



# Four Directions Tarot Spread

By

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## WHY THE FOUR DIRECTIONS TAROT SPREAD?

It happens to all of us – a time in our lives when something we **really** want never happens. Whether it's a new job, a loving relationship, weight loss, or more money – no matter what we do, "something" keeps getting in the way.

It was out of this frustration – my own and my friends – that the [Four Directions Spread](#) was born.

Why was it, I wondered, when a person wants something and is ultra-focused, does it not happen? I'm willing to accept the fact that the reason might be that the desired goal doesn't suit the person's highest good. But beyond that, was there a way, using Tarot, to help others achieve better results?

For example - a woman who is overweight and tries time and again to diet but never achieves more than yo-yo results. Down 10 pounds, up 20, down 5, up 15. Or, the person who is self-employed and wants a breakthrough year in terms of earnings, but who stays stuck at the same level, plus or minus a few thousand dollars.

Why, when these people both have a clearly defined goal and the willingness, do they not succeed in lasting success?

The answer finally came to me, and it was this:

*I believe all of us have many ways of being and many parts of ourselves that make up the whole. And, while **some** parts may want the desired goal (the weight loss, or more money), other parts don't want the same goal.*

I've also come to believe that the part of self that **doesn't** want to achieve the goal is **far stronger** than the part that does. I think this is especially true when the "no" part has a strong emotional component and the "yes" part is based only in thought. When emotions conflict with thoughts, emotions will win.

What to do?

Find out which parts of the self are for or against the goal, then work with those parts to get all sides in agreement and working towards the same goal.

Taking all these ideas into consideration, I devised the Four Directions Spread and put it into practical use. I tested it on myself, my clients and my friends. What I found was that the spread was

profoundly accurate, helping each person gain insight into their own internal and powerful beliefs.

## FOUR DIRECTIONS BASICS

### FIRE

The Fire Self represents action (with a capital A). Fire is that part of your being who simply cannot sit still. Fire wants to be in motion, to create, to burn with passion. Fire is a do-er.

### WATER

The Water Self is your emotional and child-self. The part of you who is empathetic, fearful, trusting, loving, needing protection. This is often the spread placement where you'll find a fear-based obstacle.

### EARTH

The Earth Self is the part of you who is self-nurturing. Earth feeds you, houses you, clothes you, cooks your favorite meals and shows love through nurturing.

### AIR

The Air Self is all about being in the head. Air is filled with ideas, worries, internal conflicts, "the committee", and your brilliance. Air thinks her way from problem and into creative solution.

## TAROT SUIT ASSOCIATIONS

Because there are so many ways of looking at the elements, I'm including some associations that may help you in interpreting the results of your spread.

## FIRE

Suit: Wands

Season: Spring

Color: Yellow

Astrological: Aries (Mars), Leo (Sun), Sagittarius (Jupiter)

## WATER

Suit: Cups

Season: Summer

Color: Red

Astrological: Cancer (Moon), Scorpio (Pluto), Pisces (Neptune)

## EARTH

Suit: Pentacles

Season: Fall (some readers associate Pentacles with Winter)

Color: Green

Astrological: Taurus (Venus), Virgo (Mercury), Capricorn (Saturn)

