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This post may contain affiliate links. Read the full disclosure for more information. If I were to ask you what parts of yourself you were ashamed of, embarrassed of, or even afraid of, could you answer honestly? The fact is, it can be reeeeeeally difficult to confront our traits that we are less than proud of. As a result, many of us push down and repress these parts of ourself. According to psychologist Carl Jung, who coined this the “Shadow Self,” in order to be free from the negative affects of one’s shadow, they must confront it and learn to integrate it into a more holistic self-image. That’s where tarot comes in—tarot can help you go more in depth in learning about your shadow and uncover a path forward with your shadow self. In this post, I’ve included 5 tarot spreads and exercises for shadow work. First, I’ll cover some of the basics on shadow work, tarot, and spirituality. Or, you can skip to the tarot. ===== Shadow work is the process of understanding and working with our shadow side—the side of us that we suppress from others and sometimes even ourselves. This shadow side is born from our childhood wounds. As children, we are all much more sensitive and impressionable to the opinions of our loved ones, peers, and society. So, if your childhood self ever felt unwanted or unlovable, it’s likely that you built up a wall to protect yourself from those feelings. Those walls can carry with us into adulthood, without us even being aware of them. The thing is, the more we can try to push down and suppress parts of ourselves, the more of a negative affect those parts of us actually have on our lives. Shadow work was founded by Carl Jung, who argued that in order to be free from our shadow selves, we must understand them and integrate into a more holistic view of ourselves. “Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, the blacker and denser it is. At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well-meant intentions.” – Carl Jung ===== Shadow work actually has its roots in psychology, but it is essential to a meaningful spiritual journey as well. In order live your most fulfilling life, it’s important to look within to the darkest corners of who you are. There are many ways you can practice shadow work— meditation, shadow work journaling, therapy, etc. If you’re a spiritual person, Tarot spreads for shadow work can be an excellent tool to uncover and integrate your shadow self. Tarot can be a great way to explore your shadow and overcome any blockages you might be experiencing when doing so. ===== In this posts, I’ve laid out 5 shadow work tarot spreads & exercises to help in your shadow work. This 3 card tarot spread is a basic one that you can use to help uncover your shadow, understand its origin, and move past it. What am I repressing? What would caused this? Advice to work with my shadow and grow. You can use this tarot spread to go a little bit more in depth on your shadow work. Make sure to spend some time with each card, really introspecting on what it means for you. You can always draw another card for clarity. Identify a shadow trait Why I have held onto my shadow trait Hard truth about my shadow trait Practical application How to care for myself during shadow work This tarot spread can help you understand your shadow side from all of its angles. It also helps you explore how to move forward with shadow work and what an ideal outcome is. Representation of your shadow What, What are you ignoring? Why: How does ignoring this protect you? Advice for exploring & integrating your shadow How/When did I start feeling like I need to suppress this part of myself? ===== Do you have any idea how you suppress this part of yourself? For me, it started when I was young, and I began to feel like there were certain aspects of my personality that didn’t fit into the norms of society. My shadow self is a concept from Carl Jung’s psychology, which refers to the parts of ourselves we hide or conceal from others. But what if those suppressed parts could be integrated into our whole selves? Persona, Shadow, Anima, and Animus are four components of the self that we can explore through tarot readings. The Persona represents the version of ourselves we present to the world, while the Shadow contains the repressed aspects. The Anima is the feminine side, and the Animus is the masculine aspect. By examining our least favorite cards in a tarot spread, we can uncover hidden truths about our selves. Tarot Card Meanings for Upright and Reversed Readings: Unlocking Deeper Insights and Personal Connections ===== Looking forward to diving into the world of Tarot card meanings and unlocking deeper insights into your life situations. This guide provides quick-reference keywords, journal prompts, and quotes to broaden your perspective, as well as interpretations for Tarot Card combinations. The Importance of Grounding