Reading In The Flow

A Holistic Approach to Interpreting Any Spread

By: Julia Eve | spiralseatarot.com
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Introduction 2

Lesson 1: What Is Reading In The Flow? 3

Lesson 2: Breaking Down The Deck’s Structure 5

Lesson 3: Aspects 10

Association Reference Sheets 18

Lesson 4: Compare & Contrast 20

Lesson 5: An Example 27

Lesson 6: Working With Oracle 30

Lesson 7: Advanced Techniques 33

Lesson 8: Weaving It All Together 35

Flow Chart 36

Final Words 37
Introduction

Welcome to Reading in the Flow! This is one of my very favourite tarot topics, and I do hope that you are able to take so much out of these techniques, to apply to your current reading practice. The first time I delivered this content, it was in the form of a live, online workshop. I was originally going to allow repurchase of that session, but I was guided instead to create something more specifically geared to the solo learner - and so here we are! Keep in mind, there is also a video component to this package which features examples that I can walk you through to highlight the learnings. This is available on my Patreon feed as a complimentary (though not necessary) aspect to the following lessons.

So, what will you need to get the most out of the following lessons?

- A tarot deck (any deck of your choosing, but I would recommend one with strong story-board visuals. For the examples I will be sharing with you, I'll be using a Rider Waite Smith deck).
- Something to write with to make notes
- A journal would be lovely, but it’s totally optional. I’ve also provided space in this guidebook and should you print it out, you may use that to make your notes!

And that’s all you’ll need to get started. So without further ado, please flip to the next page and I’ll explain what Reading in the Flow is all about and what you can expect to get out of these methods!
Lesson 1: What Is Reading In The Flow?

The techniques that we'll uncover over the course of the following lessons, are not necessarily things I made up, but many of them I did arrive at simply by working with the cards and practicing my craft. Reading in the Flow is a term I use to describe an overarching concept that takes smaller techniques and applies them to any reading regardless of the inquiry, the spread or the deck you're using.

So specifically when I'm talking about Reading in the Flow, what I'm really trying to describe is a style of reading which takes into account the whole story of any given spread. It's a bit like intuition in the sense that you're going to get much more information from a spread than you would with standard book meanings or memorization alone. And we will use intuition through the process but, you don't need to be a skilled intuitive to use this method - all this relies upon is the ability to see.

In essence, Reading in the Flow is about moving beyond the singular card and its singular meaning and instead, really looking at how the cards, as a whole, are interacting with one another. This is a really exciting way of reading the cards because it's a bit like a storyboard and that means there are nearly endless combinations, with potentially different tales to tell. The other way that I describe this reading technique is to say it's like taking a big proverbial step back and seeing the landscape from a higher vantage point, with a bird's eye view. Here, you really begin to observe just how interconnected the images are and what the bigger message is.

That might not explain perfectly what this style or technique is all about - but we'll break it down in detail shortly. Before we do, I just want to highlight why this way of reading, when I figured it out, really changed my understanding and relationship with the cards. For starters, it allowed me to move away from memorization and book meanings alone (don't get me wrong, those are important things and they have their place - but they aren't required to be able to read). Secondly, you are guaranteed to get a lot more information out of the spread than what the books alone will provide you.
In other words, it’s really taking things to the next level, but the nice thing about this level is that it doesn’t rely on you mastering the level below it, being the one where you’ve committed everything to memory and you can spout off card meanings flash-card style.

I’d also like to distinguish a bit between Reading in the Flow and intuitive reading. In reality, these are different methods. With intuitive reading, you’re tapping into something that exists beyond what you can technically see in the cards - a hunch or a gut instinct. With Reading in the Flow, we’re talking only about what we can physically see. But, that doesn’t mean that intuitive reading doesn’t have its place within these techniques. For example, your intuition will have a huge say in determining which aspects related to these methods are important, and which can be disregarded. Your intuition may also make something jump right to the surface for you to read right away, while some other cues may take more effort to arrive at. So essentially, Reading in the Flow doesn’t require intuition, but intuition should not be discounted through any of these processes. In conjunction, they can be powerful allies.