## AIR

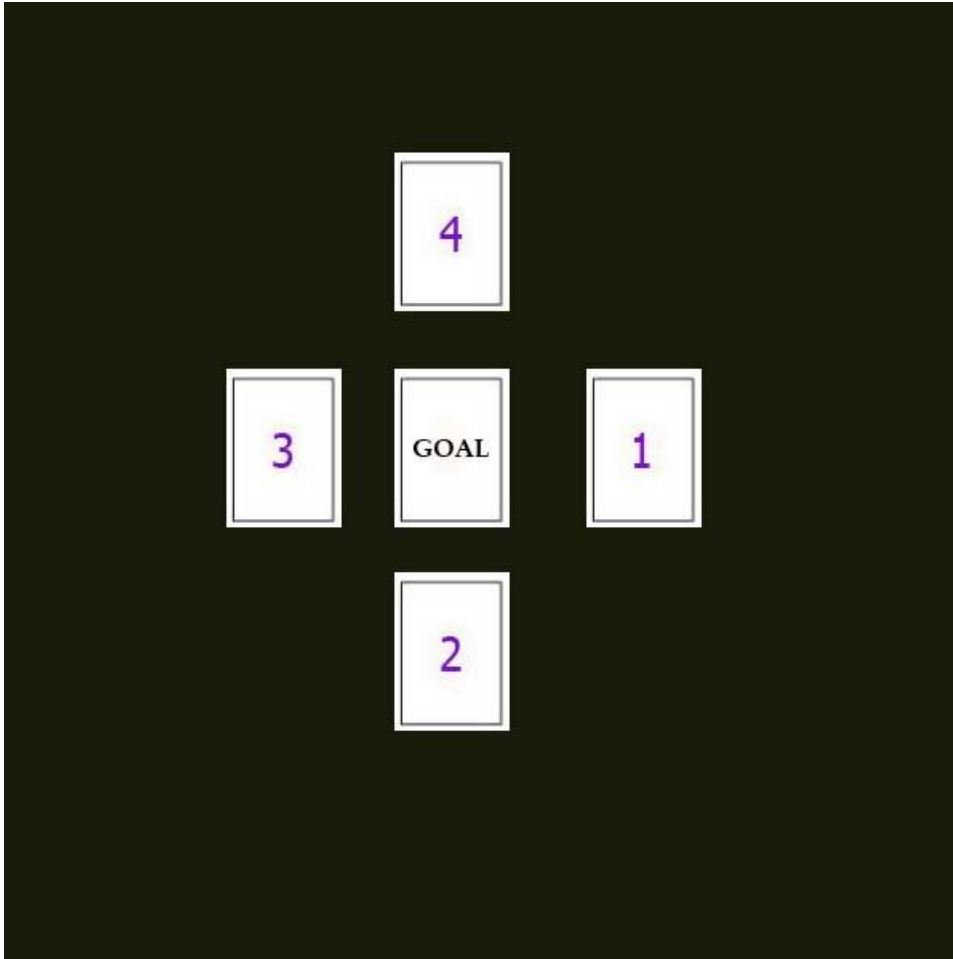
Suit: Swords

Season: Winter

Color: Indigo (or white)

Astrological: Gemini (Mercury), Libra (Venus), Aquarius (Uranus)

## THE LAYOUT



Ask the querent to choose a card from a **FACE UP** deck to represent the goal that they want to achieve.

If it's more money, the choice may be the 10 of Pentacles, if a new relationship perhaps the [2 of Cups](#) or the [Lovers](#).

Why pick the card face-up? By making a conscious choice about this card, the querent is forced to get very, very clear on the goal. When they pick a card that represents a positive outcome, it's empowering – it lets them know that the power to achieve the goal IS within their reach.

Place the Goal card on the table. It will become the center of the Four Directions

Next, re-shuffle the deck and deal four cards. Place the first card to the right of the Goal card.

The second card will go under the Goal.

The third card goes to the left of the Goal.

The fourth card goes above the Goal.

You should now have the Goal card in the center with the other four cards surrounding it in a (more-or-less) circle shape.

## LAYOUT DETAILS

Starting with the card to the right of the Goal, turn it over and interpret. Do not move on to any of the other cards until you've discussed this card in depth.

**This card represents the querent's Fire Self.** This is the part of the querent's personality that is outgoing, aggressive, assertive, and action oriented. If we were speaking in astrological terms, we would call this the Mars or Aries energy.

Questions to ask: Is the card on the right a dynamic one such as one of the Aces, the Chariot, or a Wand? Or is it a passive or reversed card?

Since Card 1 astrologically relates to Aries, Mars, and Sagittarius, you'd expect to see a Wand card here. If so, it will typically enhance this position and assure the querent that their Fire Self is on board with the Goal.

However, what if you find a Watery Cup here? It's possible this is showing you that the querent's emotions are throwing cold water on the Goal.

When you've finished discussing Card 1, Move onto Card 2, the Water Self.

If the **Water Self (Cups)** is on board with the Goal you wouldn't expect to find a Fire or Air card here. An on-board Water Self would typically show up as a Water or Earth card (Cup or Pentacle)

Be looking, too, for Major Arcana cards that are or are not supportive of the Water Self. For example, the Emperor is highly structured— and would not likely to be a warm and fuzzy companion to the Water Self.

Move to Card 3. **This card represents the Earth Self.** If the Earth Self (Nurturing) is on board with the Goal, you might find a Queen here, or one of the other cards that feels loving, kind, supportive, and giving. A Cup card would typically show that the Earth Self is happy with the Goal, but a Fire or Air card – not so much.

Next is Card 4 – the **Air Self.** This is the part of the Self that generally knows the answer to the problem – the best path for the querent to take. If we relate the Air Self to a Court Card, we'd generally see a Sword card here – or a card that represents wisdom like the High Priestess. A less mature card (like a Page) can be problematic because Pages don't have the experience needed to problem solve.

