

But You're Only a Fortune Teller Aren't You?

Tarot is all about ego and making money from disturbed people who are prepared to pay someone else to take control and tell them what fate is going to dish out to them, isn't it? "Just \$5.50 a minute, 99% accurate, answers to all your problems!" Unfortunately that's the image that most of the community at large has about one of the most insightful and deep psychological tools available to help us improve the quality of our lives.

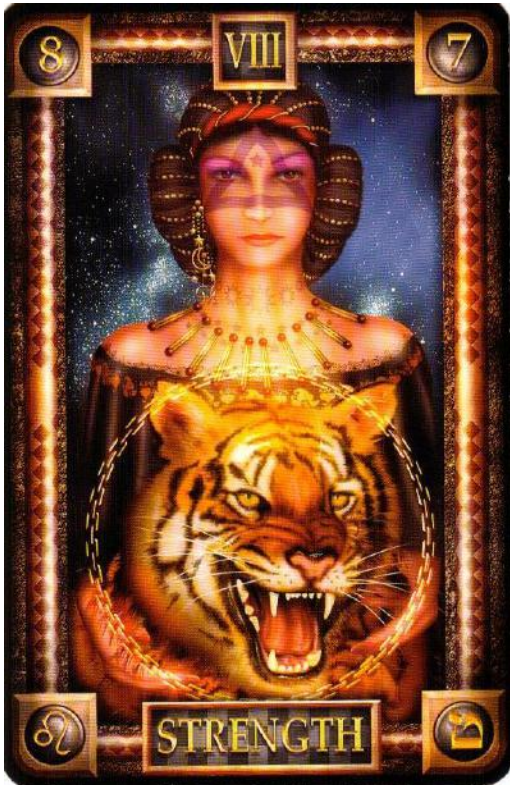
So how can you use tarot in your everyday life? What draws readers and teachers into sharing their abilities and knowledge around this misunderstood art?

For me it was the gateway to opening up my spiritual development. I had owned a mini Rider-Waite deck and a book on interpretations for some 30 years. Whenever I was troubled, I'd draw out a few cards and try to make some sense of them. Likewise I had always had a love of myths, fantasy, nature, the moon, the ocean, the stars and astrology. A few years ago, through friends, I found a website that offered free readings using the Mythic tarot cards, so I started to consult them more regularly. One day I tried to use my cards to help a friend, and messages started to just flow through, I wondered briefly if it was something I should pursue. One day, out driving around, shortly after moving to the Frankston area, my eye was drawn to the rather striking billboard outside a spiritual college. I did some research on the internet and was amazed to find you could learn tarot through a 20 week certificate course. I was looking to pursue the spiritual side of my nature and it was the start of a new year, so I decided to give it a try and changed my life!!!

Like the community at large, at the time I had no concept of how tarot could be used as a tool for self-development. I stumbled across numerology a week or so later, and found it's insights into what made me the way I am so mind blowing, that I had to start a course in that too. The linkages between the two disciplines, and my then rudimentary understanding of astrology, quickly became apparent. The more I learned, the more I found there was to know, both from a theoretical knowledge basis and from understanding about myself, my behaviour, my life and the journey I needed to undertake.

The course was a great balance between theory and practice with homework that forced me to delve into my life experiences relating them to the cards, but also to uncover my love for creative writing. I love the symbolism of the Rider-Waite deck we learned through, but always felt I wanted to read with something more creative, I liked the strong linkage to mythology and the ocean in the Mythic, but then while researching for a homework project I found www.acelectic.com. The pictures from decks were incredible, opening the floodgates of my creativity even more. My credit card took a battering as I couldn't resist purchasing quite a few from the myriad Solandia has on display on the site.

The one that stole my heart from that first experience has remained my reading deck, **Ciro Marchetti's** wonderful colourful "Tarot of Dreams". The accompanying CD with its components of animation and sound accelerated my psychic development around the cards and confirmed my need to combine colour and creativity in my work. I went on from here to rekindle my artistic side through painting mandalas and develop the linkages with colour through crystals, chakras and energy work. I also continue to build up a collection of tarot decks!!! The CD also had a series of web links which led me to the Tarot Guild of Australia, through the sister UK organisation that **Ciro** had included as a useful site reference.



The Guild has become my main source of ongoing development with tarot, through regular workshops and discussion groups. It has also enabled me to develop a sense of belonging and community through the many like minded friends I have made. My involvement on the committee has enabled me to put something back and help rebalance the understanding of tarot and spirituality in the world at large, at a time when it is able to provide some much needed meaning in our increasingly crazy lives.

From a practical viewpoint tarot provides me with a structured framework to channel the information I need to help myself and others. It helps me connect more deeply with my own sub-conscious or remembered knowledge and enables my communication with my guides and my intuition to flow much more freely. Contrary to some schools of thought, I believe reading for yourself is a must if you are going to get to a stage where you really live and breathe the cards. It actually makes me consider a wider range of meanings that could sit behind the cards in front of me, as I contemplate less favourable interpretations than those I would dearly like to see come to pass. My cards are part of my everyday life, I use them to validate my decisions, help me take control of my life and to interact with my friends. They are a very important part of a suite of tools I have at my disposal to help me understand myself and my relationships with others. They also enable me to feel aligned with what I am meant to do in life through undertaking readings and more recently teaching others to start on their own miraculous and exciting journey.

Sara Gilbert is a professional member and Treasurer of the Tarot Guild of Australia. She reads and teaches in the Frankston area. Her 10 week course "Tarot in the Context of the Universe" teaches tarot from a more conceptual basis, emphasising the linkages with numerology, astrology, chakras, crystals, colours and the "Tree of Life". For more information visit her website www.lifespirtconnections.com.au

"Strength" from "The Tarot of Dreams" by Ciro Marchetti
www.ciomarchetti.com