

ANCESTRAL PATH TAROT

The Ancestral Path Tarot by Julie Cuccia-Watts threads together the diverse beliefs of various cultures in order to find commonalities of experience between them. It examines the traditions of our ancestors through mythology to reclaim a personal spirituality that enables us to perceive the divine in ourselves and others.

The Ancestral Path Tarot emphasizes the living tradition of all human cultures for us to factor into our world view. The deck portrays paths created by ancestors of different times and cultures for our consideration.



ANCESTRAL PATH TAROT DECK

by Julie Cuccia-Watts



Text by Tracey Hoover

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ANCESTRAL PATH TAROT

The Ancestral Path Tarot is offered by artist Julie Cuccia-Watts as an ancestral gift to you. It is hoped that you will find it a path to the discovery of your own truths. For the artist, it is a synthesis of her spiritual beliefs expressed within the structure of the Tarot.

Its imagery speaks of the human experience, emphasizing potential tapped in the past and preserved through verbal and written histories, traditions and myths. This visual feast fulfills the reason d'être of the Tarot—patterns creating meaningful stories of the human condition.

We are all embryonic ancestors, similar to the fetus in the Hanged One image in the Ancestral Path Tarot. Through the placental cord of cultural transmission, we imbibe the world view of those who shaped and adapted it. We are nourished on the legacy of their belief systems.

We are so immersed in the amniotic fluid of our own particular cultural system that we rarely realize that all this nurturing was meant to prepare us for the birth of our own impact on that culture.

The process of birth into awareness and responsibility as a mature adult is painful. The world outside our cultural womb is complex and diverse. Some womb-nurtured beliefs are inappropriate for survival and success in this world.

Many beliefs from other ancestral paths intrude upon our awareness. There are collective and individual paths of infinite variety. As we sift and sort through all that the human experience offers, from the dawn of humanity through the present, we spend a lifetime “pathworking.”

We follow the path of others; we widen or close off pathways on our journey, and we carve new paths through unexplored territory. More critically, perhaps, we also shape paths for others—contemporaries as well as descendants—who (will) view us as ancestors. Evaluating whether we are clearing a path or muddling it for others is an enlightening exercise.

The emphasis on the path of the ancestors in the Ancestral Path Tarot is not the anthropological emphasis on cults of the dead, but on a living tradition from all human cultures available for us to factor into our world view.

Defining yourself as an ancestor (and your living role models as ancestors) places you in the unique perspective offered by the Ancestral Path Tarot. The deck portrays paths created by ancestors of different cultures and times for our consideration.

WHAT IS TAROT?

A working definition of the Tarot is simple. The Tarot is a specialized series of 78 symbol-stuffed cards used for divination (reading the cards) and meditation. A Tarot deck is divided into two unequal parts: the MAJOR (GREATER) ARCANA and the MINOR (LESSER) ARCANA.

More attention is paid to the Major Arcana, a group of 22 cards, usually numbered and bearing titles defining their metaphysical or archetypal nature.

The second grouping, the 56 Minor Arcana cards, consists of four suits, usually called Swords, Wands, Cups and Pentacles. Each suit contains fourteen cards (Ace through ten, Page, Knight, Queen, and King). Its structure is similar to that of a modern playing card deck, except that the playing card Jack fuses the Page and the Knight.

The Ancestral Path Tarot adheres to the fundamental structure of Tarot decks. Its Major Arcana sequence of 22 images bears the standard titles (with the exception that the Hanged Man is now the Hanged One), but an older ordering is used. The Justice and Strength trumps exchange position (Justice is the eighth arcanum and Strength the eleventh).

The suits of the Minor Arcana are named SWORDS, STAVES (WANDS), CUPS, AND SACRED CIRCLES (PENTACLES). Numbered cards are to be viewed from

the Ten to the Ace, reversing the typical hierarchical structure. Court cards are termed King, Queen, Knight and Princess for the sake of convenience, as the divine and legendary figures of the Ancestral Path Tarot do not easily adapt to static titles.

