

UFYB 176: Tarot Cards, Thought Work & Mysticism with Jessica Dore



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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Welcome to *Unf*ck Your Brain*, the only podcast that teaches you how to use psychology, feminism, and coaching, to rewire your brain and get what you want in life. And now here's your host, Harvard Law School grad, feminist rockstar, and master coach, Kara Loewentheil.

Hello my chickens. I am so excited for this episode today and for you to hear the conversation that I have with the one and only Jessica Dore, who as you'll hear I've been calling Dore in my brain this whole time. But before we get to that, I need to tell you something else important, which is that today is the day.

I guess it depends when you're listening to this, but if you're listening to this the day it comes out, today is the day that for the first time, you can sign up to do deep, deep body image work with me. This is the first time that you have been able to take a body image exclusive class with me.

So starting today, we are opening registration to the Unf*ck Your Body Image course. The course does not describe it. It is the Unf*ck Your Body Image journey of a lifetime. The Unf*ck Your Body Image amazing rollercoaster. The Unf*ck Your Body Image - I was going to say paradise, but we do a lot of work on recognizing that life always involves positive and negative emotion around here.

But maybe paradise is involving positive and negative emotion. Anyway, some of you are going to - if you're listening to this right when this comes out, you're going to be on the webinar with me that I'm doing later today to teach my three best body image hacks. So some of you I'm going to see in a few minutes probably.

But if you missed that webinar, don't worry. You can now sign up directly for the program. This is work that until now has only been available inside The Clutch. You had to be a Clutch member to do this work on your body

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image and to get access to all of these deeper tools and teachings that I have around body image, making peace with your body.

Really body image is not even the right term in some ways because we all know that sort of what you think about your body's appearance goes so much deeper. Really, this course is about deciding what the purpose of your body even is. What your body is for. What your relationship to your body should be like. What you want it to be like.

It's not just how you think about food and how you eat and how you move or don't move and all of the kind of drama you have around exercise and how your body looks in the mirror, but it's also how you live in your body as a home and the complicated relationship that you have with your body. All of the kind of fears and anxieties and resentments that we have about our bodies, especially if our bodies aren't behaving the way we want them to.

We dig deep into all of that with really powerful thought work tools. And until now, like I said, you could only do that in The Clutch. But this work is so important and everyone needs to have access to it if they want it, even if they're not in The Clutch. Obviously being in The Clutch is amazing, so if you're not in The Clutch I still don't understand you.

But you can now sign up just to do this work with me. So if you are interested in that, you've been thinking about it, you've been wanting to work on your body image, do not delay ma poulette, my chickens. When I have done these in The Clutch, they've sold out in 24 hours. And we're expecting it'll probably fill up in a couple of days.

So go to unfuckyourbrain.com/bodyfreedom. All one word. unfuckyourbrain.com/bodyfreedom. Again, all one word. Or if you want, we will text you a link to all the information. So you can just text your email address to +13479971784 and just use the code BODYFREEDOM when

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you get prompted. You'll get a text saying what's the code word, and you text back BODYFREEDOM, all one word.

Then we will text you a link straight to all the information so you don't have to remember it. Or you can go to unfuckyourbrain.com/bodyfreedom, all one word. Okay, I think that's what you need to know. Like I said, hit pause and go there now if you're really interested because it will fill up fast. It will sell out quickly.

Alright, without further ado, now I want you to hear all about my amazing conversation with Jessica Dore. We're going to talk about tarot cards and thought work and mysticism and therapy and a whole bunch of amazing juicy topics. Take a listen.

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Kara: Hello my chickens. I have a very exciting podcast guest for you today and conversation that some of you when hearing what's about to come may start to be like, has Kara lost her mind? Is this podcast now about woo-ness and astrology and witches? And I just want you to take a deep breath. I am still me.

And some of you are going to be like, finally, she's finally admitting what we all knew all along, which is that it's all about the woo. Neither of those things is happening. Just come on this journey with me. It's going to be amazing, I promise. I am speaking to - I just realized that despite working with her for three years, I don't know how to pronounce her last name. I always say it in my head as Jessica Dore, is that right?

Jessica: It's "Door."

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Kara: I'm just connecting to your ancestral lineage is what's happening to the original.

Jessica: Yeah, it means a lot to me.

Kara: You actually might want to try to get a little closer to the mic. You're a little quiet I think.

Jessica: Okay. Like I said, in extreme lounge mode. I'm sinking down into my chair.

Kara: Jessica's doing this interview if the mic will come to her fact. Otherwise, that's it.

Jessica: Right. I'll do it only if - exactly. I literally didn't move out of this chair. And this microphone appeared and the log was put on the fire.

Kara: This is a whole other conversation we have to have about what is happening in your life that you have a band adjusting to your every need in this house. We got on this call for this podcast and I was like, where are you? And she's like, I'm in this house with a band. And I was like, are you recording? And she's like, no, but they are. And I'm by the fire. Just no other explanatory info given. That's just how she rolls. It's all very mysterious. Alright, why don't you introduce yourself? Tell people who are you and what you do.

