

“Parsifal's Wheel”

A Celtic Cross Variation

Card # 10
The Outcome

“This Crowns Him”

Card # 5
The Present

“End of the Matter”

Card # 9
Positive Factors
(Root of Self-
Motivation)

“This Covers Him”

Card # 4
The Recent Past

Significator

Card #1
The Heart of
the Matter

Card #2
Major Motivators

“This Inspires Him”

Card # 6
The Near Future

Card # 8
Clarifying Factors
(Situational and
Interpersonal)

“This is Behind Him”

“This Crosses Him”

“This Is Before Him”

“This Redefines Him”

Card # 3
The Distant Past

Card # 7
Negative Factors
(Root of Self-
Limitation))

“This Is Beneath Him”

“This Holds Him Back”

Development of the Matter

Querent's Situation

Parsifal's Wheel: A Celtic Cross Variation

General Layout and Guidelines for Reading

The "wheel" metaphor comes from Eden Gray's method as published in *The Tarot Revealed*.

The Significator card, if used, lies at the "hub" of the wheel.

Cards 1 and 2 - the covering and crossing cards (here called "The Heart of the Matter" and "Major Motivators") - show the "environment of the question."

Card 3 at the bottom signifies historical aspects of the matter (the "distant past" or factors that are no longer subject to change).

Card 4 sits to the left and represents the recent past, which may still be actively shaping the querent's experience of the situation.

Card 5 - the "crowning" card at the top - shows the "present," which is the realm of possibilities and opportunities where emerging trends and the range of available options first become visible.

Card 6 at the right describes the "near future," suggesting what the querent will have to work with going forward.

This clockwise flow mirrors the diurnal motion of the Sun, from midnight (distant past, Card 3), through dawn (recent past, Card 4), then high noon (present, Card 5) and on to close of day (near future, Card 6).

Cards 1 and 2 show how things stand at the moment, including both underlying environmental factors (Card 1) and major challenges or opportunities (Card 2). The time-line begins with Card 3, which provides an historical perspective. Cards 4 through 6 are read as a continuum rather than as discrete blocks of time, since it isn't always easy to see where one phase leaves off and the next one begins; one flows into the other, the recent past informs the present and the present presages the near future. The "development of the matter" is the process by which the scope of the situation becomes clearer as it unfolds over the course of the reading.

Cards 7 through 9 reflect the querent's grasp of the matter as it evolves beyond the initial outlook (Card 6). They show responses to the situation as it takes shape and begins to impact the querent's life, ranging from confronting and conquering obstacles to regaining optimism and momentum, either encouraged or undermined by external influences. "What holds him back?" (self-limiting attitudes and behaviors - uncertainties, anxieties, lack of confidence, vacillation); "What redefines him?" (clarifying factors, including external environmental considerations and the influence of other people who have a stake in the matter); and "What inspires him" (self-enabling attitudes, behaviors, aspirations, goals, objectives, hopes and wishes that are all part of striving to achieve the best possible result). These cards reveal how the querent handles the current of change suggested by the "unloading of the wheel" at Card 6.

In all Celtic Cross systems, Card 10 represents the outcome, or "end of the matter," and provides long-term advice for successfully managing the situation.

Card 6 should be directly correlated to Card 10 to see how it is likely to mature or ripen; the intervening cards (7-9) modulate the course of events via the querent's actions and reactions in response to early developments. This is where "constructive advice" is often most valuable since the situation is still pliable and the querent can shape the final outcome with judicious intervention. So Cards 7, 8 and 9 are also a kind of continuum and an "experiential bridge."

I see both the "crossing" card and the card in the 7th position as "challenge" cards to those immediately preceding them. Card #2 seeks to alter the flow of the situation in a fundamental way, and Card #7 pushes back against still-emerging "near future" developments.; it suggests "drawing a line in the sand" and establishing a personal stand or "beach-head" so the wave of the future doesn't just roll over you. As momentum gathers to simply drive forward toward the goal, it provides a cautionary impulse to "dig one's heels in" and take things more slowly.

In this model there is no direct correlation between Card 6 and Card 8, since the point of ingress for the wheel's "download" into the querent's subjective reality is Card 7. That said, Cards 4-1-2-6-8 may be read as a "line," with Card 2 as the focal point for pairs 4/1 and 6/8. The idea is to provide additional insight into the nature of any challenges that may be blocking growth in the matter, in which case Card 8 is interpreted more precisely as the "new environment." Cards 4 and 1 "anchor" the querent in past achievements or failures – the "old environment" - adding "fuel to the fire" or "grist for the mill" to the pivotal interpretation of Card 2, while Cards 6 and 8 show externalizing factors that lift the situation out of its impasse and nudge it toward resolution. This concept is fully expanded in the "Elemental Dignities" approach to the Celtic Cross, and also in the "Parsifal's Bow" personal destiny spread.

“Parsifal's Wheel” Celtic Cross Variation

Basic Position Meanings

Significator: This is the first card laid on the table, chosen to represent the querent according to various selection methods (astrological, elemental, qabalistic, traditional [sex, age and appearance], etc.)

Card 1: Represents the “environment of the question” as it stands; laid directly atop the Significator card. (“This covers him.”)

Card 2: Represents major motivators arising from Card 1, often but not always challenging; laid atop and perpendicular to the Significator card. (“This crosses him.”)

