





PHILOSOPHY CARDS

THE EXISTENTIAL TAROT DECK

Embrace your existential freedom and create the future you desire.

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FOREWORD

As an artist and a philosophy professor with a specialization in aesthetics, I have dedicated most of my adult life to philosophy and art. I also love to inspire learning in fun and interesting ways. Philosophy Cards is the culmination of these passions: a bit of philosophy, a beautifully composed series of artworks, and a teaching tool.

I hope Philosophy Cards encourages folks to learn philosophy by presenting it in an entertaining and readable way. I also hope Philosophy Cards motivates self-reflection, cultivates the imagination, and helps develop critical thinking skills. If this happens, perhaps Philosophy Cards will play a part in advancing our understanding of philosophy, so that someday philosophy will be centrally located in our culture where it belongs.

Grab a friend, talk it out, and have fun!





INTRODUCTION

Philosophy Cards combines the structure of tarot cards with concepts from philosophy. With Philosophy Cards, you embrace your existential freedom and create the future you desire.

The Ancient Greek aphorism "Know thyself" has greatly influenced Western thought. The idea sounds simple, but it is loaded with assumptions: (1) we all have a true self; and (2) we all have a preexisting path or purpose to discover. Self-help concepts such as finding yourself and finding your truth are popular modern expressions of this idea.

Although tarot began as a card game, it has similarly evolved as a tool for self-discovery and, for some, a form of divination that offers insight into the future, the right course of action, and the nature of the universe.

In the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche philosophized "with a hammer" by shattering traditional philosophical concepts. Nietzsche's infamous statement "God is dead" is a metaphor for the loss of the world as a source of inherent meaning and value. The only meaning in the world is subjective and highly personal, since we create that meaning *ex nihilo* and impose it onto the world. We can now consider the creative role we play in fashioning the world and ourselves.

Taking a cue from Nietzsche, the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre replaced the Greek aphorism with a new one: Create thyself.



According to Sartre, "existence precedes essence"; we are thrown into the world without essence or purpose and then we define ourselves by way of active choices we make throughout our lives. There is no true self. There is no human nature. There is no human essence. We just are. And we are nothing until we make ourselves something.

In an existentialist worldview, there is no preexisting path or purpose to discover; instead, you create your own path through existentially free choices. This is the guiding idea behind Philosophy Cards. You are encouraged to take ownership of your story by creating and altering the spreads and their interpretations. You are existentially free.



The traditional tarot deck is made up of 78 cards. Each card has a general meaning, but the interpretation of the card shifts depending on its position in the layout and its relation to other cards.

Philosophy Cards preserves the structure of traditional tarot, replacing the symbolism with concepts from existentialism and related ideas influencing existentialism.

The starting points for Philosophy Cards' interpretations are concepts that focus on the role of infinite freedom and responsibility in reference to all aspects of human existence.



Tarot decks include two main categories: the major arcana and the minor arcana. There are 22 major arcana cards and 56 minor arcana cards. Each card is commonly thought to unlock mysteries about ourselves and the world.

The term “arcana” conjures notions of hidden secrets to be discovered through the activity of tarot. Philosophy Cards maintains the overall composition of the suits but abandons the concept of arcana. No hidden secrets here.

Traditionally, the major arcana cards indicate external forces at work in our lives. Philosophy Cards replaces the major arcana with 22 **World** cards that explore our existential relationship with the external world. “World” signifies the subjective attributes of the world as we journey through life. The lack of cosmic, mystical forces in the 22 World cards can offer us greater freedom of insight.

The traditional minor arcana consists of 56 cards, 16 of which are court cards. There are four suits in the traditional minor arcana, each with an ace through ten and four members of the court—a king, a queen, a knight, and a page (or jack). Each suit references a different aspect of life. The four suits are Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles. Philosophy Cards’ revised suits are Will, Emotion, Reason, and Action, respectively. A more gender-balanced court replaces the androcentric court of traditional tarot.

The Suit of Wands is traditionally the suit of desire and intention, as well as ambition, energy, passion, and fire. Philosophy Cards’ **Suit of Will** replaces the Suit of Wands. The suit represents the role of will in the existential journey: ambitions, desires, drives, and passions are sometimes aligned and



sometimes in competition. Will is our inner desire to propel forward, and it can be a starting point for action and a catalyst that can precipitate change. But desire does not necessarily lead to action. Philosophy Cards' metaphor for will is fire, since fire burns but also dissipates. The image of a flame replaces the traditional symbol of the wand.