The four suits depict representative cultures of four racial divisions: yellow Japanese Swords; black Egyptian Staves; white British Cups; and red Native American Sacred Circles. Each culture is portrayed during a distinct historical epoch: the Japanese feudal era; the Egyptian nineteenth dynasty of Ramses II; Arthurian Britain; and post-contact America.

Central myths or legends of these racial groups serve as a backdrop to each suit and trace paths our ancestors forged in shaping their world view.

In the Sword suit, a woman's epic song details the Ainu peoples' relationship with their bear god, and defines relationships between men and women, clans and tribes, and Ainu and Japanese cultures.

The Osirian myth cycle of death and resurrection weaves through the Staves. A chapter from the Egyptian Book of the Dead, entitled "Triumph Over Darkness," speaks eloquently of life and death, light and shadow, and gods and humans.

The Arthurian/Grail mythos sets the stage for the Cup suit. "Morgana's Reverie" synthesizes the story of the Cups as the sister of King Arthur prepares herself for the role of psychopomp on the path to the King's

initiation into the knowledge of his genetic inheritance and his spiritual responsibilities.

A Menominee creation legend of bear and thunder spirit ancestors and a Winnebago holy (medicine) song support the tale of the vision quest in the suit of Sacred Circles.

Court card images are deified ancestral figures. Creator deities Izanagi and Izanami and their children, Moon God Tsuki Yomi and Sun Goddess Ama Terasu, grace the Sword Court cards. Staves depict the brother-sister ruling deities, Osiris and Isis, with their sister, Nephthys, and son, Horus. The major Arthurian characters—Arthur, his wife Gwenhwyfar, his friend Lancelot, and his sister Morgana—comprise the Cup royalty. And the god/dess forms of the Sacred Circles are Grandfather Thunder, Grandmother Moon, Father Sun and Mother Earth.

Aces symbolize the raw elemental power of each suit: the clear air of the intellect associated with the Swords; the fiery spirituality of Staves; the watery emotional nature of the Cups; and the earthy physicality of Sacred Circles. Each ace is emblazoned with an image defining its suit. Swords were near-mystical objects in ancient Japan; they were believed to contain spirits and were imbued with miraculous powers. The ankh is the Egyptian staff of life and resurrection, the pre-Christian cross of a sacrificed god. The Grail quest is perhaps the most mystical experience available to the spiritually

impoverished members of western culture. And the Native American drum measures the heartbeat of the earth. It carries messages with the language of its beat, and opens pathways between the worlds of the living and the ancestors.

DEFINITIONS—MAJOR ARCANA

O THE FOOL: Beginnings; the heady moment before diving into the future; the state of being untested (inexperienced); the feeling of quivering anticipation when arriving at the brink of experience; exploring the unknown; risking; taking a leap of faith; stepping onto an untested path, or leaping onto the spiral. Consulting an oracle; paying attention to omens; using divination to clear a tangled path.

I THE MAGICIAN: Male active force; creativity, spontaneity, practicality, skill, inventiveness; self-reliance, willpower, self-confidence. The ability to imagine, create, and see ideas through to completion. The art of persuasion, or the ability to influence others. Can also represent the use of power for negative purposes: powering-over rather than empowering others; selfish hoarding rather than sharing with the community; exploiting others or resources.

II THE HIGH PRIESTESS: Female receptive energy. Intuition, understanding, serenity, wisdom, and self-sufficiency. Purity, virtue, lack of guile. Seeming lack of emotion because emotional entanglements are avoided. Conversely, the card can reveal ignorance, poor judgment, or short-sightedness. Lack of common sense,

intuition or insight. Trivializing the mysteries due to superficial motives and/or incomplete understanding.

III THE EMPRESS: Female active energy (birthing/creation, nourishing/nurturing issues); the intuitive component of a successful partnership; decisions based on facts informed by feelings; material wealth, fertility, abundance, flowing creativity, the creative process. Can also mean infertility; a difficult birth; technological intervention in natural processes; oppression, confinement, indecision, apathy, neediness, starving for love and affection, or an impoverished spirit.

IV THE EMPEROR: The patriarch; an effective leader wielding great power, capable of exercising authority, and willing to listen to counsel. Mature decisions; establishing, pursuing and attaining goals; sacrificing for the greater good; laws and regulations governing the community. A weak Emperor is immature, ineffectual or indecisive. Aggressive or violent behavior. Corrupt leadership, laws or customs.

