

Getting To Know Your Deck

After deciding on the deck best for you, approach the cards in a *one-on-one*, or personal manner. Treat your cards with respect, as if they are old friends you are just beginning to know. It is traditional to wrap your deck in a piece of silk or cloth, or to place them in a wooden box; the point being to keep them in a safe, or neutral place until they are being used. In keeping with the attitude of respect, do not let people casually handle your cards unless they are involved in an actual reading.

A way of getting to know your deck is to randomly choose a card and use your imagination to build stories around the imagery of that card. After doing this a few times, the cards will begin to produce their own associated images. Mentally make notes of any recurring images or impressions and record your thoughts about each card you've been working with. This will increase your personal feelings about each card and help to establish an active rapport with the images.



When you look at the High Priestess, feel the cool marble bench she's sitting on, hear the water flowing into the pool at her feet, experience the quiet calm she brings. Let yourself encounter the sheer iron-willed tenacity of the Emperor rooted to his throne, encased in armor and heavy red velvet, determined to hold his world together at all cost! This is all part of activating, or enlivening the imagination, and while it initially may seem an effort, if you are serious in your intent to become a good tarot reader, there are no short cuts.



Once you become involved in the process, the rewards brought by the world of imagery and imagination make it too enjoyable to be called work.

What Your Cards Can and Cannot Do

To develop as a truly sensitive reader, you must be serious in your intent. Basic guidelines to follow when doing a reading for yourself or others is to remember that the tarot **CAN**:

Help to clarify a difficult situation, which then makes it possible to start thinking about it in a different light;

Suggest opportunities for change or action

Provide indications and guidelines for future events

What the cards will **NOT** do is state any definite, unchangeable event. The cards should be used as a guideline, rather than a hard and fast set of rules to be scrupulously or unwaveringly followed. When dealing with difficult situations, attempt to see what the problem is about and then focus on all the available options that may lead to resolution.

More often than not, the tarot is looked to or consulted when a person is in a state of confusion, difficulty or indecision, either mentally or emotionally. The best a reader can do, both for yourself and others, is to bring some perspective to the problem. Look at the energies that present themselves in the cards, then address the issues and the available options. Very often just acknowledging the difficulties can be a help in itself. The tarot reminds us that whatever the situation or difficulties, we always have choices.

Furnishing signs and pointers along the way, but with no definite rules or roadmap, it has been said the tarot makes an excellent guide but a bad master.