

The Fool 0

A well-dressed individual stands at the edge of a precipice, a white sun is above him, a white dog at his feet.

The simplest, and yet most complicated, of the Major Arcana. What does the name of this card tell us?

- A fool is someone who is '**not wise**', and many wisdom traditions remind us that only a fool would think that he *is* wise. The Fool reminds us that we know so little in the wider scheme of life. Always be prepared to listen, learn and adapt.
- A King's fool was the only person in a historical court who could be **honest** with the King. Through his joking and humour, truths were spoken. As a great fan of Radio 4 political humour, I am aware that it often contains more truth than the news. Watch out for people 'jokingly' commenting; perhaps they are testing their truths to see how they will be received.
- **Fooling around** (mucking around), **playing**, perhaps seen as **unconventional** and **not fitting in** as expected? This is when you stop doing what you are supposed to do, what society thinks you ought to do, what you are conditioned to think you should do. It is a way of **breaking free** and validating that you are 'just fooling around', yet often when we are most **spontaneous**, most **trusting**, most playful is when we really discover our **authenticity**. (Though often much of the world will think you are slightly mad.)

The Fool's number 0: This marks The Fool as slightly apart, separate from the rest of the Major Arcana. Many people refer to the Major Arcana as 'The Fool's Journey', suggesting that the fool represents us and the Major Arcana the stages and experiences of our life.

I also think of the Major Arcana as a psychological toolbox. I am never The Emperor, but as I organise my diary and accounts I use his persona to offer me the self-discipline and organisational skills I need. I remain the fool, clothed as an Emperor. Perhaps real madness happens when we think we *are* the Emperor, or whichever Tarot persona we are clothed with.

The number 0 is pure potential, reminding us that at this stage our future is unformed. This is the freedom we reach when we break free of the 'shoulds and 'oughts', both from others and ourselves. The number 0 is no-thing. It is also a wild number, like a

wild card (most often the Joker) in many card games. A wild card adopts the numerical value of whichever card it is placed with.

Our pure potential is shaped dramatically by our experiences, so often The Fool must be read by looking at the cards around it. Perhaps moments of true connection happen when we catch a glimpse of the fool (in ourselves or others) without the clothing of the other cards.

There are two sides to this card (as with most):

1. Just go for it! Have faith, trust, and take a risk. I would say this is the most usual message of this card, reminding us that life has a way of working out. Regrets are more often about what we did not do.
2. Risk taker! Look before you leap, slow down a little. Sometimes, perhaps when combined with other risk-taker cards (e.g. the Knights of Swords or Wands) or difficult cards), The Fool reminds us that this is one risk too many, or perhaps the timing is not yet right.

As with all Tarot readings, your intuition, card combinations, and the spread will help you decide which of these messages The Fool is offering.

The fool's dog? It is white like the sun, and his rose. Through my work as a shaman, I like to think of the dog as the fool's power animal; his guide as he navigates life's complex journey.

In a reading:

- Be open to possibilities. Listen for your intuition.
- Live life to the full. Try to live in the moment, without trying to understand.
- Be prepared for things not going the way you expected. Always expect the unexpected when The Fool is around. Throw back your head, laugh, and continue with hope.
- Be yourself. Remember who you really are and accept it. Just be.

