

A vibrant red door with a four-pane window is the central focus. A hammer with a wooden handle and a metal head stands on the ground in front of the door. To the right, a bird with brown and yellow feathers is partially visible. A green vine with leaves hangs from the top of the door. The background is a solid red color.

Symbolically Speaking Oracle and Guidebook
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Hello and thank you for supporting this project!

I created Symbolically Speaking to be read as a language. Each card shifts the tone, adds nuance, or alters the direction of meaning depending on what surrounds it. Rather than offering fixed definitions, the deck invites you into dialogue. You combine symbols to form phrases, sentences, and stories that reveal patterns within your life, your relationships, and your inner world. This 78-card deck can be used for introspection, decision-making, or, for those who feel drawn, a way to communicate with loved ones who have passed.

To start using this deck, simply draw a card and notice what it stirs. Let your curiosity guide you as you combine cards to build a story and go as deep as you want. The meanings are flexible—if an image or word sparks something unique for you, follow that instinct. For example, pulling the Backpack card might mean you are carrying something heavy, but it could just as easily point to an actual backpack if you're asking about a lost item. This openness allows you to shape readings to your context and intuition.

For example, I asked the deck to describe a person I know and drew five cards.

Mask – Moon – Beach – Binoculars – Blanket

Mask + Moon together immediately tells us:

This is someone who is not fully transparent, and it may not even be intentional.

Mask = presentation.

Moon = confusion, illusion, emotional undercurrents.

So we're looking at someone who either:

- Hides parts of themselves
- Is unclear about themselves
- Or lives partly in emotional shadow

The addition of the Beach card shifts the energy.

Beach = retreat.

So now we're seeing:

A person who masks their emotional depth and withdraws rather than engages when things get intense.

So the individual the deck is directing me toward isn't comfortable revealing much and avoids confrontation.

Binoculars add another layer and a hint as to who this person is by changing the direction.

This person is watching. Assessing. Thinking about the long-term. With the addition of binoculars, the sentence now becomes:

Someone who keeps parts of themselves hidden, retreats emotionally, and quietly observes the bigger picture.

The addition of Blanket softens everything.

Blanket = comfort, protection, emotional containment.
Now we get more nuanced look at who this person is:

This may be a person who deeply protects themselves.
They curate what others see.
They withdraw when overwhelmed.
They observe before committing.
And ultimately, they are trying to feel safe.

The message these cards convey is that this is someone who carefully controls how they are perceived, processes emotions privately, keeps their distance when necessary, and values security over exposure.

I know exactly who this person is in my life.

Now that I have a clear picture of who the subject of the situation is, I want to know the situation. I put the five cards back into the deck and shuffled again, asking the deck to reveal the situation.

I pulled the following cards:

Fire – Gift – Ice Cube – Hammer – House

Fire + Gift

Something passionate is being offered.
Fire is intensity, desire, urgency.
Gift is offering, opportunity, something presented.

So the base phrase becomes: An intense opportunity.

The addition of the Ice Cube card introduces pause, hesitation, emotional distance, delay.

So now the sentence becomes: A passionate offering that is being cooled, delayed or changing forms.

Hammer brings force to the situation.
It can build. It can destroy.

Now we have: A heated opportunity that is stalled and then met with force. Or, something is finally nailed into place after hesitation.

The last card House grounds the situation.
House = foundation, stability, home, long-term structure.

So now the full read might be: This is an intense opportunity that affects their foundation. It may begin with excitement or urgency, stall due to hesitation, and then require decisive action that impacts their stability.

The cards do not belong to fixed categories. They take on different roles through relationship. Rather than memorizing rigid definitions, observe how the symbols interact. This is how the language forms, and how your own fluency begins.

How Difficult Emotions Form Through Combination

Some experiences have their own card. Others emerge through relationships.

Rat, for example, speaks directly to betrayal. When Rat appears, something has been compromised. Trust has been broken, loyalty questioned, or integrity undermined. The experience is present without needing further confirmation. Additional cards may clarify the source, the impact, or the outcome, but the core meaning already exists.