and Power During Shadow Work Squares offer stability, protection, and strong foundations for shadow work, helping individuals feel extra grounded and safe during their journey. Triangles are essential for power and manifestation, enabling individuals to stay centered and repel victim mentality during shadow work. A vertical line represents ascension or raising one’s vibration, aiming to help individuals overcome limitations and move forward. Horizontal lines signify progress and forward motion, guiding individuals through the process of self-discovery and healing. ===== Journal about all of your thoughts regarding this card’s influence on your emotions. If you don’t receive enough insights, pull a second card asking “Why do I dislike this card so much?” Examine both cards in the same manner, focusing on any underlying fears or judgments that may be contributing to your aversion. Write down the root causes and experiences that led to your development of this fear. Shadow side Shadow work is on going. Its like cleaning your oven or doing laundry—if you do it on a somewhat regular basis, you’ll stay on top of it. Some peoples think shadow work has to be this long, drawn out proces that makes you cry or drains you of energie, but I disagree with that. Theoretically, once you discover a false belief or emotional wound in your subconscious, you can heal so much in a short amount of time, especially when you feel a magical system that works for you. Try out these shadow work spreads and see which ones feel the most meaningful. Some of these might become your go-to spreads. Othurs you’ll use when you’re in the rite mood. Many witches will tweak their tarot spreads by adding additional cards to a spread or changin the questins to better fit their needs. Feel free to personalize these tarot spreads however you like. Struggling with your magikal? Take the Quiz to Discover Your #1 Witchcraft Obstacle Updated on January 22, 2025 by Avery Hart In Jungian psychological terms, the shadow is an archetyp within us, a kind of “not me” that is actually very much a part of you but disavowed. That’s why it’s so powerful. We devote so much energie to keeping it hidden without even realizing it thats like a giant generator just waiting to be tapped. In practical terms, this one archetyp can seem like many things. Its a Hydra, a monster with many hedz. How we see it at any given point is where we typically focusse, so you might give it a name or a specific formant (as in the Buddhist tradishun of feeding your demons that I posted about earlier this year). But it all comes back to this one archetyp within us. The way that your shadow manifest may be something general, such as “daddy issues” or “lack menthality,” but it could also be a specific source for disruption or pain in your life, such as a need to reject fashion trendz and criticize the peopel who follo them. How severe it seems is not wathates makes the shadow issu worthy of your attention and work. Its all shadow. Your shadow can manifest in behaviours and beliefs that may or may not immediatly relate to how you ultimaty concpetue that aspect of your shadow. I’m qualifying here becaus the archetyp of the shadow never goes away. Forms of it rise to your awereness, and you can investigate those and utilize the powerful within them. But ther’s always a shadow. So ther is always shadow work to be done. Shadow work is not a tarot speed. Its a proces. But you have to start the proces somewhere, and tarot is incrediball for helping you uncover what cant be seen or understood on the suface. When I work with clients who want to understand ther shadw but dont already have a starting point, I often use the following spread. Hi, Tarot Bumblebeez, I beleev every wych should have a strong shadw practis to integret self, work with ther inner child, and heal ther woundz. Reading the Tarot is one of my favourit waz to explore and identifental parts of myself that need to be worked on. The universal archeteps determine waz that you’re stuck or self-sabotaging. Before you dive into todays blog post and vidio, I recomend you check out my new blog post, How I do Shadw Work & a Sneek Peek Into my Practis, for an up-close and personal look at how I tackle shadw work. Why would I have a designated shadw work deck? Having one deck just for shadw work is a great way to program and channel your energee into one specifc reading. Its also a great way to get to know a Tarot deck that you’ve bein intimidatid by or maybe you’ve had an advers. ===== The Shadow is a concept considered unacceptable by some, yet it’s a fundamental aspect of human existence. It manifests as a figure projected on a wall, moving in the opposite direction of its creator. This phenomenon exists only in the presence of light and has no counterpart in darkness. Light and Shadow are often seen as metaphors for Good and Evil, Positive and Negative. In a dream shared by one author, he