V THE HIEROPHANT: A spiritual leader or teacher. Connection with the infinite, sacred, macrocosm, or divine; messages from non-rational sources. Insights gained by life experience; self-acceptance; maturity. Ritual and ceremony; the outer forms of worship; religious/spiritual activities and doctrine. The bestowal

of blessing, forgiveness or absolution from a spiritual leader. Conversely, can indicate a tendency to cling to outdated traditions or ideas; hollow ceremony, meaningless rituals; lip service to outmoded belief systems. Dogmatic, even fanatic, religious tyranny; unscrupulous, exploitive religious leaders; false prophecy, blind faith, cheap theatrics.

VI THE LOVERS: Choice: both freedom of choice and responsible choices. Sexuality: budding attraction; sexual expression; moral and ethical values concerning sexuality. Relationship: making decisions about the nature of a relationship; degrees of intimacy in a relationship; initiating and nurturing a relationship.

VII THE CHARIOT: Combining spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical energies to ride victoriously through life. Self-confidence acquired from family and community support. Fearlessly forging ahead, carving one's own path. Conversely, can indicate defeat where victory could have been attained. Sudden catastrophe. Insufficient planning or lack of trust collapses projects and goals. Defeatist attitude, lack of self-worth, confidence or self-esteem. Impetuous action leading to defeat.

VIII JUSTICE: Getting to the heart of an issue through judicious, considered evaluation. Advocating right

causes rather than socially popular causes. Can also mean unfairness, bias, imbalance, discrimination; rewards meted out to the undeserving. The legal system, rather than justice, is served; the scales are tipped through bribery or corruption; robbing the poor to give to the rich.

IX THE HERMIT: Solitude, contemplation; knowledge or illumination from the past; valuing traditions and the wisdom of elders or ancestors. The appearance of a mentor, guide, teacher or role model at a critical juncture in one's life path. Can also indicate being held back by the past, living in the past, or ignoring lessons of the past; fear of death; dread of aging; denying the validity of tradition.

X THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE: Fortune, fate, destiny, cycles, spirals, luck. Unlimited possibilities for good or its opposite. Seasons of being. Recognition of the cyclic nature of life and the universe. Understanding how life cycles are embedded in astrological cycles.

XI STRENGTH: An empowering strength, merging strengths in a cooperative endeavor. Attainment at considerable peril. Harmony (at-one-ness) with the environment and other life-forms in the environment. Attraction of complementary energies and qualities. Physical health and vitality. Can also show weakness,

disease, sickness; abuse of power and/or the environment; impotence or sterility.

XII THE HANGED ONE: Transition. A period of rest between significant events, a time when action is inadvisable. Surrender to inevitable circumstances; involuntary sacrifice; descent to the depths of the self; altered perceptions by examining things from a different (upside down) viewpoint. Can also indicate boredom, stagnation, impatience, ambivalence or indecision.

XIII DEATH: Seeing beyond death to rebirth; clearing away the old to make room for the new; risking renewal; radical transformation; unexpected change; death of a particular phase in one's life; completion of one cycle as a new one unfolds. Conversely, can indicate stagnation, stasis, inability to change, lack of development or evolution.

XIV TEMPERANCE: Conservation of resources, moderation, wise management of self and environment; taking a stand on the abuse of humans, animals and/or the earth. Can also imply sterility, extinction, pollution, ravaged environment, ecological disasters, or misuse of resources.

XV THE DEVIL: Karmic ties; unpaid debts; unresolved issues; loss of self to another's will; self-punishment;

violence; lack of principles; self-destructive tendencies. A more enlightened look at the trump can elicit ideas of release from bondage; throwing off shackles; overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds; releasing inner devils.

XVI THE TOWER: Unexpected, total, sudden change; breaking down old beliefs; a sudden event that destroys one's foundations or basic beliefs. Time to rebuild from the ruins of the past. The breakdown of matter to its essential elements. Catastrophic events; events that the individual has no control over except in how he or she will respond to them.