Other emotional states do not belong to a single symbol. Feelings such as jealousy, revenge, resentment, or emotional overwhelm develop through interaction between symbols.

Jealousy may form when love is touched by threat. Revenge may appear when injury meets action. Emotional intoxication may emerge when illusion blends with immersion or loss of restraint. These experiences are not objects. They are conditions that arise through context.

Certain cards intensify emotional tone. Knife introduces pain or sting. Blood introduces personal cost or sacrifice. Mask introduces concealment. Leash introduces control. Morning Glory introduces unchecked growth. These cards deepen whatever they accompany.

This is why reading this deck is not about memorizing isolated

meanings. It is about observing how symbols influence one another and allowing that message to come through organically.

Each symbol represents a central concept that can be expanded, modified, or deepened depending on the symbols that appear next to it.

Over time, you will begin to recognize emotional patterns as they form. You may notice when something is beginning, when something is hidden, when something is growing beyond control, or when something has been damaged.

Recognizing emotional combinations during your readings

The simplest way to start looking for interaction.

Pull two cards and ask yourself a very basic question: How does one influence the other?

Which card is active? Which card modifies it? Which card changes the tone? Don't try to force a message. Let your intuition guide you.

For example, Heart and Leash both relate to connection, but together they shift the meaning. Love becomes attached to control. The emotional tone changes. How that relates to your situation may be very different than how it relates to someone else's.

You do not need to identify the emotion immediately. Instead, describe what you see in plain language. Something feels restricted. Something feels threatened. Something feels hidden. The emotional name often emerges naturally once you describe the interaction honestly.

You can also practice by reflecting on your day. Pull two or three cards and ask how they relate to something you experienced. Over time, you will begin to recognize patterns. The goal is not speed. The goal is familiarity.

Sample combinations and possible emotional interpretations

These examples are not fixed definitions. They are illustrations of how emotional states can form.

Heart + Rat

Love influenced by betrayal. This may reflect broken trust, suspicion, or emotional hurt.

Blood + Badger

Personal injury followed by relentless pursuit. This may reflect revenge or refusal to let something go.

Mask + Moon

Hidden identity influenced by illusion. This may reflect emotional confusion, denial, or living behind a false narrative.

Stew + Sun

Immersion influenced by warmth. This may reflect joy, celebration, emotional intoxication, or losing yourself in a positive experience.

Leash + Crown

Control influenced by authority. This may reflect dominance, power imbalance, or enforced loyalty.

Rabbit + Mountains

Sensitivity facing obstacles. This may reflect emotional strain, heightened alertness, or vulnerability under pressure.

You will find a deeper look and more examples of how the symbols work together under each symbol's entry.

How to trust your interpretation and avoid the fear of projection

Projection happens when you force the cards to confirm something you have already decided. Interpretation happens when you allow the cards to reveal something you had not fully articulated yet.

A useful way to check yourself is to ask: Does this interpretation expand my understanding, or does it simply reinforce my assumptions?

If the meaning feels rigid, defensive, or overly certain, pause. Look

Ask what else could be present.

The cards ask that you view each selection of symbols with an open heart.

There is rarely only one possible meaning. Instead of asking, “Is this correct?” ask, “Does this interpretation help me see or understand the situation more clearly?”

Over time, you will develop trust in your ability to recognize the difference.

The language becomes clearer the more you use it.

And like any language, fluency grows through experience, not memorization.

Reading Without a Spread: Letting the Conversation Form

While spreads can be helpful and provide a jumping off point, they are not required for this deck. When the idea for Symbolically Speaking came into my head over a year ago I knew I wanted it to be a tool that felt conversational.

Each card acts like a word or concept. When you place one card beside another, they begin to interact. Meaning forms through relationship. With a basic understanding of the symbols, you can allow the cards to build their own structure rather than forcing them into predefined positions.

