

# TAROT FOR THE WILD SOUL

## Episode 235. Should I work with reversals in my Tarot pulls?

Air Date:

*(Instrumental intro music)*

**[0:00:06]**

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, all. Welcome back to Tarot for the Wild Soul. This is Lindsay, back with another one of our Mailbag Monday episodes, which is a little bit of a special summer thing where I answer your questions and then I boogie on out (*Lindsay laughs*). I had so much fun answering the question I was asked last week about how to deal with the inner critic that can really ramp up when we...in relationship to certain Tarot pulls, or just sort of how to minimize and turn the volume down on the inner critic. And this week we're gonna be talking about something we have chatted about a lot on the podcast, but I mean, fuck, this would not be a Tarot podcast if we didn't bring it up from time to time, is reversals. So before I even talk about it, before I even give my thoughts, I'm just gonna dig right into our listener question. Our question is from Sarah and Sarah asks,

*Hi, Lindsay. Firstly, thanks for the podcast. I find it soothing and restorative, and the perfect end to a frantic week.*

Thank you, Sarah.

*I'm fairly new to Tarot; one year or so.*

Welcome. Love it!

*And I have a question about reversed cards. I currently keep all my cards upright and read about both meanings. I tend to always think about the positive interpretations. I'm wondering if I'm missing the point or kidding myself this way, but did try reversing the cards for a time. I did this with a big shuffle and sort of churning the cards about. I have no idea if this is how you're supposed to do it. I Googled but did not find much. I started mainly pulling reversed cards and it made me feel insecure and negative about the Tarot, so I put them all upright again. I'd love your view on how to reverse the cards, how you shuffle when there are reversed cards in the deck, and if they are important to use. Thank you.*

**[0:02:13]**

I have so many thoughts about this, Sarah. Thank you for asking me this question. Thank you for trusting me with this. Okay. So, I'm going to answer all your questions, but the first thing I want to name is just on an overarching piece, please feel free to just not even fuck with reversals right now, especially if you're only a year in. You don't have to not fuck with them. You can totally just include them in your pulls, as you tried to do. But if they're inviting you into, like, insecurity, whatever, then absolutely just do away with it. There are times when I want just a cleaner, clearer read on something and I'll just sort of say before I pull, like, "I'm not available for reversals." And even if I kind of happen to pull a card in a reversed way, I just flip it right side up. Because I feel like if I'm just planting that seed, even if it comes right side up, my assumption is...or reversed rather, my assumption is that it would be fine if I just flipped it, especially because, again, I've stated that I'm not open to reversals. So I just want to say that.

The other thing I want to just say... This was not a direct question you asked me, but I do want to speak to it. When you said you started pulling mainly reversed cards and it made you feel insecure and negative about the Tarot, so you put them all upright again. I want to know, I'm curious about why it made you feel insecure and negative because... and if you were Googling about what it meant, I understand why. Because there's no problem with getting a reversal. Reversals are neutral. They're not good, bad, or otherwise. And if we're talking about scale of good versus bad, which is way binary, very like... It's, again, a bit broad. But if we're talking about like a good thing versus a bad thing in general, if you're in The Tower and you pull it reversed, that's a little bit more of a helpful place to be. Because normally with cards that

really—it's not bad or good—but cards that are a little bit spikier, a little bit more of a bitter taste, a little bit more of like a poisoned plant rather than a sweet plant, the reversals actually cut down on the sting quite a lot, and mostly speak about or indicate that we're either experiencing some space from what we've gone through, or we're about ready to transition out of something. It actually indicates a lot more about the specificity of the timing. It does not mean that we are blocked. It does not mean anything is bad. It does not mean we're not open to something. It just isn't a problem.

And I'm not saying anything about you, Sarah, because you're brand new to your practice, so you don't know, but you do... And I say this to everybody. It's not necessarily like, “look to *me*”. But you do...I believe that all of us have an obligation to ourselves to be *very* discerning about what we pick up in a Google search as far as especially a reversal, because most people are going on some real old-school bullshit when it comes to that. And there's been a little bit more evolution with regard to like, “Oh, you know, this card is traditionally thought of as kind of bad or not a favorable card.” But the reversals, there has been little to no evolution (*Lindsay laughs*) around that. I do feel that I'm holding up a humble torch. I really appreciate reversals. So I just want to say there's not a whole lot out there, and that's not your fault.

