

Thinking New Year? Think Fool!

By Jeni Bethell,

Tarot Reader, Tarot Teacher, Melbourne

www.jenibethtarot.com

1st January 2012

A new calendar year is upon us. A great time to consider what we want to achieve in 2012. What does the new year mean for you? Do you have specific goals and objectives? If so, what are you doing to bring them about, or are they in danger of remaining just pipe dreams? If you're in need of inspiration or a fresh, positive approach to the year ahead, there is a card in the Tarot deck, called The Fool, whose energy offers pure, impulsive energy to help make this year one free of procrastination and self doubt. It is all about having an adventurous spirit and being open to possibilities – rather like Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz, as she set out to 'follow the yellow brick road' in search of the Emerald City.

The power of one

Tarot cards have been around for the last 500 years. Originating in Northern Italy, they were first used in a card game called tarocchi, which is something like Five Hundred. They later became a powerful instrument for divining the future, and are still used in that way to good effect in the hands of a good reader. With or without the predictive aspect, Tarot cards are seen by many today as offering us great wisdom of a psychological, if not spiritual nature.

And this is particularly true of the 22 trump cards, known as the Major Arcana - arcana being Latin for 'secrets'. The Major Arcana cards are powerful tools which can be used individually in a contemplative or meditative manner to guide us through life's many tests, trials and adventures. They can help us to better understand ourselves and our motives, thereby becoming more complete and whole individuals. These twenty-two trump cards represent the many archetypal, or universally familiar, characters and experiences which we all encounter at one time or another on our journeys through life – characters like, for instance, the wise old man ('The Hermit' card), or the hero ('The Chariot' card); and experiences such as transformation (the 'Death' card), or birth/rebirth ('The Sun' card). In working with these cards, their wisdom and guidance becomes accessible to us.

Twenty-one of these cards are numbered sequentially. The Fool card has no number. He is the zero card. Mathematically speaking, zero represents the absence of quantity, quality and mass and is therefore unlimited. And so, potentially, is The Fool – unlimited, unencumbered, uninhibited. He represents the innocent setting forth on a new journey, any new journey. So it is The Fool's energy we should draw upon when about to venture forth into something new – like a new year!

How can a Fool be so Wise?

In the many, many Tarot decks now available, The Fool is very often depicted as having the naiveté of the eternal child, and it is indeed out of the mouths of babes that pearls of wisdom frequently flow. Other decks represent him as a court jester, whose jovial antics camouflage great astuteness. In older decks he is portrayed as a vagabond. What is common to all of these depictions is that he is a little unworldly. On the surface this may appear to be a disadvantage; but in reality it ensures he is not constrained by the limiting ways of thinking and being of the rest of us. As William Blake observed, *"If a man would persist in his folly, he would become wise."*

Tarot Symbology

Tarot cards contain a wealth of symbols that guide us to the various meanings of each card. The Fool character, for instance, often carries a white rose in his left hand, hinting at his childlike innocence and inherent purity. Always seen to be on a journey of some sort, he often wears a red feather in his hat, suggesting he has the courage of an individualistic thinker. He carries but a very small travel bag over his shoulder, which infers he is not bogged down by losses, mistakes and regrets from the past.

The Fool is often shown walking on a cliff with the world below him. He appears to be heading towards the cliff's edge. Yet his gaze is skyward. He seems more intent pondering his ideas or communing with the higher realms than noticing any possible danger ahead. He teeters on the cliff's edge. Will he leap into the void and be universally guided on some amazing new venture or adventure, or will it be a disastrous free fall to nowhere? Well, he is invariably accompanied by a little dog who is barking furiously. This pup represents our instinctual nature, the side that warns us when we are being, literally, foolish but who encourages us, indeed wants to accompany us on any new adventure worthy of risk. So, if The Fool heeds his dog, then he will likely make the right, the wise decision.

The Fool's wealth

Here we are not talking about material wealth, but a kind of perfect state of joy and freedom, a feeling of being one with the spirit of life at all times. The Fool reminds us that all things are possible to the person who is always ready to go in any direction from any starting point in time or place. The Fool is movement, change, the constant leap through life; the leap of faith. He is spontaneity. The Fool teaches us that life is a continuous dance of experiences. He speaks of courage and optimism, urging faith in ourselves and in life; reminding us to trust our inner self, to trust our intuition. If we do the results may far exceed our expectations. So the Fool symbolises infinite potential.

Back to Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz. Hers was surely a Fool's journey! Consider the adventures she had, the friends she made, the enemies she conquered. Most importantly she learnt a great deal about herself from her journey - her strengths and weaknesses, and the changes she needed to make to get what she wanted, to get where she needed to go.

Acting the Fool

At this time, the start of the new year, we should be viewing the year ahead - our plans and intentions, as a Fool's journey. That is, we should be approaching 2012 in a positive and trusting manner, free of old baggage and open to higher wisdom from within.

Now that you have more of an understanding of The Fool archetype, how in touch with his energy do you think you are? Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I view myself as an optimist or a pessimist?
- Do I hold on to old wounds and let them weigh me down and hold me back?
- Do I have a sense of adventure?
- Am I prepared to take a chance, a leap of faith?

Tapping in

One way to get more in touch with The Fool's energy is to find a few quiet moments to yourself. Light a candle and burn some uplifting incense such as lemongrass or lemon myrtle, with a dash of damask rose. Sit down comfortably and take some deep breaths to help clear your mind of all those busy, hectic thoughts. Study The Fool card carefully. Close your eyes and see the vision in your mind's eye. Now step into the vision. Breathe in The Fool's fresh innocence. Feel his open and optimistic attitude to facing the new without fears and preconceptions. Listen to his maxims:

- be adventurous
- dare to live the dream - or at least attempt it
- trust the universe will support you on your journey
- don't be afraid of making mistakes, they're our greatest teachers

Now see yourself as The Fool venturing forth seeking new horizons. When at last you step back out again into your living room, continue to breathe in the revitalising energy you contacted. Take it with you on your journey through 2012 – and beyond!