

13 Magickal Cards Tarot Insights By JohnnieTwoBrows

Gemini: Communicating Positively, Honestly, and Clearly

Welcome to the Gemini edition of 13
Magickal Cards!

First of all, a huge Happy Birthday to all of our Geminis! Your mental acrobatics are impressive, but sometimes you have trouble staying focused...hey! Where are you going? I'm not done giving my birthday greetings yet. Oh well...they'll be back eventually. What was I saying? Those born under the sign of the Twins typically know a little bit about a lot of different things, which makes them excellent conversationalists and a lot of fun at parties. They also learn things quickly, which can frustrate those of us who take a little longer to process things (guilty as charged!). Oh yes...birthday greetings for Geminis are now concluded.

The astrological house of Gemini involves communication of all kinds, our brothers and sisters, and short, getaway-style vacations or trips. And look...there's a long weekend in late May. How about that? So cool! Am I digressing again? ☺

All kidding aside, it's the communication aspect of Gemini that I'd like to focus on this month. So I ask you this seemingly simple question: How well do you communicate? It's tougher than it looks, folks...believe me.

For example, many of us have trouble saying what we mean, especially when it comes to giving our opinion and possibly hurting someone else's feelings. For example, do we say something is "interesting" when we really mean "I hate it"? And any question about how a piece of clothing looks on someone else is enough

to send people into anxious fits. I'm sure I don't need to say any more on that score.

You know exactly what I'm talking about: If you say something is nice when you don't mean it, you're not being truthful, which is doing a disservice to yourself and could make things worse later on. If you say what you think, you risk hurting someone else's feelings. So what do you do? Many of us would rather choose the lesser and keep our true opinion hidden because we're trying to spare other people pain, discomfort or embarrassment.

I find myself in a very unique position to speak on this one, folks...as a professional Tarot card reader, I have to give messages people would rather not hear all the time. People come to me for an independent look at things. I wouldn't be reading professionally for very long if I told people exactly what they want to hear. So it's not easy to tell people the truth sometimes. But the bottom line is that you short-change your personal integrity when you avoid it.

Having had to be the bearer of unpleasant news on a fairly regular basis has made me re-think how I communicate, and I came up with this mantra: *I communicate in a positive, honest fashion*. The "positive" is the way the feedback is given, and the "honest" keeps me true to myself. In other words, if I don't like something, I say so, but I try to do it in a positive, constructive way as much as possible. If this sounds hard, do I need to say that I'm a work in progress on this one too? Without question, I am. ☺

The key to this technique is tempering a negative message with positive reinforcement. One example from my own life is that when I was in second grade, my

father was watching me do my homework one night. He came over to me, looked at my paper, put his arm around me and said, "John, my son, learn to type." How else could he have worded the message that my penmanship was far from fantastic? Plenty of other ways. Most of them probably would have been hurtful. Instead, he encouraged me to do something to make my communication better. And folks, have you *seen* my penmanship? (No need for you to ask Jennie Sunshine. I wrote the woman several hundred letters from France and I'm surprised she even could read how I felt about her!) It is truly wretched. For those of you who have seen me at a keyboard, Mavis Beacon I may not be, but I can hold my own with many using the "Columbus" method of typing (you know, find it and land on it?). And no matter how fast I do it people can still read what I write.

As you think about how you communicate, here are a few points to consider:

- 1) *Say what you mean.* Nothing passive-aggressive should be a part of our communication, folks. Water signs, I'm talking to us in particular. Who knew that "Nothing" could mean so much?

- 2) *Carefully choose the medium.* Sarcasm and jokes are often lost when you use these techniques to attempt to convey your message over email, text messaging, or in print. How many of you have asked, "Is s/he being serious or kidding?" Also, there are some messages that should be given in person, like, "I'm breaking up with you." Keep that other person's feelings in mind as well.
- 3) *Criticize constructively and try to accept criticism well.* This last one is probably the toughest; most of us hate to criticize, and none of us like to be criticized. But as Jennie Sunshine often tells me regarding writing, "We all need an editor." In other words, there are all areas in which we can improve, and only when we know where our weak points are can we progress as people.

Boy, I communicated a lot on this topic, so it's about time to fly. May your communications be positive, honest, and clear.

I hope to see you across my table soon. Blessed be, J2B



Tarot Deck Review

The Celtic Dragon Tarot

Dragon fans rejoice! This deck represents my first foray into dragon-themed decks (of which there are many), although since purchasing this one I've acquired another dragon-based deck. If you have taken Tradition of the Witches Circle classes, you will probably recognize one of the designers of the deck, D.J. Conway. She is also the author of *Moon Magick*, the 201 textbook.

While this deck is far from my favorite, it is a favorite with Querents who are looking for the interactions between humans and dragons that is portrayed here. This deck has at least one dragon on each card, and three on the card backs, which are nice and simple with a combination of which and gray.

One of the reasons that I tend to shy away from this deck is because it lacks much of the traditional Tarot imagery. This fact makes it difficult for new readers to use right away, especially if the book was not purchased with the deck or not available during a reading. For example, the Five of Pentacles has two humans and five dragons, as well as the five pentacles, but no symbolic insight can be gleaned from the card itself. The expressions on the faces of the humans are neutral, while the faces of the dragons are somewhat menacing.

