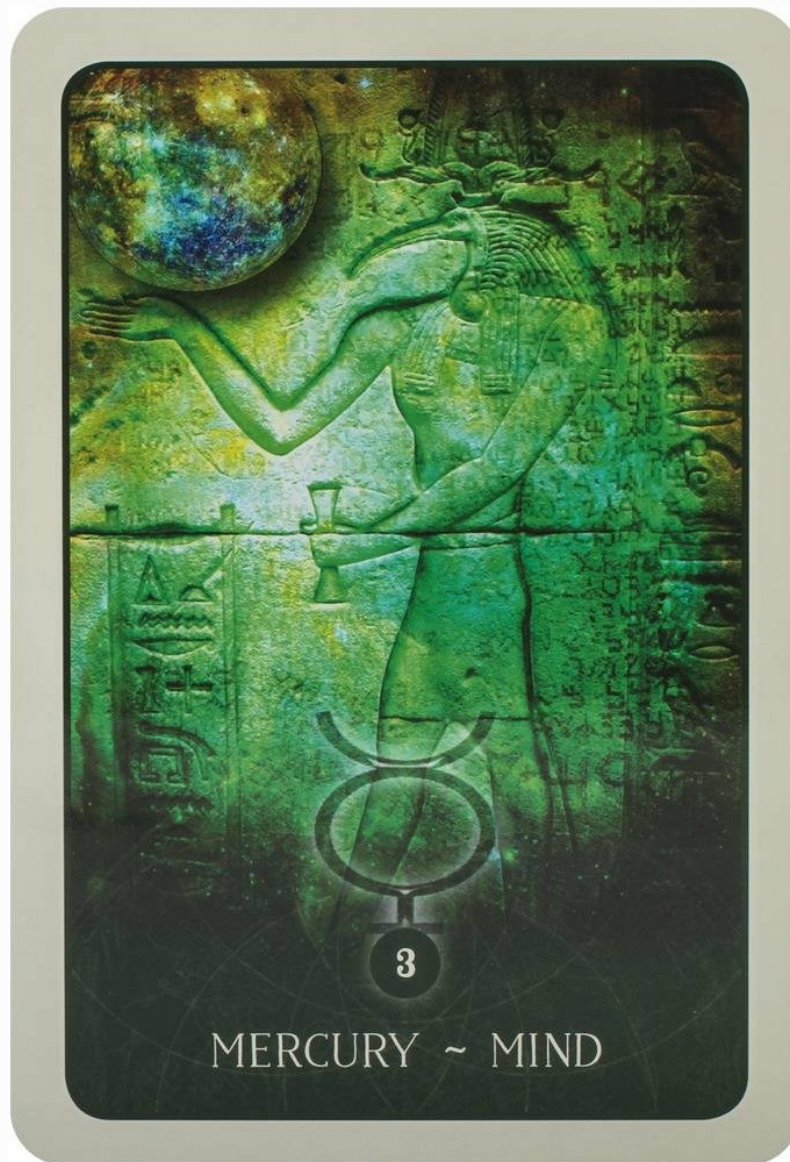


September 15, 2022

Timely Tarot: The Influence of Mercury By Lisa De La O Wyman



Mercury - Click on image to purchase deck.

Here we are, in the heart of Virgo season – on the cusp of autumn and the falling of many leaves, both literal and symbolic. Along with the sign Gemini, Virgo is ruled by the planet Mercury, infusing it with powerful energies of communication, informational processing, and profound mental acuity. Our mind creates our reality, so this energy is at the core of our experience as human beings. But who or what is Mercury, and why should you care? We all know it is a planet in our solar system, but how does it act as an agent for discovery and change in our daily lives? In this first article of a new series on planetary influences in the Tarot, we'll explore it together.

