

# *Gratitude and Blessings*

*August 2, 2021*

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*Hello Tarot Adventurers,*

Every new venture benefits by acknowledging those who have gone before to make it possible. So often, during an experience, we cannot envision the long-term blessings that it may hold, but looking back, we see how *this* led to *that*, and *that* opened up the possibility of the next thing, and so the trajectory continues and unfolds. Trust in the choices we make along the way is a key element in the process, and honoring the people and situations that have been part of the journey is of profound importance.

## **First Thanks**

While there are many humans and circumstances that have led to me writing to you today, at the foundation of it all is my cocreative essence, Spirit itself. This Universal Intelligence has sometimes gently, and sometimes more harshly (to get my attention!), led me inexorably onward toward developing and ultimately claiming my abilities and relationship with the Thoth tarot deck. There was never any doubt, from the moment that I saw the card images and symbolism, that it was to be “my deck” in this lifetime. (You can click on the “Meet Barbara” button above for more specific details.)



So, thank you, Spirit, for hanging in there with me through my doubts about pursuing this path and other phases of my life that steered me away from doing readings for periods of time, and for gently guiding me ever back to this deep work of my heart and life purpose.

## **Valued Influences**

Next, I would like to thank my first tarot teacher, Amber Waves, whose path crossed mine in the Haight Ashbury of San Francisco in 1979 and 1980. Over a period of eight months, she took us on an in-depth magical journey through the wisdom and wonder of the dynamic, multidimensional Thoth tarot deck, designed by Aleister Crowley and painted by Lady Frieda Harris.

In his *Book of Thoth: The Egyptian Tarot*, Crowley added some new features to the more traditional cards and interwove them with esoteric symbolism of different traditions of ancient wisdom, including the Tree of Life of the Kabbalah, astrology, numerology, Christianity, and Egyptian mysteries. Also threaded through the course were the profound consciousness teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Over the years, other influences appeared through books and occasional courses by those knowledgeable about the tarot, including, but certainly not limited to, cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien (*The Tarot Handbook*), Sallie Nichols (*Jung and Tarot*), Gerd Ziegler (*Tarot: Mirror of the Soul*), Akron-Hajo Banzhaf (*The Crowley Tarot*), and various books on the Kabbalah.

Special gratitude goes to holy man and healer Asher Katz, who assisted me with the appropriate spelling and pronunciation of the *sefirot*, or energy spheres, of the Tree of Life.

My thanks to all who have made the mystical wisdom of the Thoth cards and Crowley's esoteric teachings and explanations more intelligible to those wishing to use this deck and more applicable to our modern times.

## **Encouraging Husbands**

In my own personal evolution with the tarot have been two beloved "cheerleaders" who have always believed in my ability to "read" the cards and be of service to people seeking illumination about their personal situations.

In the early 1980s, then husband Gershon Siegel, who took Amber's course with me, would enthusiastically offer me up to do a reading for someone. Initially I would be terrified and resentful, and then afterward awed by and grateful for the experience.

And in the last more than three decades, my husband and lifetimes partner, Walter Drew, has encouraged me continuously—throughout parenthood, professional careers, building homes, diverse spiritual studies, and our teaching work together—to keep my tarot practice alive and expanding. He even orchestrated the building of the beautiful light-filled office that we added to our home, which has become the sacred sanctuary and creative hotbed for both my tarot readings (in person and on Zoom) and our “Creative Aging: Embracing Life with Passion, Purpose & Possibility” courses, workshops, talks, and retreats.

I thank you both and am eternally grateful for your ongoing support.

### **Tarot “Querents” (Seekers)**

None of this would have been possible had there not been those individuals over the past four decades who trusted me enough to spend several vulnerable and transformational hours with the cards and myself as instruments for them to gain clarity, expanded perspective, and guidance about various aspects of their lives.

In this process they have been led to connect with their own inner understanding. For, in truth, we already have deep innate wisdom *inside* us that we may be seeking *outside* of ourselves—we just need to open up the channels for it to reach us (or dissolve our own inner “static” that blocks it). In the sacred “cauldron” of a tarot reading, the dross of old patterns and beliefs is burned away and the “pure gold” of the person emerges. What a joy!

To all the “querents” who have come for a reading over the past four decades, my heart is full of gratitude and love for you. With them as a foundation, I extend a warm welcome to those who are yet to come.

### **Life Experiences**

Lastly, I am thankful for *all* of my life experiences—the flowing, exhilarating ones and the more challenging, painful ones—which have helped me understand the various tarot cards from the inside out, rather than only from “book learning.” For the life experiences and qualities represented by the individual cards are universal for all of us.

A goal of mine is to have personally experienced each card—Major Arcana, Minor Arcana, and Court Cards—while in this lifetime. It is only in this way that I can authentically transmit their meanings and value to others seeking the wisdom of their “voices.”

The lessons and learnings that both my life experiences and the tarot cards continually provide me are invaluable on so many levels.

## **Onward**

I look forward to beginning our exploration of the individual cards with you in the next post. Oh, the places we’ll go and the things we’ll see! ...

Blessings on our collective journey,

*Barbara*