

Reading Tarot for Others

What's covered in this chapter applies to any tarot deck and to tarot reading in general. The point of including it in this Book is to demonstrate the versatility of the SKT deck.

While these techniques can be great practice tips even when reading for yourself, the reason I frame it as reading tarot for others is because while you have plenty of time for yourself to cogitate and wax poetic about Western occult symbology, when you read tarot for others, they don't have time for that. Joe, who has a family of four and is facing eviction and whose wife has threatened to leave him, doesn't care about the Hermetic principles encoded into The World card.

One of the most effective ways to read tarot for others is to not read each and every single card in a spread. You don't have to stop and interpret every face up card on the table in isolation or even mention what they are. What you have to do is answer the question presented.

Let's walk through a couple of actual client readings. These are taken from real reading scenarios based on the cards that were drawn in the readings.

Robert is concerned about his career. He has heard company gossip that a mass lay-off is imminent this year. Robert comes to you for a tarot reading and wants to know about his job security. Will he be a victim of the lay-off?



When I say “you” from here on out, we’re going to assume for the purposes of these case studies that you read tarot exactly the way I do, in that these are actually my readings, but yes, I’m using third person.

You start by cutting the deck into four card piles for the Opening of the Four Worlds from the First Operation of the Opening of the Key. I won't get into how to do the Opening of the Key here, but will simply assume you know how to do it or know where you can look up that information.

As you cut the cards into the four card piles, right to left, Fire, Water, Air, and Earth, you explain to Robert that these four piles represent the four quadrants of life corresponding with the four elements. The Fire pile reveals his work and labors, which would be his career. The Water pile is love, family, and relationships. The Air pile is personal advancement, glory-seeking, his public reputation, and his social or external life. And Earth is for money and property matters. You are looking for the card that represents him, which is the significator card, The Seeker.



You find the significator in the Air pile. Given that in this session, the cards are pulsing in empathy with Robert and doling out the cards that you can best read to get the right information to Robert, if he was really going to be a victim of the lay-off, then there would be swords around his significator, or at least symbolic imagery more in line with decay or sorrow. We have plenty of Fire to go around here with The Force (Strength card), Six of Scepters, and Ace of Scepters. We see the sign for victory. The *emotions* evoked here are affirmatively positive, not negative.

If Robert was going to get laid off, the *emotions* of the cards drawn into a spread would *feel* negative and ominous to you, because empathic vibrations resonant with Robert at this time would be negative and ominous. Thus, no

matter how Robert or you phrase the question, the output will follow empathic resonance with emotional correspondences.



Next, you set aside that top-most card, the Ace of Scepters, anchor it in place among the four piles, and hand the rest of the Air pile to Robert to cut and draw three cards. This will give us a sense of why we’ve found his significator in the Air pile. Robert pulls the Seven of Chalices, Key 17: The Healer, and the Seven of Orbs. The numerology of seven is vibrating quite prominently.

You don’t have to read the three cards one by one, i.e., “The Seven of Chalices means... and then Key 17: The Healer, or classic Star card in tarot means... and finally, the Seven of Orbs means...” Read the three cards as one single message. You don’t have to deconstruct the cards into individual meanings.

Start by looking at the first card you put down, presuming it’s the Seven of Chalices. Forget what any textbook or even this Book says this card means or what the seven animals symbolize in accordance with medieval bestiaries.

What's *your emotional and intuitive impression* from the card? Perhaps immediately you wrinkle your nose and think, hmm, too many choices, too much noise, can't think clearly because the emotions are a mess. Great. Hang that thought and move on.

The Healer card. Perhaps seeing this card immediately brings you joy. How do you feel *immediately* from seeing this card? Be as simplistic and primitive as you can. "Happy... sad... angry... bad... love, hate..." Simple.

Whatever it is you feel emotionally from seeing The Healer card, how is that emotion modified immediately after seeing the Seven of Orbs, The Gardener? In The Gardener, it kind of feels like everything has come to a pause. Someone has hit the pause button. It's quiet. It's contemplative.

Return to the anchor card, that top-most card in the Air pile—the Ace of Scepters. What do you think of immediately? What do you hear spoken to you at the top of your head? Let's say for the purposes of this hypothetical you hear whispered within your skull, "Something new..."