XVII THE STAR: Trust in oneself and the universe; giving of oneself unstintingly without regret or fear of loss. A refreshingly quiet phase in one's life, infused with joy and outward-directed activity. Alternately, loss of hope, faith or enthusiasm; distrust, betrayal of trust.

XVIII THE MOON: Understanding and flowing with cycles; perceiving patterns in events; creating patterns of meaning in life; weaving destiny; distinguishing between webs of illusion and reality; coming to the end of a cycle. You may be a fly caught in a web; or a poorly woven pattern may have to be undone and rewoven. Resistance to adapting to cycles may create roadblocks in your path.

XIX THE SUN: Successful culmination of a quest; basking in the light and warmth of accomplishment; accepting the bounty of life and recognizing its source. Joy, happiness, exuberance, high spirits, sharing good fortune, celebrations, success, freedom, growth, abundance, pleasure, consciousness, manifestation, and splendor.

XX JUDGMENT: Self-judgment and self-forgiveness. A time of assessment. The attraction of the soul to the Creator, or self to Higher Self. Alternatively, outer rather than inner judgment; failing challenges; shrinking away from self-knowledge and self-assessment; inability to love or forgive.

XXI THE WORLD: Ecological and/or global issues. Perfection, recognition, fulfillment, completion, success, achievement. Rewards reaped from hard work. Long-term goals accomplished. Can also indicate lack of a global perspective; tunnel vision; inability to see the forest for the trees; self-serving interests; short-term rather than long-term goals; failure to complete a task; lack of vision.

DEFINITIONS—MINOR ARCANA

Suit of Swords

KING OF SWORDS (IZANAGI): Creative skill, intellectual prowess. Using the sword as a tool rather than as a weapon. Emerging from chaos or confusion with a plan of action; action following thinking and planning. Weakly aspected, can mean destruction rather than creation, regression rather than progress, or inversion rather than extroversion.

QUEEN OF SWORDS (IZANAMI): Joy in the creative process; pride in one's creations; making something from nothing; letting what you love grow in its own light; vigilance against threats to new or hard-won accomplishments. Delight in children or grandchildren; parenting skills; family pride.

PRINCE OF SWORDS (TSUKI YOMI): Disciplining emotions; meditative practices that strengthen mind and body; fertilizing a masculine domain with feminine waters. Quiet before a storm; the science of warfare; forging a sword that is a resourceful tool, as well as a destructive weapon.

PRINCESS OF SWORDS (AMA TERASU): The Spiritual Warrior; victory following an inner conflict of the soul;

the quiet aftermath of an initiatory experience; repose after struggle. Basking in the warmth of the sun. Processing the lessons of the sword, realizing its duality as a tool or a weapon.

TEN OF SWORDS: Going a long way to make a short point. Disruptive, chaotic, violent change. Overkill. Blowing a situation out of proportion. In addition, the drama of victimization; perpetuating the cycles of abuser-victim; maintaining the victim's role as an excuse for not getting on with one's life.

NINE OF SWORDS: A prophetic dream. Being in a critical position to affect events. Being overwhelmed by a sudden intuition of danger. Acknowledging the accuracy of insights, especially when they are not pleasant. Foreknowledge that demands action.

EIGHT OF SWORDS: Being held captive by one's own traditions; blinded by the path of tradition; societal boundaries. Paralysis by fear; fearing to act because of the possibility of scandal or misunderstood motives. Alternatively, pitting one's will against fate/destiny; braving scandal or scorn to do the right thing; acting despite overwhelming obstacles.

SEVEN OF SWORDS: Most commonly, the thieves' card. Manipulation, extortion, stealth—and getting away with

it. A warning to carefully evaluate who you are dealing with in a given situation.

SIX OF SWORDS: Mental harmony. A journey of the mind. Separating oneself from uncertainty. Order in nature as intellect is exerted over matter. As part of the bigger picture, however, depicts a false sense of security as behind-the-scenes activities undermine, exploit and betray.

FIVE OF SWORDS: Idealism, youthful enthusiasm, even naiveté. A time of learning, absorbing, and training. Making a commitment to an ethos or organization. Alternately, blind faith, unquestioning loyalty.

