

# A Question of Tarot

## What to expect

Learning how to read Tarot cards is not easy. There is so much to learn and understand, not just about the cards and how to lay them down into a spread but about people too. Clients who come to you for a reading will test you and your skills, what you tell them and how you explain what you are doing, how you came to a specific conclusion on specific situations and problems that you may identify. There are hundreds of possibilities to have to choose from during a simple reading and you will have to use your skills and expertise to answer them in a truthful and honest way.

## Getting started

Think of yourself as “The Fool” the card with no number (0). He starts his journey in life quite naive unaware of the mammoth task he is about to partake in.

You can start by going it alone and teach yourself but where do you start, like the Fool, you are about to step into a very deep chasm that may have no end to it, or you could find someone who has a good knowledge of the subject and ask them for advice.

Let's look at the first option and see what you will encounter on your journey. You will certainly need a pack of Tarot cards before you do anything. Do you know which pack to choose and will you be able to understand what all 78 cards mean. There are hundreds and hundreds of different kinds of Tarot decks and choosing the right one for you is not easy. There are hundreds of different types too, playing card type decks, round shaped cards, square cards, cards about cats, witches, clowns, anything and everything you can think of, so which deck to choose is a nightmare in itself.

## The Cards

Next thing you will need to learn is the meaning of each card, 78 in total, that's if you have chosen, what is called, “a standard pack”. Hang on, I'm not finished. Each card in a Tarot deck has 2, yes two meanings, when a card is laid down on the table it may be facing upright or upside down, in Tarot language we say, “Upright or Reversed”. Upright meanings tend to relate to Positive influences, whereas Reversed relate to Negative influences.

So if my calculations are correct,  $78 \times 2 = 156$  and that means you really have to learn 156 meanings. “Oh dear”, I hear you sigh. Don't worry, you can do it, can't you? I did say it's not easy, or did I? As you pursue your journey to master the art of Tarot reading there are many more steps to be taken therefore I will move on.

## Rituals and Shuffling

I have described two steps so far and the next is to understand that when a Tarot reader starts a reading many will adhere to certain rituals regarding blessing, cleansing and asking

the cards for their assistance and guidance throughout the delivery of this reading that they are about to undertake. The reader would then start to shuffle the cards and in doing so will transfer influences and thoughts into and onto the cards. The reader when finished this process will ask the client to shuffle the cards while focusing on the question at hand. Once this is completed the reader may ask the client to split the deck into three separate piles on the table and then ask the client to choose one of the piles of cards to start with.

The reader takes up the selected pile and starts to lay cards on the table, one at a time from the top of the pile of cards. Most readers will lay the cards face upwards so that the client can see the pictures on the cards.

## Spreads and Placement

The cards are placed one at a time to form a shape and this shape is referred to as a "spread". The spread is usually agreed on before the reading starts between the client and reader. There are thousands of spreads to choose from and I don't expect you to learn them all mainly because many readers these days design their own for specific readings and to answer certain questions. A novice reader would generally start with a simple combination of 3 cards and work upwards towards more complex spreads as they become more proficient and experienced. A 3 card spread would be laid out simply by placing the first card down the next card alongside, to the right and the third to the right of that. Just like writing or reading, left to right in a straight line. Now that was as easy as 1,2,3.

So far you have acquired a pack of Tarot cards, learned all the meanings, also learned the rituals of shuffling cards etc and laid 3 cards in a spread and so now that we have some building blocks we can now move on to the next step.

## Pick a card

Understanding the placing or position of the cards within the spread. When you lay out a spread, each card position has a certain meaning.

Let me put it this way. In my kitchen I have 3 jars, jar 1 has sugar in it, jar 2 has coffee in it and jar 3 is for tea. When I make a cup of tea I will use jars 1 and 3 along with some milk and hot water to combine and make a lovely cuppa.

Drunk my tea and had some biscuits too now let's get back to Tarot. Tea break over.