"You look safe for this year, Robert," you hear yourself saying, "or that's what I see in the cards, but don't rest on your laurels because you're not going to stay safe. It might be time to dust off the resume and think about what your next big career move is going to be, because although you're good in your place for now, it won't advance you to where you need to get to. So I do still see you having to change jobs, just not this year. You should start planning ahead, and it has nothing to do with the direct answer to your question about job security for the year. I don't see your head on the chopping block in this mass lay-off, but that in itself is a moot point, because ultimately, you need to move on anyway."

The symmetry of the sevens here is probably worth mentioning. Retrieve whatever recallable knowledge you might have on the numerology of seven. Seven is the number of intellect and wisdom. It's about having to access your intellect and being world-weary. Perhaps you can reassure Robert that his resume is more impressive than he thinks, and not to worry about whether he can find another job—yes, he can.

Now let's return to the specific question Robert had come to you with: his job security. Of the four card piles, the right-most Fire pile best corresponds in subject and theme to a question about job security. Yes, Earth could work (the left-most card pile, which remains unopened since the significator card

was found in the Air pile), but considering the Earth pile wasn't opened by Spirit but the Fire pile was and there's a Fire card in the Fire pile, signs point toward focusing on the Fire pile, not Earth.

So you pull the top-most card, The Force, off the pile and anchor it in place in the row of four piles, then hand the remaining Fire pile to Robert to shuffle, cut, and draw three cards.

He draws the Ace of Swords, The Scarlet Shield (Queen of Swords), and the Archangel Commander (King of Swords), in that order.



Swords cut. And there are a lot of swords here. Two of them are court cards, depicting human figures. So there are cutters, too, as in people in positions of authority who will be doing the cutting.

It's that's simple. Nothing deep or profound here.

The company gossip about a mass lay-off is in all likelihood true, you tell Robert. There are some serious cuts that will go on, but in this competitive environment, Robert will prevail. It looks like he's safe.

Before you close the reading, you tap the Six of Scepters: The Champion card in the Water pile for home and family. He will continue to be able to provide for his family, so he can rest a little easier about that pressure.

Even within my belief system and personal gnosis of the court cards featuring angelic beings, they can step aside temporarily for a mundane reading to help get clear messages across to a querent who needs constructive guidance on how to navigate a crisis. Recall that the significator appeared in the Air pile. Fire and Air in combination throughout his reading are constructive and auspicious per elemental dignities, and so here perhaps you can tell Robert that it's his strong relationships with certain members in management at the company that will keep him safe.

Next let's talk about Cora. Cora has been in a long-term relationship with Tom and she thinks it's now at that stage of commitment where Tom is shopping around for an engagement ring. She assures you that she loves Tom, but she still has some reservations, or at least isn't quite sure how she feels about marrying Tom. Is he the right one?



Once again, you start with the Opening of the Four Worlds and go in search of the significator card, Key 0: The Seeker. As soon as you turn over the Fire pile, you see the Three of Swords, The Bereaved. The Fire pile relates to career matters. Your first intuitive hit is this Tom fellow may be holding back Cora's career ascent. She'd fare a lot better in her professional sphere without Tom. But you don't say anything quite yet and you continue to put on your best poker face. Why?

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First of all, these divinatory hits from the Three of Swords are about Cora's career. She's asking about whether or not she should marry Tom. So for starters, these hits are not answering her question directly. They may very well be relevant, but hold your horses. Second, you're still looking for the significator. Don't say anything until you find that significator.

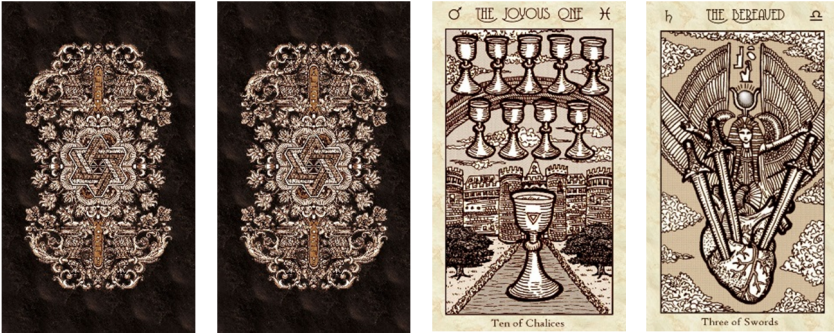


And then speak of the devil, there's the significator card in the Fire pile.