**[0:06:46]**

I understand why it makes you feel insecure and at the same time, want to encourage you to just drop it if you don't feel like using it, or if it makes you feel insecure for any reason, you know? So I encourage you to play with this metaphor, which is what I teach my students when I'm talking about reversals. If we're talking about...if a card... Pulling any Tarot card is like a trail, a path in the woods, on any road. Reversals are like going offroad (*Lindsay laughs*). That's just precisely what they are. What I want you to imagine is that you're turning off of a road, you're cutting away from the main path, and you're going on a bit of a meandering path that's gonna plant you back on the path you are on. You just might walk through some brambles, you might find something miraculous, you might find like a beautiful forest pool, and then go right back to where you were walking.

Reversals reveal information about things. So as readers, they can indicate things like passage of time, a season ending, us being complete in something. That is wonderful information when we feel ready to work with those kinds of specificities and I hate to say... It's not leveling up because there are some extraordinary readers who just don't read reversals. But if that's something we want, and if that's something that feels really nice, that kind of thing, that can really be cool. But if you don't want to work with reversals, I find Spirit just sort of finds a

different way of telling you about the shift in the passage of time. Like that Tower card that I mentioned would just come up in a different area of the reading, you know? I do think there's a natural sorting and ordering that happens that is really awesome and magical and can't really be quantified, but I do believe it happens. I absolutely do.

So reversals are great because they can reveal quite a bit, but they also indicate other really amazing things. They can tell us when we're just...when there is something in us that for one reason or another, needs a little bit more care, and love, and attention than we might be initially considering. What I do believe is that in those cases, reversals are very easy to energetically flip right side up. So in other words—I use this example constantly, but it's a good one for a reason—if we get The Fool reversed, that's still The Fool. That is still the card coming through and letting us know, mirroring something back to us that there is some kind of new cycle, some kind of new “Yes” from our soul that we're being invited to take. It might be very small and internal. It might be very large and external, like an actual leap, a yes or a no that is very expansive. Of course, this isn't the actual historical reason, but one of the things that I think is very powerful to consider is when we think about this card being called “The Fool”, when we're in that space of soul alignment where something is calling us to take a very brave leap forward, step forward, an internal “Yes”, we can feel so fucking stupid, like it's the dumbest thing we've ever done.

**[0:11:06]**

Sorry to use kind of violent language like that, to kind of reel it back. But that is...the inner critic does come out. We can have those really harsh thoughts about ourselves. We can just feel like, “Oh my God, this is the wildest, most foolish thing I could ever imagine doing.” And we can have people around us who make us feel like that. “Are you sure that's a good thing to do?” And it's not like there's someone really helpful, lovingly, with our consent, sort of pushing back on us and being like, “Would you like some fearless feedback about this?” It's not that we're doing things recklessly. It's just so scary. And so when the reversal of The Fool comes up, it doesn't mean don't leap. It's usually letting us know there's some part of us that's fucking terrified of this leap. And there might be a part of us that's like, “This feels too vulnerable and I'm not going to do it.” And then it's basically like trying to crimp a garden hose, or trying to shove a beach ball under the water, and it's just gonna pop up and bop us right in the nose.

It's not telling us *not* to do it. It's a tap on the shoulder from Spirit, from a wise part of us saying, “Hey, there's a little fear here. We may want to be a little bit more discerning about who we're talking about this to. It might be a little vulnerable for just the average person. Do we have

anybody in our camp who's done this before?" Right? Fool leaps require people who have done their own Fool leaping to be by our side for them. If there's somebody that we're talking to about whatever it is that we're going through, and they have said no to their own Fool leaps, they will 100%, whether they know it or not, whether they're aware of it or not, almost always have something to say that is a little bit more contractive, that is not as helpful because they just don't know. They just don't know. You don't know it until you've lived it.

