

## “Shadow Healing” Tarot spread

### London Tarot Conference 2007 talk transcript

#### **Introduction:**

For those of you who do not know my work I am the artist of *The Merlin Tarot*, *The Arthurian Tarot*, and the author and artist of *The Beasts of Albion* self-development deck. As well as a Tarot artist I have been a healer and teacher for ten years, and use the Tarot for healing and self development. The “Shadow Healing” spread is the spread I use most.

The Tarot is an ideal tool to discover and explore the deep roots of our being. It allows us to communicate with the shadow aspect of ourselves – that part of ourselves which holds our repressed emotions and memories, our archetypal aspects, our beliefs and our soul and ancestral wisdom.

The “Shadow Healing” spread is a way for us to communicate with our shadow self, to discover the patterns and blocks which prevent well being and harmony and which prevent us from achieving our goals and dreams. It can also show us the deepest patterns of our being, our ancestral pattern and our soul blueprint pattern which hold our potential talents and purpose in life.

When we communicate with our shadow and bring its treasures into the light of our everyday consciousness we have the opportunity to accept them, experience them, let them go and bring transformation and healing. Often the simple knowing of a pattern or block can be enough to clear it.

In this talk I am going to guide you through a spread designed to help you discover the patterns lying in your shadow realms, but most importantly I am going to show you a spread which creates communication and a relationship between you and your shadow and allows you to bring healing into your life.

By the end of the session I hope you will take away an understanding of the patterns the shadow needs you to work with and what aspects of yourself will empower it to happen.

#### **What does the spread consist of?**

The spread is split into 3 main sections:

##### *1. Healing ourselves*

- Discover the patterns blocking our well-being and growth
- Connect with the aspect of our self which will help us heal our patterns and blocks

## 2. *Healing our life path*

- Find out what is stopping us fulfil our goals dreams
- Connect with the aspect of our self which will help us achieve our dreams

## 3. *Shadow wisdom*

- Allowing the shadow to talk to us

This is the main spread which can be used for ourselves and for others. It can be read daily as a part of a self-development and self-healing approach, it can be read when we wish to understand a dream or a nightmare more fully, or it can be read on a regular basis to help us communicate with our shadow.

There are two more cards I am including in this section of the spread:

- A card to uncover our ancestral pattern and potential abilities
- A card to discover our deepest blueprint, the pattern of our soul

After having read the main spread, we will return all the cards to the deck and remove the Major Arcana cards. We will use these to draw cards for our soul and ancestral energies. If you like you can use an animal card deck to discover your ancestral pattern - which is the same as your totem animal.

Before we start on the deck we need to have a quick look at what makes up the shadow realm.

### **What is the shadow?**

The realm of the shadow holds our:

- emotions and memories
- beliefs
- childhood programming
- instinct / intuition
- body consciousness
- elemental energies
- archetypal images and symbols
- ancestral patterns
- soul blueprint pattern

We often have a complicated relationship with our shadow, filled with fear and anxiety. The shadow is a powerful aspect of ourselves; we feel its power in our nightmares and in intense emotional reactions to situations. But the shadow has a powerful positive role in our lives. It is there to help guide us to deep wisdom and healing and to uncovering our soul. It is there to tell us when we are off track, when we are out of tune with our soul or in our heads too much and not our hearts.

It is only when we don't listen to our intuition, the whispered voice of the shadow that it has to hit us over our heads with something dramatic to get our attention!

**The shadow wants more than anything else a relationship with our everyday self so that together we can fulfil our soul's purpose.**

As well as a guide, the shadow is one of the greatest self-healing tools we have, and we can use the shadow healing spread to find out which aspect of the shadow will help us.

I am using the term 'pattern', and I just want to explain the term. A pattern is a mental programme that we have learned about ourselves or the way the world works. It can also be a learned emotional response or a memory frozen in time. A pattern is not 'good' or 'bad', it is something we created at the time to help us survive. Some of our patterns are useful, and some are out of date, disrupting the things we wish in life. When we discover and accept a pattern we have the opportunity for healing.

### **Reading the cards in the spread:**

When we read the cards we read them as aspects of ourselves:

- The Major Arcana represent our inner archetypes
- The court cards represent our masculine and feminine energies
- The Pages represent our inner child
- The Aces represent our elemental energies

Reversed cards are read as emphasised.

The spread consists of a number of questions directed at the shadow, and we use these questions to guide our reading of the card. The shadow is not logical or rational and sometimes the cards may seem confusing or contradictory. What is important in the reading is to acknowledge and accept the information, as you would if someone was talking to you. If you don't understand the relevance straight away, think about the card during the day; what the card means to you and how this interacts with its position on the spread. Your shadow will be pleased that you are thinking about its message and will help by offering inspiration and insight.

