just beginning to manifest itself, or it may mean that one is a domineering or restrictive leader! I think reversals in readings challenge us to look within ourselves, and use our intuition to interpret the cards in a more personal way.

## 5 - Walking the path with The Hierophant

Card number Five in our Tarot journey is The Hierophant. Most tarot decks portray this figure as a priestly or religious leader, usually holding a staff, giving a benediction. The word hierophant means "spiritual teachings" or "bringer of the light".

As we move from the raw creative energy of the Empress, through the structured, organizational abilities of the Emperor, we find ourselves facing the Hierophant, the card that represents the spiritual authority or path that we follow. The Hierophant asks us to synthesize the inspiration of the Empress with the structure of the Emperor, and have the resulting actions be guided by ethics and Spirit. By following our spiritual ethics, whatever they may be, we deepen our faith, and increase our awareness of, and confidence in our path.

In a reading, this card can represent a teacher, or your need to find a teacher, or to pay more attention to your own teaching and learning. It can also represent how you relate to structure, authority and "following the rules of the game" in your life.

I used to have many problems with the Hierophant image; the symbols of organized religion, the authority figure pictured on the card seemed antithetical to my search for spirit in nature and inside myself. Reading in Angeles Arrien's wonderful "Tarot Handbook", I was struck by her use of this phrase regarding this card: "walking the mystical path with practical feet". After that, the picture on the card (and in all three decks I own, they are amazingly similar) didn't seem to matter. For me, the intention was clearer; I could look where I wanted for spiritual guidance, but the importance of the matter was that I pay attention to my path, that my faith must inform my actions, which must reflect what I believe. The Hierophant, then, came to mean consistency between heart and mind and action.

This card calls us to examine structure, commitment and authority in our own lives. How are we defining it? How are we responding to it? Are we providing it for ourselves and for others in an ethical way? What results do we see? Is our path possible to follow, given our present logistical situation? How can we make it so? The Hierophant wants us to succeed, and that's where the difference lies, he is not an authority figure who is handing down a set of rules and laws. He is our own spiritual conviction, asking us to responsibly define how we will live out what we believe in.

## 6 - The Lovers

Card #6 in the Major Arcana is The Lovers. Most decks show this card with a man and woman, embracing or facing each other, sometimes holding a length of cloth together; clearly absorbed in each other. The astrological sign associated with The Lovers is Gemini.

In a reading, this card can represent a love relationship, a shared life, or our feelings about love and partnership, depending on the context, and the position that the card occupies in the spread. But The Lovers has other meanings for us, and it's important to consider these as well as the obvious romantic significance.

First and foremost, there's the concept of opposites in this card; male and female, yin and yang, dark and light. When it turns up in a reading, it's a good idea to look at opposites, and how they are being balanced in your own life. Are you more concerned with the material than the spiritual world? Are relationships and an outer focus taking on more importance than the inner life? Is something happening in your life that is in conflict with your values and beliefs?

Looking at the Lovers as part of the progression of the Major Arcana, we see that once again, it's calling us to bring our relationships and ourselves into balance, so that healthy growth can flourish. The Hierophant was the beginning of that call to balance, as he asked us to consider the integration of the mystical and practical. In balance, the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts. This card can function as a catalyst for us to become whole and healthy, as individuals and in our partnerships with others. By being balanced; by attending to and integrating the conflicts and dualities of our inner and outer lives, we become better partners in all the relationships we have.

I've been browsing the web, and have come up with three websites that might be of interest to you all on tarot:

<http://www.illuminationtarot.com/insights/>

<http://www.tarotpassages.com/>

<http://www.zenhex.com/tests/tarot/>

## 7 - Rest & Motion With The Chariot

The Chariot is our 7th card in the Major Arcana of the tarot. The Ryder-Waite deck depicts a young ruler, crowned with the stars of the heavens, standing ready for action in a chariot, which is drawn by a black sphinx and a white sphinx. The chariot appears to be made of gray stone, and is draped with a starry cloth.

This is a card that represents the dynamic tension between action and inaction. The ruler is ready for whatever may come; he is poised and looking forward, his sphinxes are crouched, ready to spring out at his signal. They are waiting for the perfect moment, the time when the action will be most effective. Note that the ruler is not holding the reins of the sphinxes; any control he has over them is by voice, or relationship.

This is a card that represents mental mastery over possibly opposing (the black and white sphinx) forces within oneself. It can also represent a continued integration of opposite parts of our nature; that process that was begun in the card that preceded this one; The Lovers. The chariot is of gray stone, representing a base of wisdom (like the High Priestess and the Emperor) from which the action will flow.

Our charioteer understands his goals, and is only awaiting the right time to set his plans in motion. Even though all is poised and still, there is nothing of rest or inaction in this card, it is a card of holding all the controls; of self-control and restraint, which will make any action all the more effective. Pulling the chariot in a reading can represent a need to make fundamental changes in your life. It can also symbolize that process of continuing to understand and integrate the different parts of yourself. Be aware that whatever changes you make will require sustained attention and focus.

## 8 - Strength, Our Soft Power

The next card in our tarot travels is the Strength card. This card shows a woman standing beside a lion; some cards show her riding on the lion's back. She is holding its mouth open, and making this awesome feat look easy. On her face is an expression of tenderness and dreamy concentration. Over her head is the horizontal "8" symbol for eternity or infinity.

The strength depicted here is not the strength of brute force, but a soft, inner power that invites cooperation, rather than resistance. It is truly "power from within" instead of dominance. The lion is willingly opening his mouth for the gentle woman, who respects his own strength, and works with it. In his Thoth deck, Aleister Crowley called this card "Lust" with the word "Lust" being derived from lustre, describing a shining, glowing aspect that comes when we are operating in our full power.