The Suit of Cups is traditionally the suit of emotion and intuition, and it represents our inner responses to ideas, events, and environments.

Philosophy Cards' **Suit of Emotion** replaces the Suit of Cups. The suit represents the role of emotion and mood in our existential journey. Our emotions play a part in motivating certain choices, but they do not determine our actions. Philosophy Cards' metaphor for emotion is the garden, and the symbol of a flower replaces the traditional symbol of a cup. Like flowers in a garden, emotions are plentiful and they come in many varieties. They may also grow unpredictably and require attention.

The Suit of Swords is traditionally the suit of the intellect and decisions. This suit represents the intellectual effort needed to pursue a goal, commit to a plan of action, and solve problems related to our goal.

Philosophy Cards' **Suit of Reason** replaces the Suit of Swords. We use reason on our existential journey to connect with future possibilities and we commit to a plan of action by attuning reason and resoluteness. Philosophy Cards' metaphor for reason is the stone, which replaces the symbol of the sword in traditional tarot.



Stones were humans' first tools, hewn from raw material into arrowheads and hammer stones. Reason, too, is a tool for creating meaning and shaping a world from earth.

The Suit of Pentacles is traditionally the suit that refers to the material world and our physical experiences.

Philosophy Cards' **Suit of Action** replaces the Suit of Pentacles. Action is the culmination of will, emotion, and reason, and it is fundamental in our existential journey. Action is the materialization of choice and how we shape reality. Our mastery of the material plane is the result of existentially free choices inextricably linked to action. The symbol of the pentacle is replaced with a four-pointed star: a stripped-down pentacle. The five points of a pentacle represent the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—with the addition of a fifth element, the spirit and the divine. With Philosophy Cards' four-pointed star, the divine is absent and our being-in-the-world is stripped of any magic or faith.



READING PHILOSOPHY CARDS

Each card in Philosophy Cards introduces an existential concept; when you do a reading, use the card's concepts and imagery to look for insight about your life and your question. Using a **concept-driven approach**, you can read about each card in the guidebook as you draw cards in your reading and apply the ideas to your life. This approach will help you learn philosophy while you consider the cards' meanings in your unique situation. Or, put the guidebook down and choose an **image-driven approach**. Use the art on each card as your inspiration to interpret the spread. This approach encourages you to create your own concepts and apply them to your reading. However you choose to interpret the cards, they are here to help you create the future you want for yourself.





SIMPLE SPREADS

1. **Quasi-Traditional Spreads** modify simple tarot card spreads to suit the essence of Philosophy Cards. Below, find some samples to use as the basis of your readings. Feel free to move around the order of the cards in any way that helps you get the reading you want.

Draw three cards:

- (1) What is going well in my life?
- (2) What is not going well?
- (3) How, specifically, can I embrace my existential freedom to get back on track?

Draw three cards:

- (1) Past;
 - (2) Present;
 - (3) Future.
- (Note: In accordance with existentialism we are not attached to our past.)

Draw three cards:

- (1) What can I let go of today?
- (2) What can I pay attention to today?
- (3) What can I embrace for growth?

Draw four cards:

- (1) What is the greatest obstacle to my freedom today?
- (2) How is this obstacle limiting me?
- (3) How, specifically, can I embrace my existential freedom to overcome this obstacle?
- (4) What would I like to change when I overcome this obstacle?



Draw four cards:

- (1) My perceived life purpose.
- (2) My perceived life purpose in reference to others.
- (3) The life purpose I most value.
- (4) How can I embrace my existential freedom to create for myself the life purpose I most value?

Draw four cards:

- (1) How I see myself.
- (2) How others see me.
- (3) How I want to see myself.
- (4) How can I realize my vision of myself through active choices?

Draw five cards:

- (1) What possibilities can I possibly draw into my horizon if I follow path one?
- (2) What possibilities can I possibly draw into my horizon if I follow path two?
- (3) What possibilities can I possibly draw into my horizon if I follow path three?
- (4) What additional information do I need?
- (5) What can I do to create the possibilities I want in my horizon?

Draw five cards:

- (1) What can I let go of to move forward?
- (2) How, specifically, can I embrace my existential freedom to actually let go?
- (3) What is influencing my current decisions?
- (4) How, specifically, can I embrace my existential freedom to make decisions autonomously?
- (5) What can I learn from this?