Jessica: Okay. Yeah. Well, I'm Jessica Dore, as you said.

Kara: Dore.

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Jessica: Oh right, thank you. That's very classic you. Like no, let me tell you how you say your last name. And me, I'm like, nope you're right, that's it.

Kara: Don't let her fool you. She's got a will of steel. It's just hidden behind some nicer manners.

Jessica: But yeah, I'm a tarot reader and that's how we connected. But I think you connected with me maybe because more of - my background is in social work. I have a social work license in Pennsylvania. I have a background in psychology publishing. I've been working in the psychology publishing field for 10 years. So I've just been studying cognitive and behavioral therapies for a long time and incorporating them into my interpretations of the tarot.

So I've kind of tried to weave these things together and that's I guess the basis of my work with tarot and kind of what makes it different than a tarot reader that does sort of fortune telling or more of a divination type practice. That's me.

Kara: Yeah, so tell us a little bit - I think that's true. The one other time I'd had two tarot card readings that were not done by you. And they were both more like, yeah, this is what's going to happen kind of, or this is your year is about this. So interesting because I was just - I told you before I got on this call, I was just teaching the first session of my advanced certification in feminist coaching and I had - I wrote this whole curriculum and then I was having everybody go round and say what stood out to them.

And the vast majority of people, what stood out to them for the first lesson was what I was teaching about mutuality and collaboration in the coaching experience, rather than this sort of top-down hierarchy where the coach is

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like, producing the knowledge that they then tell the client and it's very authority driven.

And I think that's one of the things I find really striking about the way you use tarot is that it's not - I mean, it's definitely not like, let me tell your future. But even like, I've never had a tarot card reading where the person was like, "And you'll meet a horse named Andrew." It wasn't that specific, but it was kind of like, your year will be about this, or about that. And that's not how you approach it at all. So I would love if you could talk a little bit about how you approach the interaction of doing a tarot card reading and what you think the purpose of that process is.

Jessica: Yeah. I mean, I love those words that you use. Mutuality and collaboration. Those are, as you may know, trauma-informed principles.

Kara: I'm secretly trauma-informed. Even though everybody insists that I'm not because I say that you might have some control of your thoughts.

Jessica: Because I did go to social work school, because my background has been in studying and learning about these different psychotherapies and ways of working that really are about relationship and in counseling, one of the first things that you learn when you're learning how to do counseling is advice doesn't help people.

Just giving someone advice, it rarely leads to behavior change. What helps people is asking questions, asking the right questions, giving people the space to have their own realizations. So I've really been influenced by those kinds of principles in the way that I use cards. And I also just find it a lot more interesting.

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So I use the cards kind of more as a way to ask questions than to give answers. And I find that that - it's more fun, it's more interesting. It's easier in a lot of ways as a reader because it requires less of me. I remember when I was in graduate school and I was doing therapy and in a clinic for eating disorders, one of the therapists there who was supervising me said you should never be working harder than the client.

And I thought, oh, that's an interesting idea. And I was like, I'm going to take that and use it in my tarot card readings too. And it's like, people don't like walking away from something feeling like I've sat there and listened for the whole - I don't. I want to feel like I'm doing something and having realizations.

Kara: That's such a good - don't work harder than the client. Because I do think that especially those of us who are drawn to helper professions, it's like both positive motivation and then there's just the ego dopamine hit. One of the things that I was teaching this week also was about not coaching a client to resolution all the time because that feels fun and easy. It feels good to you, you know what's going on, you get this dopamine hit, you get to seem like you're a magic wizard.

But they actually - and they feel better in the moment because they're talking to you and you're reflecting back that there's nothing wrong. It's not like it's fake, but it's just temporary because they haven't earned that understanding themselves. So it's like a flash of insight that then kind of dissipates.

But I think a lot of us are like, okay, well, I'll do all the work. Let me show you the thing and show you again and try to get you to understand, and I love that idea that you need to be working equally hard or probably ideally you want your client to be working a little harder than you are. I mean, it's their life. They need to be showing up in that way.

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Jessica: Right. I mean, you think about why there are such high levels of burnout too in these fields, in the so-called helping professions. It's like, because it's a lot. It's a lot already just to be able to hold space for somebody. So how can you minimize the amount of energy that you're exerting too just for sustainability reasons that if you can be smart, work smarter, not harder, which I'm sure both you and I, as you can see again, I'm over here lounging.

Kara: Yeah. You can hear the fire crackling behind her. That's what that is.

Jessica: I worked earlier.

Kara: It's a fireside chat with Jessica Dore. I'm just here to facilitate.

Jessica: Yeah, right. I love that.