Looking at Strength in relation to the cards that preceded it, we find it is the natural development of integrating opposite parts of ourselves with the Lovers walking our mystical path with the Hierophant, taking control over our lives with the Chariot and exercising precision and discrimination in the changes we make with Justice. Doing these things develops our inner strength, and prepares us for the challenges to come.

This is a strength that we all have the potential for, and once realized, is ours for life. Think of a time in your own past, when you survived a difficult transition or experience, and came out of it feeling stronger, more confident, and yet, with a feeling of peace and direction. This strength grows and shines within, and its use does not deplete us, rather it flows through us.

The astrological aspect for this card is, of course Leo, the lion, emphasizing the magnetism and radiance of the sun, and of how lustrous we can be, when we realize and develop our inner strength.

## 9 - The Hermit: Finding Our Light & Following It

I was visiting my friend and circle sister, Ani, some years ago, when I lived in California. We used to get together once a month to drink tea, and read tarot together. I was complaining about feeling exhausted by other people, tired of social interactions, and feeling deeply the need to take a long quiet vacation somewhere I didn't have to speak or think about anyone else's needs or confusions. Ani was surprised; she said she'd been feeling exactly the same way.

Later, as we were calculating our growth year, we found that both of our birth months and days and the current year added up to number 9; the year of the Hermit! Of course we were wildly amused at how our instincts had been demanding that we pay more attention to what was going on in the Universe. Suddenly, the feelings of needing to escape became instead a certain knowledge that we needed to take time to listen to our inner voice.

The Hermit is the card in the Major Arcana that speaks to us of seeing ourselves more clearly, of following our own inner guide. The Mother Peace Deck calls this card the Crone, and portrays her as Hecate at the crossroads. The Hermit has chosen to live alone, in order to see more clearly, his own truth, without the distractions of the social milieu. He depends on himself, and asks nothing from the world.

Taking time to be alone with ourselves, to get to know and clarify what we believe in, can help us give more to the world around us, when we end our period of isolation. Rejuvenated and surrounded by the balance and harmony we've restored, we shine light in the chaos, and inspire others.

This is a great card to meditate upon when trying to shed our masks and break through social conventions and conditioning. The Hermit follows his own light, and represents for us, the desire or need to follow only what is extremely meaningful to us. It is difficult at times to be true to ourselves, and that is what the Hermit asks of us: to pay attention, to clarify what is essential to our very core, and then to live by that code. This may require that we restructure our lives somewhat, shedding the extraneous things that no longer seem to fit us.

By knowing what is true about ourselves, and losing those things that no longer serve us, we shed more light in the world!

## 10 – Reaping what we sow with the Wheel of Fortune

Card #10 in our Tarot journey is the Wheel of Fortune; the spinning wheel that brings gifts and opportunities for growth around in our lives. Ruled by Jupiter, the wheel can bring us luck, abundance and new beginnings. It can also bring thorny gifts and insights that will foster our growth, though living these changes may be challenging at the time.

Ryder shows us a wheel with zodiac symbols and the sphinx on it, other decks show a face or the whole gamut of human emotions spinning round the wheel. I like to think of the wheel as representing all the possibilities of human experience, waiting for us, much in the way that the major arcana of the tarot reveals the major turning points and passages in our lives. Of course decisions we make, and the actions we take will weight the wheel, and influence where it stops for each of us. The rule of life is that you have to spin the wheel when it comes up; change happens, we adjust, respond, react, and increase our ability to weather change and grow with it.

Looking at the card numerically, we see that it is number 10.  $1+0 = 1$ , or the card of the Magician. The Wheel of Fortune is related to the Magician card in that it is a growth symbol. Remember that the Magician represents the mastery and wise use of the communication, spiritual, emotional and practical domains. By communicating clearly, by staying with what has "heart" for us, by expressing ourselves openly, we can bring about the abundance and good fortune that the wheel offers. When we use our talents wisely, and are in our full power, we invite positive changes. Positive changes bring a positive, constructive point of view, and we become more able to mine our difficult lessons for the jewels hidden within.

The Wheel of Fortune, with its seeming element of chance, carries a warning within it, also. A wheel is not fixed, it is able to spin freely, thus observing many viewpoints. By being flexible and creative, we invite abundance. If we are reluctant to take on other viewpoints, or if we go about our lives in the same fixed way, we risk creating a sense of lack and neediness in our lives. This is a good card to meditate on if you're looking for a way to face a difficult situation creatively, or find another viewpoint. It is a good card to use, as well, as you work on breaking habits and old patterns.

## 11 - Justice and Adjustment

Card number 11 in the Major Arcana is the Justice card. It shows a figure seated on a chair, on a stone base, (remember, the stone base represents wisdom, or wise use of the element represented by the card!) holding a scale. Some decks show the figure (man? woman?) holding a sword.

While we might associate the image with a judge, ready to mete out swift consequences in the name of justice and fairness, and all that is right, in truth, that is a very small part of the meaning of this card. The Justice card is all about adjustment, and the small changes we make in our lives and situations to achieve balance; it's about finishing what we've started, about looking hard at what is really necessary in our lives, and clearing away the obstacles that cause us to feel "off balance".

With Justice, we learn to use the four elements of ourselves in a creative, constructive way to live a balanced life. Think of inspiration vs. over-analysis, passion vs. being consumed by anger, emotional openness vs. wallowing in one's sorrows, and working vs. being overworked.