2. **Embrace Your Existential Freedom Spreads** encourage you to embrace your existential freedom by adding any card or cards to the traditional spreads to find the interpretation that best suits your goals for the reading.

3. With **Create Your Own Spreads** use the cards in whatever way is useful to you as you explore a question or topic in your life. Consider choosing a challenge or goal, then ask questions like the ones below and draw cards to answer them—like a conversation with your existentialist friend. Structure the reading however you like. There are no rules except the ones you impose on yourself.

- What possibilities do I want to draw into my horizon?
- What obstacles do I perceive as getting in the way of getting what I want?
- What, specifically, can I do to embrace my existential freedom and overcome obstacles?
- What strengths I can develop to help me achieve my goal(s)?
- How can I create new strengths to help me achieve my goal(s)?
- Specifically, what can I do to build myself for success?
- What opportunities can help me get what I want?
- How can I create new opportunities?
- What do I perceive as outside of my control?
- How can I reinterpret my situation to create a new outcome?
- How can I re-contextualize the circumstances of my situation to create a new outcome?
- What, specifically, can I do to embrace my existential freedom and achieve the best outcome?





0 THE PAINTER: "In life man commits himself and draws his own portrait, outside of which there is nothing." – Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism"

In traditional tarot, the first card is The Fool, which is the starting point and the beginning of the journey; nothing is yet known, and we are playing with possibilities. The Painter is the starting point of our existential journey, characterized by possibilities and about which nothing is known. This painter does not start with a ready-made canvas. This painter creates her canvas and her tools. She creates from nothing. The Painter recognizes that she is nothing until she makes herself something; her existence precedes her essence.

1 THE AGENT: "Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss, or a fungus or a cauliflower. Before that projection of the self nothing exists." – Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism"

In traditional tarot The Magician follows The Fool, because The Magician represents the beginnings of action. The Agent represents the concept of subjectivity as the beginning of action. Subjectivity refers to the "I" that is directed toward and acts upon the world through a projection of active consciousness, unique to each individual. We are different from objects such as fungi, cauliflower, apples, and rocks, because we exist with the ability to interpret and contextualize our surroundings. This is the starting point for our active choices and the source of our existential freedom.



2 FREE SPIRIT: "He was free, free in every way, free to behave like a fool or a machine, free to accept, free to refuse, free to equivocate. ... He could do what he liked, no one had the right to advise him..." – Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Age of Reason*

In traditional tarot this card is The High Priestess—the mediator of the imagination and assimilation of ideas. The Free Spirit mediates and ultimately embraces the possibilities that accompany a self and a world characterized by nothingness. The Free Spirit accepts that being existentially free means being attached to nothing, including our past or any presumably fixed nature or preconceived image of ourselves (whether initiated by us or others). The Free Spirit understands that existential freedom is infinite freedom and she relishes in that freedom. The Free Spirit has not yet taken into consideration the responsibility that accompanies existential freedom; thus, there is a possibility she will meander in her freedom.

3 THE DIONYSIAN: "One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star." – Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

In traditional tarot The Empress represents art, creativity, and beauty. The Dionysian symbolizes a sense of drunkenness and madness that inspires spontaneity and improvisation. This energy motivates creativity through chaotic emotions related to impulse and instinct, rather than reason. The Dionysian acts with enthusiasm and ecstasy and can lose a sense of self through intoxication. The Dionysian plays a central role in how we shape our reality *ex nihilo*.



4 THE APOLLONIAN: "The image of Apollo ... must include that measured limitation, that freedom from wilder impulses, that wise calm of the image-making god." – Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*

In traditional tarot The Emperor represents structure, authority, pragmatics, and regulation. The Apollonian symbolizes our ability to define the stuff of the world, thus individualizing things and making them distinct by providing form or structure. The Apollonian is the energy by which we create our image of the world out of nothing and, in doing so, we set ourselves apart from the rest of the world. The Apollonian plays a central role in how we shape reality *ex nihilo*.