Kara: Well, I think that same - the burnout also in that over-coaching or trying to get people to - it's like the point of therapy or coaching is not to necessarily feel better right then. So we're like, okay, trying to get them to that place, as opposed to the most important work I think you can do as anybody in a counseling position on some level is like, get comfortable with the discomfort of somebody else not being happy. Being able to be in that space with them.

Jessica: Totally. Another thing that I learned in social work school was this idea of the righting reflex, which I'm not sure if you're familiar with that concept but it's the reflex that you have to make something right. To fix something for someone right away. It's a human thing to want to make people's problems go away, I'm sure, but watching that, being mindful of it that we might not - we probably aren't going to find an answer to - people

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come to a tarot reader with sometimes really intense psychological conflicts.

And it's just like, I've been in this unhappy relationship for 10 years or job for 10 years and it's just like, it's a bit arrogant to expect that you're going to come - oh, surely I'll pull some cards and then you'll know and you'll have the tools that you need. That's just not realistic. So being able to be able to hang in that space - and now I'm almost too good at it. I'm like, well, we might not even have anything cohesive at the end of this conversation.

Kara: I have calls with Jessica and she's like, "I mean, I pulled some cards if you want to look at them and tell me what you think it's fine. I'm here in front of the fire."

Jessica: Right.

Kara: Do you have any thoughts? No. Okay, this session is over. That's obviously not what happens. So I'm curious if you think of yourself as a tarot card reader. I think of you as a philosophy mystic I think.

Jessica: I love that.

Kara: If you follow Jessica, my favorite thing is I just love all the different parts of my life. Scrolling through my Instagram stories is like, people I knew from law school having very normal standard lives, there's inspirational life coach stuff, all of these kill the rich and eat them people I know from my old leftie days. Jessica pops in and she's like, yesterday I was speaking to a deer about the blah, blah, blah. And there's like, three slides of some sort of gnostic spirituality you're reading. Such a wonderful mix. But I would love to hear a little bit about kind of what do you think your work is fundamentally about?

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Jessica: Yeah, it's a great question. And I like that idea of being a philosophy mystic for sure because I do think of myself a bit more as a thinker, as an intellectual, even an independent scholar or academic than a healer. I'm not a therapist. A lot of people think that I am because I write about therapies all the time. Recently I've been really inspired by this concept of negative work, which sounds amazing off the bat, right? Like does that mean that you...

Kara: Don't work? Not work? Is it lying down? I like lying down.

Jessica: Exactly what I thought. But it's kind of this idea that if you have access to resources, tools, skills and things that you know work to help people, it's sort of this idea that you make them as widely available as possible for free. That you don't take the traditional routes within the institutions that make those things hard to access, really sort of esoteric in a way, like therapy.

It's this secret - a lot of these ideas, they're like secret knowledge that are tucked away. You have to have a therapist or you have to know the right book or the right thing and I just find that so not adequate. So I think a lot of my work is about trying to share information, skills, concepts, ideas that I've had access to, that I've been able to learn about, primarily through my six years that I spent at New Harbinger, which is a psychology and self-help book publisher where I was reading clinical psychology manuals for years.

I wasn't a therapist, wasn't in the mental health field other than that and just learning and learning and learning and realizing that those secrets that were in those books, even though they were meant for therapists, I was getting access to them and they were changing my life. And I thought why can't we talk about these things in other areas? And I mean, your work is a great example too. The way that your podcast and the work that you do publicly, it's life-changing. And then people can sort of choose their...

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Kara: Yeah. And there's no ball hidden. It's not like oh, I mean yeah, of course if you join The Clutch there's additional tools or exercises or whatever and you can get more support. But it's never like, okay, I'm just going to teach you three quarters of what you need but the real secret is inside, behind the pay wall. It's all of that knowledge being shared.

And I think there's such a - it's such a scarcity mindset to also think like, if I give everything away for free than I won't be able to make a living, I won't have a business and people won't pay me. And it's like, no, of course, there's always people who want - number one, just fall in love with it and want more, or who want additional help, or who want personalized support, which is just literally impossible for me to provide to - the podcast has been downloaded 15 million times. I can't personally provide free support to everybody. It's not physically possible.

But it's all out. I'm not hiding anything. This is how we do it. If you want help doing it, you can always come to me. So it's also disrupting this idea that I mean, one of the most powerful things that I think I learned from my coach, from my teacher Brooke Castillo, which was so different from how you're raised to think, at least how I was raised to think, which is a very scarcity mindset people - understandably, given the historical trauma was just very - the more you give away, the more you get in return, which was not - that flow of the more I teach, the more clients I get, the more money I make that I actually able then to teach even more people.

It's this sort of virtuous cycle as opposed to a vicious cycle. And not that everybody wants to be running a big business or making money, but it's just I think important to be like, giving stuff away is not only for people who - demystifying or popularizing or whatever this work is like, it's not like if you want to be a missionary, which has its own problematic history, that's what you do, or you have a business. It's both.