Two cards that are complimentary to the Adjustment card are the Ace and the Two of Swords. The Ace of Swords is that pure burst of creative inspiration; the "aha!" moment, in which we see so clearly what changes we need to work on in our lives. The sword that Justice is holding is our "aha" moment. The Two of Swords, sometimes showing a woman holding two swords out, trying to achieve a balance between them, reminds us that balance in our own lives can be a precarious thing; we find it, it ebbs away, we find it again...there is no "there" there!

Justice reminds us to pay attention to our own light, like the Hermit, and like the Hierophant, to find new and practical ways to implement our magical ideas. Cleaning the garage, paying bills, freeing up time to enjoy your life are some of the little adjustments this card can signify.

"Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water."

## 12 - The Hanged Man

Card #12 of the Major Arcana is The Hanged Man. Ryder shows us a tree branch running horizontally, with an upside down figure suspended by one leg, tied to the branch. With his arms bound behind his back, and a neutral expression on his face, he appears at ease with his predicament, despite his obvious helplessness. If we reverse the card, the figure appears to be dancing a jig on the tree limb. There is a glowing light around his head.

The Hanged Man is symbolic of the turning point in our lives. He is the moment when we wake up and see repetitive themes or patterns that have limited and restricted our growth. Often these patterns; procrastination, being over-cautious, excessive spending, etc., are things that seemed to work as solutions in our lives for a while, but have since thoughtless responses to any given situation or demand in our lives. By realizing that we are acting or reacting according to the old patterns, rather than objectively thinking through what each new situation demands of us, we awaken and empower the Hanged Man within us.

My personal take on the Hanged Man is this: old reactions and habits that no longer serve his purpose have restricted him. He sees and understands that he has hung himself up; limited his options, and in that moment of clear vision, he relaxes. He smiles. His consciousness is expanded by the very act of seeing and understanding his role in his imprisonment. He is free! By seeing the pattern, he has taken the first step in breaking it.

Sometimes, it's "hard to see the forest for the trees," in regards to our behavior patterns, and when we finally do realize what we need to change, or work on, it's after we've come a long and difficult way. We can feel bound, nailed or crucified by past life choices, or simply "hung out to dry" by our experiences. It is then that the Hanged Man's unique vision can help us. From his topsy-turvy perspective, he sees his experience from a new angle. He teaches us that there are many more approaches and solutions to consider, and that we benefit from looking at our problems and reactions from different angles. Our hang-ups can blind us to the need for change in our lives, or they can be valuable teachers, once we see and accept them.

This card can also signify the surrender of will or ego to a greater cause, or to express a deeper love within your nature: think Odin, Inanna, Jesus, Ghandi, Joan of Arc, Frodo Baggins, Cesar Chavez or Martin Luther King. By sacrificing easy answers, painless solutions and personal comfort (no matter how short-lived) we dig for something richer.

## 13 - Death & the Principle of Release

Card #13 in our journey through the major arcana of the tarot is Death. The card may be the most dramatic, macabre, shocking and misunderstood card in the tarot. Ryder depicts Death as a skeleton riding a horse, carrying the reaper's scythe and waving a banner with a white rose, as kings and children alike fall under his spell. Motherpeace shows a snake crawling between two trees shedding an outworn skin. Thoth shows a dancing skeleton wielding the scythe and wearing a priestly headdress. Robin Wood illustrates a red-shrouded figure flying the white rose banner, as well.

Death is the great equalizer. It comes to us all, and is the journey, the confrontation that each of us must make alone, at the end of our lives. We fear the end of life, and are fascinated by it; our culture courts it, a multimillion dollar industry revolves around it, and it remains an unsolved mystery, despite our best efforts to explain it, postpone it, prevent it. Too often, it is the unwelcomed guest, crashing into our party, reminding us that the hour grows late.

There is another side to Death, and within it lies a truer meaning of this card. This side of Death is the reaper, the harvester, the turning of the wheel that brings us 'round to our essential selves. It is the shedding of the parts of our life that no longer serve us, so that we may continue to grow. When a gardener plants a row of seeds, after the seeds have sprouted, some must be thinned out, in order to provide room for the others, the chosen ones, to grow. We cannot concentrate all our efforts everywhere, so we must choose some things, and release the others.

Ask yourself "What do I need to release from my life?" "What has grown old and stagnant in my care?" By surrendering those things which no longer hold life for you, you become a little freer, a little less bound to old agreements.

The Death card in a reading seldom means a real, physical death, but rather, a need to examine and shed commitments, belongings or practices that we have outgrown, like a snake shedding her skin. Last month's card, The Hanged Man revealed to us the clarifying moment, when we realize we needed to make a change in our lives. Now Death brings us a step closer, by supporting us as we release the unnecessary.

Now for something completely different... I've been reading reviews and looking at images online of two tarot decks which seem to contain more "neopagan" imagery than the standard Ryder deck. One is the Wheel of Change deck, and the other is the Tarot of the Old Path. Check out the artwork and reviews on these links and indulge your curiosity!

[http://www.wheelofchange.com/Lg\\_Justice.html](http://www.wheelofchange.com/Lg_Justice.html)

<http://www.aeclectic.net/tarot/tarotoldpath/review.html>

I won't bias you with my own preferences and opinions; but I think both of these decks are worth a second look!

## 14 - Temperance

Card #14 on our journey is the Temperance card. Ryder shows a tall angel standing with one foot on the ground, and one foot dipping into the water, pouring a liquid from one goblet to another. On the angel's robe is a patch with a pink or purple triangle, over the heart center. (The Greek letter "delta", represented by a triangle shape, is the scientific symbol for change.) Irises grow around, and the atmosphere of the card is beautiful and peaceful, the central figure utterly absorbed in his task.