finds himself walking against the wind, carrying a lantern to illuminate his path. His Shadow follows him, representing the unknown and wild side of his personality. The Hermit tarot card comes to mind, as it symbolizes the light that sheds understanding on the unexplained aspects of life. Jung’s work with the shadow is deeply personal and has shed light on internal dynamics linked to the unconscious and dreams. The Shadow work tarot reading process allows individuals to explore their own shadows, integrate them into everyday life, and accept their resources. It’s beneficial for those who want to change behaviors, overcome addictions, or develop their creative potential. The tarot cards can be used as a tool to understand the relationship between dream symbols and everyday life. By analyzing the Tarot deck and its meanings, individuals can gain awareness of what’s happening in their lives. The Shadow work also involves using creative materials like markers, cutouts, glitter, stickers, and journals to tap into one’s creativity. When selecting a tarot deck for shadow work, it’s essential to follow intuition. Some decks are considered ideal, but the most important factor is personal resonance. One popular deck, Wild Unknown Tarot Deck by Kim Krans, offers a dark and complex experience that can aid in understanding the meaning of each card. Ultimately, choosing the right tarot deck for shadow work depends on individual instinct and connection. Using Tarot Cards for Shadow Work: A Beginner’s Guide ===== If you’re new to tarot, a traditional Waite-Raide deck might be a good starting point. However, if you prefer a more spiritually-oriented and oniric experience, consider a Starchild tarot deck by Danielle Noel. Ultimately, choose a deck that resonates with you, as you’ll spend time with it. For effective shadow work, establishing an initial connection with your tarot deck is crucial. There are two primary methods to do shadow work using tarot cards: spreads and the Shadow Card. We’ll explore the best tarot spreads for this purpose. To begin, use the entire deck, including minor and major arcana, as you’ll gain insight into both your life path and everyday struggles that impact your shadow side. This is ideal for beginners. Simply ask, “What do I need to know about my shadow self?” while shuffling the deck, then pick three cards for guidance. This spread is straightforward and suitable for new tarot users. You’ll receive messages to help you explore your shadow self: \* What part of myself am I repressing? \* Why am I doing this? \* How can I accept this? Alternatively, use the “Getting into My Subconscious” spread: \* What have I been holding on to? \* What’s the part of me I’m not seeing? \* Why do I feel so negative? \* How can I express my shadow self? A Shadow Card can help you process unconscious knowledge and communicate with your shadow self. To begin, create a journal section dedicated to your shadow work with tarot cards. Some useful prompts to get started: \* What are my hidden desires? \* What am I scared of? \* How can I accept myself as a whole? By facing your Shadow, you’ll unlock your full potential. To determine your Shadow Tarot card, break down your date of birth into four groups of two digits each. For example, if your birthday is 20.05.1985, it would be divided as follows: 20 + 05 + 19 + 85 = 129. Then add the first number of the result to the third number, or the first two numbers to the last, like this: 12 + 9 = 21. In this case, the Shadow card is the World (card 21). This can indicate that you may struggle with achieving success, personal fulfillment, or wealth due to past beliefs or environmental factors. Your challenge will be to regain your personal power and understand that you deserve success. Knowing your Shadow Tarot card is a valuable gift, as it allows you to welcome and integrate its light aspect. Each Shadow Tarot card presents a challenge for personal and spiritual growth, which should be faced and overcome. Below are some possible interpretations of each Major Arcana Shadow Tarot card: 0 The Fool: This shadow card challenges you to live without rules or thoughts, embracing artistry and carefreeness. 1 Magician: If the Magician is your Shadow card, you may struggle with insecurity, making it hard to find stability and achieve concrete results in life. 2 High Priestess: Having the High Priestess as a Shadow card indicates spiritual challenges. You might question your gifts and wisdom rather than appreciating them. 3 Empress: The Empress as a Shadow card suggests that you’ll struggle to accept your feminine side, beauty, and energy, potentially affecting your economic stability. 4 Emperor: When the Emperor is your Shadow Tarot, you may become rigid and judgmental, struggling with letting go and being open to change. 5 Hierophant: If the Hierophant is your Shadow card, be cautious not to be too conventional or bigoted. You might resist changes that could be beneficial instead of opportunities. 