

indicates that a specific color scheme was never considered an important component of the Marseille pattern.

Of course, there's nothing stopping you from using color considerations yourself. You might, for example, assign meanings of your own to the colors on your deck, such as: red for energy, blue for emotions and/or spirituality, green for growth, brown for the material world, yellow for enlightenment, etc.

The method we'll use will be outlined in three levels. Level I gives the overall method and simple meanings for the suits and the numbers/rankings. Level II describes how to develop more specific personalities for each card. Level III discusses how to use the visual elements on the cards to help determine meaning. Beginners can start with Level I and add the subsequent levels when they feel ready. Finally, a sample reading will show how to combine the levels.

Level I

If you're accustomed to other tarot books, you may be somewhat dismayed to see that individual meanings for the courts and pips are not given in this book. The reason for this is simple. The method recommended in this book involves creating your own meanings for the cards as they appear in readings. This gives the pip and court cards a

depth and sophistication which is not possible with memorized meanings. This method enables you to create readings as meaningful and as significant as readings done with scenic-pip decks. Giving a list of my own divinatory meanings would be self-defeating, because I want you to think them through for yourself.

I will, however, give my own suggested meanings for the suits and the card numbers/ranks, so that you can follow the sample reading. Please feel free to use your own keywords, key phrases, and meanings. Mine are no better than yours. Or go ahead and use mine, if you like them. Or gather a list of meanings you like from different sources. It's entirely up to you. The specific meanings you use are less important than the process of choosing meanings (whatever they may be) and practicing with them, modifying them, and living with them until they become like a language. That's when the cards will start speaking to you.

Don't be put off by the simplicity of the following keywords and phrases. Experienced readers may look at them and think them limiting, but when all three levels are taken together, you will find endless potential for complexity and depth. And if you're new to this method, it helps to start off simply.

There are only 18 meanings you need to learn; four suit meanings, ten number meanings, and four court meanings.

Suits

The suits represent areas of human experience.

Staves: *Creating.* Creative energy. Think of building a house with wooden planks.

Cups: *Interacting.* Emotions and relationships of all kinds. Dealing with people. Think of two people toasting each other with wine glasses.

Swords: *Defending.* Self-defense and setting boundaries. Think of drawing a line in the sand with a sword point.

Coins: *Obtaining.* Providing for yourself. Establishing a comfort zone. Taking risks with resources. Think of the thoughts and feelings you experience when you buy a lottery ticket.

Pip Numbers

The pip cards represent actions, thoughts, and feelings that we experience on a daily basis.

Ace: *There's a first time for everything.* Beginnings. A seed that will grow.

Two: *It takes two.* A dialogue. Weighing and comparing different possibilities.

Three: *Having a plan.* Formulating a strategy to accomplish a goal.

Four: *Making it happen.* Your efforts result in concrete manifestation. Initial success.

Five: *Challenging yourself.* A monkey wrench. Things don't go as expected and you're challenged to grow. Or you may be deliberately

challenging yourself.

Six: *Keeping it going.* You've established a pattern or rhythm which allows things to run smoothly. Things are going well and you're in a position to be generous with others or even to give up some of your goals for others' benefit.

Seven: *Going deeper.* You become aware of deeper levels of meaning and hidden motivations. You're no longer satisfied with superficial answers.

Eight: *The efficiency expert.* Through use of discipline and structure, you reach peak efficiency.

Nine: *You deserve it.* You receive rewards due to your own efforts.

Ten: *Enough already.* You've attained your goals, but find them unsatisfying. Time to begin something new.

Court Rankings

The court cards represent modes of human behavior.

Knave: *Learning.* Curiosity. Becoming interested.

Knight: *Focusing.* Single-mindedness. Determination.

Queen: *Encouraging.* Getting things done in a calm, understated way. Using persuasion rather than force.

King: *Controlling.* Using force and authority to impose one's will.

Notes:

Please note that any of the above meanings can be seen positively or negatively. Eight, for example, "*The efficiency expert*," could indicate too much discipline and structure, or someone who is being too efficient.

With the Five, a challenge might be just what you need right now. The Knave ("*Learning*") can be nose-y.

