

TAROT FOR THE WILD SOUL

Episode 206. Investigating our Fears with Nine of Swords Rx

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[Introduction]

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Hey, loves. Just a heads up that today is the last day to take advantage of our [Wild Soul Holiday Bundle Sales](#), where you can get really incredible discounts on some of our most beloved courses, including [The Threshold 2023](#), [Rewilding the Tarot](#), and more. To get all of the scoop and all the information about those bundles, as well as ways to purchase them, you can go to the link in the show notes. Thank you so much for being here.

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(Instrumental intro music)

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Welcome to Tarot for the Wild Soul, a podcast that explores the Tarot through an inclusive, soul centered, trauma-informed perspective for growth, healing, and evolution. I'm your host, Lindsay Mack.

Hello, loves, and welcome back to the pod. So lovely to be gathered here with you. So last week, on the podcast, we talked all about the Monthly Medicine invitation for December and how the theme of December is Adventure, and how such a big part of what we're doing here in December is working with The World card, which is our Anchor Card for the month ahead.

The World card is here to usher out a cycle that we are absolutely, definitively complete with, and we're never going to go back to it. Never again. And the fact that we are moving through this kind of a preparatory clearing card in advance of a Chariot year, which is all about that idea. It's all about leaving behind the chariots, those shells, those symbolic skins that we've outgrown. We're also, in 2023... Because The Chariot card is our card for 2023, so that's what we're working with. We're also, by moving through a Chariot year in 2023, leaving behind Line One of the Tarot and moving, preparing to move into Line Two in 2024.

So to try to convey the level and degree of transformation, of transmutation of what we're completing and clearing away in order to prepare to receive something new is almost impossible (*Lindsay laughs*). And The World card's huge. You know, it's connected to Saturn. And it has really to do with bringing us back to the root pieces of what we promised ourselves we would do, of opening to and kind of taking an inventory of all the things that we are complete with, and that we're ready to completely process and cycle through, so that we can be complete with them. It's not easy work, but it is an adventure (*Lindsay laughs*) of its own kind. And we are sort of this year being invited to venture into different things, journey into different things, unpack different things.

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And with adventure, whether it be of the highly internal variety, the soul-led variety of just sort of an adventure of the self, or whether we're adventuring out into the world in a new way, or a different way, or in a fun way, or in a way that's part of our responsibility that there's very little fun around it. Inevitably, whether it's internal or external, whether it's routine or very new, contraction is bound to arise. Whenever we work with The World card, whenever we're doing this kind of soul-led excavation work, this kind of clearing and completing of cycles, it brings up all the things. Because there's very often not a whole lot of clarity or assurances on paper on the other side of a World card experience. A lot of it is a leap of faith, as is with all intuitive-led work. It's mostly leaps of faith.

So it's very important to understand that while all these things sound great, to the nervous system and to the mind, to the inner little one, it can feel excruciating. It can feel *terrifying*, depending on our level of security and of the trauma we've experienced. The World card is very typical for bringing up all of the stuff so that we can clear it, so that we can process it. And we don't have to do it alone. We can bring it into therapy, into our coaching work, into our connections with Spirit, in our Tarot pulls, whatever it might be.

But this week, the week of December the ninth, the Anchor Card that we're working with is Nine of Swords reversed. And I say, fucking bring it. Because Nine of Swords is so good. It's so important. It's not necessarily like, you know, a warm vat of honey (*Lindsay laughs*). It's not like flowers. But what it brings is really great. It's really great. And we don't need to be afraid of it. It's a really beautiful card, and it brings really beautiful medicine.

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So any Nine in the Tarot is a very, very important—we can call it “pilgrimage” back home to some aspect of the Self. If you notice on the Smith-Rider-Waite Tarot, everyone in a Nine card is alone. So it's powerful to think about that, and also important to remember that it's a crucial final moment with oneself—the Nines are connected to Hermit, so it makes total sense—where we have to dig into something internally in order to move forward, in order for there to be a little bit more movement, whatever.

So this week, essentially, what's coming up for us is that we need and are invited to pay attention to some fear, some worst case scenario, some what-if scenario that might pop up from the mind that we have to navigate, we have to touch in on—even, by the way, if it's just being like, “Hey, I see you.” The end. Like, just acknowledging like, “Whoa, that's there.” We have to... In some way, we're going to be asked to touch into, in some way in order to move forward again.