FOUR OF SWORDS: You cannot prevail against greater forces; release ideals or goals that cannot be actualized. Alternatively, listen to your inner voice and act upon its message. Don't bury good ideas.

THREE OF SWORDS: The sorrow of separation, especially from family and relatives. A temporary separation to mature or gain perspective. Weaning from a deep attachment or addictive dependency. The releasing of expectations about other people; letting others make their own way in the world.

TWO OF SWORDS: A stalemate. A difficult choice must be made; at this time, however, no decision resolves the issue or problem. Indecision results from the lack of satisfactory choices available.

ACE OF SWORDS: The element air, the power of the intellect, the ability to think and reason. Like the other aces, it embodies the potential of the suit; it does not actualize or manifest Sword qualities.

Suit of Staves

KING OF STAVES (OSIRIS): Judgment, measuring, assaying, weighing. Decisions, law, rules, regulations, standards; establishing criteria; critical evaluations. May have something to do with the legal system. Adversely, can indicate harsh judgment, guilt pinned on the innocent, or injustices.

QUEEN OF STAVES (ISIS): The perfect blend of body, emotions, and intellect in a spiritual venture. The world of magic and mysticism brought to the practical level (i.e. applying magical principles in the real world for a tangible result). A committed woman of will, strength and determination. A risk-taker for personal concerns, she may show a curious lack of interest in other issues.

PRINCE OF STAVES (HORUS): Inflamed passion. Emotion excited by new experiences. Willingness to fight for what is right. Preparation for battle, a spiritual rather than physical struggle. Using the fire of the soul to combat the vagaries of human existence. Training to reach the peak of one's spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical prowess.

PRINCESS OF STAVES (NEPHTHYS): Messages from the other side, a higher plane, or a different dimension. Discerning between right and wrong, and making a stand for the right. Participating in a just cause. The eruption of something due to tremendous forces underneath the surface of everyday reality.

TEN OF STAVES: Responsibilities and obligations can be oppressive and stressful. Distinctions between exploiting and being exploited need to be examined. Slavery and/or servitude to society, family, or one's job.

NINE OF STAVES: Hard, physical, manual labor that may produce weariness, exhaustion, fatigue, or even illness. The need for a rest or break from a difficult project.

EIGHT OF STAVES: Swift, speed, skill, racing against danger. The swift resolution of a situation or problem. Negatively, it can imply deliberate, wanton

destruction, desecrating the sacred, or defying authority through destructive acts.

SEVEN OF STAVES: Initiation. Induction into the mysteries. Solving the riddle of the sphinx; to will, to know, to dare, and to keep silent. The coming together of experience. Goals are achieved by synthesizing the experiences (initiations) of the past.

SIX OF STAVES: Victory, achievement, adulation, honor, awards, celebration, or recognition; overcoming obstacles. Adversely, a hollow theatrical; an inconclusive or false victory. The pitfalls of patriotism and hero worship.

FIVE OF STAVES: Discussion, planning, strategies, negotiation. Cooperative efforts by diverse groups to achieve a common goal. A pooling of skills and talents to create something on a grand scale.

FOUR OF STAVES: Home; the personal environment; the boundaries of one's world. Additionally, family bonds and relationships; a successful marriage and/or partnership; the family as representative of society or civilization.

THREE OF STAVES: Successful conclusion of a journey or project. Leaping back into the mainstream of activity

following a period of withdrawal or inactivity. Inheritance; passing power, wealth or wisdom to the next generation.

TWO OF STAVES: Potential energy, fertility. Temporary but necessary separations. The need for patience to see a project through to completion. Waiting, with its attendant frustrations. Watching others act while one cannot act.

ACE OF STAVES: Elemental fire, flame, light, warmth and energy. Growth, enterprise, beginnings, potential. Activity, initiative, creativity. Conversely, the destructive, burning use of fire or light.

Suit of Cups

KING OF CUPS (ARTHUR): A responsible, learned person. Interest in the arts and sciences. A person with powerful emotions who has developed incredible control over them; this emotional mastery is used to unleash emotion at appropriate times.

QUEEN OF CUPS (GWENHWYFAR): A creative dreamer, poetic and gifted with vision, tranquil and dreamy, yet magnetic and compelling. A committed and loyal partner. A person who flows rather than trudges through life.

