



## THE OH SO IMPORTANT PIPS

*Following the [map](#) at the beginning of the book, we have now arrived at the market. Here in the market we will explore the suits and numbers as they relate to the overall structure of Tarot.*

## HOW TO MASTER 50% OF THE TAROT DECK STRAIGHT OUT OF THE GATE

In the previous section, we learned to go with our gut and how to get intuitive hits on tarot cards. We also started keeping a Tarot Journal and began corresponding with the cards. In this next section, we are going to tackle the biggest chunk of the deck: the pip cards.

There are ten numbered cards in each suit, Ace through 10. These are known as the pip cards. Ten cards and four suits equals 40 out of 78 cards in the deck.

There are also four Court Cards, also known as the royals, for each suit. These are the Queens, Kings, Knights and Pages. Everything about the suits applies to the Court Cards, but we'll meet the Court Cards a bit later in an upcoming section.

### **EARTH, AIR, FIRE AND WATER**

As noted earlier, it appears that the tarot deck was derived from the traditional playing card deck with the addition of Trump cards.

Playing cards have the following suits: clubs, hearts, spades, and diamonds. Tarot has the following suits: wands, cups, swords, and pentacles. Different decks may call the suits different things, such as batons instead of wands. Regardless, all Tarot decks have four suits corresponding to the elements.

The suits in Tarot correspond to the four elements of Western cosmology:

Wands = fire

Cups = water

Swords = air

Pentacles = earth

The four elements, or suits, make up the world we live in, and we all have an innate sense of how these elements behave and what to expect from them.

We run across the four elements in our language with various expressions, such as:

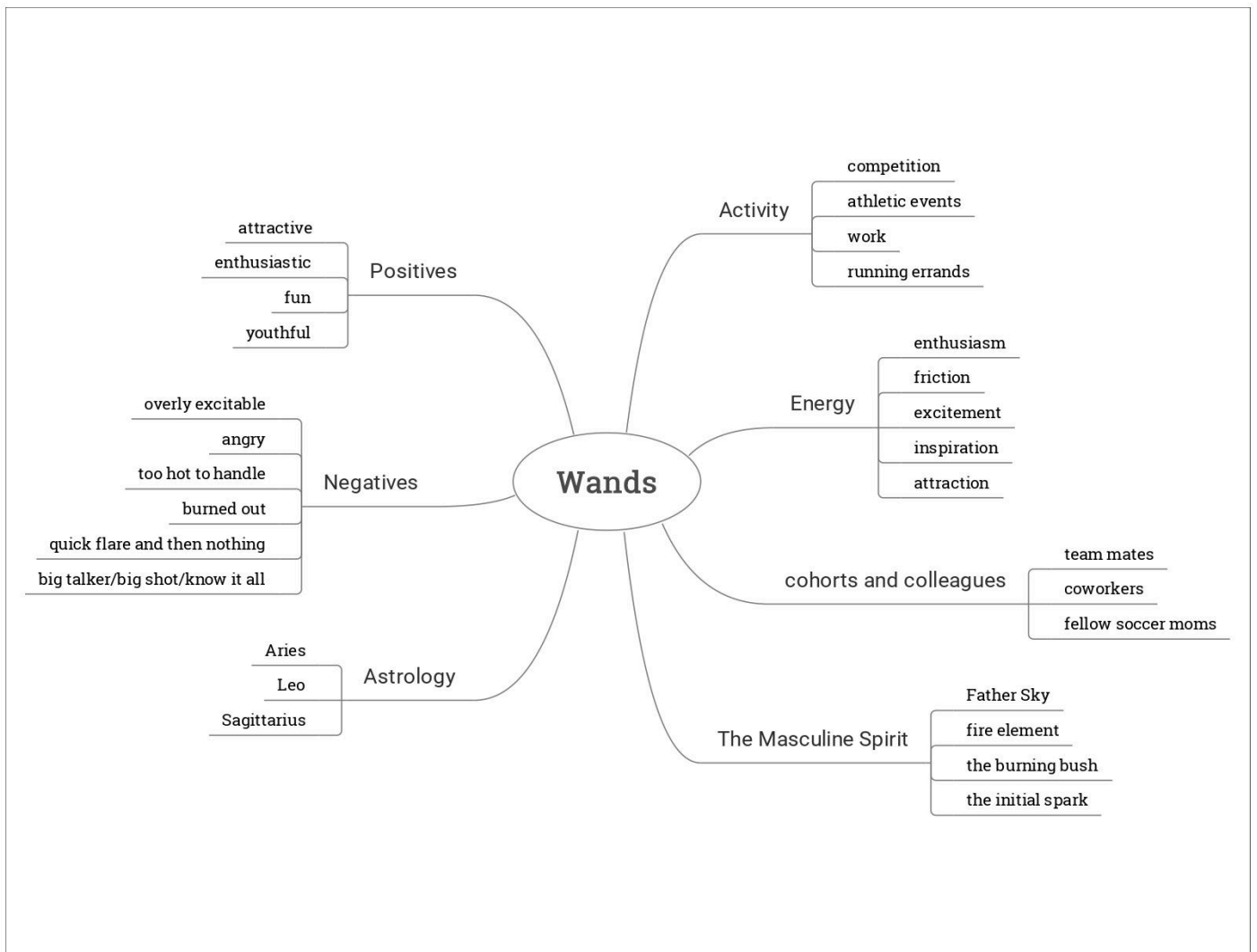
- light a fire under your butt
- salt of the earth
- that's too airy fairy for me
- ride like the wind to be free again
- go with the flow

Think of the four suits as the building blocks of the deck. They are the flour, eggs, sugar, and milk of making a cake. (Okay, yes, technically you need butter or oil to make a cake too, but that messes up the metaphor!)

Once you understand how the ingredients of flour, eggs, sugar and milk work, you can make pancakes, biscuits, corn bread, cookies and a host of other goodies.

We'll now take each suit one at a time and uncover the various elements of each one. While, as always, your intuition will always be your first guide, there's several common understandings of these various suits to help you gain deeper knowledge.

