

How to Use I Ching Prescription Inspiration Cards

by
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The content in this deck of cards has a companion book, [*I Ching Inspirations: Paintings and Prescriptions.*](#)

This ***I Ching Inspiration*** Deck of Divination cards can be found on my Etsy [I Ching Shop.](#)

Also by Adele Aldridge

I Ching Record Book: Tools for Creating a Synchronicity Journal

I Ching Meditations, Vol One

I Ching Prescriptions: Choosing Change

adeleart.com

ichingmeditations.com

The I Ching Prescriptions in this deck of cards were first published in the book,

I Ching Prescriptions: Choosing Change, 2011

What is the I Ching?

I Ching means, “Book of Changes.” The Book of Changes has only one law that remains constant: The only thing that never changes is change itself.



I Ching is a philosophy, not a religion, although there are many who consult I Ching religiously. This philosophy dates back to the origins of Chinese civilization, evolving over centuries of time as Chinese writing and culture developed. This philosophy is based on the premise that everything in the universe arises out of two forces, Yang and Yin, the Chinese words for masculine and feminine energy. I Ching philosophy says that if you follow the way of nature you will find the right way and right time for action in your own life. I Ching can be viewed as a part of nature herself as the human psyche reflects back, as a collective, where it stands within the whole. By consulting the I Ching we can recognize ourselves as part of nature and that the universe and we are one organism.

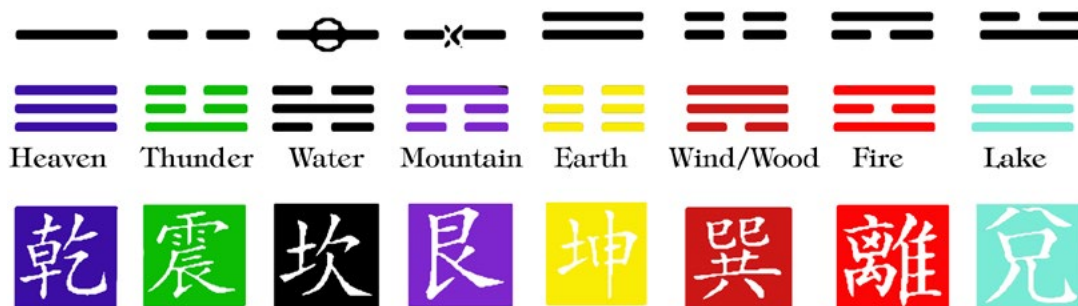
I Ching is the Original Computer

Because the archetypes in the I Ching were programmed over centuries by the input of many human psyches the evolution of I Ching philosophy is a collective response to the human condition and part of the collective unconscious. The I Ching might be experienced as a psychic computer revealing itself to us through thousands of years of time. The traditional way of consulting I Ching as a tool for divination, requires interactivity based on the concept of synchronicity, a term coined by Carl Jung. The power of the I Ching is only activated through the interaction of the human mind.

While the I Ching is used for divination, it is not meant to be a fortune-telling device, but rather guidance for the best possible behavior in a given situation. One brings a question to seek counsel from the book much the way one might seek help from a therapist, priest or any such wisdom figure.

While the Book of Changes incorporates an inter-play of symbols derived from the elements of nature it contains layers of symbols, one within the other where symbols are used to describe other symbols. Because the nature of a symbol always points to something beyond itself, the meaning can never be pinned down but is always open to each new reader. It is no wonder then that many people find this book of wisdom obscure.

The I Ching is comprised of 64 situations derived from the combination of 2 lines, yang (whole)  and yin (opened) . There are 4 combinations of the 2 lines. When the yin and yang lines are combined in sets of 3 they form the 8 trigrams. When the trigrams are combined in sets of 2 they form the 64 possible combinations that form the hexagrams. The 8 images of nature that the I Ching is based on are: Heaven, Thunder, Water, Mountain, Earth, Wind/Wood, Fire and Lake.

