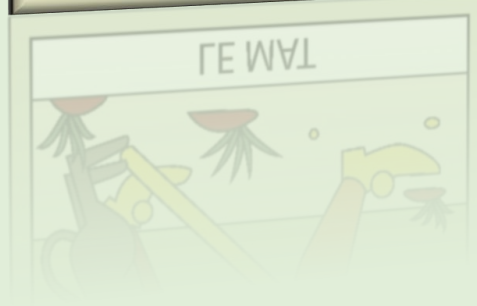

INTRODUCTION TO TAROT



LARA HOUSTON
INTERNATIONAL TAROT FOUNDATION

Empowering someone with knowledge and insight is a true gift.

Learning to read Tarot is a steady process that involves developing a connection with your deck and developing your own insights based on what the card or combination of cards mean to you.



The traditional keywords and associations will give you a foundation to develop from and then you can flourish as a reader from the foundation that is set.

They key is confidence and trust.

With the course programs from the International Tarot Foundation, you will learn to read Tarot but also learn to read with confidence.

You will learn to speak the universal language of Tarot but

then develop your own Tarot voice.

Please enjoy the process and let this be your own journey.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Illustrations from the Rider-Waite Tarot Deck®, known also as the Rider Tarot and the

Waite Tarot, reproduced by permission of U.S. Games

Systems, Inc., Stamford, CT 06902 USA. Copyright ©1971 by U.S. Games Systems,

Inc. Further reproduction prohibited. The Rider-Waite

Tarot Deck® is a registered trademark of U.S. Games Systems, Inc

Some Tarot History

In understanding Tarot, it is helpful to have insight of its colourful history and how Tarot has evolved over time.

'Colourful', is also in the literal sense too because Tarot is expressive art and symbolism, a reflection of life in its most wonderful and mundane within a deck of 78 cards.

If we step back to the 'Renaissance' period in Europe (1400-1700), we see a revival of the interest in ancient philosophy.

This revival was especially evident in art and literature, paintings were themed upon this popular renewal.

During this innovative period, playing cards were introduced to Europe and here is where we begin to connect the past to the present-day Tarot.



Playing cards were used for divinatory purposes as early as 1540 but it was not until the late 1700's that a man named Etteilla (Jean-Baptiste Alliette) 1738-1791, created the first known divinatory Tarot Deck in 1789.

Etteilla created a deck that was rich in symbolism, with astrological and elemental associations which added a fascinating layer of insight to Tarot.

The deck was especially representational of the classical and Christian theme that had become popular throughout the Renaissance period.

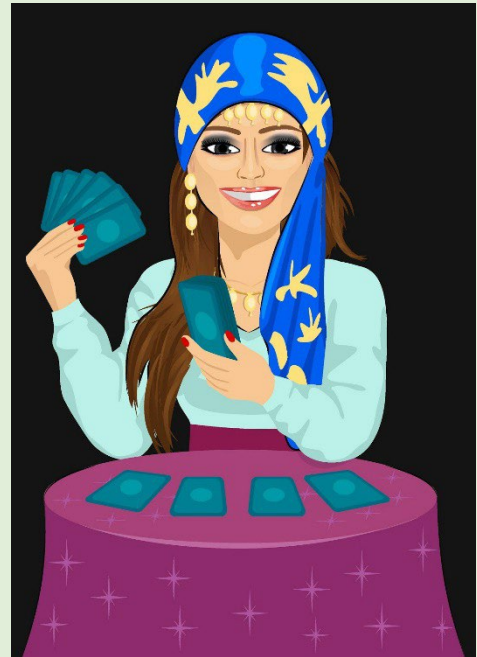
Today, we can thank Etteilla and other great occultists of the day for the legacy that they left behind.

The foundation they set has allowed us to further enjoy diverse imagery that takes us on a journey alongside the great philosophers in history, initiates discussion on tradition, religion, spirituality, personal challenge and of success. How incredible to think that the meaning of life could be fashioned between the lines of a brush stroke or an artist's fine pencil.

HOW DOES TAROT WORK?

When many imagine Tarot, the image of the fortune teller sitting within a curtained room, complete with head scarf and large hoop earrings, often comes to mind.

In fact, Tarot is more than 'Fortune Telling', Tarot can offer insight into how future events may unfold but importantly, it offers guidance on how best to navigate through some of the significant phases in our life. Tarot can teach us about life changes, hurdles, and personal development. The skill of the Tarot reader is to guide an individual through life transitions, after all, knowledge is power, and our aim is to empower our clients.



There are varying schools of thought when it comes to the actual divination aspect of Tarot and how it works.

I am happy to share my understanding and perspective on this and you can mull it over and then decide if it makes sense to you.

I am not saying that my perspective is right or wrong but for me, it does make sense.

My understanding is based upon my experiences as a developing reader from the learning that I gained from giving 20 free readings a day for a good several months that I gave in my own Tarot group 'Nokomis Tarot for Guidance'.

Firstly, let us consider that Tarot connects to us, to our way of thinking, our experiences, and our language.

