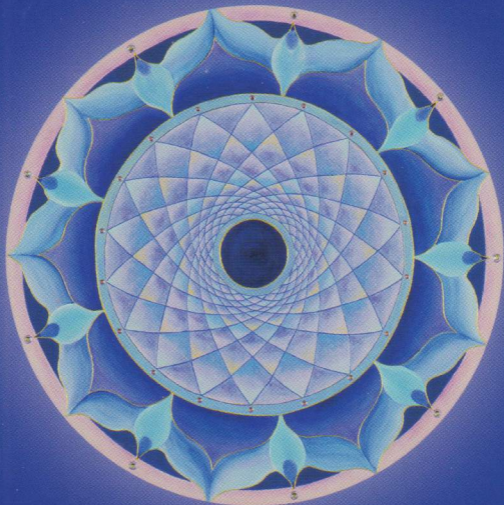


The SOUL'S JOURNEY

Lesson Cards

Guidebook



James Van Praagh

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Talking to Heaven

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Ghosts Among Us

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How to Work with *The Soul's Journey Lesson Cards*

We are all Spirit beings who have chosen to incarnate in this physical dimension to learn to manifest the energy of love. That may sound easy, but before birth, we consulted with our guides, our teachers, and members of our soul family to help us choose the best circumstances for us to reach that goal. And we deliberately haven't made it easy. What is the point of testing ourselves if we already know the answers? We've chosen lives for ourselves that will present us with challenges to overcome, but we've also been given the ability to tap into our inner wisdom to help us rise above obstacles, circumnavigate roadblocks, and guide us to the best possible outcome.

I present *The Soul's Journey Lesson Cards* as one such means to access the infinite wisdom and guidance of the Divine that has purposely been shielded from our awareness. If we give our souls the necessary time and tools to access

this unlimited knowledge, we can have a better perspective on life and our meaning within it. Our souls are the link to the Divine, and all too often we neglect this powerful and transformative connection. It's like living next door to the Archives of the Universe but not bothering to get a library card.

Deep down, your soul has always known that this information has been available to you—in fact, it yearns for it. But the challenges and chatter of life on Earth have become a worthy opponent. You need to consciously be aware that there is more to life than your five senses, and you must make an effort to go within and find the answers that are there for your contemplation.

My hope is that these cards will help you on that journey. (You may also find helpful information in the companion book, *Adventures of the Soul: Journeys Through the Physical and Spiritual Dimensions*.) With this 44-card deck, you can spend time with your higher self in the hopes that you will be guided in making the correct earthly decisions and discover how to best fulfill the plan that you have charted for your soul.

The images in this deck are called “mandalas.” A *mandala* (mun-dah-lah), Sanskrit for “circle,” can refer to any symmetrical design radiating from a defined center, like a flower. Another translation of *mandala* is “world in harmony,” which refers to both the inner and outer world. Designs like these have been used for balancing, calming, healing, and meditation for thousands of years in cultures around the globe. Mandalas are visual reminders of universal truth: everything is connected, and everything is integral to the whole.*

Each one of us is Spirit having a physical experience, and the spark of Spirit that manifests in a human body is the soul. The soul is infinite and eternal, but because the physical body is necessary to traverse this dimension, it can feel limited and separated from the whole. My wish is that these cards will be a bridge for your soul, connecting it with its source of Spirit, and that you will learn to trust the language of your soul, which is your intuition. I hope it will be a guide to understanding who you are and remembering your soul self.

*Mandala explanation courtesy of the artist, Charlotte Backman (www.mandalavisions.com).

The soul's journey is always about learning, experiencing, expanding, and evolving. When a soul advances, it grows in consciousness and becomes aware of its true purpose. Imagine how our lives would change if we were able to recognize the truth of who we are and live accordingly. Instead of looking upon challenges as punishments, we can begin to view them as stepping-stones of enlightenment.

Oracle cards are a time-honored way to seek guidance and to cultivate a connection to the Divine, and in this deck, I've focused upon opening up a direct conversation with your inner spark. My desire is that these cards will assist you in your soul's progress and in the understanding of your place in life and the people you share it with. By changing our consciousness, we can transform our lives.

How to Use The Soul's Journey Lesson Cards

Step 1: Clear Your Card Deck

Your cards are sensitive instruments, so they'll need to be cleared of any energy that they may have absorbed from the

manufacturing process. Steps 1 and 2 only need repeating after another person touches your cards or if your readings lack clarity because the cards have become clogged with too much energy.

To clear your cards, first hold the deck in your nondominant hand (the one you normally don't write with), as this is the hand that *receives* energy. Then, say a prayer over the cards, asking that they be cleared of any energy that they may have absorbed. For example:

*"Dear Spirit, thank you for lifting
away anything from these cards
that is not of Divine love."*

This clears out the old energy so that the cards are now a blank slate and ready to be imbued with your own vibration.