You tell Cora that in considering whether or not to marry Tom, she may want to think about her career path and what it is she wants out of a professional life, if anything at all.

You point to the Water card pile and tell her the significator didn't appear in the Water pile, which is what would theoretically happen if the message is directly going to bear relevance to a romantic relationship.

Then turn the Water pile over to see the top-most card. It's the Ten of Chalices.



According to the cards, you tell her, she would feel emotionally fulfilled with Tom. Family life with Tom looks joyous. But there's going to be a price to pay, and it looks like she'll have to sacrifice her career ambitions if she chooses Tom. That's why the signifier card, Key 0: The Seeker, was in the Fire pile—because Spirit wants to make sure Cora goes in with both eyes open, fully informed of the decision she's making.

Remove the Ten of Chalices from the Water pile and place it as an anchor in the row of four, then have Cora cut the remaining cards from that Water pile and draw three cards. She pulls the Stronghold of the Vale (Page of Orbs), Six of Orbs, and Eight of Swords in that order.

You now adjust your mindset toward love, relationships, marriage, and family, and look at the imagery on the Stronghold of the Vale. What immediately comes to mind?

Don't analyze or try to check yourself, or get too deep and academic with your thought process. Lean in to your impulses. What are the most primal and instinctual emotions stirred in you from looking at the imagery on the card, and what words or phrases do you hear whispered into your inner ear in reaction to what you're seeing on the card?

You think and you also hear in your inner ear, "fertility...children...a beautiful little girl..." and then you see The Giver card. It calls to mind motherhood for you, in the context of the question presented. Even the roundness of the sphere on the Stronghold card reminds you of a pregnant belly. And then you see The Captor.

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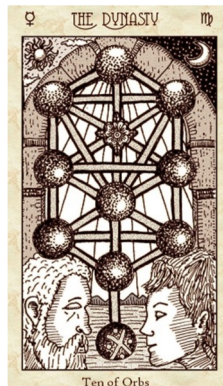


Since in the universe of the *Spirit Keeper's Tarot* deck, Strongholds invite you to draw a second card, the message card from the Stronghold, you invite Cora to pull another card. She gets the Ten of Orbs: The Dynasty.

“Tom can provide you financial stability,” you tell her. “In the distant future, I can even see a beautiful baby girl. It’s not clear to me whether she’s conceived in the winter or you give birth in the winter months, but the season of winter is relevant.”

There will be times in this marriage that Cora feels trapped by her circumstances. She’ll go so far down one very specific path in life that even if she later decides she wants something else, she will see no way out of the circumstances she’s bound herself to.

You tell her that everything from



the outside looks fine in this marriage to Tom and in her future family life. It's just that this loving marriage and this beautiful family, as extraordinary as such a blessing is, isn't everything she wants out of life. There's more to it. And that's the problem. Because in this path of marriage to Tom, she will take on the role of the giver and nurturer to such a masterful degree that she will forget how to make demands on behalf of herself. She may lose her sense of independence. What accomplishments will be her own?

You then remind her that the two of you have intentionally peeked beyond the veil to read about marriage to Tom (i.e., turning over the Water pile and pulling cards from a pile that doesn't contain the significator).

Now it's time to return to the message Spirit wants to impart to her, and that was the Fire pile with the Three of Swords, which is where we found her significator.

You move on over to the Fire pile and tell her you'll be reading about the "what ifs" and her career prospects. You have her cut the Fire pile and draw three cards. She pulls the Nine of Orbs, Key 14, and Key 21.



You smile, laugh, and tell her, “There’s a reason intuitively you’ve been struggling about whether to marry Tom. There’s no doubt about the love and the happiness this love can bring you, but you would be walking away from an absolutely impressive, sparkling career. You can achieve the heights of success, become independently wealthy, accruing your own estate, still be able to find happiness, by the way, so it’s not like the doors of love and marriage are closed to you if you don’t marry Tom, and this future relationship prospect might in fact bring better work-life balance to you. But this future prospect is an uncertainty [the mutable nature of Sagittarius, which corresponds with Key 14], whereas Tom, right now, is a certainty.”

You shake your head. Tough decisions indeed, Cora. Cora looks to you, and you don’t need to be a psychic to see that she feels helpless. She asks you, “What should I do? Which path should I choose? Should I marry Tom and follow him to wherever he needs to go for his career? Or should he and I part ways, so I can pursue my own ambitions?”