# WANDS

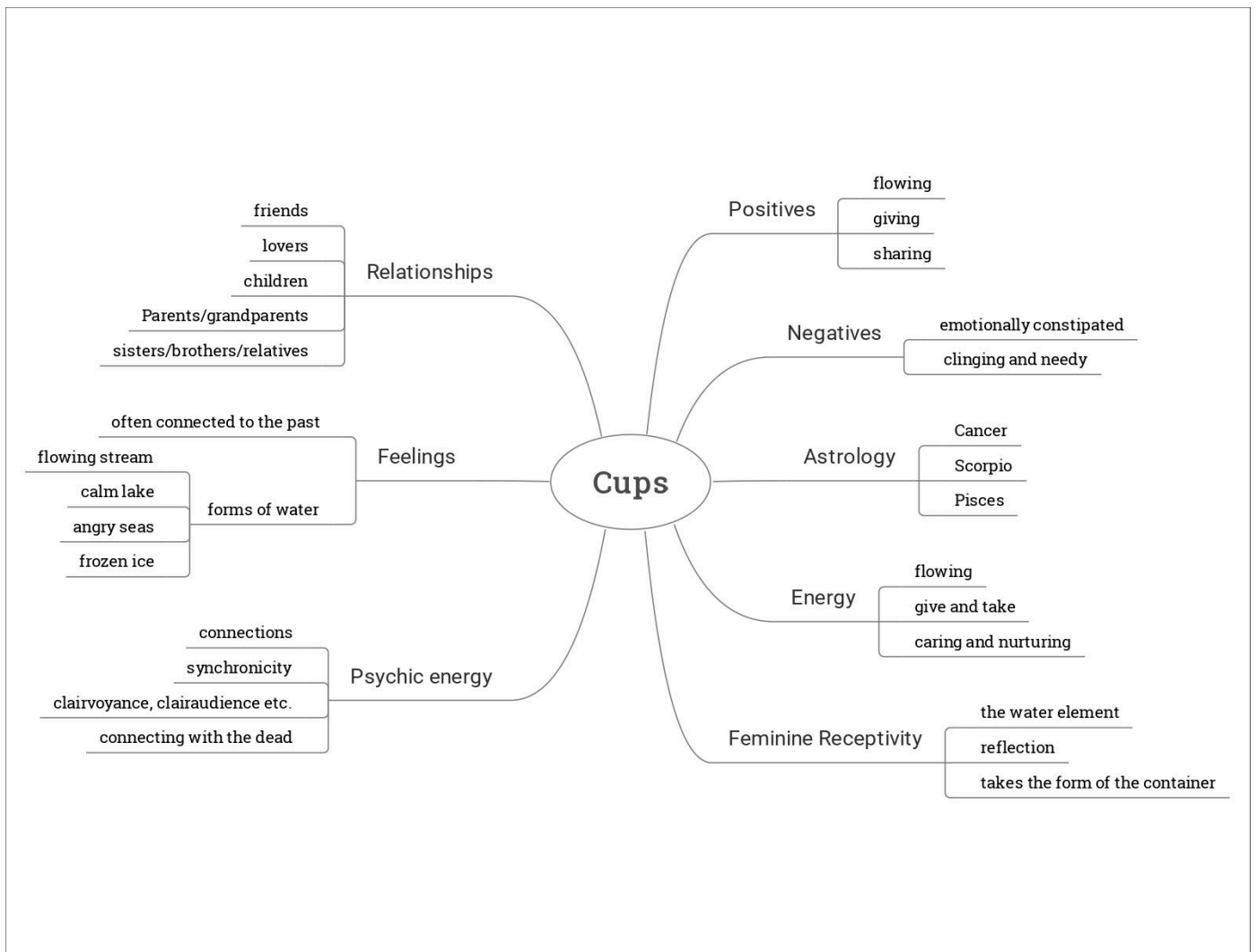


Wands are the fiery, inspired, and action-oriented cards of the deck. Wands have lots of ideas and interactions and move quickly. One of the drawbacks of the wands is that the fast-moving fire can burn out quickly, meaning it can be hard to sustain enthusiasm. Or, the wands can let the fire get out of control and conflicts quickly erupt.

Wands are the work you do and the spice of life. A little pepper goes a long way. Too much, and the meal is spoiled.

Wands people are inspired and charismatic, busy and always off to the next big thing.

# CUPS

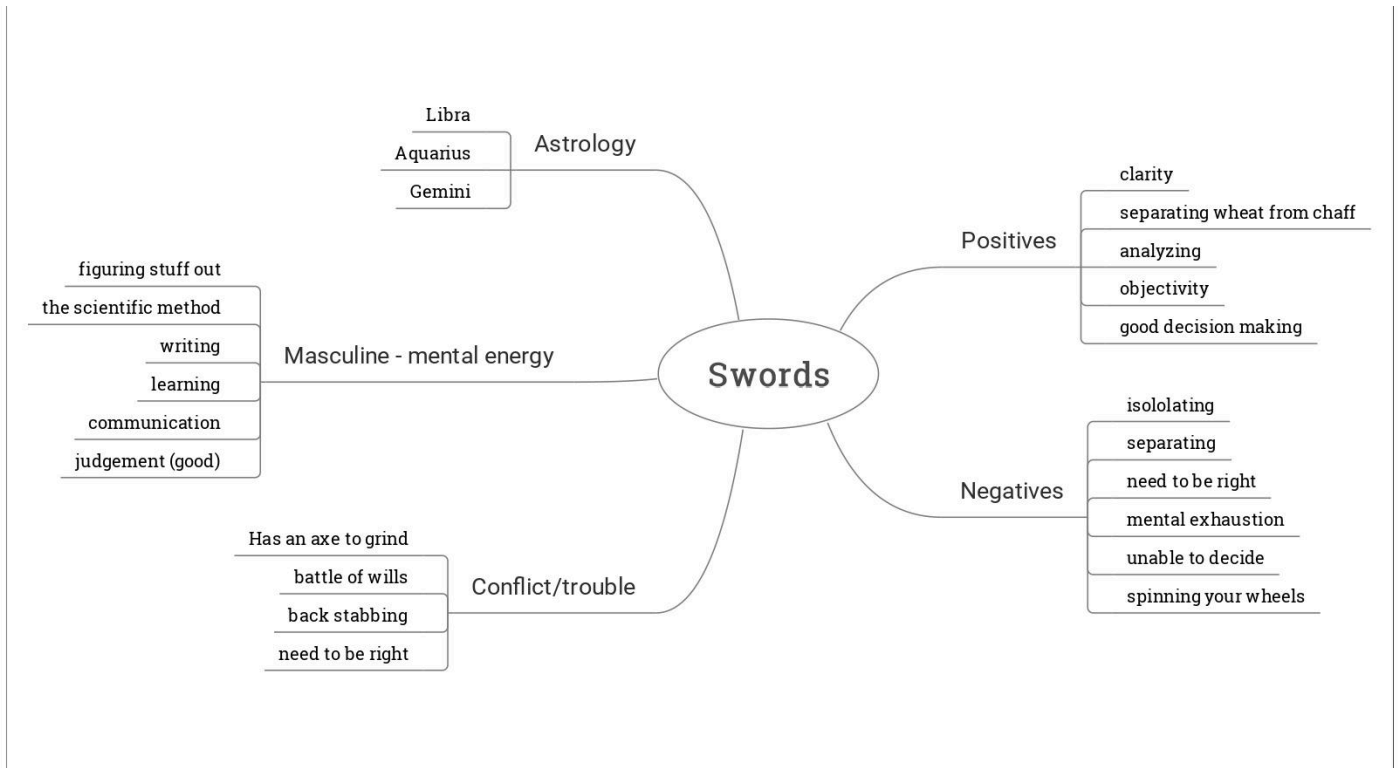


The suit of cups encompasses or holds our emotions and emotional nature. Cups are connected. Cups connect us one to another, our emotions to our body, our past to the present. Cups can represent psychic connections as well, when we sense a presence or feel something is wrong.

Cups can move and flow like water, or they can stagnate, like being stuck in a bad mood. There's an innocence to the cups, like the laughter of a small child.

Cups people enjoy a good time. They are social and giving.

