



THE NATURAL RUNE DECK BOOK OF MEANINGS

Physical ~ Psychological ~ Metaphysical ~ Natural



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The Natural Rune Deck Book of Meanings

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WHICH RUNE IS WHICH?



Fehu



Hagalaz



Tiwaz



Uruz



Nauthiz



Berkana



Thurisaz



Isa



Ehwaz



Ansuz



Jera



Mannaz



Raidho



Eihwaz



Laguz



Kenaz



Perthro



Ingwaz



Gebo



Elhaz



Dagaz



Wunjo



Sowilo



Othala

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Introduction

“Augury and divination by lot no people practice more diligently. The use of the lots is simple. A little bough is lopped off a fruit-bearing tree, and cut into small pieces; these are distinguished by certain marks, and thrown carelessly and at random over a white garment. In public questions the priest of the particular state, in private the father of the family, invokes the gods, and, with his eyes toward heaven, takes up each piece three times, and finds in them a meaning according to the mark previously impressed on them.”

Roman Historian Tacitus, Germania, 98 CE

Tacitus’s history, written secondhand from interviews with those who had actually made the long journey from Rome, doesn’t specify whether the Germanic tribes were using runes in divination. However, his account suggests that the practice of seeking information based on arrangements of symbols or signs dates closely to the earliest discovered rune inscriptions. Medieval rune poems in Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, and Norwegian indicate that runes had symbolic meanings in addition to functioning as phonetic letters. The *Havamal* or “Sayings of the High One” – part of a collection of poems dating from the 10th to 13th-centuries – associates runes with wisdom and power. The modern meanings of the Elder Futhark runes found in this book solidified in the 20th-century, bridging these sometimes conflicting historic sources.

The elements of rune readings – seeking information through seemingly “random” physical arrangements, symbolic rune meanings, and the association of runes with power – are all historically attested. As modern people, we combine them into “rune work” our own unique vehicle of inquiry and insight. This book embraces a progressive and flexible approach, incorporating modern psychology with time-honored spiritual principles, traditional craft with digital art. The background of ancient rune practice opens the door to new creative exploration.

Runes were developed in cultures living in intimate embrace with nature. Many correspond with natural elements, and rune consultation likely involved natural challenges: drought, flood, inconsistent harvests, or stagnant herds. The Natural Rune Deck seeks to harness these organic origins. Each rune’s natural background helps users draw lessons from nature and remember the rune’s meaning.

Since this book is first and foremost a deck guide, it starts with the card meanings. Feel free to skip to Part IV for tips on reading with runes.

Note that there is some disagreement about the names and forms of the Elder Futhark runes and their English letter equivalents. The names, written forms, and meanings presented in this book are commonly accepted, but your research may turn up variations. Connect with your own higher self or Divine source to decide which versions speak to you.

Author’s Personal Note

People often get the best results with physical manifestation and mental, emotional, or spiritual transformation when they request help. Depending on your beliefs, this could involve calling on a Divine source, seeking the intercession of spirit guides or other spiritual beings, enlisting your higher self, or even enlisting trusted friends or family members to help encourage, empower, and guide you.

In other words, you do not need to walk your path alone.

In the author's personal experience, the power to change is not so much inherent in the runes themselves as in the steps we take to implement the wisdom that comes to us through them.

Runes are not a substitute for your belief path and support system. Rather, they are conduits and tools to boost the effectiveness of your engagement with those in crafting a life you want to live.

Part I How To Use This Guide

In this book, the term *insight source* refers to your preferred rune wisdom connection. Whether you choose a Divine source that generates the runes and meanings, interpretive assistants like a metaphysical entity or entities (e.g. ascended master, spirit guide, or energetic collective), or an internal source like your higher self or your own intuition, your insight source generates understanding beyond your top-of-mind, cognitive mind abilities.

In an attempt to speak to a variety of faith paths, it also uses the term *Spirit* as a general catch-all for communicating with a universal source of wisdom or love or any entity linked to that (e.g. angels, ancestors, spirit animals).

Using the Card Meanings

Each card entry has keywords, three rune meanings for specific topic types, and a natural lesson/memory aid drawn from the whole card. Start with the keywords, and then focus on the meaning that corresponds with the subject of your reading. For example, physical-world questions related to employment or housing should start with the Physical Meanings. Queries about personal growth, emotions, or relationships can focus on the Psychological Meaning. Questions about spiritual growth, connection with a Divine source, or other spiritual activities, can start with Metaphysical Meanings.

For more input, peruse the other entries, where different rune aspects may be covered to avoid repetition. Since few circumstances apply only to one life area, the Psychological or Metaphysical meanings may apply to your physical situation as well.

Finally, read through the Natural Lesson, which combines the rune with its photographed background. These are often more metaphorical and may trigger your interpretive intuition.

Chakra Associations

Chakra associations have been assigned numerically, dividing the Elder Futhark runes into three sets of eight, and proceeding up the body from the red root chakra to the white soul star chakra. Common themes and your intuition may also guide you to associate certain runes with other chakras. For example, numerically, Ansuz relates to the green heart chakra, which reminds us of the importance of communicating heart-felt truths and speaking in love. However it would also be natural to link Ansuz with the throat chakra since both relate to communication.

Let intuition guide your connection between the chakra color and the rune meaning. For example Fehu, which relates to material success, is strengthened by the red chakra association with security and physical safety.

When reading multiple cards, you can look for patterns or repeated chakra colors that suggest future responses to the reading. For example, multiple cards featuring the color yellow might suggest sacral chakra activities like wearing yellow, eating yellow foods, using related crystals like citrine and yellow topaz, or exercising personal choice or creative play.

Part II Rune Keyword and Transliteration Tables

Rune	Name	Meaning	Keywords	Reversal
ᚼ	Fehu	Cattle	material success, wealth, abundance, fertility	materialism, greed
ᚱ	Uruz	Ox	personal power, strength, freedom, vitality	overbearing, unchecked
ᚦ	Thurisaz	Thorn	internal protection, caution, cleansing, defense	self harm, paranoia
ᚲ	Ansuz	Estuary	communication, message, connection, revelation	gossip, failure to listen
ᚳ	Raidho	Wagon	life's journey, transition, road, change, travel	undirected, fear of change
ᚷ	Kenaz	Torch	knowledge, information, skill, clarity, improvement, inspiration	ignorance, confusion too much information
ᚹ	Gebo	Gift	reciprocity, exchange, relationships, balance	NONE
ᚰ	Wunjo	Joy	happiness, good result, fun, satisfaction	sadness, aimless
ᚨ	Hagalaz	Hail	destruction preceding rebirth, renewal	NONE
ᚮ	Nauthiz	Need	urgency, essential, duty, restraint, requirements	NONE
ᚩ	Isa	Ice	stability, stagnation, unchanging, constant	NONE
ᚫ	Jera	Year	harvest, cycles, change, repetition, work/investment produces results	NONE
ᚱ	Eiwaz	Yew Tree	physical-spiritual connection, mystical, ritual	NONE
ᚷ	Perthro	Dice Cup	chance, fate, embracing the unknown, womb	chaotic, uncertainty
ᚹ	Algiz	Elk	protection, security, patronage, instinct	insecure, trapped
ᚦ	Sowilo	Sun	success, triumph, vitality, power, health	NONE
ᚦ	Tiwaz	Glory	leadership, goals, self-awareness, authority, male	conflict, selfishness
ᚷ	Berkana	Birch Tree	nurturing, healing, care, growth, birth, female, Divine mother	family issues, neglect lack of self-care
ᚨ	Ehwaz	Horse	trust, partnership, loyal, progress, teams	lack of trust or progress

ᛞ	Mannaz	Humanity	people, community, society, identity, true self, traits/gifts that make us human	inhumanity social pressure
ᛠ	Laguz	Lake	emotions, subconscious, revelation, spirituality, excavation, uncovering what is hidden	too emotional overwhelmed
ᛘ ᛚ	Ingwaz	Seed	beginning, essence, sprouting, potential, ideas, inner self, the root of the matter	NONE
ᛞ	Othala	Legacy	inheritance, responsibilities, home, family	rigidity, pressure
ᛞ	Dagaz	Day	opportunity, optimism, awakening, thresholds, light overcomes darkness, transformation	NONE

English Letter / Rune Equivalents

Notes:

It's optional to use the same rune for each English vowel or to differentiate between long and short vowels. Follow your preference to skip silent letters and use diphthongs or to transliterate every English letter.

English	Rune	Name	Pronunciation / Transliteration Notes
A	ᚦ	Ansuz	
B	ᚷ	Berkana	
C	< ᚨ	Kenaz Sowilo	Use Kenaz for hard C (Carolyn) Use Sowilo for soft C (Cecilia)
D	ᛞ	Dagaz	
E	ᛚ ᛞ	Isa (Eee-saw) Ehwaz (Aa-waz)	Use Isa for long E (Evelyn) Use Ehwaz for short E (Ethel)
F	ᚥ	Fehu (Feh-hu)	
G	ᚷ	Gebo	Hard G (Giselle), can use Jera for soft G (Gerald)
H	ᚨ	Hagalaz	
I	ᚦ	Eiwaz (I-waz)	Pronounced long I (Ivan), can also use for short I (Israel)

J	⚡	Jera (Yeee-ra)	Jera can used for Y or J
K	<	Kenaz (Key-naz)	
L	↑	Laguz (La-gooz)	
M	⚡	Mannaz	
N / NG	⚡ ⚡	Nauthiz / Ingwaz	Use Nauthiz for N (Nell) and Ingwaz for NG (Ingrid)
O	⚡	Othala	Pronounced long O (Odelle), can also use for short O (Olive)
P	⚡	Perthro	
Q	< ⚡	Kenaz-Wunjo	Combine Kenaz-Wunjo for 'KW' sound
R	⚡	Raidho (Ride-ho)	
S	⚡	Sowilo	

T / TH	↑ ⚡	Tiwaz / Thurisaz	Use Tiwaz for T (Tom) and Thurisaz for the TH (Thorne)
U	⚡	Uruz (Ooo-ruz)	Pronounced long U (Uriah), can also use for short U (Uthelbert)
V	⚡	Wunjo (Wun-yo)	
X	< ⚡ ↑	Kenaz-Sowilo or Algiz	Use Kenaz-Sowilo when pronounced KS (Alex) Use Algiz when pronounced like Z (Xavier)
Y	⚡	Jera (Yeee-ra)	
Z	↑	Algiz	

* Interpretations and equivalents are the intuitive work of Spiritsaid, based on traditional and modern sources.

Part III Individual Card Meanings



𐌺 Fehu - Cattle

Keywords: Material success, wealth, abundance, fertility, flow of resources, prosperity

Reversal Keywords: Materialism, greed, too much focus on the physical situation

Physical

Fehu may refer to a physical object of desire like an intended job, the ideal partner, a promotion, some concrete achievement or physical object that tells you you've achieved your goal. As an omen, this is typically a positive card, indicating that a goal is within reach.

Psychological

Consider your definition of success. Cattle represent wealth in agrarian societies, but not every kid who grows up on a stock farm is cut out for ranch life. Beware of blindly following social or family success or defaulting to material concerns—living situation, job, possessions. While we need those, simply increasing material accomplishments may not create happiness. A flexible work schedule, a giving-back volunteering opportunity, or more sleep may be the success you long for. If you're struggling with others in success-related arenas, your challenges may relate to differing visions of success. Fehu urges you to expand your definition to discover the overlap between practicality and deeper satisfaction.

Metaphysical

You may have heard the saying “You can't take it with you.” Fehu asks us to consider what we can take with us, and what's worth pursuing even if we can't? It's hard to prove how this life's good deeds might impact our cosmic futures. Will we disappear in a puff of smoke? Are we gunning for an eternal reward? If we come back around again, will our experience be influenced by whatever we did in this physical body? Aside from the material necessities of physical life, what do you want to put your effort into stockpiling—spiritual enlightenment, positive karma based on good deeds, a full experience of this life's sensations? These questions help minimize just blundering through life, trying to pay this month's rent or save for next month's groceries. Looking forward to age 80, what can you reliably say that you will still value at the end of your life?

Chakra association

Red Root

Natural Rune Lesson

Some of the best types of success serve multiple purposes. In the old days, sheep or cattle were valued for not just meat but also milk, leather, wool, and horn. In colder areas, the house and the barn shared the same roof to capture the animals' body heat in winter. In the modern era, we still use sheepskins for decorating, clothing, and baby swaddling. In your life, how can you combine the essential aspects of material success—the income needed for food, shelter, and healthcare—with the pleasurable aspects of a deeper sense of success—community, satisfying activity, or a meaningful collective contribution? While there's value in a practical day job that funds your non-remunerative dream, daily activities are sweeter when they feel like more than just a paycheck. Contemplate the overlap between many definitions of success in your life.



\ Uruz - Ox

Keywords: Personal power, strength, freedom, vitality, force of nature, willpower, manifestation, the ability to identify your essential self

Reversal Keywords: Overbearing power, unchecked momentum

Physical

Uruz refers to your ability to exercise your will on your physical environment. Rather than waiting for things to take their course or relying on others, take the matter into your own hands and shape the circumstances yourself. Trust your own personal wisdom. You have the ability to achieve your goals.