This card is the alchemy card, reflecting the process in our lives, whereby we change one element or quality into another. After the shedding of old practices and habits during the time of the Death card, it is time to renew ourselves, to work on our own healing and integration of lessons we've learned. The pain of old wounds and anxieties, stemming from the fiercely purging qualities of the Hanged Man and Death cards will ease over time. This is a slow process, more like an evolution or unfolding, as pain and frustration are mixed, in equal amounts with compassion and understanding. It ultimately results in more maturity; a more heightened and enlightened world view, but patience is required! There are no quick fixes with this card, like the Chariot, it moves according to its own rhythm, and requires trust in the process.

This card can support us as we take care of ourselves, practice healing arts, or reflect on the changes that have taken place in our lives after a particularly chaotic time. It can represent, as well, a union of opposites, a compromise that works for the benefit of all concerned. Like the temperance angel, we must be patient and attentive to detail, as we work this out. The rewards of going through this process are great, as often, when we heal ourselves, physically or spiritually, we are capable of more than we were before. Crowley calls this card "Art", and it is the art of looking inward, that we are developing here.

Temperance is a good card for this time of year, I think. Spring is not yet with us, yet we feel it, in a damp wind after a week of snow. We see it in the buds of the dogwood tree, even as we pull our coat around us tighter. We know something, somewhere, deep inside the earth, is growing, preparing to emerge, and we just need to be patient and await its inevitable arrival.

## 15 - The Devil

April brings us to another controversial card in the major arcana; The Devil. Ryder shows us a scary, horned and frowning Devil figure, beastly, with inhuman eyes. Superimposed on the figure is the inverted Pentacle. A man and woman are chained together below him. Other tarot decks are less stereotypical, more subtle, but striking, nevertheless.... Thoth shows us a smiling goat studying us through its third eye in the center of its forehead. Robin Wood shows us a man and woman trying to drag a chained treasure chest down a long hall toward a door leading outside. The MotherPeace deck shows a pharaoh figure sitting in front of a clock, on a dais. Below him are other figures from the tarot; the Chariot runs over a pedestrian, the Emperor lounges on his couch while a servant bears a heavy burden.

Many of these images speak to us of enslavement, fear and moral conflict. The Devil in history and literature is all about temptation and greed intemperate, and the harm that comes from this. The Devil image speaks to us of being trapped by our own desires and illusions. When we over-focus on what we think we want, we have a tendency to be blinded to everything and everyone else around us. We become enslaved by our situation, unable to imagine a way out. We cling to what we imagine we want, even though it brings out the very worst in us.

There is another side to the Devil as well. He represents Pan, Dionysus, the Horned God, in pagan mythology. As the Horned One, he is our untamed wild spirit, putting us in touch with our sensuality, and nature. Interestingly, when we are in touch with that side of ourselves, our tendency to be enslaved by material desires or imagined outcomes diminishes. In our culture, it is easy to lose touch with nature, and the wildness in ourselves, thus leading to confusion and inner conflict, a veritable bedevilment. Pan and Dionysus ask us to loosen up, to laugh at ourselves and our obsessions, to caper and frolic like the goat, to enjoy our bodies and our connection to the natural world. By keeping our sense of humor, we avoid bedevilment.

In the end, it's Thoth's Devil card I like best, the smiling goat, looking out through his third eye, instinct. By staying connected to our instinctive nature, we stay on our true path, not falling sway to what we are told about devils and where they may lie.

## 16 - Dismantling the Tower

Last week, I was doing my usual card-a-day draw, when I turned up card #16 of the major arcana - the Tower. I gasped, and recoiled, as the image of the tower, struck by lightning, jumped out at me. A figure in the card tumbled from the crumbling tower, and all around was darkness and disaster. "Oh no", I muttered, as, despite my suspicion on one level, that I lead a charmed existence, I also believe that my good times may soon come to an end. I skulked through the day, awaiting disaster at every turn. I looked for shadows, and saw every little setback as a harbinger of impending difficulty, even though the day ran pretty normally, and nothing was really going wrong. At home, later that evening, I decided to read up on the card that I had never drawn for myself before, and that had so stunned me. What I discovered was not as horrifying as I had anticipated. In fact, it made perfect sense, as I was supposed to be cleaning out my office this weekend.

The Tower is the symbol of renovation and restoration, and therefore, of healing. It is the picture of tearing down the edifices in our lives that we have decided to change. When we make a change in our lifestyle, or our way of thinking, the new pattern needs room and time to grow and become a part of who we are. The Tower represents the rearrangement in our life that makes change possible. The person leaping or falling from the tower represents the old pattern that we are getting rid of. The lightning is the cleansing fire that will make us ready to bring new growth into our lives.

Sometimes healthy growth is preceded by upheaval and trauma. The changes symbolized or assisted by the Tower are usually quite profound, as changes one would encounter after they had "hit bottom," where everything afterward seemed like a relief. This card brings us 'round to a more balanced state, and it is like stepping into a renovated room or building. Everything is more comfortable, everything fits better.

These middle cards of the major arcana; from The Hanged Man, to Death, to Temperance, to the Devil, to the Tower speak to us of the endless cycle of looking within, knowing ourselves, changing what needs to be changed, and looking within again, constantly coming back to that person we really are, at the essential core. As we march forward in our lives, this cycle rolls onward with us. There is no "there" there, there is only figuring out what needs to come next and making room for that new thing to grow. The Tower is what helps us make these necessary renovations, so that we become more of ourselves.