And at the end of all of this, my hope is that you’ll walk away from these lessons with new information and a fresh perspective that will take your relationship with the cards to the next level and beyond.
Lesson 2: Breaking Down The Deck’s Structure

Because Reading in the Flow is all about sussing out more and more information from our spreads, I want to start first with breaking down a standard deck’s structure. To me, simply knowing how a tarot deck breaks down is a bit like unearthing the first layer of reading the cards. Even without knowing what each card technically means, just knowing where a card falls within the structure of its larger body, will provide you some key points of interest. For example, you may not know what the 2 of Cups means, but you may know that Cups represent the water element and therefore, the card may be touching on matters of emotions, relationships and love.

Below we’ll explore other associations and structures with the intent that knowing these pieces, will help lend greater meaning to a spread at large, especially when we’re seeing multiples or many of any one of these items below. But, we’ll explore that in a lot more depth in a following lesson, for now, let’s simply break it down.

The Major Arcana

The Major Arcana can be described as the first 22 cards of your standard tarot deck, or in other words, The Fool to The World. There are some tarot decks which include bonus Major Arcana cards and that is fine, they would still qualify under this category. When you draw a Major Arcana card, you don’t necessarily need to know what the individual card means. As a whole, any card drawn from this subset of cards may signify any or all of the following:

- A larger life lesson
- A recurring theme in the seeker’s life
- Patterns of human behaviour significant to the seeker’s life
- The soul’s journey (via human experience and consciousness)

Essentially, the Major Arcana represent bigger, soul-level matters as it pertains to the topic being discussed or the seeker’s life in general.
The Minor Arcana

The Minor Arcana can be summed up as all of the suit cards in your standard tarot deck. This would be Ace-10 of the Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles, but does not include Court Cards. There are 40 suit cards in total in a standard tarot deck. If you draw a Minor Arcana card, it may represent any or all of the following:

- A day-to-day matter
- Something smaller or more mundane in the seeker’s life
- An issue or matter that is transient or more easily altered (if desired)

Essentially, the Minor Arcana represents day-to-day activities or matters that may be more mundane in nature. That isn’t to say they aren’t as valid or feel just as big as any of the Major Arcana. However, the Minor Arcana generally depicts matters that have less influence in the grand scheme of things.

Court Cards

There are 16 cards in the tarot deck which stand to represent people, whether literally or figuratively. These are the court cards, and they are often described titled as such i.e. Page, Knight, Queen, King. Without knowing what a specific court card represents, drawing one may indicate one or both of the following.

- A literal person in the seeker’s life (or the actual seeker)
- An attribute the seeker is asked to consider or embody as it relates to the reading

While we’ll talk about this in more depth coming up, court cards, especially seeing many in a reading, may be significant and can indicate an abundance of external influence to the situation at hand.
Elements

A standard tarot deck carries with it an abundance of elemental power. In fact, each suit card and court character represents a certain element, and this is key to know to get an overarching sense of a card or group of cards. Below, I will describe how each suit card translates as an element, and what that may mean practically speaking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suit</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wands (Ace-10 + Courts)</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Passion, Creativity, Attraction, Energy, Movement, Excitement, Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cups (Ace-10 + Courts)</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Love, Emotions, Relationships, Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentacles (Ace-10 + Courts)</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Resources, Finances, Job/Career, Health, Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swords (Ace-10 + Courts)</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Ideas, Communication, Thought, Control, Conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table will be an important reference as we move through the following lessons, so while it's good base knowledge, especially if you're newer to tarot, it's also something we'll be returning to later on!

Flip to the next page where we'll continue the conversation, revealing yet another layer; numbers.
Numbers

Numbers carry a certain vibration, and they can be seen and felt throughout the tarot deck. For example, each of the Major Arcana is numbered 0 to 21. As well, the suit cards are numbered Ace (1) to 10. Below, I have outlined the general meaning of each number, 0-10. Following that, I will explain how that can be applied when cross referencing with a tarot spread. Please keep in mind, with any area of this material, I am providing my ideas and what works for me. If you have a different understanding of the number 2, for example, please always feel empowered to go with your gut and your methods.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interconnectivity</td>
<td>Beginnings</td>
<td>Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full circle</td>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>Patience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eternity</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Breakthrough</td>
<td>Choices</td>
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<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Situations</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Configuration</td>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestics</td>
<td>Introspection</td>
<td>Cause/Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitments</td>
<td>Self-analysis</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Action</td>
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<tr>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near Completion</td>
<td>Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abundance</td>
<td>Success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>Fulfillment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Letting Go</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

reading in the flow | spiralseatarot.com | page 8
As with elements, the table on the previous page will be repeated on page 18. There are also a number (no pun intended) of ways we could approach how we tackle numbers, and this will be explored in more depth in the following lesson. So for now, take it as a reference and we’ll circle back to it when needed!