# SWORDS



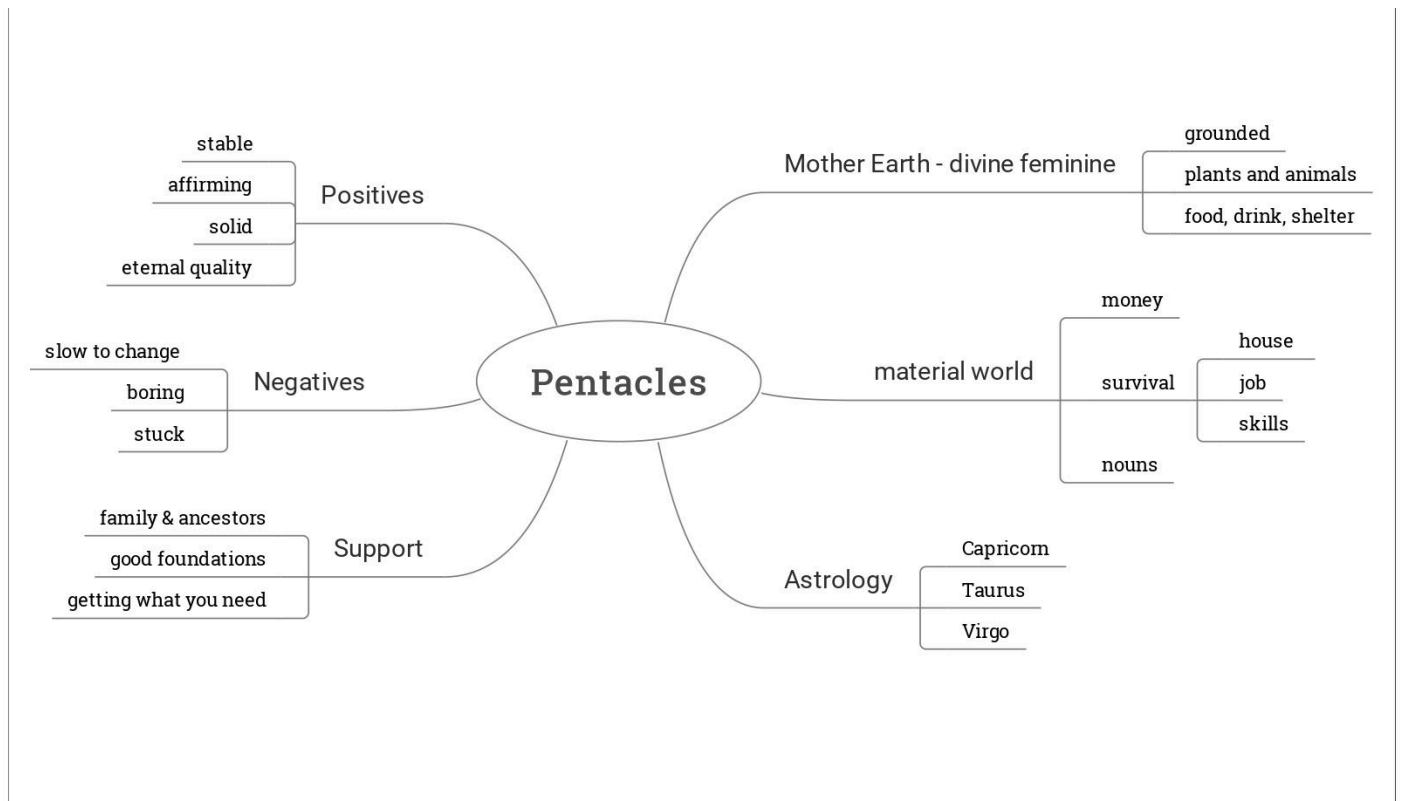
Swords are the overall negative suit of the Tarot, meaning that swords can represent trouble, and the suit contains many troubling cards. However, as with all of the cards, there is a spectrum of negative to positive here.

Swords represent our mental activity and faculties, as well as communication. We all know that the pen is mightier than the sword and that words can help or they can harm. This is the double edge of the swords.

Thinking about something can provide clarity, or it can spin and spin and create more indecision or confusion.

Swords people want to talk it out, discuss the terms, and weigh their options.

# PENTACLES



The suit of Pentacles represents everything we can experience with our senses. Pentacles are everything we can see, smell, taste, touch and hear. Pentacles are also the things that support us in life, like money, jobs, houses, family, and skills.

Pentacles are like the salt of the earth farmer who says, “If I can’t see it, it’s not real.”

Pentacles are reliable, but they can also be stuck in their ways. Pentacles are the heaviest, slowest suit. Lots of pentacles can represent material abundance or can feel the burden of the weight of the world on one’s shoulders.

Pentacles people just want to get things done and see results.

## RESOURCES FOR THE TAROT SUITS

### THE 4 ELEMENTS (SHORT STORY) -BY BEN RUBBO, GRADE 6, NSW

The four elements. Wind, Earth, Fire and Water. They have their beauties and their terrors. Wind. The breeze that it blows on a hot day cools us down. Feel the breeze in your hair. See the grass sway to and fro. Hear the whisper that it makes. Then it starts to blow, harder and harder. Harder by the second! In less than a blink of an eye, a tornado forms in the distance. Its funnel growing towards the ground with winds blowing up to 300km/hr. The bits of metal, bark and wood being sucked up. Then, next to the tornado, a cyclone arrives, like a whirlpool in the sky, flinging bricks, trees and cars miles away. The wind has gotten angry.

Water. The refreshment it brings once drunk on a hot, summers day. Listen to it singing a tune. See the ripples that it makes. Taste the flavour of something natural. Then the ripples start to grow. Growing larger and larger. Eventually large enough to be a Tsunami. The CRASH... the giant wave is flooding the huge city. Taking memorabilia and valuables kilometers away. People are being washed away and are in terrible danger. The water has gotten angry.

Earth. The safety that it creates when we stand on it. Feel the coarseness on your bare foot. Listen to it sleeping silently. See the loose dirt rolling along the earth. All of a sudden, the dirt starts to shake violently. It starts bouncing like a ball. The buildings are shaking as well. A crack has formed in the ground. Growing longer and wider. An earthquake has occurred. Then the rocks on the top of the cliff start to roll down the edge, followed by a trail of mud and dirt. A mudslide has joined the party. The earth has gotten angry.

Fire. The relief it brings on a cold Winters night. Hear it laugh as we tell stories to one another. Feel the warmth warm up your body. See the different colours that it makes. Then its laugh gets louder. Loud enough to be a roar. It springs from the firewood and onto the trees. It's spreading, spreading very fast. Trees are collapsing and the millions of leaves being turned into ashes. A bushfire has started. Then BOOM... the volcano erupts. Hot, molten rock jumping over the rocky edges, sliding slowly towards the city. The fire has gotten angry.