Step 2: Consecrate the Cards

Briefly touch all of the cards to infuse them with your personal energy. You can simply touch one of the corners of each to accomplish this. Then fan the cards out with the mandala art facing you. Place your hands

upon the backs of the cards and think about any prayers or intentions you'd like to bestow upon them.

Your cards are sensitive and absorb your intentions. For instance, while shuffling, you can say aloud or silently:

*“Spirit Guides and Master Teachers,
I ask your protection and assistance in
guiding me with these cards, that the soul
lessons I need to be made aware of are revealed
to me and speak clearly to my soul through
the use of this sacred deck.”*

Ask and pray for whatever help you'd like while working with the cards, such as confidence, clarity, compassion, and so forth. Your cards now carry your personal vibration and intentions.

Step 3: Get to Know the Cards

One by one, look at each card in the deck and take in what each image and message means to you. Your readings will only be as good as your own personal connection and association with each card. Consult this

guidebook to get a better general understanding of the cards, but it is your *own* relationship to each one that will produce a profound message. Make it personal; think about how the lesson applies to you, since we can only give proper readings if we can relate to the situation described.

Every day we are learning a myriad of soul lessons, which disguise themselves in various situations and behaviors. The answers to our lessons are woven into our soul fabric, and when recognized, these patterns can be transformed and are always available for our review, whenever we would like to know more.

All you need to do is ask. Send out a thought to the Universe that you would like some clarity about a particular lesson you are learning. This lesson may involve a specific situation in your life right now, or it can be about a person whom you would like to garner insight about. If you're pulling cards for another living person, ask him or her to either think of or verbalize the situation or person about whom he or she would like to have some insight and awareness.

Step 4: Shuffle the Cards

Continue thinking about the situation or person you would like clarity about as you shuffle the cards, and ask the Universe to assist you with answers and guidance. I often say this prayer, similar to the one in Step 2, while shuffling:

“Dear Universe and Spirit Friends,

I ask you to please draw close to me and illuminate my mind and heart, so that my soul may be united to the oneness of the Universe.

I ask that only the highest of intentions and energies be present in this experience. Please help me release my ego fears so that I can clearly see, feel, hear, and understand the lessons my soul needs to be shown at this time.”

As you're shuffling, you'll likely notice feelings, thoughts, words, or visions. This Divine guidance will help you further understand the cards that you draw, so pay attention to these impressions as they come to you. If one or more cards “jump” out of the deck while you're shuffling, place them to the side. They will become part of your reading.

When your cards begin to clump into two distinct sections, it's time to stop shuffling. You may also receive a feeling, thought, or vision to cease—or you may even hear the words *Stop shuffling now*. Trust and honor these Divine messages that are helping you with the reading. You can't make a mistake or stop shuffling too soon, as the Divine Law of Attraction ensures that you'll choose the correct cards no matter what.

Always place your cards right side up during a reading. Any card that has jumped out in the shuffling process can be used as the all-encompassing, or umbrella, card of the whole reading. Place the umbrella card at the top of your spread, as it will speak to the significance of the story.

Step 5: Deal Your “Soul Spread”

ONE CARD

Before you start your day or head off to work, shuffle the deck and ask Spirit to show you what lesson is going to be prominent. This is Divine guidance letting you know in advance that this particular situation will be

noteworthy today. Take a moment to be in silence with the card and envision how the lesson might be significant with respect to your planned day. Play that situation out in your mind and imbue it with love, understanding, and compassion. Visualize the happiest possible outcome and how you can reach that goal. When you feel good about the strategy that you have envisioned regarding that lesson, thank the card and place it back on top of the deck.

THREE CARDS

After the cards have been shuffled by you or the recipient of the reading, place the deck in front of you. Lay the first card to your left. This card represents a lesson that has already been made evident but may not have been embraced or learned. This card is the cornerstone of the three-card reading, as it signifies the essence of the query, and progress cannot be made unless this lesson has been addressed and dealt with.

Place the next card to the right of the first card. This card represents the energy that is currently present, whether you are aware of it

or not. This card is significant because if you're not prepared for this lesson, it could prove to be a stumbling block impeding your progress.

Place the third card to your right. This card suggests what long-range lesson is to be learned. It is the end of the arc of your story. It may relate to the situation at hand, or it could be an ultimate life lesson of which this situation is just a piece of the puzzle.