Psychological

Uruz raises questions about the proper use of personal power. The ox can be productively harnessed to the plow, but it can also rampage through the garden. Use personal power to achieve goals without bulldozing over others in the process. Use power to encourage others, but avoid controlling their lives or dictating what you think is right for them. Enjoy positive self-esteem and faith in your own abilities, but continue to seek needed help and respect others who don't seem as strong as you. Uruz is all about the positive application of power in your circumstance. Do you need to push more to create your own vision? Or is this a time to help others bolster their own power to create something that benefits everyone?

Metaphysical

Metaphysically, Uruz relates to the underlying source of our power. Some abilities—talents, notable physical stature, very high intelligence—came at birth. What are you preternaturally good at, and how can those benefit yourself and others? How do you use your gifts to maximize this bodily incarnation? Do your spiritual beliefs guide what you should be doing with those abilities? Beyond existing comfortably in this world and helping others, is there something that you'd like to build in the long run? Or perhaps your particular abilities open up new, advanced spiritual paths. Seek out the most appealing intersections between your personal strengths and spiritual progress.

Chakra Association

Orange Sacral

Natural Rune Lesson

Oaks are gorgeous, strong trees with beautiful fall color and great sources of building material. But powerful oaks can also leach moisture and nutrients from other plants, hog available light, and create a poison hazard for pets or children. Oaks can strengthen but also overwhelm. Now trees have no choice but to drop their tannin-rich leaves and acorns, even if teething babies are nearby. But humans can be aware of our context and modulate our own use of resources, leaving space for others to grow and flourish around us. If you have a tendency to be overbearing or hold back when using your fair share of resources, emulate the healthy oak's balance, existing in harmony with its garden companions. It's also important to remember that not all progress is founded on strength. The fallen detritus around the oak tree provides small animal shelter and nurturing mulch for seeds. Even a dead oak can provide nesting space for birds, and ultimately its decay enriches the soil. Avoid falling into society's deification of power. Even things that stem from defeat, failure, or decay, contain the potential for assistance and regeneration.



‣ Thurisaz - Thorn

Keywords: Internal protection, caution, cleansing, self-defense, self-care, penetrating, destroying old patterns

Reversal Keywords: Self-harm, paranoia, too much caution

Physical

Thurisaz may indicate the need for caution in seeking your physical goals. Be patient, scope out the situation before you act, or be aware of other people or forces potentially counteracting your aims. It might be time to re-evaluate the goal you are pursuing. Perhaps it needs tweaking to align more closely with your best interests.

Psychological

Consider a healthy balance of self protection. Thorns protect the rose from damaging grazing animals, but they can also ward off the healthy pruning gardener. In many cases, cautious self-care is just common sense. However, excessive caution or oppressive memories of past mistakes can hold us back from new experiences or invigorating opportunities. Sometimes protecting yourself means having enough faith to open up even if success isn't guaranteed. The cleansing aspect highlights the importance of protecting ourselves by letting go of what might hold us back: other people's energy, foreign influences that don't represent our highest good, or limiting memories from past experiences. When does protection involve setting up a barrier to keep away harmful influences, and when does it mean dissolving barriers that no longer serve us?

Metaphysical

Many spiritual experiences revolve around external protection provided by Divine figures, spirit guides, or the protection of providence. How does your spirituality involve the ability to protect yourself? Jesus's family thought that he had lost his mind and came to take charge of him, effectively threatening to end his ministry. But even though he loved his mother, he refused to go with her, protecting his own spiritual dream by persevering with his spiritual family of choice rather than his blood family of birth. Sometimes our metaphysical path needs protection from people or forces—well meaning or otherwise—who threaten to derail our progress. At the same time, our reaction to these forces often brings up childhood wounds, old conditioning, or social/cultural beliefs that we need to release in order to persevere in our spiritual path. The blood that drips from the thorn prick cleanses the wound to promote healing. Consider what you may need to heal or let go of in order to protect the spiritual progress you are trying to make.

Chakra association

Yellow Solar Plexus

Natural Rune Lesson

Blackberry thorns are exactly calibrated for the right kind of protection. Distributed along the stems, they keep away hungry animals, but they don't deter pollinating bees and butterflies. However, humans can respond strongly to perceived attacks and end up fending off healing influences as much as harmful ones. Learn from the blackberry to use discretion when it comes to self protection. Give yourself a day or two (or even longer) for strong protective impulses to subside. But once they do, consider re-emerging, opening doors to regenerating interaction, hope, or renewed activity. If you trigger other people's self-protective impulses, learn any needed lessons, but don't end up isolating yourself because you feel like a harmful presence to others. Humans, susceptible to blackberry thorns, can nonetheless learn to pick blackberries without damaging the plants or being damaged themselves. Sometimes it just takes a little practice to find the balance between protecting yourself and still reaping the delicious fruit you crave.



† Ansuz - Estuary

Keywords: Communication, message, connection, revelation, inspiration, charisma, understanding the self, altering language to change attitude

Reversal Keywords: Gossip, failure to listen, blocked communication, slander, plotting against others

Physical

The key to this situation involves communication. Those involved may need to make their needs, desires, or preferences known. Or perhaps messages or input from others will resolve the matter. Be on the lookout for incoming signs or signals, and consider how you may want to use communication to shape your

circumstances.

Psychological

Communication can feel like a double-edged sword. At the estuary, the river can deposit its contents into the ocean, but that opening provides entrance to foreign invaders. We must communicate to shape the outside world and avoid bottling up internal concerns. However, sometimes other people's return communication doesn't seem to bolster our own highest good. Ansuz questions how we view communication. Do we take others' pronouncements as gospel, implicitly or explicitly assuming their view? Do we remember that other people don't receive our exact intentions, but only their impressions based on their background and context? Sometimes speech is simply about expressing our own thoughts and beliefs without trying to control other people's responses. It may be best simply to say what feels necessary and let the chips fall where they may. Try to find balance between speaking your own truth and being receptive but not gullible about what others communicate in return.

Metaphysical

Communication is a huge part of spirituality. Whether with a Divine being, spirit guides, your own higher self, or members of your spiritual or support community, the ability to talk about your "Truth with a capital t" is the lynchpin of any spiritual practice. Whether widely accepted or applicable only to your interior world, being honest about what's really going on is key for healing wounds, Evolving, and developing sincere connection with other spiritual seekers. Ansuz relates to many spiritual practices like meditation, prayer, opening to messages from the universe, and receiving Divine guidance. In using this powerful rune, it's vital to Acknowledge how open you are to spiritual messages. If you're not ready to hear everything, don't be afraid to let the universe or your spiritual partner know. At every level, enlightening and refreshing communication is ready to come your way.

Chakra Association

Green Heart

Natural Rune Lesson

What does this background say to you? Is it a snowflake or frost? A banshee or a willow-the-wisp? Or maybe it's foam on the seashore. In fact, it's a colony of lichen, a symbiotic collaboration between an algae and a fungus. But the actual botanical fact is not what matters. Like Ansuz, the importance is what the image communicates to you. Your answers lie in what you hear. Since what you understand may not be what others wanted to communicate, you can change the messages you have perceived. Even past communications that indicated you that you were a [fill in the blank] person or lessons about not hoping for [fill in the blank experience] can be re-evaluated and re-interpreted. Is there another way to perceive those shaping messages that may not have helped you become the person you wanted to be?



⌘ Raidho - Wagon

Keywords: Life's journey, transition, road, change, travel, dedication to your path, the Spiral Dance or Cosmic Journey, destiny

Reversal Keywords: Lack of direction, fear of change, choosing the wrong path

Physical

The key to your situation may involve actual movement, like getting more exercise, receiving a message or object arriving from afar, or traveling to a new location. Or, Raidho may indicate a mental or emotional journey: seeing things from another perspective, changing your approach, or stepping out of your comfort zone. To achieve your goal, your current tack must change.

Psychological

"It's the journey, not the destination" raises the question of what journey you want to be on. When planning a vacation, you consider whether you want a peaceful natural getaway or an exciting experience navigating foreign city. Life's journey requires similar choices. It doesn't have to be the same choice every day, and sometimes life seems to serve up a certain type of trip whether that's our preference or not. But don't let the momentum of your daily requirements determine your journey experience. While we can't fully control external circumstances, our internal mental and emotional perspective determines how we experience our physical existence. How can you take greater control over your own journey to create the type of experiences you will enjoy?

Metaphysical

Do you have any preconceptions about the arc of the human spiritual journey? Do you prefer the stair-step model, striving ever closer to some perfect understanding? Do you envision a spiral, revisiting the same concepts or experiences but from a slightly different perspective? Or maybe it's more like a sine wave with repeating ups and downs? Whatever the larger shape, our choices affect our experience along the way. Are you seeking joy, wisdom, Truth, love, camaraderie, or peace? Raidho urges you to become an architect of the parts that you can control and of your perceptions of the parts that seem out of your control. Do you feel limited by your beliefs, past authority figures, faith tradition? Do you want to find wiggle room or plan a total jailbreak? While you may not have your hands on every aspect of your trip, you have a lot of influence as the main participant. Any changes you'd like to make?

Chakra Association

Blue Throat

Natural Rune Lesson

Like the camellia blossom on this card, sometimes our journey takes an unexpected turn. An unknown force caused this bud to fall to the grass, in perfect position to be memorialized in a photo. The physical blossom would have lasted longer in contact with its bush, but there it was one of many, gone by the end of the winter. However, its surprise detour enabled it to participate in a creative project – this rune deck – that will last much longer than a single season. The grief, frustration, or disappointment of unexpected turns can cause us to miss their full potential. Persevere to find the new gains a surprising situation can bring. The perfect journey may not look "perfect" in the beginning, but it has the potential to be the best ride of your life in the end.



< Kenaz - Torch

Keywords: Knowledge, information, skill, clarity, improvement, inspiration, curiosity, creative power, illumination, exploration, the Seeker/Sage

Reversal Keywords: Ignorance, confusion, too much information, ignoring the creative impulse, putting out your fire

Physical

More information or more skill is needed to address this circumstance. This could involve extra research, an outside expert, or an additional perspective. Perhaps individuals involved need to leverage additional abilities, get more training, or bring on new hands. Generally, this card is a positive indication that more

knowledge or new skills can enable a solution.

Psychological

Kenaz is about discovery and progress. Lift your torch high, search the dark corners, uncover what's been blocked, forgotten, or lost. Investigate new areas to reveal the psychological underpinnings. Then, employ the lamp of knowledge or the forge of skill to take your next steps. Uncovering areas where you need to improve may involve raising your emotional intelligence quotient, learning how to heal painful emotions, developing your forgiveness muscles, or adopting a more flexible perspective. Improve your skill level in pursuit of psychological progress.

Metaphysical

Kenaz represents the pursuit of knowledge for any purpose. Some spiritual paths prioritize knowledge as an end in itself. Knowing more means you're more evolved. However, others prioritize certain types of knowledge over others – perhaps knowledge of spiritual growth or service over sacred texts or traditions, or vice versa. What knowledge is most meaningful to you? If life has dealt challenges, Kenaz can refer to knowledge of how those enable spiritual growth. If your physical life is relatively quiet, Kenaz may indicate a time for deeper soul searching about what knowledge you want next. Whether responding to life itself or working within your spiritual traditions or preferred activities, it's time for thoughtful consideration.

Chakra Association

Indigo Brow / Third Eye

Natural Rune Lesson

A tree has five layers. Outer bark protects the tree. Inner bark transports food. The growth cambium responds to hormones produced by the leaf tips. Sapwood carries water. Heartwood provides structure. Did you know all that? I didn't either (at least not until I wrote this card meaning). This is the essence of Kenaz. Imagine how useful this would be to, say, a maker of bows or canoes or houses, back in the day. A highly skilled craftsperson would make the very best use of this theoretical knowledge to make practical objects. Kenaz is about gathering information and then figuring out it's best application in the real world. Nowadays, it's tempting to do the mental equivalent of going to the lumberyard and buying a 2x4: following the latest internet guru, mimicking a successful mentor, or piggybacking on someone else's work. But Kenaz asks us to think more subtly, understand in greater detail, and be sensitive to nuance so that we can become true masters of both knowledge and skill.

✕ Gebo - Gift



Keywords: Reciprocity, exchange, relationships, balance, bonds, mutually beneficial interactions, bringing people together, drawing things to you

Physical

Multiple aspects must be evaluated or harmonized to achieve success. Consider social or teamwork approaches. You may need to get out into the community, meet new people, or look for others to support you. Gebo may indicate some form of crossroads with multiple possible paths to be evaluated. It is also a card of harmony, so you may need to strive for an even-handed give-and-take or identify a win-win strategy, even if things currently seem adversarial.

Psychological

Gebo urges us to consider the balance in our lives. When we contribute to the collective good, do we receive equally in return? Do we nurture our relationships to benefit our partners and ourselves? Or do we fall into the trap of extremes, either prioritizing what's good just for us or sacrificing ourselves for others. Gebo suggests taking time to consider other possibilities. At this crossroads, how can you choose a balanced or harmonious path to achieve the highest good for the greatest number? Don't be afraid to take time to consider. A peaceful woodland path can be just as productive as a busy city shopping trip. But you must plan in advance how you want to benefit and set yourself up to achieve that.

Metaphysical

Gebo reminds us that everything has at least two sides. Every physical occurrence has a spiritual effect. Every relationship action affects all partners. Every challenge comes with a chance to build strength. Every disappointment is an opportunity to reevaluate expectations. Every obstacle begs a creative path to a satisfying resolution. In some sense, we are always standing at a crossroads. What direction will your next step take? If you're somebody who's used to making these decisions on your own, consider consulting metaphysical partners – your higher self, your personal connection with the Divine, or spirit guides or counselors – to avoid one-sided decisions. Reach out for loving support to ground your individual steps within your journey's larger map.