5 SISYPHUS: "All Sisyphus' silent joy is contained therein. His fate belongs to him. His rock is a thing. Likewise, the absurd man, when he contemplates his torment, silences all the idols." – Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*

In traditional tarot, The Hierophant represents education, knowledge, and progress, as well as our need to understand through belief systems and conformity. Sisyphus perpetually rolls a rock up a mountain, only to watch it fall back down. This is a metaphor for the perpetual cycle and ultimate failure of our attempts to find meaning in a meaningless world—the Absurd. Sisyphus is the absurd hero and his punishment is representative of the human condition: He must struggle perpetually and without hope of success. Sisyphus accepts that there is nothing more to life than this absurd struggle and he finds happiness in his struggle.



6 THE OTHER: "By the mere appearance of the Other, I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as on an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other."

– Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

In traditional tarot, The Lovers symbolizes decisions, relationships, and the effect others have on our life experiences. The Other symbolizes the role of other people in relation to our existential freedom. Since the gaze of the Other is always acting upon us and there remains a continuous threat that we will conform to that gaze, the Other exists as a potential obstacle to our existential freedom. We appear to the Other as an object. If we conform to the gaze of the Other, we deny our subjectivity and, ultimately, our existential freedom.

7 THE ARCHITECT: "For the game of creation ... a sacred yes is needed." – Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

In traditional tarot, The Chariot symbolizes victory, will, self-assertion, and self-mastery. The Architect symbolizes the idea of projecting the human drive for mastery and control (will to power) inward. The Architect is a master of creativity. He willfully fashions himself as he establishes his own values rooted in the earth. The Architect builds himself in his preferred image of humankind; his actions project values onto the world. Thus, as he fashions his own image, he builds the image of all humankind. The Architect embodies *amor fati*, while recognizing fate is a human matter.



8 METAMORPHOSIS: "This world is the will to power—and nothing besides." – Friedrich Nietzsche, Will to Power

In traditional tarot, Strength symbolizes fortitude, force, and self-control. Metamorphosis symbolizes a continuous mutual force relationship between ourselves and our environment—will to power. Will to power is inextricably linked to our will to life. It is the source of our desire to seek knowledge and truth; the birth of art, science, philosophy, and religion. Will to power is the ultimate source of the reality we create ex nihilo. It isn't simply a reactive force tied to our evolutionary survival. It is active and transformative; thus, metamorphosis.

9 ZARATHUSTRA: "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal: what can be loved in man is that he is an over-going and a down-going." – Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra

In traditional tarot, The Hermit is a prisoner of discovery who lights the way for others and symbolizes introspection, searching, guidance, and solitude. Zarathustra is a prophet who faces an important task: teaching us to revert otherworldly cosmology and give meaning to the Earth. In pursuit of this task, Zarathustra has significant encounters with others from which he experiences deep crises and changes of heart. He discovers there is more wisdom in our bodies than the deepest philosophies could uncover. He realizes that we are under constant transformation in a pursuit of self-overcoming: We are a rope, rather than a goal.



10 THE ABSURD: "The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world." – Albert Camus

In traditional tarot, Wheel of Fortune represents turning points, movement, change, cycles, and impermanence. The Absurd symbolizes a universe characterized by lack of meaning and value and our tendency to search for meaning and value. The Absurd marks the confrontation between our need for meaning and the inevitable silence of the world. This cannot be reconciled and any attempts to do so are illusions. The counterpart to The Absurd is Sisyphus, the absurd hero who finds joy in meaninglessness and chooses to embrace life in the face of its absurdity.

11 ETERNAL RETURN: "In the world of eternal return the weight of unbearable responsibility lies heavy on every move we make." – Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

In traditional tarot, Justice represents justice, responsibility, decision, and cause and effect, and reminds us that our actions have consequences. Eternal Return symbolizes consequences of the hypothetical idea that our lives and actions will repeat perpetually. As a metaphor for anguish, the burden of existential responsibility, the eternal return is the heaviest weight. Once we are thrown into the world we are responsible for everything we do. Existential responsibility involves all humankind, since our actions contribute to the essence of humanity and the shape of the world.



12 THE ORPHAN: "We are left alone, without excuse. ... Man is condemned to be free." – Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism"

In traditional tarot, The Hanged Man is held in suspense, symbolizing waiting, suspense, and inertia. The Orphan symbolizes forlornness. Upon the realization that we exist without a guide to help facilitate our choices, we feel abandoned. We are thrown into the world and we must exist without help. Nothing determines the circumstances of our decisions: not God, not the universe, not human nature, not our passions. Forlornness may lead to the suspension of action due to a fear of making decisions without a guide or a safety net or someone else to blame if things go awry.