You might pull two cards and notice tension between them. You might pull five (or more) and see a progression. You might pull one and sit with it. There is no single correct number.

Beginning the Conversation

Begin with a question.

Shuffle the cards and pull as many as feel necessary. Sometimes the answer arrives in two cards. Sometimes it takes five. Sometimes a single symbol is enough.

Lay them down in the order they appear. Read them from left to right, noticing how each symbol changes the one before it.

Ask yourself: What is happening? What is changing? What is being revealed?

Allow the story to form.

Questions To Ask Your Deck

These questions are designed to open dialogue

Understanding a Person

- Who is this person, really?
- What are they carrying that I cannot see?
- What motivates their actions?
- What are they not saying?

Understanding Yourself

- What am I carrying right now?
- What am I avoiding?
- What part of me needs attention?
- What truth am I ready to see?

Understanding a Situation

- What is actually happening here?
- What is influencing this situation?
- What is hidden?
- Where is this leading?

Understanding Relationships

- What connects us?
- What is strengthening this bond?
- What is weakening it?
- What needs to be acknowledged?

Guidance and Direction

- What should I be aware of right now?
- What am I being asked to release?
- What is emerging in my life?
- What requires my attention?

Let the symbols lead.

Sometimes the answer will be clear. Sometimes it will be layered. Sometimes it will raise another question. If a symbol stands out, sit with it. If a sequence feels unresolved, pull another card and allow the sentence to continue.

Similar, But Different

As you become familiar with the symbols in this deck, you may notice that some cards appear to overlap. They may share a theme, a gesture, or a feeling. Just as spoken language contains synonyms, Symbolically Speaking contains cards that seem related. But no two cards are identical.

Each symbol carries its own motive, its own posture, and its own way of interacting within your story. Understanding these nuances allows the story to become more precise. The difference is not always in what the cards do. It is in how and why they do it.

Below are examples of cards that may appear similar on the surface, but reveal very different truths.

Mask • Fan • Blanket: All cover, but for different reasons

These three cards can all hide something, but the intention behind the covering is different.

Mask is about identity. It represents presenting something that is not entirely true. Mask is active and intentional. It is worn to influence how others perceive you or are perceived.

Mask says: This is who I want you to believe I am.

Fan is about concealment of motive. It hides emotion, intention, or influence while still allowing interaction. Fan can also amplify what is hidden, quietly fanning something into greater intensity.

Blanket is about protection and comfort. It covers not to deceive, but to soothe, protect, or preserve. Blanket can hide, but it does so to create safety.

Blanket says: This is being shielded.

When combined with other cards, these distinctions matter.

Mask with Rat suggests deliberate deception.

Fan with Rat suggests hidden betrayal.

Blanket with Rat suggests betrayal that someone is trying to soften or conceal.

The surface action is covering. The emotional truth is different.

Here is an example of how these cards can be read together, and how this same trio can shift tone depending on order:

- Blanket · Mask · Fan: Comfort found in concealment can lead to performing a version of yourself that quietly intensifies what remains hidden.
- Fan · Mask · Blanket: Hidden motives intensify, leading to concealment that ultimately serves as protection.
- Mask · Blanket · Fan: An identity appears protective, but something hidden continues to influence what is shown.

Crow · Fox: Both are clever. but their intentions differ

Both Crow and Fox are intelligent and perceptive, but they move through the world differently.

Fox is quiet and strategic. It observes, calculates, and acts with purpose. Fox seeks advantage and survival.

Fox says: I know what I am doing is sly but that is how I survive.

Crow on the other hand is disruptive. It questions, interrupts, and exposes. Crow does not always act to gain advantage. It acts to provoke movement or reveal what is stagnant.

Crow says: I refuse to leave this undisturbed. (*and do you have a french fry?*)

Fox creates advantage. Crow creates change. Fox may hide and plan before executing an attack.

Crow jumps all in to expose, to shake things up, to disrupt.

When paired with Crown for example a symbol of Authority, Fox may suggest political maneuvering whereas Crow may suggest it's time for a rebellion.