Chakra Association

Purple Crown

Natural Rune Lesson

Lichen sheltering on a tree branch is a terrific example of both aspects of Gebo energy – balance and crossroads. While the lichen uses the tree's protection and structure, if it expands too much, its water weight can start to threaten its protector. Nature seeks to find the harmonious balance, benefiting from the tree without taking too much. Once the branch falls to the ground, the lichen is at a crossroads. Lichen lifespans often measure hundreds of years, easily outliving the fallen branch. Not all relationships are destined to last for the full life of both partners. Sometimes, Gebo's crossroads points us to new people, new institutions, or a new career. Such a parting does not mean that the old relationship was unfulfilling or lacked value. However, life is always about balancing constancy and change. The lichen and the tree branch raise provocative questions about how to decide when to stay and when to look for something new.



‡ Wunjo - Joy

Keywords: Happiness, positive results, fun, satisfaction, fulfilled wishes, ideals, vision, beautiful things happening

Reversal Keywords: Sadness, aimlessness, prioritizing superficial goals over true joy

Physical

Wunjo suggests you seek joy or satisfaction in this circumstance. Your path forward may involve creating encouraging emotions or experiencing gratitude. If your situation is challenging, this card can also be a stimulus to learn to find the positive when things are hard. Wunjo is as much about mindset as physical actions.

As an omen, it is strongly positive.

Psychological

Sometimes it can feel like joy is a dirty word – productivity, usefulness, sacrifice, or conformity can feel much more comfortable. But being joyful isn't selfish; creating joy for yourself leaves plenty to share with others. Bake a double batch of cookies and give half away. Wunjo urges you to think about furthering your own brand of joy. Consider what, where, and how. Include the environment surrounding your efforts. When taking advice, remember that you and others may find joy differently. Even when others disapprove, your positive energy can radiate into your environment. However, be careful that your paths to joy don't involve trampling others. Some people feel that the Wunjo looks like a victory flag. Value a wide range of victories. If all your victories automatically result in others' losses, you may end up with a pyrrhic victory – you win the battle but find yourself all alone in the end.

Metaphysical

On your spiritual journey, you may find moments that do not seem to further your joy or immediate satisfaction. Sometimes, devoting ourselves to spiritual pursuits, we may believe things will become easier or more comfortable, that life should unfold for us with less effort. And sometimes that does, indeed, happen. But other times, spiritual evolution runs through a rocky place. Some stages may feel like punishment for the wrong road. Of course, feel free to learn whatever lessons you feel are appropriate. However, if your decisions seem sound in retrospect, Wunjo asks you to consider a deeper definition of joy. How could this cratered, pitted path actually be your ideal road? Is it possible that, even with its disappointments or challenges, this journey is actually profoundly satisfying? Perhaps your subconscious or your higher self is creating a larger vision that surpasses your conscious desire for ease and comfort. Rather than becoming frustrated, strive to see how your current scenery is helping you achieve what you've always really wanted – a life that is satisfying, strengthening, and empowering rather than just comfortable, easy, and reassuring.

Chakra Association

White Soul Star

Natural Rune Lesson

Why do vines climb trees? Because that makes them happy - metaphorically, of course! In the case of the vine, climbing the tree provides better access to sunlight and provides shelter from predators or wind damage. However, too much ivy can siphon moisture from the tree's roots, block access to light, and unbalance or overweight the tree's crown. Humans desire happiness, but too much focus on just that can reduce our appreciation of challenges and lead to short-term decision-making. Consider the difference between happiness, joy, and satisfaction. Obviously, we need all three; focusing on only one can leave us unbalanced, unable to bend with the wind during storms. Consider the balance of those in your situation. Sometimes the need to find a silver lining can feel more like a duty. If you truly valued your own growth and development, would that help it feel more like a joy?

ᚱ Hagalaz - Hail



Keywords: Destruction proceeding rebirth, renewal, crystallization from chaos, beneficial challenges, moving forward from difficulty, manifesting something new out of hard times

Physical

You may have suffered loss in this situation, but when something passes away, room is created for something new to replace it. Either look for opportunities that have arisen as a result of what has gone, or consider that you may need to give up or sacrifice something to create space for something new. Hagalaz is about the momentum to continue forward, embracing change and transition even when what has passed feels irreplaceable.

Psychological

Like the hail that flattens crops, Hagalaz-related situations often bring grief, loss, anger, and even despair. Hail creates moisture to nurture new growth, but depending on the weather, the hail may not melt right away, and even if moisture is available, new growth may be slow to appear. Give yourself time to process challenging emotions. Don't try to shortcut directly to rebirth. However, don't let emotions block out hope for what might be coming next. Perhaps what was lost was ready to go, especially if you aren't fighting to regain it. What fresh opportunities present? How could you use this new open space? Wait to see what springs up, make a detailed plan, or perhaps balance the two. Whatever your path forward, find optimism in new options.

Metaphysical

Ever wondered why Jesus was born a poor baby in an occupied country or why Buddha decided to give up his wealth? Very often, early social or family training prioritizes a comfortable material existence. But that quest can suck up all available energy. Sometimes it takes chaos to galvanize spiritual growth, metaphysical abilities, or the impetus to create the life we are looking for. If you feel like you're in the middle of what Native American tribes called the Great Giveaway – losing comfort, familiarity, or shelter – consider what you want to crystallize next. Perhaps Spirit is supporting your dreams by removing obstacles to growth. Needing to rebuild can be the mother of inventing a wonderful new life. Don't shortcut the process and bury any grief, loss, anger, or fear in your new, pared-down circumstances. As you work through those, keep your eye on the prize of what is coming next. Hagalaz reassures you that something is on the horizon!

Chakra Association

Red Root

Natural Rune Lesson

Tiny pathway stones are terrific examples of the redemptive power of Hagalaz. Many thousands or even millions of years ago, they were rocks in a majestic mountain range created by a volcanic eruption. How the mighty have fallen, split into tiny chips and transported to a landscaping stockyard. How would a human observer have interpreted the journey? Overwhelmed by the eruption's power, bored to tears by the eons of mountain-building, terrified by dynamite explosions, stuck in an anonymous pile of rocks, we would have worried whether we'd ever become something great again. But through all those transitions, these rocks endured, and at every stage they were ready to become part of a larger, productive whole. Now they are part of a decorative path in suburban Oregon, admired and enjoyed daily by walkers and joggers. Despite having been melted, pummeled, stretched, squeezed, and fragmented, their essential strength has endured, simply showcased in a new form. Each incarnation highlights another productive aspect; it doesn't diminish the rocks' integrity. How is this true of you, too?

‡ Nauthiz - Need



Keywords: Urgency, essential, duty, restraint, requirements, hardship, the need to level up, sacrifice required to advance, pushing forward in adversity

Physical

Need may drive actions in this circumstance. Rather than pining over luxury of choice, or falling into paralysis of analysis, consider what has to be done. When contemplating the actions of others, consider that they may simply be trying to meet their perceived needs. Employ creative problem solving to identify a situation that meets both yours and theirs.

Psychological

Needs can be frustrating when they push us to do things we don't want to do or make decisions before we feel ready. But need can also be the engine for ingenuity, invention, and change. Rather than becoming frustrated, consider using your needs to stimulate the creative energy to stir your soup. How can you meet your most exigent needs and still support the rest of your life goals? If you must be driven by others' needs, can you find some happy synergy between those and your internal desires? Look at the big picture, and consider psychological needs as well as physical ones to create a springboard into a new, fertile period.

Metaphysical

Nauthiz often appears in challenging situations, and it's easy to focus on immediate material concerns like food, shelter, companionship, and encouragement or comfort. But metaphysical Nauthiz reminds us that spiritual needs for transcendent experience, a sense of wonder or awe, or a connection with the untouchable can be just as urgent. Where do you need to take your spiritual path for maximum growth, satisfaction, or other spiritual goals? Sometimes the choice that seems less physically comfortable or secure actually meets those spiritual needs better than playing it safe or sticking with a known quantity. Your spiritual connection may ask you to step out in faith, even if it doesn't fit the needs that your society or family prioritized. What kinds of larger needs – perhaps for healing, challenge, freshness, or invigoration – might this nurture? Consider others' spiritual needs as well. Sometimes people put pressure on us to bolster their own comfort or material success, but coddling others with what's comfortable for them may not advance their spiritual growth or ours.

Chakra Association

Orange Sacral

Natural Rune Lesson

Grass needs water and sunlight. It can last for a few days, but long term drought or blocked light is terminal. However, grass has no way to make sure that it gets either one – it must trust in Providence for sustenance. We may have the ability to meet our needs in the short-term, but we are just as dependent on circumstances in the long run. Children depend on others for food and shelter, and even adults need companionship for mental and emotional support. Thus, we need to make sure to choose an environment where our needs can be met. As much as we might want to be different – perhaps more self-supporting or less needy – there's no point in denying what we need to survive. Rather, become an expert in your own needs. Requirements differ from person to person, but everyone has a non-negotiable few. What are those for you? How can you make sure that you and those you love receive what's needed to thrive?

| Isa - Ice



Keywords: Stability, stagnation, unchanging, constant, blockage, the need for rest or contemplation, preservation, a conservative approach, fortifying connections, doubling down on what needs to be protected

Physical

In this situation, consider what can be changed and what cannot. Are those non-negotiables positives to work with or challenges to work around? Figure out what can go and what has to stay. Remember to exercise discretion when determining the difference between stability and stagnation. Consider what you're trying to achieve with your changes rather than embracing change just for the sake of doing something new.

Psychological

Stubbornness and solidity are the twin psychological aspects of Isa. Sometimes we cling to things when it's really time to let go. But at other times, holding on to what's important, nurturing, or provides purpose can help us through the chaos. Isa asks you to sort through your current psychological tools and decide which camp they belong in. What would you like to release? Where would you like to double down? What is helping you endure? What is holding you back? Answering these questions will help you use Isa's energy to make the right kind of progress for you.

Metaphysical

Spiritual growth typically involves a lot of change: transformation, stepping into the unknown, healing, letting go of past traumas or conditioning. It can feel like Spirit wants us to major in high-wire acts without a net. However, just as important is figuring out what you refuse to change. What essential values, desires, or talents do you want to retain and build on? What are you not willing to let go of, no matter how poorly it fits with your family or society or how tough it is to work into regular life? Another of Isa's aspects, taking time for rest and contemplation, may help you answer this question. Don't grab on to change, transformation, or growth as inherent positives. Don't constantly push yourself to confront the uncomfortable in ways that don't feel healthy or appropriately measured. Sometimes, pulling back to rest, recuperate, or consider your approach is the key to fulfilling, long-term progress.

Chakra Association

Yellow Solar Plexus

Natural Rune Lesson

Have you ever discovered food that's been in the freezer for so long that it's no longer edible? Frozen blackberries are delicious, but if you've had them for a long time, they may no longer fit your current menu plans. Preserving or stabilizing something is valuable when you have an actual plan to use it. Otherwise, hoarding can create burden, a false sense of security, or create valueless objects, goals, or beliefs that clutter up your physical, mental, or emotional space. To judiciously use Isa energy, periodically clean out your personal freezer. Identify what is past its freshness date, what you never really liked anyway, what you have no plans to eat if you can possibly avoid it. Whatever is left constitutes real food that you can actually make into a delicious meal.



✧ Jera - Year

Keywords: Harvest, cycles, change, repetition, work or investment producing results, Cosmic cycles, reaping what you sow, stimulation, a catalyst for growth, slow and steady progress

Physical

Putting in effort is likely to yield a positive result in this situation. You may not see it right away; it may take work to achieve your goal, but something good will come. Remember to cast a wide net – even just learning something counts. Just because your specific goal didn't materialize doesn't mean that nothing good resulted. This card may also suggest that you're re-enacting a repetitive cycle, so if that resonates, consider what effort is needed to get out of your rut.

Psychological

Jera asks you to evaluate when to keep going on your current path and when to start in a new direction. If you continue without results, are you persevering in hope or continuing to spend good money after bad? Jera suggests that hard work will reap a profit; however, do your best to put in work that has the highest chance of achieving your goal. Sometimes a refresher course or a renewed approach can be helpful if your current tack is more of a rut. How can these concepts wring more value from your current efforts?

Metaphysical

Remember that hard work does not automatically produce the expected crop. Planting wheat seeds, the farmer expects to grow wheat. The gardener who knows the name of the rose bush can predict the blossom color. But sometimes spiritual work yields unexpected results. Unexpected outcomes can lead to frustration or doubt. But since Spirit's path is sometimes crooked and surprising, don't be too quick to blame a mistake, poor choice, or wrong path. Jera's results often take time. Your current crop, even if seemingly initially undesirable, may still be deeply satisfying at maturity. Consider where this process may be taking you rather than judging based on momentary feelings. While you're waiting, try planting some unfamiliar seeds; sometimes it's worth simply sowing a new crop. You can always go back to your old standbys, but harvesting new growth may be enriching beyond imagining.