13 LA MORT: "Everything is true, and nothing is true!"
– Albert Camus, *The Stranger*

In traditional tarot, the Death card has nothing to do with actual death, but instead symbolizes endings and beginnings, transition, elimination, and resolution. La Mort is a metaphor for the death of God, although this is not an actual death in relation to a specific figure of God. La Mort symbolizes a loss of meaning and value after traditional belief systems no longer work for us. Once God is dead we are left in an absurd universe. There is nothing to have faith in, other than ourselves. As a consequence of the death of God we are existentially free.



14 THROWNNESS: "Into this house we're born ... Into this world we are thrown, like a dog without a bone."

– Jim Morrison, "Riders on the Storm"

In traditional tarot, Temperance represents temperance and balance and draws attention to the connectedness of things. Thrownness represents our being randomly thrust into a world characterized by nothing but possibility. We understand the world in reference to possibilities. We project ourselves onto those possibilities that lie before us and those not yet in our horizon. We do not stand against other things as objects. We exist as being-in-the-world, similar to how we would exist in relation to water after being thrown into an open sea.

15 THE MADMAN: "Do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker? Shall we not have to light lanterns in the morning?" – Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*

In traditional tarot, The Devil embodies bondage, materialism, ignorance, addiction, and selfishness. The Madman is a prophet: He proclaims the death of God with a sense of urgency, regret, and disorientation. The Madman symbolizes the initial sense of uneasiness we may feel in a world stripped of meaning and value. The Madman lives in the shadow of the death of God. He reveals a loss of certain meaning and value, but he has not given up the need for those comforts. The Madman is directly opposed to New Dawn.



16 NAUSEA: "I understood the Nausea, I possessed it. ... The essential thing is contingency. I mean that one cannot define existence as necessity." – Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*

In traditional tarot, The Tower signals transformation, a release, a downfall, a shattering of illusion, and sudden change. Nausea is the feeling in our gut once illusions of meaning and value are revealed to our psyche and we apprehend the relevance for our own existence. We become nauseated with the thought of our own contingency and lack of purpose. We become nauseated with the thought that our existence is absurd. We become nauseated with the thought that we are pure existence without essence.

17 THE SPOTLIGHT: "All revealing belongs within a harboring and a concealing." – Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology"

In traditional tarot, The Star represents clarity, alignment, and inspiration. The Spotlight symbolizes the role of perspective in interpreting and judging the world. Similar to a spotlight, which we use to shine light in a certain direction, we shed light on certain aspects of our world through interpretation. Our perspectives are projected outward but they reflect inward to reveal something about ourselves. Perspectives are never fixed and they lead to further interpretations.



18 THE SITUATION: "There is freedom only in a situation, and there is a situation only through freedom." — Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

In traditional tarot, The Moon symbolizes the idea that we are subject to invisible forces that we can only partially sense. The Situation is the context for our existential freedom. We are radically free beings, yet we are beings in a particular situation. We cannot avoid our situation, but we can transform it through interpretation, re-interpretation, and contextualization. Thus, although we belong to a situation, we are not determined by it.

19 NEW DAWN: "The sea, our sea, again lies open before us; perhaps never before did such an 'open sea' exist." — Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*

In traditional tarot, The Sun is a symbol of enlightenment and it represents greatness, victory, vitality, assurance, and growth. New Dawn symbolizes the dawn of a new day as a shift in perspective. Whereas for The Madman the death of God was regretful and disorienting, perspectival revelation presents an alternative: relief, exhilaration, and encouragement. The death of God is a clearing. We are free to create the world and ourselves. This is liberating. It is the meaning of our cheerfulness.



20 THE HAMMER: "And if your hardness does not wish to flash and cut through, how can you one day create with me?"
 – Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*

In traditional tarot, Judgment symbolizes judgment, a sense of self-review, and a wake-up call. The Hammer symbolizes the idea of intentionally shattering tradition, the past, and all that we believed to be unchangeable facts. The Hammer is a tool for reinterpretation, decontextualization, reinvention, and liberation. It is our tool for transcending the 'givens' of our situation and of our selves.

21 AUTHENTICITY: "The champion of sincerity is not ignorant of the transcendence of human reality, and he knows how at need to appeal to it for his own advantage." – Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

In traditional tarot, The World symbolizes conclusion, completion, integration, accomplishment, involvement, and fulfillment. Authenticity symbolizes the completion of our existential journey, as we have embraced our existential freedom and accepted the responsibility accompanying that freedom. We choose, we act, and we recognize that action changes the face of the world. This is an existential victory, but not necessarily a conclusion. We may recurrently struggle with potential limits and the temptation to deny our freedom.