Knife • Scissors: Both cut, but their role is different

Knife wounds. It creates injury, sting, and emotional pain. Knife often reflects words, actions, or truths that leave a mark. This messaging of this card is similar to the Three of Swords in the Tarot

Knife says: This hurts. These words are used to cut someone or cause harm in some way.

Scissors separate. They remove, release, and divide. Scissors may cause pain, but their purpose is not to wound. Their purpose is to end connection.

Scissors says: This is no longer attached. Something must be cut or released.

Knife leaves a wound. Scissors create distance.

For example: Knife with Heart suggests emotional injury, being stabbed in the back, having your feeling crushed..

Scissors with Heart suggests falling out of love, no longer giving your heart to someone or something.

Rabbit • Nest • Robin: All reflect youth, but at different stages

These cards speak to beginnings, but each reflects a different phase of emergence.

Nest is the beginning. It represents potential, protection, and something not yet fully formed.

Nest says: This is just beginning.

Rabbit is early independence. It represents sensitivity, instinct, and rapid growth. Rabbit is alert and learning to survive.

Rabbit says: This is new and vulnerable.

Robin is awakening. It represents curiosity, awareness, and stepping into the world with fresh perception.

Robin says: This is discovering itself.

Nest is the origin. Rabbit is the response. Robin is the awareness.

Putting the three together the sentence may read:

A sensitive new beginning seeks safety while slowly learning to step into the world.

To break this down:

- Rabbit introduces sensitivity, vulnerability, and instinctive responsiveness. Something is new, alert, and emotionally open.
- Nest provides protection, incubation, and a place where something can grow safely. It stabilizes and shelters the vulnerability Rabbit brings.
- Robin represents youth stepping forward, curiosity, and the early stages of independence.

Together these cards show that beginnings are not a single moment, but a process. Something is sensed, something is protected, and something eventually emerges.

Atmosphere Cards: How the Deck Expresses What Cannot Be Seen

Not everything in life can be held, named, or pointed to directly. Sometimes we do not see the problem, instead we sense it. We may not witness an event, yet we can be impacted by its aftermath. A room can feel heavy. A conversation can leave something lingering in the air. It's that moment when you walk away knowing something shifted, even if nothing was said out loud.

My focus when designing this deck was to capture those moments.

Atmosphere is rarely conveyed by a single card. It emerges through interaction. One card introduces the source. Another reveals how visible or hidden it is. A third shows whether it is growing, fading, or waiting to be discovered. Certain cards naturally carry atmospheric qualities. They do not always represent the main event. Instead, they describe the conditions surrounding it.

Fern speaks to what grows quietly and out of sight. It suggests influence without announcement. Something may already be underway without your awareness.

Fan can conceal or intensify. It may hide something behind movement, or it may fan something into greater visibility. It reminds you that not everything presented is the full truth.

Clouds obscure clarity. They suggest confusion, uncertainty, or conditions that make it difficult to see what is really happening. Mask presents an identity that may not reflect what lies beneath. It indicates performance, protection, or concealment.

Ghosts carry emotional residue. They represent what lingers long after the original event has passed.

Fire is the source of heat, passion, or destruction. When combined with concealment cards, it can suggest something actively burning beneath the surface.

Flashlight reveals what was previously hidden. It does not create the truth. It illuminates what was already there.

Rat and Mosquito often signal subtle disturbance. They suggest something that may not be obvious at first, but becomes undeniable over time.

These cards do shape the emotional environment in which the story unfolds.

For example:

Fire + Clouds may suggest something actively burning, but obscured from view. This combination may also indicate smoke or the smell of smoke. If you use the deck to connect with a loved one, and this combination appears, it may point to someone who smoked.

Ghosts + Fern may indicate something from the past quietly influencing the present.

Rat + Flashlight may reveal betrayal that had previously gone undetected.

Mask + Fan may suggest hidden motives beneath a shifting exterior.