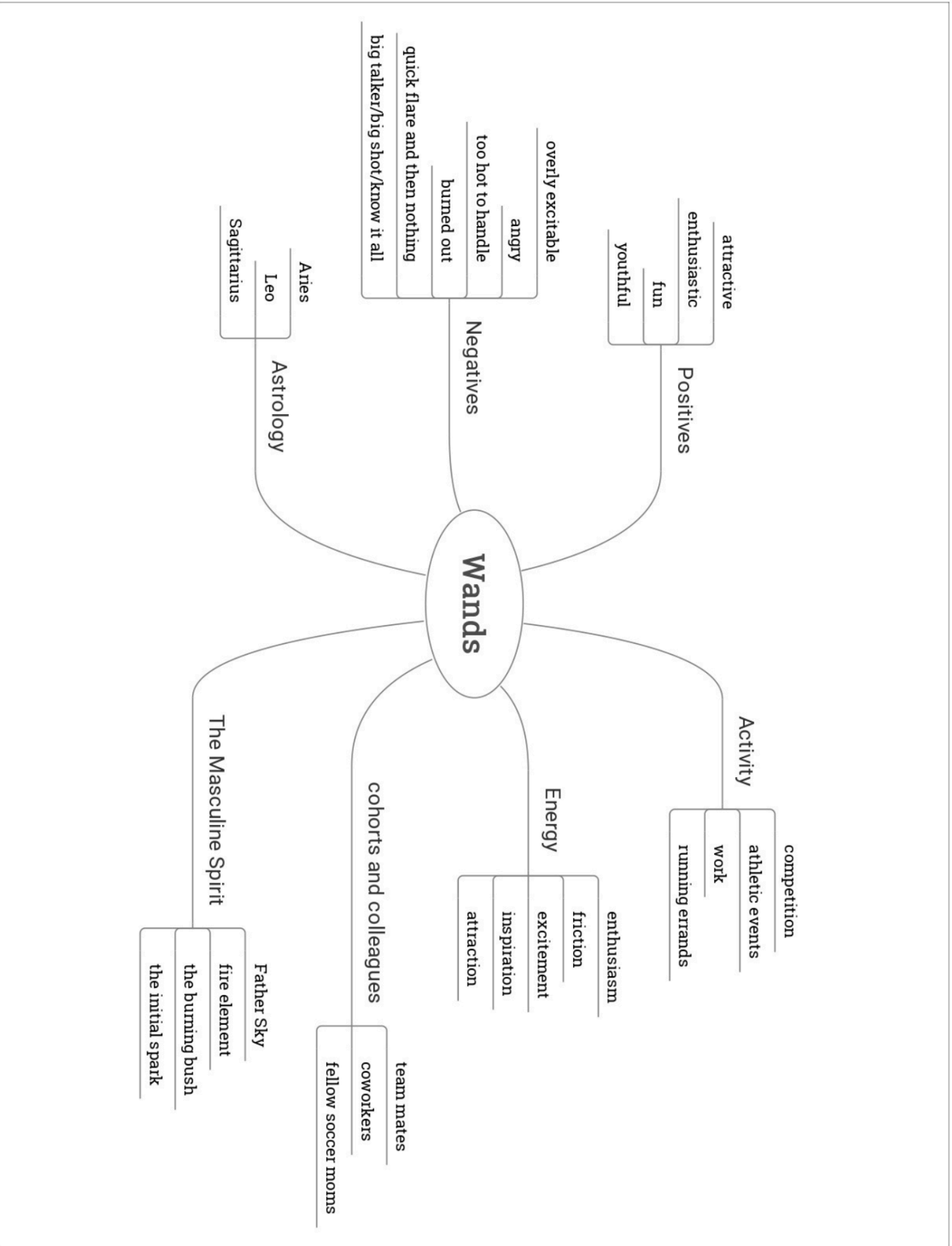
Then a tornado appears once again. So has the cyclone. The earthquake and mudslide have joined them and so have the bushfire and the molten rock. The tsunami and the flood are impatient and are eager to destroy the city. The city is in despair. They can't afford this much destruction that awaits them, but the elements show no mercy. Then they attack. Wind then Water, Earth then Fire are getting their revenge, one by one. The residents can do nothing but run and watch the destruction. Together, the 4 elements make an invincible team.

## EXERCISE - MAPPING THE SUITS

Use the mind maps provided in this section, and add your own ideas to them. I've also included a blank one in case you want to work with a blank slate.







**Wands**

**Positives**

- attractive
- enthusiastic
- fun
- youthful

**Negatives**

- overly excitable
- angry
- too hot to handle
- burned out
- quick flare and then nothing
- big talker/big shot/know it all

**Activity**

- competition
- athletic events
- work
- running errands

**Energy**

- enthusiasm
- friction
- excitement
- inspiration
- attraction

**Astrology**

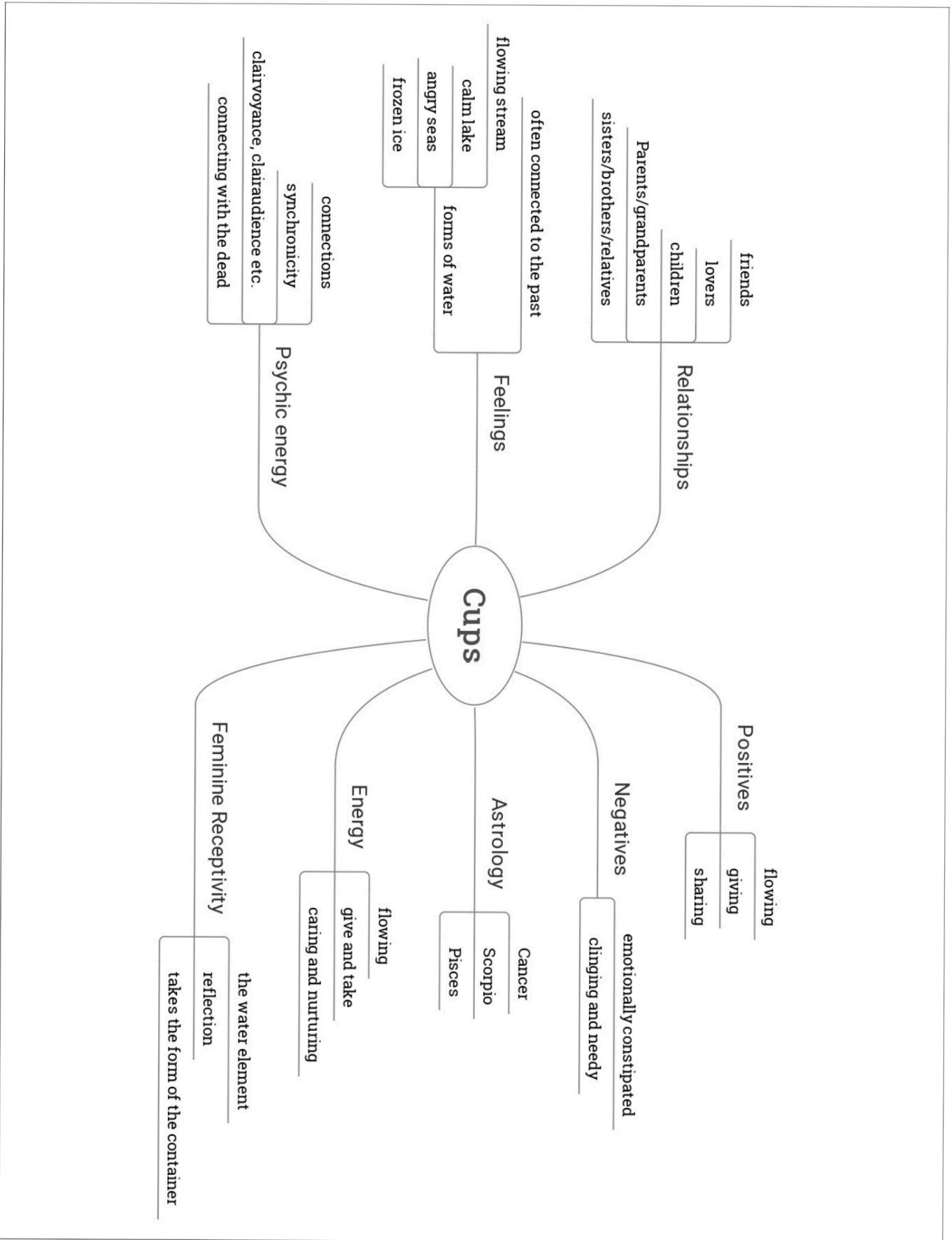
- Aries
- Leo
- Sagittarius

**cohorts and colleagues**

- team mates
- coworkers
- fellow soccer moms

**The Masculine Spirit**

- Father Sky
- fire element
- the burning bush
- the initial spark



**Cups**

**Relationships**

- friends
- lovers
- children
- Parents/grandparents
- sisters/brothers/relatives