This is when you tell her the tarot doesn’t and shouldn’t make life decisions for her. The cards are here to give her the lay of the land, to show her the possibilities and prospects of the decisions and opportunities availed to her, and with those insights and foresights, she has to make the call herself.

The cards cannot tell her whether she should marry Tom. The cards can only tell her what can happen if she marries Tom and what can happen if she doesn’t. Ultimately, Cora can take either path and she will find her way to personal fulfillment. Cora is resilient and resourceful. We see a glimpse of that personality in the Nine of Orbs in the Fire pile and the Page of Orbs in the Water pile. Both quadrants show Cora managing to find for herself a sense of spiritual balance. You see that in the Ten of Chalices covering the Water pile and The Angel card or Temperance in the Fire pile.

If you intuit that it’s going to be beneficial for Cora to know, close the reading by redirecting her attention to the New World Order, or Key 21, The World card and convey to her the classical meaning of this card. There is a reason why her signifier was found here in the Fire pile.

Now let’s move on to another reading. Say you’re reading for Chad, who sits down across from you, crosses his arms, leans back smugly in his chair, and remarks, “You’re the psychic. You tell me what’s going on in my life. Plus, I don’t have any specific questions.” Once again you start with the Opening of the Four Worlds from the First Operation.



The top-most card of the Fire pile is the Archangel of Healing. What is the very first hit you get, leaning in to your emotions, impulses, and letting the sentimentality evoked from the imagery lead you? You think to yourself, *Chad needs my compassion. There's a lot more going on with Chad than he wants to let on.*

Now blink, re-focus, and look at the card again. This is the King of Chalices. The card pile relates to professional work. You tell Chad, “You’re at the top of your game when it comes to the creative arts industry. Your professional work is one where creativity and having to deal with lots of different types of personalities are required.” You see the bottles and the chalice with the magic square on the card image and spontaneously think alchemy, which reminds you of cooking, which reminds you of something cooking. So you add, “You’re in the middle of a creative project or undertaking, and you’re under a lot of pressure to be the one who makes sure all those moving parts come together.”

Chad nods and you watch him unfold his arms. He leans in closer. “I’m a filmmaker,” he tells you. You continue, open the next pile since the significator was not found in Fire, and the top-most card of the Water pile is the Two of Orbs.



Secretly you don't really recall what the Nocturne card was all about or even what Nocturne means. Maybe it has something to do with night-time. Whatever. But you *do* recognize that those two circles of symbols are zodiac signs and moon phases. There's a serpent coiled into a figure-eight around the two orbs, biting its own tail. Ships at the bottom of the card image are sailing in opposite directions from each other.

"This quadrant of cards tells us about your personal life, home, family, relationships, that kind of thing," you tell Chad. "This is the Two of Pentacles in tarot, and in this position, tells me work-life balance is kind of a struggle at the moment. Two ships passing in the night..." you hear yourself blurting out.

Chad nods emphatically. "Yeah unfortunately that's kind of me and my wife right now. But I don't even know what I can do about it. There's just so much on my plate. I'm under a lot of pressure to get everything right."

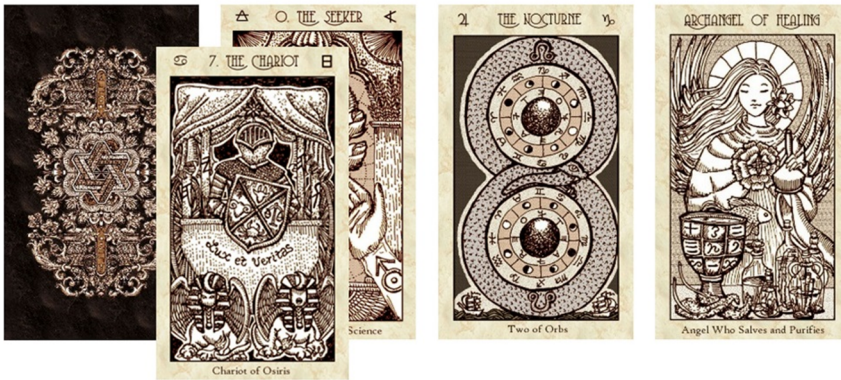
You smile to let Chad know you empathize. The significator card wasn't in the Water pile either, so you move on to the Air pile. The top-most card in the Air pile is The Chariot.