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So when you sit down to do a reading, I think we're going to do a little three-card reading for people so they can experience what I experience. I should have booked my next six years of sessions with you before I show everybody how this works and you get all booked up. But what do you think your role is?

So you're somebody, you learn about this stuff on your own, then you did go an institutional route in a way of going to get your degree in social work. Your clinical social work degree. So you could have become a therapist. And then you were like, maybe not.

Jessica: Yeah. Well, it was just the timing honestly. It wasn't even necessarily like a super intentional decision. My work on social media and my daily card pulls on Twitter, those things started gaining popularity while I was in graduate school. And so I was oh, this is different, and then once I finished grad school I was working on a book proposal and I was just like, okay, I don't have time to get a job as a therapist somewhere even though that was always what my goal had been.

But as I really started to do that work of thinking about how can my - the skills that I have and the finite amount of energy that I have, what's sort of going to be the best use of that. And even though I had a lot of thoughts about well, you did all this work, you got this master's degree, you should get a job as a therapist, you should do this, you should do that, I was just like, it doesn't make sense for me.

And then I think yeah, for some of the reasons I just described, it hasn't felt like the right fit. And I have felt much more like I'm someone who wants to work with ideas and write books and then yeah, I love the one-on-one sessions with people too.

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Kara: Yeah. I was thinking the other day that when I was growing up, this is so hilarious, but when I was growing up, I used to think I just want to be a public intellectual. Why can't I just think about things and tell people what I think about them? And why isn't that a living? I was like, I feel like in Europe that's more of a thing, but of course - there are public intellectuals. They mostly have whatever, PhDs or law degrees or professors. But now a few months ago I was like, wait, that is what I do now.

Jessica: And I do have a law degree. You.

Kara: Yeah, it's not in the New York Times, but who gives a shit? It's such a more democratized version where I'm like, I can just be directly to people. I'm on this whole kick right now, I'm going to do a whole episode about it, about how self-help is just philosophy and philosophy is self-help. That sort of things that are targeted to men in elite institutions are very serious philosophy and ethic questions.

And then because women are doing it on the internet, it's like, oh, self-help. But good philosophy has always been like, what - there's obviously different branches of philosophy but they're basically like what is the world. There's this epistemological philosophy, like what the fuck is happening, is this real, do we know what's going on. And then there's ethics, like how do you be a good person, and then there's practical philosophy, what kind of life should we - these are all the same questions that we talk about in coaching or in mysticism all the time.

Jessica: Yeah, that's true.

Kara: Alright, shall we do a reading? What do we think?

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Jessica: Yeah, let's do it. Well alright, do you have a question? Do you have something you want to focus on? Remember what happened last time.

Kara: I'm supposed to be working. I thought you would just do all the work.

Jessica: Nope. I'm just going to sit here. I'm going to pull the cards and then I'm just going to sit here in silence like I usually do.

Kara: I do feel like our last reading you were even less directive than usual.

Jessica: I've accepted my role with you.

Kara: Usually they cohere and at the end of the last session we were like, well, alright then, I guess that's it, which is good for me because I'm always wanting to turn things into a narrative. Yeah, it's a good question. I was supposed to come up with a question. This will be an interesting one.

Okay, I get this question a lot and I'm experiencing it in a certain way, which is sort of like, okay, when you learn that you could be happy with any kind of outcome and you're wanting things without attachment, what if there's more than one thing that you could see being legitimately happy with and how do you sort of decide that?

So I'm thinking right now about my relationships and my relationship structure and feeling like, I think there are multiple ways of building this life that I could be happy with and at the same time I'm not someone who's very comfortable just being like, so we'll see what happens. And it feels like picking one kind of has to happen so I can look for what I'm looking for and communicate what I'm looking for. All of that. And so I think figuring out - I

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think that is something that comes up for me that I think might be a good thing to do a reading on.

Jessica: Okay, cool. Yeah, I mean I think that's a great question. So just to make sure that I understand what your question is. It's like, once you get to a point where you sort of have an understanding that you have - and this is not dependent upon a particular outcome or even a choice that you make. Is that right?

Kara: Yeah. Not an external choice. It's dependent on how you decide to think about it. Yeah, mental choice, but not like...

Jessica: Not like if I choose road A versus road B.

Kara: Have this job or this job, this relationship or that one.

Jessica: So once you recognize that then sort of what are the ways that you make decisions?

Kara: Yeah.

Jessica: I mean, that would be - isn't that kind of - I know you're not saying that.

Kara: Yeah, I think it's like one step - the next step of that, which is one of the things I teach that I think is really true is often we do know what we want. We tell ourselves we don't know what we want because we think we can't have it or we're scared of it or we think we're socialized to not want certain - so I think when you learn to not have that attachment to certain outcomes, I think often stuff does bubble up that is what you want.

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So it's not so much being like I don't know anything what I would want, but more like I've come up with two possible things, both of which I think would be great, amazing, they would just be different. How do I pick which one I want?

