

The two input chains are shown as starting from a low-confidence stance and culminating in one of relative certainty, whether for good or ill. The three progressive phases in each chain are intended to display how much confidence each one instills at different stages of development in the situation. Early on, before much effort has been expended, something that just "feels" right or wrong may be all you have to go on. As the picture comes into focus, the original hunch may or may not become more concrete, depending on the cards drawn for those positions.

The "Con" side is intended to show reasons why you shouldn't do what you're contemplating, and the quint (Card #9) is the crystallization of that advice. The "Pro" side gives the background for going ahead with what you're considering, and the quint (Card #5) should be read as the best argument for doing it. The sub-quints are then individually paired with the Situation card to see which combination is the most conducive to delivering its recommended solution. That pair forms the preliminary judgment. The numerical values of the three cards are added together and reduced to produce the final verdict, which is intended to be taken as the best course of action under the circumstances, all things considered.

The quintessence can be calculated in a number of ways:

The face values of all the cards with numbers on them can be added together.

The values of the numbered cards and the implied values of the four court cards (11 through 14) can be added together.

The values of any reversed cards can be subtracted from the total rather than being added to it. This allows obtaining a value of zero for the Fool, which cannot otherwise be reached. It also permits a reversed quint card.

Reduction of the totals to arrive at a number below 22 can also be performed in different ways.

Traditional reduction by numerology involves adding the digits of the calculated number together (e.g. $17 = 1 + 7 = 8$, or Strength). This can be done repeatedly with large numbers until the value comes within range.

"Casting out nines" until the desired range is reached is another method (e.g. $41 - 9 = 32 - 9 = 23 - 9 = 14$, or Temperance.)