MULTI-CARD

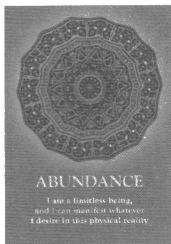
As with any tarot or oracle cards, I recommend creating a spread that works for you. Every card reader brings a different energy to the deck and will read the messages differently. You have to be comfortable with the progression of the story that the cards are communicating to you.

If you have a close friend who might enjoy working on this project with you, that would be ideal, as you will get objective feedback. Have your friend shuffle the deck and mentally infuse the cards with his or her intention. When he or she is satisfied with the shuffle, take the deck back and place it in front of you.

I resonate with a seven-card draw, but it is only a personal preference. In my readings, I place three cards in front of me from left to right, then one card above that row, then another three cards in a row above the single card. I view the first row as the energy currently in play, the upper row as the energy of the future, and the lone middle card as the transition or possible obstacle between the present and future. Always remember after a reading to reclaim the energy of the deck. Hold the deck in your hand and infuse it with your power. Remember that the reading belongs to the sitter, but the cards belong to you.



THE MEANINGS OF THE CARDS



Abundance

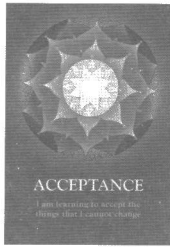
I am a limitless being, and I can manifest whatever I desire in this physical reality

Always remember that you are God, and God is all about creation. God says *yes*; the ego says *no*. In order to have abundance in all areas of your life, you must create the space of receiving and know that you are deserving of anything your heart desires. The more you can release limited thinking and worry, the more open you are to receiving the infinite flow of the Universe.

Allow yourself to have fun when manifesting what you want in life, and enjoy the process. By embracing a positive mind-set, you are opening the door to unexpected abundance. It is natural to have abundance in your life, and you must realize that any thoughts of limitedness may have come from either a past life or a life condition you have chosen to overcome. They could also originate from programming that you received from the environment you grew up in and the value systems you were taught when you were young.

Now is the time to begin to live with the realization that you are worthy of having abundance in every aspect of your life. When you are in the vibration of receiving, you can manifest whatever you desire in this physical reality.





Acceptance

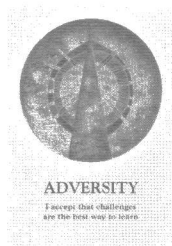
*I am learning to accept the
things that I cannot change*

Right now your soul is learning acceptance. This may force you to feel out of control in a situation or with another person in your life. Just realize that the Universe has given you this incredible opportunity to release control. Perhaps doing so will help you realize that there is a rhythm—a rhyme or reason—to everything in life. Rather than thinking that

these are “accidents” that are occurring, refer to these conditions as moments of “Divine Design.”

Maybe it is a person or a situation that you do not agree with right now. For the moment, instead of having a knee-jerk reaction based on an emotional response, stop, step back, observe, and make an attempt to understand both sides of the equation—which is an incredible gift for you to practice tolerance, grace, and patience. Realize that although you have come to accept a situation or a condition, it doesn’t necessarily mean that you are condoning a behavior or that you support it. You see it for what it is and recognize that there is something rich to learn from it.





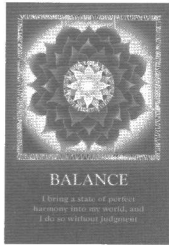
Adversity

*I accept that challenges
are the best way to learn*

No one ever said life was going to be easy. Obstacles are presented to you so that you may overcome them. Believe that you *will*, because if you don't believe in yourself, no one else will. Confidence comes to those who have succeeded in conquering adversity, and then the next hurdle won't seem as daunting.

Adversity is an opportunity for you to reach out to your soul family. You are not alone in this time of challenge. If you need help, others are waiting to offer assistance. This test may have come into your life to teach you to receive rather than to give.





Balance

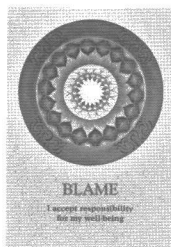
I bring a state of perfect harmony into my world, and I do so without judgment

Balance means bringing a sense of stability and wholeness into every area of your life. Many times when you look at a situation objectively, you will resonate with one side more than the other. Try not to view either as *good* or *bad*, but simply recognize that it *is*. The true nature of the scales of balance is to give both sides of a situation your equitable, objective

perspective. It can be difficult to understand the side that you don't relate to, but that is a lesson in itself.

What is it about *you* that prevents you from giving both sides of the coin your non-judgmental assessment? This situation or person has been placed in your path to teach you that everyone has his or her own unique, authentic life story, and you must put yourself in that person's shoes to really understand his or her motivation. Balance is a godly virtue, and if it is struck, you will reap the benefits of insight and compassion.