PRINCE OF CUPS (LANCELOT): The romantic dreamer—warm, impassioned, attractive, and appealing. Setting out on life's journey with all the romantic idealism of youth. An artist—musician, dancer, painter, poet, or writer. The idealized lover.

PRINCESS OF CUPS (MORGANA): A magical being, one who sees via the lens of insight; a healer, especially of the emotions. Knowledge of herbs and the mysteries of the earth; a deep, intuitive understanding of earth and water energies. In addition, charismatic energy; magnetism; attraction.

TEN OF CUPS: Home, happiness; savoring family, friends and temporal success. Establishing territory, surveying one's domain, marking the boundaries of one's personal environment.

NINE OF CUPS: Community celebration; public events; fellowship/sistership; joining a group of people who share similar interests and/or values. Conversely, hollow rituals, meaningless celebrations, and events that are devoid of substance.

EIGHT OF CUPS: Abandoning assured success for an uncertain future. Dissatisfaction with material success. Spiritual yearnings. Leave-takings, farewells (temporary and permanent).

SEVEN OF CUPS: Visions, omens, innate intuitions that rip the illusionary veil of everyday reality. Or, a determination to discover what lies behind the obvious, to confront the meaning and purpose of one's existence.

SIX OF CUPS: Memories, childhood, the past impinging on the present. Looking to the past for inspiration; longing for simpler, less complicated times; a desire to resurrect the past. Also, avoidance of negative childhood issues.

FIVE OF CUPS: Disappointment, inability to enjoy what life has to offer, immersion in regret or depression, emotional confusion and distress. Also, mental illness brought on by emotional problems, psychological illnesses.

FOUR OF CUPS: Ennui, discontent, boredom, laziness, estrangement, depression, weariness, loss of hope. Physical incapacity or handicap; mental, emotional or physical illness; a spiritual wasteland. Numbing emotions with alcohol or drugs.

THREE OF CUPS: Reconciliation, reunion, renewal, commitment, promises, vows. Issues of trust and honor. Reconnecting with people and places from the past. Being restored by integrating the past into the present. Combining the spiritual and material aspects of one's life.

TWO OF CUPS: Love, marriage, friendship renewed, reciprocal affection or passion. Reunion or reconciliation following a separation. The beloved mirrors the lover. Bonds of affinity, sympathy, understanding, and empathy that may be karmic.

ACE OF CUPS: Light is shed in dark corners to reveal simple solutions to complex problems. The answer to one's question appears in the form of the brimming Cup ("wish your will; drink your fill"). The clarity of the liquid in the Cup may illuminate an answer to problems muddled by emotional turmoil.

Suit of Sacred Circles

KING OF SACRED CIRCLES (GRANDFATHER THUNDER): An undeviating, serious attitude of watchfulness. One who is slow to anger, but volcanic in eruption. Stern, implacable, steady, noble, reliable, courageous, persevering. Weak aspects include volatile responses or over-reacting.

QUEEN OF SACRED CIRCLES (GRANDMOTHER MOON): The wisdom of the feminine/maternal principle. The wisdom of the grandmothers, elders, or ancestors. Nurturance, being cared for, the release of one's burdens to a willing recipient, unconditional love and acceptance. The bounty of the earth is available for the taking.

PRINCE OF SACRED CIRCLES (FATHER SUN):

Learning experiences. Reverence for the growth processes made possible through the union of the sun and the earth. Can represent one's genetic father, or a fatherly role model. A tutor, teacher, or mentor who shares knowledge and wisdom. One who nurtures the young, helping to develop newly planted ideas and concepts.

PRINCESS OF SACRED CIRCLES (MOTHER EARTH):

A person with a strong connection with the earth, which can manifest as concern for the environment, concern for animals and children, or domestic concerns of the home and hearth. The traditional meanings of thrift, diligence and benevolence apply here, as well as the negative implications of waste and laziness.

TEN OF SACRED CIRCLES: The extended family, kinship, clan matters, the blood line, family matters, the accumulated wealth of experience offered by the extended family, relationships with relatives, the wealth of one's family traditions. Conversely, problems in the family arena.