When you sort of feel like, okay, I do need to make a decision here and I think the way I teach it is very analytical, which is just pick one and see what happens. But I'm curious to sort of see if this more - and I maybe should have said this at the beginning. One of the reasons that I enjoy doing this work with you that I think is very complementary to thought work in my experience is that my experience of talking with you about the cards is really - it's like a more creative version of doing thought work in some ways with both the benefits and disadvantages.

Creativity has some benefits and disadvantages and analysis has some benefits and disadvantages. So I like them together. But it feels sort of it's like a way of talking about thought patterns and other things, but in a more visually and allusive way. So I think it'd be interesting to think about - I know how I teach it, which is just you make a decision, it doesn't matter. But it'd be interesting to tease that out and think about that in a different context.

Jessica: Yeah, definitely. And I love these cards for this question.

Kara: So what do we have? Tell the people. They can't see it.

Jessica: Yeah. So we have three cards. They are the five of wands, the ace of pentacles, and the queen of swords. And do you want me to - do you such a good job of describing the illustrations but...

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Kara: Last time we had a call I almost - Jessica fell out of her chair because I had so much to say about the chariot. Well, let's just say first, I don't know if this is proprietary but probably not given our whole conversation. Do you want to explain what you think each suit - how you use the suits?

Jessica: Yeah, sure. So there's four suits in tarot for people who are not familiar. Just like a playing card deck where there's the clubs and spades and diamonds and what not, except in tarot, there's four suits. They are the wands, the cups, the pentacles, and the swords.

And the wands - well, the wands are the most weird. So I'll actually start with the more easy to understand ones. The swords would be thoughts. So when you're talking about thought work, when you're talking about making a decision, when you're talking about narrative, you're talking about approaching something from an intellectual place, telling a story, reframing, restructuring, any of that kind of stuff, swords, that's the domain.

The cups have to do with emotions. So generally and in my work I think about them that way as well, so that's feelings, emotions, and such. The pentacles I think about as having to do with behavior. And that's the little bit I diverge a bit from the traditional tarot interpretations that talk about pentacles as having to do with career and finance.

The reason that I associate them with behavior is of course because my background in studying behavioral therapies, which really as you know, is about understanding the interaction between thoughts, feelings, and behavior. How your thoughts and feelings can, if you're not aware of them, can create certain behaviors, patterns, and how you can use them to support behavior change.

And the pentacle is connected to the earth element. Each of the four suits are connected to an element, earth, air, fire, water. And so I think the

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pentacles is most related to behavior because the body would be connected to the earth element.

And then lastly, the wands would be energy. And we've talked a lot about this and it's really interesting to talk to you about that one because of your work with thoughts and cognition. The wands, I was actually just revising my manuscript for my book that's coming out later this year and my editor has had the most notes by far on the writings about the wands. She's like, "I'm not sure I totally understand."

She says things in a very diplomatic way. I'm not sure I'm totally understanding what these wands are, can you explain to me what is energy? And it's been really good for me because I've had to clarify my understanding of what that is, but we'll say for this purpose it's anything that is not a thought, a feeling, a behavior.

Kara: This is so interesting though because I can't believe I've never somehow put this together, which is great we had this conversation. But the way that the coaching model I teach that I learned from my teacher is CTFAR, so it's like a way of breaking down.

So the core of it is a differently worded version of the cognitive behavioral therapy. CBT is what? It's thought, emotion, behavior, and we call it thought, feeling, action. Same thing. But then there's the circumstance. So we spend a little more time on really distinguishing between what's outside of you and your thought. But then the last line is the result, which is what you create in your life through those behaviors.

And it's interesting, I have not really thought about before but what you have is there's the thought, the feeling, the action line, and then you call - and I've been thinking of energy as being more like either like a variant on emotion or off to the side somehow, just a different whole paradigm. But I

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also think there's maybe - I wonder how the readings would be different for me if I was thinking about the wands as being about results, not in the like, I've achieved this project and checked off this thing or whatever, but like what is the whole experience that I'm creating kind of being in the world through all of these other levels coming together.

Jessica: That's interesting. Yeah, I mean I think it can be that, it can be - I think about the wands as having to do with drives. That there's the thing that sort of - is that a thought? Is that a feeling? It's something that if you're not conscious of it, it can be - in your work, I feel like I always say this to you, I don't understand a lot of - I know that there are similarities and stuff because I've never taken any of your classes or anything, I don't know. I'm looking forward to your book. Did you say you're writing a book?

Kara: Yeah, I'm working on the book.

Jessica: Yeah. So I can't wait for that because then I'll really understand and I won't say so many annoying things.

Kara: I don't want to blow your mind but I do have a podcast.

Jessica: Right, I know. But there's so many episodes. I get overwhelmed.

Kara: There's just no way to learn what you do.

Jessica: Yeah, I know, exactly. Even though what were we just talking about? Even though I've worked with you so many times but I'm like, finally you'll have a book and I'll finally get access to this information that you're keeping hidden from me, I don't know why. Yeah, but anyway, I don't know where I just...