Blame

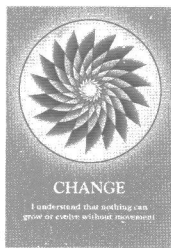
I accept responsibility for my well-being

It is so easy to give away the power to transform your life. Certainly, there have been people along your path who have shaped you into who you are today, but you are solely responsible for your own happiness. The ego can be a very fragile thing, and if it comes under fire, the first instinct is to blame an outside force. Victim consciousness weakens the connection that you have to your soul

source. This mind-set says: *I don't have the power inside myself to break free, because someone else's power is stronger.*

This is an illusion. When you believe that someone else is responsible for your problems, that belief *is* the problem. Personal responsibility can empower you to change your reality. Lasting transformation always begins on the inside and works its way out. There is a difference between a *reason* and an *excuse*. A reason is valid and unavoidable; an excuse is an attempt to shift the blame.





Change

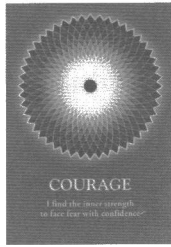
*I understand that nothing can
grow or evolve without movement*

There is a certain comfort in the idea of living a life without surprises. The status quo has an appeal, but you will never learn or grow if your circumstances stay the same. Everybody wants life to be better, but that requires change. You have chosen to incarnate into this physical dimension called Earth because of the myriad of opportunities. If you don't take advantage of them, what was the point?

Staying within your comfort zone is overrated. With change comes transformation, and with transformation comes evolution.

Stop viewing change as good or bad, because *all* change nourishes your soul. Don't equate it with a lack of control. Life happens, and it's *supposed* to happen. You can direct how it plays out, and you always have the power to accept a change that redirects your path.





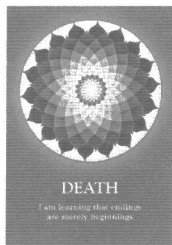
Courage

*I find the inner strength
to face fear with confidence*

You need to remind yourself that part of the challenge of being a soul is learning to honor your own power. By listening to your inner voice and following its advice, you are acknowledging the perfection of your intuition. Fear is only an illusion, and obstacles are great opportunities for you to demonstrate that coming from a place of love will conquer all of fear's disguises.

Perhaps you are changing career paths or entering or exiting a relationship. This test has been put before you because it is an opportunity to prove to yourself that you, and only you, can make the correct decision. By not taking that step forward, you may find yourself two steps back, only to face that same obstacle again.





Death

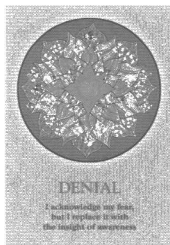
*I am learning that endings
are merely beginnings*

Death is an illusion. It's a fact of life that the human body we use to travel the earth must eventually stop working. It's not meant to exist forever. The energy and consciousness that inhabited that body is free and returns to its natural home, but it never abandons us.

Learn to view death as merely a change—and everything *must* change, because stagnancy extinguishes progress. The same is true

for a relationship or a career. A soul lesson may be completed, and it is time to move beyond this point of familiarity and expand into new horizons of learning and development. This is a wonderful opportunity to thank those other souls in your life who have shared part of your path and taught you so much.





Denial

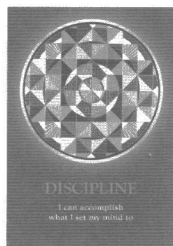
*I acknowledge my fear,
but I replace it with the insight of awareness*

It is time to open up and be completely honest with yourself at this present moment. Buried fears and resentments do not die; they merely fester and cause dis-ease. Only by bringing them to the surface and examining them in the light of day with love and compassion will you banish them from your life.

It may bring you pain and heartache to reflect upon these situations again, but you are only giving them power by suppressing them. The dangerous seeds of denial will grow and spread and manifest unless you uproot them, examine them, and release them. This is the only way to become whole and healthy.

Learn not to bury painful emotions in the first place. Deal with them as they come, and take all the time you need to neutralize them without hiding them. Your soul wants to live honestly and authentically in the now. Don't hinder it by placing emotional land mines on its path.





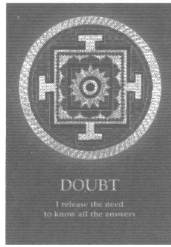
Discipline

I can accomplish what I set my mind to

Your soul has a goal, but it has also chosen to incarnate into a world of distractions. Earth is a dimension of obstacles and challenges, but you have been given discipline as your birthright. It is time to remind yourself what your soul has come back to this planet to learn. This is a great opportunity to reevaluate your priorities and go about your daily tasks with a new system of managing your life, instead of being the passive recipient of whatever comes your way.

Distractions can easily get us off the work of our soul, and if we give in to this apathetic impulse, we can miss many well-placed and preplanned teachings needed for our inherent growth. Learn that the satisfaction of a task completed is more emotionally rewarding than a task delayed.