ACE: In traditional tarot, Ace of Wands represents inspiration, potential, new beginnings, and enterprise. Will 1 represents passion for creating an enterprise of choices in which each new choice is the potential for a fresh start.

TWO: In traditional tarot, Two of Wands represents progress, planning, partnerships, and influence. Will 2 represents enthusiasm for plans, projects, and partnerships we freely consider despite any potential roadblocks.

THREE: In traditional tarot, Three of Wands represents foresight, expansion, successful enterprise, good fortune, and activity. Will 3 represents foresight to advance successful strategies for expanding our enterprise of successful choices that can will good fortune into our lives.

FOUR: In traditional tarot, Four of Wands represents harmony, celebrations, rewards, and satisfaction. Will 4 represents our desire to create satisfaction and rewards by attuning passions, intentions, and actions.

FIVE: In traditional tarot, Five of Wands represents competition, disagreement, misunderstanding, and diligence. Will 5 represents the competitive nature of the gaze of the Other and the diligence needed to remain in accordance with our own gaze.



SIX: In traditional tarot, Six of Wands represents victory, overcoming obstacles, public recognition, and payoff. Will 6 represents commitment to individuality in order to avoid a "crowd" mentality. Maintaining our existential individuality may be difficult, but there is a payoff in terms of fostering success and overcoming obstacles.

SEVEN: In traditional tarot, Seven of Wands represents effort, challenge, courage, perseverance, and advocacy. Will 7 represents courage and perseverance in challenging biological, physiological, and sociological obstacles to advocate for our own free choices.

EIGHT: In traditional tarot, Eight of Wands represents sudden action, excitement, swift movement, travel, and opportunities. Will 8 represents the role of active consciousness in energetically propelling us into swift action and positioning us alongside opportunities.

NINE: In traditional tarot, Nine of Wands represents persistence, resilience, prudence, and resourcefulness. Will 9 represents resilience and resourcefulness when past choices do not produce desired outcomes. We can persist in creating and making prudent choices to achieve future goals.

TEN: In traditional tarot, Ten of Wands represents responsibility, burden, and stress related to hard work. Will 10 represents the taxing yet productive nature of responsibility. The stress of hard work may feel burdensome, but it is a choice we make in willing ourselves toward our future.



PAGE: In traditional tarot, Page of Wands represents good news, communication, encouragement, and cautious progress. Page of Will symbolizes cautious progress after good news. Encouragement is the byproduct of successful projects and situations.

KNIGHT: In traditional tarot, Knight of Wands represents proposals, passion, energy, and inspired action. Knight of Will symbolizes passionate energy that inspires targeted action. This energy helps us overcome boundaries and push forward toward future goals.

QUEEN: In traditional tarot, Queen of Wands represents creativity, focus, clarity, integrity, determination, inspiration, and passion. Queen of Will symbolizes the synthesis of creativity, passion, clarity, focus, and determination in advancing toward possibilities we want in our horizon.

KING: In traditional tarot, King of Wands represents vision, integrity, honor, and compassion. King of Will symbolizes the drive for imposing values onto the world, which requires vision and action. Integrity is a commitment to active choices that reflect our values.





EMOTION

ACE: In traditional tarot, Ace of Cups represents love, relationships, emotional fulfillment, spiritual growth, and beginnings. Emotion 1 represents the Other as a possibility for emotional fulfillment and a potential limit on our existential freedom. Personal relationships can be emotionally fulfilling, but they are not the key to existential growth.

TWO: In traditional tarot, Two of Cups represents harmony, peace, partnerships, love, and relationships. Emotion 2 represents the role of love in cultivating harmonious and peaceful relations with the Other, which is to cultivate harmonious relations with ourselves.

THREE: In traditional tarot, Three of Cups represents friendships, family, celebrations, connectedness, and community. Emotion 3 represents accordance between our existential freedom and the freedom of others. Embracing our existential freedom celebrates existential freedom for all.

FOUR: In traditional tarot, Four of Cups represents restlessness, boredom, and monotony. Emotion 4 represents restlessness, boredom, and monotony that stems from living passively rather than actively. We may "outlive ourselves" or we may use our restlessness to take action against passivity.