So again, back to the Nines. The Nines are this really important reclaiming, journeying back to self for some kind of, again, reclamation process where we are resetting something, rebalancing something, usually clicking something into place in some way. Nine of Swords is not a card of nightmares, of horror, of anything... Although we may, in this card, on occasion experience nightmares, experience disturbances in our dreams, especially if something really big and unconscious is coming up to be processed and cleared in some way. It's not, however, a foreboding of something. It's not a prediction. It's not a knowing. It's not “something terrible is going to happen”. It's just not. I don't care what the journey says. In practice, in reality, that's just simply not what this card is indicating.

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This card indicates that we are inside some kind of worst-case scenario thinking. That we're worried about what *might* happen. We're worried about what *could* happen. We're worried about... We're in the what-ifs. We're in, like, everything that could go wrong here, there, everywhere. We're in it. And it might have varying degrees of distress that accompanies it. It might be kind of like, “Yeah, I see that. It's a bummer, you know? And I'm on... I'm in my center about it.” It might completely knock us off our center, you know? And again, like, we want to lean into the right kind of care and support for experiences like that.

Nine of Swords comes up all the time. A lot of the time, it pops up and then it goes away, and it's as simple as that. It just really has to do with like the mind, in its own weird way, trying to protect us by covering every scenario, every base point, “This could be. No, *this* could be. No, that could be.” And if we don't have a lot of information, if we're worried about something and there's a lot of room for what-ifs, it can sort of fester even more because then the brain has room to sort of move into different areas and be like, “Oh my God, this, maybe that, maybe that.”

And so we've likely all been there. And that's really kind of what we're working on this month, is really sort of having more of an objective, open-hearted awareness of the natural organic presence of this card and what it brings. Because what every Nine brings to us is a chance to recenter something that was just slightly off balance. And once it clicks into place, we can move into the Ten.

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With the Nine of Swords, we're called to be a parent to ourselves. So when that part of us is frightened, we're actually called to move closer, to not believe it. If your child was terrified of what was in the closet, you wouldn't tell them, "Oh, be quiet. There's nothing to be afraid of," or you likely wouldn't ignore it. You also likely wouldn't be like, "Oh my God, maybe there is something in the closet. I'm scared too." You would probably say, "Well, let's check it out. Let me get a flashlight. Let's check it out here." And you'd be your own intrepid, you know, explorer of the unknown.

So what we're doing in those moments when our frightened inner child goes, "I think there... Like, there might be a monster in that closet," we're being asked to show up as self-parents and go, "Well, let's check it out, boo." And grab our flashlight, and grab, like, whatever we need, and open up that closet door and be like, "I don't see any monsters in here. I do see like, you know, this toy that might have been like making noise, might have been turned on. I do see, you know, this or that. I wonder how we can make the closet a little bit more of a safe space. Maybe we leave the closet doors open. Maybe there's a little night light coming from the closet." So, you know, whatever it is.

Opening up the doors and shining a light in it is the way of quieting down that fear-based voice of the mind. That's essentially what Nine of Swords brings to us in form of an opportunity. The invitation that it brings is that it calls upon us to be that self-parent who moves into those cobwebby places with the flashlight and goes, "Yeah, you're right. It could be this. What if it is? Or it could be this. Why don't we ask a person who's way more suited to actually tell us? You're worried about this outcome? Let's ask this professional. You're worried about that outcome? Let's actually ask the person." We're worried, "Oh, this person hates me. They don't like me. They're mad at me." Ask them.

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It's so vulnerable (*Lindsay laughs*). I've done it so many times, just being like, "Hey, like, my brain is inviting me into a story that you're upset with me, or that I did something wrong. If so, like, I want to know about it so I can make it right. But if not, would you mind just clarifying?" It's amazingly freeing and gives other people the permission to do the same thing because we all have those feelings. We all have those worries and fears, and then we isolate because we think,

“Well, everyone would think I was, you know—” whatever adjective we want to use, “to ask this or to feel this way.” And it’s not true.

So we’re being invited this week to be that self-parent; to practice that, to play with that, dare I say. Because doing so is an act of deep intimacy and self tending. It’s a profound act of self tending that can move us closer to deeper love and, you know, can just move us closer with ourselves.