NINE OF SACRED CIRCLES: Mastery of life. Maturity brings wisdom and the responsibility to share wisdom with others. Savoring the blessings bestowed by age. In a less exalted sense, the image points out the dangers of hero-worship, dependency upon doctrine, or unworthy gurus.

EIGHT OF SACRED CIRCLES: Apprenticeship; learning a craft or vocation; job training. Physical dexterity and skill. Alternatively, half-hearted efforts; chasing shallow goals rather than developing inner convictions; going through the motions; lack of purpose or direction.

SEVEN OF SACRED CIRCLES: The rewards of hard work. The bounty of the harvest. Communal sharing of food and/or resources. The fruits of labor sustain the community through the winter season. Conservation of resources for lean times.

SIX OF SACRED CIRCLES: Reciprocation; sharing prosperity with those who helped you become prosperous. The giving or receiving of a gift. Passing on of wealth in the Native American custom of potlatch.

FIVE OF SACRED CIRCLES: Searching for a direction or purpose in life. Tapping the subconscious for direction. A spiritual retreat. Spiritual risks. The pause between preparing for and undertaking a spiritual ordeal.

FOUR OF SACRED CIRCLES: The home environment as basis for life's experiences. Creating harmony in one's home or work environment. Setting things in motion following thorough preparation. Beginning phase of a task or project.

THREE OF SACRED CIRCLES: A craft is mastered when (1) the body, (2) the materials and (3) the idea all become one. Ethics and values are consonant with one's lifestyle. Work reflects values. Balance between work, social, family and spiritual responsibilities.

TWO OF SACRED CIRCLES: Integration of the spiritual and physical worlds; balancing the two worlds. The card illustrates a peak experience, an event that will cast a shadow over one's future. It shows what can be achieved by a fully empowered human being.

ACE OF SACRED CIRCLES: The gifts of the earth (plants, metals, fertile soil, precious stones and minerals). The earth is indeed a sacred circle.

THE CELTIC CROSS SPREAD

The Celtic Cross spread is the workhorse of the Tarot world. First appearing in 1910 in *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot* by Arthur Edward Waite, it has retained its popularity through the twenty-first century.

Its popularity is probably due to its utilitarianism. It is an ideal vehicle for readers to employ, as the spread contains enough cards for a thorough reading. Most seekers are satisfied with the content of this pattern, as well as the amount of time it takes the reader to interpret the content.

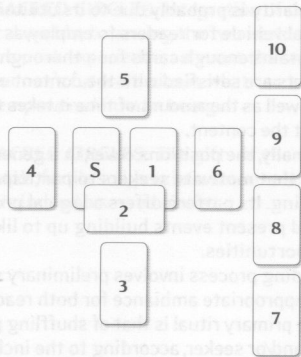
Additionally, the positions cover, in a general sense, the issues that motivate seekers to participate in a Tarot reading. Its pattern offers a logical progression of past and present events building up to likely future opportunities.

The reading process involves preliminary rituals to create an appropriate ambiance for both reader and seeker. The primary ritual is that of shuffling performed by reader and/or seeker, according to the inclination of the reader. Most readers evolve a pattern of shuffling and cutting the cards a requisite number of times before the reading commences.

Regardless of the ritual(s) employed, the reading eventually comes down to the reader's interpretation of the cards in the spread. The interpretation is dependent upon a card's individual meaning, its upright or reversed

state, its position in the spread, and its proximity to or distance from the other cards in the spread.

The following page provides a description of each position in the Celtic Cross spread.



Position Meanings

5. **Significator** The Seeker (Inner World).
1. **The Outer World** What is happening in the Seeker's environment.
2. **The Mirror** A reflection of the Significator.
3. **Basis/Foundation** Issue grounding the Reading.
4. **Past** Impacting the Present (S, 1, 2).
5. **Possible Future** Possibilities (not probabilities).
6. **Immediate Future** What will happen next.
7. **Karmic Implications** Influence from past lives.
8. **Influence of Others** Opinions and actions of others.
9. **Hopes and/or Fears** Reaction of the Seeker to the events of the Reading.
10. **Probable Future** Most likely future outcomes.

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