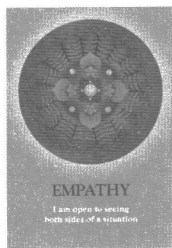
Doubt

I release the need to know all the answers

It's impossible for the human brain to comprehend the mysteries of the Universe. You are only consciously aware of the three dimensions for a reason, and that is to learn to love without the full awareness of your connection to Spirit. Everyone has his or her own personal path to this awareness, and there is no right or wrong answer as long as your goal is to manifest the energy of love and compassion.

The wisdom of the Divine trickles into the physical dimension, and some of it will resonate with your soul and some will not. These are your signposts that guide you to your correct path. If the wisdom resonates with you and seems right, then keep it. If not, release it back to the Universe. Always be aware and mindful of the insights that your Spirit Guides and teachers put on your path.





Empathy

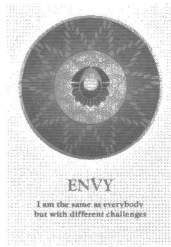
I am open to seeing both sides of a situation

You don't truly understand others' motivations if you haven't lived their lives and seen the world through their eyes. It's so easy to judge another's behavior matched up against your own and label it as right or wrong. But you're missing an important part of the equation: the other person's history and personal path.

We are all sparks of the Divine, with a purpose here in the physical dimension, and we can all exert our free will. Some of us have

lost our way along the path to love, and it is a human reaction to judge others before examining their journey through their eyes and with compassion. Your job is not to judge; your job is to love and understand.





Envy

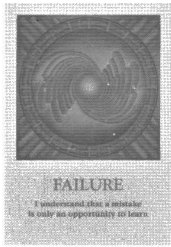
*I am the same as everybody
but with different challenges*

You must learn to accept that the obstacles in your life have been chosen by you. To be jealous of the soul path of another is to doubt your ability to judge what is best for *you*. It is human nature to covet the perceived luxuries of someone on a different journey, but to try to emulate him or her is not being true to your own guidance. You have chosen this life and these circumstances for a reason; by

disregarding that and following in the footsteps of another, you are only setting yourself up for confusion and disappointment.

You never truly know what is going on in another person's life and what personal challenges he or she may face, so to be envious is a fool's game. Be authentic to your inner voice, because only you know what is in *your* best interests. If you don't follow your own path, you will have to reincarnate in an attempt to learn your original lessons again.





Failure

*I understand that a mistake
is only an opportunity to learn*

Life on Earth is full of experiences. It is our human brain that views outcomes as good or bad. The soul simply views them as chances to grow. Learn to see the big picture of life instead of the minutiae. Failure to accomplish a task is merely the opportunity to evolve, and the negative connotation of the word *failure* can prevent you from trying again.

You must come to the realization that there is no judgment involved with your soul's lessons. Realize that what you view as a failure is just your soul telling you that there is another path. Embrace the maxim *When one door closes, another one opens*. It is a time for you to stop any negative emotional investment you have in the outcome. Revel in the "knowingness" that everything will reveal itself when it is meant to. No matter what, be true to your dream and the creative process.





Fear

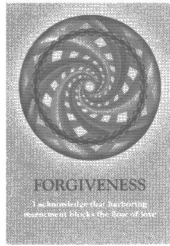
*I realize that I am testing my
resolve to live in the energy of love*

The outcome of all choices in life is determined by two emotions: *fear* and *love*. Your soul is made of the energy of love, and fear is an earthly manifestation of a challenge. To embrace and wallow in fear is to go against your very being. Fear, in its many guises, is the obstacle that your soul uses to test its tenacity to stay on track. For a soul, human life can be

very difficult, but acknowledging that your soul's true nature is love will always help you on your path.

When fear rears its ugly head, it is really an opportunity for you to stare it in the eye and turn that doubt into trust. View it as a teacher. What lesson are you learning from these fearful emotions? The more you use the energy of love to defuse fearful situations, the less often they will present themselves.





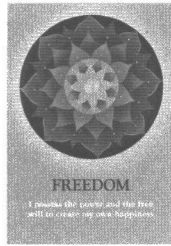
Forgiveness

*I acknowledge that harboring
resentment blocks the flow of love*

You can never flow with your natural energy of love unless you release the negative energy of hate, anger, intolerance, or blame. Every soul in your path has free will, and you have no control over that. What you *do* have control over is how you react to the manifestations of others' free will.

Holding on to that negative energy will strengthen karmic cycles, and forgiveness can break that pattern. The most important person you must learn to forgive is always yourself. Blaming yourself for “failures” blocks the natural flow of love, which will attract all good things into your life.