Now, we could go in much more depth exploring correspondences such as astrology, kabbalah, mythical figures etc., but I want to keep this simple and streamlined. The thing with tarot is that there is always another layer there and available for you should you want to dig deeper. I suppose depending on how you look at it, this could be both a blessing and a curse! I like to think of it as unlimited potential and quite frankly, it there wasn’t so much to it, it likely wouldn’t have held my attention for as long as it has.

So now that we have a basic understanding of the way the deck is structured, along with a couple of correspondences, being elements and numbers, let’s move on to the next lesson where we’ll explore all of the various aspects to look for when examining a spread at large.
Lesson 3: Aspects

Now that we've explored one piece of the puzzle, the next thing I am going to share is what I commonly look for when I’m taking in the landscape of a spread as a whole. So, after the cards have been drawn and typically after I've looked at the singular cards and their meanings based on positions (if applicable), I take a big step back and ask myself, “what else?"

And that “what else” for me is a list of criteria or aspects that I’ve trained myself to really quickly spot. At first it may feel like you’re running through a checklist in your mind, but with practice, your eyes are going to start to automatically zoom in on these facets. And keep in mind too that while this isn't exactly intuitive reading, when you are in your "zone", your intuition will have a big say in what aspects are significant, and which are not - so pay attention to where you’re being drawn. As we practice through these lessons, we’ll just be seeing. But when we're performing a reading for real, then we may intuitively decide, not every aspect carries as much weight as another.

P.s. There will be an exercise at the end of this lesson so have your tarot deck and a pen ready!

The ratio of Majors to Minors: Majors may indicate bigger issues such as soul and personal development, whereas minors may indicate more mundane, day-to-day areas of life. Remember, there are only 22 Major Arcana cards in a standard tarot deck, so drawing many of these would be considered statistically unreasonable. For example, in a 6 card spread, having 3 or more Majors would stand out to me as being significant.

An “abundance” of Court Cards: “Abundance” should be defined by how many court cards are pulled in relation to how many cards there are in the spread overall. There are 16 court cards in total in a standard tarot deck, so it wouldn’t be unusual to see one or two in a medium sized spread. However, having many may indicate that people, or other outside influences, are weighing heavily on the situation at hand.
**Numbers:** An “abundance” or multiples of any number repeated in a spread may be something to consider. For example, if you drew 3 cards and 2 of those 3 cards were fives, that may read as significant to you. Don’t forget to include the Major Arcana in the mix too! 5’s are easy to spot, but if you drew The Hierophant, that would also be considered a 5 card. For Major Arcana cards that are beyond the number 9, you could deduce the number to a single digit, similar to the concepts of Numerology. For example, The Devil is 15 so you would take 1+5, which equals 6. The Devil then becomes a 6 vibration. The Wheel of Fortune is 10. You could accept the 10 as a 10 as listed in the reference sheet in the last lesson, or you could deduce it to a 1. In my opinion, there is no right or wrong way to approach these things, just what feels comfortable and right to you. Me personally, I reduce The Wheel of Fortune to a 1 and leave the 10 option to the 4 10s in the suit cards alone - but, that’s just me!

Multiples of numbers aren’t the only noteworthy feature. It may also be significant to see cards either progressing or regressing in count i.e. 3 cards in a row that read Ace, Two, Three for example. This may mean a natural progression of events at a steady pace. Regression could indicate going backwards or having to maybe take a couple steps back or consider something from the past.

**Dominating suits:** Similar to the aspects mentioned above, if one or more suits seem to dominate the landscape, that may indicate that the element associated with that suit has much to do with the situation at hand. For example, if you’ve pulled 5 cards, and 4 of the 5 cards (or even 3) are Pentacles, perhaps the issue at large has much to do with finances, or resources or something rooted in the Earthly realm.

