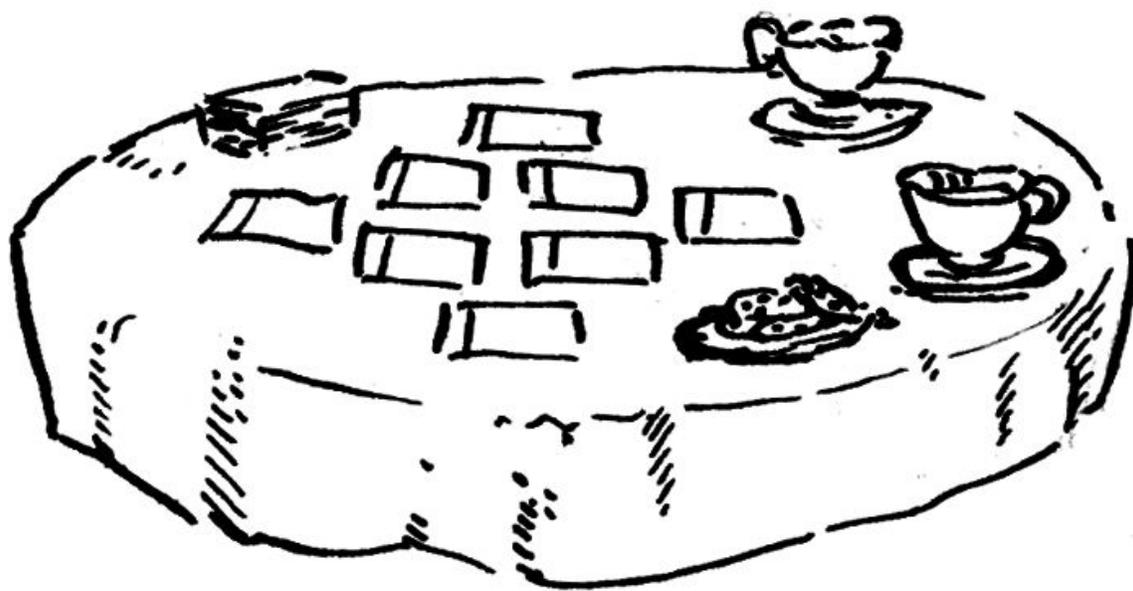


MODERN ORACLE TAROT: HELLO



BY RONDA SNOW

Modern Oracle: Hello

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HELLO

If you have ever had an in-person reading with me, or if you follow the “Tarotbytes” blog on ModernOracleTarot.com you may have heard most of this before. This is the same, basic background information that I give everyone the first time we work together, especially if it is your very first Tarot reading. When we are working in person, sharing a little bit of background information puts everyone at ease and helps the reading settle into a comfortable routine. When we work at a distance (by print, video or e-mail) I’ll put this kind of energy-settling information the “general pattern” section of the reading.

There often isn’t time within a single Tarot session to give an in-depth introduction to the Tarot process. “Hello” will pull back the curtain and let you see how things look from my side of the table. Hopefully that will make your side of the Tarot table all the more relaxing, comfortable and fun.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Tarot’s origins are uncertain. The real story is clouded by centuries of myth, religious oppression, political opposition, periods of obscurity and sporadic bouts of ill-informed popularity. Very few reliable academic sources are available. The most reasonable scenario I’ve found describes Tarot as an ordinary card game emerging sometime around the 16th century, primarily in France and Italy. Little or nothing survives of the original game. It isn’t clear exactly when or how it changed into “fortune telling.” Most believe that evolution happened in England in the mid 19th century and was influenced by the Golden Dawn and other spiritualist movements of the time. This is important to keep in mind to help us understand the cultural context of the images on the cards. Knowing the historical context helps us to understand the card’s symbolism from our contemporary point of view. That is why I call my books and website “Modern Oracle”. My goal is to interpret Tarot in modern, reasonable, understandable terms while combining it with Tarot’s timeless wisdom and spiritual guidance. The biggest challenge to that comes from all the misunderstandings about Tarot that have cropped up over the years from books, movies and television.