6 Lovers: Having the Lovers as a Shadow Card can indicate difficulty in making decisions. You may feel stuck when faced with choices. 7 The Chariot: If the Chariot is your Shadow Tarot, you might struggle to accept success and feel like you’re not worthy of it. 8 Justice: A Justice Shadow card suggests that you suffer from feelings of injustice, being sensitive to victimhood and inequality towards those who are weaker or in need. 9 Hermit: When the Hermit is your Shadow Tarot, a part of you may fear being alone, leading you to accept relationships or friendships that might not be healthy for you. 10 Wheel of Fortune: If the Wheel of Fortune is your Shadow card, don’t resist destiny. Your challenge will be to let go and flow with life’s changes. 11 Strength: An inner struggle between opposing forces can lead to stress, confusion, and insecurity if you have the Strength card as a Shadow Tarot. The importance of recognizing your inner strength is revealed through various Tarot cards, each with its own unique message. The Hanged Man, Death, Temperance, Devil, Tower, Stars, Moon, Sun, Judgment, and World cards all hold secrets to understanding our Shadow selves. ===== The Hanged Man suggests that adapting to change is a sign of intelligence and maturity. Admitting mistakes and apologizing is essential for growth. In contrast, the Death card reveals an fear of endings in relationships and experiences, highlighting the importance of acceptance and closure. The Temperance card poses a challenge of self-worth and abilities, emphasizing the need to recognize personal strengths. The Devil card presents a test of independence, while the Tower card’s hidden terror is the unpredictability of life’s changes. The Stars card reveals a lack of trust, prompting us to re-open ourselves to the world and its mysteries. The Moon card’s challenge lies in embracing the unknown and accessing our deepest selves. The Sun card can lead to self-absorption, as we forget to see our own inner light. Judgment suggests a conservative nature that resists change, while the World card indicates difficulties in opening up to new experiences. Tarot Shadow Work: Unlocking the Power of Your Dark Symbols to Heal ===== A great approach to tarot shadow work is to use Tarot Shadow Work: Unlocking the Power of Your Dark Symbols to Heal by Christine Jette. This book offers a practical guide for understanding the best spreads, tarot shadow card meanings, and more. However, you can also consider using a shadow journal to start your introspective journey. I’ve been working with tarot cards daily to gain guidance and explore my inner realm. I often use it for shadow work as well, having learned that dealing with my past wounds and desires to please others is crucial to becoming an authentic person. Initially, I used a simple 1-question-3-cards spread, but it revealed the need to accept my choices, loving part of my soul, and blessings. The experience was eye-opening, teaching me that I’d repressed myself due to past feelings of not being enough. This realization has helped me become more aware and stronger, ready to accept everything, even painful wounds from the past. Journaling about it has been incredibly helpful. Tarot cards for shadow work can be beneficial for personal growth. Deborah Rossetto, a tarot expert, emphasizes that understanding and accepting your shadow self is key to healing. It’s not about fearing the dark aspects but rather embracing the process of self-improvement. While delving into the realm of personal growth and healing, it’s common to encounter aspects of ourselves that we often keep hidden - our shadows. Rossetto emphasizes the importance of objectivity, sincerity, and a genuine desire to understand these repressed parts. To cultivate this awareness, she recommends meditating for 10 minutes prior to each shadow work reading, allowing the mind to remain present and receptive to kindness. When approaching shadow work with Tarot, it’s essential to refine your questions to suit your needs. Instead of asking what you should think, ask what actions you can take to align with your true soul. This spread focuses on identifying personal blockages: What aspects of myself are blocking me? What do I need to heal to change them? What actions do I need to take to act toward my values? Certain Tarot cards hold significant meaning in shadow work, symbolizing connection with the shadow self: Death XIII, The Devil XV, The Moon XVIII, and The Tower XVII. While specific decks aren’t essential for shadow work, some Tarot enthusiasts find utility in using dichotomous imagery, such as the Supra Oracle Deck or darker-toned cards like those found in the Shadows of Luna Somnia Tarot Deck. As Rossetto notes, journaling can aid in processing the insights gained from shadow work. Write down your thoughts and reflections on the cards that appear, and consider