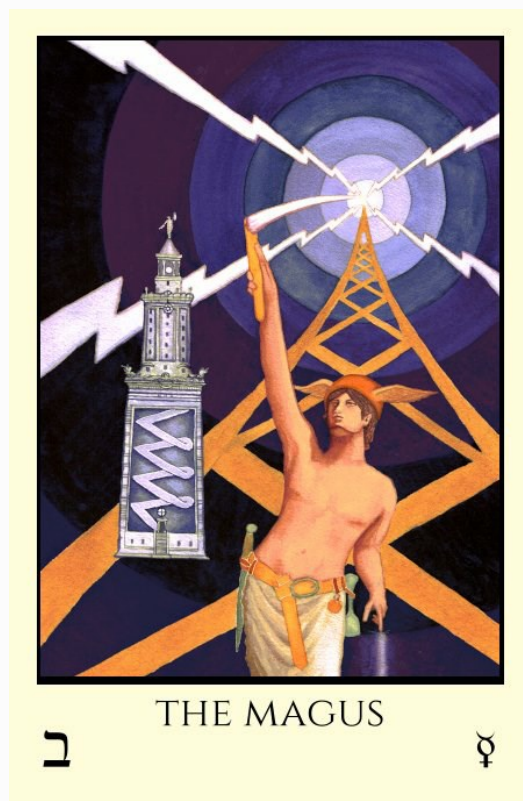
Mercury is the planet closest to Sun. It is named after the Greek god of messages, communication, commerce, divination, boundary-crossing, travel, oration, trickery, thieving, and intellectual prowess. In an astrological birth chart, Mercury will never be more than 28 degrees from your Sun sign (therefore it will always be in the sign before, in, or after your Sun sign). In your chart, it represents how you think and communicate. Being so close to the sun, it is the hottest planet, as well as the fastest. It also has an 88-day orbit, highlighting the theme of *twins*, which we'll look at in greater depth shortly – it's a big part of Mercury's inherent duality. We can never see the planet's full cycle of phases from Earth; it is always somewhat obscured, much like the Mercurial nature – hard to pin down, ever-shifting, and never fully revealed.

One of the most popular concepts surrounding this planet is Mercury Retrograde. For many, it's a time of dread, but there are many misconceptions about it. An optical illusion that makes the planet appear as though it is moving backward, it is believed that this energetically affects the fluid movement of information, potentially creating technological setbacks and breakdowns in communication. We are currently in a Mercury Retrograde in Libra from September 9th through the 23rd. The sign of Libra brings up themes of balance, harmonious relationship, and fairness. While many people fear retrogrades, it largely depends on how you regard what comes up. We all want things to work out the way we want *when we want*. If they don't, we might complain, feel defeated, or find someone or something to blame. Instead, we can choose to observe the perceived setback and ask – was our planning hasty? Are we pushing due to impatience or fear of missing out? Is the tension at home with our partner urging us to revisit a long-simmering issue? And then sometimes things just happen and it's not about you, and learning to meet it with a bit of grace and acceptance is the best course of action.

Much of how we regard the planetary energy of Mercury is tied to the Roman mythological figure of Mercury, known to the ancient Greeks as Hermes. His classic depiction is that of a young man in a stance of motion or flight, wearing a winged helmet, winged sandals, and carrying a caduceus (wand of the herald). He was a bringer of messages and information, but also a *psychopomp*, a guide of souls to the underworld. He was the only god who could cross the boundaries of the upper and lower realms with ease and authority. He also represents the trickster, an archetype that employs intelligence and cunning to disrupt convention and social order. The trickster may play with deceit and illusion to do so, but as mythologist Joanna Gardner states, "they represent the perpetual stranger who exists outside the known order. But isn't it so often the stranger who shakes up our moribund routines? Who reminds us to stay alert? Who ignites new ideas? We tell stories of Trickster to talk about the fires of life as they exist outside our rules, precisely so we can change those rules when we need to."

Mercury is also unique in its double nature. He is often considered both priapic and hermaphroditic, a kindly guide of the dead *and* a mischievous liar. He's the scholar *and* the used car salesman. He uses his mind and words to decipher the truth, or he may twist it. He's the ruler of the marketplace, the transaction of money, haggling, hustling, verbal dexterity, prophecy, and effortless persuasion. Mercurial energy is hard to define – it is both/*and/or/yes/no/sometimes*. It's as varied and changeable as our thoughts, which is why he represents the mind. Yet he is also the companion of the human and gently guides them home when life is done and the mad activity of the mind is finally at rest.

Let's look at how our slippery friend shows up in the Tarot and helps us navigate the tricky byways of thought and speech.



