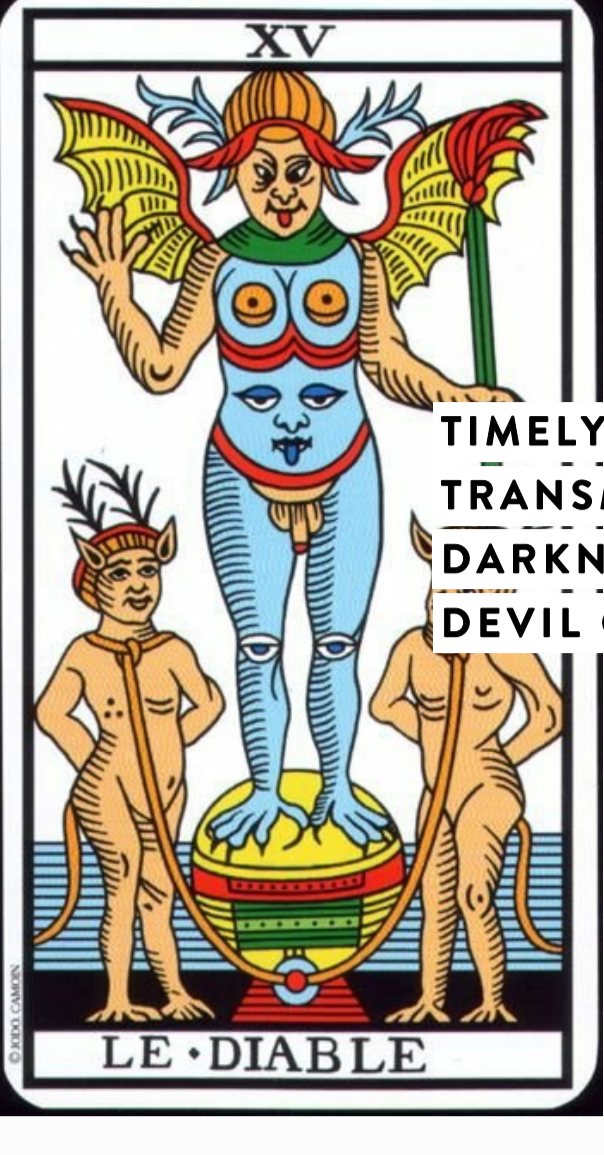


December 31, 2020

Timely Tarot: Transmuting Your Darkness with The Devil Card



TIMELY TAROT: TRANSMUTING YOUR DARKNESS WITH THE DEVIL CARD

By Lisa De La O Wyman

On December 21st, the Winter Solstice not only marked the shortest day of the year but heralded the return of lighter, longer days. Traditions around the world celebrate this season as a harbinger of not only the light needed for the growth of crops but also the light of spiritual hope and unity. We are now in Capricorn season, a time of quiet introspection and affirmation of our values and social responsibilities. We are all citizens of earth, and while the weather is colder and we remain largely tucked away in our homes, we have the time to look deeply at who we are as individuals and how that affects the well-being of the world around us. The Devil card is perfect medicine for these times. While it's often pegged as the card of addiction, it offers so much more. Behind every dark impulse, destructive action, or dangerous hunger resides a grimy layer of shame and guilt. The Devil card invites us to ask why. In this painful year of pandemic terror, racial violence, and political melodrama, we've been closely quarantining with our personal demons. I think we've all spent a fair amount of that time sitting in a sludgy pool of our own shame, and it's been painful. It's time to stand up and get out now. But we can't turn a blind eye to it and just walk away. When you understand what your "vices" are and how you feel about them, you begin to release their control over you. Get to know them. Help them transform into something that helps, not harms. Liberate yourself and explore your wildness from a space of compassion and self-awareness.



The Devil

Ruled by the planet Saturn, Capricorn is a cardinal Earth sign. Saturn presides over time, restrictions, diligence, discipline, responsibilities, and ambition. It imbues Capricorn with its deep commitment to success through diligent effort. Capricorn is associated with the father, government, military, career, tradition, morals, ethics, values, achievement, stability, public appearance, status, and social responsibility. Capricorn energy is methodical, hardworking, and focused. Those born under this sign tend to set professional goals early in life and display tremendous dedication in attaining them. They often take on roles of authority, rise in the ranks of their chosen field, and highly value the resources that aid them in the creation and maintenance of what they hope to be a meaningful legacy for society as a whole.