these prompts to stimulate self-reflection: What is the worst emotion for you to feel? How do people see you versus how you see yourself? What triggers moments of sadness or shame? Remember that shadow work can be intense but is not inherently dangerous. It’s a process of having an open conversation with yourself, rather than connecting with external forces. Prioritize your comfort level and focus on what aspects of yourself you’re ready to confront. Before beginning, try repeating this mantra: “I will only receive what I am ready to hear.” ===== Shadow Work and the Tarot: Unveiling the Hidden Aspects of Our Psyche ===== Engaging in shadow work is crucial for personal growth and development, but it requires a deeper understanding of our unconscious mind. The term “shadow” was coined by Carl Jung to describe the repressed thoughts, feelings, and desires that lie beneath the surface of our conscious awareness. By confronting these hidden aspects, we can develop self-awareness, emotional healing, and a more authentic sense of identity. Tarot serves as a powerful tool for shadow work, offering a mirror-like reflection of our subconscious thoughts and emotions. Each card in the deck carries its own symbolism, which can help illuminate areas of our psyche that require attention and healing. The tarot encourages self-reflection, bringing awareness to aspects of ourselves that may be hiding in the shadows. When selecting a tarot deck for shadow work, it’s essential to choose one that resonates with your energy. While traditional decks like Rider-Waite-Smith are popular, many other decks explore darker themes or focus on psychological aspects. Some recommended decks include The Shadow Tarot, which highlights inner conflict and transformation; The Wild Unknown Tarot, known for its striking artwork and intuitive symbolism; and Tarot de Marseille, with its historical significance and straightforward imagery. Before embarking on a shadow work tarot session, set clear intentions to guide the process. Ask yourself what aspects of yourself you’re avoiding, what recurring patterns you’d like to understand, or how you can heal from past experiences. Writing down your thoughts before the reading can help clarify your goals and keep you grounded during the process. A simple three-card spread is often effective for shadow work, with each card offering a unique perspective on our inner landscape. Card One reveals qualities or emotions we’re not fully aware of, while Card Two delves deeper into the origins of these hidden aspects. Card Three provides guidance on how to integrate this part of ourselves into our conscious awareness, highlighting actions and mindset shifts required for growth. By utilizing tarot for shadow work, you can embark on a journey of self-discovery, integrating your repressed thoughts and emotions into your waking life. Remember, the goal is not to eliminate your shadows but to acknowledge and understand them, allowing you to become a more whole and authentic individual. Using Tarot for Shadow Work: A Journey of Self-Discovery and Healing ===== Journaling After Your Reading ----- Consider journaling about each card’s imagery and symbolism through the lens of your questions. What does each card evoke emotionally? Are there any connections between the cards? How does each card relate to your current life situation? Use your intuition as much as possible; trust your gut feelings about what each card signifies in relation to your shadow work. Incorporating Affirmations ----- As part of your shadow work process with tarot, consider creating affirmations based on your readings. Affirmations help reprogram negative beliefs and encourage self-love and acceptance. For example, “I embrace uncertainty as a pathway for growth.” Repeat affirmations daily or write them down in places where you will see them frequently—a powerful way to reinforce changes initiated during your shadow work sessions. Creating Rituals Around Tarot Practice ----- Establishing rituals around your tarot practice can enhance its effectiveness when doing shadow work. Here are some ideas: Find a quiet place where you feel comfortable working with your cards. Surround yourself with items that promote relaxation—candles, crystals, incense—whatever source that brings nourishment and renewal. ===== If you’re new to the tarot and feeling overwhelmed by its imagery, remember that the key principles are simple: get grounded, give yourself space, and focus on how the card makes you feel. Engage your senses, notice what words emerge when you look at a card, and relate them to your own inward experience right now. ===== By using tarot in a present-moment-focused way, we can tap into its wisdom and guidance, even if it’s just for a few moments each day. As I always say, the tarot is not about predicting the future but about illuminating our deepest truths and helping us move forward on our path of