The Magician - Click on image to purchase deck

The Magician is ruled by Mercury. This is the card of manifestation, where "as above, so below" comes into play. It is the power we have to take what was once just an inspired idea and materialize it in the world. Most depictions of the Magician show all four elements available to him – they are the tools he utilizes to create a new reality with the fifth and final secret ingredient – spirit. He understands that he is the conduit, the lightning rod, the vessel through which spiritual energy flows. His very body is a pathway for the flashing current. There is an element of mastery and authority to this card, an understanding of the power we possess to bring forward what we want from seemingly nothing. Children, businesses, degrees, cars, homes, food, physical changes, works of art, dollar bills, and on and on. It all starts with a glimmer in the eye, a thought, a desire. We create magic by marrying intention with passion. How many times have you embodied The Magician? Do you honor this ability? Are you afraid of it? Do you occasionally abuse it? With the power of creation comes great responsibility, as well as the need for mental discipline.



The Lovers - Click on image to purchase deck

In the cards of Gemini (The Lovers and 8, 9 & 10 of Swords), mutable Air energy explores our relationship to information and awakens knowledge of dualities. We must learn to differentiate before we can integrate. How is *this* not like *that*? How is *that* similar to *this*? How do I want to combine them in a way that makes sense to me? This is what we do when working with this energy. The cards of Gemini teach us a great deal about relationships with the *other* – person, place, or thing. We need to understand how they are separate and can be connected.

Gemini is related to the concept of twins, and throughout world mythology, many examples speak to us of the inherent conflict of dualities – Cain and Abel, Castor and Pollux, Osiris and Isis, etc. In these stories, one twin always dies. Through their duality, they symbolize choice – to reach a decision and commit to it, one option must be sacrificed. Settling on an outcome can cause tremendous mental anxiety. We feel “analysis paralysis” and it seems like all of the options sound good, make sense, or offer us something we want. How can we possibly choose just one? We may even avoid choosing at all in a misguided effort to stave off the “wrong” one, but that tends to simply cause more stress.

Our thoughts can keep us up at night, marinating us in fear and exhausting us with second-guessing and painful self-judgment. But in the end, we have to kill off the twin and make peace with it if we truly want to move forward. You may regret your choice later, realize it was made with good intentions but yielded unexpected results, or find it turned out as happily anticipated. Either way, you must accept the consequence of your action. We are integrating information into choices, finding and fleshing out their relationships and how they might play out in our lives. It can feel like high-stakes gambling at times, so be honest and kind with yourself and others.





The Hermit - Click on image to purchase deck

In the cards of Virgo (The Hermit and 8, 9 & 10 of Pentacles) mutable Earth energy refines the work that has come before. Their versatility and attention to detail will help carry us through to the autumn and winter of the journey . . . to the end, really. There is maturity and elder wisdom here as The Hermit walks us towards the culmination of our efforts. He teaches us that the wisdom we've accrued over time must be applied to something that will live on after we are gone. What is your legacy? What is your service to the earth and its inhabitants? This is often where we fully embody whatever we believe to be the meaning and purpose of our lives. What is this experience about for you anyway?

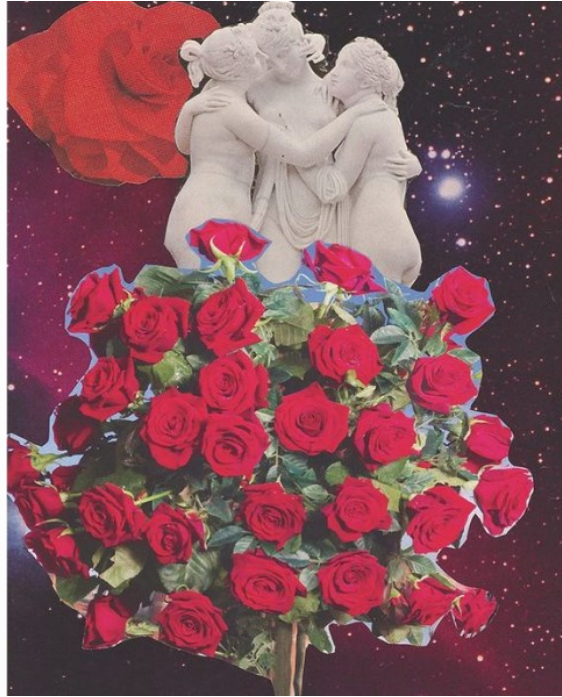


10 of Pentacles - Click on image to purchase deck

In this trio of Virgo-ruled cards (especially Mercury-in-Virgo-ruled Ten of Pentacles), we have amassed resources, are tending to them devotedly, and preparing to ultimately give them away to share with the world. They may be in the form of children, friendships, creative works, properties, financial donations, and hopefully always love. There are many kinds of wealth, and holding onto it too tightly can turn it into a burden. How do you feel about finally giving away what you've spent a lifetime nurturing with such care and commitment? This stretch of the journey asks why you might want to hold on to it

for anyway – where you will go in the end doesn't accommodate "luggage". Letting go and accepting the inevitability and potential of the next cycle is intrinsic to the Hermit's sojourn. Having gained so much, he seeks to finally give it away and imbue it with new life beyond his reach. That which we value needs movement to be alive and effective in the world. Keep it flowing.