Chakra Association

Green Heart

Natural Rune Lesson

What does the tree get out of the leaves that it grows and then drops? A chance to grow more leaves next year? Sometimes our lives can feel that way. Especially if our efforts appear to be lying useless on the forest floor, life can feel like a perpetual work cycle without permanent rewards. However, not all results are designed to last a lifetime. Even when our achievements seem fleeting, we may still have benefited. It's true that the tree needs to grow a whole new set of leaves next year, but this year's leaves gave it a chance to photosynthesize and thrive for three seasons. Even though more work will be needed next spring, the tree will be larger, stronger, and better able to withstand stress. It can provide more woodland habitat or cast more shade for overheated hikers. Not all types of work produce a tangible, enduring result. But building skills, wisdom, or endurance through experience is also valuable. And if your achievements are not as permanent as you'd like, perhaps your new strengths can help you produce something more to your enduring satisfaction next season.



↓ Eiwaz - Yew Tree

Keywords: Physical-spiritual connection, mystical, ritual, link between two worlds, transcendence, resilience, strengthening your inner integrity, hitting the target from afar

Physical

This card is about connecting your actions in the physical world with a higher or spiritual goal. Don't get caught up just in trying to achieve a material result. Eiwaz indicates a time to consider your actions' higher purpose. Perhaps the higher purposes of those around you will influence your course going forward. You may be at a bridge between two stages, either inhabiting both at the same time or making a transition into a higher level.

Psychological

Eiwaz symbolizes connection between two states. Is a higher motivation driving you, underneath the logical-sounding reasons that explain your actions? Lift your eyes above the physical situation and search for the penumbra of influences surrounding it. Consider making a transition to a higher state, thinking about your larger goals or bigger impact. Transcend a purely "what's this going to achieve for me in the moment" perspective. Somewhere, there is something you need to connect with. Eiwaz also indicates recognition of duality. Representing the yew tree, which is both evergreen and poisonous (also commonly found beautifying cemeteries), Eiwaz can appear in circumstances that are life-giving despite dangerous or challenging elements. Recognize that few situations are all good or all bad. Through careful study and consideration of your higher goals, you may be able to tease out an advantage even when the situation looks bleak.

Metaphysical

Of all the runes, Eiwaz may be the most overtly related to metaphysics and spirituality. It may urge you to leverage your Divine connection, higher self, or physical or metaphysical spiritual team to facilitate new levels of understanding. Ask for assistance or signs if you need help along your ascension path. It is sometimes associated with Yggdrasil, the World Tree, with its roots in the physical world, its crown in the spiritual world, and trunk connecting the two. Consider your desired spiritual path. What physical activities can nurture that experience? This rune reassures us that we are simultaneously physical and spiritual. We don't need to pursue one at the expense of the other or to denigrate one as less valuable. Instead, like the roots and the crown of the tree, each supports the other. The physical self – the roots – provides stability and nutrients while the spiritual self – the crown – gathers transcendent energy. To achieve a proper balance, how can you nurture both?

Chakra Association

Blue Throat

Natural Rune Lesson

The connection between the fallen tree leaf and the grass goes through Eiwaz. This leaf started its life 40 feet above the ground and had a productive tenure, collecting energy before falling at the season's end. Yet the tree that gave birth to the leaf and the grass beneath, both grow out of the same earth, both nurtured by the clouds' rain and the soil's minerals. Two seemingly independent entities – tree and grass – are again connected when the soil's nutrients return via the decaying, fallen leaf. Eiwaz symbolizes this connection. Things that seem separate aren't. The spiritual and material worlds actually are deeply related. It's easy to see how decaying leaves enrich soil. But in your life, how do seemingly separate worlds contribute to your own well-being? In any areas where activities seem opposed, what adjustments could bring harmony?

𐌺 Perthro - Dice Cup



Keywords: Chance, fate, embracing the unknown, the womb, answers that require a search, going with the flow, rebirth

Reversal Keywords: Chaotic, uncertainty, lack of structure, ungrounded

Physical

Perthro revolves around unpredictability. This card may highlight productive aspects of lacking control. Embrace the unknown, take a chance, roll the dice, or try something new, staying open to the possibilities rather than micro-managing a specific outcome. Expand your horizons to see the positive possibilities in an environment filled with uncertainty. Perthro can also indicate new birth, so consider generating a new, previously unimagined path. On a practical note, Perthro may

also relate to female fertility issues.

Psychological

Feeling worried about needing to take a chance or try something risky? Perthro reassures you into thinking about the possible gains from trusting in fate and letting the chips fall where they may. If Perthro's association with fertility, the womb, and child-bearing don't seem to apply literally, consider the metaphor: what can be birthed from your current circumstances? Is a new confidence, direction, or project brewing in your inchoate maelstrom? Perthro reminds us that having a sure plan is not the only way to success. Sometimes just sitting back and seeing what comes to us from out of the darkness highlights a fertile new breeding ground. If you're skeptical, type "microwave oven invention chocolate bar" into an internet search engine...

Metaphysical

Perthro's association with the Well of Fate challenges us to accept our spiritual evolution even if it's uncomfortable or unexpected. Modern society circumscribes spiritual experiences. Proclivities that would have gotten a past youngster apprenticed to the village shaman may now elicit a medical diagnosis and drug treatment. Of course, appropriate medical treatment is vital. But sometimes spirits' physical manifestations surprise us. Embracing metaphysical talents, skills, or abilities can minimize fear and suspicion, enhancing a healthy and vibrant daily life. Discernment and contemplation can determine whether a divergent experience should be nurtured or minimized. Perthro fertility advises us to wait and see what is growing before passing judgment. Like a splash of stars or a buzzing swarm of butterflies, many seemingly random arrangements create great beauty. Often there actually is order in apparent ambassadors of chaos. Patience, waiting to find the good, looking for utility, and embracing the unknown are valuable tools to make sense of our lives.

Chakra Association

Indigo Brow / Third Eye

Natural Rune Lesson

"Random," "chaotic," "uncontrolled," and "unplanned" are not positive adjectives in Western society. But that's exactly what a kaleidoscope quilt is. Fabric layers are stacked, cut, and pieced, revealing unplanned patterns. Like the high tide line of shells on a beach, these are driven by laws of physics too subtle for most to understand. Their very unplanned nature highlights the beauty of embracing what is rather than managing something prepared, predictable or safe. Certainly, some situations require planning (space exploration, heart surgery). But always prioritizing the predictable over the chaotic drains excitement. Do you really want to receive only what's on your gift list? Perthro embraces the quintessential human experience of spontaneity: even completely unpredictable results can bring beauty, wonder, and goodness. Where in your life has randomness or chaos created something waiting to be recognized as wonderful?

‡ Algiz - Elk



Keywords: Protection, security, patronage, instinct,

Reversal Keywords: Insecure, trapped, overly vulnerable, alone

Physical

Algiz represents a protected environment, a safe circumstance for branching out, trying something new, spreading your wings. You are surrounded by resources that can help you succeed. Consider who or what might help you and reach out for assistance.

Psychological

It's easy to feel like we can only rely on ourselves, and it's true that we have to take ultimate responsibility for our lives. But Algiz reminds us that protection and resources surround us. Like the elk this rune represents, we can defend ourselves. But the elk also benefits from the shelter of the forest, the photosynthetic energies of the leaves it consumes, and the rain that falls from the sky, none of which depend on the elk's own worth or effort. Resources in our environment – some naturally occurring, others provided by caring people – constantly nourish us. It's easy to adopt a survival mindset, scrabbling to fend for yourself. But a balanced perspective recognizes what your environment provides for you. Take time to express gratitude for and trust in its continuance. Do you have friends or family with needed expertise or encouragement? Do you need a new, advantageous situation with more powerful allies? Find harmony by appreciating the protection of your environment and fine-tuning it to your best advantage.

Metaphysical

Algiz is a key metaphysical rune because it symbolizes the fact that we are not alone. A harbinger of external resources and protection, it reminds us that we are supported, assisted, and guided by a whole raft of physical and metaphysical partners. Humans usually make use of the resources we believe in the most. Confidence in your Divine connection will access that wisdom and support many times in a day. If you feel more secure relying on friends, family, or even your own intuition, that's what you may reach for. Algiz may urge you to experiment with new resources. Instead of falling into tried and true habits, try exploring areas where you could benefit from more confidence. Instead of doubting yourself, show faith in your higher self's guidance. If you wonder whether anyone's listening to your prayers, ask for signs or communications that indicate your words are heard. Reach out, see what's available to help. Who has your best interests at heart? Where do advisors lurk in the physical or metaphysical realms? Algiz is a sign of unseen forces that support you when you spread your wings. Who or what will you rely on when you need assistance on your adventures?

Chakra Association

Purple Crown

Natural Rune Lesson

The relationship between the moss and its tree host is a terrific example of Algiz energy at work. The tree provides a moist, supportive environment for the moss to thrive. The world is full of sheltering trees even though the moss may not provide anything in return. Sometimes the moss can even be detrimental, burdening the tree with extra water weight or hiding damage or infection. But trees continue to shelter moss anyway. What provides shelter, sustenance, or resources for you without asking anything in return? Are there any places where you would like to return that favor, perhaps performing services or sending positive energy to people who don't reciprocate or even know you exist? Sometimes that is its own reward.

𐌱 Sowilo - Sun



Keywords: Success, triumph, vitality, power, health, clear perception, brighter times ahead

Physical

You need to marshal your energy and resources to shine. Especially if you feel tentative or overwhelmed, do whatever you can to part your gray clouds and bring a sunny attitude. You have the power to succeed in this situation. As an omen, this card is very positive, indicating the potential to create your highest good.

Psychological

Success has many faces. Sometimes the sun helps us grow crops or create solar power. But sometimes just getting outside and feeling its warmth is a success.

Casting a wide net when you evaluate your success. Don't stop with social or family messages emphasizing material objects or accolades. Deep inside, your own definition – free time, peace of mind, or time with people that you care about – may be just as if not more important. On the other hand, don't accept others' dismissal of physical achievements you value. Refine your own criteria. Then harness Sowilo's vitality, energy, and power to go all-in on accomplishing them. There's no point in choosing a "successful" path that drains your zest for life. Arrive at the mountain top with enough energy to enjoy the view.

Metaphysical

Sowilo is a reminder that success is the birthright of every human. We all face disappointment, but work to ensure those experiences don't dominate your thinking. Some studies suggest it takes three or four positive internal comments to balance out every negative one. Sowilo urges us to celebrate success when we actually achieve it. It's challenging when spiritual success seems to come at the expense of society's standard of worldly success. However, holding your head high and bouncing back from an unfair firing may do more for your spiritual growth than continuing at a job with an adverse work environment. It's important that we not simply follow collective standards when judging our own accomplishments. What would the spirit of unconditional love applaud you for today?

Chakra Association

White Soul Star

Natural Rune Lesson

What is a fungus's definition of success? A nice moist stump to grow on? The chance to finish out its cosmically ordained life cycle? Successful promulgation of future fungus? It doesn't include creating beauty against the dark brown of the stump it's growing on and providing immense pleasure to nature-lovers walking in the park. The fungus can't even conceive of the immense pleasure a photographer took in finding the perfect background to photograph this rune. As individuals, we can have such a small definition of success. Even encompassing emotional or spiritual accomplishments as well as material, we usually are only judging by our own standards. However other beings, both physical and metaphysical, may enjoy us in ways that we can't fathom. Don't limit your self-appreciation to just your definition of success. Strive to see a larger view and experience the appreciation of those around you. Have faith that the world is enjoying you even if you can't always see it. And reciprocate for someone else who may be seeing only failure in the current circumstances.

↑ Tiwaz - Glory



Keywords: Leadership, goals, self-awareness, authority, masculine energy, victory, sacrificing for the highest good, navigation, true calling, ethics, Divine masculine

Reversal Keywords: Conflict, selfishness, lack of direction, selfishness

Physical

Let your own personal goals and desires be a guiding light. Incorporate advice and consider the greater good but not at the expense of your own motivations. Thinking about where this decision will take you in the long run. Be your own North Star.

Psychological

Tiwaz isn't about the glory that comes from having other people congratulate you.

Although that's enjoyable, this rune envisions you as your own navigator, pointing the prow of your own ship. Where will this journey take you? What is the best road to achieve your goal? Sometimes the roundabout route will help you enjoy the countryside. Other times the direct path will fast-track happiness. Either way, you are directing this arrow and deciding where you want to shoot it. Other people may give advice, but ultimately it's your hand on the bow and your fingers on the bow string. Avoid the trap of sacrificing yourself for others or giving in a way that does not benefit you also. Where do you want your arrow to fly?

Metaphysical

Tiwaz symbolizes Divine masculine energy. If you feel drawn to “God the father” or male Divine manifestations, by all means pursue those. But this rune may also indicate masculine energy of going out and seizing your goal. When this rune appears, circumstances are likely aligned for you to make a plan and execute it successfully. This creates extra responsibility to identify your aim and pursue it, but it also highlights your ability to shape results. Tiwaz may indicate that you need to help others have this confidence or ability. Those who tend to have more of this masculine energy (whether born into a biologically male or female body) have the potential to help others create results or capitalize on opportunities. Similarly, if you struggle to complete your tasks or finalize those last few steps, Tiwaz may cue you to seek a partner who has these skills. Find an advisor or cheerleader to spur you to completion. Spiritual input often emphasizes co-creating with spiritual forces, receiving what is provided. However, sometimes Spirit may want us to stand up for ourselves and be powerful on our own two feet. Tiwaz can signal time to take responsibility for our part of the co-creation dance.

