



## Publishing Nonfiction Books on Spirituality

benebell wen

### MODULE 3 TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

## Sample Book Proposal

I thought about whether I should include a completely fictional book proposal sample, but one I believe to be an optimal book proposal or to include the actual one I used for getting *Holistic Tarot* published, which was a flawed, imperfect book proposal that you should definitely not emulate. I decided to go with the actual one, because it's real. Also, it actually worked, since *Holistic Tarot* got published and became a top selling tarot book, reaching #1 in its categories for many weeks in a row. By providing a real book proposal rather than a hypothetical one, you can see that your book proposal can be flawed and imperfect and still get you a publishing deal.

That being said, you do not want your book proposal to be flawed or imperfect if you can help it. So browse through this actual book proposal used to secure a publishing deal, but know that if I could do it over again, there are many changes I would have made to optimize the proposal. For example, the tone in my Overview is dry. If I had a do-over, I would have revised it to be more captivating. Also, my Marketing Plan was not very well-written, specific, or persuasive. I would have devoted more attention to tweaking my Marketing Plan.

*Note:* You'll see many discrepancies between what is said about *Holistic Tarot* in this early draft of a book proposal and the actual book that was published. For example, according to the book proposal, *Holistic Tarot* was 156,000 words. The actual book published was over 200,000 words. Also, according to the proposal, the title of the book is *Tarotanalysis: A Compendium of Tarot Theory and Practice*. The final title that the publisher and I decided on was *Holistic Tarot: An Integrative Approach to Using Tarot for Personal Growth*.

The following is the complete boilerplate book proposal I drafted for my first book. Then, for each individual publisher I submitted to, I modified the boilerplate book proposal to fit the publisher specifications.



Full Legal Name  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Telephone Number  
Email Address  
Author Website URL

Nonfiction Book Proposal

Est. Word Count: 156,000

# TAROTANALYSIS

## A Compendium of Tarot Theory and Practice

By Benebell Wen

### Overview

Updating the study of tarot to the 21st century, *Tarotanalysis: A Compendium of Tarot Theory and Practice* conjoins the time-honored traditional syntactics of tarot with contemporary applications. Tarot began as a card game played by the European elite and was then later adopted for divination uses. *Tarotanalysis* now presents tarot as a mind mapping tool for decision-making diagnostics. Learn how to activate your unconscious knowledge and intuition to hone creativity, design the trajectory of your life goals, and accomplish your ambitions.

*Tarotanalysis* offers historical and theoretical context for tarot studies and deconstructs the Rider-Waite-Smith system. A cyclopedia of the card meanings not only provides the traditional notations of each card, but also explains the corresponding symbols and imagery. Astronomy, astrology, numerology, Judeo-Christian symbology, Western elemental associations, and other studies are incorporated into the interpretation of tarot.

Given her heritage and having been a long-time practitioner of I Ching, I also reconcile the Western heritage of tarot with Eastern philosophy. The principle of Qi in relation to tarot theory and the Ba Gua are explored. Both traditional and modern methods of reading spreads are provided alongside fresh, contemporary approaches to crisis management and building resilience.

For the business executive looking for an intuitive system of decision-making, or the young professional seeking guidance for the next career stage, and maybe even guidance in matters of the heart, or the artist looking for inspiration, *Tarotanalysis* will become an indispensable compendium for using tarot as a modern-day oracle to foster personal and professional development.

## Author Biography

Benebell Wen is a lawyer, fashion designer, and literary journal editor. She has studied tarot for over 15 years and is a certified tarot master with the Tarot Certification Board of America. Wen is a professional tarot reader and teacher, a member of the American Tarot Association, and has published articles on tarot in the *ATA Quarterly*, the journal of the American Tarot Association, *Tarot Reflections*, among others. Originally from upstate New York, Wen now lives in San Francisco with her husband, a financial analyst, and their beloved cat.

## Book Description

Learn how to use tarot to facilitate creativity and intuition. As a self-empowering intellectual trigger, tarot can help people tap into their unconscious knowledge. By learning to connect to the unconscious with the conscious, an individual can harness creativity and intuition in a way that will help artists and writers advance past plateaus in their work, provide insight to corporate professionals who seek advancement in their careers, and to anyone looking to make sense of difficult emotions, experiences, and relationships. *Tarotanalysis: A Compendium of Tarot Theory and Practice* teaches all that and more, through simple and concise instruction.

The book begins by offering a historical and theoretical context for tarot studies and deconstructs the Rider-Waite-Smith system. A cyclopedia of the card meanings not only provides the traditional notations of each card, but also explains the corresponding symbols and imagery. Astronomy, astrology, numerology, Judeo-Christian symbology, Western elemental associations, archetypal myths and legends, and an assortment of studies are incorporated into the interpretation of tarot.

Given the author's heritage and having been a long-time practitioner of I Ching, the book tries to reconcile the Western heritage of tarot with Eastern philosophy. The principle of qi in relation to tarot theory and the ba gua are explored, as is feng shui and the Lo Shu square. Both traditional and modern methods of reading spreads are provided, with new approaches to crisis management and building resilience. Finally, for practitioners seeking to read professionally, this book will offer tips on how to approach tarot as an ethical profession.

Whether for work or love or greater understanding of purpose, tarot can help individuals be mindful of the factors that substantiate or attenuate their efforts toward success and help them design the trajectory of their life goals. Learn how to use tarot in a way beyond card games, fortune-telling, or divination, and rather, as an indispensable decision-making and mind-mapping tool.