ART WITH A HEART

The true art of reading tarot cards is all about dealing with difficult emotions, finding new understanding, empowering positive choices, and inspiring all of us to

live life fully. There is no predicting the future, no “100% accurate,” and certainly no guaranteed results. Tarot can do so much more than give a side-show prediction. Modern Oracle Tarot respects your ability to reason, choose and act. As I see it, old-fashioned “predictions” imprison you when a Tarot reading should set your mind free. Predictions trap you into seeing yourself as “a victim of fate” and set you up for harmful self-fulfilling prophecies. A good reading doesn't predict a set future. A good reading shows you how to create a better future. Tarot isn't “accurate,” Tarot is art with a heart.

NOT SO STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

There is no standard, official way to do a Tarot reading. There are as many ways of giving a reading as there are people doing readings. Some follow a set tradition, while many of us create our own way of doing things. Some of us take medical questions (I don't.) Some psychics still give predictions (I don't). Some psychics won't work by phone or e-mail (I do!) The insight you gain is what matters in a reading, not the surface details about how the reading is done. No one style of reading is better or worse than another. Style differences are simply a matter of personal preference, not an indication of reading's quality . The more comfortable you are with a reader, no matter what their style may be, the more useful any given reading will be for you. Some people enjoy a little glitz, glamor and drama. There are many Tarot readers who enjoy working with all the bells, whistles, props and costumes. My style is more down-to-earth and practical, sweaters and mom-jeans. I like to think my style is more like the cooking-baking Oracle from the Matrix movies. I'm definitely not the sequins and feathers “Miss Cleo” type from the 1980s. While on the surface it may seem like chaos, the wide variety of readers is the best possible way for things to be. With so much choice, anyone can find the right reader. With e-mail and online video calls, readers and clients can network across the globe. World wide communication is modern, and it gives us access to the best that the oracle of Tarot has to offer.

Many of my clients like to work in-person. Meeting and talking with people is one of the best things about Tarot work. I'm not surprised that many (if not most) intuitives prefer working face to face. Some psychic do not work by phone or e-mail at all.

I'm different. E-mail and distance readings are my specialty. As a writer, a keyboard is a direct line short-cut to my intuition. I get the exact same identical words and mental images typing as I do talking. Your physical location makes no difference to

what I mentally 'see' and 'hear' intuitively in a reading. It doesn't change the results one bit if you are three feet away or if you are three time zones away.

There is one big advantage to written sessions over live sessions that no one ever seems to talk about. Working remotely, I can't ask you leading questions or make guesses based on your body language. There is no way for me to "cold read" you the way a mentalist or stage performer might. Working remotely in print or by e-mail, you can be sure the information is 100% extrasensory & pure intuition. That isn't to say any reader who works in person is a sham. We need both remote and in-person specialists in Tarot to meet the different needs of everyone who wants a reading. No two readers are alike, but neither are any two sitters alike. The end product is the important thing. The same information comes through intuition, no matter whether I *say* the words to you or *type* them to you. It is only a matter of finding the reading experience that matches your personal tastes and needs.

DEALING WITH THE CARDS

I use either the classic Rider Waite Smith Tarot deck published circa 1909, or a RWS based contemporary deck. Why? I like them. There are many Tarot and non-Tarot oracle decks. I believe the right message for you will come through, no matter what cards are used. 'Oracles' like Tarot cards (tea leaves, runes, palm lines, what-have-you) just help us uncover our inner knowing and articulate it in a clearer, more understandable way.

The tarot deck is larger than the modern game-playing deck because it has a fifth category that the modern deck doesn't have. It's called the major arcana and symbolizes the major life lessons and decisions we all encounter. Think of them as the big green signs at major highway ramps and intersections that help you decide which way to turn. They are sometimes called the trump cards because that is literally how they were used when Tarot cards were a game.

The rest of the cards are called the minor arcana. These cards symbolize less intense, day-to-day lessons and advice. Think of them as the smaller signs along the side of the highway that let you know which road you are on and direction you are heading.

On its own, the minor arcana is almost identical to the modern cards we all know. It has four suits, each with ace, number cards, knight (instead of jack), queen and king. Tarot has an additional "court" or "face" card in each suit - the page. There are

four suits: cups, swords, wands (or batons) and coins (or pentacles). As I read them, the suit of cups symbolize romance and the close relationships in life. Swords symbolize the more distant relationships like cultural identity, political affiliation, religion, your relationship with authority and so on. Coins represent your relationship with the physical world, particularly wealth and career. Wands symbolize your relationship with yourself, the inner world of philosophy, spirituality, and personal growth. There are other older symbolic associations with the suits, but they vary depending on which reference you use. The classic Western elements are an example: cups are water, swords are air, coins are earth and wands are fire. I always follow intuition when it comes to decide what older associations to use for any given card.