The constellation of Capricorn, or *Capricornus*, is connected to the mythology of the sea-goat, a creature that begins its life in the ocean but eventually climbs toward land and steadily ascends to the mountain top. Like the sea-goat, Capricorn energy embodies the dual nature of the spiritual being having an earthly experience. This is why integration is so important - creating a materially successful life while nurturing emotional connection and internal growth. True Capricorn evolution comes through exploring hopes and dreams, not just professional ambitions. In doing so, they can play an integral role in building a better world fueled by their dreams for the collective.

Capricorn is also associated with Cernunnos, or Horned One, the Celtic forest god of fertility and masculine energy. The connection extends to the Greek deity Pan, goat-horned god of the wild. In true Devil card fashion, Capricorn's most controversial association to the archetype of the man-beast is the infamous Baphomet, commonly and somewhat inaccurately seen as the poster boy of Satanism. While the Church of Satan adopted the image as a symbol of their organization in the 1960s, Baphomet pre-dates them by centuries and has long represented pagan reverence of the natural world rather than glorification of a demonic being or Satan himself. Baphomet was supposedly worshipped by the Knights Templar in the early 1300s and resulted in accusations of heresy, along with other charges, that ultimately led to their execution. He represents a power and vitality that exists outside the structures of religion or lawful society.

The Devil card traditionally depicts a horned creature that is half-man, half-beast (usually goat). They sometimes have breasts and a penis, bat wings, and sharp talons, representing the union of opposites (masculine and feminine, human and animal, sacred and profane, good and evil, etc.). On or above their head is a pentagram, the five-pointed star. In pagan traditions, it symbolizes the four elements plus spirit, but over time has become associated with Satan and dark magic or the "danger" that any form of magic potentially threatens. Standing at the Devil's feet are two lovers, naked and bound by chains. They appear to be in a dungeon or prison, the only light being the lit torch of the Devil. The imagery has some distinct BDSM elements to it, and that's not accidental - this card takes us into darker themes of domination, debasement, addiction, suffering, taboo, obsession, power, and lust. It speaks to our primal instincts, our animal drives that remind us that we are of the natural world, not superior to it. The devil of the card is nature, encompassing its beauty and violence, echoing the duality of humanity itself. He represents our untamed natures that are wild and uncivilized. There's a part of you that is lawless, chaotic, and raw. It's your mysterious cave of impulses and hedonistic appetites that both vitalize and control you with their intensity, which often leads into the darkness of shame.

The Devil card is one of the most misunderstood in the Tarot. It's often mistaken for being about addiction or vice. While the card can certainly speak to that, it goes much deeper. Addictions, destructive behaviors, and unhealthy compulsions can cause harm and are often condemned as unlawful, sinful, or unacceptable within a social system, but this card is actually about your personal relationship to them. How do you regard them, and how do they make you feel? At some point, they most likely result in deep shame and guilt. Why? It's not about the vice, but your feelings about the vice. Like the chained individuals in the card, why do these urges or behaviors make you feel oppressed, trapped, or filled with self-loathing? How do you feel about yourself after engaging with, or even considering, the behavior? Understanding this is a crucial step towards transmuting your personal demons into powerful allies.

The Devil figure resides in the underworld of the subconscious, making them a rite of passage in the "hero's journey" of a person's life experience. We encounter the devil inside our darkness. Our devils are the illusion of separation from self, others, and God. They block us from accessing our true nature and potential. Our devils and demons show up in the forms of humiliation, remorse, dependency, shadows, and negative beliefs about ourselves. They are obstacles to wholeness and self-awareness. To dismantle their power over us we must understand what fuels them. After all, how can you learn to manage violent rage if you don't know why you feel it? How can you change your relationship to alcohol if you don't know where your overwhelming thirst comes from? The Devil card asks you to look into the darkness of the mirror in order to break through to the light beyond it.