"Well," you say. "You're really good at what you do. Whatever it is you're working on at the moment—you said you're a filmmaker?—it's headed for great success and glory. This work seems important, too. It's not just about entertainment or fun. *Lux et Veritas*..."

Chad finishes your sentence. "Light and truth." Chad's a clever one, isn't he, and one who wants to make sure you and everybody else also knows that he's clever. "Light and truth," you repeat for emphasis.



You also happen to have some basic knowledge of astrology and the Golden Dawn astrological correspondences in tarot. The Chariot card with its association to Cancer can denote the summer solstice. Not to mention the suit of Cups (or Chalices in the SKT) can sometimes be linked to summer. As you continue sifting through the cards for the significator, you tell Chad that the summer season seems most relevant, most important. A turning point will happen in the summer months. Oh! And there is the significator card! You find The Seeker in the Air pile.



You tell Chad that his main priority to focus on is getting this current project he's working on to production, to completion. It's going to symbolize one of his great works, something that will advance his public reputation, his status, and will be a mark of glory in his career path.

You redirect his attention back to the four piles and ask him what does he want to know more about? He points at The Chariot card. "Tell me more about that," he says, "about what I need to do to make sure I achieve that glory and success, and that this film I'm working on will get distribution."

You set The Chariot card down as an anchor, set aside the significator card, and have him cut the remaining cards in the Air pile and draw three. He pulls Key 13: The Reaper, the Archangel of Glory (King of Wands), and Key 12: The Outlaw, in that order.

What is the first thing you notice about these three cards in succession? The rays of light connect through the Archangel of Glory, where there's a flaming torch of light. To the conceptual left of The Reaper, the light continues to shine outward, leftward, but you can't see what's there (no card to the left of Key 13) and the light continues to shine outward, rightward

from The Outlaw, but again you can't see what's there (no card to the right of Key 12). Not to mention Keys 12 and 13 are neighbors in the order of Keys in the Major Arcana, but appear here in reverse, so there's some sense of disorder.



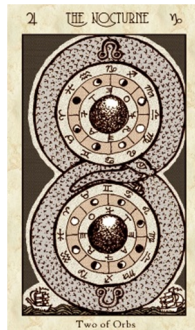
What is the feeling you get about not being able to “see” what’s to the left of The Reaper and what’s to the right of The Outlaw? “There’s a lot of uncertainty,” you remark to Chad. “The project is headed for success, but where you are now, you, Chad, I don’t know if you’re the one who can take it there to the finish line. You’re not paying attention to all the moving parts. There’s a little bit of naval-gazing going on here.” Your eyes had wandered down the torso of the hanged man in The Outlaw and saw the snake’s head, and so you blurted out the first thing that had come to mind.

You look back up at Chad. “Pay attention to what’s going on around you, not just what it is you want, and you’ll see what’s wrong, what you need to correct so that you can get what it is you want. And then I see that turning point toward success and glory coming your way in the summer months.”

In reading for Chad, or anyone for that matter, you don't have to dive into what The Death card (The Reaper in SKT) signifies and all the meanings you can regurgitate about the King of Wands (Archangel of Glory). The cards are like acupuncture or acupressure points at the surface of the body that you as the tarot reader know the functions of. Get straight to addressing what those functions are to Chad.

Some Chads might then ask you pointedly, "Where are you getting that information? What does this card mean? What is that card? What does this symbolize?" At that point, you can answer Chad's questions about card meanings and flex those tarot-knowledge muscles to show off your smarts, but unless prompted by Chad, stick to answering his question directly and in the most practical manner possible.

The reading session for Chad is coming to its close, but Chad looks sheepishly at you and asks if he has time for one more quick question. You say sure, what is it. He points at the Water pile. "You said this is about love, relationships, and my wife, right? Can you tell me a little more? I don't think I have a question exactly. I just want to know...like whatever you can tell me about this." You have Chad cut the Water pile and draw three cards. He draws The Contender, The Empress, and The Dark Horse.



The prominent, centered position of The Empress and your intuition reconcile with all that Chad has said so far. “Is your wife pregnant?” you ask. Chad looks puzzled. “No,” he answers, but he doesn’t exactly appear to be confident of that answer either.

You smile. “That’s okay. Who knows what the future holds, right?” You then direct Chad’s attention to the two cards flanking The Empress: The Contender and The Dark Horse. “How about you play psychic for a while?” You say to him. “Tell me what you think of when you see these two cards.” You turn The Contender and The Dark Horse so they face upright to him and he can get a better look.