This is an important aspect of Tarot reading and if I had not journaled my readings for others with absolute commitment, I do not think I would have discovered this.

The 'traditional' meanings of a Tarot card are ideally used as a platform, a starting point and a prompt for your own understanding and for what we refer to as intuition.

Card imagery itself can help us to develop a perspective of a card, it can trigger a feeling that connects to the experiences in our lives.

To give an example:

Card 5 of the Major Arcana is the Hierophant, upon looking at his image, it is natural that we will form an impression in our mind.

He has a similar look to the Pope or a Cardinal of the Catholic Church?

If you were brought up in a boarding school run by catholic priests, then



this image may conjure thoughts in your mind that are based upon your experiences. If your mother was helped with charity from the Church at some point in her life, then your experiences may trigger another insight.

Then we have media influence, films will also initiate perspectives that are triggered by the symbolism associated with the card.

What is now happening is a connection is being made between the conscious and the unconscious mind.

The image of the Hierophant is unlocking our unconscious mind where these thoughts and feelings have been lying dormant, forgotten

but still very much there.

As these thoughts and feelings surface, our inner voice, our intuition speaks to us, at this point all we need to do is listen and trust that inner voice. Your intuition is a valuable tool, it is your own resource.

As people, you/we are each different, some can develop using their intuition naturally and others need to work more so to develop the skill.

So, is there some mysterious aspect to the Tarot? In a short answer, I feel that it is a possibility that we can keep an open mind upon.

Talking Tarot

Is Tarot Evil?

The simple answer is no, not at all.

Tarot cards are created with so much dedication by incredible artists and authors. There is immense pride, time and artistry that goes into the creation of a Tarot deck and at the end of the day it is a tool for guidance.

There is a mysterious aspect to Tarot, that for me, is undeniable but in my opinion it is not 'spirit' led in any way but more so I would describe it as a universal energy and the intuitive connection between a reader and his/her cards.

Think about this, the past we already know and the present too so it is no great surprise that we have some indication of what may be ahead.

There is a 'hidden' aspect and this is what we are looking for in a reading, a skilled reader can usually find it, we then interpret this for the 'seeker' so they can be empowered with this knowledge.

Tarot is spiritual in nature and are intended for good purpose only.

As with many things that are on the outer spectrum of the 'norm', Tarot cards are open to speculation and the consequential stigma that is attached to them.

Do I Need to Cleanse my Deck?

Some people like to cleanse their new deck or their regular deck on occasions. There is no hard rule that states you must do any cleansing of your deck at all but if it is your own regular practise to cleanse your deck, then it is reasonable to continue to do so. If it is not something you normally do or something you have not considered to do then there is no reason why you would need to begin to.

If you would like to cleanse the deck on occasions, it can be as simple as leaving your card by the window with a quartz crystal placed on the deck, the Full moon is great for this.

Ethics

Always read Tarot with good intention for yourself and others
Be honest but considerate to those you read for.
This below, is the basic of the outline of the International Tarot Foundation Code of Ethics.

Read with good intent and purpose

Uphold the tradition of Tarot Reading

Respect client confidentiality

Be non-judgmental in your approach

Daily Journals

I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of keeping a journal. Journaling your Tarot readings are an excellent way to develop as a reader.

Do a predictive daily read for yourself and record the reading in your journal and at the end of the day, evaluate your reading. Did your day go as interpreted? Did you miss anything? This practice will enable you to gain better insight into your cards and you will find value in being able to look back and reflect.

Reading Practise

Once you feel you are familiar with your cards, in addition to your daily read, you can practice for family and friends.

Tell them that this is purely for your practice and that you will be making notes of the reading. Journal as you read and check your reference sheets if need be.

Explain that feedback will be greatly appreciated. One of the great things about reading for those close to you is that their feedback

will be honest and relevant.

Get as much practice as you can because it is invaluable. Every reading offers learning.

Choose relevant topics where the answer can be checked later.

Consider the question

It is much better to present Tarot with a specific question or area of life to look at, rather than an incredibly open reading. Keeping your question clear and specific will enable you to give a better reading.

If someone asks for a "general reading" or a reading on "anything," I usually suggest that we begin by looking at one specific area of their life.

You will find that some people who come for a reading feel they need to test your ability. In this case, they will often say,

"I don't want to tell you what specific area or question I want looking into because I don't want to influence you."

Well it is difficult to be "influenced" because we can only read what we see. When and If this happens, I advise that they do not need to be worried about influencing me and that if they want a specific reading, then the question will facilitate this.

General questions or readings give general interpretations, specific questions allow more opportunity for specific answers.

The Tarot Deck

A Tarot Deck generally consists of 78 Tarot Cards.

22 of which are known as Major Arcana Cards

56 of which are known as Minor Arcana Cards

The Major Arcana

The Majors are numbered 0 – up to 21

The Magician is numbered 1 and begins the sequence of the Major Arcana cards up to and including card number 21 which is the World card.