## Reading the spread

### The first line of the spread: Healing ourselves

In this first section we are asking the shadow to help us to:

- accept what we have rejected
- let go of out dated patterns
- actively heal what needs healing at this moment in time.

#### Card 1:

What do I need to accept and love about myself at this time?

#### Card 2:

What do I need to let go?

#### Card 3:

What aspect of myself do I need to heal?

#### Card 4:

What aspect of myself will help with this healing?

### Card 1:

So often there are aspects of ourselves which we don't accept. These can be the result of past events or they can simply be the result of us emphasising a single aspect of ourselves too strongly.

#### ***Example: The page of cups***

***'What I need to accept and love about myself at the moment is the emotions of my inner child.'***

Pages represent our inner child; in this case the aspect of the child which is sensitive and emotional. The shadow is telling me that I have lost contact with the part of me which likes to play, to have fun and enjoy life. The shadow is asking me to take myself less seriously and give priority to doing the childlike things which fill me with joy.

### Card 2:

Throughout our lives we learn ways of thinking and perceiving the world. We develop beliefs about our selves and our limits, about how we should behave and about what is possible for us. But as we grow our patterns and programming can become invalid, and rather than helping us they block our way to well being, happiness and healing.

**Example: The King of Pentacles**

***'What I need to let go of is being too focused on money, financial security and power.'***

The shadow is saying that my thinking has become too rigid and too occupied with the security money can bring. It is no wonder I have lost touch with the inner child! The pattern behind the need for security is a feeling of *insecurity*. The shadow is asking me to let go of trying to make security, and to allow myself to become more flexible and to trust that the Universe will look after me.

**Card 3:**

With this card we are asking the shadow to tell us where to focus our energies at this moment in time. The shadow will have its own priority on what it thinks we should be healing.

**Example: 9 Staves**

***'I need to heal my tendency to fight the world.'***

This card is showing that I view life as a struggle and a series of challenges to overcome. Through this card the shadow is showing me that to bring healing and balance I need to change my attitude and thoughts on how I see my life.

**Card 4:**

The question here is: How do I heal this pattern? What aspect of myself within the shadow can I get in touch with which will release and heal this pattern?

**Example: Ace cups**

***'The aspect of myself that will help with this healing is my water energy, my emotional energy.'***

When we connect with our water energy we are flexible, confident, trusting and content to go with the flow of life and events. We don't try to hold on to anything, we simply enjoy the experience. Water is also the element of emotions, hopes and aspirations and gratitude.

The shadow is saying that by connecting to my hopes and dreams and becoming more flexible it will heal my need to fight the world and see it in terms of winners and losers.

### **So having got this information how can I use it?**

I can give myself time to do fun things to reconnect to my inner child and can change my thoughts away from feeling the need to make money to appreciating what I have and focusing on my dreams.

I could use meditation and visualisation to help me connect with these aspects of myself or I can create more practical ways. To connect to water, I could visit a river or the sea. Or I could have a huge bubble bath with a rubber duck to keep my inner child happy!

## Second line of the spread: Fulfilling our dreams

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| <p><b>Card 5:</b></p> <p>What pattern within me at the moment is stopping me from fulfilling my dreams and goals?</p> | <p><b>Card 6:</b></p> <p>What aspect of myself will release this pattern?</p> | <p><b>Card 7:</b></p> <p>What aspect of myself will help me achieve my dreams?</p> |
|---|---|--|

Sometimes we can find that we have become stuck in our lives. We try to advance towards our dreams and goals but for some reason, no matter how hard we try, we fail to make progress. Sometimes this is due to a pattern in our shadow realm, perhaps a childhood programming about our limitations or a repressed fear. By discovering this pattern and releasing it we free up space for new energy to flow into our lives to make our dreams come true.

### Card 5:

This card shows us the pattern which is holding us back.

#### **Example: Death**

“The pattern which is stopping me from fulfilling my dreams is my need to hold on and not to let go.”

The shadow is telling me that there are old out-dated aspects of my life which I need to let go of. To create the new I have to clear out the old to make space for it. What stops me from letting go is fear, fear of my inability to manage or survive in the new circumstances.

### Card 6:

As well as aspects to heal and release, the shadow holds aspects of ourselves which are the key to our healing and transformation.

#### **Example: Queen wands**

“The aspect of myself that will release this pattern is the part of me which is naturally confident, passionate and dynamic.”