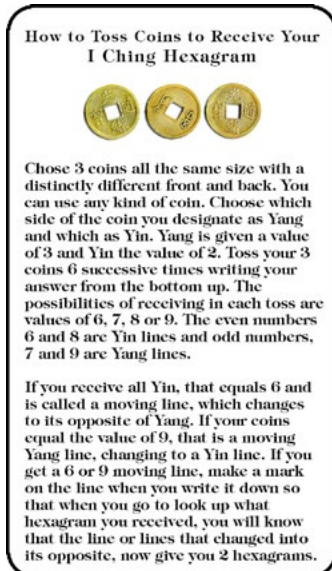


The origins of the I Ching pre-date literacy. We can not begin to imagine today what it was like to live in an environment that did not include the internet, telephone, electricity — you name it — and be solely dependent upon nature. The people of prehistorical China had to have respect for and awe of nature that in many ways has been lost to our consciousness today. The ancient Chinese did not see themselves as separate from the environment in which they lived.

Different Ways to Use the I Ching Inspiration Deck of Cards

1. The Traditional Method by Throwing 3 Coins

This method is described in one of the I Ching Inspiration Cards. In using this method throw three coins six times to arrive at an answer to a question. Allowing chance to provide an appropriate response to what is on your mind is a phenomenon that Carl Jung called synchronicity.



Chose 3 coins. They should all be the same size with a distinctly different front and back. You can use any kind of coin. Choose which side of the coin you designate as Yang and which as Yin. Yang is given a value of 3 and Yin the value of 2. Most instructions I have read say to designate heads to Yang and tails to Yin. I have also read where the opposite designation is prescribed. So choose what makes sense to you and then stick with that method.

Toss the 3 coins simultaneously letting them fall with no effort to control the outcome. Toss your 3 coins 6 successive times writing your answer from the bottom up.

The possibilities of receiving in each toss are values of 6, 7, 8 or 9. The even numbers 6 and 8 are Yin lines and odd numbers, 7 and 9 are Yang lines. If you receive all Yin, that equals 6 and is called a moving line, which changes to its opposite of Yang. If your coins equal the value of 9, that is a moving Yang line, changing to a Yin line. If you get a 6 or 9 moving line, make a mark on the line

when you write it down so that when you go to look up what hexagram you received, you will know that the line or lines that changed into its opposite, now give you 2 hexagrams.

Example: Hexagram 12 changing to Hexagram 16

Reading from the bottom up.

3 Heads (Yang) = 9 (changing) = 3 Tails (Yin)

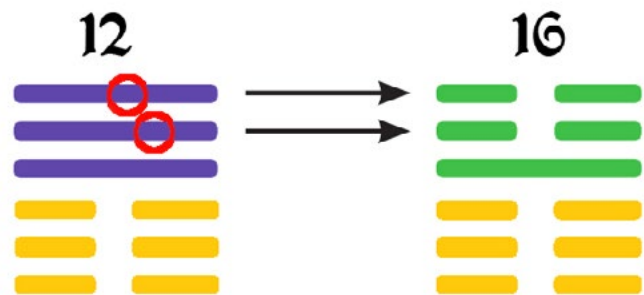
3 Heads (Yang) = 9 (changing) = 3 Tails (Yin)

2 tails, one head (Yang) = 7 (not changing)

2 heads, one tail (Yin) = 8 (not changing)

2 heads, one tail (Yin) = 8 (not changing)

2 heads, one tail (Yin) = 8 (not changing)



After you find throw the coins and write down the yang and yin lines you received you can find the appropriate hexagram card to read by looking at the card that contains the list of hexagrams. See the following page.

I Ching Chart for Locating Hexagrams

Trigrams	Ch'ien	Chên	K'an	Kên	K'un	Sun	Li	Tui
Upper →								
Lower ↓								
Ch'ien	1	34	5	26	11	9	14	43
Chên	25	51	3	27	24	42	21	17
K'an	6	40	29	4	7	59	64	47
Kên	33	62	39	52	15	53	56	31
K'un	12	16	8	23	2	20	35	45
Sun	44	32	48	18	46	57	50	28
Li	13	55	63	22	36	37	30	49
Tui	10	54	60	41	19	61	38	58

2. Choose your Changes — Use the I Ching as a Prescription

When consulting the I Ching as a prescription, instead of asking a question in the traditional coin throwing approach, decide what issue you want to address, cure, or solve.