Atmosphere cards ask you to pay attention to what cannot be immediately proven.

They remind you that not every message arrives as a clear statement. Some insights or messages arrive as a feeling. A hesitation. A change in tone. A sense that something is present, even if it has not yet revealed itself fully.

When these cards appear, they do not always answer the question directly. Instead, they ask you to notice the environment surrounding the question.

Yes, No, Maybe Guide

Altar: Maybe	Fern: Maybe	Rat: No
Backpack: Yes	Fire: Yes	Raven: Maybe
Badger: Yes	Fish: Maybe	Ring: Maybe
Bandage: No	Flashlight: Yes	Robin: Yes
Beach: Maybe	Fox: No	Shoe: No
Beehive - No	Game: Maybe	Scales: Maybe
Binoculars: Maybe	Gift: Yes	Scissors: Maybe
Blanket: Yes	Ghosts: Maybe	Squirrel: Yes
Blood: No	Hammer: Maybe	Star: Yes
Boat: Yes	Heart: Yes	Stew: Yes
Bones: No	House: Yes	Sun: Yes
Book: Yes	Ice: No	Tears: Maybe
Bridge: Maybe	Knife: No	Telephone: Maybe
Buck: Yes	Leash: Maybe	Tidal Wave: No
Butterfly: Yes	Leopard: Maybe	Trap: No
Chain: No	Mask: No	Tree: Yes
Chair: Maybe	Moon: No	Watch: Maybe
Clouds: No	Mop: Yes	Web: No
Clover: Yes	Morning Glory: Maybe	Whistle: No
Coin: Maybe	Mountains: No	White Flag: No
Crow: Yes	Mosquito: No	
Crown: Maybe	Needle: Maybe	
Cuatro: Yes	Nest: Yes	
Curtain: No	Paintbrush: Yes	
Doe: Yes	Papaya: Yes	
Dog: Maybe	Pinecone: Yes	
Dove: Yes	Polar Bear: No	
Door: Yes	Rabbit: Yes	
Fan: No	Rainbow: Yes	

Reading the Symbols

Altar

Altar represents faith, devotion, belief systems, ritual, spirituality, and the structures through which meaning is organized. It can speak to organized religion, inherited doctrine, personal spiritual practice, or anything you treat as sacred. In its balanced form, Altar is grounding belief, chosen devotion, and intentional ritual that strengthens identity. When paired with Doe or Buck it may point to a spiritual person.

Depending on the surrounding cards this energy may be working in it's shadow. Here, Altar becomes dogma, blind loyalty, spiritual manipulation, or worship of something unexamined.

When Altar appears, it may ask what you or someone near you is kneeling to and whether it was chosen consciously.

Now let's take a look at how Altar works with a sample of other cards. This is just to get you started, to show examples of how Altar is modified by other symbols.

Altar + Chain

If this represents you:

You may feel bound by inherited beliefs.

If this represents another person:

Someone clings tightly to doctrine.

If this represents a situation:

Devotion may feel restrictive.

If this represents advice:

Examine whether your faith liberates or confines.

Altar + Blood

If this represents the you:

You may feel spiritually tied to family or ancestry.

If this represents another person:

Someone sacrifices deeply for belief.

If this represents a situation:

Faith is personal and intense. You may be asked to prove your devotion.

If this represents advice:

Do not give yourself entirely to something that drains you.

Altar + Book

If this represents the reader:

You may seek wisdom through study or scripture.

If this represents another person:

Someone relies on written authority.

If this represents a situation:

Belief is guided by text or teaching.

If this represents advice:

Learn — but also interpret.

Altar + Book

If this represents you:

You may seek wisdom through study or scripture.

If this represents another person:

Someone relies on written authority.

If this represents a situation:

Belief is guided by text or teaching.

If this represents advice:

Learn but also leave room to examine your beliefs.

Altar + Morning Glory

If this represents you:

A belief expanding rapidly or you may feel suffocated by religion.