## Market Category

*Tarotanalysis* would fit under the market category of Body, Mind, Spirit; New Age and Occult; and Self-Improvement. The book specifically addresses Tarot Divination as a means for self-improvement and teaches tarot through the Rider-Waite-Smith system, by far the most popular tarot system currently in use.

## Comparable Titles

Three recently published bestselling titles in the same market are *Tarot Beyond the Basic* by Anthony Louis, *Tarot for Life* by Paul Quinn and Rachel Pollack, and *21 Ways to Read a Tarot Card* by Mary K. Greer.

### Tarot Plain and Simple

Author(s): Anthony Louis  
Publisher: Llewellyn Publications  
Year: 2012 (reprint; first published 1996)  
ISBN: 978-1567184006  
No. of Pages: 322 pages

### Tarot for Life: Reading the Cards for Everyday Guidance and Growth

Author(s): Paul Quinn and Rachel Pollack  
Publisher: Quest Books  
Year: 2009  
ISBN: 978-0835608794  
No. of Pages: 296 pages

### 21 Ways to Read a Tarot Card \*

Author(s): Mary K. Greer  
Publisher: Llewellyn Publications  
Year: 2006  
ISBN: 978-0738707846  
No. of Pages: 336 pages

\* Although Greer's book was published over 5 years ago, I am including it in the list because it continues to be a strong bestseller.

## Distinguishing Features

*Tarotanalysis* will become a timeless reference book on tarot interpretation, from both traditional and contemporary approaches, and cover history, theory, and application.

Specifically, my book is set apart from current books on the market and comparable titles by the following key features:

- Comparable tarot books on the market either discuss theory and history from an academic perspective or they only provide card meanings and a few tarot spreads. *Tarotanalysis* will bring together both—an academic, practical approach beyond divination and yet also offer a comprehensive 156,000-word reference on card meanings, tarot spreads, and more.
- Within the tarot community, there has been recent interest in merging Eastern metaphysical practices with Western, though few have done so in a way that feels authentic to the Eastern heritage. I hope my book will be able to fill that void. For the first time in recent tarot publications, *Tarotanalysis* synthesizes Eastern philosophy, specifically the concept of Qi, the I Ching, feng shui, and the Lo Shu square with the traditional Western practice of tarot reading.
- None of the top selling tarot books teach the Opening of the Key method in tarot (a multi-tiered, complex divinatory approach dated to the late 19th century) in a way that is digestible. My book includes the Opening of the Key and also a modernized psychoanalytical adaptation of it that I call Depth Diagnostics.

## Market Interest

Tarot has been seeping into pop culture more prevalently in recent years, as incidental features in blockbuster movies and young adult fiction, television, and headlines in publications such as *The New Yorker*, *Huffington Post*, *The Atlantic*, and *BuzzFeed*. A renewed mainstream interest in tarot could equate to a renewed mainstream interest in buying books that teach tarot. In terms of social media, a Facebook page created for those interested in Tarot has garnered 240,932 “Likes” and the Astrolis Tarot Facebook application has over 10,000 users. There is a strong core market of enthusiasm for tarot studies and *Tarotanalysis* presents a fresh, contemporary perspective on the hundred-year-old Rider-Waite-Smith tarot deck.

## Target Audience

In particular, I envision young professionals and independent artists between the ages of 18 and 45 and who are interested in alternative lifestyle practices to be the target interest group. The New Age and New Thought movement is also gaining momentum in the 21st century and *Tarotanalysis* will be well positioned to capture that market for alternative spirituality.

*Tarotanalysis* takes the study of tarot to the level of mastery for those aspiring to turn tarot into a profession, and so it will appeal to the market of tarot professionals as well. There are over 1,000 members in the American Tarot Association and about 13,000 self-identified professional tarot readers on LinkedIn. *Tarotanalysis* will capture this professional segment, which has largely been overlooked by popular tarot books currently on the market.

## Endorsements

*Tarotanalysis* will seek endorsements from notable names in the tarot world, such as Mary K. Greer, Rachel Pollack, Joan Bunning, Barbara Moore, Anthony Louis, Corinne Kenner, Sasha Graham, and others.

## Publicity & Promotion

I am local to the San Francisco Bay Area, which has a thriving spiritual community and a strong interest in tarot and Eastern perspectives on tarot divination. Thus, it is an ideal region to promote a book like *Tarotanalysis*. I plan to engage in all of the following to promote my book:

- A book tour across the San Francisco Bay Area
- Free tarot reading events to promote the book
- Free workshops on learning tarot
- Keynote speaking engagements at national tarot conferences and symposia
- Query the top 20 bloggers in the online tarot community for reviews or interviews
- Seek out reviews or interviews in national publications to showcase tarot as a tool for triggering creative-intuition and helping with decision-making, rather than a tool of fortune-telling or other-worldly mysticism
- Publish articles on tarot or excerpts from *Tarotanalysis* to promote the book

# Table of Contents

Please see enclosed “Table of Contents.”

## Sample Chapters

The following chapters are enclosed for your review:

- Chapter 1: What is Tarotanalysis?
- Chapter 3: Allaying Fears and Offering Theories
- Chapter 9: Cyclopedia of Card Meanings (entries for Key 0: The Fool, Key 14: Temperance, Ace of Wands, Queen of Swords, and Ten of Pentacles only)
- Chapter 15: Considerations of the Spread Landscape
- Chapter 33: A Personal Essay—How I Started
- Appendix A: Tarot Spreads Quick Reference
- Appendix B: Astrological and Elemental Reference Tables