often connected to the past

flowing stream

- calm lake
- angry seas
- frozen ice

forms of water

connections

- synchronicity
- clairvoyance, clairaudience etc.
- connecting with the dead

**Feelings**

**Psychic energy**

**Positives**

- flowing
- giving
- sharing

**Negatives**

- emotionally constipated
- clinging and needy

**Astrology**

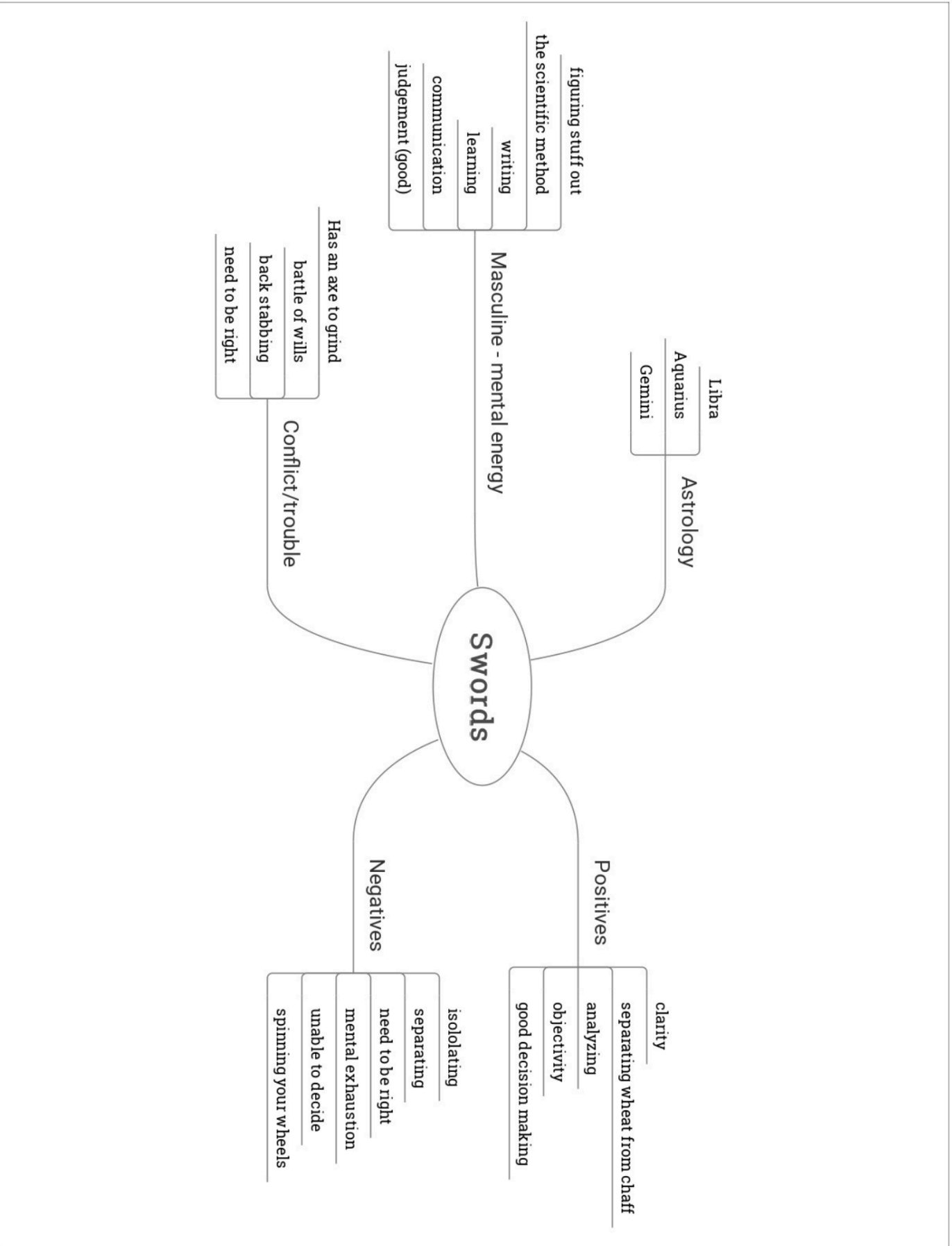
- Cancer
- Scorpio
- Pisces

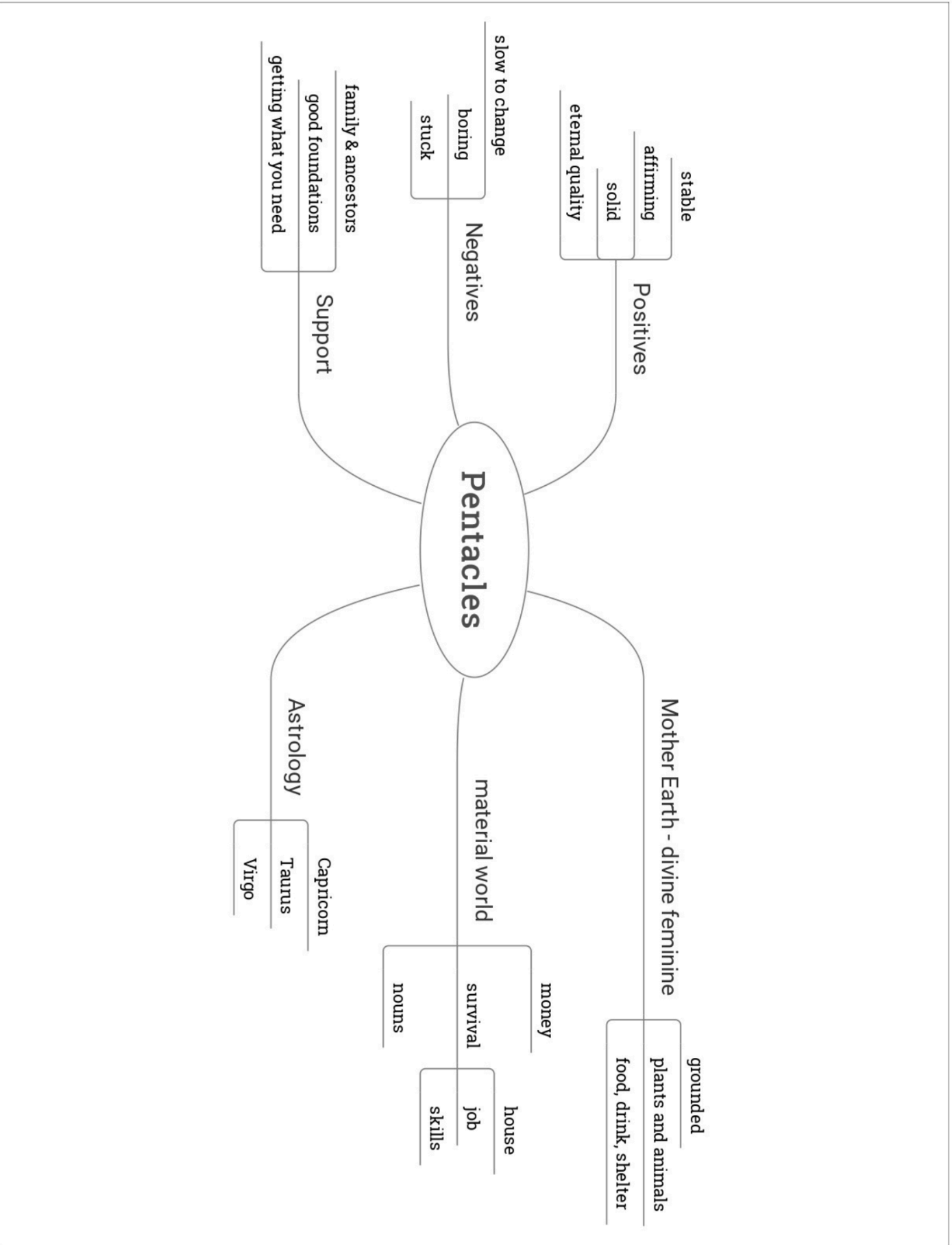
**Energy**

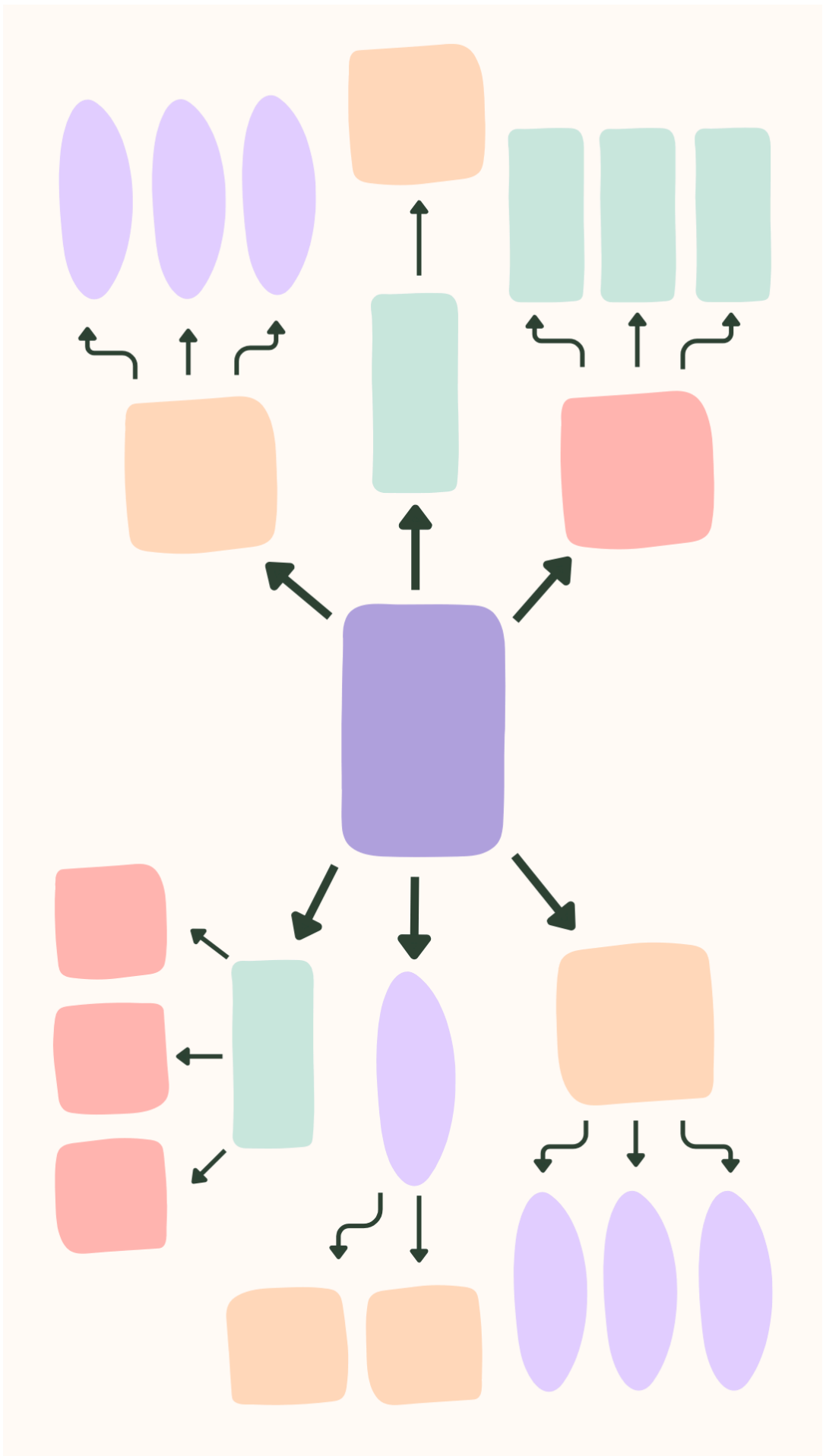
- flowing
- give and take
- caring and nurturing

**Feminine Receptivity**

- the water element
- reflection
- takes the form of the container







## EXERCISE - MAPPING THE SUITS (CONT')

You can also map out how the elemental qualities of the suits interact. It's like rock, paper, scissors. Air feeds fire and water puts out fire. But fire can also boil water.

Think of all the different ways the suits can interact.

I've included some worksheets for you to try your hand at suit combinations. If you get stuck, go back to the element of each suit.

For example, wands are fire and pentacles are earth. What happens when you combine fire and earth? How about earth and water?

*Earth and water make mud. Mud is fertile and can grow things.*

*Water and fire are opposites. Water cools and fire heats. Water can put out fire. Fire can warm water.*



# Summing up the Suits

write some keywords for each of the suits below

Wands

Cups

Swords

Pentacles

# Combining the Suits

Think about how the suits might combine and write your thoughts below

Wands + Cups

Wands + Swords

Wands + Pentacles



# Combining the Suits

Think about how the suits might combine and write your thoughts below

Cups + Wands

Cups + Swords

Cups + Pentacles

# Combining the Suits

Think about how the suits might combine and write your thoughts below

Swords + Wands

Swords + Cups

Swords + Pentacles

# Combining the Suits

Think about how the suits might combine and write your thoughts below

Pentacles + Wands

Pentacles + Cups

Pentacles + Swords

# DEEPENING YOUR CONNECTION WITH THE SUITS: IT WILL TAKE YOU FAR

Now that you've explored the suits of the Tarot, let's have a look at how suits contribute to the overall picture in a reading.

The suits can indicate areas of life.