FIVE: In traditional tarot, Five of Cups represents loss, leaving, despair, disappointment, and bereavement. Emotion 5 represents despair following expectations about what the future could hold. When we expect the universe to fulfill our hopes and dreams, we will be disappointed and we may bereave an unconcerned universe.

SIX: In traditional tarot, Six of Cups represents nostalgia, reconciliation, and fond memories. With Emotion 6, we reconcile with the notion that we are not connected to our past—even though nostalgia and fond memories may provide us with comfort.

SEVEN: In traditional tarot, Seven of Cups represents opportunities, possibilities, choices, and confusion. Emotion 7 represents an existential response to possibilities that provide opportunities, but also incite confusion. We must not let our confusion lead to indecision and inaction.

EIGHT: In traditional tarot, Eight of Cups represents withdrawal, abandonment, departure, and productive restlessness. Emotion 8 represents abandonment as a point of departure. Abandonment may lead to withdrawal or productive restlessness that results in creating new choices.

NINE: In traditional tarot, Nine of Cups represents happiness, fulfillment, and comfort. Emotion 9 represents existential freedom as an affirmation of life. Infinite freedom may not be comforting, but it has the potential to awaken our consciousness to leave us feeling alive.



TEN: In traditional tarot, Ten of Cups represents prosperity, alignment, family, and security. With Emotion 10, family identity may provide security but it does not determine who we are. Being existentially free means creating new interpretations and new contexts for our identity.

PAGE: In traditional tarot, Page of Cups represents prosperity, joy, imagination, and creativity. Page of Emotion symbolizes the joy we create through imagination as a way of transcending presumed facts.

KNIGHT: In traditional tarot, Knight of Cups represents charm, bewitchment, affection, and proposal. Knight of Emotion symbolizes choice in reference to love and affection. We may be bewitched by the charm of love and affection, but even this is a choice.

QUEEN: In traditional tarot, Queen of Cups represents intuitiveness, emotional security, emotional intelligence, insight, and sensitivity. Queen of Emotion symbolizes connectedness between emotion and genuine insight; emotional intelligence is beneficial to choice.

KING: In traditional tarot, King of Cups represents emotional balance, problem-solving, and intuition. King of Emotion symbolizes emotional maturity as a byproduct of problem-solving. As we create our essence with each active choice, we cultivate emotional growth and obtain emotional balance.



 REASON

ACE: In traditional tarot, Ace of Swords represents victory, success, decisions, mental clarity, beginnings, and breakthroughs. Reason 1 represents decisiveness as an existential victory and the mental clarity we gain through choice and action. Decisions are the first step toward breaking barriers that impede our success.

TWO: In traditional tarot, Two of Swords represents choices, indecision, time to think, and stalemate. With Reason 2, time to think could lead to successful choices, but we must be wary of indecision, stalemate, and the danger of stagnancy.

THREE: In traditional tarot, Three of Swords represents sorrow, heartbreak, rejection, and pain. With Reason 3, sorrow and heartbreak are expressions of a life guided by expectation rather than resoluteness. We avoid rejection when we understand expectations are not prudent in a universe characterized by possibility.

FOUR: In traditional tarot, Four of Swords represents rest, passivity, recovery, and relaxation. With Reason 4, we discern rest from inertia. The choice to take a break and relax supports future action, while passivity is a choice that denies future choices.

FIVE: In traditional tarot, Five of Swords represents tension, conflict, upheaval, and loss. With Reason 5, we acknowledge the strain of existential freedom versus the comfort of self-imposed limits and we understand that persisting with inflexible boundaries leads to internal conflict, tension, upheaval, and the loss of ourselves as existentially free beings.



SIX: In traditional tarot, Six of Swords represents a necessary transition, moving on, peace, and harmony. With Reason 6, we accept a fluidly transitioning existence and a constant loss and renewal of self with each new choice.

SEVEN: In traditional tarot, Seven of Swords represents dispossession, dishonesty, cunning, and stealth. With Reason 7, we examine the gaze of the Other as choice. If the Other successfully steals our gaze, we have actually deprived ourselves by choosing to acquiesce.

EIGHT: In traditional tarot, Eight of Swords represents imprisonment, restriction, and frustration. With Reason 8, we acknowledge we may become frustrated as we perceive our freedom as a restriction, but even this is a choice.