If this represents another person:

Someone's ideology may be growing unchecked.

If this represents a situation:

Devotion spreads and influences others beyond control. This could point to a cult-like atmosphere.

If this represents advice:

Be mindful of what takes root in sacred space.

Altar + Fern

If this represents you:

Your spirituality may grow quietly and privately.

If this represents another person:

Someone practices faith in subtle ways.

If this represents a situation:

Belief and spirituality is growing beneath the surface.

If this represents advice:

Sacred growth does not need to be a show or spectacle.

Altar + Fox

If this represents you:

You may start to consider the motives within spiritual structures.

If this represents another person:

Someone may use religion quietly or secretively to obtain a goal.

If this represents a situation:

Belief may be manipulated or used in a clever way.

If this represents advice:

Discern carefully. Not all who lead are pure in intention.

A Note on Altar with Fox vs. Altar with Crow

Altar represents devotion, belief systems, and what is treated as sacred. When paired with different “disruptor” cards, the tone changes dramatically.

Fox is calculated and self-serving. It works quietly and with intention. Crow disrupts, exposes, and unsettles. It is less strategic and more catalytic.

When Crow appears with Altar, the focus shifts from observing and considering to openly questioning sacred structures. This may represent challenging dogma, calling out hypocrisy, or breaking from inherited belief systems. It can indicate irreverence, reform, or the need to shake what has become rigid.

Unlike the Fox, the Crow does not quietly manipulate. It interrupts, it is loud, it is outspoken and causes a scene.

The Fox is calculated influence.

The Crow is visible disruption.

Altar + Fan

If this represents you:

You may be keeping parts of your belief private or quietly strengthening a spiritual practice without revealing it.

If this represents another person:

Someone may be quietly encouraging devotion behind the scenes.

If this represents a situation:

There may be hidden spiritual or religious influence being stirred without open acknowledgment.

If this represents advice:

Pay attention to beliefs or traditional values that are being quietly amplified. Ask whether the flame is being fanned intentionally.

A Quick note about the differences between the Fan card and the Mask card because although similar they are very different.

Fan = concealment of motive or quiet amplification.

Mask = identity performance.

Fan is “Something is being hidden or stirred.”

Mask is “I am pretending to be something.” For example: A person speaks frequently about their faith but their actions in private contradict the values they claim to hold. The performance becomes more important than the practice.

Altar + Raven

If this represents you:

You may be integrating intuition with belief. Your gut may be challenging a long held belief.

If this represents another person:
Someone sees beyond rigid doctrine.
If this represents a situation:
Insight challenges traditional structures.
If this represents advice:
Let wisdom inform faith.

Altar asks what you honor and why. Devotion can anchor a life or imprison it. Spirituality is powerful when chosen consciously, dangerous when accepted blindly. The question Altar brings forward is this: Is what you worship expanding your awareness or narrowing it?

Backpack

Backpack represents the weight you carry by choice: the responsibilities, beliefs, grief, identity, expectations, or obligations that feel important enough to keep holding. It is not the same as Chain or Leash. Backpack is something we choose to carry even if it causes struggle. We know it can be set down, but depending on what it is, we find the strength to carry on. For example, working two jobs to support your family. Or keeping a secret that feels like a burden but could destroy someone's life if they knew. In its balanced form, Backpack is endurance, commitment, and strength through effort. In its shadow, it becomes self-imposed pressure, martyrdom, or carrying something long after it stopped being necessary. When Backpack appears, it asks whether what you are carrying still serves your purpose or simply defines you.

Backpack + Rabbit

If this represents you:

You may be carrying something that demands responsiveness a responsibility that requires quick adaptation.

If this represents another person:

Someone may be holding a burden that makes them highly alert and reactive, not necessarily anxious, but constantly attentive.

If this represents a situation:

A responsibility is growing quickly or multiplying, requiring nimble movement

If this represents advice:

While carrying something heavy, remain responsive rather than rigid.