- Wands: work life, daily activities, business and busy-ness
- Cups: emotional life and relationships, connections, psychic
- Swords: mental and rational functions, troubles
- Pentacles: money and the material realm, heavy, solid

Even if you know NOTHING else about Tarot, you can see what parts of life are being emphasized in a reading.

If someone asks a relationship question, but the cards are mainly pentacles, it might be safe to say someone is more concerned with money and survival or long-term support than the emotional component of the relationship. Or, it might be that they need security in relationships. Or, maybe doing things is their love language.

If someone is asking about their business and swords dominate the reading then there are troubles. These may be legal troubles, or perhaps the person is too caught up in thinking and planning and not doing enough.

## WORKING MAGIC WITH THE NUMBERS

With numbers, we run up against the idea of definitions once again.

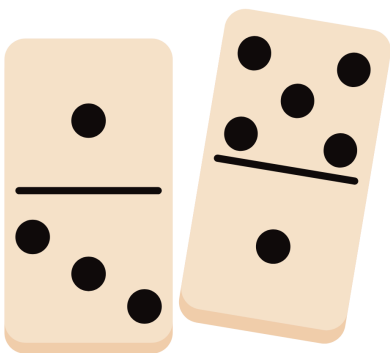
In this case, I believe the intuitive way to start is to list out the numbers 1-9 and note your personal connections with them. Write your thoughts down in your Tarot Journal.

- Do you have a favorite number or numbers? Why?
- What numbers seem to show up around you in the form of addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers etc.?
- Do you have any numbers you dislike? Why?
- Are there any common or repeating birthdays in your family?

Next, spend some time pondering what our societal associations are with certain numbers. For example:

- lucky 7
- third time's the charm
- looking out for number 1
- 3 is a crowd

Write down some reasons you think these associations came to be.



One way to think about numbers is that odd numbers embody active, masculine energy. Odd numbers throw things off balance and create change.

Change can be needed and welcomed or resisted. Too much change creates chaos.

Even numbers, by contrast, embody receptive, feminine energy. They are balanced, harmonious, and stable.

Balance can be boring. Stability can become stagnation.

I still struggle with the numbers in Tarot from time to time, so don't feel like you have to wrap your head around the numbers right away.

Remember, we are trying to make connections and see overlap, not create rigid definitions.

I've included some keywords for the numbers 1-10 after this section. Remember to add your own special sauce to the numbers!

# Numbers

A

Starting point. New Beginnings. Pure potential. The source. Opportunity. The perfect form.

2

Balance. Attraction. Polarity and duality. Receptivity. Reflection. Union or opposition.

3

Growth. Synthesis. Abundance. Fun. Third wheel. And baby makes 3. A third party. Communication.

4

Stability. Structure. Foundations. Cross of matter. Grounded. 4 walls. Boredom.

5

Change. Instability. Challenges. Creativity. Excitement. Adjustment. Strife. Friction. Never a dull moment.

6

Community. Reciprocity. Harmony. The best it can get. Equal exchange. give and take. Victory.

7

Goals and intentions. Focus. Restriction. Striving. A glass ceiling. God's number. Trust issues. Loss. Material vs. Spiritual. Focus

8

Energy, personal power and the use of it. The struggle to manifest. Hard work. Money and business. Power. Balancing material and spiritual. Bringing vision to reality. Vitality.

# Numbers

9

Completion. Mastery. Wisdom.

10

Transition and transformation. The crack between the worlds.  
Endings and beginnings. The pause in the pendulum swing.

All of the numbered cards can be cross referenced with the Major Arcana cards of the same number. For example: 8's with Strength, 10 with the Wheel of Fortune.



## **EXERCISE - COMBINING NUMBER AND SUIT**

This is the most analytical method of reading Tarot that we will cover. Linear thinkers rejoice!

Even if you aren't highly analytical, I strongly recommend working through this method as part of building your Tarot foundation. By using a number plus a suit, you can always say something about any pip card and won't be at a loss during readings. As well, the number plus suit can help get your juices flowing, allowing your intuition to speak.

Print out the pip card grid that follows and fill it out with quick, easy to remember meanings for the pip cards.

For example, if "5" can be disruption and pentacles can be finances - then the 5 of Pentacles can be a disruption of finances.

Another example, if "3" can be synthesis, and swords can be problems, then the 3 of Swords can be a synthesis of problems, or problems showing up together.

Feel free to add your own associations with numbers and suits into this exercise.

For example, if you associate the number "7" with business because you run a business called 7 Swans, then use that association with the meanings you come up with.

At the beginning of this journey we opened up and let the cards speak to us. Now is your chance to say something to the cards. Try out your associations in readings and see how they pan out.

[The Lego Method and Tarot Card Meanings](#)

# Pip Card Grid



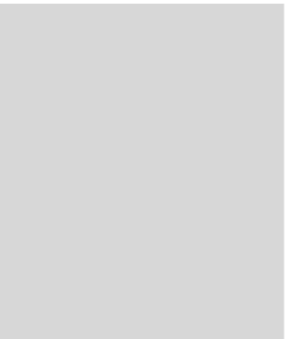
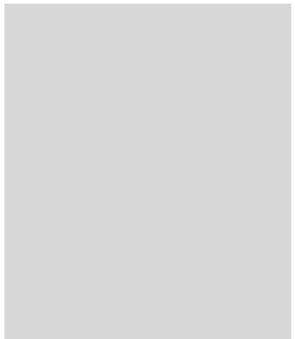
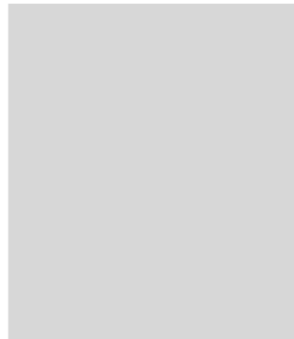
wands

cups

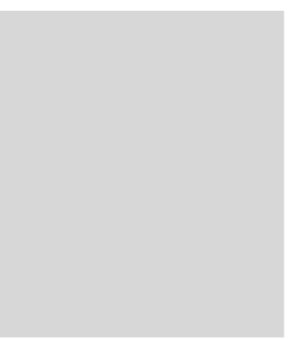
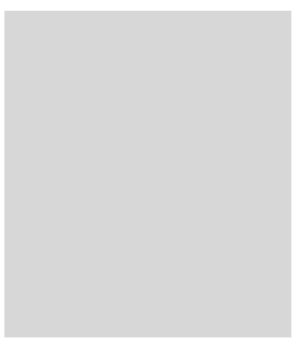
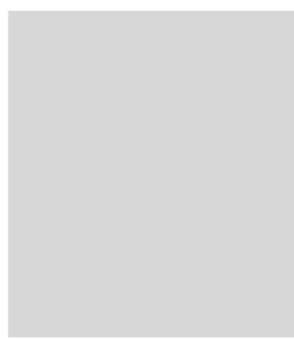
swords

pentacles

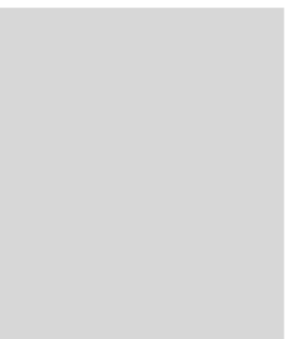
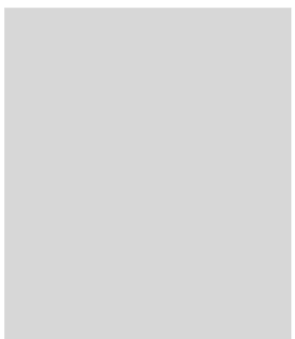
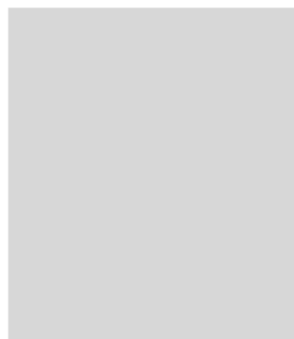
Ace