The card positions are like labels and explain what the card placed there refers to. So let's say that the spread is called, "Past, Present and Future". We now understand that reading from left to right just might correspond to where we could lay our cards. So let's put our first card under the label "Past", card 2 under "Present" and card 3 under "Future". Well done. You are doing great. We now have a spread of 3 cards named, past, present and future. This is all well and good but, who's past, present and future is it? It's the client's, silly! The client wanted to know if they would get promotion to the next level in their existing job. Ah! Now you get it, don't you. Of course you do, we need to know what has happened in the past and what is going on in the present to at least have some idea how the future is going to pan out for the question to be answered. I still think this is easy, so far. Let's try and make

it a little more tricky and add to the pot the meanings of the cards. You forgot about them didn't you, with all this spread stuff going on.

## Card meanings

Let's get back to those 3 cards and their meanings. The card in position 1 is (9 of Wands), position 2 is (The Chariot) and position 3 is (The Emperor). I will take each card in turn and expand on them to make this all fit together like a jigsaw.

### ***Position 1 is the 9 of Wands and its meanings are:-***

(Upright) Eventual victory, plans coming to fruition, resolve, good health. Determination, commitment to an issue or belief. Acknowledging past grief.

(Reversed) Rivalry, obstacles, time to move on in your life. Loss of rights, isolation. emerging from pain and isolation.

### ***Position 2 is the Chariot and its meanings are:-***

(Upright) Endurance, a journey, decisions at a time of crisis, triumph in adversity, strife leading to victory, revenge taken, spiritual growth. progress. Taking a trip.

(Reversed) Conflict, bad news, accidents, a sudden downfall. Life out of control, openness to new ideas, delay. Breakdown of fixed ideas.

### ***Position 3 is the Emperor and its meanings are:-***

(Upright) Order, confidence, wealth, stability, leadership, competitiveness. Worldly power, self control gained through experience. Ability to shoulder responsibility.

(Reversed) Sorrow, an obstacle, disarray or conflict with organisations. Taking action against establishment, corruption, and softening in authority.

## The Outcome or is it

There are our 3 cards and meanings, both Upright and Reversed. We will assume that all cards were placed in the Upright position which gives the whole reading a positive outcome. Now that all this information is out in the open, so to speak, you as a Tarot reader suddenly have a wealth of power at your disposal. You must use this newfound knowledge wisely, ethically, honestly and truthfully and under no circumstances use it in any other way other than to answer the question being asked by your client.

Card 1. The past starts to give us plenty to work with. From the positive meanings and looking at the past they seem to be hard working and have been working towards improving their financial position and overall stability and security.

Card 2. The present shows a number of things. The drive and determination of the client to overcome obstacles and the perseverance to keep going, no matter what. Self motivation and strength. Someone who cares about their home and will strive to stay to live their life in that home.

Card 3. The future is all about this card that represents the boss, the person who is about to take control if not already in control of their own destiny. This is everything you would like your boss to be like, strong, a leader and responsible. I think our client has got the job. Hurray! You've done it, your first reading and and so much good news to tell your client. I bet you could cry with happiness. OK maybe not. Well if I was you I would pat myself on the back and say, well done you.

You're not laughing, crying or even smiling. What's up? Oh I know. We haven't looked at the reverse cards yet. Those negative ones. I'll tell you what, you go and make some lunch for both of us and we can come back and tackle these nasties on full stomachs. Yes?

Right mate, sleeves rolled up and let's knock the nasties socks off.

Can you remember what the first card was? Oh that's right, the 9 of Wands. Some people don't like this card but I think it's not all that bad.

## Keeping a brave face

Card 1. Past-Reversed looks like there has been a lot of bad feelings here, is this work, at home or both. I think you will need to ask the client to expand on the situations that this card is revealing. It is the number 9 and looks likely to end quite soon and the client feels the need to move on. Get away from what has happened.

When the cards show a lot of negativity you need to be careful how you explain things, don't start hitting peanuts with sledgehammers to break the shell. Easy does it Kido, be empathetic to the situation and don't jump to conclusions at this stage. You've only looked at one card so far and you could have it all wrong. Get some feedback from the client if you can and carry on with the reading.

Card 2. Present-Reversed out of control is not good considering the first card. Not going anywhere. If this card was real, a chariot and two horses upside down isn't going anywhere. That doesn't mean it's a car crash or total right off because the client is still open to new ideas and that may change the situation entirely.