So reversals are *amazing*. And sometimes—let's just fucking say you pull The Tethered One reversed—that can a lot of the time—same with The Hermit reversed—mean like we're actively resisting the suspension or the pause in this card. Well, of course, we fucking are. It's uncomfortable as shit. And if we haven't been aware of it, if our modus is to be like, "Wow, I feel so stuck and weird. I'm gonna try to do something really wild to break out of this energy," and then we pull this card reversed, it's not anybody shaming us. It's just an opportunity to be like, "Oh, fuck. I had no clue. I was in The Hermit." Now I understand why, like, I was trying to book a flight, or I was trying to go off and do this thing and it sort of didn't really feel like a yes, and it was like a push. Jeez, okay. I wonder if I can get a refund. Or maybe it was a great thing that I didn't book something right now."

**[0:14:23]**

It's just information. That's it. That's it. I don't want to say... I'm very cautious to be... I believe... I guess what I'm trying to say is, you can trust me on this (*Lindsay laughs*). I know that I really push away the idea that I know better or that there is...but I do believe that there is something to the way that I teach reversals that is really useful, and that I really have not seen too many other places. So I would just say you don't have to believe me, but you might want to just try, you might want to just try and see, if you ever feel like bopping around with reversals again, going into the transcript for this episode that will likely be up or will eventually be up when this airs and just isolating a couple things that maybe track for you about what I've said. And when you get a reversal, run through it. Like, "Is there some part of me that needs a little support? Am I completing something? Am I in something that maybe I wasn't aware of? Can I really be honest with myself? Am I pushing? Does something feel like I need a little bit more of a bridge to get to it?" That's Ace of Swords very classically.

Ace of Swords is like a brilliant idea and like a melding of Spirit and the mind, and all the best things about the way our nervous system *tick-tick-tick-tick*. Like, all that beautiful Mercury synergy and connection. When we get Ace of Swords reversed, it's like we have an amazing vision but we have no...we can't execute that alone, so we might need somebody. Like, if we

want to do a course, we might need somebody to be there for the backend of it, right? We might need someone to be there for the design, creation of it. We might need someone to be there for, like, moderating the group calls. All of those different pieces are Ace of Swords reversed, legit. It's just an opportunity to think about like, "Well, maybe I need a little bit more support. Can I ask for that or reach for it?"

So that was a little bit of a diversion from what you (*Lindsay laughs*) actually asked me. But I did want to take a moment to just sort of gently offer a different view on what reversals can be, if and when you're ever ready to explore them again. But yeah, when you start, it's like... When you add reversals in, it's like a piano piece that is so much more complex. And you're like, "Fuck, I feel like a shitty piano player because now there's all this totally different stuff happening with these notes, with this piece of music, and what the fuck is this?" So just know that that's normal, too. And again, you never have to use reversals because anything you need will be contained in the cards. But yeah, so going back to what I was saying, I believe all reversals sort of lead back to the card in question. And by kind of exploring the things that pop up for us in the reversal, they actually help us to get back to the heart of the card in some new and refreshed way.

**[0:18:02]**

So now onto your kind of direct questions. I love that you made the empowered decision to put them all upright. It literally made me feel joy. Like, absolutely, do whatever feels best for your practice. I would have done the same thing. How you reverse the cards is precisely the way you did it, mashing them all together, like (*Lindsay makes sounds like they are shuffling cards by moving them around in a big pile*) literally putting them out in like one big blob of cards and just sort of like moving them around. And there is just no fancy way to do it. There have been a couple folks that I've worked with who've been like, "I literally don't know how you reverse." And I think it might be just the way I'm shuffling. I tend to do like a bridge shuffle and I also tend to kind of... Oh gosh, I know that there's a name for it, but I'll hold the deck in my hand and just pick up cards from the back and shove them in the front, and cards in the back and... And sometimes I'll cut them and move the cards in different directions and re-cut them, and it just eventually all kind of gets into a bit of a soup and the cards just wind up...some of them show up reversed and some of them don't. So that is sort of on a more technical end how that can happen. I hope that made sense.