The King and Queen can also be positive or negative. No value judgments are meant by the definitions. At various times their approach can be appropriate or inappropriate, depending on the context.

No actual genders are implied by any of the courts. A Queen can describe a male querent's actions, and a King can describe a female's. Also, no commentary on gender roles is intended. Women and men are just as likely to be either encouraging or controlling.

In modern usage, the word "knave" means a rogue or a rascal, a deceitful fellow. In the 15th century, however, its primary definition would have been a male servant (child or adult). English playing-card decks contained a King, a Queen and a Knave, until the late 19th century, when the introduction of card indices (the single-letter indications of rank in the card corners) created confusion, because there were two court rankings beginning with "K." The Knave then became the Jack. So when a Knave appears it does not necessarily indicate a rogue (although you can certainly use that meaning in the context of the reading if you wish).

Try interpreting a few cards and see how it goes. The key is to interpret loosely and not be too literal. Take

the concept of the suit and the concept of the number and combine them. If the meaning doesn't make sense, think about it a bit, adjust it in your mind until it falls into place.

Here are some examples, just to give you an idea of the possibilities:

Seven of Swords. *Going deeper* (number) and *Defending* (suit). In a battle, you need to go deeper into your reservoir of skills and endurance in order to defend yourself. Or you need to set boundaries at a deeper level than you've been doing. Or you're getting too involved in working out complex strategies for self-defense. Or someone you know is being self-defensive for reasons which aren't immediately apparent.

Queen of Cups. *Encouraging* (ranking) and *Interacting* (suit). Encouraging people to get together. Or making subtle efforts to get someone to tell you something, rather than forcing the issue. Or trying unsuccessfully to keep a relationship going by being too accommodating.

Level II

You may find that you would prefer for each pip and court to have its own personality, rather than relying solely on the intersection of number/ranking and suit. First, take a look at the Pip Number meanings. You'll notice that they aren't just

random concepts, but rather follow a progression, from beginning to climax to anticlimax. To develop more individual personalities for the pips, create a story for each suit which utilizes the number meanings as waystations.

I'm not going to give you my own individual meanings for the cards, because I want you to develop your own. But I'll take an imaginary suit and use it as an example.

Let's say we had a suit of Eggbeaters, and the suit meaning was Cooking. The story would then tell the tale of cooking a recipe.

Ace: *There's a first time for everything*. Deciding to make a home cooked meal for tonight's dinner.

Two: *It takes two*. Trying to decide on which recipe to cook.

Three: *Having a plan*. Choosing the recipe and making up the shopping list.

Four: *Making it happen*. Setting all the ingredients on the counter, the mixing bowls, the utensils, and preheating the oven.

Five: *Challenging yourself*. Uh-oh, you forgot to buy an ingredient. What will you do? You're challenged to come up with a creative way around the problem.

Six: *Keeping it going*. Everything's coming together smoothly.

Seven: *Going deeper*. It occurs to you that the dish would have more depth of flavor if you make a substantial change in the recipe. It's a risk, but you decide to go for it.

Eight: *The efficiency expert*. The dish goes in the oven and you set the oven timer. Everything has come together perfectly.

Nine: *You deserve it*. The timer beeps, the finished dish comes out of the oven. Enjoy!

Ten: *Enough already*. You enjoyed the dish on the first day, but after eating it as leftovers for a few days, you're ready to cook something new (or go out for pizza).

Knave: *Learning*. Discovering an interest in cooking. Reading cookbooks or going to cooking school.

Knight: *Focusing*. Thinking exclusively about the recipe you're cooking. Becoming obsessed with cooking.

Queen: *Encouraging*. Appreciating the serendipitous accidents that occur while cooking – the result deviates from the cookbook, but is good nonetheless.

King: *Controlling*. Insisting on following the recipe precisely, so that it comes out exactly as described in the cookbook.

If you create stories like this for each of the four suits, then you'll have an individual meaning that you can call to mind for each pip and court card. The stories will have even more resonance for you if you base them on events that have happened in your own life. If you wish, you can create single keywords or short phrases for each card which help you bring to mind each card's story.