

TAROT 101

These read like rules, but they are guidelines based on my experience. Keep what works for you, throw out what doesn't work.

Get a deck.

- Have a friend buy your first deck, or don't. Do what makes you feel empowered to use the deck. Witches like ritual so feel free to follow the ritual of gifting if it does that for you. It's not required, however.
- Pick one that resonates with you.
 - What path are you on? What gods do you work with? What mythologies are you drawn to? Your deck can and should reflect that.
 - Rider Waite is a real deck, not just a starter. IT WORKS, so don't feel like you're using training wheels if you resonate with it.
- For some, decks are religious objects, for others they are strictly a tool. However you see them, reflect on the guidance you receive from them. This how you teach yourself through the cards.
- Decks are a tool. They don't all work for the same job.
 - The energy or feeling of a deck can tell you what questions it does best with. Decks can be ritualistic, direct, poetic, gendered, specific to a sphere of influence, so having some sense of the question can guide your choice of deck.
 - The deck I reference in this podcast, The Gill Tarot, always worked best for questions about spiritual development or personal development. The use of the superconscious, ego and ID on the major arcana can remind you to look more deeply at your motivations, known and unknown. The Robin Wood Deck I mentioned often gives me readings more about the material world. For those working with Celtic deities, it can be especially religious.

Charge the deck.

- First use, take a week or so and charge the deck before you start reading. Sleep with them, flip thru them and handle them a lot so you are acquainted. To me, they are ready when my random pulls start to feel applicable to my life, or anytime after 7 days.
- Ever so often, I use the full moon to charge my cards. I often use the major Sabbats as a reminder to cleanse, clear and recharge. (Even my lithium batteries. Witchcraft is practical.)
- If I am reading and it's been a hot minute, I use my hands to warm the deck up before I start.

Learn the meanings of the cards.

- Daily pulls and meditation can help you learn the meaning of the cards generally, but also help you learn what the card means to you. *Important:* The cards you pull are because of who you are and will speak to you directly. Your nuances of meaning are valid. However, if a card reads radically different to you than it usually is interpreted that can be a sign that that deck isn't right for you.
- When I have a new deck, I also do spontaneous rapid-fire pulls where I just spit out the first thing that comes to me when I see a card. I will pull multiple cards and do this in quick succession and then "score" myself to see how well I work with that deck.

Learn some layouts.

- 1 and 3 cards are fine, but do challenge yourself to learn the Celtic Cross and other larger spreads. There is a reason.
 - The more specific you want a reading to be of a broad area, the more cards the initial spread needs to be.

- 3-5 card spreads tend to be broad overview answers for general questions. Can be more specific if the querent asks a specific question.
- *Timing:* Readings usually go no further than 6 months out for divination, 3 months is more likely.

The Reading

- The moment before as a reader is one of preparation.
 - I tend to do a ground and centering meditation before I read. It's gotten shorter as I age but could run up to 20 minutes if I planned on doing a long reading or multiple readings in one sitting.
 - Right before I read, I tap into that calm center again while holding my cards and clearing my mind. I tend to repeat, "no expectations, no obligations" to myself.
 - Setup for the ritual of a read. If candles put you in the right mind space, light them. I like to use a cloth so the cards are protected from the surface of the table. It's practical in the main: I don't want to damage the card and leave a mark that makes them identifiable from others. You can also store the cards in the cloth to retain the energy in them. Do whatever makes you focus.
- Shuffle the cards. However you want, just mix them up good. I tend to shuffle, then and shuffle at the start of the night and shuffle once in between people and focus on allowing the cards to speak clearly.
- Ask the Question. If it's me, I ask the question as I shuffle. For others, I give instructions to deeply concentrate on the issue or questions as the querent cuts the deck.
- Cut the Deck. I have the questioner cut the deck into 3 piles as they like. Then based on my gut, they assemble the cut or I do. On the podcast, I assembled since Kate & Emily mentioned they were getting the same cards when recording.
- Lay Out the Cards. Make sure you have space for the cards to be laid out. I lay them face up with no reversals unless the reversal makes more sense in a reading.
 - Whatever layout you use, take a moment to study and read the big picture.

Read for people aka Querents.

- Think about what expectations you want the Querent to have and explain things in a way that sets that experience up.
- You don't have to read for skeptics. Don't waste your energy on people who are closed down to you.
- Court cards do not need to be selected to represent a querent in readings. In fact, not choosing one, let's a random card tell you what part of the querent's life the spread is interested in.
- Read for as many and as much as you can. I used to give away reading to people for free at lunch every day.
- Limit the number of readings you do for yourself or anyone to no more than 1 complex reading a week. More than that can generate anxiety about your skills and yours/their future.

Clearing the deck.

- After a while or several readings at once, a deck will develop a buildup of energy that needs to be cleaned up. This calls for a cleansing, aka clearing.
- There are a few ways to do this: smudging, running a crystal around and over the cards come to mind. I had a friend who wiped the cards with linen and then washed the fabric. Whatever works.
- In the podcast, I said I collect this old energy in my crystal and toss the energy away. What I didn't say and is **SUPERIMPORTANT**: I specifically direct that energy out my window and then picture the energy returning into the earth where it is reabsorbed. I focus on this image until I sense the energy grounded and returned. Always send energy somewhere specific. Don't send random energy out anywhere. It's like tossing a brick out the window, you or anyone could get hurt.

Replacing the deck.

- When or Never? It's a personal preference. I have friends who only replace decks when they lose a card or the card becomes recognizable from wear. I do it every decade or so.

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- Generally, I pass a good deck along after clearing it and storing it for a year or so.
- In one case, the cards felt so gross to the touch, I bagged them and thru them away in a trash can outside with a visualization of the energy leaving my home and being recycled and cleaned up.

IMPORTANT: My deck doesn't respond/is angry/hates me/only says negative things.

- Not every deck resonates with everyone. If a new deck hasn't warmed up to me in 7 days, I start using it anyway. Two things can happen:
 - I develop a working relationship with a card deck and it works for certain environments/situations.
 - The deck never makes sense when I read it. In that case, I box it until the owner shows up. Every tarot reader I know has the story of a deck that someone else could read beautifully that did nothing for them.
- Tarot cards reflect the energy of the art or creator.
 - If the artwork is dark and you see dark as negative, you will get a negative reading from those cards.
 - If their belief system doesn't align with you, you may find yourself argue with what the cards offer.
- You are in a negative space and your cards are speaking to it. If you feel like your life is out of control, or you struggle with an emotional issue, your cards will speak to that. So stop reading for any type of divination purpose for yourself or others. You will only read what you are emotionally experiencing and may even get yourself trapped in a feedback loop of your negative emotions.

Ways witches use Tarot

- Spellwork & Divination
 - Some covens and traditions use tarot to plan their rituals or spellwork out.
 - A reading can check on the motivation for those who work with threefold law.
 - The cards can help plan the timing of a ritual or working if everything else is equal.
 - It can also test outcomes. Drawing a card to check the possible result of this ritual or spellwork and adjusting until the cards reflect the desired outcome.
 - For solitaires, you should use tarot as a magickal tool just like a coven does.
 - It's important feedback when you are working alone.
 - **IMPORTANT:** Read to get clarity for your motivations before committing to any spellwork that affects other people without their consent.
- Self-Knowledge was discussed in podcast.
- Divination/Fortune-telling was discussed in podcast.

PROFIT!

- Do what is ethical to you. Some witches and Wiccans do not think it is morally okay to be paid for readings. Some do. Do what you believe.

Develop a Philosophy.

- Hopefully, it's clear that your tarot philosophy is connected to your worldview as a witch. Look for those connections.