In the Tarot we also find Mercury nimbly traveling through a handful of other zodiacal cards:



Three of Cups - Click on image to purchase deck

In Three of Cups (Mercury in Cancer) we revel in easy, fluid communication and connection. Intuitive gifts of divination are heightened. We are happily reflecting on the past and feeling grateful for the love and abundance we have now. We experience tender feelings of fellowship and comfort that warm our hearts and bind us together. Create safe and nourishing spaces in your life for regular communion and appreciation.





Five of Coins - Click on image to purchase deck

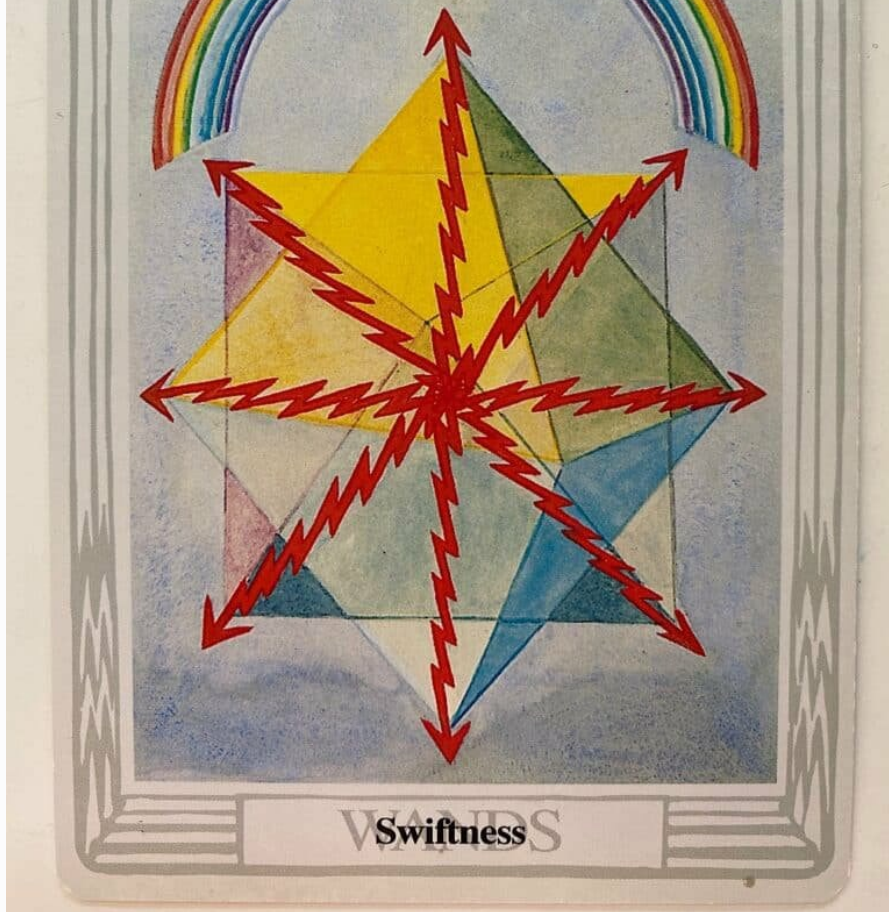
In the Five of Pentacles (Mercury in Taurus), we see the mind focusing on material matters and a fear of scarcity. There can be deep anxiety regarding money, shelter, and health concerns. We're doing a lot of overthinking about basic needs. Tauran energy helps us to look ahead and plan; this can be used to either fuel panic or create peace of mind. How does it show up for you? Its earthy nature also encourages us to get back into our bodies when we feel trapped in our heads. Take a walk, exercise, or do busy work with your hands. Pull the energy down from your head and into your arms, legs, and core.