**Directions/body language/posture:** This stands out to me the most of all the aspects, usually, though for others, it may be colours or numbers that jump out first. What I mean by direction/body language and posture, is basically taking into account what the characters are doing and how they are interacting with the cards around them (or themselves). So when you’re looking at those characters, ask yourself. What direction are they facing? What way are they pointing? Perhaps their gaze is aligned to another card close by. Maybe their back is turned to something - what could that mean? These directions may indicate the additional ways that cards form relationships with or conversely, repel one another.
Repeated imagery: You may find that when you take a look at the whole of the landscape, there are repeated images, symbols or even colours. Maybe horses are showing up in multiple cards, or a particular fruit. Perhaps a character from one card looks similar to a character in another, or is wearing similar clothing. While I can’t provide meanings for every possible symbol or association, I’ve included colour associations on the last page of this lesson, along with elements and numbers again for reference. For other images or symbols that are repeating, which feel significant, you could go with your intuition or do some additional research.

What isn’t there?: This is a big one, but something than can often be overlooked. That’s because its absence can mean “out of sight, out of mind”. But consider this - If you’re performing a reading about love and you pull a bunch of swords mixed with a few coins, but no cups, that may be very telling. With some topics, you almost expect the presence of certain cards or suits, and so when they do not show up, that can be just as important as what does.

A note on reversals: I will be keeping all examples upright for the purpose of simplification. However, if you use reversals, that is fine; you can use this technique no matter what your approach. And while I won’t be broaching them for the purpose of this content, I will say this. If you are using reversals in your practice and reading in the flow, you will in effect be adding that many more possibilities to how the cards may land. For example, a character on an upright card may point one way, but when you reverse that card, the character now points another. This may alter the way in which you view the engagement that is happening between the scenes. I’ve included an example on the following page.
Example With Reversal:

In the example above, we have both cards upright. Here, it could be said that The Hermit is walking in the direction of The Lovers which may indicate some level of engagement or interest from one card to another.

However, in this second example with The Hermit reversed, it looks as if he is walking away from The Lovers. This may indicate a walking away from or disengagement on some level.
Lesson 3 - Exercise 1:

Now that we've covered a series of aspects to look for in every spread, I want you to go ahead and draw 6 random cards and place them in two lines of 3. You’re not asking any questions and you won’t be applying any positional meanings such as “past, present, future” for example - you’re simply going to lay 6 cards down for the purpose of practice. Then, with your 6 cards in front of you, you’re going to work through the aspects we’ve so far discussed to see if you can spot these pieces (i.e. repeated numbers, body language, similar imagery etc.). I've included some space below so you may record your pulls, and then on the next page, you may work through the questions to see how the spread weaves together.
1. How many Major Arcana cards presented and how many Minor Arcana cards presented? Was the landscape dominated heavily by either side? What do you think this man mean in the context of the message?

2. How many court cards presented in your spread? Whether they showed up in droves, at a reasonable rate or not at all, what do you think this may mean in the context of the message?

3. Have a look at the numbers on each card, including both suits and the Major Arcana. Did any numbers present multiple times? Or perhaps, there is a progression or regression in counts i.e. Ace, Two, Three all in a row. Note what you see and also what you think it could mean in the context of the message. P.S. There is another reference sheet on page 18 containing element, number and colour meanings.

4. What is the distribution of suits like? How many Wands are there, Cups, Swords and Pentacles? Note their presence below and what it could mean in the context of the overall meaning. Please feel free to utilize the reference sheet on page 18 to understand suit meanings.
5. Now, look at the ways the cards are interacting with one another. Do characters face each other? Perhaps their backs are turned to one another. Where does their gaze fixate? Does the scenery seem to flow, or is it disjointed?

6. Do any particular images, symbols or colours seem to repeat? Look at the clothing, sky, what’s in the hands of the characters, what’s on the ground. What is similar or perhaps conversely, what is different - and what may that mean in terms of the messages? There is a colour association reference sheet on page 18 so please utilize that to help understand what an abundance of a certain colour may mean.

7. And finally, what isn’t there? Maybe there are no court cards. Or no Major Arcana. Or there is a suit missing (or two suits!). It’s as important to note what you see and also, what you don’t. What could this mean in terms of the message in this reading? Feel free again to reference those association sheets on page 18 for more insight.
Putting It All Together...