## 17 - Healing Our Hearts and Minds with The Star

After our hard work of taking down the Tower, to make room for new growth in our Tarot journey, we come to the Star card. I like best the Motherpeace image of the star, which shows a woman bathing in a spring, as a beautiful star shines above her, and rain falls upon her upturned face. She is accepting the blessings of what she has learned in difficult times, and is washing away the memories of pain and confusion. This is a beautiful image, and the Star is a card that brings the gift of confidence in who we are, and what we are doing. We have learned to laugh at ourselves, from our dance with the Devil, and broken free of illusion and old patterns with the tower, and now we are ready to fully step into our power, and create our own reality. This is a card that speaks of a nurtured and healthy spirit, unafraid of risk, and ready to commit to being "out there" in the world.

The Star represents a state of grace, of acceptance of who we are, and what we know we are able to achieve. Astrologically, it is Aquarius, the Water Bearer, which represents creativity and the inventive mind. Water is a symbol of emotion, as well, and when we are in the power of the Star, we are acting from a place of healthy self-esteem. Emotionally, we have what we need, or we know how to ask for it in an honest way. When we feel good about ourselves and what we've learned, we dare to risk new ideas and put our dreams out into the world. We have met our shadow self, and have taken it into ourselves. We love and trust ourselves, and as a result, we are more open to Spirit. As Spirit flows through us, it is evident in our actions in the world. Naturally, the Star card is a terrific card to use in meditation to build self-esteem, and to feel more courageous about risking new ventures. The star is the light of the Hermit's lantern, and can strengthen our resolve to be true to ourselves and to our vision of what is right and just in the world.

And now, a little blurb from the "Know Thyself" department...I've been kind of interested in Astrology for awhile, and have to admit I know so little about it. Here's a link to a site, assembled by my friend and former teacher, Heather Ash, with an astrological component: <http://www.spiritweavers.com/> Follow the article link for this month; at the bottom of the article is a link to the astrological essay, by Isis Ward, for the current moon. I find that Isis makes sense, and her take on what is happening celestially really enhances my understanding of what's going on in my life, which makes me a better tarot reader. Enjoy!

## 18 - The Moon

Now we come on our path to the mysterious Moon, gazing down upon us, as we return her stare, with longing. Who among us is not fascinated by Luna, the moon, whose ever-changing face drives our moods and actions, in spite of our efforts to control ourselves?

Ryder shows us a great moon, illuminated by the sun, looking down on a rather barren landscape, flanked by two towers. In the foreground, there is a pool with a crayfish, a golden path - our journey - leads outward, and on either side of the path are dogs, or some say, a dog and a wolf.

The path shows our journey, a long way yet to travel, and we are hounded by our dark side, every step of the way, in this card. The time of the moon is about taking a look at those dreams, memories and hints that arise from our unconscious, and bringing them into light. This is a card that

asks us to face our shadow selves, again and again, as regularly as the cycles of the moon. The crayfish, crawling out of the waters of emotion, can represent a very early, primitive part of ourselves; it walks backward, and by looking at our past, we can understand what motivates us in the present. The towers may represent our journey's end, but we aren't there yet, even though we have a sense of where we want to be. If we look at the dog and the wolf, on opposite sides of the stream, we can interpret them as opposite sides of ourselves, to be integrated; one wild, one domesticated.

Emotions and situations ruled by the Moon are unpredictable, and all too often, uncontrollable. The part of us that wants to order our lives, and control events and emotions, is governed by the Emperor card. Halfway between the Emperor and the Moon, lies the Strength card. If we understand the "soft power" that Strength represents; working in harmony to understand emotions, rather than conquer them, we are not so disrupted by the power of the Moon in our lives. We can use the dark part of our journey to better understand ourselves. The Moon card is a good card to meditate upon if you're striving to know yourself better. It is also inspirational to visual artists; by the light of the Moon, our hearts and emotions are more connected to what we create.

## 19 - The Sun

As our tarot journey continues through the heavens, we make a transition from the reflected light and mysterious shadows of Lady Moon, to the brilliant blaze of energy that is the Sun. This card, in the Ryder deck, shows a golden-haired child, riding a white horse, under the light of a great sun. The whole mood of the card radiates success and a boundless overflowing joy.

Is it the way the real, celestial sun affects our moods in its season? Or is it the lightness, after coming through the "heavy" middle passage of the major arcana, that gives this card its energetic shimmer? Perhaps both. The significance of this card is enlightenment; the hidden mysteries of our life, with which we have wrestled, are suddenly brought out into clarity. We recognize and welcome what we've been searching for, and now, no longer having to put our efforts into a struggle for survival, we feel reborn.

This is a card that speaks of having newfound, seemingly boundless, energy to put into ambitious projects and lifelong dreams. The time of the Sun is a window of opportunity, when we are able to connect our dreams with the practical ability and good fortune to make them reality. It is being in "our zone" or creative flow.

It is important, when we feel the Sun's glow warm us, that we let our energy and light shine. The power of this card is for us to share, with all those around us, the community that sustains us. This is not energy we must be conscious about conserving, this is energy which flows through us with the generosity and abundance of sunlight, itself.

This card can be used to raise our energy level, or to inspire us at the beginning of new projects. It can be used in healing, to balance us and warm our hearts. As we approach the summer's end, be sure to take some time to appreciate the glow of sunlight off green plants. Already, the days are getting shorter, but we can carry the sun's energy in our hearts as we move toward the darkness.