Freedom

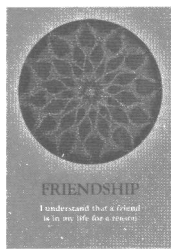
*I possess the power and the
free will to create my own happiness*

Your soul is open to receiving new wisdom and insights that will allow it to make the right choices for its own growth. Remember, you are never a victim of other people or their circumstances. You have complete control over your own choices. By following your heart and being authentic to yourself, you present the real you to the world. Making decisions based on other people's expectations is not the

true path to happiness. You are responsible for creating your own reality.

When a soul shifts to a place of honoring itself in its totality—free from judgment—only then will it find its true freedom. Every soul is unique and follows its own path. Don't give in to peer pressure or the urge to fit in. You are the only one who truly knows the real you, so feel free to march to the beat of your own drummer.





Friendship

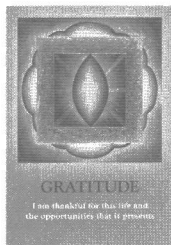
*I understand that a friend
is in my life for a reason*

All humans are created from the same Source, but there are some souls that share a unique kinship. Friendship can be the most exciting and beautiful experience on Earth, but it can also be frustrating and heartbreaking. Understand that everyone in your path is here to teach you something. It may be for a year or a lifetime. Together you will teach each

other various lessons of the heart such as trust, love, loyalty, and admiration.

The bonds of friendship are often stronger than those of family. You have formed a bridge of understanding between the two of you that has stood the test of time—and of lifetimes. A true friend will illuminate your path instead of dim it. He or she will give advice with your best interests at heart. To be able to communicate at a soul level with another human being is the biggest treasure of the physical dimension.





Gratitude

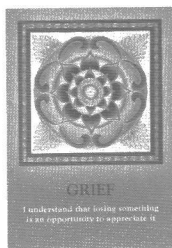
*I am thankful for this life
and the opportunities that it presents*

This soulful card is telling you that it is time to stop, close your eyes, and become mindful of the incredible gift the Universe has bestowed upon you in offering valuable and unique lessons, tailored especially for your soul. This is an important reminder to express your appreciation for what has been, what will be, and most important, who you are. It is time to acknowledge to the Universe how thankful

you are for being provided these opportunities for insights and understanding. It is also time for your soul to share recognition of all those loved ones in your life—upon the earth or in Spirit—who have helped form who you are now.

You may even find it helpful to begin to write a list of all the things you are grateful for in your life. When you put forth the contemplation and the energy to do this, it awakens thoughts that acknowledge your connection to all that is. By bringing yourself into a state of gratitude, it not only has a transforming effect on the energy in the sacred space surrounding you, but also brings about an overall sense of health and well-being.





Grief

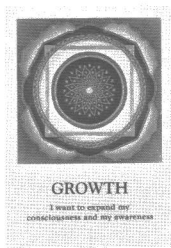
*I understand that losing something
is an opportunity to appreciate it*

Nothing is gone forever. The belief that we have “lost” someone or something is merely an illusion to assist us in learning to appreciate our having had it in the first place. The emotion of grief and the sense of loss are absolutely real—but that is the point. The lesson of loss is not about the actual physical separation, because the parting is temporary and illusory.

The point of the lesson is to acknowledge that the bonds of love never end and that we have not been abandoned.

When you accept in your heart that you will be reunited with everything you have ever loved, it will give you the ability to move beyond your grief and derive something beneficial from the experience. To wallow in grief is to pass up the opportunity that you and your soul family have devised and learn nothing from it. Instead, allow your grief to take you to a place of deeper understanding.





Growth

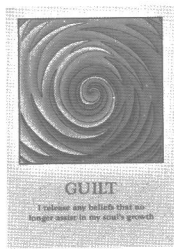
*I want to expand my
consciousness and my awareness*

You are constantly being presented with situations that enable you to develop your inner wisdom and assist you in advancing to higher levels of understanding. The lesson is to be aware of these events and recognize them for what they are. To live a *mindful* life is not only about respecting and honoring those around you; it is also about recognizing every person and circumstance on your path as a

teacher. The constant chatter and diversions of life on Earth can distract you from the signposts that Spirit has left on your path.

Take the time to be aware of the bountiful wisdom that has been laid before you. Acknowledge these gifts and take them to heart as you continue your sojourn in this physical dimension. Don't look for the opportunities that you think you need; instead, be receptive to the opportunities that are given.





Guilt

*I release any beliefs that
no longer assist in my soul's growth*

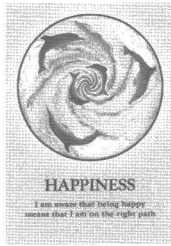
The energy of fear has many guises to complicate your path to loving yourself. Guilt is the most devious, because it is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It is a self-imposed emotion that *pretends* to be instructive and enlightening.