Card 3. Future-Reversed is not looking too healthy either. It's turning into a fight by the looks of things and nobody is giving way. Obstacles and conflicts, fighting for your rights. There is no level playing field and the scales have tipped against your client's chances of getting the job they were seeking.

It's now down to you to explain the situation which the cards have now revealed. This has now become a very difficult scenario compared to when all the cards were positive. That was easy but this is hard. You now have all the information you need to deliver your outcome to your client but how do you tell them.

Go through the cards explaining what you think could be the outcome, the client may give you some answers as to why they are all so negative. As I have said, some clients will try to test you, they might ask the wrong question hoping you will come up with some amazing answer to the question the client was really thinking about but was too scared to ask. There

are many reasons the negative spread came out the way it did so don't stress yourself because you read it correctly. It's not your fault.  
How do you feel now? Was going it alone the best choice to make?

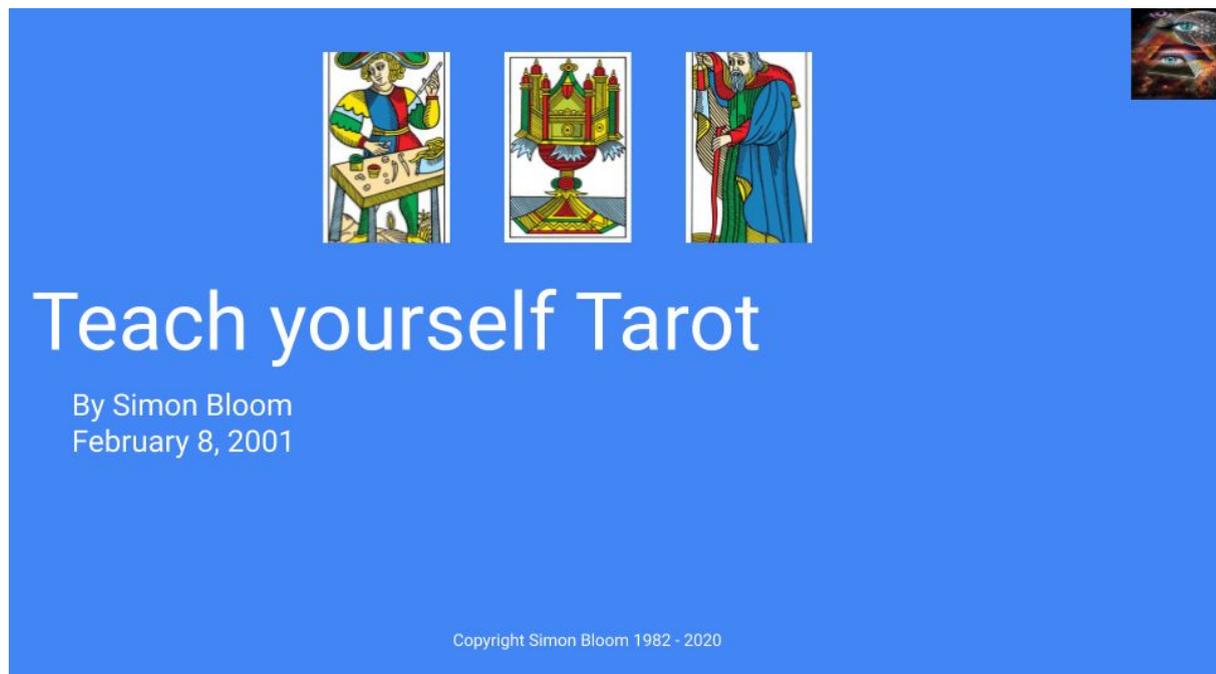
Some advice on the above spread. You are dealing with people and you have to understand them. Not only is Tarot complex but so are people and you have to merge the two together. So when people say reading Tarot is easy you can now tell them, if it's done correctly, then it's not as easy as they say.  
Let's move on now to your next lesson. Wrestling bears...