The Devil card can ultimately help us learn to make peace with the parts of ourselves that make us feel like we are bad, tainted, or evil. It encourages us to gain insight into our transgressive impulses in order to transmute them. The concept of turning a "demon" into an "ally" is not new, and there are many spiritual practices and psychological tools available to help us wade into these initially murky waters. According to local South Bay author and teacher Lisa Erickson, "Tibetan Buddhism, for example, includes practices such as Chöd, for transforming parts of ourselves that we don't like or that cause us suffering. Instead of trying to battle or destroy these personal 'demons', we recognize them as a reflection of something we need. By befriending them within ourselves we can find out what pain we may be in that we haven't been recognizing and offer this part of ourselves nurturing and care."

The Devil card is a call to tap into our magic, power, and creativity. Our primal wellspring holds reserves of treasure when we learn how to work with it. It asks us to get intimate with what lights us up in a raw and wild way. Are you afraid of your innate freedom? Are you suppressing what makes you exciting, visionary, and vibrant? By reclaiming your power you also reclaim power of choice. You can take the pain of the past, or behaviors regarded as wrong and repurpose them into something beautiful and affirming. The Devil card is also connected to the narrative of Lucifer as "light-bringer" and Eden's tree of knowledge as awakening humanity to consciousness. The Devil card doesn't ask for obedience, instead encouraging you to face the truth - your truth. It helps us destroy the lies we tell and the illusions that we use to feel better about ourselves. It's a gatekeeper of our enlightenment and liberation.

When a client pulls The Devil card, it usually indicates an area of their life which feels oppressive or heavy with shame. They might be struggling with an unhealthy habit or self-destructive tendency and it's time to examine what's driving it. For example, they might be in a relationship with someone who claims to love them but is verbally abusive. Every time they forgive and accept the person's hateful treatment they feel disrespected, resentful, and filled with self-disgust. In order to move past the relationship and establish better boundaries for the future, they need to look at why they allowed the behavior to continue for as long as it has. Why was it okay for their partner to use words as weapons? What part of them believed the abuse was deserved? By exploring the pain, they can learn what's needed to heal it and free themselves in the process. We can all do this. It's not easy, and it takes us into our darkest places, but at the end of the tunnel we can find an open pathway to light and empowerment. We are all strong enough - and brave enough. It's the work of Capricorn season and 2021. I'm ready, and I think you are too. YOU CAN DO THIS.



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The Devil

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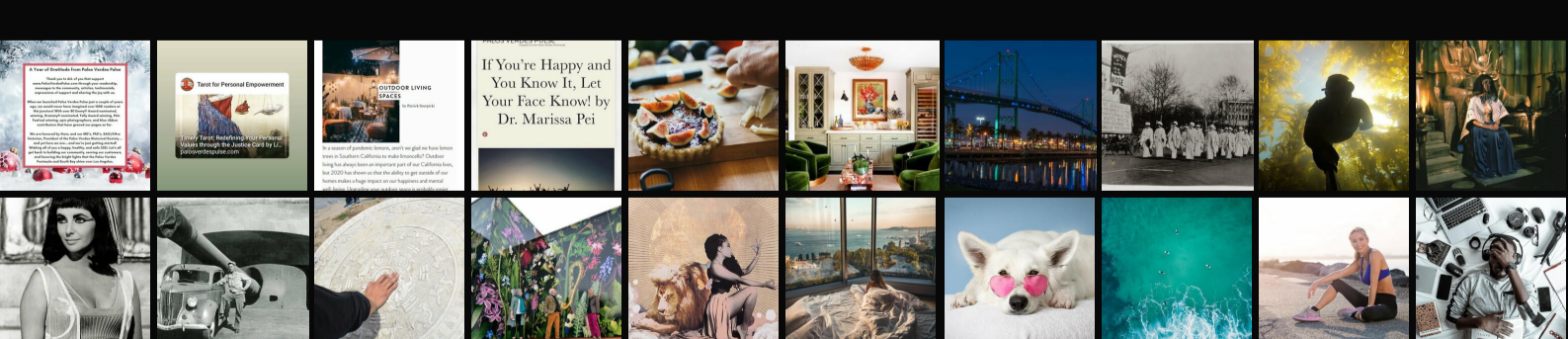
Lisa De La O Wyman is a Tarot reader and writer based in Redondo Beach. At Tarot for Empowerment she works with individual clients, private parties, and special events. Through her work she seeks to connect people with their innate power as well as encounter the mystery in everyday life. She can be reached via Instagram and Facebook at @tarotforempowerment.

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