- Pick your prescription. Look at the 64 hexagrams cards. Decide what prescription you need. Look up the prescription distillation on the back of the card. Read it and see how the advice applies to your life.
- Each I Ching prescription has seven parts to it; the general meaning at the top and the six phases written from the bottom up. These lines match the color of the trigram that they relate to which reminds us of the trigram energy that the reading derives from.
- There are seven paragraphs of counsel for each hexagram prescription that can be used — one for each day of the week. Focus on or meditate on the prescription you have chosen. You might keep a record over the next seven days as you follow each step. Write down what happens for you in the process.

I Ching Hexagrams 1 — 32	
01. Creativity	17. Following
02. Receptivity	18. Decay/Therapy
03. New Growth	19. Approach
04. Youthful Folly	20. Contemplation
05. Waiting	21. Biting Through
06. Conflict	22. Grace/Art
07. Army/Discipline	23. Splitting Apart
08. Union	24. Return
09. Many Small Things	25. Innocence
10. Treading/Conduct	26. Great Power
11. Peace	27. Nourishment
12. Standstill	28. Over Loaded/Crisis
13. Friendship	29. Abysmal Water
14. Wealth	30. Clinging Fire
15. Modesty	31. Influence
16. Enthusiasm	32. Duration/Marriage

I Ching Hexagrams 33 — 64	
33. Retreat	49. Revolution
34. Great Power	50. The Cauldron
35. Progress	51. Shock
36. Darkening of the Light	52. Keeping Still
37. The Family/Clan	53. Development
38. Opposition	54. The Second Wife
39. Obstruction	55. Abundance
40. Deliverance	56. The Wanderer
41. Decrease	57. Gentle Penetration
42. Increase	58. Joy
43. Break-through	59. Dispersion
44. Coupling	60. Limitation
45. Gathering Together	61. Inner Truth
46. Pushing Upward	62. Small Stuff
47. Exhaustion	63. After Completion
48. The Well	64. Before Completion

Another Way to Use I Ching Prescriptions

Suppose you are dealing with a situation where you are at a standstill. Look up hexagram number 12, *Standstill*. Read over all the lines. Notice that if you had cast the coins and actually received the hexagram for Standstill and had all the lines changed this would have turned into hexagram 11, *Peace*.

I have created a chart of all the hexagrams and their opposites that shows what a hexagram transforms to if all the lines changed using a synchronistic method of consultation. Take the meaning to heart and see what happens if you act on the advice, rather than the synchronistic mode of asking the I Ching a question and throwing the coins. Why not act upon the I Ching philosophy the way one might by going to a therapist or doctor for help? You can decide what situation you want to be in.

To give just one example, using the same situation from the example previously discussed for how to throw the coins. Suppose you are in a state of standstill (#12) but you would like to be experiencing some enthusiasm (#16). In order to get out of the *Standstill* and move to a situation of *Enthusiasm* the top two lines would need to be acted upon. Focus on the meaning of those lines and then see if you can bring about those changes to allow enthusiasm to happen. Use this same method for any of the 64 situations. The deck of cards has a card that shows what happens if all the lines change. Included here:

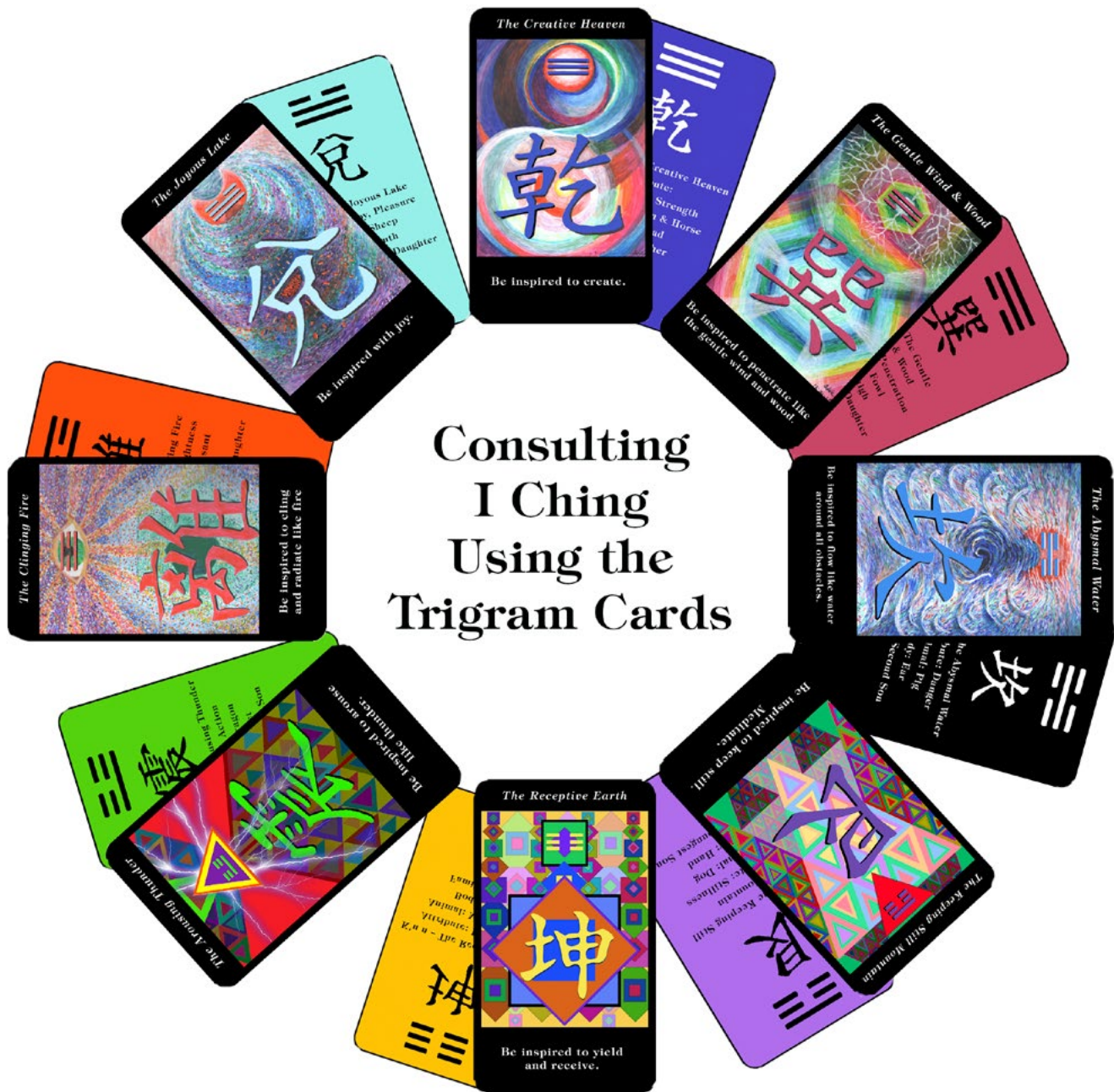
When All Lines Change page 1	
01 Creative	02 Receptive
03 Sprouting/Birth	50 Cauldron/Transformation
04 Youthful Folly	49 Revolution
05 Waiting	35 Progress
06 Conflict	36 Darkening of the Light
07 The Army/Discipline	13 Friendship
08 Union	14 Wealth
09 Small Accumulating	16 Enthusiasm
10 Treading/Conduct	15 Modesty
11 Peace	12 Standstill
17 Following	18 Therapy
19 Approach	33 Retreat
20 Contemplation/View	34 Great Power
21 Biting Through	48 The Well
22 Grace/Art	47 Exhaustion/Oppression
23 Splitting Apart	43 Breakthrough

