

Ethical Tarot

Frequently, Tarot readers are the targets of ignorant and damaging statements, which blatantly defame people all over the world who use the Tarot as a tool of self discovery and empowerment. In an effort to educate the general public about Tarot and the role of Tarot readers, the American Tarot Association (ATA) is offering this article, which may be downloaded, printed and distributed freely.

The ATA is disturbed when it comes across reports that Tarot cards have been used as a tool to defraud or take advantage of the public. The ATA fully supports the actions of law enforcement in the prosecuting of these individuals. The ATA does not condone the use of Tarot cards to identify nor remove "curses" under any circumstances.

Unfortunately, in today's society, there are unscrupulous practitioners in every industry: construction; medicine; legal services; investment companies; etc. Internet and telephone scams cost unsuspecting consumers millions worldwide. The key defense for the consumer and public at large is education.

The Tarot deck was created in the fifteenth century in northern Italy. The cards were manufactured for use in a trick-taking game very much like modern Bridge. Even today, the game of Tarot, and its many variants (Tarocchi, Tarock, etc.) remain popular in parts of Europe.

Most scholars agree the earliest known decks reflect a Medieval Christian mindset (though the illustrations also draw upon other sources, including mythology). Many scholarly sources believe the earliest Tarot trump cards depict an allegory, or symbolic story, which appears to illustrate the triumph of God's will over all. While cards like Death and the Devil do appear in the deck, these concepts likely do so because they appear in the Bible. Given that the earliest Trump series incorporates images of the Christian resurrection (Judgment) and the appearance of the transfigured Christ (or the dawning of the "New Jerusalem"), no well-informed person or organization would ever associate the cards with demonism or Satanism. Modern decks associate the cards with all kinds of philosophies and trends, but the cards themselves are neither Satanic nor Demonic in origin.

There are millions of Tarot readers worldwide. They are business executives, doctors, lawyers, teachers, housewives, writers, engineers, students, and any other profession that can be named. They are neighbors, sisters, brothers, mothers and fathers. They are even national poet laureates! Tarot empowers readers and their clients to think through their options and come to decisions on their own. The cards are used to gain insight into personal growth opportunities, to aid in meditation or concentration practice, to explore options or alternative answers to questions, or to enhance creativity through brainstorming. Within the last decade, the cards are even beginning to appear in therapeutic settings. Such spiritual and internal exploration is a healthy part of the human condition, and should be encouraged, not dismissed.

Ethical Tarot readers are people who help others better hear their own inner guides. They empower clients to think through their options and come to decisions on their own. They remind clients that, whichever direction the cards may point, the future really lays in the hands of each individual person. Most importantly, ethical Tarot readers encourage clients to seek the licensed professional help of doctors, counselors, accountants, and lawyers - especially in cases where the client's concern goes beyond the expertise of the reader. They do not use the cards to identify "curses" or "bad energy" and then charge a fee to remove these "curses" or "bad energy."

The ATA has an established code of ethics for Tarot readers, designed to protect both consumers and readers.

THE ATA CODE OF ETHICS

- I will serve the best interests of my clients, conducting my professional activities without causing or intending to cause harm.*
- I will treat all my clients with equal respect, regardless of their origin, race, religion, gender, age, or sexual preference.*
- I will represent honestly my Tarot qualifications, including educational credentials, levels of certification and experience.*
- I will keep confidential the names of clients and all information shared or discussed during readings, unless otherwise requested by the client or required by a court of law.*
- I will recommend clients consult a licensed professional for advice of a legal, financial, medical, or psychological nature that I am not qualified to provide. If trained in one of these areas, I will clearly differentiate between the tarot reading and any professional advice additionally provided.*
- I will discuss and agree upon all fees (if any) with my clients in advance. Should a client wish to proceed beyond the originally agreed arrangement, all additional fees (if any) will be discussed and agreed upon by both parties before proceeding.*
- I will respect my clients' right to refuse or terminate their reading at any time, regardless of prior consent.*
- I recognize that all ATA members have the same rights and obligations, and I will always respect and honor my co-members.*

Local governments can play a role in the empowerment of consumers to make the best possible choices. The American Tarot Association stands ready to collaborate with elected officials to create programs to help educate the public in what to watch for when seeking the services of ethical Tarot readers, working pro-actively through press releases as Tarot scams are identified. The ATA also calls for action by all ethical Tarot reading practitioners to be vigilant and protect their own profession by reporting the criminal activities of others to authorities immediately. We cannot allow the actions of a few criminals, through the use of a tool we love, to diminish us all and potentially provide the means for the ill-informed to close ethical, law-abiding Tarot reading businesses.