Chakra Association

Red Root

Natural Rune Lesson

In a night sky full of options, it can be hard to pick out which star to steer by. Should we prioritize our legacy, helping others, or our own enjoyment? If clarity about your long term eludes you, start with smaller things or maybe eliminate what you don't want. Picking your own North Star may not be easy, especially when surrounded by others promoting their North Stars as the best choice. But your intuition and experience can guide you. Maybe what you want isn't a star at all. Maybe it's the moon, even during an eclipse. Or maybe it's not even a celestial object. Maybe all stars fade in the background compared to the one thing you really want. It's fine to change your aim – nothing demands that your entire life should pursue a single goal. If your destination is fluid, don't decide your previous pursuits were wasted. Those skills or lessons may lay the foundation for your next star target in the Milky Way of life.

‣ Berkana - Birch Tree



Keywords: Nurturing, healing, care, growth, birth, feminine energy, mothering, moving closer to Mother Earth, Divine feminine

Reversal Keywords: Family issues, neglect, lack of self-care

Physical

This situation presents a golden opportunity to nurture yourself or others, featuring themes of healing, growth, kindness, and gentleness. Marshal feminine energy, responding to the opportunities to come your way, rather than molding circumstances to your preference, exploring the unknown woods rather than planning to take down the woolly mammoth. On a practical note, Berkana can also highlight issues of parenting or child rearing.

Psychological

What does nurturing mean to you? If you grew up with tough love, telling people “like it is” may seem natural. Growing up in a softer environment can make it hard to lay down the law or set hard boundaries. The animal kingdom reveals the truth: there are many ways to nurture. Elephants tend their young for years while mother guppies abandon their offspring. A “proof is in the pudding” approach allows you to evaluate your nurturing results – are you building up or unwittingly tearing down? Rather than cling to or reject what was modeled for you, just be wide-ranging, open, and flexible. Adaptively adopt the nurturing approach that achieves what you're looking for. Don't be afraid to ask for advice, imitate natural nurturers, or simply try something new. Remember to receive others' efforts to nurture you as well. See nurturing energy around you, welling up within you, and spilling out from you, creating an envelope of love to further your aims.

Metaphysical

Berkana represents Divine feminine energy. This certainly could encompass feminine Divine manifestations as well as natural nurturing or caretaking. And it isn't confined to those who've been born in a physically female body. However, feminine – or Yin – energy focuses on receiving what comes, going with the flow, perceiving what we are given and then maximizing its utility. It is the counterpart to the masculine approach of identifying a target, making a plan, and executing to get results. Feminine energy allows us to persevere in long-term, marathon activities. Always fighting to control circumstances can devolve into a wrestling-match-style life, exhausting you and missing the universe's gifts. You may miss the amazing present under the holiday tree if you're only focused on the red fire truck you have in mind. Feminine energy helps us work with our environment, alert and attentive to what's provided, perhaps a gift beyond our wildest dreams. Leaving modern society's determined, productive zone can feel scary. But a receptive, observant state can reap great rewards that a more driven, focused approach may fail even to perceive.

Chakra Association

Orange Sacral

Natural Rune Lesson

You wouldn't think that concrete would be a very nurturing environment, but the moss in this card shows that "nurturing" is in the eye of the beholder. Flourishing where humans would find no sustenance, moss demonstrates that the aim should not always be the cushiest, easiest, most comfortable circumstances. Depending on what you really want, more challenges may nurture the internal strength or wisdom you deeply crave. Family or society may preach the "safe" road, involving a home, a job, and 2.5 progeny. But that predictable goal might be a death sentence for your sense of adventure, zest for life, or fun-starved inner child. The focus is not what would nurture others or only assuages your practical self but rather what you are really hoping to get out of this life. Identify what nurtures that.

ᚱ Ehwaz - Horse



Keywords: Trust, partnership, loyal, progress, teams, intimacy, mentorship, guidance, cooperation

Reversal Keywords: Lack of trust, stagnation, too much independence

Physical

This situation involves working together, either seeking out new partners or leveraging your current ones. This can include learning to trust parts of yourself – self-partnership, as it were. This is not a situation to go it alone or forge an individualistic path. Consider what teammates to bring with you, even if one teammate is just a long-lost aspect of yourself.

Psychological

Ehwaz is a rune of trust. Like the horse it represents, it reminds us that we can achieve more by leveraging forces that supplement our strengths. No human is designed to be an island; no individual is good at everything. Those with more material skills may need others for mental or emotional balance. In the puzzle of life, someone's indentation fits your protrusion, and the other way around – no one is an edge piece on all sides. If you recoil from trust or feel yours is more theoretical than practical, you may need to have faith in your own choices, distinguish intuition from random thoughts, or believe in your own abilities to increase healthy trust. If trust has been misplaced, analysis of past mistakes may identify better future partners. When partners are non-negotiable, what sorts of boundaries can you set? Controlling others is impractical and inappropriate, but trust, like any skill, can be refined with introspection, advice, and practice. Don't spend your life trying to pull your own plow. Maximize your effectiveness in cultivating life's crops with trustworthy partners who supply strengths you lack, all the more satisfying if that perfect partner is actually another part of you.

Metaphysical

When we pray, who hears us? When we ask our intuition for help, what do we think answers back? When we feel connected to something larger, what are we connecting to? And how do we know that we can trust what's on the other end of our interaction? It's challenging enough to trust people we can see, but partnership with non-corporeal entities takes it to a whole new level. Metaphysically, Ehwaz cuts to the heart of the spiritual path: our willingness to trust that there is more out there than just us. It takes discretion to find spirits that seek our best interests, discern trauma logic from intuition, or nurture unhealed parts of self that can't provide solid guidance. Persevere in finding physical and metaphysical partners that strengthen, comfort, and direct you. They exist even if it takes trial and error to connect and tweaking to understand what you can give each other. Not every individual has what you need or will have that forever. You may need to let go of one dancer and cut in on another partner. But the concept of partnership is solid. If you ask the universe, the right partners can appear for you.

Chakra Association

Yellow Solar Plexus

Natural Rune Lesson

The relationship between a tree and its bark illustrates a trusting partnership. Outer bark protects the tree and maintains moisture. However, bark can also be a source of damaging fungal infections or insect infestations. To minimize potential problems, a flourishing tree allocates resources to keep the bark healthy, which can then host beneficial insects and other plant and animal life. A positive partnership nourishes all partners and generates extra benefits for those nearby. How do you allocate resources to benefit your partners and receive benefits in return? Do you need to nurture more or perhaps ask for more nurturing? How do you create a healthy ecosystem inside your partnerships that provides a bounty for your surroundings?

M Mannaz - Humanity



Keywords: People, community, society, identity, true self, traits or gifts that make us human, fidelity, identity, social experiences, faith in humanity

Reversal Keywords: Lack of humanity, social pressure, smothered by community

Physical

The key to this situation somehow involves a crowd. You may need to work with an organization, assemble your team, or consider the greater good. Whatever the way forward, it isn't just about you. Consider consulting experts. Tweak your project to give it a humanitarian bent. Rely on and contribute to your community.

Psychological

Mannaz highlights your position within the group. Carefully balance receiving other people's nurturing, positive energy while avoiding the extremes of over-dependence on others' opinions or retreat from those who might hurt you. Ultimately, the proper stance is what works for you. When your internal state requires support, surround yourself with others. When positive influx is needed, choose social partners who nurture your soul. When hurt or deluged by past trauma or challenging voices, withdraw, meditate, or use resources to heal yourself. You may need external quiet to deal with your internal cacophony. In the long run, find a healthy rhythm between isolation and group participation; titrate time with others versus time with yourself. If your social consumption seems mindless or distracting - excessive social media, Netflix binging, or other emotional potato chips (they taste momentarily good but don't satisfy in the long term) - ask what you are avoiding in your own internal world. Ultimately, some group involvement is healthy for almost all humans. We need people to love and care for and who will love and care for us. But it's up to each one of us to modulate that interaction, depending on personal preferences and current circumstances.

Metaphysical

Mannaz signifies not just our human community but also our larger metaphysical ecosystem. In addition to having one-on-one spiritual relationships, we may inhabit the larger cosmos of a spiritual group, a specific faith path, or a network of metaphysical partners: Divine manifestations, ascended masters, other spirit guides, even the souls or spirits of physical people. How can we leverage this? How do we humbly learn without losing individuality? In brief, urgent times we may need to sublimate our own desires to provide what others need from us. We must be flexible, evaluating current interactions and then adjusting if necessary. Hurt can cause us to pull back briefly to heal. But in the long term, we are not designed to exist by ourselves. Using physical and metaphysical communities to happily prosper is a key life lesson. Our social human traits do not oppose our progress on the spiritual journey. Spiritual growth can encompass our humanity, not abandon it. How do we combine being human and being spiritual to create a positive blend of both?

Chakra Association

Green Heart

Natural Rune Lesson

Just because a leaf is a different color doesn't mean it's not a part of the same plant. Just because people don't look, act, or dress doesn't make them alien. Leaves at different life stages coexist on the same plant, all performing valuable functions. In a park, clover, moss, and pine needles break up the grass monoculture, sustaining wildlife and minimizing disease. Sometimes, people feel like blessings, but at other times, they can feel like a curse. However, even those with diametrically opposed values play vital roles in enriching our human ecosystem. Could those who seem undermining actually increase your understanding or strength? Could you coexist more happily even with people who seem plaguing rather than nurturing? Nature reveals how even seemingly destructive or unattractive elements all have their productive place. How can you benefit from the diversity of humans you experience?

† Laguz - Lake



Keywords: Emotions, subconscious, revelation, spirituality, uncovering what is hidden, understanding bubbling up or bursting forth, hidden insight, menstruation

Reversal Keywords: Too much emotion, feeling overwhelmed

Physical

Dig deeply into what lies beneath the surface. Don't shy away from emotions – yours or others' involved in the situation. Excavate subconscious desires. Think about what you truly long for in this circumstance. Don't be derailed by immediate superficial, practical, or logical concerns. The deeper aspects of the human experience are in play.

Psychological

An interesting study once found that people in logic-based professions (e.g., doctors, lawyers, scientists) made emotional decisions just as much as the general population did; they were just significantly better at generating logical-sounding reasons to justify themselves. In fact, our brains' chemical composition alters about 20 seconds before we consciously decide, clear evidence of subconscious internal processes. Laguz encourages us to uncover those. Contemplation, meditation, prayer, or just a little old-fashioned analysis can highlight trapping, pseudo-logical rationale. If perplexing actions, repeating feedback loops, or inexplicable barriers hold you back, plumb your depths to make more conscious choices. When confronting other people's emotional or subconscious motivations, remember that their reactions stem from their own internal processes, only partially (if at all) reflecting you. Be considerate of your own emotional experience. Well meaning people or social conventions may push superficially sensible actions not deeply aligned with your inner being. If logical-sounding steps are not satisfying, rethink how you nurture your deeper self or the selves of those around you.

Metaphysical

Laguz's association with water links it to Europe's sacred bog sites., rare forest openings where sky, earth, and the water met, allowing the living to communicate with other states of existence. Now bodies, foodstuffs, and other sacred objects sacrificed centuries ago return from those sites to elucidate past beliefs and practices. Similarly, Laguz allows us to communicate with older, deeper, or banished self-aspects: the subconscious, our emotions, wounded inner children or marginalized parts. With an inquisitive, curious welcome, they can bring great richness and understanding to our current lives. However, like the tattered bog bodies, these long-buried parts may be torn, damaged or painful to see. Don't expect an instantly recognizable message. Patience, openness to garbled communications, and the compassionate assembly of puzzle pieces will maximize your psyche's attempt to communicate much needed information. What's been long-buried but is now ready to see the light?

Chakra Association

Blue Throat

Natural Rune Lesson

Laguz is about layers: paint, self-esteem, pretending what we really want or really are. Sometimes life's wear and tear strips the layers away. Do we want to recognize what's really going on, what we're really made of? Or do we want another covering coat of paint to create what's expected or what we think we would prefer? Is it okay to want a deeply satisfying but low-paying job, to admit who or what you want to love, or to be honest about the reality of existing relationships? Admitting how you really feel doesn't mean you automatically act on those feelings. But the human impulse to paint over what we don't like is often antithetical to deeper healing. Resist the temptation to shove things under the carpet and just vacuum over the lump. Don't give up the chance to enjoy life as your true self (or selves).



✕ Ingwaz - Seed

Keywords: Beginning, essence, sprouting, potential, ideas, inner self, the root of the matter, gestation before birth, children, germination

Physical

The path involves new beginnings or getting to the root of the matter, perhaps starting a new venture or finding a new perspective. Dig deep, past superficial perceptions or logical protestations to excavate the seed. Like the tiny acorn that turns into the huge oak tree, your leverage point may be a small issue having a big impact. On a practical note, Ingwaz may also relate to male fertility issues.

Psychological

Ingwaz mitigates against our society's predilection for fixing symptoms with superficial treatments. It urges us to uncover deeper causes, expose foundational cracks that skew the walls of our mental and emotional houses. Fill in the holes in your psyche. Straighten what has become crooked, and undo any deep shackles. It's not about reliving every childhood trauma if you're able to release and move on without extra pain. But if progress seems slow, Ingwaz suggests finding deep leverage points to enable lasting change. If you've already thoroughly plumbed this well, Ingwaz may also be about starting afresh. Perhaps you've been hoeing the same row for long enough, and you are now ready to plant. Try a new project, a new approach, or a whole new territory for profitable work. Don't be afraid to start small and let the path unfold. As you work, Ingwaz builds into something larger.