The shadow is saying that by connecting to the part of ourselves which is naturally self-confident and taking action in the direction of the things we feel energised to do and passionate about we will be able to release the old.

### **Card 7:**

While we are asking the shadow about making our dreams and goals manifest, we can also ask it what aspect of ourselves at this moment in time will positively help us to make things happen.

#### **Example: King Cups**

“The aspect of myself that will help me achieve my dreams is the application of empathy and creativity.”

The King of Cups represents wisdom, empathy and artistic talents. The shadow is telling me that actively using these abilities, perhaps as a therapist or an artist or musician, will help me achieve my dreams.

#### **So having got this information how can I use it?**

Summarising the cards, the shadow is telling me that I need to develop a pattern of self-confidence and self worth to release the main pattern holding me back at the moment, and that the way to fulfil my dream is to follow a path towards creative or empathic expression.

### Third line of the spread: Letting the shadow speak.

So far we have concentrated on the questions we want answers to. A relationship consists of two-way expression, so we need to give the shadow room to tell us whatever it needs us to know.

**Card 8:**

What does my shadow need me to know?

**Card 8:**

For this card I am not giving an example because I don't wish to limit your expectation of the type of message you will receive. Your shadow will use this opportunity to show you something that it needs you to know or understand at this moment in time.

## Fourth line of the spread: One-off reading

To read the final two cards we need to work purely with the Major Arcana cards.

We will draw two cards, one for our ancestral pattern pattern and one for our soul's blueprint. Unlike the rest of the spread which you can use daily, these cards you only draw once.

The ancestral pattern shows you a deep underlying pattern of energy which has come down your ancestral line. It shows you your potential talents and ancestral characteristics and energies. It represents a strong deep pattern which influences all you do and which, when we live in tune with it, can be a powerful positive force in our lives.

For some people, the ancestral pattern will be stronger in their lives than their soul pattern. This is because your ancestral pattern can be reinforced by your family and upbringing. For other people, their soul blueprint pattern may be stronger, especially if they have had the environment which has allowed or forced them to discover who they are. When drawing these cards it can be useful to think about which aspect is stronger in your life and how you can become more balanced in expressing both these sides of who you are.

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| <p><b>Card 9:</b></p> <p>Ancestral<br/>pattern</p> | <p><b>Card 10:</b></p> <p>Soul blueprint<br/>pattern</p> |
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### Card 9:

#### **Example: The Chariot**

This shows a strong mastery and leadership ability, the ability to create success and make things happen. It also shows strength of will and the strength to make decisions and take on responsibilities. Depending on how these energies are used they can be seen as positive or negative.

When you draw this card for yourself, think about the abilities it represents which you don't seem to have – these are your unrealised potentials!

### Card 10:

#### **Example: Empress**

This shows a strong creative ability and the ability to nurture and care for people, projects and ideas and to bring them into fruition. The card shows patterns of motherliness and passion and a strong link to the natural world.

If this reading was for a man, he may be happier to express the more dynamic aspects of his ancestral pattern than the more feminine aspects of his soul blueprint. A woman brought up in a success-orientated family may also experience the same preference.

I have provided a **separate document with soul blueprint card interpretations.**

### Before you start the spread for yourself:

I hope that with this spread you've seen that we can set up a positive relationship with our shadow to help us bring healing and balance to our lives. The shadow not only helps us to understand the core of our problems but also shows us which aspects of ourselves we can connect with to help us to clear patterns and to heal.

Our shadow is there to help bring us into alignment with our soul and to use our ancestral talents and energies. If we give it time to talk to us, it becomes a wise companion and guide.

Before doing a reading we need to do a short visualisation to connect with our higher self or guardian angel. This higher aspect of our self will act as an intermediary between our conscious mind and the shadow, and facilitate positive communication.

Sometimes the shadow can be so frustrated with not being heard that when you open the door it comes out in a whoosh! Your higher self will keep the energies and communication gentle by interpreting the messages for you.

### Protection visualisation:

1. Sit upright, with eyes closed and arms and legs uncrossed.
2. Centre yourself and ask your higher self or guardian angel or spirit to come behind you and wrap its loving energy around your body, under your feet and over your head to hold you in a protective embrace.
3. Ask it to create a bridge between you and your shadow, and be your intermediary for positive and loving communication.
4. Now you are ready to do your reading. At the end of the reading you may like to say 'thank' you for the protection.

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*'Shadow healing spread: Soul card interpretations'*

*'Shadow healing spread: Layout'*

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