Now that we’ve explored the primary aspects, what do you think holistically, the overriding message may be? Without using individual card meanings, what were you able to ascertain from the cards taking that bird’s eye view? Use the space below to record your overall impressions. On the next two pages are the association reference sheets which you may use to help expand on the message. Following that, we’ll unravel another layer by comparing and contrasting groups of cards.
### Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pentacles - Earth</th>
<th>Swords - Air</th>
<th>Wands - Fire</th>
<th>Cups - Water</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources, Finances, Job/Career, Health, Property</td>
<td>Ideas, Communication, Thought, Control, Conflict</td>
<td>Passion, Creativity, Attraction, Energy, Movement, Excitement, Change</td>
<td>Love, Emotions, Relationships, Compassion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Numbers

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<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interconnectivity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beginnings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Balance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expression</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foundation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full Circle</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individuality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Patience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creativity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stability</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eternity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cooperation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dynamism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reliability</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Breakthrough</strong></td>
<td><strong>Choices</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Situations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
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<th>7</th>
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<th>9</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adjustments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spirituality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Energy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Near Finale</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td><strong>Domestics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introspection</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cause/Effect</strong></td>
<td><strong>Abundance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Challenge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Commitments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Self-Analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Achievement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Idealism</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Configuration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comfort</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inspiration</strong></td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Success</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fulfillment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Letting Go</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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See colours on the next page...
Colours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Chakra</th>
<th>Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Heart Chakra</td>
<td>Harmony, Healing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Throat Chakra</td>
<td>Communication, Tranquility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Crown Chakra</td>
<td>Spirituality, Wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>Power, Elegance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold</td>
<td></td>
<td>Illumination, Prestige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>Third Eye Chakra</td>
<td>Intuition, Insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friendship, Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Root Chakra</td>
<td>Passion, Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Sacral Chakra</td>
<td>Creativity, Stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Solar Plexus Chakra</td>
<td>Confidence, Joy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*I have added Chakra associations in bold for those who work with this system. A multitude (or conversely lack of) a colour associated with any given chakra, may indicate over- or under-activity in that region.*
Lesson 4: Compare & Contrast

Up to this point, we’ve broken down the structure of the deck, discussed different aspects you can look for in each spread, and also examined various associations i.e. numbers and elements. All of these pieces add a layer to our understanding of the cards and how they mix and mingle with each other. Now, we’ll look closely at the cards in contrast to one another. Especially if you are new to tarot, it may not be as apparent what is happening in each card until you have the opportunity to compare it with what is happening in others.

In this lesson, we’ll compare cards on the following topics: Perspective, movement, speed and body language. Beginning on the next page, we’ll dive into our first comparison - perspective.
Comparison 1 - Perspective

When you’re looking at a card which features a character or characters, where do you place yourself (or the seeker)? Do you see yourself as one of those characters? Do you see yourself as an objective unseen viewer? Where do you fit in? Take the following cards, for example:

8 of Pentacles: With only one character in this image, it’s a bit easier to assume perspective. The character may reasonably be you, the seeker, or someone else involved in the inquiry.

4 of Wands: Here the scene gets a bit trickier so again, you must go with your gut. Do you sense that you are one of the characters in the distance engaging in what looks like a celebration? Or, perhaps your perspective is that of an unseen character on the other side of that entrance point, and the other characters are ushering you forward.

6 of Pentacles: Here is an example of multiple characters who are not doing the same thing. We have the perspective of the character who is in giving mode and who looks to be in the power position. On the other hand, we have the characters on their knees receiving. Are you in this scene and if so, which role do you fulfill? These are, of course, all rhetorical questions meant to prompt you to consider these factors when faced with them during an actual reading.
Comparison 2 - Movement

When you’re looking at any one single card, the type of movement may not stand out or be overly evident. But, when you compare it to other cards in the deck, it becomes clear just how scenes are very purposefully being depicted. Let’s have a look at some examples below.

Below are the words I would use to describe each movement depicted here, though something else may come to your mind and that is fine! The purpose of this is to emphasize types of movement so you can easily spot and identify them in a reading. This will help add extra layers of understanding or form meanings of cards quickly without having to rely on memorization.

The Fool: Unencumbered
Knight of Cups: Even or steady
10 of Wands: Laboured
Knight of Swords: Swift
7 of Swords: Stealthy
The Hanged Man: Still
Comparison 3 - Speed

Similar to type of movement, there is also some indication of how quickly a character is moving based on the imagery. The speed may help inform how you interpret a spread. For example, is there a card that appears to be moving very quickly? Could this be a message to move forward or even a warning to slow down? These are some of the messages that may come through when considering the speed of cards. Observe the examples below and then flip to the next page for my impressions.
Knight of Coins: While the character is riding a horse, the horse is actually stalled. Might this indicate a slow and steady approach?