## 20 - Judgement and Perceptions

Our next card in the tarot journey is that of Judgement, the next-to-the-last card in the Major Arcana. Ryder shows us a card that depicts the biblical end of the world, with an angel blowing a trumpet and bodies rising out of graves and coffins; resurrected, for a final accounting of deeds done in life. Crowley calls this card "The Aeon" - a word that describes a long, indefinite period of time. I love that title, because I believe it describes, very accurately, what this card is really about.

Judgement is a card about our perceptions of who we are, and what we have done, and what it means in the grander scheme of things. We are constantly evaluating ourselves; against our goals, against each other, against society's expectations. Are our evaluations realistic? What do we base our expectations for ourselves upon?

In our constant process of weighing our actions and qualities, we tend to react to and use information that is very recent, situation-bound or incomplete. Thus, we end up not often taking the long view, and seeing ourselves in the context of our whole learning cycle.

The Aeon interpretation of this card asks us to form our perceptions of ourselves based upon our entire history, or against a bigger picture. It has been said that we face The Final Judgement on a daily basis, in all the little judgements we make about ourselves. The idea of the Aeon asks us to suspend judgement of ourselves and those around us, as we consider the history we share as humans. What we are doing or not doing in our lives needs to be interpreted with compassion, not judgement.

This card is connected to the High Priestess card. The High Priestess is resourceful, and when we are resourceful and trust ourselves, we are more able to use good judgement, based on realistic and accurate perceptions.

It is a good card to meditate upon as we consider our place in the long view, in history, and in our culture.

## 21 - Dancing the Boundaries

The Fool's journey, and our Tarot journey bring us to The Universe; the final card in the Major Arcana. This card is sometimes called "The World" and usually depicts a nude woman, surrounded by a great wreath of greenery. She is holding a wand or batons, and is dancing within this prescribed circle. In each of the four corners of the card are sometimes depicted the faces of the animals representing the Four Gospels; the ox, the lion, the eagle and the human.

The Universe represents the end of the Fool's path, the completion of the journey of development and experience. It has been a difficult process, but one which has built upon itself, so that we, like the Fool, are never given more than we can manage, at once. After the self-examination, atonement and lessons from experience of the Judgement card, our arrival at the Universe is sweet relief. Our spirits have been strengthened, over time, and we are more than when we'd first begun: stronger, more creative, more capable of happiness.

The lady in the card is dancing within the ring; the limitations of her situation do not faze her. She is doing what she can, with what she has, and in her perception of the world, nothing is amiss. She, like the Magician card, shows an "as above, so below" element; a kind of harmony between the physical and spiritual realities. She is also related to the Empress card, in that she is expressing herself creatively, without interruption or interference from the outside world.

In a reading, The Universe signifies the culmination of a matter, productive creative expression, or the ability to be successful in spite of the obstacles or boundaries placed upon us. The lady in the Universe isn't surviving, she is thriving, and her free-spirited dance inspires us to fully inhabit our own worlds.

Like all endings, The Universe also signals a beginning, as we complete one journey, and, after a time, move into another. The cycle of the Fool is an endless one, with new lessons and experiences for those who choose to take part in them.

Our next Tarot series will be on the 16 court cards. These cards give me many problems in readings, and I'm hoping that by researching them, and dwelling with them for a few months, that they'll become less confusing to me.

## The Court Cards

I tried to avoid them. They confuse and befuddle me, with their impassive faces and lack of clear symbolism, but they keep turning up in readings, often at inopportune moments, like when I'm reading for someone else, or doing an interpretation of a card in a public ritual. Yikes! I draw a blank. Huh? The Knight of Whom?

Finally, I decided I had to face my biggest tarot fear...the court cards. Now, I love the Major Arcana; they speak of life's journey, and our common experiences, the things that make us human. The pips show us life's daily little dramas, and tell us what's really happening, but the court cards speak of human tendencies and traits, all the little pieces of ourselves that we carry inside us all the time. And well, I'm an introvert. I like plants, and animals, and books and things. People are harder to define.

There are 16 court cards in the tarot: pages, knights, queens and kings, one of each for every suit. The suits are Swords, Wands, Cups and Pentacles, or Disks. Those items correspond roughly to the 4 directions of the circle, and to our traditional Neo-Pagan altar tools!

There are a lot of interpretations for exactly what the court cards stand for. The most common one seems to be "people" in a reading, but I'm not entirely comfortable with a simple definition like that. I'm thinking that they stand for something more like a human element. So the King of Disks might show up in a reading as a dark haired man who holds some authority in the working and physical world, or maybe not. Maybe he represents success, enjoying the fruits of long labor, the importance of a connection with nature...or someone born under an Earth sign, astrologically speaking. See what I mean? They're slippery. Too many choices abound, when working with the court cards.

Reading up on the Pages (no pun intended), however, I was encouraged. They can symbolize exploration or study of an issue, and human curiosity and openness. I will start our examination of the court cards with the Pages, then.

Pages are portrayed in the Waite deck as young androgynous figures, outside, usually holding a tool. The Thoth deck calls them princesses, and the Motherpeace deck calls them daughters. They can represent a child, or childishness, or your own inner child, or a quality of youthfulness. Some people believe they are messengers, or representative of a message.

The Page of Swords can represent the quality of fearlessness, through facing fears. This Page is sometimes called the 'mask-cutter' because he can see through illusion, by not buying into the worst-case scenario. He is not afraid to face the facts that he uncovers; though inexperienced, he trusts his intellect and ability to discern the truth.