NINE: In traditional tarot, Nine of Swords represents depression, anxiety, and suffering. With Reason 9, we examine angst as a response to suffering and death. Evading angst through illusions may offer temporary relief, but these illusions impede our existential freedom.

TEN: In traditional tarot, Ten of Swords represents loss, ruin, endings, and transition. With Reason 10, we recognize loss of meaning and value is not an ending, but a transition. A loss of the past can be a win for our future.



PAGE: In traditional tarot, Page of Swords represents intelligence, perception, practical advice, and contracts. Page of Reason symbolizes intelligence and self-perception as practical skills that guide us toward informed choices.

KNIGHT: In traditional tarot, Knight of Swords represents truth, battle, and unpredictability. Knight of Reason symbolizes unpredictability as a consequence of an irrational universe. We are in a constant battle between expectations and the recognition that in a random universe we ought to expect nothing.

QUEEN: In traditional tarot, Queen of Swords represents incisiveness, perception, independence, and eloquence. Queen of Reason symbolizes perspective as the source of our individuality and autonomy. A keen sense of perception marks the eloquence of humankind.

KING: In traditional tarot, King of Swords represents intellect, ambition, logic, strategy, and problem-solving. King of Reason symbolizes shift in perspective as a strategy for problem-solving, since our ambitions and our intellect are the source of any logic in the universe.





ACTION

ACE: In traditional tarot, Ace of Pentacles represents material success, prosperity, financial gain, and property. With Action 1, we create prosperity and material success by acting in accordance with perceived goals.

TWO: In traditional tarot, Two of Pentacles represents adaptability, negotiation, management, and solvency. With Action 2, adaptability is skillfully reinterpreting a situation to transcend material facts.

THREE: In traditional tarot, Three of Pentacles represents reward, achievement, enterprise, and success. With Action 3, we reward ourselves by creating a reality that is a negotiable enterprise for success.

FOUR: In traditional tarot, Four of Pentacles represents stability, security, self-improvement, and firm foundations. With Action 4, we ground ourselves in possibility to create conditions for self-improvement through steady movement, as we recognize security and stability may be fleeting.

FIVE: In traditional tarot, Five of Pentacles represents financial loss, financial insecurity, hardship, and a test of resources. With Action 5, financial loss and financial insecurity are tests of our existential resources. Although it may be tempting to consider ourselves victims of circumstance, this is existentially counterproductive.



SIX: In traditional tarot, Six of Pentacles represents charity, inheritance, a gift, and property. With Action 6, material rewards are the product of active choice and not a gift from the universe. We do not expect material rewards as charity for good deeds.

SEVEN: In traditional tarot, Seven of Pentacles represents perseverance, vision, quality work, opportunity, and the potential for success. With Action 7, we harvest success when we persist in strengthening skills needed to produce quality work and to create opportunities.

EIGHT: In traditional tarot, Eight of Pentacles represents education, active engagement, and achievement. With Action 8, active engagement in the present benefits future goals. Education plays a key role in achievement, regardless of whether it is academic or self-motivated.

NINE: In traditional tarot, Nine of Pentacles represents comfort, stability, self-efficiency, prosperity, and accomplishment. With Action 9, we cultivate prosperity, accomplishment, and self-sufficiency while realizing comfort and stability are fleeting.

TEN: In traditional tarot, Ten of Pentacles represents prosperity, inheritance, establishment, and property. With Action 10, we strive for prosperity, but our identity is not rooted in inheritance, property, or material achievements.



PAGE: In traditional tarot, Page of Pentacles represents skills, talents, diligence, maturity, and financial opportunity. Page of Action symbolizes hard work, maturity, skillfulness, and diligence in order to overcome circumstance and create opportunities.

KNIGHT: In traditional tarot, Knight of Pentacles represents efficiency, progress, improvement, prosperity, and financial growth. Knight of Action symbolizes progress and prosperity as the outcome of efficient choices and constant improvement. Prosperity and financial growth are not our destiny, but our choice.

QUEEN: In traditional tarot, Queen of Pentacles represents generosity, monetary support, and self-sufficiency. With Queen of Action, we do not rely on the generosity of others for support; instead, we make choices that cultivate material autonomy and self-reliance.

KING: In traditional tarot, King of Pentacles represents practical support, reliability, generosity, and security. With King of Action, we make choices without expectation of reliability, generosity, and security from the universe.