Knight of Cups: This knight isn’t stalled, but their not exactly speeding either. The horse has one foot extended and appears to be moving along at a comfortable pace. Neither still nor speeding.

Death: Death looks a lot like the Knight of Cups, but the difference is that the Knight of Cups appears to have a clear path whereas Death meets others along the way. May they be ushering him in or perhaps even standing in the way?

Knight of Swords: You really get the sense of speed when comparing the Knight of Swords to other cards. Here, it’s quite clear that this knight is on a mission!

Knight of Wands: There is definitely some speed evident, but look at the body language of the horse here compared to that of the Knight of Swords. Is there some trepidation? Does this Knight have as much control over the situation as, let’s say, the Knight of Swords who blazes in tandem with their horse companion?

6 of Wands: This horse is certainly not speeding and probably looks much more in line with the the Knight of Cups. The difference here is how the horse is adorned, and the demeanor of the surrounding characters. This rider is going slow, but is he going slow because he is in no rush or is it because he must keep to a pace in line with his followers on foot?

So you see, in many decks, the type of movement and speed of movement is very purposefully depicted. It may not be apparent when simply observing the card by itself, but when you hold it up to other decks, you can see the way in which there are very conscious and important differences that may lend greater meaning to the card or spread at large. When you’re ready, flip to the next page for one final comparison.
Comparison 4 - Body Language

We know that communication is much more than what we say. It’s how we say it and also how we look when we deliver the message. There is a lot that can be read between the lines and body language makes up a lot of how we interpret the information we’re given. Take a look at the characters in the following cards. What is their body language telling you? I’ve provided some keywords below based on what I see, but with anything, you may sense something different entirely! There are no right answers, simply what we see. So, take a moment to consider the body language on each of these cards and when you’re ready, flip to the next page where I’ll explore in more depth what I see happening.
**The Emperor:** The Emperor sits on a throne, fully faced forward with body language that looks both confident and in control. He holds an Ankh in one hand, upright and with a sense of authority. If there were one word I could select to describe what I'm seeing in the body language depicted here, it would be “powerful”.

**9 of Swords:** Here we have an individual in bed, sitting up with their head in their hands. It is dark in this image which may indicate that the character is up late at night when they should normally be sleeping. I would describe this character’s body language as any of the following: Sad, anxious or overwhelmed.

**7 of Wands:** The character in the 7 of Wands is standing with a stick raised, almost as if fighting off another 6 sticks coming at them. To me, this character looks aggressive or on defense.

**7 of Pentacles:** Our character in the 7 of Pentacles is hunched over, leaning on a gardening tool, watching over 7 blooming Pentacles in a bushel below. To me, the character is observing, not moving, and so therefore may be described as patient or perhaps even *impatient*.

**4 of Pentacles:** The character in the 4 of Pentacles has very closed off body language. They have 4 Pentacles which they appear to be clutching tightly. I would describe this as being frugal, rigid or guarded.

**4 of Cups:** In the 4 of Cups, we also see a very closed off individual. They have their arms crossed, legs crossed and head down. They don't seem to care or see the gift being offered. I would describe this body language as being apathetic.

I hope that by comparing and contrasting cards, I've been able to demonstrate more of what is happening in each scene, thereby adding an extra layer of information. In the next lesson, we'll be pulling it all together with one 3 card example.
Lesson 5: An Example

In this lesson, we’ll pull it all together with one 3 card example. If you’d like to explore more examples, you can find a video containing 6 that I will walk you through, which I’ve linked up on my Patreon.

To get started on this example though, have a look at the image below and make some notes regarding what you see. Think in terms of what is similar or what is different. Also, does anything repeat? What does the body language of the characters indicate? Is speed or movement a factor? And of course, anything else that jumps out to you as being significant and relevant is always worthy of noting. Make any notes on the next page or in your journal, and on page 29 I’ll share some of my impressions.
There are no right or wrong answers here, so resist the urge to compare your answers with mine. I want to share with you what I see, simply to assist in you in this process and give you some ideas!