Backpack + Book

If this represents you:

You may carry the weight of knowledge or learning something or there may be a heavy expectation regarding school or learning.

If this represents another person:

Someone feels obligated to live up to what they know or using their degree.

If this represents a situation:

Information becomes weight. There is something that you can not unknow and now it has become a burden in some way.

If this represents advice:

Wisdom should empower and elevate not exhaust.

Backpack + Fern

If this represents you:

You may carry something quietly that others do not see.

If this represents another person:

Someone's unseen effort grows heavier over time.

If this represents a situation:

Subtle burdens accumulate, something is growing and gaining weight under the cover of darkness.

If this represents advice:

Acknowledge what has been developing and becoming heavier in the background.

Backpack + Doe

If this represents you:

You may carry emotional responsibility for others.

If this represents another person:

Someone carrying feminine energy bears the emotional weight of others.

If this represents a situation:

Compassion and nurturing may increase your obligation.

If this represents advice:

Care does not require self-sacrifice.

Backpack + Cuatro

If this represents you:

You may carry joy for others while feeling exhaustion.

If this represents another person:

Someone shows up for community, creates joy despite exhaustion.

If this represents a situation:

Shared celebration masks individual weight.

If this represents advice:

Let music, community help lighten what you carry.

Backpack + Knife

If this represents you:

You may be carrying something that continues to sting; a responsibility, expectation, or role that comes with emotional pain or criticism.

If this represents another person:

Someone may be using their influence, words, or authority to make the burden heavier or more painful.

If this represents a situation:

The weight of the situation is intensified by sharp conflict, harsh truth, or cutting communication.

If this represents advice:

Be mindful of what you continue to carry when it is actively causing harm. Protect yourself from further injury while you decide what to do next.

Backpack + Blood

If this represents you:

You may feel deeply tied to what you carry. You are giving your blood, sweat, and tears for something.

If this represents another person:

Someone sacrifices personal energy to carry something to the end.

If this represents a situation:

Burden feels personal and intense. There is a deep connection to this thing that is being carried.

If this represents advice:

Do not bleed for something that does not nourish you. Are you giving more of yourself than is needed? Is someone who will benefit from your actions making the same contribution?

Backpack + Morning Glory

If this represents you:

You may carry something that is expanding beyond control. Something may have started out manageable but has grown out of control.

If this represents another person:

Someone's responsibilities grow rapidly and as a result they are becoming weighed down.

If this represents a situation:

Weight increases steadily and will grow until action is taken.

If this represents advice:

Prune what grows too heavy to sustain. Pay attention to areas that branch off and create smaller obligations that pile on.

Backpack is a weight carried with intention, but the intention can shift. Strength is not proven by how much you endure, but by knowing when to rest. The question Backpack raises is this: Are you carrying this because it still matters or because you have forgotten how to put it down?

A Note on How Surrounding Cards Change Meaning

I used Fern, Blood, and Morning Glory in the examples for both Altar and Backpack to show how they modify the base symbol in different ways depending on what they touch. Each card has its own identity, but its meaning is shaped by context. Over time, you will begin to recognize these patterns naturally. This guide offers examples to help you get started, but your own experiences, questions, and intuition will refine the language into something uniquely yours.

Badger

Badger represents relentless drive; the instinct to push forward, defend territory, and go after what you want with determination. This energy is courageous, protective, and focused. It does not wait passively; it acts. At its best, Badger is disciplined pursuit and fierce loyalty. In its shadow the Badger becomes a beast; it can become combative, impatient, or unwilling to yield even when flexibility would serve better. When Badger appears, ask yourself whether your intensity is purposeful, or simply reactive.

Badger initiates action. The card that follows shows what the Badger directs its force toward and whether that action builds, protects, disrupts, or damages something. If the following card is supportive, Badger becomes determination and courage. If the following card is fragile, hidden, or resistant, Badger becomes pressure that can either break through obstacles or cause unintended harm.

Badger + Door

If this represents you:

You are aggressively pursuing an opportunity. You may be knocking harder than necessary, determined to force an opening.

