

Major Arcana & Shadow Work

A Tarot Integration Guide

Meet the parts of yourself you've been avoiding

Welcome

The Major Arcana tells the story of becoming human.

Each card is not just a symbol or prediction, but an inner figure — a voice, role, or survival strategy that has shaped you over time.

In shadow work, we turn toward what has been exiled, misunderstood, or quietly running the show from beneath awareness. The Major Arcana offers a powerful map for this work because these archetypes live in all of us — not as fixed traits, but as energies we move in and out of across a lifetime.

This guide invites you to meet the Major Arcana not as fortune-telling tools, but as mirrors. Mirrors that reflect where you resist, over-identify, avoid, or unconsciously repeat patterns. Through intentional tarot spreads, journaling, and gentle integration, you'll begin to recognize which archetypes are asking for attention — and how to welcome them back into conscious relationship.

Move slowly. There is no card to “master,” no shadow to conquer. This is about listening, befriending, and allowing the psyche to speak in its own symbolic language.

How to Use This Guide

1. **Set an Intention** – Focus on a personal challenge or shadow aspect you want to explore.
 2. **Create a Quiet Space** – Find a calm setting, breathe deeply, and ground yourself.
 3. **Shuffle & Draw** – Keep your intention in mind as you pull cards for the spread.
 4. **Reflect & Journal** – Use the prompts to explore emotions and patterns that emerge.
 5. **Take Action** – Choose one small step to integrate what you've learned into daily life.
 6. **Be Gentle with Yourself** – Shadow work can bring deep emotions. Take breaks when needed.
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Shadow Work Tarot Spreads Using the Major Arcana

1. The Archetype in My Shadow Spread (3 Cards)

Purpose: Identify which Major Arcana archetype represents a hidden or rejected part of you.

- **Card 1:** What Major Arcana archetype is most active in my unconscious?
- **Card 2:** How does this shadow aspect influence my thoughts, emotions, or relationships?
- **Card 3:** What step can I take to integrate this energy in a healthy way?



Journal Prompt: How do I resist or deny this archetype in myself?




Example: Drawing *The Emperor* in this spread might suggest difficulty with control, authority, or structure. You may either avoid responsibility or overcompensate by being rigid.

2. The Unresolved Lesson Spread (4 Cards)

Purpose: Discover which life lesson a Major Arcana archetype is trying to teach you.

- **Card 1:** What shadow lesson from the Major Arcana am I currently resisting?
- **Card 2:** How does this resistance show up in my daily life?
- **Card 3:** What would embracing this archetype look like?
- **Card 4:** How can I start integrating this wisdom today?

 **Journal Prompt:** When has this lesson shown up in my life before?


 **Example:** Drawing *The Hanged Man* here might suggest resistance to surrender, feeling stuck, or avoiding a necessary shift in perspective.

3. The Light & Shadow Within Me (2 Cards)

Purpose: Recognize both your strengths and blind spots in a given situation.

- **Card 1:** Which Major Arcana archetype represents my **strengths** in this phase of life? How?
- **Card 2:** Which archetype represents my **shadow challenge** right now? How?

 **Journal Prompt:** How do these two archetypes interact within me?

 **Example:** If you draw *The High Priestess* as your strength and *The Devil* as your shadow, it might indicate deep intuition (*High Priestess*) but a struggle with unhealthy attachments or addictive patterns (*Devil*).

Integration & Next Steps

Shadow work does not end with insight — it deepens through relationship.

As you work with these spreads, notice which archetypes return again and again. Repetition is not failure; it is the psyche's way of saying *this matters*. Integration happens in small, embodied ways — in how you speak, rest, set boundaries, tolerate uncertainty, or choose compassion over self-judgment.

Remember: every shadow carries life force. What once protected you may now be asking to evolve. The Major Arcana does not demand transformation through force, but through recognition.

If you feel called to go further, you may deepen this work through practices drawn from Jungian psychology, Internal Family Systems (IFS), myth, ritual, and creative expression — all ways of giving these inner figures a place at the table rather than locking them away.

Return to this guide whenever a card feels charged, confusing, or emotionally alive. That aliveness is the doorway.

And when you're ready to explore each archetype in depth, you can return to the full roadmap here:

<https://www.fromcentowholeness.com/tarot-shadow-work-major-arcana/>