

Book Title: Messages from the Archetypes:
Using Tarot for healing and spiritual growth
Author: Toni Gilbert, RN, MA, HNC
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Whether you are a skilled Tarot counselor or a neophyte, you will find *Messages from the Archetypes* an intriguing exploration into the history and application of the Tarot cards as a healing art. The author maintains that you can use the cards for self-exploration, self development and for helping others improve their lives. Toni Gilbert makes the system understandable and accessible. The book is user-friendly because it is clearly written and the concepts come across in a direct manner.

Among the concepts that I found intriguing is the fact that symbolic images predate the spoken word and that these symbols have held meaning for humans since the beginning of time and across all cultures. Symbolic imagery is not new to us. As Toni states, “We find archetypal symbols in our imagination, in our dreams and fantasies, and in the world of art, myth, legend, literature and religion.” It makes perfect sense that when we view symbolic imagery on the face of the Tarot cards, the images can intuitively trigger insights that bring forth information from the psyche and the spirit.

Ms Gilbert explains that Tarot is a 600 year old system of cards; each of the 78 cards holding a symbolic depiction of one of the archetypal themes in our collective unconscious. They work like this: The questioner asks a question that focuses upon an issue in one’s life such as relationship and shuffles the cards with the question in mind. Synchronicity is mysteriously involved and the cards are then laid out in a predetermined layout. With the Tarot counselor as a guide the images speak to the questioner by means of intuitive projection. This projection technique is a gentle way of teaching people about themselves with the cards, which represent “major universal principles that act in and through us.”

Toni describes how archetypal inner images, nighttime dream images, and artistically drawn symbols all come from the same source in our psyche. The guided imagery process, dream interpretation and Tarot counseling are three different means of accessing this subterranean source. “The spontaneous imagery or visualization found at the preconscious level of the self can uncover insights and wisdom beyond the knowing of the conscious ego.” During a guided imagery session, dream interpretation or a Tarot imagery session, insights arise from the deeper self to be revealed in a similar way. The archetypal images on the cards mirror characteristics to the questioner for his or her reflection. Whether images come from the inside or the outside, they come alive in our imaginations to offer healing information. In this book, Toni dips into the rich symbolism within each image and brings them to life for us to use in our own lives.

I appreciate the stories and the case examples from diverse life issues that are sprinkled throughout the book. Toni is a good storyteller and makes the application of the Tarot easy to comprehend. This book has good instructions on how to get started. She also points out limitations about who would not be a good candidate for using this tool. I

would have liked even more elaboration on this aspect. There are detailed descriptions about the messages from each archetype and how to go about conducting a counseling session. I would strongly recommend, as Toni does, that further training and mentoring are important for those considering using this tool professionally.

Overall, I would say this book is an enjoyable and informative primer.

More information about Toni Gilbert: www.tonigilbert.com and www.altjn.com

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