

## Shadow work- finding yourself once more.

I believe shadow work, or personal development, is an essential part of learning and reading tarot. Tarot says what Tarot needs to say- and if you as the reader have a serious block you are avoiding the tarot will start to reflect that- even if you are reading for another person.

A core part of Tarot reading for others is to become, for that time, a neutral channel. Putting your emotions, judgements, personal bias to one side. If you never look at this side of you- you will not know you need to push it to onside. Then its all too easy to mix personal judgement with the reading, or project advice that is meant for us on to our client.

We all have personal bias, either a result- or a reaction to- our upbringing.

I didn't realise how biased I was against wealthy people until I'd been working with a client for some months. She'd always booked using her first name and paid using a business account. Then one day she mentioned a couple of facts and it clicked who she was. The daughter of a billionaire. I felt my surprise- I'd really grown to like her! It helped me to realise that I unconsciously expected poorer people to be "nicer". This took me on a long journey around money wounds, family wealth and parental support.

People often ask if it's exhausting always listening to other people's problems- the answer is no. What is exhausting is all the emotional wounds other people trigger in me- that I then need to go and sit with to process.

When my husband had an affair I had to sit with how I felt reading for people having an affair. Could I be genuinely unbiased? I came to the conclusion that the affair isn't what breaks a relationship, it is the honesty of those involved. Working with me I can help a client to be honest with themselves- which is always a good thing for everyone involved.

If you have unbreakable rules that prevent you for reading for a particular issue or type of person then don't read for them. It is better to refuse a reading, or alter the subject matter, than to give a biased reading.

I won't read for revenge. I had a client recently ask me about an ex of hers, "will this new relationship break his heart as much as he broke mine?" That was a gentle "that's too far for me, can we focus on you." And a reframing of the question.

So how do you go about unpicking your shadow self? All of those parts you don't want to acknowledge about yourself?

Slowly, with kindness, and at your own pace! (note Strength card).

Little and often- and if you are finding it upsetting or too distracting take a break. Far better to do a little each week and take it slowly than risk re-traumatising yourself.

Here's some ideas- and spreads- to try.

- **I hate that card!**

Sit with your deck and consciously choose a few that you just don't get, or you really don't like. Sit with them, gaze at them one at a time for a while.

Is there a connection between these cards?

If they were in a spread together what would they be saying?

Choose one of the cards and use it as a basis for my "unlocking" spread.

If a client comments they don't like a card, or the image on a card, pay attention. Their reaction can be informative.

- **Stalker cards**

Stalker cards are there because you haven't understood their message yet. Once you understand what they are trying say- they will go again.

Try all of the above ideas, and again pay attention if a client has a clear repeater card during a session.

Try asking the card what it wants to say to you. Leave the card out, shuffle, pull three cards, "what do I need to know". Allow this to develop into a longer spread if it feels right.

- **Unlocking spread**



This is a spread I use quite a lot- for myself, and for clients. It was inspired by a classic shamanic “soul retrieval”. Take your time with it, if you are doing it for yourself it really helps to journal.

You may need to repeat his spread several times, gently, over weeks- or months- to work through the layers.

If I am using this to unlock a stalker card I would place the card in position one, and draw another 8.

Cards 1-3 reflect the issue you are trying to resolve, and how it impacts your life. How does it feel? How is it present in your life?

Cards 4-6 lead you to the root of the issue. It may not be the core root at first, but the root you can process at this point. Remember the early major arcana may link to your childhood. Court cards may link to specific people, or roles you were forced to take on at that point (good girl, class clown, successful...)

Cards 7-9 give you advice about how to integrate and heal cards 4-6. If you are struggling with cards 4-6 then work with these advice cards instead. Try to bullet point practical ways you could work with these cards.

The card at the bottom of the pack is a clarity card- shining a light on the whole spread.

- **I see- you see square**

This is a spread that is very old, and you may find it else where but slightly different- many people have adapted it.

Choose a focus, or perhaps an area of your life. (you'll find an example in the spreads to try). Turn the cards one at a time- and try to read each card as you turn them- because the narrative between the cards helps you to see into the shadow areas of the spread.

It might help to have meditated, or relaxed before hand so you are in an intuitive state of mind.

It's a curious spread, helpful to reflect on how you see yourself, and others see you- and compare this to what is unseen.



The main thing- if reading for yourself or others- is to take your time, be gentle, and stop if you need to.

We place parts of ourselves in the shadows because we need to at that point. It's a self protection mechanism. So the only comfortable way to bring those parts out of the shadow is to feel safe as you do it.

It's a lifetime of work- feeling complete once more.