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Kara: Who knows? So the wands are energy slash maybe there's some way to connect them to the result line we haven't figured out before that is a side note that occurred to me. So our cards, we have?

Jessica: So the five of wands, and the image you see five people, they each have a wand and they're all kind of - it looks like they're sort of play fighting. They're all going in a different direction. I'm curious...

Kara: Or trying to erect a structure but they're doing it the wrong way.

Jessica: Oh yeah, totally. How do you - I'm curious to hear from you. I guess this is how I read. When you were saying the result line, or the result domain, what comes up around this? For me, the immediate association was well, it could be - if the result of all of this stuff that you were talking about is it could be anything and it could be a mess.

Kara: I guess when we talk about the result in the work that I do, a result is always specific to a certain model you're doing. So it's like, what is thinking that thought and having that feeling and that behavior produce for you? What results does that create in your life? And so I think when I look at this card, which is a bunch of people - we'll put these in the show notes.

But it's like, five people and they have these giant wands, which look like basically big sticks with some plants growing out of them a little bit. Bit sticks with leaves. Those are the wands. And like, one or two of them are up in the air but then a couple of them have them crossed with each other. It sort of looks to me like it's a result in process. They're trying to build or create something.

But they're not really - they're also wearing color coordinated outfits, which I think is funny. They're a little troop of some kind. But it sort of looks to me

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like - for some reason when I look at this card, I don't see disorganization. I see something in process, which actually totally relates to my question, which is like, it's not a decision about I'm going to have this life or that life. It's like, where am I going to direct my process right now, as opposed to this is a final decision or this is a strategic element on a plan.

It's like if what you're focused on is your process as a person, what is your emotional growth or what is your development of just your own consciousness of your human life and trying to be more skillful at navigating it. Any decision you make is just - I think thinking more about - this is one of the I think insights of coaching, I'm sure therapy too, especially for very type A people like me, moving away from an emphasis on what is the outcome to how do you want the process to feel, which of course I fucking teach all the time but didn't occur to me until now was relevant to my question.

Jessica: I love that because you also have the ace of pentacles in the middle, which is the - the aces are the one of the suit. And the pentacle, again, I mentioned has to do with behavior. But also with the earth element, so it's grounding and really does have to do with being present to the current circumstances of your life and what you're talking about, which is being very process-focused and not results-focused.

This future thing that I'm imagining, that's beautiful, but also what are you trying to learn right now in this moment or do right now in this moment. The pentacle feels like a real symbol for me, it feels like a symbol of what it looks like to really pare your awareness down to what's directly in front of you, what does your next five minutes, 10 minutes look like, what are you trying to create and experience.

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Kara: That's interesting because when you think about the ace, so I think the ace is the top, right? It's the most advanced in that field or is it the least?

Jessica: Well, I don't know that it really goes in terms of most to least. I think it's the one - as you can see in the image, in this deck, which is illustrated by Pamela Colman Smith, the hand is coming out of this guy. There's an indication that this is like a - I'm getting a little bit too far into...

Kara: Be as weird as you want. Go for it.

Jessica: Okay. So I mean, it's not that weird actually. It's kind of just saying you're given the gift. All the aces, it's like okay, you're born into a human body and you're given these four capacities. You're given the capacity to think, to feel, to experience energy, and to behave. To move your physical body in certain ways.

And the ace of pentacles is this reminder that you've been given this gift, you have choices to take particular actions, but part of the work that you do and what you see laid out in the pentacle suit is learning how to occupy the body in the present moment, which is not something that most of us know how to do. We knew how to do it once upon a time and then we forget.

Kara: The reason I ask because I know sometimes you talk about the page, the queen, the king as being kind of beginner. So the reason I was thinking about that is it's interesting to think about the idea that what we think is mastery of action is something big and ambitious or long range, and that it would be - it's like a subversion of that to think no, the true mastery of action is the next five minutes, it's like being extremely present in making a decision about your actions, being present and grounded in your body. What if that is the pinnacle of being in a body, as opposed to the pinnacle of being like, I can build a pyramid.

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Jessica: Totally. This is reminding me of something that I read and I'm going to totally butcher it but it's by David Whyte who is this writer from the pacific northwest I think and I think that's his name. I hope it is. He said this thing about ambition and how kind of as soon as you have an ambition, it's already sort of no longer a living thing. You're just sort of deadened moving from point A to point B because you have your eye on this thing and you're moving through it, just not always aware and present to the contingencies of the present moment.

And I do think exactly just to reiterate what you're saying, I think that's exactly right. That part of the gift of having - we have the ability to be in the present moment. We have the equipment for it, we have the system for it, we have the tools for it, but it requires - I think it requires practice.