- In each card, the faces of the characters are either not visible or partially covered. In the first two cards, we only see the backs of the characters, while The Hermit is wearing a hood, face down. This may indicate a journey, a walking away from, or a going a different route. It might also mean that this has little to do with ego and more to do with soul and spirit. I also think this could indicate that there is some hidden or not yet known aspect to the situation.

- In each card, our characters are holding something. Card 1 shows 10 wands, card 2 is a walking stick as with card 3. This could indicate that the journey will be tricky and so we must allow ourselves to be supported. Because we started with 10 sticks (and can't really see the way forward), there may be a need to put some of those sticks down and reduce ourselves to just 1 as is depicted in the 8 of Cups and The Hermit.

- The progression of the journey itself looks interesting. In the 10 of Wands the landscape starts out kind of bright with a clear path, with something visible up ahead. In the 8, it's darker now with a rockier terrain. And in The Hermit, it's darkest yet with also a rocky terrain and visible snow indicating perhaps a change in weather. Because it looks like seasons pass between the cards, it may be that the situation at hand will take some time. It may also get progressively more difficult, which is why it's important to scale back.

- There is a different lightsource happening in each scene. In card 1 we're illuminated by the sun, card 2 by the moon and card 3 by a lamp. This to me reads like a progression from ego to shadow to then inner wisdom.

Did you see some of the same? Do some of those impressions resonate? What do you see if you go back and have a second glance?

On the next page, we'll explore this technique when applied to reading oracle cards!
Lesson 6: Working With Oracle

We’ve talked a lot about Reading in the Flow where tarot is concerned, but what about oracle cards? How do the concepts translate and how do they differ?

For starters, there is so much variation among oracle decks on the market. For this reason, the lesson on Deck Structure likely won't apply to most oracle decks and can be eliminated from the conversation. However, that doesn’t mean that various associations or correspondences still won't apply. And depending on what deck you’re working with, more or less may be applicable.

An example may be colours. Even if you have a very specific oracle deck that is very sparse or which does not include humans, animals or other characters that could indicate body language or direction, if it includes colour you could use that feature to weave cards together. Numbers may also be applicable. Many oracle decks will come numbered, so this may add another layer of meaning or understanding.

Many decks though, do contain lots of full images and story-board visuals. For this reason, Reading In The Flow can be just as easily accomplished. On the next page, I will share two cards from The Wisdom of the Oracle and provide you some space to see if you can weave together any similarities or differences. Once you’ve had a chance to note what you see, I’ll provide some thoughts on what I see happening in the cards as well.
Lesson 6 - Exercise 1:

Make some notes about what you see in the space below and how you may interpret the message if these two cards were drawn together. On the next page, I'll provide some of what I see and what that may signify.
I hope you were able to apply some of the techniques we've so far discussed with Tarot to the oracle example on the page previous. Here are some points or notes that jump out to me when I look at these two cards together.

- If you add and reduce the numbers on these cards, they both add up to 3. 48 = 4+8=12, 1+2=3. 39 = 3+9=12, 1+2=3. This may indicate that social situations, creativity or expression are pertinent to the message behind this reading.
- There are a handful of similarities between both characters on each card. They both have angel wings, they are both stationed on a pedestal, they are both reaching upward and in both images, their faces are not showcased full on.
- While the colouring on each card is fairly different, what is similar in the background is the presence of clouds.
- There are also stars and a banner repeated in both images.

And if we're to take all of that information, how could we weave it together to arrive at a cohesive message? Perhaps the cards are suggesting this: In the Seeker’s life, there is the opportunity to awaken to new possibilities, especially where matters of expression and social dynamics are concerned. While outside influences may be relevant, the focus is really on the seeker now and the ways in which he/she is growing. While the changes ahead may not be clear as day just yet (note the clouds that dominate the background), the seeker should be be alert and open to what may soon unfold around them.

Just in that short blurb, we can arrive at a clear and succinct message. And in doing so, we never once discussed what the book suggests or even what the keywords read. All we did was observe the images and find meaning in what we saw.

So you see, Reading in the Flow is possible whether you're dealing with tarot or oracle! In the next lesson, we'll unwrap a few advanced techniques that will provide you a means to access even more information from your spreads!
Lesson 7: Advanced Techniques

Technique 1: Total Number

Using the concepts of numerology, you could determine a total number for each spread you do and apply that number’s meaning to add additional insight to the final message.