So as we continue to embark on our month of adventure, as we continue to embark on this time of preparing for pretty radical change (*Lindsay laughs*) in the coming year, as we open to the medicine of The World card working on us deeply in the month of December, what has to be faced? Not some old, horrible, traumatic memory that we have to dig out and look at. That’s not what I’m talking about. If there is naturally presently a lot of noise from the mind inviting us into this and that, what is it to show up as the self-parent rather than the scared child? What is it to show up in almost advocacy of that younger, more frightened part of ourselves? What are they actually afraid of?

We learn in Nine of Swords that we don’t necessarily have to believe the mind. That we... That actually, the mind is frightened. And through our willingness to investigate and actually ask the questions, clarify some of the assumptions or stories the mind has, we have the ability to be set free in many ways. And that is a part of what this week, again, is inviting us into.

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So one way, again, that The World card kind of turns up, kind of works, is that it tends to turn up the volume and the brightness on all of those what-ifs because it’s such a tender, intense energy. We’re going into such a void, the mind can’t help but project onto it. Like, if we’re completing something, there’s a total vacuum in space that we’re being called to leap into on the other side because we’re starting again in The Fool, which is a big card in [The Threshold 2023](#), as well. So it’s very much this gateway between The World and The Fool, and it’s scary. It’s okay to be scared. It’s alright to be... Like, it’s normal, you know, to have fears come up about the what-ifs and all the different pieces, all the potential worst-case scenarios.

So Nine of Swords is sort of our buddy (*Lindsay laughs*) in a way that helps us to rethink, groove a new pathway for how we might handle a situation like that; how we might handle feelings like that. When fears and what-ifs come up, how do we greet them? How do we tend to that inner child? And how does that prepare us for Ten of Swords—which I didn’t pull here—but there’s just a natural progression which is ultimately very similar to The Chariot; very similar to shedding a skin that we absolutely cannot hold anymore. Ten of Swords is basically like, “Hey, this way of thinking, this way of considering things, this way of going about this or that, it’s done. It’s dead. There’s nothing else to it. There’s nowhere else for you to go with this, but to leap into something new.”

So Nine of Swords is a crucial threshold in getting to that place. We investigate our fears in order to rewire our relationship to them. So whether it's super teeny, very subtle, you barely notice it, you just think, "Oh yeah, I see you there," or it's wildly cacophonous... First of all, if it's wildly cacophonous, get yourself whatever you need. Like, fuck the Tarot (*Lindsay laughs*). Like, get yourself what you need when you need it; whatever you need to help you move through that kind of an experience. But if it is safe, accessible, appropriate for you to do so, depending on what you're going through, what is it like for you to open to greater support inside of yourself? What is it like to move through a process of opening to something a little different, in terms of how you might handle your what-if and worst-case scenarios?

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So that's a huge part of what we're being invited to work with this week. You know, as things very naturally come up as a result of being in so many, many kind of huge Major card... Major Arcana energies at the same time, it's very natural that fears are going to come up, that contraction will arise. We can greet that. We can hold our center. We can explore. We can move through it. So what provides a sense of beauty for you while you do some work like that? What nourishes your soul and your spirit? What helps you to remember that you're safe? Those are all different things. It's... It would be incredibly useful to touch into and really hold close to your heart—not just this week, but forever, (*Lindsay laughs*) you know.

So it's a shorty today, but I think it really gets the point across. That's the medicine. That's the invitation this week is really diving into those themes. And having a chance to really befriend Nine of Swords because it's such a wonderful Anchor, it's such a helper, such a buddy. Really is leading us into far greater connection with self. Yeah. So I'm hoping that this card is really... You know, the energy of whatever is arising around this card is super easeful for you, and that you have lots of gentleness around you as you traverse it.

I'm going to dive into a listener question and then we'll go from there. So our question today is from Angelann, who says,

Hi, Lindsay. I've been feeling burned out in a way that I've never experienced before. I've been working ever since I turned 16, and have never had more than a week off at a time in the 10 years since. I've never felt exhaustion on such a level, but lately, it seems like every aspect of myself is just trying to tear me down. My therapist has told me that I should take FMLA... " which for those of you who don't know, is Family and Medical Leave Act, "...for a few weeks, so I can rest and bring myself back up to speed. But when I ask my Tarot cards, I can only seem to get mixed messages. Perhaps it's because I myself can't decide whether to do it or not. How can I remove my own bias and mixed emotions while doing a reading to get a clear message? Thank you, and much love to you.