## Asking for and getting help

If you really want to read the Tarot as a hobby or long term project I would suggest you read as many books on the subject as you can afford, some are very good but be careful out there because some are just downright tat. Youtube videos that teach Tarot are ten a penny and there are hundreds to trawl through, again it's about choosing the right one to watch and learn from. I am not advocating you spend all your money on books, video tutorials, Tarot classes at university etc but I have been writing, teaching, reading and advising on Tarot for well over 30 years now and never had a complaint so far, touch wood. My readings have always been free along with my advice, teaching etc. The only time I have accepted money is when I have read on behalf of charities and the proceedings have been donated.  
Tarot is my hobby, my love and my life, so why should I not do it and why should I not share my experiences with others who want to learn.  
The front page of my website has these words...

### **THIS IS WHAT I DO**

A Google slide presentation



Teach yourself Tarot

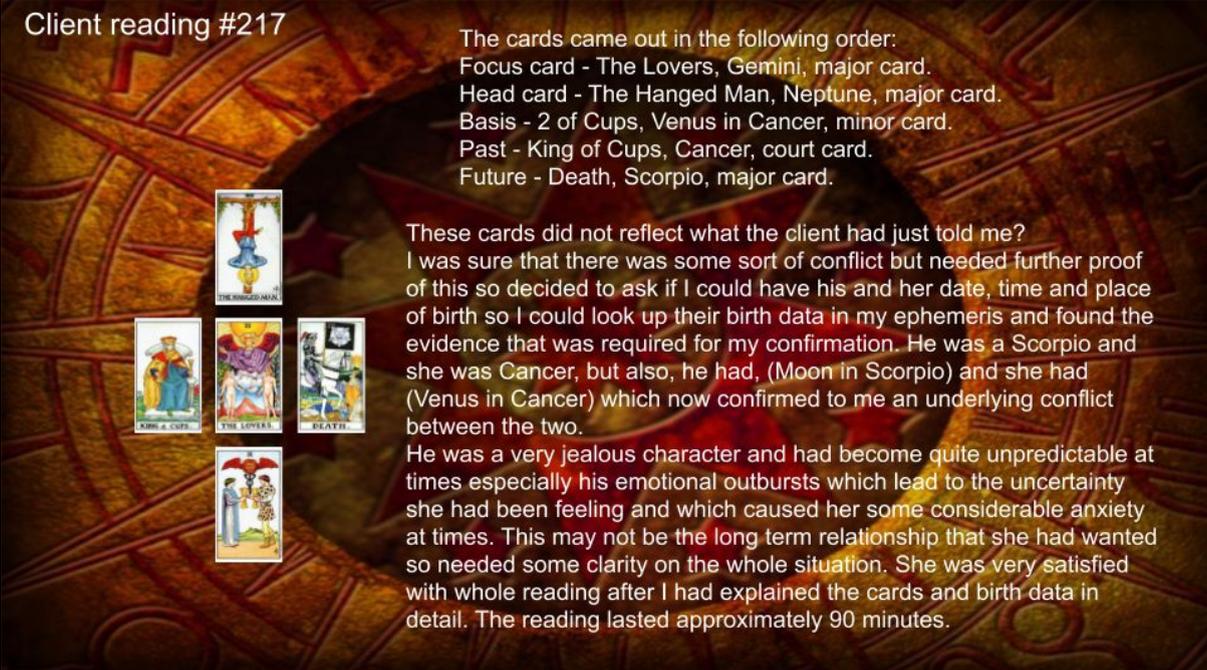
By Simon Bloom  
February 8, 2001

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This is the opening title slide to one of my many presentations I produce using Google slides. I use these for teaching, training and interaction with some of my clients. They are simple and effective in all aspects of teaching any classroom type subject.

If you have a Google or gmail account you can access most of my presentations, slides and documents on Tarot either by using a direct link or email. Obviously I would have to give you access which is simple and straightforward. I send you both link and email address and you just have to click and connect to my library of slides, docs etc.

Below is a selection of slides from various presentations that I've produced on Tarot.



**Client reading #217**

The cards came out in the following order:  
Focus card - The Lovers, Gemini, major card.  
Head card - The Hanged Man, Neptune, major card.  
Basis - 2 of Cups, Venus in Cancer, minor card.  
Past - King of Cups, Cancer, court card.  
Future - Death, Scorpio, major card.