For example, let’s say you pull the following cards: Temperance, 4 of Wands, Page of Cups

Temperance = 5 (14 becoming 1+4 =5). 4 of Wands = 4. Page of Cups = 0.

Take all the numbers, add them together, and then reduce to a single digit. In this case, we’d add 5+4 which equals 9. 9 is already a single digit so no need to reduce further. The total number in this case is 9.

What additional meaning may that number lend to the spread? Taking the keywords for the number 9 from the reference sheet on page 18, it could indicate that the situation at hand is nearing completion. It may also (depending on the energy of the spread and the cards drawn) indicate that the seeker is soon to reach a certain level of satisfaction or fulfillment regarding the situation at hand. You could also keep things very Tarot centric and take the total number and apply it back to a Major Arcana. So, the total number may be 9, which represents Hermit energy in that case.

With this technique, I do not apply numbers to court cards, so for me, those are effectively 0. The Major Arcana are 0 (the fool) to 22 (The World) and then the suits are obviously labelled 1 (Ace) -10.

Now, since the court cards have no numerical value, and The Fool as well would equal 0, if you were to say, pull only court cards or pull courts in combination with The Fool, it is possible you will end up with 0. That is okay! The number 0 carries its own unique vibration which I’ve also outlined in the reference chart on page 18.
What’s On The Bottom?

Whether you are pulling 1 card or 10, you can easily add a little extra to your spread by looking at the card on the bottom of the deck. This you would do after the cards for the spread have been drawn and set down. When you do take that peak, there are a few different ways you could apply this, which I will outline below.

The card on the bottom could indicate...

● A shadow element. Something the seeker is challenged to acknowledge or assimilate.
● An unconscious aspect of the situation/seeker i.e. something the seeker is unaware of.
● A summary of the spread and further elaboration/affirmation of the themes presented.
● What the issue or situation is not about. Since the card is the furthest from the top, the bottom card could be showing you something that definitely doesn’t apply.

I pretty much always approach this technique using the final option - what the issue is not about, but any approach would work. Even if one of these options doesn’t resonate, you can always make up your own! What does the card on the bottom of the deck represent to you?
Lesson 8: Weaving It All Together

Over the course of the last 7 lessons, we've examined the structure of a standard tarot deck, explored some common associations, compared and contrasted what's happening in the scenes of cards, addressed aspects to look for in every spread and learned a couple extra techniques for additional meaning. We've also practiced with examples and now it's time to take what we've learned and apply it.

For this exercise, you'll be taking the concepts we've so far discussed and using them to perform a real reading for yourself.

You may opt to ask a question or keep it general. You may decide you want to use a three card spread with no positional meanings, or a full on celtic cross. I won't tell you how to perform your reading and I would encourage you to use methods and spreads that you are most comfortable with.

Once you've drawn your cards, turn to the chart on the next page to record what you are able to observe in the spread at large. This chart will also be handy, if you wish to use it, for future readings. Feel free to print out multiple copies and keep on hand for reference.
FLOW CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cards:</th>
<th>Question:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majors vs. Minors</td>
<td>Court Cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directions</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number:

What’s On The Bottom:

Overall Impressions:
| Final Words |

A spread should be looked at from all angles, not just the singular card and its singular meaning. Before or after interpreting the cards on their individual level, take a step back and ask yourself, what else are the cards telling me and what else am I seeing?

- Is there imagery that repeats?
- Is body language or posture telling?
- Is there a suit, number or even colour which dominates?
- How do the cards attract or repel one another?
- What is the ratio of Major Arcana to Minor Arcana?
- Do the cards read like a storyboard? Or, are the scenes vastly different?
- What isn’t there?

And you don’t need to perform a “real” reading in order to put these techniques into practice. You can simply pull 3 (or more) cards at random (applying a question or not) and then take a step back to notice, or make note of what you see. Don’t worry about what’s relevant or not to the seeker while in practice mode. When you’re reading for real, your intuition will inform you which aspects, of what you see, need to be acknowledged and which can be overlooked.

I hope you’ve enjoyed these lessons and that the techniques discussed will help elevate your tarot practice and understanding of the cards. With tarot, it can be a never ending process of discovery - but it doesn’t have to be hours of memorization and difficult work. Just start with what you know and what you see, and you’ll be reading with confidence in no time!

With love,
Julia Eve

spiralseatarot.com