Kara: Yeah, and that's also - this reminds me of something I just did in Clutch College which is this live online event. And one of the things that I was talking about was we're so freaked out by our emotions, but your body knows how to have an emotion. It's built for that. Just like it knows how to digest and it knows how to sleep. Your body knows how to have an emotion. The problem is your brain.

The problem is the freakout about the emotion, the story about the emotion, the resistance to the emotion. All of that. We think we can't handle them but your body is a physical animal totally capable of handling an emotion. It's your mind that's the problem. So yeah, there's something about that sort of going back to you're born knowing how to do this. You have the ability to be present, you have the ability to allow emotion, you have the ability to have a truly fully embodied experience.

But it's interesting that the next card is the king of swords, which is like - is it the king or the queen? It's the queen. Because I'm a queen obviously. That's the queen of swords, which is the queen of intellect.

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Jessica: Yeah, I know, that's definitely the you card. But what you're saying though, visually, the queen of swords in this deck is the clouds actually I have the page right here, it just happens to be at the top of the deck. But the page to the queen, if we're talking about things in terms of developing levels of mastery, the page you can see is these clouds are internal events. They're emotions, for instance, as you were saying. So you can see all these emotions happening and the page is very reactive. The sword is drawn, the body posture is ready to fight, ready to swing.

Kara: And the clouds are all over the place on the card.

Jessica: Yes, exactly. The clouds are all over the place. The queen on the other hand, there's a lot of clouds. It's not an absence of clouds. And they're all at the body level, like you said. The body knows how to do that. There's no - she's not freaking out. Her head is just above the clouds and her sword is in a resting position but ready to go if it needs to be, to make a decision, but she also has a hand out, a welcoming...

Kara: I see it as she's tamed the cloud. She put out her hand and she was like, alright clouds, calm down and come gather around me and then all the clouds are like, okay.

Jessica: There's a real - this is a great example of a sovereignty. Not just intellectually but behaviorally. I think about this idea of behavioral sovereignty a lot that that sort of means that you can - I don't know that that's a real thing. It's one of those terms, I think I made it up, but someone else...

Kara: I think if we make it up it's a real thing.

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Jessica: Okay, cool. But the question being like did I make that up or did I hear it somewhere? I think I made it up. I think I made it up. But she has that too. She's even - her cape has clouds all over it.

Kara: I know, I was about to say that. She's got clouds on her cape.

Jessica: She's just totally comfortable with that. And people think of the queen of swords as not being particularly emotional, but it's not the case. She is. It's just that she really understands how to not let the behavior, the thoughts, and anything else be at the service of the emotions.

Kara: She does look a little grim in the face though.

Jessica: She does. That's true. Totally. She's got a frown.

Kara: She's got a frown. So that's why she's not - if she was the empress level, she would know she could also be happy while doing all of this. But I do think you know what actually, that frown and that sword makes sense to me because she is allowing - it's almost like maybe she's actually the intermediary step. It's like, okay, she can have all the clouds, she's able to allow those emotions, but she's still sort of brandishing her intellect at them and looking kind of stern and maybe the next level, maybe the empress of swords, if there was such a thing, would be like, no clouds and a smile.

Not that the clouds would be lower, not that we're supposed to get rid of our feelings, but there's something about this where it feels a little bit like I think sometimes when we learn how to process an emotion, or allow our emotions, I think it's normal and natural, but we start out doing it as a means to an end or so that I can then change my thinking.

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And then the next level of it I think is being like, well, or the emotions become like clouds in the sky. They come and they go. Yeah, you might change some of your thoughts, but it becomes much more - you don't feel like you have to be brandishing your brain at everything kind of, or you don't have to feel like you have to be on guard.

It sort of feels like she's like, okay, everything is calm and peaceful for now, but I have my sword up just in case, as opposed to like, maybe really the empress would be like, she's just swimming in the clouds and everything's totally - she's happy about it.

Jessica: Yeah. Totally. So what do you think in terms of...?

Kara: We totally lost touch of the original question. This is interesting.

Jessica: I know. But I felt like the cards were so great for the question really.

Kara: Right. Well I think it was like, it's not about making which decision. It's like, not about thinking - I've been thinking of it as well, of course I need to make a decision about which version of the life I want so that I can move towards it and build it. It's very action-oriented but in this long-term way. And very like, I'll have a strategy and go create it.

And then I think what these cards suggest is there's another way of doing that, which is to be much more in the present and the process and let things develop more organically. What feels - what does the next five minutes feel like? What action feels right to take in the next five minutes, in the next 10 minutes? How can I be more - but in order to do that I think you have to have done the work to be able to allow and not be reactive to your emotions.

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Otherwise what's happening is you're just taking a bunch of constant actions that are reactive to your emotion. So having that long-term vision is important when you're very emotionally reactive because it's what keeps you from blowing up the house. But maybe it's like once you've learned how to be less emotionally reactive and not be in a rush, that's when you're able to sort of take things at a slower pace and not have to think so big picture all the time. It's almost like you have to get big picture in order to get grounded and granular again.