## KEYS TO INTERPRETATION

In each position, look for a card that either supports the energy of the position or weakens it. For example, if you have a Cup card in the Fire position, there's something emotional going on that suppresses (or drowns) that much-needed fire energy.

Your goal, as the reader, is to recognize the part or parts of the Self that aren't on board with the goal.

Once you go through all the positions in the spread you will easily see where the problem lies – and why the querent isn't achieving the goal.

Don't be surprised if more than one problematic Self appears. I've often found that if both the Fire and Air Self is on-board, the Water and Earth are not, and vice-versa.

## DOES IT END HERE?

No. This is an open-ended spread. Once you find the problematic part/s, you'll next draw cards asking for right action.

The question would be something like: "what can the querent do in order to get all of the parts happily working towards the goal".

If two or three of the positions are clearly opposed to the goal, it may be time to understand WHY and perhaps *re-think or even change the goal*.

Now that you've laid out the Four Directions Spread, let's look at two sample readings, both real-life situations.

## READING 1 – FINDING A HEALTHY LOVE RELATIONSHIP

As you read through the reading, you'll gain an understanding of a) what to look for in each position; and b) how to use the open-ended nature of the reading to give the querent practical steps that can be taken TODAY to turn the situation around for the positive.

*And, as you read the samples below, keep in mind that your interpretation of cards may be wildly different from my own. That's okay. I don't always read a card as it's "meant" to be read; sometimes my psychic self has a different take. I encourage you to read in a way that suits you.*

## THE ISSUE

Carrie is a mature woman, twice married, and having experienced several relationships (including some with people she met online).

In each case, the relationship was disastrous. Carrie was either a victim of mental or emotional abuse, or her relationship partners cheated on her, or they became (over time) emotionally and then physically unavailable.

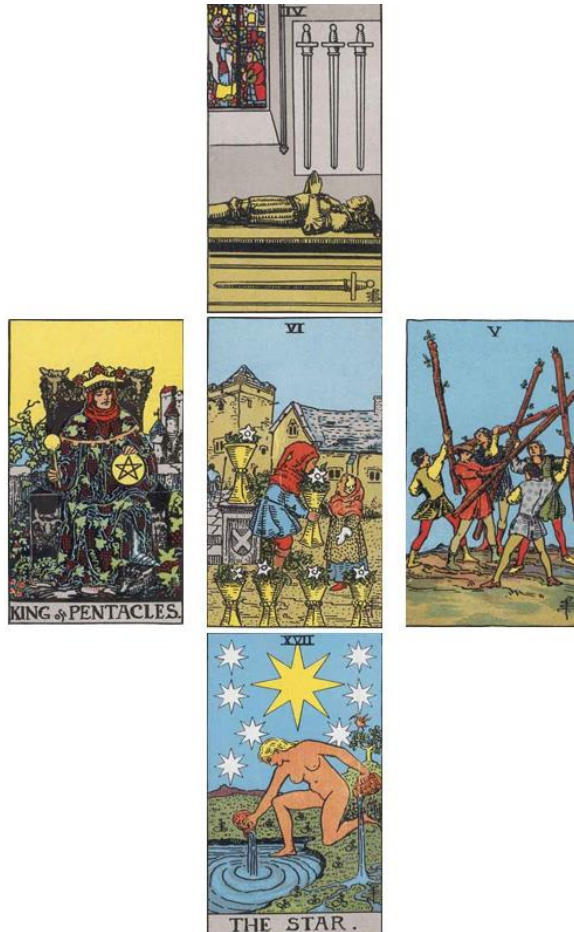


## THE GOAL CARD

Carrie chose as her Goal card the 6 of Cups. To her, this card represented a beautiful and healthy relationship.

Before laying out the cards, I do want to point out that in choosing the 6 of Cups, it seems that Carrie's idea of the perfect relationship might be stuck in very old ideas as this card represents sweet memories from the past. It's almost as if the very little girl part of Carrie sees relationships as all sweetness and light.

## THE SPREAD



## CARD 1

The first card (representing Fire, the "get out there and do it!" part of Carrie's self, was the 5 of Wands. First, good to see a Fire card in this position, however the 5 can represent opposing factions.

Each of the five figures could represent different members of Carrie's "internal committee" who are fighting with one another, or they could represent Carrie's experience with relationships.

Something to think about: Would the "get up and go" part of you want to get up and go if you knew it meant going to war? For me, Carrie's Fire Self sees finding a healthy relationship like going into the battle zone.