All this fearlessness can lead to detachment, however, and that is a message the Page of Swords can bring; are you becoming too much of an outside observer in your effort to look at the truth of a matter? Are action and involvement required?

This Page would be a good card to meditate upon if you're trying to manage depression or a case of being overwhelmed by too much information.

Next installment will bring us to the other Pages, and hopefully, further understanding of these messengers from our own subconscious. In the meantime, I recommend a book that Leah's been recommending to me forever; Rachel Pollack's "Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom: A Book of Tarot." (ISBN 0-7225-3572-4) Now, Rachel Pollack doesn't simplify tarot, but she writes well, and her book is wonderful to delve into. She's even resurrected my interest in the Rider-Waite deck! So if you're looking for a great read, and an author who goes way beyond simple explanations for card meanings, this is your book. I am happy to add it to my bedside table.

## Court Cards - More Pages

Last month we started looking at the court cards in the Tarot. We met the Page of Swords, the mask-cutter who is able to look at situations in a detached manner. Today we will look at the remaining 3 pages, and their significances.

Moving around the wheel, we come to the Page of Wands. This is a very young, innocent-looking person, holding a wand staff, which he studies. Pages can symbolize youth, ingenuity and beginnings. Since the suit of Wands signifies action, this page, with his optimistic outlook, represents the beginnings of a new venture or phase of life. More explicitly, he shows that not only is he beginning something new, but he is announcing it publicly. Wands are outgoing, expansive, like the fire element they contain, and this Page is enthusiastic in his energy and outlook.

We move on to the Page of Cups, who holds a cup, from which a fish emerges. Our watery page gazes at it, not surprised, for in the world view governed by this card, fantastic events can occur. This card can represent a dreamy, imaginary world or situation, or a person given to fantasy, or imagination. The tendency to daydream and indulge in a life of the mind is an appropriate one, in this card, however, and not a destructive or neglectful escape. The Page of Cups moves easily between concrete and non-ordinary reality, and as a result, can be somewhat psychic or sensitive. He can also represent the development of psychic abilities, though not necessarily through practice and study, but more of an emergence of a natural perceptiveness. This Page learns and develops his abilities through inspiration.

The Page of Pentacles holds up his pentacle orb, and studies it with focused energy. All the Pages of the tarot can represent learning and study; however, this particular Page is the scholar in the deck. With his powers of concentration and ability to totally immerse himself in his subject, he carries a practical intensity into anything he approaches. His immersion into his discipline, whatever it may be, pays off in the craftsmanship and expertise that is typical of this suit. Use this Page in meditation or to inform work that requires focus and sustained effort to complete.

The Pages, I think, are representative of the innocent parts of ourselves; curious, optimistic, eager, sensitive and enthusiastic. They are not overwhelmed by responsibility or the conflicts that arise in day-to-day existence. They are very much in the "here and now" and when we look at the more mature, experienced Court Cards, such as the Kings and Queens, we will see how a person's past can build on the present, to show a more complex individual or representation of the suit.

## Of Knights and Balance

The court cards we will look at this month are the knights. Rider shows each of the four knights mounted on a horse, wearing colors and symbols of his suit. Generally, these cards symbolize action and responsibility to others. Easy qualities to remember, as the cards depict very dynamic figures: horses are rearing or otherwise in motion. We know from fairy tales and legends that knights were generally in service to their king or queen, and that is the framework that the cards follow.

Knights show how a particular quality of each suit is put to practical use. While the Pages were all about study and the initiation into each suit, the Knight shows us the ups and downs of acting out these elements of mind, spirit, soul and body.

The Knight of Swords gives us rash courage, unfettered by social responsibility, and confident. He is skilled and strong, but tends to be over-eager, and can be unprepared to sustain effort over a long time. He is very extroverted, which can help to make up for his lack of experience; he is unafraid of mental and energetic challenges and putting himself "out there." This Knight can signify a need to be extroverted or a need for a more careful approach to life.

The Knight of Wands symbolizes movement, action, travel, and adventure. He is eager for change, and, like the Knight of Swords, desires to gain the experience he lacks. His energy has not yet manifested itself in the achievements and awareness of the more mature court cards. This card can symbolize a reminder to be grounded, to focus our energies into more fixed goals.

The Knight of Cups is a dreamy knight on a slower horse. He gazes into his cup, and the world around him goes unnoticed. He lives almost entirely in his mind, and while dreams and fantasies were appropriate in the younger Page of Cups, the Knight is at a point in his life where his imagination must be allied with action, or it will go stagnant. This Knight, in a reading, provokes the question "is it a vision or a fantasy?" with the implication that a vision is a divine inspiration, and a fantasy, uncoupled with action, leads to a dead end. With this card, it is important to pay attention to the tension between valuable inner exploration and mere escape from outer responsibilities.

The Knight of Pentacles sits unmoving on his quiet horse. He stares out into space, and though he holds the disk that represents action, material accomplishment and connection to nature, he has forgotten it. He is focused on the mundane details of practical life. This attachment to simplicity can be a good thing, but it can also lead to spiritual detachment. Nature is the source of our inspiration and nurture, and when we lose sight of our deep connection with it, we become overburdened with responsibility.

The Knights, like their legendary namesakes, bring action, changes and warnings. They invite us to explore our inner tensions and battles, as we live and operate with one foot in the material and one foot in the spiritual world.

## The Queens

Queens represent the receptive, "yin" qualities of each suit in the Tarot. More complex in meaning than knights, they are believed to unite 2 or more qualities of their element. In a reading the queen can represent a woman or the creative use of that suit's quality.