Six of Swords - Click on image to purchase deck

In Six of Swords (Mercury in Aquarius), we channel the power of the mind to problem-solve. This is where you think your way out of a tricky situation, navigating yourself in the direction of something better. Fueled by idealism and logic, you find your North Star, see a brighter future, and utilize your intellect to coolly sort through all the data until the light bulb goes off and you find the path forward. Work with your mind to create a better experience by looking ahead and sorting out roadblocks.





Eight of Wands - Click on image to purchase deck

With Eight of Wands (Mercury in Sagittarius), we are dazzled by the swiftness of communication. This is the sudden bright idea, the inspiration, the unexpected message or parcel. Take advantage of the movement or you'll lose the opportunity. Go at the same speed. Take that journey of mind or body. It's fleeting, so response time matters. Catch it while you can. Mercury likes it here – he's in motion with an armful of information!

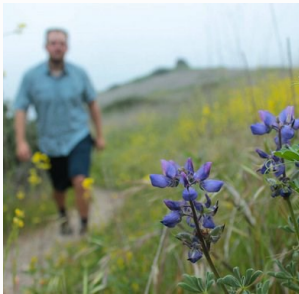
How do you use thought and language to frame your worldview? I think an important question for all of us right now is how are we using mental narratives and the written word to deal with disappointment, loss, and massive change? Are we doing so thoughtfully or reactively? Is it helping or hurting us? Is social media a transformative ally or a wasteland? Is technology a weapon or instrument of healing? Do our words build bridges of understanding or cut deep and cruel wounds?

Words are powerful and cast spells, birthing an intention into the world that may manifest in ways you can't predict. Be mindful and aware. This is true for your thoughts as well. Do you cast unkind spells on yourself or others all day with biting inner monologues? How would your life change if you altered your words? Mercurial energy is brilliant and versatile, but it can lack feeling. Working with your Heart Chakra and connecting with people through kind words and gestures can counterbalance some of the frenetic energy of "monkey mind" and move you out of your head and into your heart for greater balance and tranquility. Fuel the power of your mind with compassion, curiosity, and openness. Create space around those thoughts and words that flash through the air like quicksilver - make room for love to accompany them and color them with light.

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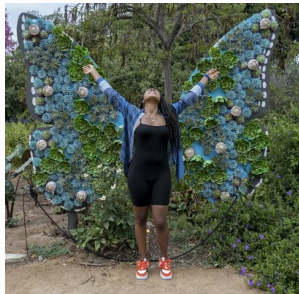


Lisa De La O Wyman is a Tarot reader and writer based in Redondo Beach. At Tarot for Empowerment, she works with individual clients, private parties, and special events. Through her work, she seeks to connect people with their innate power as well as encounter the mystery in everyday life. She can be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



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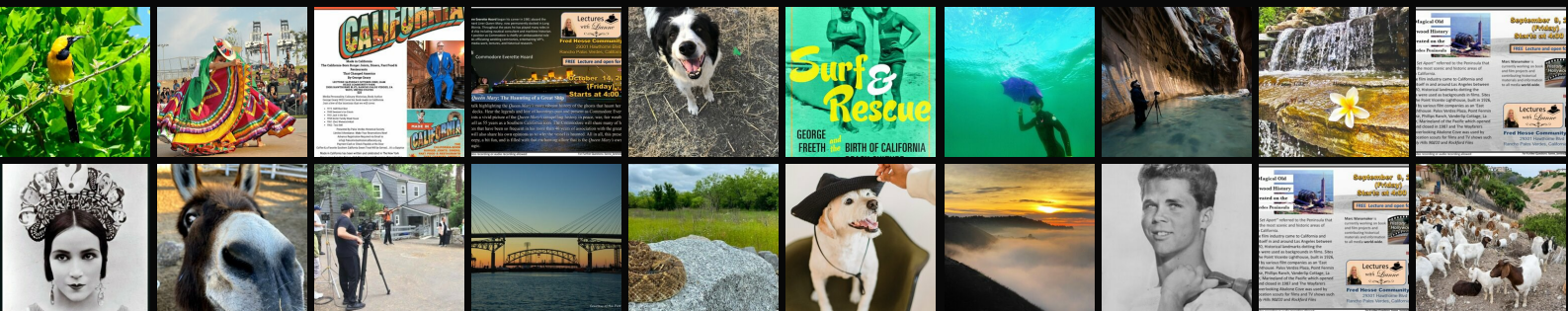


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