Guilt can help us grow when we realize that our actions have been hurtful to others and that we need to make amends. After we do

so, though, it's time to learn from the behavior and move on. The problem arises when we hold on to a guilty feeling that serves no purpose other than promoting self-destructiveness and low self-esteem.

No one is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes. Guilt is not always rational, but if you examine it subjectively, act on it, and release it, it becomes a temporary emotion. Long-held guilty feelings are never good and will create a roadblock to self-love and happiness. You must continually scan your current emotions for any guilty feelings and bring them to the surface for analysis. Healthy guilt is a warning that action should be taken; irrational guilt needs to be released.





Happiness

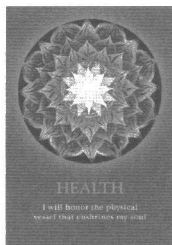
*I am aware that being happy
means that I am on the right path*

Before incarnating, your soul created a blueprint for you to follow in this physical dimension. The easiest way to chart this path is to follow your bliss. Life is full of choices and opportunities. Spirit, in its infinite wisdom, has given you the emotion of happiness to guide you. The signposts are always there, but you have to acknowledge them and have the courage to follow them.

As you hold this card, do you feel that you are living a life of happiness? In what areas is it lacking? It may be time to be truthful with your soul self. Listen to its language and intuit if there is someone or a scenario holding you back from experiencing complete happiness. Even though it may be painful to admit, you need to be completely truthful.

Be mindful of how happiness will affect every aspect of your life on your path. Also, intuit if there is someone else in your life who needs to be brought into the awareness of happiness. This is important to recognize as well. Others will want to learn from you, and whether you admit it or not, you can be their teacher. When you are filled with love and compassion, not only do you bring happiness into *your* life, but you lead others by example. Be the light.





Health

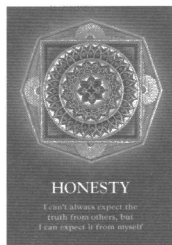
*I will honor the physical
vessel that enshrines my soul*

Your body is your temple, and you are responsible for its care. You have chosen to incarnate in this physical dimension to learn certain lessons, and if you don't maintain the physical vehicle that your soul has chosen, then you are sabotaging your own plan. Your health is a vital element for your soul's progress, and you should never take it for granted. Be sensible about nourishment and exercise.

You could be a “sensitive” being who must be conscious of your surroundings because you can easily be drained by people, places, or things. Always make a ritual of protection and cleansing before you work with a client, or just bring your mind back to your heart throughout the day to rejuvenate.

This card may also signify a desire to assist other beings through physical or emotional healing work. You may be involved professionally in the medical fields, bodywork, or psychiatry and counseling—or maybe you're just a good listener who possesses sage advice. If you or someone you know inherited a congenital dis-ease, past-life work may be of some benefit.





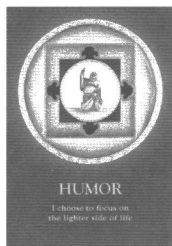
Honesty

I can't always expect the truth from others, but I can expect it from myself

Being truthful with others is a slippery business. You are expected to tell—and expect to be told—white lies. No one wants their feelings hurt, but sometimes a strong dose of reality is needed. No one can tell you definitively in what circumstances an *untruth* would be better, but honesty is usually the best policy. You, and only you, know in your heart when the right time is to be totally honest.

The only time you must be absolutely truthful is when you are addressing yourself. You must at all times present yourself authentically to those around you. Only by being yourself do you draw in the people and circumstances that you most need to learn from.





Humor

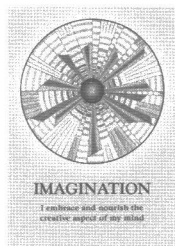
I choose to focus on the lighter side of life

There are definitely parts of life that require your serious attention, but you have to learn to have fun. Don't neglect things that bring you joy or make you laugh. Besides the health benefits to your physical body, your emotional and mental bodies reap huge rewards from the art of joy.

Seek out the people who make you feel good about being alive. Avoid cynicism and pessimism. Always look at your cup as being

half-full instead of half-empty. The endless chatter of this physical dimension can seep into your conscious mind, so do your best to listen to happy music, read soul-enriching fiction, and be wary of movies or TV shows that can darken your mood. Happy people attract happy people.