When All Lines Change page 2	
24 Return/The Turning Point	44 Coming to Meet
25 Innocence	46 Pushing Upward
26 Taming Power of the Great	45 Gathering Together
27 Providing Nourishment	28 Over Loaded/Crisis
29 Abyssal Water	30 Clinging Fire
31 Influence	41 Decrease
32 Duration	42 Increase
37 Family/Clan	40 Deliverance
38 Opposition	39 Obstruction
51 Shock	57 Gentle Penetration
52 Keeping Still/Meditation	58 Joy
53 Development	54 Second Wife
55 Abundance	59 Dispersion
56 Wandering	60 Limitation
61 Inner Truth	62 Many Small Things
63 After Completion	64 Before Completion

While creating the chart for the hexagrams of opposites when all lines are in movement I noticed a few things that caught my interest and something to ponder when choosing a change. Here are a few examples.

- If all the lines of hexagram 7, *The Army*, change, the new hexagram becomes hexagram 13, *Friendship*.
- Hexagram 53, *Development*, speaks about the steps towards marriage. When all the lines change we get hexagram 54, *The Marrying Maiden* which is also about marriage but about the second wife.
- *Approach*, hexagram 19 and *Retreat*, hexagram 33 are opposites.
- *Conflict*, hexagram 6, when lived out to the fullest becomes *Darkening of the Light*, hexagram 36.

3. Using the Cards as the Tool for Divination.



There are 8 Trigram cards: *Creative Heaven*, *Arousing Thunder*, *Abysmal Water*, *Keeping Still Mountain*, *Receptive Earth*, *Gentle Wind & Wood*, *Clinging Fire* and *Joyous Lake*. Separate these 8 cards from the deck and place them under a cloth so that you cannot see them. In this way you will be relying on synchronicity to find the response to your question. Of course you can also choose which two cards you want to work with.

Shuffle the cards in such a way so that you can't tell which card you are picking. Pull out one card and write down the symbol and name. You will find the Trigram symbol at the top of each card.





Put the card that you just chose back under the cloth. Mix the cards up again without seeing them and pull out another card. Sometimes you will get the same card. This is part of your reading and indicates that you will get one of the doubled hexagrams — Heaven over Heaven; Fire over Fire, and so on. Write that second trigram and name down above the previous response. Look at the charts in the deck (page 6) to see what hexagram your two cards generated. Or look at the larger chart here on page 5.

The example here is the trigram for the *The Gentle Wind & Wood*, followed by the card for *The Arousing Thunder*. If you look at the chart you will see that the trigrams in this order point to hexagram 32, *Duration*. Find that card in the deck and read the prescription.

An alternative to choosing the cards randomly or blindfolded, you might decide that you want to see what any two cards point to in the 64 hexagrams.



Another Way to Use Trigram cards

Suppose you have received the hexagram 32, *Duration*, by what ever means. Take a look at what hexagram this would have pointed to if the order of the trigrams were reversed, *Wind & Wood* after the *Thunder*. You will notice that this time the hexagram is 42, *Increase*, with an entirely different prescription.

Questions for the I Ching

The most important part of consulting I Ching is how you phrase your question.

- Be as specific as you can with your question.
- If you are using the coin method you may have changing lines which will lead to a second hexagram.
- Don't ask a question when you already know the answer.
- Remember that I Ching is best thought of as advice coming from an ancient and very wise source. I think of I Ching as calling on my DNA to guide me. I believe that the key to how the I Ching works is found in and controlled by our DNA. We are all connected to each other.
- You don't always need to ask a question. You might let the I Ching tell you what you need to know right now.