How you shuffle when there are reversed cards in the deck is really just kind of however you want. Again, that bridge shuffle, I would say is probably the way. And probably what you'd want

to do is when you split your cards in two with the intention of doing that shuffle, that bridge shuffle, what you'd want to do is probably flip one half of the cards upside down. So you're literally shuffling cards, half of the deck is facing one way, half of the deck is facing another way. What sometimes also happens naturally is some people always, when they have their cards in a pile and they're ready to pull, they always pull from the side, and some people always pull from the top, and some people always pull from the bottom. And when you switch that up a little bit, there might be some variants in it. I know if we were in person, I could show you what I meant and you could show me what you were doing, but we're not, and I apologize if there's any part of it that doesn't feel like a comprehensive answer to your question. But that's what I would say.

And then in terms if they're important to use. They are a wonderful expansion on our relationship to the cards, and they are an expansion that will always be there. There's no rush. There's nothing we're missing because Spirit will find a way to get us there by different means, basically, by different pulls. We can wind up at the same place in our pulls with many different... Like, you can pull The Fool and be like, "Fuck, I feel really nervous about what this is coming up around." You don't necessarily need the reversal, you know? The reversal can just be a validation sometimes of those things. So you know, if you want to and if it feels right, and if you feel like you have a very sturdy resource and relationship to your reversals, then I would say you could play with it. But I don't necessarily think they're important. Because, again, your cards will get you there. I just wanted to offer up what was possible with reversals.

**[0:22:36]**

As I'm talking about this, do you feel like...? I know not everybody here consumes or purchases my work. Would y'all ever want literally something that is called Reversals (*Lindsay laughs*)? It would literally just be like a couple of bullet points about ways that a card might show up reversed. Like, there would be no upright meanings. It would just be reversals. Maybe an e-book or something; not a course, but like a workbook. I think that's a really good idea, and it is definitely a missing piece of my repertoire. Hm. Now I am thinking about this. Let me know. Shoot me an email at [info@tarotforthewildsoul.com](mailto:info@tarotforthewildsoul.com) and let me know. I'll check in with myself either way, but as I'm talking about it, I do feel like there should be. I feel very passionate and protective about reversals, and I should create something that is a little bit more solid for people to lean into if they want it.

Anyway, that's not an answer to your question, Sarah. Yeah, I don't know. Important. You know, I feel like I've answered it. I don't need to belabor it. But I think if you one day find yourself open to it, it might be interesting to play with. But if it is inviting you into any kind of insecurity, just

don't. Sometimes I have gone through years of my practice, with this podcast, across the board, where I have just simply not been available for reversals, and there's just no particular reason why, where I've just wanted a little bit more of a straightforward thing. Now that I've started to give readings, I love what reversals can do for my readings. But again, you have to remember that I'm years into this and have a very solid framework for them. So it's different, you know? And every once in a while I'll pull something and I'm like, "Hm, what the fuck is that?" And I have to really touch in and pull a clarifier and get clear on what it might mean for me or for the client. So that's what I'd say. Trust yourself. Absolutely give yourself permission to play in this pool. Get yourself really solid on your cards. And then if you want to play with reversals—and it truly is a dance. It's just play—they'll be there for you. So I hope that's helpful. Let me know if any part of it wasn't, or if you'd like more clarity in one direction or another.

Thank you all so much for listening to this. I am loving Mailbag Mondays, I gotta say. Thank you for being here. And just sending tons of love to you all. And until we connect again, please take real gentle care. You deserve it.

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### *[Conclusion]*

**[0:25:53]**

This podcast was edited by Chase Vorhees, podcast art by Rochelle Sartini Gardener, and this episode was transcribed by one of our absolutely brilliant and beautiful transcriptionists, all of which you can learn more about or read about on our website [tarotforthewildsoul.com](http://tarotforthewildsoul.com). If you wish to dive into more of my work, learn more about Soul Tarot, work with me in any kind of capacity, I'm always creating new things for us to do together, but you can find out all about our self-led courses, and classes, and new offerings on [tarotforthewildsoul.com](http://tarotforthewildsoul.com).

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