## CARD 2

Representing Carrie's Water Self – her emotional self. How does she feel about finding a healthy relationship? Major Arcana XVII - the Star! Well, who wouldn't want to be the Star on the relationship stage!

The Star tells me that the Carrie's Water Self is on board with the idea – but it also gives me a bit of a warning. Does Carrie want a relationship but only one in which she is treated like the Fairy Princess? Can you see some problems stacking up here?

## CARD 3

This represents the Earth Self – that part of the self that is nurturing and caring. This is the part that takes care of Carrie. Very interesting that the King of Pentacles appears here. I wish we had seen the Queen of Pentacles or Cups, but alas, we don't.

While the King of Pentacles is a supportive card here, in this position it warns me that Carrie's inner nurturer is looking for someone to take care of her – someone who will make her feel safe, both financially and physically.

Is the King a good emotional caretaker? If Carrie found a healthy relationship, would the nurturing part of her take care of her or be more concerned about other more practical issues? More to explore.

## CARD 4

Here we have the Air Self. The card is the 4 of Swords – the card of taking a rest from all the mental issues. For me, it says Carrie's Air Self is saying "stop going over this ground time and again!"

I suspect her Air Self is so sick of the topic it doesn't even want to try any more.

What do these cards tell you?

My thoughts:

- Fire relates looking for a relationship like going to war
- Water loves the thought of being in a relationship
- Earth is desirous of a physical relationship
- Air is sick of the whole question

Can you see why Carrie has problems with finding a healthy relationship? Of course, I didn't stop at the initial spread – as the goal is to help Carrie reach her desired goal.

## NEXT STEPS



Now that the problem areas were revealed, more cards were drawn to clarify and give direction.

For the **Fire Self** (who doesn't want to face another battle) the question I would ask is: "How can I get back into dating that feels fun, adventurous and exciting?"

The card drawn was the Knight of Swords - the person who loves looking for new ideas.

For the **Earth Self** who is more interested in being taken care of, the question was: "what can you do to change your belief about deserving a healthy, mutual loving relationship?"

The **King of Cups** appeared. He suggests that Carrie begin picturing her perfect mate. Who IS the King of Cups - is there anyone in her life that she can use as a model?

For the **Air Self**, the question was, "how can Carrie walk down this path in a new way (by using her wisdom) and take advantage of all that she's learned from her prior bad choices?"

The card here is **6 of Pentacles**. I would encourage Carrie to get into a woman's group and work on learning from the past as she keeps repeating the same mistakes without learning from her experiences. And, this has become a major problem.

Lastly, I asked "What if Carrie takes these steps, then what?" I drew the **Queen of Cups**. She would become a woman who is open to love, who is giving, who loves herself, is nurturing - - and who hopefully will attract the kind of relationship she longs for.

## READING 2 FINDING A JOB

### THE ISSUE

John is a 44 -year-old marketing wizard in the audio-video field. With every career move, John worked his way up the corporate ladder. He owns his own home, drives a late model car and enjoys a comfortable lifestyle. However, when John's company downsized, his position was eliminated.

Because of an abundance of saving, and his high level of expertise, John wasn't concerned about getting another job immediately. In the past, employers came to him with job offers. With the downsizing he decided to take a month off and just relax.

Now, two years later John hasn't found employment. His savings have dwindled. He has applied for dozens of jobs, posted his resume on multiple online job sites. He has networked with all his past employers and co-workers, worked with a headhunter, and spent time building relationships on LinkedIn.

However, each time John has applied for a job – and oftentimes he reaches the second or third interview – he isn't chosen. He is discouraged and doesn't know what else to try.

### THE GOAL CARD

John chose as his GOAL CARD the **10 of Pentacles**. There's no doubt that this reading is going to be all about career and money.

### THE SPREAD



## CARD 1

Begin with the **Fire Self** - the Fool. The Fool in this position doesn't feel like a source of concern.

The Fool is quite willing to set off on the journey, even though he's not sure where the journey is leading him. Likewise, John is totally open to working in a new (and unexpected) industry, at lower wages, in a different position. He really does trust that the Universe will guide him to the right place.

However, the next three positions are problematic. Would you agree?

## CARD 2

**The Water Self** position is the one most likely to turn up a card that is fear-based. In this case the reversed King of Pentacles suggests the emotional part of John is afraid of losing his possessions. His physical well-being (home, car, savings) are all at risk. And, of course, it's hard to be effective when you're afraid.

## CARD 3

The **Earth Self** is the Knight of Pentacles (reversed) who is almost the opposite of nurturing. Instead of being supportive, John's Earth Self is basically saying "You aren't looking hard enough!" Instead of being loving and supportive, John's Earth Self is critical and demeaning.