Much love to you, too Angelann.

So I read Angelann's question and was very... really wanted to answer it, but needed some more information from them about what cards they were pulling that we're giving them these mixed messages. So Angelann was kind enough to answer me, and mentioned that they had been pulling the Eight of Cups both upright and reversed, also Temperance reversed, and The Hermit.

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Okay. So I really try to refrain from essentially telling people what to do (*Lindsay laughs*). So I'm going to come in with some really blunt words. But know that even though I'm being blunt, this is your life and you still get to do whatever you want, because I'm not the arbiter, nor am I the expert on anything. I just have a Tarot podcast. Every cell in my body is screaming at me for you to take this fucking time. You deserve it. You deserve it more than anyone. Take the time. *Take the time.*

I know it's hard. I know that there might be a part of you that feels like you don't deserve it. Of course... I'm not even gonna talk about the Tarot. I'll get to it. But for right now, of course, you have such mixed feelings about it if you've been working this hard, this long. Talk about... This is exactly... I chose your question before I even knew the card we were doing this week, and of course, it showed up for this one. Of course, you have contraction about this. It's so expansive for you to take this space. It's so expansive. Of course, there are feelings like, "I don't know. I shouldn't do it. I don't... You know, I don't know." Of course, you have bias. Of course, you're mixed.

The idea that after 10 years, that you could have the level of space, you could have some space, some ease in your time, in your... Of course, it's scary. And I believe, of course, you have to try (*Lindsay laughs*). And like, of course, you don't because, again, don't do anything I say just because I say it. But that's how strong my reaction is upon reading your letter, like, oh my God, yes. Please, please, please, please. You don't need any... We live in a society—sorry to get up on my soapbox—live in a society where everything tells us we're selfish for resting, we can't do it, especially in your position where you likely haven't been able to afford to stop. If there is something that you can reach out to, that's what those programs, those systems are there for.

And you don't need to apologize for reaching out and taking what you need for your nervous system at all. And in many ways, leaning into, applying for this, taking this time and leave, even considering doing it is a very, very powerful thing for you to do in terms of helping your nervous system to know, "Oh, it's okay. I can ask for help. I can pause. I actually can pause. There's room for me to pause here. I can do this, if even for a little while, if even for this amount of time

or this section of my week. I can do it.” I think your therapist is right on, and I think that you deserve this.

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Now, having said that, I will just say—and I say it so with the utmost gentleness—there is nothing about the cards that you're pulling that seem mixed to me. Not a little bit (*Lindsay laughs*). Eight of Cups is like a transformation card that has to do with leaving something behind that we're complete with that no longer serves us. So that doesn't mean leaving your job, but it could mean walking away from the burnout, choosing something different. It's a migration card. It's a moving away and towards something that suits us better. The reversal of it can be a million different things. One of them can be that we're not leaving. We're not leaving when we're being called to. So that feels very clear to me in terms of a directive. Any time we get an Eight, it's a go-kart. It's a movement, a journey. You know, again, that migration energy that's... It's moving away from something that's not serving, and moving towards something that is more suited to us.

Okay. Temperance reversed. When we have an experience with Temperance right side up, it's essentially Spirit reaching a hand out and going, “I'd like to help you a little bit more. I'd like to help you a little bit more, if you're willing to let me. I'd like to, if possible, create a little bit more space, ease, flow in your life where you maybe—you human being—can't fully see how it's possible to get that space or ease, or flow.” Because there's a little bit of a... Ha, “a little bit”. Because there's a wider lens view that Spirit has, or that our wise inner self has than what we do inside of our minds, there is a tremendous possibility of a very slow but very radical shift that happens in Temperance, because we start letting Spirit in more. We start saying, “Okay, I feel stuck, I feel caught, I feel blocked, but I'm willing to let you help me.”