“Reversed” cards appear upside-down relative to the person reading the cards. Some readers change the meaning of the card when that happens, making it the opposite of the right-side-up meaning. I don’t. I take all the meanings into consideration all the time anyway. Reversed cards might hint at blocked energies, frustrations or challenges with relative to the card or topic at hand. I follow intuition in that regard as well. If the reversal intuitively seems important, I’ll bring it up with you. Otherwise we just turn the card upright and go on as usual. For written sessions, we’ll do a little of both. I’ll note when it’s reversed, but keep the card graphics upright.

The way you place the cards on the table is called the “card spread” or card “layout.” Each position within the pattern has an assigned meaning that plays a part in interpreting that individual card. There are lots of card spreads, with new ones being created all the time. The only requirement is to begin the reading with the card layout and each position’s meaning clearly in mind.

I created the “Modern Oracle” card spreads to give depth and detail while still respecting your choice and your power in all of this. For now, we’ll talk about the 7 card “Expanded Modern Oracle Tarot” version. It is the only layout I offer for individual in-person sessions, but I have multiple layouts available by phone and e-mail. We will talk about the other layouts and choosing the right layout for your question a little later on. The general structure of a reading is the same for all of the layouts. The format for a reading is the same by e-mail as it is in-person.

First, I listen to (or read) your question. That, plus shuffling the cards is how I connect the reading to your energy. Then, especially if you are new to Tarot, I’ll give

you a taste of the background information and answer any questions you have about the process of doing a reading.

Again, every Tarot reader has their own unique way of doing things. In person, I'll often ask you if you want 3, 5, or 7 shuffles. If not, then I will shuffle based on the number of syllables in the name or nickname you give when you send your e-mail order. This connects your energy to the reading, no matter if you are across the table or a world away.

After I put the cards on the table, we'll talk about the general pattern. This is the big picture of the cards taken all together as a whole. We'll talk about the ratio of major and minor arcana and anything else notable such as repeating numbers or dominant minor arcana suit. Sometimes general intuitive impressions about the cards or your questions will come through here.

Minor arcana cards outnumber the Majors in the deck roughly 2:1, so we would expect more minor arcana cards in any given layout. If there are a majority of major arcana cards in your layout, that can symbolize a time of big changes or important life-lessons. A layout of all Minor Arcana cards might symbolize a period of stability or balance. If you are feeling stressed, but the Minor Arcana cards still dominate, that could be a symbol the majority of the stress is over or it could hint that this time will look better in retrospect than it feels at the time of the reading.

After the general pattern, we will go card-by-card. Each position in the layout has meaning in addition to the individual card's meaning. We'll talk about both the card and the position one at a time. The positions in the expanded Modern Oracle layout are:

1. Lessons from the past: Things from before that might help you now
2. Understanding now: understanding the current situation
3. Next step forward: moving along in your current path
4. Pivot point: advice to consider or a decision that needs to be made
5. Alternate direction: another way you can turn your path, if you choose to do so.
6. Assets: Things working in your favor or additional advice
7. Challenges: Cautions, areas that need particular attention or change

Within any of those card positions, each card can have a type or “flavor” of message. This isn’t related to the card’s traditional meaning. It describes how the card feels intuitively. Card “flavors” can be:

1. Advice: something to consider doing
2. Caution: something to consider avoiding
3. Validation: acknowledgement of something you’ve done well or how you feel.

After the card-by-card, we’ll summarize. Sometimes I call this “scrying” or “cold reading”, because I have a tendency to stop think and stare at the cards for a bit at the beginning of this section. This part opens up to any intuitive impressions that come through for you, whether it has to do with your question or not, whether it has to do with the cards or not. For reasons I don’t know and don’t care to question, this part often starts with colors, but it can include mental images, words, sounds, scents, crystals, book titles, movies, TV shows...anything that can help point you toward the ideas that are trying to get through to you.

Finally, it is your turn to talk. In a live session, you are welcome to ask questions as we go. Questions can take a reading in some really wonderful directions. Questions that pop to mind are often your intuition telling you something is important and needs to be included. If we are working by e-mail or in print, then by all means send a follow-up e-mail with questions. I’m always happy to hear your thoughts about the reading too.

