

CYCLOPEDIA OF CARD MEANINGS



△
FIRE

♃
Jupiter

♐
SAGITTARIUS

Balance
Forbearance
Attunement



REV:
Excess
Overflow
Overindulgence

A red-winged angel with halo stands, nearly floating, with one foot dipped in water and the other on land, pouring water between two goblets. An orange alchemical symbol for Fire is patched onto the angel's chest. The symbol also affirms the angel's divinity, a symbol of the Holy Trinity. A path forms at the edge of the water and runs through rolling hills and mountain to the sun. Two yellow lilies, symbolic of innocence, virtue, and joy, bloom in the field.

KEY 14—TEMPERANCE

Some call Temperance the “healing card.” It denotes greater external or universal forces entering into our individual lives to right what is wrong, restore what was lost, cool what was too hot, heat up what was too cold, and temper our lives for balanced, harmonious health. The card is about internal balance. *Compare:* Key 11: Justice indicates external balance. Temperance is the fusion of two contrasting elements and bringing them into harmony within the mind or the spirit.

The Temperance card could also indicate that tempering is an important factor in dealing with the Seeker's current situation. The Seeker needs to reconcile two contrasting elements and bring them to harmony.

HOLISTIC TAROT

Temperance and balance are the keys to resolving the matter at hand. If the Seeker is single and asking about love, Temperance urges the Seeker to examine his or her own behavior as the source of romantic complications. There is internal imbalance within the Seeker, causing difficulties in love. If the Seeker is in a relationship and asking about love, Temperance suggests a greater need for cooperation and tempering of extreme emotions, such as anger, resentment, hostility, or sexuality. If asking about a current career situation, Temperance suggests that the Seeker's skill set is not directly pertinent to the task or project that the Seeker must complete in his or her profession, but that Seeker can temper that skill set into the task or project for balanced success. Temperance suggests the fusion of the Seeker's current skills with the skills that are expected. Thus it isn't that new skills need to be learned, but rather that the Seeker need only reconcile his or her existing skills with the task at hand.

The two goblets that the angel holds represent the higher-level unconscious and lower-level consciousness. The water poured between the two symbolizes reconciliation or temperance of the two. There is also an issue of whether the water flows from the higher cup to the lower cup, with gravity, or from the lower cup to the higher cup, against gravity, against the laws of physics. Tempering the unconscious with the conscious will resolve our anxieties and depression. *Compare:* Key 18: The Moon suggests a repressed unconscious, whereas Key 14: Temperance refers to the temperance between the Seeker's known conscious and repressed unconscious; reconciling the two.

Key 14: Temperance calls to mind Freudian and Jungian concepts. The mountain peaks in the background are reminiscent of the psychoanalytic concept of the ego. The sun is the superego. Beneath it is the id, the rough terrain leading to the foreground water pool. The pool is the unconscious. The angel represents the conscious, with one foot dipped in the unconscious and the other on a part of the terrain that represents the preconscious. In the Temperance card, the angel expresses the balancing of the many tiers of awareness in the human mind. Note further the winding path from the water to the rising sun, suggesting a path toward epiphany or sighting of the first light of the divine.

While the triangle symbol on the angel's chest denotes the element Fire, it can also represent the primary Trinitarian force, which in Christian ideology is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; in Judaism: Kether, Chokmah, and Binah; and in Hinduism: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. A triangle with a single point upward symbolizes the male energy, as depicted here on the angel, while a triangle with the single point downward would symbolize female energy. (Combined, such two triangles form the hexagram, which is significant across many Far Eastern and Abrahamic faiths.)

In notable twentieth-century texts, Temperance is also referred to as the Time card.⁵⁴ “The name of the angel is Time. . . . One of the cups the angel holds is the past, the other is the future. The rainbow stream between the cups is the present. You see that it flows both ways.”⁵⁵

The element of Fire governs this card; attributions associated with Fire will represent the external forces at play in the Seeker's situation. Temperance is related to Sagittarius, the Archer. Key 14: Temperance corresponds with the planet Jupiter, the element Fire, and, timing-wise, denotes the period November 22–December 21. Yang energy is dominant.

Reversed Meaning

Temperance is an important factor in the current problem, but the Seeker is not applying it. The card in reverse is a warning to do a better job tempering and bringing harmony to the contrasting elements currently in the Seeker's life. Temperance in reverse also suggests excess, overflow, and corpulence. The card in reverse could indicate either physical obesity or figurative obesity as a result of neglecting temperance. The Seeker's mind or body is out of balance as a result of excess. The Temperance card in reverse suggests the Seeker's inability (or the intent refusal) to curb cravings, usually cravings of a physical nature. When the Temperance card appears in reverse, the Seeker is urged to devote greater attention to his or her personal health and, no matter what the matter at hand is, do not let it adversely affect Seeker's well-being. There is an emotional, mental, or spiritual imbalance within the Seeker that is quickly manifesting as a physical imbalance.