Another reason that this deck is not one of my favorites is that the suits do not necessarily have the same element as in the traditional Rider-Waite; Swords are represented by Fire, and Wands are represented by Air. Yeah, I know...I'm a purist in many respects. But this is a change from many Tarot decks out there, so know how you're going to read the cards before you lay them out. For me, Swords are Air and Wands are Fire, and I interpret them as such, but the choice is up to you, of course.

However, there is some fantastic artwork on these cards that made it necessary for it to be a part of my collection. The Two of Cups shows a large dragon filling a cup which is being held by a man and a woman standing across from one another. This was an original way to get the dragon into the image. They are surrounded by roots and flowers—solidity of the relationship and fertility—and the whole scene is presented with a full moon as the backdrop.

For Major Arcana cards, The Hermit is one of my favorites, showing a large green dragon on a hillside studying books. Temperance shows three different color dragons of equal size, showing the balance of the card meaning. However, Chains, which is The Devil in more traditional decks, is quite a disappointment to me. In this card, the man and woman appear chained together by a dragon who is holding the chains. But the chain does not go around the figures; in truth, the chain only is shown on the floor and not at all connected to the humans. The book talks about there being sparks from the chains, which I saw but only upon close inspection.

My favorite card in this deck was the Ten of Cups, which shows a family at a table. The cups on the table have rainbows coming out of them, and small dragons come spilling out of a jug on the tabletop. It shows much of the traditional imagery of the card: family, peace, and happiness.

If you're into dragons and have a solid understanding of Tarot imagery, this deck may be just what you're looking for. Buy the deck and book set together to make sure you're not missing any of the imagery. To date, I haven't seen a deck designed by a Wiccan author that really speaks to me, but there's always next month, folks. 😊

Next month's review: The Tarot of Atlantis

Schedule Changes

Over the past 18 months or so, I've been reading at 13 Magickal Moons every Wednesday almost without fail and most Saturdays.

Some of you may have noticed that I've been cutting back on the amount of time I've been reading Tarot lately. And believe me, it took a long time for me to come to this conclusion, but here it is: Doing fewer days reading makes me a better reader. 13 Magickal Moons is where I belong. So please don't worry...I'm certainly not going anywhere. But I'm cutting back to once a week except for special occasions when Sam asks me to come (like Tradition of the Witches' Circle School events). I'll be reading either Wednesday ~~or~~ Saturday for the near future.

See the "[Shameless Marketing](#)" section for more information on how to get a reading from me if you can't get to the store when I'm going to be there.

Website Enhancements

Sam is in the process of giving me a space for Tarot at www.13magickalmoons.com. I'm truly honored that she's putting in new page just for Tarot. On this page, you'll find my bio, reading schedule, and all of the back issues of the 13 Magickal Cards Newsletter in PDF format. I'm not sure exactly when it's going to be up, but keep checking the website for its eventual appearance.

Featured Spread of the Month

I'm extending the [Work Treasure Chest](#) spread into June, so it will be running until June 30.

This reading will have no less than 18 cards and will cost **\$30**. This spread's positions

are named after various gemstones and it will give you insights into how to make the most of your abilities at work.

Shameless Marketing: Phone Readings and Tarot Parties

What is scary is that I'm actually being serious in this section this time. Enjoy it now...don't expect it to happen again! ☺

A number of you have asked me for more details on phone readings and Tarot parties, so here's the information.

Phone Readings: To set up a phone reading, email me at hierophant@cox.net so we can set up a time. I charge **\$30** for a half hour (which typically encompasses one question or one expanded Celtic Cross reading), and **\$60** for an hour. If you choose the latter, I will answer as many questions as I can for you within that timeframe. I do have a few ground rules for phone readings, though:

- 1) They must be paid for in advance via PayPal to my email address (hierophant@cox.net).
- 2) Only the person who scheduled the reading may ask questions.
- 3) Unused time will not be refunded.

When I call you, I will be calling from my personal telephone number, which I do not give out. Once you have one telephone reading, your caller ID will probably register my number. Out of respect for my privacy, I would ask you to set up **all** of your readings using the email address and NOT call me directly to set up readings.

Tarot parties are an excellent option if you have a number of people who want to be read at a person's home. I have read at holiday and birthday parties and wedding showers, but there are so many more occasions where a Tarot party would really make a positive, lasting impression on your friends and family. And what is a Samhain

(Halloween) party without a Tarot reader? I mean, come on! ☺

For Tarot parties, I charge \$75 for the first hour and \$60 for each additional hour. I can design a party layout to handle most budgets. For most locations in Northern Virginia, there will be no additional charge for travel. If you live elsewhere, I will provide you a quotation with my travel expenses figured in so you have a complete picture of what you would be spending.

If you're interested, contact me with the potential dates, location, number of people, and budget (if you have one). The earlier you let me know of your interest, the better the chance that I'd be available.

As always, contact me for more information. I attempt to respond to all telephone reading and party requests within 24 hours.

Upcoming Dates

I'll be reading Tarot for the following dates for Gemini and Cancer at 13 Magickal Moons. All of these dates are tentative. Please check www.13magickalmoons.com for an up-to-date schedule. If you know in advance you're going to be coming to the store for a reading, you may also call the store or email me (hierophant@cox.net) to schedule an appointment. This is especially true for weekend dates.

Wednesday, May 30	6:00pm-9:00pm
Saturday, June 9	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, June 13	6:00pm-9:00pm
Saturday, June 23	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, June 26	6:00pm-9:00pm
Saturday, July 7	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, July 11	6:00pm-9:00pm
Saturday, July 21	11:30am-5:30pm