I find that keeping a record of my I Ching questions helpful. Sometimes the answers I get are obvious as to their meaning but at other times I think, “*What is that about?*” Or, “*I don’t think so.*” Or, “*I don’t like that answer.*”

Questioning the I Ching is like looking at one’s dreams. They are both symbolic and often mysterious in meaning. In both instances, if I keep track and look back after some time, the meaning becomes clear. A simple example of this is when I ask my New Year question, “*What will most characterize this coming year for me?*” At the beginning of the year it is impossible to tell what will unfold during the entire year. I like getting a hint of what may be ahead. Sometimes I am surprised by what seemed like a weird hexagram to receive for the year but by the end of the year the response fits.

Using the I Ching Prescription Cards in a Tarot Deck Layout

Whether using the Tarot or the I Ching, we ask questions about any number of things. We seek inspiration or answers to some meaningful event in our life. This I Ching inspired deck is the same size and has the same number of cards that Tarot decks have and so lends itself to Tarot spreads for an inquiry.

Tarot cards always have the same back, the way playing cards do. These I Ching cards have a different face for both front and back for all cards. While Tarot decks usually come with a small booklet that describes the meaning of each card, this deck has the meaning of the cards on both sides. One side is the image that is an abstract painting inspired by the Chinese character for each hexagram with a description of the Hexagram. The other side gives the prescription for the situation.

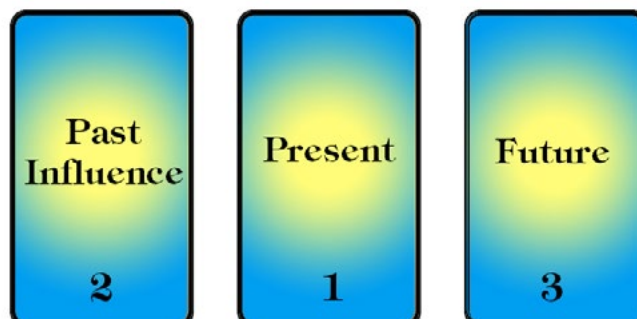
Because the cards have content on both sides, when you shuffle the cards close your eyes while picking the cards, thereby relying on the synchronicity of your unconscious to supply your reading for your inquiry. Of course there is nothing wrong with choosing the cards that you want to explore in a Tarot-like layout and look at a prescription for anything you might want to explore with this ancient Taoist wisdom.

Consulting the I Ching is best used when wanting to know how to behave in any situation. While both the Tarot and the I Ching rely on archetypes of the human condition, the I Ching is useful for not only defining the situation but giving advice on the best way to handle what is happening.

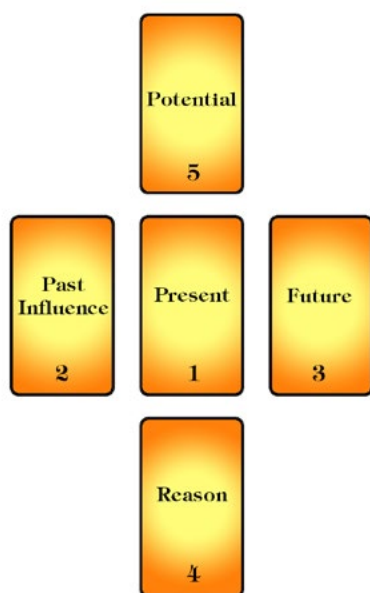
There are many kinds of Tarot spreads. A few are shown here as suggestions. Before shuffling the deck remove the eight Trigram cards and the six cards that are not one of the 64 hexagrams. Use only the 64 hexagram cards for this reading. Decide what spread of cards to use and then lay out the I Ching Prescription cards in the order that the Tarot spread indicates.

3 Card Spread

This is a simple spread and when using the I Ching Prescription cards very effective. Each card has a lot of information to absorb for any question.



5 Card Spread



This is a useful spread when trying to decide a given course of action.

Card 1: The present or general theme of the reading.

Card 2: Past influences that are still having an effect.

Card 3: The future.