## CARD 4

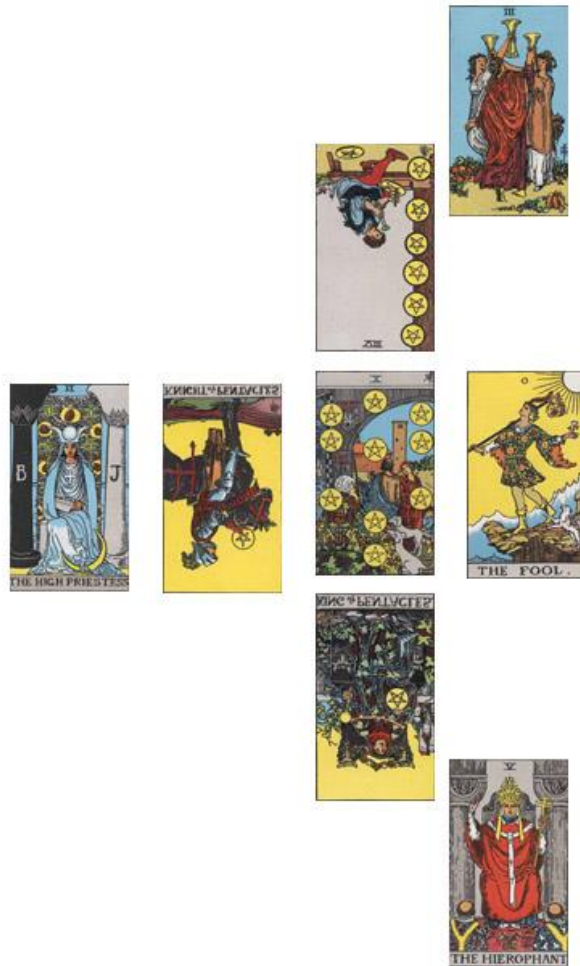
**The Air Self.** Here, the reversed 8 of Pentacles indicates that John has lost his confidence. Although he is an expert in the audio-video field, the two years of not being hired have worn down his sense of self-confidence. Now, he questions his every move.

John doesn't see himself as the able and skilled craftsman of the upright 8; instead he sees himself as someone who doesn't know what to do next.

*By the way, did you notice that of the four cards, one was a Major Arcana and three were Pentacles? Interesting in a reading about job, money and security.*



## NEXT STEPS



Because it felt right to me (and you can take this in any order you wish) I started with the [Air Self](#). Here, I drew a card for right action. What would be a practical step that John could take to turn the 8 of Pentacles upright?

The card I drew was the [3 of Cups](#), which a card of celebration with others. This suggested to me that John take a brief “time out” to celebrate all his past successes. I encouraged him to write down all his career successes, going back as far as he could remember. In

addition, John reached out to close friends and asked them about the successes they've witnessed.

John later told me that once he started to make his list, he was shocked at all he had accomplished. Doing this task made his confidence level zoom back up.

The right action card for the **Water Self** was the **Hierophant** (Major Arcana V). The **Water Self** needed someone to lean on, but not just anyone. It had to be someone John respected and whose opinion he valued.

John contacted an old business acquaintance whom he regarded as a mentor early in his career. The mentor focused on ways that John could improve his interview skills because John never made it through a final interview. Something was amiss and the mentor helped him figure out this part of the problem.

Right action for the **Earth Self** (who was acting like the critic) was the **High Priestess**. The inner critic, I believed, was the most problematic of the three problem cards.

This right action would take some perseverance as I suggested to John that every time he heard that inner critic berate him, to stop and listen (the High Priestess) to what he knew was true.

As he heard the critical voice, his "job" right now was to replace it with short affirmations about his skills, capabilities, and successes. He was also reminded that he had more options than the ones right in front of him – if he would only listen to the High Priestess.

How did John's situation turn out? He found smaller, part-time contract jobs that alleviated his financial worries. These jobs gave him time to work on his interview skills and continue to pursue full-time employment.

In the end, he ended up getting a job in a totally new industry – a non-profit, where his work was appreciated, and he felt fulfilled.

## THANK YOU!

Thank you for downloading the Four Elements Spread. I hope you find it valuable as you work with your clients, friends, and yourself.

Hands down, this is the most accurate spread I've found in more than 30 years of reading Tarot. It truly does pinpoint the inner demons that prevent goal achievement.

I would love to know your thoughts about the spread – how you used it and what you learned. Feel free to contact me [sageandshadow@gmail.com](mailto:sageandshadow@gmail.com)