

## 1. WHAT DO I NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT MY PAST TO BREAK FREE OF UNHELPFUL PATTERNS? SIX OF SWORDS

There is a situation that has ended--focus on your active role and choice in the matter. You have chosen to move on; you are making a decision to release what no longer serves. These are not events that are happening *to* you.

If you find that you are ever slipping into a victim mentality, stop what you're doing and shake things up--literally. Get up, move your body, do a silly dance--whatever you need to do in order to break this mental pattern, not only by interrupting your thoughts but with physical movement as well.

You have not embarked on this new chapter of your life alone. You already have spiritual guides and physical support in the form of loved ones and your spiritual community, and you will be pleasantly surprised to find help in unexpected places. Look for seemingly small gestures that signify deeper assistance on your path.



Remember that your willingness to reflect on your inner truths has brought you this far--trust that you are making positive change and are moving toward increasing stability and happiness in your life. And while the waters may be choppy at times, you might be surprised at how remarkably smooth the sailing is when you are the one consciously rowing your boat, and not letting someone else drag you in their wake.

Finally, the lily is a reminder that many resplendently beautiful things grow out of the mud. Don't get mired in the muck of past mistakes or hurts, but use them as fodder for powerful growth.

## **2. WHAT DO I NEED TO OPEN THE DOOR TO AND WELCOME INTO MY LIFE RIGHT NOW? TWO OF PENTACLES REVERSED**

Give yourself permission to take a break from the juggling act. If you've been trying to keep certain areas of your life perfectly in balance, know that this isn't always possible (or even ideal) at all times. Sometimes you really need to dig in and focus on healing, or play, or study, and other areas will naturally take a back seat for a time.

You might also have been doing your work (be it literal work, or spiritual/emotional work) and someone else's, and it's time to release what isn't yours. By doing another's work for them, you are keeping them from learning and growing, and you're setting up a never-ending high-wire juggling act for yourself. And who will be there to pick up the mess when the balls come crashing down? You.



Time to bow out gracefully and welcome the newfound energy that this frees up for you--energy that can now be directed toward your life, your growth, your fulfillment, rather than being siphoned off by someone who isn't pulling their own weight.

You might feel like you are distancing yourself from love by doing so, but know that a "love" that asks you to take responsibility for another person's journey is not honest love. It is a way to keep both people from living out their full potential,

and you have the strength and inner light to choose better.

### **3. WHAT WILL AID YOU IN WALKING THROUGH THIS DOOR? THE HIEROPHANT--HE'S BACK FROM YOUR FIRST READING! ;)**

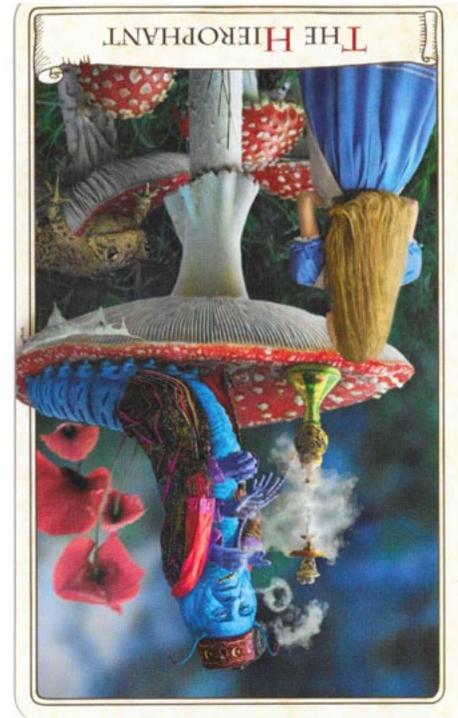
Like the first card, I'm again seeing assistance coming from an unexpected and easily overlooked source, so keep your eyes (and heart) open to help in unlikely places.

There is a person (or people) in your life who have been expecting you to suppress your own truth in order to submit to their control. They might be subtle (quietly failing to support your endeavors) or quite obvious about it (openly criticizing and/or abusive).

Either way, you must understand as fully as you can the ways in which they are attempting to control you, or the ways they have controlled you in the past if this situation is no longer active. Once you gain clearer understanding of these mechanisms of control that you are vulnerable to, you have the choice to reject them.

Without this understanding, you will be rebelling against forces you do not understand, and sometimes this undirected rebellion can unwittingly be turned inward, at yourself. But when you understand the control dynamics and how you are/were affected by them, you are able to make a proactive choice to break free. In other words, truly see the chains for what they are so you can throw them off!

Keep in mind that, sometimes, the most damaging part of a controlling situation is the part that we internalize. For example, when we don't realize that we've adopted the critical voice of our controller as our own mental soundtrack, or when we've subconsciously taken on their expectations for us as our own. Then, even when we meet these expectations, we wonder why we're still not fulfilled--it's because they were someone else's goals for us, not our own dreams and desires.



## TWO MORE NOTES

First, there is a toad in two of the cards--the six of swords and the Hierophant--and this felt very important to me. The message I received was that this toad represents the ability to see situations and people clearly. In the six, the toad is small, but she's still there.

This represents what you were able to see about the situation that compelled you to leave it behind. There are still things you have yet to fully understand about that situation and your role in it, and those will be revealed over time with further self-inquiry, but don't forget to celebrate the vision you already possess that enabled you to break free.

By the third card, the Hierophant, the toad is much bigger, and she looks out of the card directly at you. This ability to see situations and people clearly will serve you well, and as you grow in this capacity, you will be better able to train this wise gaze inward and see yourself for who and what you are.

More specifically, as you learn to see past any confusion and drama, you will be gazing directly into yourself. Get ready to connect with a powerful source of inner strength that, when applied to your life goals and paired with the clear seeing of the toad, will bring you good fortune, indeed.

Second, I had a powerful message come through at the end of the reading, and it wasn't until then that I understood why I was called to use this Alice deck.

The Hierophant in the form of the caterpillar wants you to pay attention to situations in your life when someone else seems to be in a position of superiority or control. This is likely what they want you to think, but in reality, their view is clouded and inflated and they only have as much power over you as you give them.

If you find yourself acting out of fear or caving to external demands that require you to sacrifice your own best interests, try tapping into your inner strength by introducing some whimsy: Picture the other person's face on the body of the caterpillar, smoking his hookah and wearing his odd little hat, trying desperately to look distinguished and important. See if this helps you to gain perspective and lovingly but firmly stand your ground.