Jessica: Yeah, totally.

Kara: I feel like this is what other people do when they're high.

Jessica: What we're doing right now?

Kara: Yeah. Not read tarot cards, but this is the kind of conversation two sober people have when they're life coaches and tarot card readers that other people would be like, maybe it's like you got to go big before you go small.

Jessica: Yeah, totally. And then the other person says yeah totally, like how I'm doing.

Kara: Yeah, totally, that makes sense. Pass the bong.

Jessica: It's so true. So true. That's us.

Kara: Yeah, I like it. I do feel like a lot of what's coming up in my - in coaching for me these days and in this is that sort of like, less about the goal, more about how you want the process to feel, which I often teach as yes, set the goal and then the journey has to feel like you want it to or the

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destination isn't - the destination is going to feel like the journey, so you have to learn to love the process.

But I think this is a next level, which is like, what if you actually don't even have a goal or aren't even going to set it? You're actually just going to think about how do I want to feel right now, what do I want to experience right now, sort of as opposed to setting the goal and building a ladder to get there. It's more like, just going out the door and taking each thing as it comes, which it's like every teaching, you have to know where you are.

If you've never set a goal before, then don't take this as a good reason to never set a goal, but if you're very good then you need to set one and try that. But if like me you're extremely good at setting and achieving goals and very goal-oriented, then the growth may be in not having a goal, not being on the path to an outcome and just experiencing in some part of your life what happens if I just take what seems like the right next step without knowing where I'm going.

Jessica: Yeah. I mean I think you're touching on something so interesting that I think has a lot to do with the pentacles because the pentacle, what is a pentacle? It's a coin. And so it's a symbol of value. A symbol of something that, for us culturally, that means you can trade it for things that you want.

And so it's like, the ace is an interesting card in the context of somebody who is maybe redefining their relationship to, like you said, when someone is having to do some hard work or do some hard things, learn how to make behavior change, learn how to make big changes, changes to their thoughts and things like that, it's often necessary, like you said, to have, what are my values and what are the goals that are connected to those values.

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But once you learn how to do that and you no longer sort of need to know what makes doing the hard work worth it, then you're coming back to this place of like, having to redefine your relationship to what your values are. Is it having things that you're striving for? Or is it learning how to appreciate the things that you've cultivated, the things that you've made for yourself too with all the goal setting that you've done? And I think that's really part of that whole idea of being present to this five minutes and the next five minutes.

Five minutes ago, I guess metaphorically, it may have really served you to have longer term goals. Right now, maybe it doesn't. Maybe it gets in the way. So being attentive to those shifts and being willing to renegotiate what is valuable to you is important.

Kara: It's also interesting, we have a one, a five, and a queen. It's like the whole spectrum kind of. Alright, thank you for sharing your expertise with us. Is there anything else you think we should know about tarot and obviously you should tell us where to find you and your work. But have we not talked about anything that you feel like we should talk about?

Jessica: No. I think this was great and it was fun to do this, and I appreciate you being vulnerable to bring a tarot reader onto your podcast. I know you can do that and you have the trust and respect of people who work with you and who listen to you and who come to you and trust you, and it means a lot. When I was coming out of - transitioning out of psychology publishing, starting to write about tarot, I had a lot of fear around being taken seriously by serious people.

Kara: Legal academic to life coach. Once you do that, I mean, that's why I'm like, a tarot card reader, I mean, I went from - I was like, I'm going to be a law professor, just kidding, I'm going to be a life coach.

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Jessica: But you do very smart work. You know what I mean? I don't need to say that to you. But you know that. You do very smart work and it's not woo-woo. It's not like we're saying all these vague things and no one knows what we're talking about. And I think of myself similarly, that I really have tried to ground the tarot in some things that I think are really practical and really useful and helpful. So anyway, I appreciate your being able to see that and all the work we've done together. This was really fun.

Kara: Yeah, I only got time for pragmatists. I don't have time for - I got a lot of work to do. So where can people find you if they want to learn more?

Jessica: Yeah, so my website, which is jessicadore.com. I guess that's my...

Kara: Spelled Dore.

Jessica: Dore, yeah. And then I'm @thejessicadore on social media, Twitter and Instagram.

Kara: Don't accept any substitutes. No fake Jessica Dore's.

Jessica: Exactly. And yeah, that's it. And I teach classes and stuff if people are interested in tarot and how to read cards and the way that I read them and otherwise, I just post writings about the cards and things like that.

Kara: And there is such a deep well. This is like, 0.2% of the amount of thinking that Jessica has done about tarot cards and mysticism and myth and psychology and like, so definitely go follow her, read her stuff, buy her book when it comes out.

Jessica: Thank you.

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Kara: Alright, thanks for coming.

Jessica: Yeah, thanks for having me.

Kara: Alright chickens, go pick up a tarot deck. See what you think. I'll see those of you who survived this journey next week.

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