If this represents another person:

Someone is pushing their way into a new space or decision.

If this represents a situation:

An opportunity exists, but it is being approached with urgency or pressure. Entry may require persistence.

If this represents advice:

Go after the opportunity but make sure you are not breaking the door down when it would open on its own.

Badger + Chain

If this represents you:

You may feel a surge of determination that has nowhere to go. Something is holding you in place despite your drive.

If this represents another person

Someone has strong will and instinct to act, but they are constrained by obligation, loyalty, or circumstance.:

If this represents a situation:

Force meets restriction. There is power here, but it cannot move freely. What is contained may remain steady or eventually strain against what holds it.

If this represents advice:

Recognize what limits your movement and why. Not all restraint is harm, but neither should your strength remain bound where it no longer belongs.

Badger + Crown

If this represents you:

You may feel a powerful drive to claim your place or defend your authority.

If this represents another person:

Someone holds authority and defends it fiercely. They may act quickly to maintain control, protect their position, or ensure they are not challenged.

If this represents a situation:

Authority is being actively asserted.

If this represents advice:

Claim your authority confidently — but avoid turning leadership into domination.

Badger + Heart

If this represents you:

You love fiercely. You may protect your heart aggressively or pursue someone with intensity.

If this represents another person:

Someone cares deeply but expresses it through strong or overwhelming action.

If this represents a situation:

Emotions are running high. Passion may fuel conflict as much as devotion.

If this represents advice:

Act from love, not pride. Let passion guide you, but do not let it overpower connection.

Badger + Mountains

If this represents you:

You are determined to overcome real obstacles. Stubbornness may be both your strength and your burden.

If this represents another person:

Someone refuses to back down in the face of difficulty.

If this represents a situation:

There are genuine barriers. Effort will be required — possibly sustained effort.

If this represents advice:

Stay persistent, but adjust strategy if brute force is not working.

Badger + Mask

If this represents you:

You may aggressively be confronting someone's false front. Or your aggression may be seen as performative.

If this represents another person:

Someone is defensive and hiding their true motives.

If this represents a situation:

Conflict arises around authenticity. Truth may be forced into the open.

If this represents advice:

Address deception directly but consider whether confrontation will resolve or escalate.

Badger + Coin

If this represents you:

You are willing to take a bold financial or practical risk.

If this represents another person:

Someone may be gambling on opportunity with confidence.

If this represents a situation:

A decision requires courage and a calculated leap.

If this represents advice:

Take the chance but ensure you are acting strategically, not impulsively or overly aggressively.

Badger + Beach

If this represents you:

You may be pushing forward when you need rest.

If this represents another person:

Someone oscillates between intensity and withdrawal.

If this represents a situation:

There is tension between action and pause. Timing matters.

If this represents advice:

Know when to press forward and when to let the tide reset you. Intensity must follow rhythm.

Badger does not create the situation. It activates it. Wherever Badger appears, it shows where energy is being applied with force, urgency, or determination. It reveals what you are willing to defend, pursue, or confront. The card that follows shows where this intensity lands, and whether it strengthens, protects, disrupts, or overwhelms what comes next. Badger reminds you that instinct is powerful, but how and where you direct it will shape the outcome.

Next up is Bandage. Bandage does not force movement the way Badger does. It responds to what has already happened. Where Badger applies pressure, Bandage applies care. It shows where something has been hurt, strained, or weakened, and where an attempt is being made to protect, stabilize, or temporarily repair it.

Bandage

Bandage represents immediate repair; tending to something that has been hurt, strained, or damaged. It is practical healing, not dramatic transformation. This card speaks to patching things up, stabilizing a wound, or addressing a problem quickly so it does not worsen. In its healthy expression, Bandage is care, accountability, and responsiveness.

In its shadow, it can signal a temporary fix that avoids deeper healing such as covering something up rather than resolving it. When Bandage appears, ask whether you are truly healing or simply managing symptoms.