Definitions

• **Divinatory Use of Tarot**: using cards to gain insight into the past, present or future by formulating a question, then drawing and interpreting cards…looking for answer by supernatural means. Relies on esoteric sensibilities.

vs.

• **Therapeutic Use of Tarot**: a method and means for self-realization. Tarot cards serve as unique picture-sort stimuli for images and archetypes (but are not used as actual tarot cards for readings, just for the symbolism).

Tarot Cards & The Healing Process

- Tarot Cards stimulate self-expression and provide a structure for organizing thoughts and feelings and are a vehicle for communication.
- Opportunity for self-reflection
- Understanding Happens
- Personal Growth
- Self-knowledge that leads to the relief of distress and positive transformation

Expressive Arts

- Expressive therapies encourage not only self-exploration, exploration, but also use self-expression through one or more modalities as a central part of the therapeutic process.
Tarot Imagery - History

- Using cards for playful divination probably goes back to the 14th century, likely originating with Mamluk game cards brought to Western Europe from Turkey.
- Originally, the imagery was designed to reflect important aspects of the real world that the players lived in, with prominent Christian symbolism.
- As divinatory usage became more popular, illustrations evolved to reflect a specific designer's intention.

Tarot Card History Lesson

- Rider-Waite has been continually printed since 1909.
- Publisher William Rider and popular mystic A.E. Waite commissioned Pamela Colman Smith to illustrate the deck.
- The Rider-Waite helped bring about the rise of 20th-century occult tarot used by mystical readers.
- The Rider-Waite deck was designed for divination and included a book written by Waite in which he explained much of the esoteric meaning behind the imagery.
- Stuart Kaplan obtained the publishing rights and developed an audience for it in the early ’70s, which helped renew interest in card reading.

Images, Symbols, & Healing

- We are surrounded by energy that can be used for healing. Symbols can tap into that energy or evoke energetic reactions within us.
- Images generate stories, imaginal dialogue, and other forms of artistic expression. They also act directly on our bodies, minds, and senses.

“Symbols are images that speak to us. They are the best possible expression for an emotionally meaningful situation.”

- Carl Jung

The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease
“Pictures carry medicines, energies, creative spirits, and vitality that they will give to you freely.”

–Shaun McNiff
Art Heals: How Creativity Cares the Soul
2011

An archetype is a universally understood symbol, term, statement, or pattern of behavior, a prototype upon which others are copied, patterned, or emulated. Archetypes are often used in myths and storytelling across different cultures.

A generic version of a personality. In this sense, "mother figure" may be considered an archetype, and may be identified in various characters with otherwise distinct personalities.

The use of archetypes to illuminate personality was advanced by Carl Jung early in the 20th century, who suggested the existence of universal forms that channel experiences and emotions, resulting in recognizable and typical patterns of behavior with certain probable outcomes.

Archetypes are used symbolically to help us make sense of the world, they can be found in all forms of human expression: art, drama, literature, etc.
Archetypes are so commonly used in society and art that almost everyone has encountered at some point, whether it's in novels, movies, stage shows or tarot cards. Creative artists love using them because they're easily recognizable and something that everyone can relate to in some capacity.

Archetypes & Self-Awareness

Personal meaning comes from finding patterns and connections that give significance to your life.

People are pattern-making creatures.

Archetypes & Self-Awareness

Role of Archetypes in Change, Healing, and Transformation

• Empowerment comes from defining patterns and deciding their value
• Finding meaning in your experience not only helps you endure life's inevitable pains, but also gives inspiration and energy to your everyday existence.
• To create change, you don't have to change life directly, only what you tell yourself about it. This allows you to imagine yourself in new ways and revision your possibilities.
Power in the Stories

- Everything that you think, do, wish, or that happens to you is another episode in the story of your life.
- Each chapter is filled with hidden symbolism and significance that is part of the unfolding of your story.
- The stories you tell yourself are the ones you personally act out in your life.

Personal Mythology

- Ancient myths live on in the stories people tell about their own lives.
- We construct our reality through mental images and words which we use to represent our experience.
- Personal mythology refers to an individual's fundamental stories for making sense and meaning of the world.
- Personal myths can be adaptive or maladaptive.
- Most world myths are tales of transformation.

- The way you see and describe an image is a reflection of your personal mythology.
- The resulting stories define your sense of self and give you meaning, identity, and purpose.
- Not only are you the hero of your story but the story itself tends to be based on archetypal themes, themes found in all times and places despite cultural variations.
The Intuitive Role of Emotions

- Emotion tells you how and where psychic energy is being processed.
- Emotions alert us to specific issues.
- Feelings are an energy source that can be harnessed for constructive purposes.
- “Our emotions will be able to contribute the energy we need to move into and out of any situation imaginable, because they contribute the specific energy and information we need to heal ourselves.” (Karla McLaren, Emotional Genius)

Questions

- Which card is most intriguing?
- Which one is most unsettling?
- Which card has the most detail?
- Which card has the least detail?
- Which card tells your story? What is that story?
- Which card do you want to tell your story? What is that story?

Holding Space

- Your job is to listen closely, to become sensitive to the undercurrents and pulse of what is being said. A person's description of an image, whether objective or subjective, suggests quite a bit about the state of the person and his or her concerns.
- Remembering that emotion is energy in motion, note when the energy changes or sounds urgent.
- Use a person-centered approach.
Person-Centered Approach

- **Unconditional positive regard:** Be empathetic and non-judgmental. Convey feelings of understanding, trust, and confidence. Encourage patients/clients to make their own decisions and choices.
- **Empathetic understanding:** Understand and accept thoughts and feelings.
- **Congruence:** No acts of authority or professional superiority. Be present. Be authentic.
- **Do not interpret or analyze.**

Applications for Tarot Cards

- Articulating Thoughts/Explaining Feelings and Emotions
- Making the abstract concrete
- Empowerment
- New Perspective
- Inspiration/Affirmation
- Goal Setting
- Habit Change/Self-Management Tool
- Enhance Therapeutic Communication
- Rapport building with certain populations

Easy Resources

- Art & Healing Activity
- Mood Tracking
- Self-Development
- Pain Management
- Journaling
- Trauma
- Stress Management
- Meditation

Let's Try Some!

- Reflection & Affirmation
- Positive Reinforcement: Exploring positive aspects of yourself and considering traits you’d like to develop
- Imagining Your Story
**Recommendations**

The Goddess Tarot  
Chakra Oracle  
New Mythic Tarot

**More Recommendations**

Chrysalis Tarot  
Wildwood Tarot  
Guain Tarot

**References**