Card 3: Represents the established past in the matter, that which is not subject to change. (“This is beneath him.”)

Card 4: Represents that which has passed or is just passing, but which still features actively in the matter. (“This is behind him.”)**

Card 5: Represents the present; the realm of possibilities and opportunities. (“This crowns him; this is above him.”)**

Card 6: Represents the near future. If Cards 5 and 6 are complementary, Card 5 strengthens the probability of Card 6 manifesting. (“This is before him.”)**

Card 7: Represents the deepest part of the self, the “psychic basement;” negative emotional “baggage”: pessimism, fears, uncertainties, self-doubts, etc. impeding the querent from fully embracing the initial outlook shown by Card 6. (“This holds him back”).

Card 8: Represents the querent's environment and human relations, for good or ill. (“This redefines him.”)

Card 9: Represents the querent's basic self-interest and emotional stake in the matter (what may be gained or lost); goals and objectives, hopes or wishful thinking, optimism. (“This inspires him.”)

Card 10: Represents the final outcome. (The “end of the matter.”)

* Modern practice frequently dispenses with the Significator card, especially when reading face-to-face.

**Cards 4, 5 and 6 tend to be fluid regarding the timing of events: the Past may still be strongly felt in Present circumstances, while the most probable Future may already be visible as either a logical extension of the Past/Present dynamic or as an emerging new direction.

Note that the first six cards show situational developments in the matter over time, while the last four reflect the querent's circumstances and reaction to those developments.

Expanded Celtic Cross Position Meanings

The first six positions provide a "situational snapshot" and a time-line for advancement of the matter. The span of positions 4, 5 and 6 can be flexible, forming a continuum; conditions arising in the present may already be glimpsed as the recent past evolves, and the emerging future may be visible before the present completely unfolds. Positions 7, 8 and 9 relate to the Querent's personal, psychological and social circumstances as they variously affect or are affected by the "ripening" of the matter. Position 10, in addition to its individual card meaning as the last word in the matter, can be read as the narrative conclusion of the 9-chapter story that preceded it.

- 1 - **Primary Meaning:** The situation as it stands; the environment or circumstances of the question.
Secondary Meanings: The "heart of the matter;" that which caused the Querent to ask the question.
- 2 - **Primary Meaning:** Challenges and opportunities; what the situation lacks at this time.
Secondary Meanings: Major motivators or stresses (people if shown by the card) that affect progress in the matter; challenges that must be worked through to harness the opportunities they often present.
- 3 - **Primary Meaning:** The distant past (months to years); the history or "foundation" of the matter.
Secondary Meanings: Underlying factors that – while still influential - have been pushed into the background; that which the querent has accepted as fact and which is no longer subject to change.
- 4 - **Primary Meaning:** The recent past (days to weeks); developments in the matter that have just occurred and are now passing away.
Secondary Meanings: Prior situations or influences that are still fresh in the mind; the threshold of a change; the first inkling of the next step.
- 5 - **Primary Meaning:** The present; the situation coming to a head; the "light at the end of the tunnel."
Secondary Meanings: Developing trends; the realm of possibilities and opportunities; options available to move the matter forward; a chance to seize the initiative, gaining traction and momentum toward resolution; dawning realization about what may soon occur.
- 6 - **Primary Meaning:** The near future (days to weeks); a preview of coming events; advice for the early going.
Secondary Meanings: What the Querent has to work with going forward.; factors that set the stage for the eventual outcome; a foothold in the final result; an emerging reality that is still within the Querent's power to change over the long haul; early hints of ultimate success or disappointment (to be either nurtured or actively discouraged), and the degree of ease or difficulty anticipated along the way.
- 7 - **Primary Meaning:** What holds the Querent back; a dose of realism or healthy skepticism that puts the brakes on excessive zeal; unconscious urges that create resistance to change; an instinctive, reactionary push-back .
Secondary Meanings: Potentially self-defeating behaviors and attitudes; lack of self-confidence; second-guessing; mental/emotional blocks or upsets; misgivings; pessimism; "your own worst enemy;" the deepest part of the Self; the Subconscious; the "psychic basement" as a hotbed of negative reinforcement; a necessary sacrifice.
- 8 - **Primary Meaning:** What clarifies or redefines the Querent's grasp of the situation; immediate surroundings and personal contacts as stabilizing or destabilizing factors.
Secondary Meanings: The circumstances and condition of the Querent's "home base" and personal support system (or lack thereof); the influence of other people close to or in a position to affect the Querent; aid from supporters; resistance or competition from adversaries; suggests the need for a "coping strategy."
- 9 - **Primary Meaning:** What the Querent wants; conscious aspirations, choices and actions that are in the querent's best interests; advice that, if followed or ignored, could substantially alter the outcome.
Secondary Meanings: Last chance to shape the outcome "closer to the heart's desire; the Querent's emotional "stake" in the matter (what may be gained or lost); goals and objectives, both realistic and naive; hopes (well-founded or otherwise) and wishes (or "wishful thinking"); optimism, warranted or not as shown by the card.
- 10 - **Primary Meaning:** What the Querent gets; the final outcome, the "end of the matter;" long-term advice.
Secondary Meanings: The best that can be achieved at this time; the point of intersection for all prior inputs.