CHOOSE A CARD, ANY CARD

Most psychic websites don’t offer the variety of card layouts available here at ModernOracleTarot.com. You pay for your time with the psychic - period. You have little control over the end price, the more cards they use the more they keep you talking, the more you pay. Whether it is intentional or not, that is how the pay-per-minute or per-hour structure works. Even if you find a pay-per-session flat rate, it still leaves you with one price, one format, one option.

All of my readings follow the same basic format (general pattern - individual card - summary) so the number of cards and the layout pattern is how we can customize the session to suit your individual needs.

So which layout should you choose?

What is your budget? It isn't the Middle Ages anymore, and Tarot readers don't trade in chickens. Whether you consider Tarot to be spiritual counseling or simple entertainment, it is still a service to you worthy of compensation. We pay admission to a movie or donate to a minister's counseling without a second thought. Tarot is no different. I set my rates per card for several reasons. It allows you to pick a reading that fits your budget and ability (or willingness) to pay. You are not stuck with a one-size-fits-all session. Per-card pricing allows both of us to pay fullest attention to the reading at hand rather than with no worries about watching the clock. It also gives you some control over the reading experience. You are very much part of the process.

What makes you want a reading in the first place? If you have a very specific question and want a short specific answer, a one card meditation might be best. If you have a specific topic but want a more comprehensive answer, a Pathway or Modern Oracle layout would be the best choice. If you have a very general question, multiple questions drawn from different topics (romance, career, etc) or are open to whatever guidance the energies may offer, the Modern Oracle layouts are designed to guide you through your choices and show you multiple possibilities. Yes or no readings do one thing - answer one, single yes or no question. Maybe. If you want an accurate prediction or you want to know what will happen to you, then your best choice is to find another psychic. I don't make predictions.

When in doubt, use the five card Modern Oracle. It always amazes me how well this layout adapts to almost every question.

Here they are again:

- 1 card **Meditation** readings work on both ends of the focus spectrum but not so well in the middle. One card can focus like a laser on one small, very specific concern or it can give a broad overview and look at the general tone of a day or a year.
- 3 card **Pathway** is perfect for those "am I headed in the right direction" kinds of questions. Contains lessons from the past, understanding now, and next step forward cards.
- 5 card **Modern Oracle** readings have a great balance between focus and detail. If in doubt, this is the one to get. It can look at one question from different points of view, or it can look at multiple questions from various aspects of life. It is the most adaptable, in my experience, to meet your individual need. It includes the past-now-forward cards from the Pathway reading plus "Pivot Point" that suggests particular advice, or a decision that needs to be made. This card can hint at how you can turn your current path in a new direction. This leads in turn to the "Alternate Direction" card which

gives you some insight into that alternate direction. It can give you ideas and inspiration about what is possible.

- 7 Card **Extended Modern Oracle** has all of the cards in the 5 card reading plus “Assets” (things working in your favor) and “challenges” (things that may be difficult or complicated). Wide ranging with moderate detail, this layout is helpful if you have multiple parts to your question or want to cover multiple areas of life.
- **Seasons of the Year** is perfect for birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, weddings...any occasion where you want to look ahead and see where the energies might be flowing. It gives one card for each season of the upcoming year, starting with the season we are in now. Then it summarizes with a card representing the year as a whole.
- **Yes/no reading:** I call this my “Zombie Cat” reading after a post on the blog that talks about probabilities, predictions and Schrodinger’s Cat. This is not a prediction, but sounds a little bit like one for people who just have to have a yes or no answer. Lighthearted, fun, infused with humor, a “Zombie Cat” reading It has a 50% chance of being dead wrong but 100% chance of provoking a thought.

EXAMPLE OF AN E-MAIL READING

Q: I would like one card general guidance about working with my spirit guides and when will be ready to guide and counsel others?



FOUR OF WANDS

A: That you are asking this question at all shows you are on the right path.

Personal growth is worth asking questions, seeking guidance and respecting the process of it all. Guiding others is ten times so.

It is important to respect and focus on your own growth first, and then you must take great care to give respect to other’s path, including the divine (and sometimes difficult) lessons they call to themselves and must experience for themselves to

learn what it is they need to learn. Only when you can keep yourself disengaged from their lessons, and focus on your own spiritual growth, can you hope to guide others. A good guide must not tangle their own ego and path with their client's choices. Sometimes we get it wrong. Sometimes the best thing that other person can do is ignore our advice. This concept is essential if you are to do no harm, which I believe is the most important principle of all, especially in spiritual guidance .

