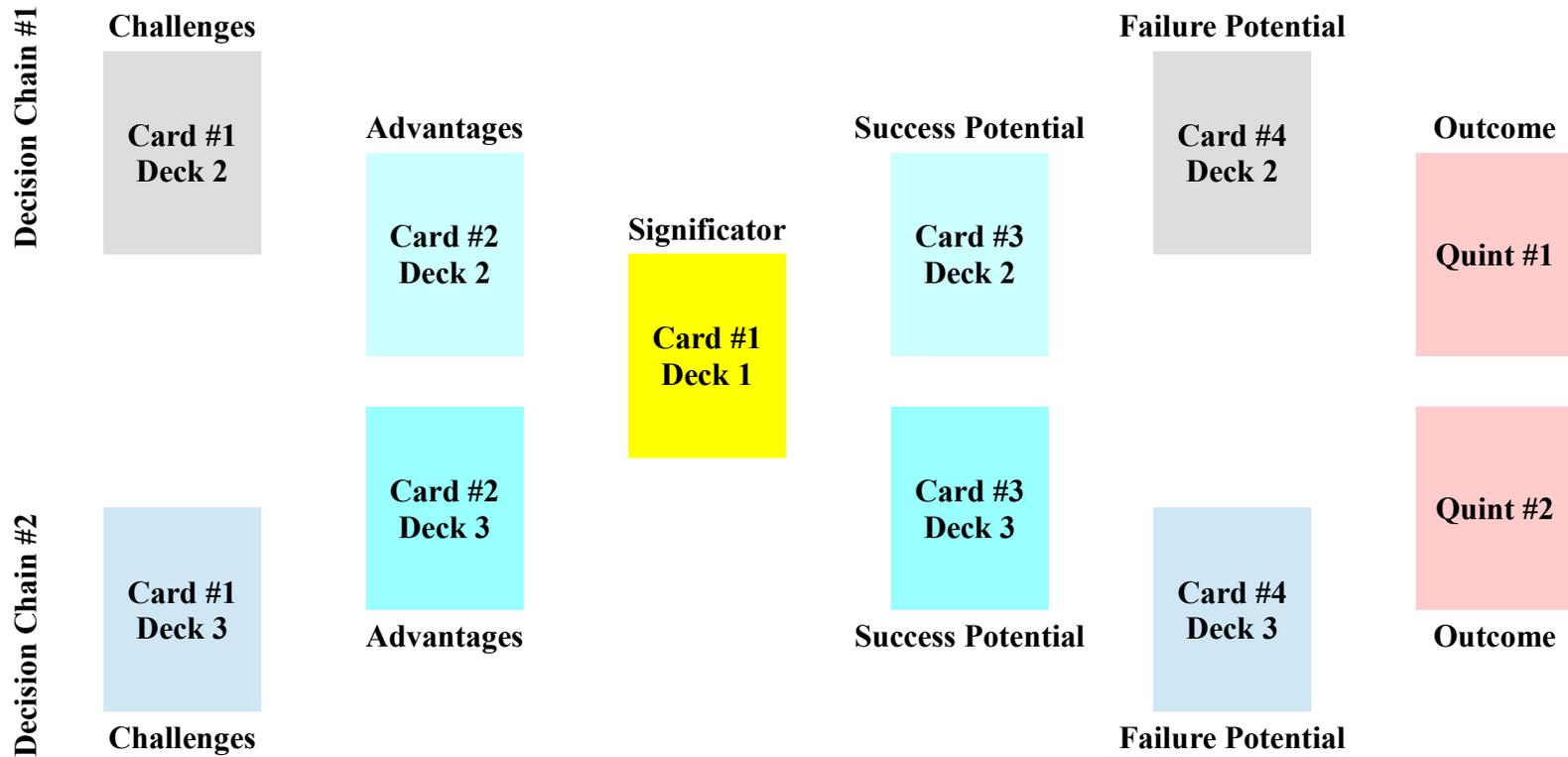


The “Crossroads of Necessity” Decision-Making Spread



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Self-directed, choice-driven change is the focus of this spread. It uses three decks to ensure that all options remain on the table for each of two decision chains. The cards in each chain show the Challenges, Advantages, Success Potential and Failure Potential for two alternative courses of action, with a composite Outcome card collecting the evidence of suitability in each case, thus enabling a roll-up comparison of both chains.

Step #1: Choose a Significator card from one deck to represent the querent or the central issue to be decided. Because this spread assumes that a binding judgment must be made and not simply an idle “curiosity call,” the Significator should be selected intentionally rather than randomly. Place this card in the center position of the spread and set the rest of the deck aside.

Step #2: Populate Decision Chain #1 with the cards from a second deck. Because the reading is more about a “weighted” consideration of different options than a narrative “story,” reversals are unnecessary and will not change the outcome. However, if you choose to keep the Fool as “zero” and not 22 for the completion of Step #4, reversals will permit subtracting those values during the calculation to potentially obtain a sum of zero. If you decide to read the spread as two competing narratives, your usual practice for dealing with reversals should be followed.

Step #3: Populate Decision Chain #2 with the cards from a third deck.

Step #4: For each of the chains, numerically derive a “quintessence” card by adding (and subtracting if desired) and numerologically reducing the values of the cards in that chain (including the Significator), using your preferred method of calculation. Because I use all of the cards on the table for this purpose, I always include the Court Cards as 11, 12, 13 and 14; I also keep the Fool as zero, so I subtract reversed values. Although it isn't essential to the decision process, this practice can also produce a reversed “quint” card which can add another hint of emphasis for or against a particular conclusion when comparing alternative outcomes. The calculation should continue until a number lower than 22 is reached, and the Major Arcanum (“trump”) card of that number should then be placed at the end of the chain to serve as the “outcome” card for that alternative. If the applicable trump card from Deck #2 or Deck #3 has already appeared in the associated chain, draw it from Deck #1.

Step #5: Compare the testimony of the two outcome cards to deduce the best overall choice. Examination of the “weighted” cards in each chain (and in matching positions across chains) will add depth to this analysis. Each chain may also be read as a narrative flow for added insight.

For the purpose of weighting, the following guidelines may prove useful. Each of the factors in a chain (and especially any multiples) must be carefully integrated to arrive at a final decision.

The “perfect” numbers One (Ace), Three, Six and Nine can be considered supportive of a particular choice, while the balanced but dynamically limited numbers Two, Four, Eight and Ten can be treated as neutral, and the unbalanced numbers Five and Seven as contradictory.

Among the Court Cards, Knights and Kings appearing in a chain support that alternative, while Pages contribute a neutral outlook and Queens argue against the indicated action.

Elementally, the active and positive suits (Wands and Swords) support pursuing a particular direction, while the passive and negative suits (Cups and Pentacles) suggest not considering it. (Note that the textbook meanings of the suits and the cards in each suit are not factored in for the purpose of this determination, just the “classical” polarity of the suit's assigned element.)

Because the decision-making process is under the querent's control, the Major Arcana cards are not viewed as inevitable or unavoidable mandates that make any attempt at finding one's own way moot. Instead, they offer a persuasive argument for or against choosing any alternative in which they appear. Reducing each trump card to its elemental expression through zodiacal and planetary correspondences will make this process simpler. However, the traditional practice of assigning fortunate and unfortunate meanings to these cards is also acceptable.

In this sense, the outcome card for each chain should be understood as a concrete statement of the advisability or inadvisability of following that particular course of action. The testimony of the “weighting” process and the narrative story-lines can also be factored in to add breadth and depth to this judgment call.