And when Temperance is reversed, it can indicate that in some way, we just might not see that the help, and ease, and support is there. It's not always what it means. It can also mean like, we're really trying to figure it out instead of including Spirit in uncertain things. One of my coaches, Sheryl, one time I asked her... She's an actor, and an artist, and also a brilliant, intuitive and spiritual... She does creative work with people and creative coaching. And I asked her once, “How do you deal with moments when you're so overwhelmed, you don't know what to do, you are too scared to put something forward? Like, what do you do when it's too much to hold?” And she says, “I go outside, and I walk in nature, and I pray. And I give it to Universe, Spirit, whatever you want to call it. I give it over. And I know that I'm not even meant to hold it all myself anyway. But when I forget and I try to figure it all out, I wind up really crunched and overwhelmed, and scared. And when I remember to come back and I remember to say, ‘Okay, like, I don't know what to do here. Please help me. Please show me,’ it shifts something in me, even if I don't necessarily know the right moves to make.”

That gesture that Sheryl was talking about, of kind of walking through nature and saying, “Spirit, I don't know what to do. Please help me.” Like, you know, “I'm going to basically surrender this to you,” that's Temperance. And when reversed, for one reason or another, usually because of all the things in life, in us with attachment stuff to our caretakers, not feeling like we can trust Spirit, not feeling like there's any help available, or that we can take help. For all the reasons, we might feel like we can't ask for that. We don't even know it's there. So that, I feel, is why Temperance reversed is there for you.

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The Hermit, an invitation to pause and to rest and to be. Now, I understand why you would consider... First of all, I want to acknowledge your experience. If you felt these were mixed, that's so valid. I'm just offering because you asked me... In fact that... From a bird's eye view, I can really see how these were delivering something pretty clear to you. I also acknowledge that getting a card like The Hermit around a decision like this might cause... might lead me to think, if I were pulling this for myself, like “Oh, maybe it's just a pause with the decision.” I would love to consider...because there's something in my gut that's telling me this might be something. What I actually think it might be is The Hermit showing up being like, “Please come and be with me on the mountain (*Lindsay laughs*).” Like, don't hesitate to ask for this time. Take this time so you can be a Hermit too for a little bit. So you can just be, so you can heal. Because burnout is very real, and you deserve to take this time if you can get it.

So I honor whatever decision you want to make, whatever decision is right and best for you. And because you're asking me—and I hope it's okay that I said this—I really think you should try to go for it. I don't see that there's much mixing of the messages with these cards. They feel super direct and very clear. And I don't know that you *can* remove your own bias. Yeah. I don't know that it's... I mean, I think, you know, there's something to be said for shifting our biases over time.

But you asked, “How can I remove my own bias and mixed emotions while doing a reading to get a clear message?” I think that what you're speaking about is at the heart of my work, which is like, how can we honor the human stuff, all of our feelings, our resistances, our...? The brain being like, “No!” when the soul might be being like, “Yes.” And the reason the brain is saying no is because it's scared to fucking death of whatever unknowns, or whatever new stuff this is bringing. So, you don't ignore it. You don't remove it. You say, “I have this bias. I am mixed, Spirit.” I... You go to your deck and you just say, “I am all fucking twisted up like a pretzel right now. I feel like I can't do it. I feel like I shouldn't. I feel like I can't,” whatever you got going on. You just say, “How can I honor these feelings, but also open to what's in alignment for me? What would taking this kind of leave bring into my life?” And then you pull on that. And then maybe you say, “What is coming up to be tended to as I navigate this?” And then you pull on that, too. And on and on, you just pull gentle inquiries. Pull on gentle inquiries as related to what's coming up for you.

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I hope that this helped, and I cannot... I feel very honored that you asked me this question. And I hope you fucking go for it, and never apologize, and never look back (*Lindsay laughs*). And take this time and do nothing and be with... You deserve it. You deserve it, if you can get that leave. I hope you do. And yeah, I don't know...I don't see any mixing of the messages in these cards. But I think in answer to your direct question, we don't remove the bias. We honor the bias and read, calling out for the truth and for the medicine that can help to nurture whatever's underneath the bias and mixed emotions. But again, I just want to validate and normalize, it makes a lot of sense to me that you'd be having that experience. So keep in touch with me. Let me know what you decide to do. Let me know how it goes. We're all rooting for you, for real.

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[Conclusion]

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Wild Souls, I adore you. Thank you for being here with me. I cannot wait to connect with you next week and see what's in store for us then (*Lindsay laughs*). I hope that your experience, if you choose to opt into [the bundle sale](#), I hope you get all of the goodies, all the Soul Tarot goodies that your heart desires. And yeah, I really look forward, again, to sensing into the card that's showing up for us next week. And until we meet again, please take exquisite care of yourselves.