The Queen of Swords shows a stern looking woman sitting on her airy throne. She holds a sword out in front of her. On her wrist hangs a tassel, which signifies a cut tie or severance. She is known as a 'mask cutter' in some tarot correspondences; i.e., she is able to use the sword of her intelligence to see beyond confusion. This queen's hand is open, showing that, even though she is sorrowful, her heart and mind are still open to experience and to the world. This card can represent women's suffering or widowhood.

Moving on to the Queen of Wands, we see a relaxed woman sitting on a throne, with a tiny black cat at her feet. This queen holds a sprouting wand and a sunflower, both signifying passionate growth and energy. She is calm, very much a part of the world around her, but not dominating it. Her brilliant energy is one of support, championing the causes and people she believes in. The cat signifies protection, and emphasizes her fearless nature. One old story says that once the cat was a lion, but it turned into a black cat to remind the queen that her power and energy come from experience, and the integration of the darkness and lightness of her past.

The Queen of Cups sits on a throne, gazing with adoration upon the most elaborate cup in the suit. She is not dreamy like the knight and page of the Cups suit, but, rather, focused and intense. Even though she is a water queen, her throne sits on land, symbolizing her connection to the outer world. This queen represents the fusing of dreams, creativity and action. She has a disciplined imagination; hence, her ideas often come to completion, and in beautifully executed form, as we see with the cup she holds. Love and intelligence combine, with this queen, to bring clarity and vision to all her creative pursuits.

At last, we come to the Queen of Pentacles, who sits on her throne, out in the wilderness, gazing at her pentacle with adoration. She symbolizes a connection with Nature, and she is very much part of the world around her. This queen reminds us to engage fully in the world around us, and to trust the magic and rhythms of nature and daily "mundane" tasks to nurture our spirits.

The queens in tarot, I think, are about going deeper into the element, and about the alchemy of combining different traits found there. They ask us to walk the balance between our inner and outer worlds.

## Kings

The Kings in the tarot represent mature figures, socially responsible or connected, who show the fullest possible expression of the energy of their particular suit. Where the Queens' expression of the energy may be subtler, or more inwardly directed, the Kingly expression is outwardly directed; its results can be seen in the physical world.

They may represent a mature male figure in a reading, but they can also signify qualities of wholeness, completion and confidence, fatherhood, mentoring and leadership.

The King of Swords is a compelling King, in that he resembles the Emperor, grounded on his throne, staring directly ahead, at us. His sword tilts slightly to the right, in the direction of manifestation and action, and represents his wisdom and intellect used for active purposes. This King is a player in the practical world, and carries out the Emperor's ideals of fairness and order.

A pitfall to being or meeting the King of Swords is that he can be narrow-minded and rather set in his ways. His intellect, combined with his energy and position, can present over-confidence, and an "I'm always right" attitude. In his best manifestation, the King of Swords is a wise and benevolent champion, who puts his mental energy into the greater civic good.

Moving on to the King of Wands, we meet another strong-willed, strong-minded character, who also puts his energy out there. This King's character is positive and optimistic; he in his best incarnation, is a tolerant, compassionate leader, who seeks to share his power with those who would reflect and magnify it.

The Wands energy is active, and poured into projects and careers, and this King is a leader in this area. He is a great card for invoking self-confidence, and the initiative to begin a difficult undertaking. His attitude of "I can do it - you can do it" can inspire us to work hard and be optimistic when the going gets tough. The creative fire he kindles moves us to action in the practical world.

Negatively, the King of Wands can foster impatience, and a harsh attitude toward others less able than he to attempt difficult feats.

The King of Cups is a dreamy King, who sits on his rocky throne, surrounded by water. He has had to channel his intuition and creativity to achieve his kingship, and while he moves his toe toward the water, he does not touch it, signifying that it is still "under wraps" or removed somewhat from his present reality.

Behind the King, a live fish jumps from the ocean, which represents the vivid reality of imagination, poetry and dreams in his world, despite his efforts to control and channel them. Where we saw his Queen gazing lovingly at her elaborately crafted cup, the King of Cups doesn't look at his cup at all, but instead, looks out at us. He has put his emotional needs aside for a time, to do what he deems practical.

Negatively, this King can represent a shutting off of feelings, or the refusal to listen to his intuition. In his effort not to become self-indulgent, he has denied himself access to the great well of the unconscious, with all its guides and inspiration.

This King is a good symbol to meditate upon for artistic achievement, and for trying to balance the practical with the intuitive in an undertaking.

We move on to the King of Pentacles. Rider shows us a handsome king, sitting comfortably in his throne, in a garden, which grows up around him. He looks at his pentacle, which represents all that he has achieved in the mundane world. Now, this King can be deceptive. We look at him and see his absorption in his work, his material accomplishments, and think, "hmhhh, obsessed to the point of oblivion..." but, it isn't so. Note how he has chosen to sit outside his house, and in his garden, indicating that this King is close to Nature, and open to Her teachings and gifts. His absorption in his pentacle is almost meditative, and the expression on his face is one of calm appreciation. He has worked hard for his comfort and pleasure, yet, also, he is a person whom the Universe has gifted, simply because he has paid attention and been open to receive those gifts. Now he means to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

Negatively, this King may represent impatience with the slow process of growth necessary for real achievement. He can also fall prey to self-doubt in the face of slow progress. It is important to cultivate patience and to be observant with this King.

Interestingly, the King of Pentacles is the very last card in the Tarot journey, which began with the Fool, and commenced through the Major and Minor Arcana. In that sense, he is connected to a journey's end, and thus, to completion and another beginning.