“It looks very hostile and combative, very argumentative. I mean, both cards show conflict. That’s kind of an incredible probability that both cards around The Empress would show conflict, wouldn’t you say? Does this usually happen in tarot? I mean what are the odds? Is The Empress my wife?”

Now it’s time for you to take the steering wheel again. “Your wife feels like she has to compete for your attention. No one wants to feel that way. You don’t have to choose between her and your professional success, so that’s the good news. You can have both. You’re capable of managing both successfully. But right now, you’re making the subconscious choice to neglect home life. You hold all the power to make everything right. You’re simply choosing not to.”

To wrap up, absorb the totality of all impressions from Chad’s reading. The significator was in the Air pile: he cares about glory and his public image. He is on the verge of success so you don’t want to do or say anything that might hinder that momentum. The Reaper and The Outlaw could suggest changes that he’ll be forced to make that stall progress.

You recall what you had said earlier to him about naval-gazing. The Two of Orbs signals to you that the issues with his career and the issues with his marriage are interconnected. If he can figure out how to manage one, he’ll be able to succeed at managing the other. Both, it seems, call for him to show more compassion and consideration for others. Chad thinks he doesn’t have enough time to go around for everything and everyone, but maybe if he shifts his perspective—sacrifice to others some of that time he thinks is so valuable that he must reserve exclusively for his own interests—and in a

surprising turn, he will get everything he wants. If he selfishly pursues only what he thinks he wants, then ironically, he won't get what it is he wants.

Perhaps you hesitate a little about whether to go full spiritual woo on Chad. And then you decide heck, just go for it. The guy thinks you're a quack anyway. He's a skeptic no matter what you have to say. So you say it.

You gather both the Archangel of Healing and the Archangel of Glory and set it directly in front of him. "I see a lot of Light around you," you say. "You have the power to contribute so much good into this world. That's why you can hold the attention of the angels."

He gives you the side eye. Yep, maybe you went too far there.

And yet at that moment, everybody can intuit what's really going on. You will have to beat him to death before Chad will ever admit that he believes you, that secretly he wants to believe you, that in fact, these last parting words will be the most memorable, most impactful, and most influential.

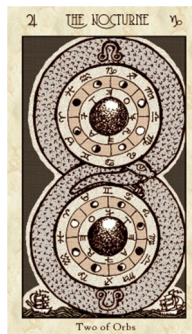
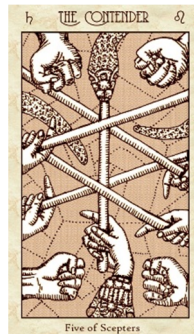
You think of that Reaper, Key 13 and then the appearance of Key 12. So you add, "But you still have a lot of growing up to do. You are going to grow into who you're meant to be, and you're not there yet. You are going to accomplish what will have a great social impact, what will be lauded as an incredible contribution."

You point at The Empress card, which Chad had asked whether or not represented his wife. "If you want to get there, achieve that glory promised, then start here, in the home, with how you care after your loved ones in the



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private sphere. And that will radiate outward to the love and adoration you garner from the public sphere.”



Several months later, Chad e-mails you to let you know that his wife is pregnant, that the marriage has never been stronger, and he wants to know if you can do a tarot reading for his wife. Also, he adds, he was beyond impressed with the tarot so now he is learning how to read the cards for himself all thanks to you.

The *Spirit Keeper's Tarot* (and any deck for that matter) has different filters through which you can read the cards. When reading for others with a deck that features scenic pips, the emotional filter can often be the most effective. While the SKT deck is built tough for heavyweight occult purposes, there is also a gentle side to it that seeks to be of service to the general public. I hope you won't overlook that gentler service-oriented side of your cards.

The compendium of beneficent immortals that the *Spirit Keeper's Tarot* is built for will almost inevitably bring in awareness of the Light to your readings for others, no matter what their spiritual perspectives might be.

Even when answering the most mundane everyday questions about our relationship struggles or work-related stress, emanations of that Light come in and gently direct us to strive for the highest good, to embody our Higher Selves, and to do all that we do with Love.

Deeply spiritual readings aren't limited to those times you're asking the tarot about your soul purpose or life path. A glimmer of signs from Beyond can often be exactly what help us to overcome our challenges and get to higher ground.