Metaphysical

Ingwaz's metaphysical meaning urges us to look at the root of life's developments. Self-recrimination over a lost job, a botched relationship, or plans gone awry is easy. But blame, especially when fault isn't concrete, may mask a truth: even if uncomfortable, what happened may actually have benefited you. Ingwaz is the opposite of looking on the surface, judging a book by its cover, or social media FOMO. It urges us to scrutinize deeper undercurrents and evaluate the true effect, whether the prevailing wind seems comfortable or challenging. What's at the root of your deepest desires? Is a longing for exploration, new experiences, self-challenge, or a deeper connection driving you? If Spirit is encouraging you to embrace your root impulses, don't immediately respond with practical concerns. That can make the difference between a comfortable, convenient, but unsatisfying life and really, truly living the life you want to live. Don't be afraid to at least understand what's bubbling from inside you. You can always decide how much you want to act on them - if at all. Just knowing what they are can be a key to adding more spice, interest, or launching the life you are longing for.

Chakra Association

Indigo Brow / Third Eye

Natural Rune Lesson

Think of the power of grass seed. Each is about the size of a grain of coarse sand; it's not even a native species in most areas where it's planted. Yet think of all of the fun, joy, and wonderful memories built on the green swards of parks, lawns, and stadiums. Epic Super Bowl halftime shows live in collective memory because somewhere, once, people played the first game of football on a grass field. How many daisy chain crowns have been made by young children, enjoying the bounty of a summer lawn? Landscapers who planted those seeds may never see the young couple watching a plane overhead with the banner "Will you marry me?" but they knew those humble granular beginnings would support an incredible bounty of human creativity. Where do humble beginnings set the stage for something grand in your life? Have you denigrated your own work or accomplishments as too small? Is there greater potential than you first perceived? Or maybe you can cheerlead for other people's small beginnings. We can all be seeds that together provide a stratum for something great.

⌘ Dagaz - Day



Keywords: Opportunity, optimism, awakening, thresholds, light overcoming darkness, transformation, liminal spaces, paradoxical situations, seeing both sides of the story

Physical

A new opportunity is dawning! Strike out on a fresh path, consider a metamorphosis, or ask how you can grasp something new without losing hold of what you currently have. Don't seek the run of the mill or simply continue your current process. Opportunity is knocking, a big change or just a tweak with a big effect. Lift your eyes and open up your mind to a new way of moving forward.

Psychological

Dagaz signals change. You get to choose how you feel about it and how to navigate it. In Chinese, a single word means both crisis and opportunity, only context or perception determines which. Consider the saying "The difference between an ordeal and an adventure is attitude." Dagaz can represent a door opening, the sun rising, or a butterfly emerging. Don't let fear of the unknown overcome the excitement of the new, no matter how little control you have over what's on the other side. Dagaz urges a positive, constructive attitude about stepping through into this new space, whatever it is. Can you work through your fears, plan to squeeze out as much fresh juice as possible, or enjoy connecting with new people? The opportunity may happen, no matter how much you wish the door would just stay shut. What you make of the opportunity is much more under your control.

Metaphysical

Dagaz symbolizes existing in two simultaneous states, a condition at the heart of the spiritual path. Physical beings in a tangible body, we, nonetheless, feel the call to a larger, unseen or intangible connection. We are both caterpillar and butterfly. Our spiritual slot in the universe can be difficult to find. Where can our metaphysical puzzle piece fit without distracting from or ignoring the demands of our physical existence? Dagaz highlights an opportunity to incorporate both the physical and metaphysical. Simultaneously sitting on both sides of the seesaw raises thought-provoking questions and urges us to consider our actions – at the very least, the back-and-forth motion is in itself invigorating. Where would you like to rise spiritually? How would you like to get more satisfaction out of your physical existence? Dagaz can help you embrace the transformation, go through the double door, write chapters on both sides of your story's pages. It's not a matter of prioritizing spirit over body but rather enjoying the interaction between the two.

Chakra Association

Purple Crown

Natural Rune Lesson

A local lady brushes her extraordinarily fluffy Malamute dog in the park. Who enjoys the opportunity of the plethora of dog fur left behind? Turns out there are many takers! What would be trash inside turns into a building material for birds' nests, nutrition for microbes, enrichment for the soil, and a found treasure for children, who love to show it to their somewhat disgusted parents: "Look what I found!" In fact, excess dog hair in this particular park goes to an amazing variety of users. It's easy to criticize the opportunities as imperfect or unplanned. Or perhaps we're just perplexed about how to make use of a particular "bounty." Take time to contemplate, work through disappointment, and ask some friends or mentors for ideas to maximize your options. Just like the continual progression of new days in our lives, new opportunities are always presenting themselves. Some require us to be especially innovative with a modest resource. How can you look more positively or creatively at what's being given to you?

⌘ Othala - Legacy



Keywords: Inheritance, responsibilities, home, family, childhood, intergenerational trauma, pride in your traditions, strong boundaries, the limits of responsibility

Reversal Keywords: Rigidity, pressure, stifling sense of duty, weak boundaries, family trouble, lack of family, snobbery about background or upbringing

Physical

Consider the long-term ramifications of your current actions. Go beyond solving the immediate problem or identifying a few next steps. Evaluate future goals and line up your approach now. Look to your past for inspiration, either learning from experience or healing old limitations. See current circumstances as the middle of a long road; consider your past and future to create alignment.

Psychological

Othala reminds us that our ideal future builds on the continuum of past and present. If childhood training doesn't lay a foundation for an ideal future self, consider changing. Many people believe the past can't be altered, but studies show that actually, we can rework our perceptions of past events. Memories are rewritten each time we recall an event: good or bad, damaging or resilience-building. It's not always easy. Changing your view can undermine cherished values and beliefs or feel like a betrayal of those involved. But it's empowering to re-mold your view of the past to springboard future growth. Don't let its weight prevent you from spreading your wings and soaring. Today's actions lay groundwork for future memories. How you want to remember this time in your life. What can today's actions enable you to do tomorrow?

Metaphysical

Representing both the past you build on and the legacy you create, metaphysical Othala urges you to consider your spiritual belief foundation. What aspects serve you well? Is it time to let go of or transform any? If beliefs are troubling or intertwined with childhood or social trauma, then prayer, meditation, study, or counseling can help. Are your current metaphysical or spiritual practices building long-term satisfaction? What would you enjoy more? Othala's shape represents the wall or stockade around your metaphysical homestead. Ancient societies believed that a family's stockade delineated their responsibility – caring for those inside those walls determined the family's honor or disgrace. What lies within your realm of responsibility? You can look after your physical and metaphysical state and support those in physical or emotional proximity. You can send positive energy into the world, but your responsibility for others diminishes with distance. Be careful that caretaker impulses don't create guilt, shame, or obsession surrounding other people's challenges. Be a citizen of the larger world, but don't constrain yourself with accountability for actions that you can't control.

Chakra Association

White Soul Star

Natural Rune Lesson

What is the legacy of a mushroom? With a lifespan that averages between one day and one month, it might seem like "not much." But a quick "amazing mushroom pictures" internet search uncovers how incredibly inspired people are by mushrooms. From the culinary delights of butter-sauteed fresh morels to toadstool-shaped fairy houses to time-lapse videos of mushroom spore release, it's clear that almost anything can have a legacy. Of course, it's not all positive; aside from being potentially poisonous, mushrooms can signal unwanted decay, or create a lawn eyesore. But evanescence and diminutive size don't diminish their importance. Similarly, you may not fully perceive your legacy or the full effects others have on you. But that doesn't mean they aren't important. If you're unsure about your legacy, a little interviewing may help you determine whether you are creating something that feels desirable and meaningful. If mushrooms can change the world, surely you can, too.

Part IV Rune Readings

There are as many approaches to rune readings as there are rune readers. Many techniques used for other card types also apply to runes, so feel free to research and adopt diverse ideas into your own practice. The following section addresses a few common questions.

What To Do With Reversals

Note that some runes are the same upside down and right side up and so do not have reversals. Those runes have no reversal keywords in the Card Meanings selection.

Rectangular cards are dealt either right side up or reversed (on average 50% reversed). However, round or square cards can come out in a variety of directions. For those, one option is to turn the cards right side up unless they come out directly upside down (leading to approximately 25% reversed).

Below are four common approaches to reversals. Depending on your personality, typical challenges, or question type, you may find some approaches more helpful than others. Feel free to change for different readings. Just make sure you let your insight source know before you start drawing cards. Note that these also work with Tarot or other Oracle cards.

1. Ignore Them

It is perfectly fine to ignore reversals and simply turn all runes (or cards) right side up.

2. Use Provided Reversal Meanings

These are fairly standardized. Some are listed in the Card Meanings section. If desired, check the internet for other reversal meanings.

3. Reversal Indicates Too Much of the Rune's Energy

Taking the “too much” approach tells your insight source that you will interpret a reversed rune as a sign that the situation is out of balance and that the influence of this rune's energy needs to be diminished. For example, a reversed Uruz might indicate the exercise of too much personal power, a sign to take your foot off the gas pedal, listen more to others, or use a collaborative or consensus-based strategy. You might find this helpful if you tend toward extreme responses or a strong-arm approach to life. This reversal treatment allows your insight source to tell you when to soften your strategy if you chronically overdo things.

4. Reversal Indicates a Need to Re-evaluate or Re-think this Energy's Role

There's a great quote from the TV show “The Simpsons” where Homer is telling a rambling, incoherent story: “This all happened in a place called Paris,” he says, “but not the Paris you're thinking of...”

Taking the “re-think/re-evaluate” approach tells your insight source that you are open to changing your thought patterns or re-working your habitual understanding. For example, reversed Kenaz means you need more knowledge but not the knowledge you normally think of. You might consider an alternative definition of knowledge – perhaps knowledge from a place you don't normally look or the knowledge that it's okay to not always understand everything. This treatment is especially helpful when you feel stuck in your usual approach and seek transformation.

Suggestions for Structuring Readings

Again, the internet and other books are full of suggestions on how to read runes. You may also find valuable information from resources about reading Tarot or oracle cards. If you'd like to narrow down your possibilities or want a simple place to start, here are three options that fit many circumstances and reading styles.

Option 1: Ask a general question. Draw 1-3 runes, and see what message comes to you.

Option 2: Ask a general question and use a classic Tarot or rune spread. A quick internet search for “Tarot spread” or “divination spread” will yield many suggestions (or see p.37 for a few options). You can also search for spreads that are related to specific questions or circumstances like “full moon Tarot spread” or “relationship Tarot spread.”

Option 3: After deciding on your overall question, brainstorm mini questions that apply to separate insight areas or facets of the circumstance. Then draw a rune or runes to address each of those. (A good example of this is the traditional Tarot Celtic Cross where each card represents a different aspect of the situation.)

The number of runes might depend on the number of mini questions, the reader's intuition, or a numerology concept that seems meaningful or pertinent (thank you to Valorie Lewis at www.goddesswithanattitude.com for this last suggestion!)

Example:

General Question

How can I improve my performance at work?

Mini Aspect Questions

Rune #1 - What is standing in the way of my work performance?

Rune #2 - How could I enjoy my work experience more?

Rune #3 - What allies can help me perform better at work?

Rune #4 - What positive outcome or experience should I be aiming for at work?

Optional Final Step: As you draw the runes, or afterwards, arrange into some meaningful geometric shape - influenced by personal preference, intuition, sacred geometry, or the reading topic (for example a heart shape for a relationship reading)

Sidebar: To Predict or Not To Predict...

The attempt to predict events is one of the most controversial aspects of divination. Can a selection of inanimate objects really tell what will happen in the future?

Consider rephrasing the question to this: *Can a human being using a selection of inanimate objects really tell the future?*

The answer is that some humans seem to be able, yes! But not all humans.

A professional psychic once said, "I stink at telling the future. I know because I tried." She makes a good living helping people understand their own spiritual gifts, no prediction ability needed!

Runes are excellent for channeling guidance of many types including, insight, understanding, and guidance. Whether you are also successfully able to use them to predict the future is a function of your own gifts and reading skill. If you're interested, you can certainly experiment with low stick circumstances to check your accuracy.

But tread lightly, and be judicious about what you try to predict. Some people who have this ability choose not to use it, finding that more knowledge about what will happen can bring more worries and not more happiness.

Many readers prefer to focus on nonpredictive, information-gathering questions, to help make sense of the situation and navigate it more successfully rather than yes/no questions which often don't provide a path forward.

Example:

Unless you have proven predictive ability, the question

“Will I get this job?”

might cause discouragement or over-confidence, depending on the answer's accuracy.

By contrast, the question

“What can I do to give myself the best chance of getting this job?”

might provide more encouraging and actionable information, as well as encouraging valuable practice with job interviewing, even if that particular job doesn't come through.

Ultimately, it's up to you. Experiment to see what types of information your readings reliably and helpfully create.

Three Simple Rune Spreads

Try these three simple approaches. Feel free to tailor them for your situation or reading topic. Before you draw, choose one of the suggested questions for each card placement (Don't forget to decide how you want to treat reversals). If both questions interest you, consider drawing two cards for that placement. These will also work with Tarot or Oracle cards. If you're feeling adventurous, you can combine runes and card decks!

