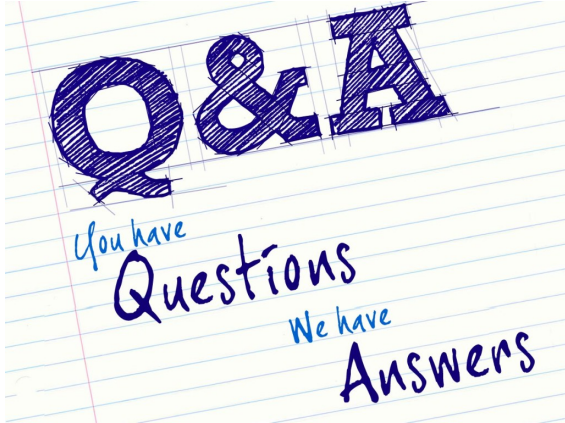


## Phrasing your Question

<http://i0.wp.com/thatstotallytarot.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/job-interview-questions-and-answers.jpg?fit=1024%2C1024>



Questions, they are the reason we approach the tarot or any divinatory tool. We may be facing a difficult situation in our lives, a tough relationship, and an important decision that needs careful consideration or some small curiosity.

Tarot is a tool, which answers questions. The way a question is asked is very important. A well-worded question can provide a more specific answer. Vague questions can lead to vague answers.

Author Joan Bunning of *Learning The Tarot* provides wonderful tips for this subject.

Joan says that you should phrase the question to show that *?you accept responsibility for your situation?*. Joan provides the following example

- Should I put my father in a nursing home, or take care of him in my house?
- What do I need to know to decide on the best living arrangements for my father?

In the first question, the writer gives up her responsibility for making a decision. She wants the cards to **tell** her what to do. On the second question, she is simply asking the cards to give her more information. She knows the decision lies with her.

It is tempting to ask questions like the first one, but Joan stresses that we should *?avoid questions that deflect responsibility?*. Such would be questions that are answered with a *?Yes?* or *?No?* or Questions that begin with *?Should?* or questions asking only about time.

So what kind of questions should we ask the tarot? Joan says the question should be open ended, which are questions that allow for conversation and explanation. These questions start with *?How?* or *?What?*. Example: *?How can I improve my relationship with??* or *?What do I need to know about?.*? These questions allow tarot to provide a detailed answer which is how tarot is designed to answer. Tarot likes to talk.

Joan also states that the question should focus on yourself, not on others. It is very tempting to ask, *?What is my ex thinking?* or *?What does my boss think of me?*. We want to know the unknown and get into people's heads. It is natural to ask these questions, if only we knew what they thought then it fix our problems, we would know what we should do based on what the other wants. However tarot is not a mind reader. Yes, I have used tarot to find reasons for behaviors in others, but it is only speculative.

Instead of asking questions totally directed about someone else, stay focused on yourself and phrase the question where it gives you an action or advice. Instead of *?What does my boss think of me?* you could ask *?How can I best present myself in front of my boss?.*

The finale two tips from Joan are to *?stay neutral?* and *?be positive?*.

Staying neutral removes your interest in the outcome. Joan states *?it is easy to begin a reading convinced that your position is the right one, but if you truly want to receive guidance, you need to be open to other points of view?*.

Being positive gives the question confidence and removes defeating thinking. For example, Joan provides us with a question, which is negative then is rephrased into a positive statement.

- Why can't I overcome my fear of public speaking?
- How can I improve my ability to speak to groups effectively?

Personally, I think you can ask the first question, it is valid because it is a "why" and tarot can provide an indication of the problem. However the main purpose of the second, rephrased question is to provide a positive self-focused question.

What happens if there is no question? Can't think of a question to ask the tarot? Marcus Katz and Tali Goodwin from *?Tarot, Face to Face: Using the cards in your everyday life?* provide guidance on this. They go on to ask that if you woke up in the middle of the night, what issues may be on your mind? Or you were to stare out a window and daydream, where would your mind wander off? The goal is to engage the imagination to allow deeper questions to emerge.

After you phrase the question properly, it is time to activate the question. Activating the question is more of a ritualistic idea, which I have come to through my own practice, and study of magick. It is not enough to think of the question in your head because the question remains *internal* and *private* to yourself. To activate the question it needs to be *released* into the universe by way of the four elements.

You think the question (Air), speak the question (Fire) and write the question on paper (water and earth). If you use a pen the ink represents water and the paper is earth. This is my practice, the way I see it by this process you are conceptualizing the question and manifesting the question into reality (birthing the question to life). This makes the question a *thing*, and releasing the question to the universe allows it to be answered by whatever it is you connect with (God, Goddess, Spirit, Higher Self).

Finally, a tip I learned from studying Lenormand (another system of card reading), Rana Geroege in "The Essential Lendormand" reminds us that we should stay focused on the answering the question asked, do not go off into other tangents of unrelated subjects. Rana also says that if the cards do not make sense, then your question or focus may not have been clear. So make sure to follow all the steps listed above.