The Fool is therefore card 0 and he represents the potential energy of a new journey in life or a new situation. I position him initially for the sake of ordering at the place before the Magician card so, the Fool-card 0 is the first card of the Major Arcana although the Fool can also be positioned after the final Major Arcana card-the World.



The Major Arcana cards represent a significant message and are influential over the Minor Arcana within a reading.

We will discuss this further during the book when we meet the Major arcana cards individually.

Each individual card carries its own message and the imagery of each card acts as a visual prompt for the reader.

It helps to understand the imagery and the symbols that are presented within the imagery as this adds an additional layer of understanding and allows your intuition to connect to the card



The Minor Arcana

The Minor Arcana cards are split into 4 sections, these sections are called 'suits'

Each suit consists of 10 numbered cards from 1 up to 10 and 4 Court Cards.

The Court cards for each suit are:

Page

Knight

Queen

King



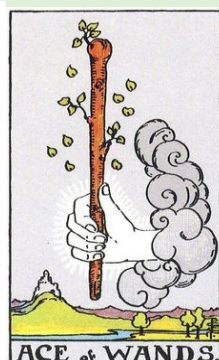
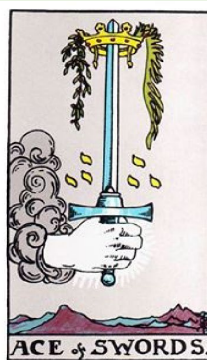
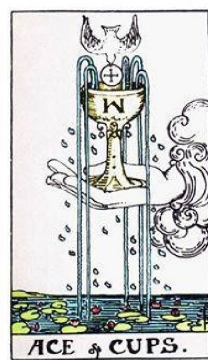
Below are the traditional Waite Smith Deck images of the four Tarot Aces that are normally found in each Tarot Deck. You can see how each card symbolises the element of its suit. It is the main featured symbol on each of the Ace cards

Cups

Pentacles

Swords

Wands



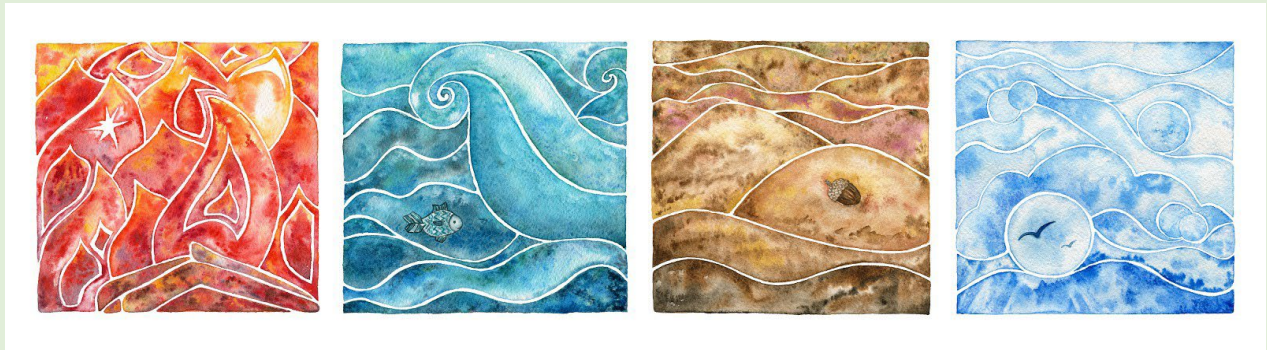
Each suit represents one of 4 elements that are found naturally around us in our environment:

Wands-Fire

Cups- Water

Pentacles-Earth

Swords-Air



Cups

Cups are of the water element and represent emotions such as love, compassion, joy, contentment, regret, sadness, and loneliness.

Emotions are internal, each person has the potential to feel a range of emotions that tend to be triggered by events and situations that they experience, emotions are the response to these triggers.

Swords are of the air element and air represents thoughts, logic, reason, and communication.

The Swords therefor offer insight into matters of the mind, ideas, reflection, mental arguments, mental challenges. Spoken truths can hurt and they can offer release and respite.

The Major Arcana cards are not based on a suit as the Minor Arcana cards are, but they are assigned an element.

Each element has its own characteristics, its own individual way of behaving and moving.

When we look at the Tarot card it helps to take into consideration the way the element behaves in each card. This will help to understand the nature of the card's message.

What is the difference between the Major and the Minor Arcana?

The Major Arcana cards focus more on significant life events, karmic situations, and life lessons. In a reading with Minor Arcana cards they hold more influence than the Minors'.

If you lay a significant number of Major Arcana cards within a reading then you can safely presume that the message is one of importance.

The Minor Arcana focuses on the everyday aspects of life such as work, finances, relationships, health, home, travel, and education.

Feelings and thoughts are expressed through the Minor Arcana and hopes, regrets and behaviours.

The Court cards of the Minor Arcana indicate messages that are being received or will be received, they show people who may be coming in and out of our life and ways we can adopt characteristics that will benefit us. They can also represent various people in our life.