These cards did not reflect what the client had just told me? I was sure that there was some sort of conflict but needed further proof of this so decided to ask if I could have his and her date, time and place of birth so I could look up their birth data in my ephemeris and found the evidence that was required for my confirmation. He was a Scorpio and she was Cancer, but also, he had, (Moon in Scorpio) and she had (Venus in Cancer) which now confirmed to me an underlying conflict between the two.

He was a very jealous character and had become quite unpredictable at times especially his emotional outbursts which lead to the uncertainty she had been feeling and which caused her some considerable anxiety at times. This may not be the long term relationship that she had wanted so needed some clarity on the whole situation. She was very satisfied with whole reading after I had explained the cards and birth data in detail. The reading lasted approximately 90 minutes.

**THE HANGED MAN**  
**KING OF CUPS**  
**THE LOVERS**  
**DEATH**

This slide is from an interactive client reading, where I send a link to the client and they can see the full presentation of how the reading was performed, card by card. They go through the presentation and if satisfied with the outcome, they then sign it off as completed. If the client has any further questions they can ask them through the slide/presentation in the Q and A section integrated into the slides system. It's instant, unique and a great way to have a live Tarot reading without leaving home.

## Major Arcana MENU

This is the Major Arcana MENU.

Click on any card to take you to that card's meaning.

To return to this MENU, click on the text below the meanings which says:-

Major Arcana MENU



Another slide from the presentation "Teach Yourself Tarot" This is the Major arcana menu. It allows you to click on any card to reveal the cards meaning as you will see in the next slide.



### The Hermit

The Hermit card symbolises meditation, reflection, and solitude. As one of the cards resembling old age it also represents bearing the light of wisdom, looking into the unconscious, observing dreams. There is an emphasis on peace and patience, by which maturity is reached, and a striving to connect to the higher spiritual self. The Hermit also depicts the spiritual leader, the taskmaster who leads with purpose, conscience, and wisdom. A mature person, the Hermit symbolises deliberation about which path to follow, reassessment of achievements and goals, and taking the time to reflect and plan.

In a negative environment this card can resemble excessive isolation, lack of communication, intolerance, crisis and doubt.

Major Arcana MENU

I chose the Hermit card above. Each of the Major cards has its own description alongside it with the card's keywords merged within the description itself.

Unlike the Minor cards which have their keywords listed separately from their description as shown in the slide below.

# Page of Cups



## Page of Cups

Valet de Coupe

Astrological Correspondence: (Pisces)

Keywords: emotional, intuitive, intimate, loving

Description: The Page or Princess of Cups can have two meanings. The first meaning indicates a young child or woman who is sensitive and intuitive. The other interpretation implies that a message will soon be coming. This message may not be blatantly obvious as it could occur from the most unconnected circumstances. A young person or one with a youthful cast of mind, gentle and loving, artistic and insightful. If a girl, somewhat tomboyish, if a boy, then somewhat feminine. This person could be emotionally vulnerable and needs affection.

If you click on the card it will take you to the suit of CUPS where you can choose another card to look at.

I have also added the astrological correspondence of the King, Queen and Page of each suit that make up the 12 zodiac/star signs for reference purposes to people that may have influences within the reading. The Minor court cards tend to be regarded as people as well as influences but the four Knights don't have any star signs associated with them. Also included are some spreads and layouts to practice with along with explanations of those spreads.

## Card Spreads

Tarot card spreads are what readers use to place or layout their cards for a reading. A spread can consist of any amount of cards, from 1 to 101, it all depends on the type of reading and the question being asked. The client may ask any question and so the reader must be prepared to use a specific type of layout/spread to be able to answer the question or questions being asked. Types of spreads will vary from maybe 3 card layouts to 30 or more in a single reading. The following slides will explain and demonstrate several readings and show how to begin a reading from the start.



Celtic Cross Spread



3 Card spread



4 Card spread



Relationship spread



Focus area spread

Further information on spreads can be found in the "Teach Yourself Tarot" presentation which is on my website along with many more and can be found at [Cybeeonline.co.uk](http://Cybeeonline.co.uk).