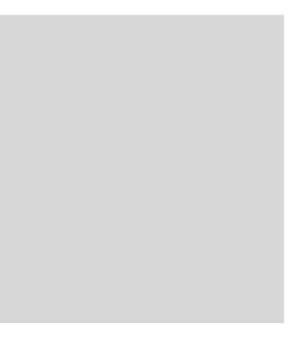
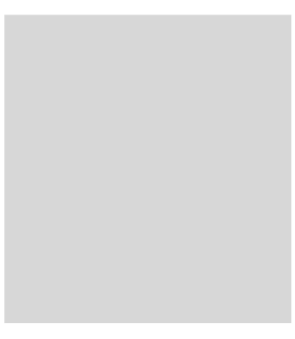
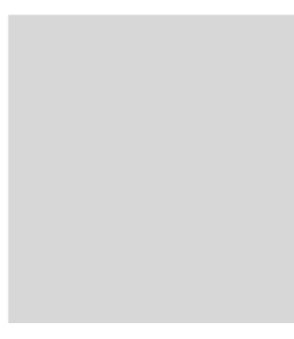
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3



4



# Pip Card Grid



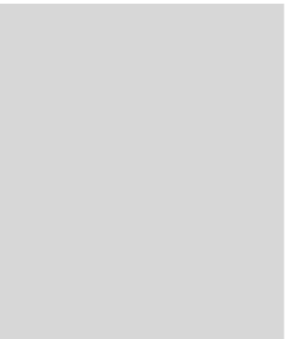
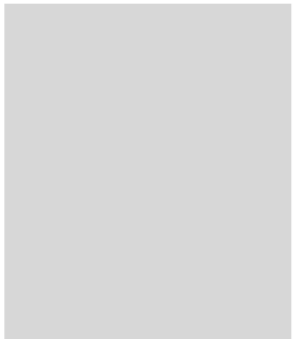
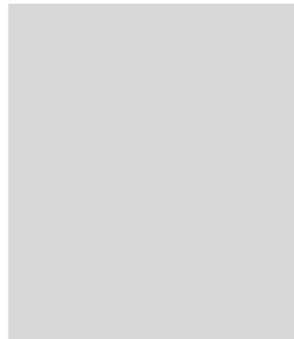
wands

cups

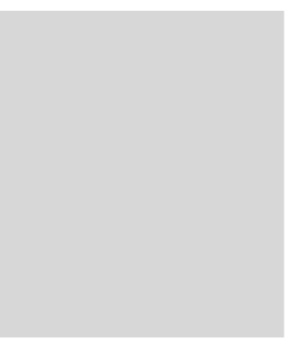
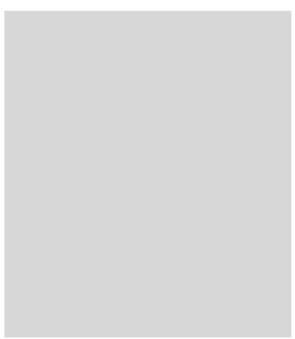
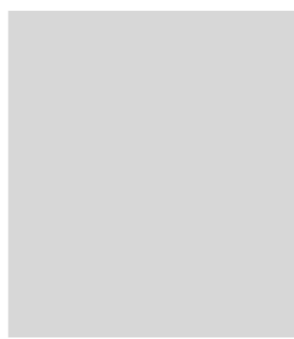
swords

pentacles

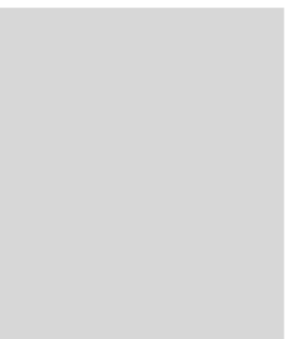
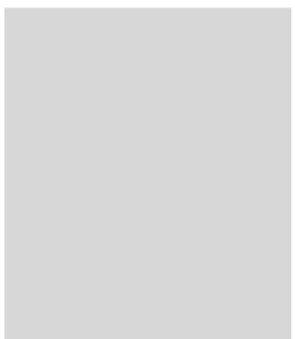
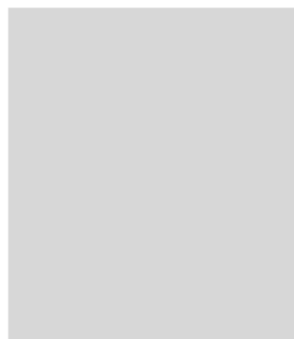
5



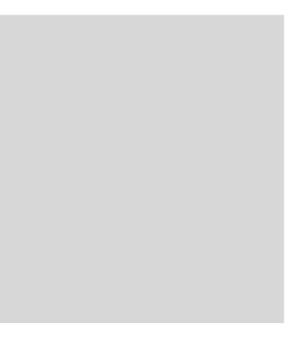
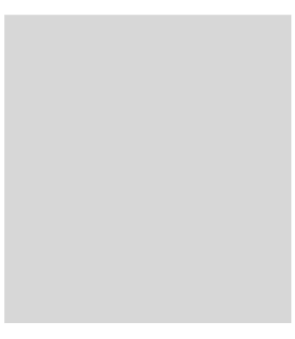
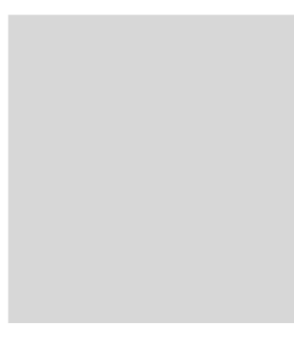
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7



8



# Pip Card Grid



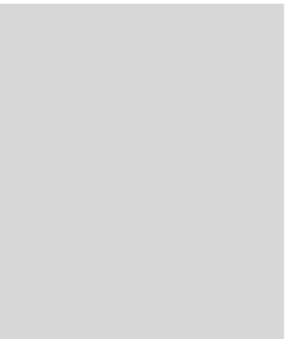
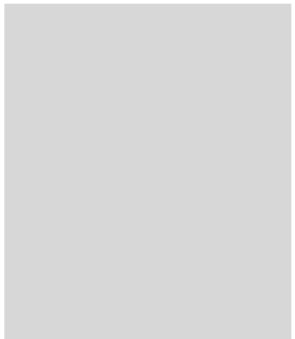
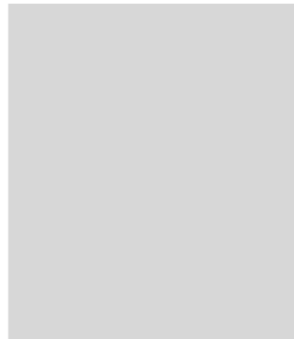
wands

cups

swords

pentacles

9



10