For Understanding Your Situation

Rune #1 - PAST

What past influences affect this situation?

How can I understand the circumstances that have created my current experiences?

Rune #2 - PRESENT

What influences are in play now?

What energies are currently manifesting?

Rune #3 - FUTURE

If things continue as they are, what outcome should I expect? (Predictive option)

What positive outcome or experience should I aim for? (Guidance option)

When Changes Seem Needed

Rune #1 - CHALLENGE

What obstacles are impeding this circumstance?

What negative effects do current actions create?

Rune #2 - RESPONSE

What energies can be marshaled to address the challenge?

How do I need to change my actions or approach?

Rune #3 - GOAL

If I implement this guidance, what will the results be? (Predictive option)

What new situation or circumstance should I be trying to create? (Guidance option)

When You Want Help Feeling Better

Rune #1 - EMOTIONAL OBSTACLE

What is impeding my current progress or growth?

Why am I struggling with these challenging emotions, fear, or anxiety?

Rune #2 - WHAT TO HEAL

What parts of me need nurturing or support?

What parts of me feel wounded, attacked, or unsafe?

Rune #3 - WHAT TO RELEASE

What am I ready to let go of?

What is not serving my highest good?

Rune #4 - WHAT TO REPLACE IT WITH

What energies can I use to turn my experience in a more positive direction?

What should I be thinking about or focusing on instead of my current challenging energy?

Part V Extra Tips To Enhance Your Readings

Setting Special Space

Creating special space helps your psyche dissociate from mundane activities and enter a more receptive state for accessing new information. This book uses *special* in place of the more common term *sacred* to encompass all readings, whether approached from a spiritual perspective or not. Depending on your insight sources, you may want to mentally substitute *sacred* or any preferred term.

External Space

Surface

Minimizing physical clutter in your reading space may decrease mental clutter and enhance deeper understanding. When tidying up, focus on releasing stress, worries, distractions, and unneeded challenging emotions. Choose a surface that enhances your insight source connection. Inside, you might find a beautiful piece of cloth, silk scarf, or cheery bandana. Outside, you may use lovely green grass or a tree stump. Some people use dedicated reading boards or create special circles with rope or string.

Meaningful Objects

Feel free to set out objects that represent your insight or other supportive sources, perhaps a cherished toy for your inner child, a picture of an ancestor, or a Divine symbol or other ritual object representing your insight connection. Consider including an offering with appropriate emotional or spiritual connotations.

Sound

You can inaugurate your reading with sound to symbolize the transition from mundane to special activities. Background music, an instrument, or symbolic objects like Tibetan singing bowls, chimes, gongs, or wind whistles can help set the mood. Some people enjoy ASMR ambient noise videos, which can easily be found online.

The Four (or Five) Elements

Including representations of air, earth, fire, water (and metal, ether, or spirit, depending on your tradition) can increase connection with natural energies and separate the reading space from a larger surface. Light a candle, bring in a glass of water, add some leaves, twigs, or berries, or blow your breath gently across the reading surface. If you don't want to work with live fire outdoors, a red or orange object can symbolize that element.

None of these practices is essential. Setting a special space is more about a conducive mindset to facilitate contemplation and insight. If you have a special space already set, feel free to use that. But if you want to create something new for your reading, experiment to see what works best. You might find it helpful to keep a journal about your special space setting experiences.

Setting Protections

This may not be necessary for every reading, especially connecting with your own insight or intuition. However, attempting to connect with external entities - ancestors, spirit guides, or a Divine intelligence - may attract visitors that do not have your best interests at heart. You may decide to never attempt to connect with any spirits at all. However, if you feel the upside is worth the risk, you may need to learn to navigate non-corporeal beings that come your way.

This book mentions a few basic protections and principles, given in from a desire to be helpful and support a beginning reader. However, each reader must be responsible for independent due diligence and accept that individual results may vary. Entire books have been written on just working with spirits. Please consult a professional practitioner for more information.

Personal Power

You are the primary power within your own psyche. You are free to ask a spirit to leave. Set your intention firmly that you will only talk to spirits that you choose to. If you feel deluged, try a reading without any spirit connection or fold up your tools and come back later. You are not under any obligation to provide mental or emotional succor or interact in any way does not feel right to you. This is not the time to be polite or practice hospitality.

Love and the Highest Good

Helpful spirits and spirit guides should feel warm, loving, and positive. You may start to feel uncomfortable upon hearing what they bring up, but the delivery itself should not be critical, abusive, or pushy. Feel free to say “I want to stop” and take time to think or process. Your own internal space should not feel unsafe because of any visitors. Even with helpful spirit guides, it's possible to simply become full. Politely express gratitude and ask to meet later when you want to resume. There's no offense in saying, “Thank you, I've had enough for now.” Spirit guides are there for your benefit. They will appreciate that you want to meditate on what they've given you before receiving more.

A Quick List of Commonly Used Protections

Again you can experiment with these and see which seems to work for you. As always, much more information is available on the internet, in books, and from expert practitioners.

Physical

You can smudge with sage or palo santo as part of protecting your physical space. These are not always harvested from sustainable sources, so check your materials. Some people also place or burn other protective herbs. You can also use protective sigils or create a sacred circle.

Visualized

Imagine yourself in a bubble of protective light or on an island surrounded by a protective body of water. Some people prefer more concrete images like a hand vacuum – yes, that's right – vacuuming off any sort of negative energies that might try to attach. You can experiment to see which visualisations are most powerful for you.

Intentional

Start with the intention that you only want to connect with spirits who are there for your highest benefit. Announce mentally or out loud that you do not welcome any spirits who do not have positive intentions or will not assist in your spiritual growth.

Note on Effectiveness

Even with all these protections, you may still encounter unwanted spirits. It's easy to become angry or disillusioned with your Divine connection for not keeping you protected despite having taken prescribed steps.

However, sometimes stray spirits are allowed through for specific reasons.

It can help sharpen your discernment to decide what spirits you want to work with. Some practitioners need to learn to tell the difference between loving, kind, helpful critique and critical or abusive denigration. Deciding which spirits stay and which go can be part of taking ownership of your own internal ecosystem.

Some practitioners need to assert their personal power by booting out unwanted spirits. This can be part of a larger lesson about learning to help others in a way that produces mutual benefit. Just because a wandering spirit wants company, doesn't mean you are duty bound to let them walk all over you.

Some practitioners believe that this sort of stray spirit activity is a sign you are emanating negative energy, attracting undesirable attention. If you feel this applies to you, by all means take steps to remediate it. However, sometimes, this sort of challenge simply provides a chance for you to grow and understand your own strengths. It is not necessarily a sign that you are doing anything wrong or should avoid working with spirits altogether.

That said, just because you have the ability to contact spirits does not mean that you need to do so at all times, or ever. It's perfectly fine to decide this is not a gift you would like to exercise or to put it off until another period when it feels more appropriate or comfortable.

Once you've set your external space, it's time to work on the inside.

Preparing Your Inner Space

One of a reading's primary goals is to connect with an insight source beyond the forefront of your consciousness. The whispers of spirit – either your own or something larger – are like bubbles from the bottom of a pan of hot water. They are most visible when the water is still. If you're trying too hard to cook at a rolling boil, you'll miss those small, still emanations often at the heart of insight and breakthrough. Turning down the heat, reducing the rolling waves of thoughts, emotions, and fears, stills the water and allows you to access that quiet place where those small bubbles of insight can percolate to the surface.

To set the stage within your inner space, consider the following four aspects of yourself:

Sit comfortably. Close your eyes, and turn your energy inward. Pay attention to your breathing for a minute or two. Breathe naturally at first, and then take a few deeper breaths. Turn your awareness away from daily activities – they will still be there when you return. Become more aware of your own inner landscape.

If you like, imagine grounding energies going through the soles of your feet down into the Earth to ground you. Or extend your awareness to the natural landscape outside your current location, up into the heavens, or out into the galaxy.

Then, cast your inner senses around your physical body. Notice the feeling of your feet and legs pressing against whatever is supporting you. Sense any pain or pressure in your physical experience. Imagine any cramped energy flowing away from those spaces and healing energy flowing into them. Relax any muscles that seem tense, perhaps your shoulders, your back, or your face.

Next, sense your emotions. You may be able to name your feelings: excitement, curiosity, sadness, anger. If you can't, that's all right; just become aware of what might be lingering below the surface. Relax your emotions and let things flow. You might like to imagine an element – air, fire, water, earth – moving through your body, cleansing any emotions you don't need. Let go of anything left over from some previous experience or a prior self. You might experiment with visualizing a cleansing shower, a clarifying wind, a crackling flame, or a purifying mud mask to remove any emotional experiences that you no longer need.

Now turn your attention to your thoughts. Observe what is running through your mind, perhaps a to-do list, worries about yourself, or concerns about the subject of your reading. You may encounter doubts or skepticism regarding the insight you're about to encounter. Again, there's no need to change them. Just observe. Sometimes, you might find that your mind grows still under your own internal gaze. That's perfectly fine, too.

Finally, extend your internal senses to your energy body. Perceptions here may overlap with previous observations. You might find general tension or defensive thoughts. Perhaps you sense your heart huddled up to protect itself or feel radiating anger or aggression. Again, just observe, and feel free to release anything you don't want to carry into your reading. You may be able to visualize your personal energetic environment. Feel free to do any repairs or strengthening.

In the course of being observed, any tension or restriction may begin to ebb. While you may still experience those emotions or thoughts, part of your awareness feels freer from them. It's easier to access insight after having relaxed defensive or aggressive or tense aspects, especially in your energy or physical body.

Being conscious of what you are carrying with you minimizes unwittingly bringing it into the reading and wondering why all the "insight" you're getting is so negative. It's the equivalent of showering before you get into the hottub to avoid inadvertently spending your delicious hour soaking in the stresses you're trying to escape.

Improving the Energy in Your Inner Landscape

If your inner space seems to need a little TLC, consider an exercise or two for further clearing or enrichment. Meditation, breath work, sound healing, yoga, and physical relaxation are all effective.

A Quick and Easy Energy Improvement Practice

Mentally take yourself somewhere – either an envisioned environment or the memory of a real physical location – that elicits peace and calm. Let any momentary worries or concerns drift away. In place of anxious or distracted energy, tap into what makes this place so life-giving for you. Drink from it deeply.

Envision your own energetic state, looking for or sensing any rips, tears, or damage that can be repaired. As you channel this place's positive energy towards those weaker areas, nurture a ready and alert openness to what will arise in you and arrive from your inside sources during the reading.

Take three deep, relaxed breaths, starting with an exhale. Breathe out worries, fears, and tension and breathe in peace, love, and calm. You might also envision inhaling white or golden light (or any other color you prefer). Repeat three times and feel your body and mind relaxing and focusing. You may also imagine a sense of openness and receptivity to prepare to receive messages or insight.

Connecting to Your Sources of Information

Take time to consciously strengthen your connection with your insight source. That could be internal – higher self, intuition, or your subconscious – or external – a universal intelligence, Divine being, spirit guide, or messages from nature. It's possible to access both internal and external insight sources in the same reading.

Let your established spiritual practice, if you have any, be your guide. You might set an intention: mental, oral, or written. *"I humbly ask [fill in the blank insight source] to be with me and enhance my understanding during this reading."*

You can add gratitude.

"Thank you so much, [fill in the blank insight source], for any insight or wisdom you want to give me."

If you're looking for interior wisdom, consider inviting all aspects of yourself.

"All parts of me, social or shy, wounded or healing, from any part of my life are welcome here. All emotions, even including anger, shame, sorrow, and rage are welcome in this space."

Deep struggles can be rooted in unacceptable, alienated, or criticized aspects of self. And often to be frank, we can be the sources of that criticism ourselves. Transformation may hinge on contacting those deeper aspects, ensuring they know they are welcome.

Feel free to focus intention or touch on any special space elements that elicit these information sources. Consciously strengthen your connection.

A Simplified Approach to Preparing for a Reading

If the above suggestions seem overly complex, try the process in the following infographic.



Part VI Other Uses for Runes

Most of the following practices are focused on transforming personal energy, increasing understanding, or manifesting in the real world. For these activities, especially, power comes from calling on your physical and metaphysical support system to help you achieve your desired outcomes.

Transform Energy or Emotions

Runes are terrific for replacing challenging energy or feelings. If you feel stuck in worry, anxiety, depression, or any state that feels unpleasant or unproductive, Try the following three-step process:

1. Center yourself, and announce your intention to heal or release any energy that is not for your highest good at the moment.
2. Ask your insight source to identify an energy to replace your current feelings or refocus your thoughts.
3. Draw one or two runes (fewer is better, in this case), and open yourself to any insight about how you could morph your current inner state to better align with the productive aspects of the runes' energy.
4. Create some visual reminder for yourself to keep you on your new, more positive track. E.g. create a manifestation grid, write yourself a note, set an alarm in your phone to make sure you haven't slipped back into your old energy, or just leave the rune in a prominent place where you will see it and be reminded.

This is a powerful practice, but it often needs to be repeated to produce lasting change. Don't be discouraged if you need to reinforce your new path. Also, attempting to replace a habitual energy may raise resistance. If this perseveres, you may need to address it. When parts of you cling to old, unproductive energies, it's important to deal with objections and get all of you on board with your transformation plan.