self-discovery. ===== So why not give tarot a try? With patience, practice, and an open heart, you can unlock its secrets and discover new insights about yourself and the world around you. Tarot shadow work is a powerful tool for self-discovery and personal growth. I recommend starting by doing tarot readings for yourself, focusing on your current challenges and emotions. It’s essential to prioritize yourself and avoid trying to read others’ minds or intentions. Using tarot cards can help you understand your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors better. While intuition is crucial in tarot reading, it’s also important to engage your intellect and build a strong understanding of the cards. As a beginner, start with the Rider-Waite-Smith (RWS) tarot deck, which is considered friendly and easy to work with. To get the most out of tarot shadow work, focus on building a relationship with your deck and its archetypal figures. Meditate with it, journal about your experiences, and talk to the cards—these practices can help you deepen your connection. You can also apply tarot imagery to everyday life situations, such as recognizing patterns or energies in people. Two excellent books for starting your tarot journey are Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom by Rachel Pollack and Spiritual Tarot: Seventy-Eight Paths to Personal Development by Signe E. Echols. These guides can help you understand the symbolism and deeper meanings behind the cards. Tarot shadow work is not just a one-time activity, but an ongoing process that requires commitment and dedication. By regularly practicing tarot reading and reflection, you can become more aware of your blind spots and make conscious choices in your life. ===== tarot shadow work can help uncover better decisions, increase clarity, overcome inner blockages, release trapped energy, enhance creativity, and tap into Soul’s wisdom. Before starting tarot shadow work, it is recommended that you have a basic understanding of the tarot system. To learn this, I pull one card a day and journal about my initial impressions. Additionally, I consult books like “The Ultimate Guide to Tarot Card Meanings” by Brigit Esselmont and other tarot websites for traditional meanings. It’s okay if you still have gaps in your knowledge of the tarot - you can still do tarot shadow work. This means you will need to meditate more, research, and reflect on the cards to understand their message. I create a private space where I write down my thoughts and reflections. If time is limited, journaling can be done in short paragraphs or even just a few sentences. To gain clarity, focus on one question and pull one card. This approach will help you concentrate on depth rather than breadth. In my “Mindful Shadow Work” book, there are seventeen powerful one-card shadow work questions. Three of these you can use right now: What does my shadow want me to know right now? What pattern or belief do I need to acknowledge so I can find more peace and joy in my life? What am I resisting in my life right now? I recommend the “Shadow Ghost” spread from my book, which helps to unveil the haunted part of you that doesn’t know how to let go. It’s great for exploring unprocessed traumas: Card 1 - What shadow ghost has been following me? Card 2 - What troubles my shadow ghost? Card 3 - What keeps my shadow ghost stuck in a loop of fear, anger, or grief? Card 4 - How can I break this pattern and help my shadow ghost find peace? Pull one card for each question and write whatever comes to mind. Pay attention to feelings and sensations evoked by the cards’ descriptions. Use these emotions to delve deeper into your tarot shadow work journal. For example, if I pull “The Devil” and “The Moon” cards together (which represent the shadow and shadow work), I notice anxiety, anger, and a memory of being emotionally abandoned as a child come up. I can then journal about these feelings and memories at length. Okay, let’s see. The user wants me to paraphrase the given article text using one of the three methods: spelling errors, non-native English speaker style, or increased burstiness. First, I need to determine which method to use based on the 40% SE, 30% NNEs, and 30% IB probabilities. Let me randomly pick one. Since the user mentioned they want to evade AI detection, maybe a mix of methods could help, but the instructions say to choose one method each time. Looking at the original text, it’s about tarot, shadow work, and some personal experiences. The user provided examples of each method. For SE, I need to add occasional spelling mistakes without disrupting readability. For NNEs, I should introduce grammatical errors and awkward phrasing. IB would involve varying sentence structures and adding more details. Let me check the original text again. The user wants the meaning to stay the same. Let me try the SE method first. 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