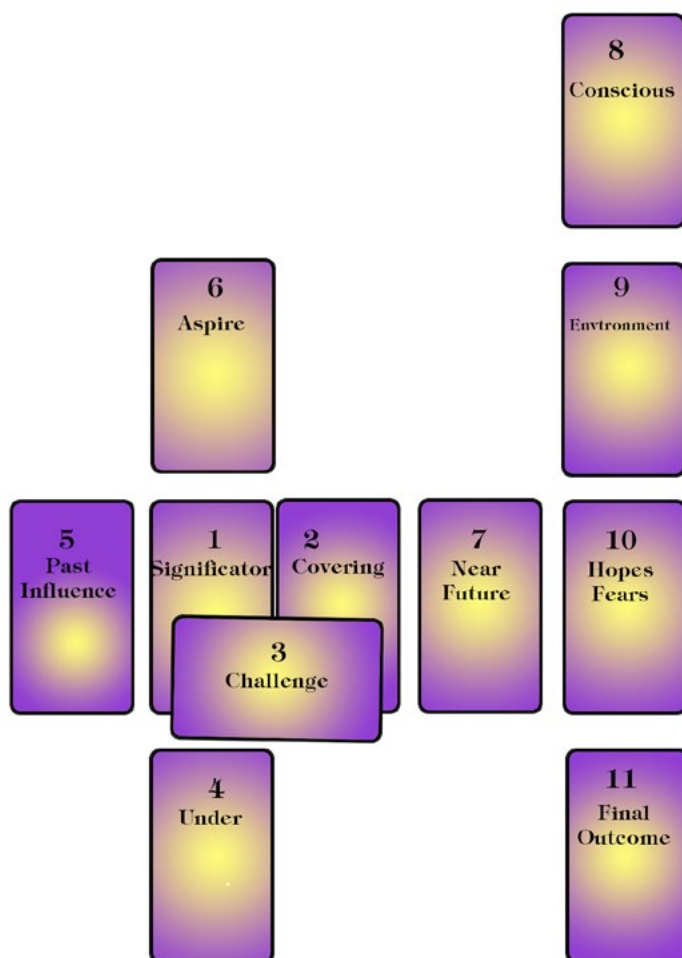
Card 4: The reason behind the question. This card can reveal what is in the unconscious or what might be blocking you from achieving your wish.

Card 5: The potential within the situation. This shows possible results from taking a course of action.

I did a reading for myself with the 5 card spread to use as an example. My question was to tell me about my decision to create these I Ching Cards.



The Celtic Cross



The Celtic Cross is good to use to answer specific questions and is probably the most common Tarot card layout. It is usually a ten card spread. The placement of the cards varies. The spread I have here uses 11 cards and is one I learned with a Tarot group that I belonged to when living in California and has been meeting now for 40 years.

Card 1: The present situation for the questioner.

Card 2: The energy covering the questioner.

Card 3: The immediate challenge facing the questioner.

Card 4: The root of the subject matter or what is in the unconscious.

Card 5: Recent past events regarding the question.

Card 6: What you are looking up to as the best outcome to the question.

Card 7: Immediate Future.

Card 8: Conscious awareness regarding the issue.

Card 9: External influences. The environment.

Card 10: Hopes or fears around the situation.

Card 11: Final outcome.

A Few Suggestion for Questions to ask I Ching?

Year-to-year

- What will most characterize my January 1st to January 31st for this year?
- What will most characterize Solstice to Solstice for this year?
- What will most characterize the Chinese New Year until next Chinese New Year?
- What will most characterize my Anniversary to Anniversary year?
- What will most characterize my Birthday to Birthday year?

Relationship

- What should I do now in the face of this _____ situation with _____?
- What characterizes this relationship between me and _____?
- What can I do to resolve my difficulties with _____?

Career

- What do I need to be aware of when applying for this job?
- Situation results of taking this job?
- Situation results of leaving this job?
- What best characterize my work environment at this place?
- How will this work situation help me?
- How can I be of best service here?
- What is my career path?

Dreams

- Amplify the meaning of this dream.
- What is this dream telling me that is hidden from my consciousness now?
- What is the significance of _____ in this dream?

Insights

- What is my best quality?
- What do I need to learn now?