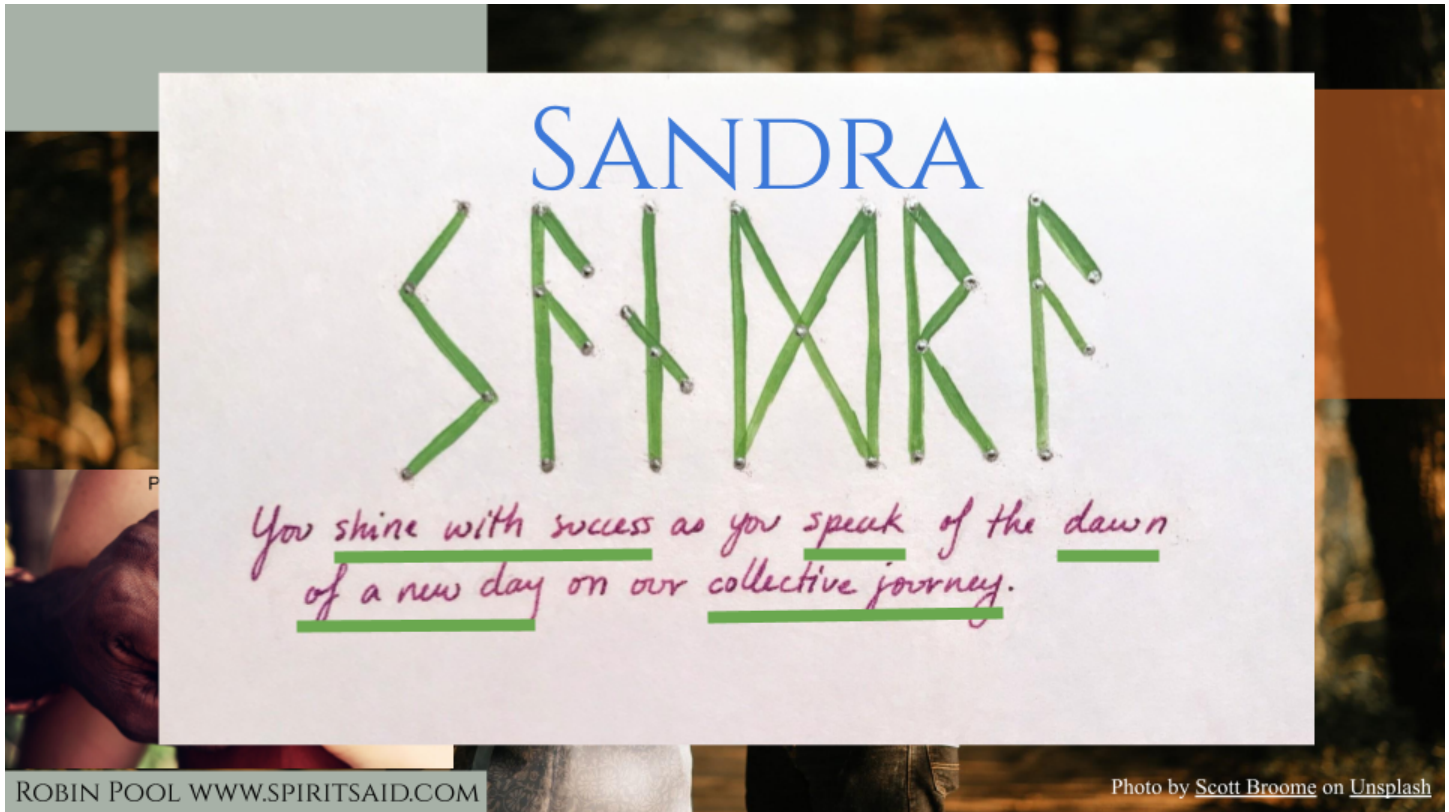
NOTE: Once you've learned the runes and meanings, replacing energy can also be done in meditation. Simply ask your higher self or insight source to bring a rune into your mind, and ask for aid bringing your energy into alignment with it.

Generate Encouraging Messages

If you know others who need encouragement and support, you can do this same thing for them. Ask your insight source to help identify how you might encourage or support this person. When you draw a rune, open yourself for insight about how best to communicate that rune's energy.

Depending on that person's receptivity or interests, that might involve simply sending positive energy or prayer, incorporating the rune's insight into a positive message to them, or sharing the rune itself, either by discussing it, drawing it on a greeting card, or taking a picture and texting or emailing it.

Transliterate Initials or Names Into Runes for Personal Insight



Another powerful way to encourage yourself or others is to use the transliteration tables in the middle of this book to transliterate a name or initials - your own or those of someone you care about - into runes. Then open yourself to a positive message from the runes' meanings.

You could send positive energy to the person, convey the inspiring message, or create a beautiful greeting card. People often love to understand the deeper meanings behind their names. Using runes adds a whole new level to this. It's an especially fun activity to do with kids!

Example:

The woman's name SANDRA is comprised of the following runes:

Sowilo = Success

Ansuz = Communication

Nauthiz = Needs

Dagaz = Day

Raidho = Journey

Putting those together into an inspired sentence, you get

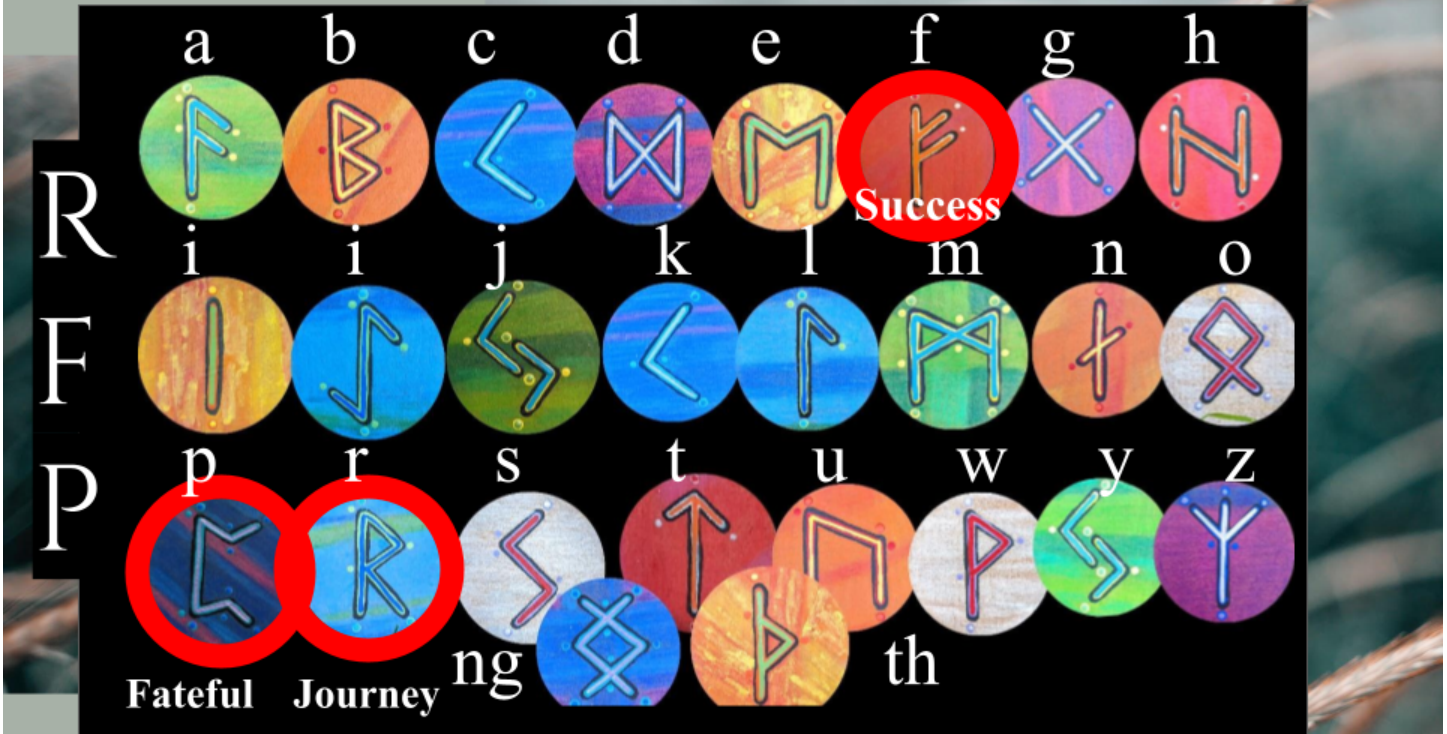
"You shine with success as you speak of the dawn of a new day on our collective journey."

It takes a little experimentation and creative wording, but the results can be very inspiring! And it's a great way to practice working with rune energies.

As the following graphic illustrates, you can also do the same thing with initials. You may decide to go in order or to switch it up. Any three runes can yield multiple interpretations.

Your Initials In Runes

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Here's a handy keyword table for this exercise.

Changing English Letters to Runes

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A ƒ Ansuz Estuary communication, message, connection, revelation	M 𐌛 Mannaz Humanity people, community, society, identity, true self
B 𐌋 Berkana Birch Tree nurturing, healing, care, growth, birth, female,	N 𐌗 Nauthiz Need urgency, essential, duty, restraint, requirements
CK 𐌑 Kenaz Torch knowledge, information, skill, clarity, improvement	NG 𐌶 Ingwaz Seed beginning, essence, potential, ideas, inner self
D 𐌹 Dagaz Day opportunity, awakening, thresholds, transformation	O 𐌵 Othala Legacy inheritance, responsibilities, home, family
E 𐌺 Ehwaz Horse trust, partnership, loyal, progress, teams	P 𐌰 Perthro Dice Cup chance, fate, embracing the unknown, womb
E 𐌶 Isa Ice stability, stagnation, unchanging, constant	R 𐌹 Raidho Wagon life's journey, transition, road, change, travel
F 𐌴 Fehu Cattle material success, wealth, abundance, fertility	S 𐌲 Sowilo Sun success, triumph, vitality, power, health
G 𐌶 Gebo Gift reciprocity, exchange, relationships, balance	T 𐌹 Tiwaz Glory leadership, goals, self-awareness, authority, male
H 𐌺 Hagalaz Hail destruction preceding rebirth, renewal	TH 𐌰 Thurisaz Thorn internal protection, caution, cleansing, defense
I 𐌶 Eiwaz Yew Tree physical-spiritual connection, mystical, ritual	U 𐌵 Uruz Ox personal power, strength, freedom, vitality
J 𐌶 Jera Year harvest, cycles, change, repetition, work/investment	V 𐌰 Wunjo Joy happiness, good result, fun, satisfaction
L 𐌶 Laguz Lake emotions, subconscious, revelation, excavation	Y 𐌶 Jera Year harvest, cycles, change, repetition, work/investment
	Z 𐌶 Algiz Elk protection, security, patronage, instinct

Transliterate Words Into Runes for Inspiration or Meditation

Faith

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F - MATERIAL SUCCESS

A - DIVINE COMMUNICATION

I - STABILITY VS. STAGNATION

T - SELF-DETERMINATION

H - REBIRTH AFTER LOSS

Looking at the runes that make up words like “hope,” “love,” “faith,” or “growth” can elucidate subtle aspects of those powerful concepts. This can focus our minds when we meditate or provide practical ideas about how we can implement them in our daily lives.

Example:

Knowing that the English word “hope” begins with the rune Hagalaz (the equivalent of the English letter ‘H’) reminds us that having hope often means learning to see opportunity after loss. When hopes feel dashed because our vision didn’t materialize, it’s easy to want to give up on the concept altogether. But the purpose of hope is not to achieve exactly what we thought we wanted - we can’t control the physical world. Rather, it’s to get us to the point where we’re receptive to what actually does happen. Even after the hail smashes crops, it enhances conditions for something new to grow.

How could your understanding or spiritual walk be enriched by contemplating the rune energies of your most treasured concepts?

Incorporate Runes Into Crystal or Manifestation Grids

Runes with Crystal Grids: 3 Types of Self-Love

Self-Direction

Knowing Yourself

Enjoying Yourself

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Crystal and manifestation grids or arrangements typically use elements relating to the desired goal or topic. Including mental, emotional, and energetic elements helps harness the universe's cooperation to your own desires. Adding a rune gives your mind something to think about every time you look at the grid, completing the power trifecta with crystals (energy) and devotional objects (emotions). You may use the rune to inspire manifesting actions.

Example:

*The rune **Wunjo** adds a cognitive hook to the loving energy and warm emotions of the rose quartz and figurine in the self-love crystal grid (above right). It incorporates the concept of joy, reminding us that self-love is about rejoicing in the many aspects of who we are, beyond just taking care of ourselves. **Wunjo**-inspired actions could include writing a list of 20 things we enjoy about ourselves (aim high!), asking trusted friends or family to list favorite things about us, or enhancing self-love energy by encouraging others with things we enjoy about them.*

Author's Afterword

Thank you so much for taking time to read this! I love to hear from readers, so please email me at Robin@poolmx.com with feedback, thoughts, or questions.

I hope runes are as transformative in your life as they have been in mine (or more so!). If you do find them helpful, please consider supporting cultural heritage organizations. We all benefit from the knowledge they keep alive.

There are many more ways to use runes, including sigils, crafts, and, of course, making your own rune deck or set. Sign up for the mailing list at www.spiritsaid.com for ideas, instruction, and notifications of future free rune materials!