So by that same token, to give you that same respect, only you can answer when you are ready to work with other people. My advice is always to approach the learning and experience with a very deliberate intent. You must clearly and deliberately set your intent to work with your guides in an attitude of Love above all, or as one my teachers used to say, only for the "highest and best".

Working with your OWN guides is a crucial step toward helping others – it has to come FIRST.

I've always been taught that working with true guides is a positive, uplifting, loving thing. They want to help and heal...and to be heard. That is my first-hand experience as well.

Just listen, and they will find a way to communicate. If you think something is meaningful...chances are it IS meaningful. Spirit speaks through symbolism, and coincidence, and feelings.

Once you are comfortable working with you own guides, it will be easier to ask the difficult questions that have to be considered before moving into guiding others... WHY do you want to guide others? Is it to help and heal, or is it to gain power and influence? What to you hope to accomplish? Are you the best one to help here, or should you defer to another? Is this the right thing for you? (guiding others is not the best thing for everyone, and it it doesn't have to be permanent...you can quit any time). A healer must keep questioning like that always.

As for the Tarot reading itself, I think a one card, focused, "daily meditation" style reading would be the best choice. Think about the card, research it, learn all you can from it. There are no easy answers in working with guides or guiding others, so a little work on a card is no big deal.

Set your intent to Love, then trust your heart, and strive to do no harm...given those things all will be well.

Not a surprise, your card is the **Four of Wands**. It's meaning is "Strong Foundation". The feeling, the message that seems urgent for you (as you can probably tell by

what has been said so far) is to build a strong foundation. Build a strong foundation of working with your own guides before you consider trying to guide others.

There is a strong sense of caution...if you try to guide others too early, your own growth might become compromised.

There is a feeling of a cult leader...not saying you will become one, but perhaps you are at danger to follow one. But cult of personality is to be avoided either way. "Anchor" "root" "ground" are all words that come to mind for you.

And there the energy ends, with a strong feeling of you must do this for yourself....find your foundation, and anchor and root. Be strong and wise for yourself...only later consider guiding others once you are on a strong footing for yourself. There is a mental image of a cement slab that must be poured before a tent or shelter is built for the shelter to be long-lasting, and helpful to those who use it. Best Wishes to you on your path of learning!

A READING OF YOUR OWN

If all of that sounds good to you, and you would like a Tarot reading, please visit www.ModernOracleTarot.com or e-mail modernoracletarot@gmail.com for more details. Hand illustrated Keepsake readings are available through my etsy.com shop "[Quirk & Flotsam](#)"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ronda Snow reads Tarot cards, writes e-books and gives Natural Wellness & Meditation tutorials. She has a B.S. in Medical Science and a non-accredited Ph.D. in Natural Health. Ronda is co-host of Menage A Tarot podcast (available on iTunes) with David Dear of MyOwnMinister.com and Kate of Daily-Tarot-Girl.com. She is a Reiki Master-practitioner and Taijiquan enthusiast. She likes to make stuff, especially meditation beads (mala) and other quirky, random items for her Etsy shop. Ronda gives in-person Tarot readings in select Pittsburgh PA locations by appointment. Her E-mail Tarot readings are available anywhere with internet access, no appointment needed.

AVAILABLE E-BOOKS

www.QuirkandFlotsam.etsy.com for .pdf download

- **#PeaceTarot** - easy guide to doing daily meditation style Tarot readings for yourself. Does not require a Tarot Deck, or any Tarot reading experience. Designed to ease stress and help you find a moment of peace in a world that often isn't.
- **Bead Mindful, Begin Meditating** - beginner how-to teaching a simple, secular yet spiritual approach to meditating with beads. Easy to learn and easier to do, this mindfulness style of meditation fits with the busiest modern lifestyle.

On www.amazon.com For Kindle

- **Triquetra: The Dance of Worlds** - a collection of poems in three parts. The first part, "The Outer World" contains poems inspired by the images and experience of Nature. "The Inner World" is filled with images of emerging spirituality and growing autonomy. The third part, "The Dance of Worlds," speaks of heartfelt relationships, that place where two worlds meet and begin to dance.

Look For These Upcoming Titles

- Modern Oracle: Primer
- Modern Oracle: Tarotbytes
- Modern Oracle: Arcana in Balance
- Moonlight and Silver