Imagination

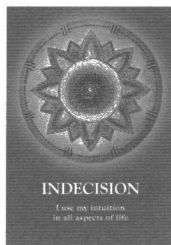
*I embrace and nourish
the creative aspect of my mind*

By its very nature, the physical body is limited by the three dimensions. But your mind is free to travel without boundaries and merge with the Cosmic Consciousness. Your mind is the great creator, and your imagination is its toolbox. Everything in life begins with the energy of imagination. Thoughts are real, and they can manifest themselves into the physical world. Train your mind to only have positive

thoughts, and you will attract positivity into your life. If you can *see* it, you can *be* it. Visualize the components that you want in your life and imbue those thoughts with love, and they will become your reality. Conversely, if your mind strays to negative thoughts, you will only bring that energy to you.

Be positive and loving. Imagination is creativity! Express yourself and let your imagination assist you in letting go of any creative blocks, and allow your dreams to come true. Remember, you are not doing this for other people. It is your soul opening up and singing its own unique song.





Indecision

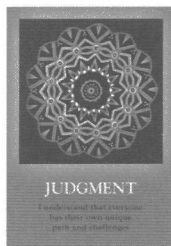
I use my intuition in all aspects of life

Your soul is Spirit manifest in this physical dimension. Even though you may feel limited by the constraints of your body, your connection to the infinite wisdom of the Universe is always available to you in the form of intuition. You are never alone when making any decision. Spirit only wants the best for you, and by listening to your inner voice, you will always be guided to the proper outcome. All you have to do is ask. The expectation of others

is only an illusion. You were not born to listen to fear; you were *taught* to listen to it.

Visualize any decision in your life as a fork in the road. How does your body react when you imagine your travels down each path? At first glance, one may look easier to traverse, but the destination will cause anxiety and a heavy heart; another path may be more difficult to walk, but the destination will feel light and calm. When you silence your mind and listen to your intuition, the signposts will always be obvious.





Judgment

I understand that everyone has their own unique path and challenges

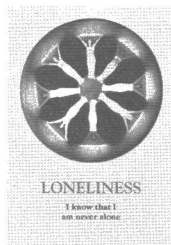
We are all Spirit. We are all the same. It's only the roles we have chosen to play here on Earth that make us seem different. The biggest lesson *you* have chosen to learn is to love. There are so many situations in this physical dimension that it is possible to incarnate into, but the core lesson is to look past these illusions and see yourself in everyone. Each soul has chosen its own struggles, and your task is

not to judge how someone goes about overcoming these obstacles, but to assist that soul.

Spirit has given you the tools of compassion and empathy to help you see through the eyes of those who appear different. Your ego has taught you that making other people feel insignificant or inferior will allow you to feel better about yourself. That is an illusion. By diminishing others, you diminish yourself.

Always learn to follow the Golden Rule: *I will treat others as I would like to be treated.* Everyone in your life is here to teach you something about yourself. Accept the lesson with love and understanding.





Loneliness

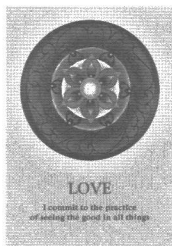
I know that I am never alone

This card has come to you because you must be reminded that there is a difference between being lonely and being alone. Feelings of loneliness originate from a sense of not appreciating the most important person in your life: *you*. If solitude seems like an affliction, you need to work on creating a healthy relationship with yourself. Only then will you attract others who will nurture your soul. If

you don't develop a healthy relationship with yourself first, you will only draw unhealthy relationships to you.

To create a healthy, positive relationship with yourself, you must begin to feel worthy of love. The pessimism of this physical dimension can affect your self-esteem if you don't have the strong conviction that you are valuable and meaningful. Don't view solitude as a weakness; it is merely your soul telling you that it is time to do some inner work and reevaluate your path before you start to shine. As you sit in the silence of your soul, you will realize that your Spirit family, teachers, and guides are with you. You are never alone.





Love

*I commit to the practice of
seeing the good in all things*

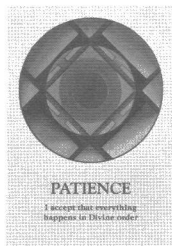
You are love. It is your inherent vibration. The obstacles and challenges of the physical dimension attempt to trick you into thinking that there are other ways to view life—but there is only one way that is natural to your being: *love*. This card simply reminds you that your soul is made of God's pure Divine vibrational force of love and that you need to bring

this awareness to bear on every aspect of your life and being.

Love is a healing energy. All anxiety and drama cannot exist in the aura of love. Most souls have come back upon this earth to learn, accept, and utilize this harmonic force and to see its effect upon their lives. It is your time to remind others of the strength of their own power of God, and assist them in knowing fully that love is the most powerful element in the Universe. It builds, fortifies, and strengthens even the most lost person.

When we live in the power of love, then and only then will we know truth. True love is the spiritual link between us and God. It will guide our footsteps through the conflicts of the material world and will cleanse our hearts of unwanted facets of the human personality.





Patience

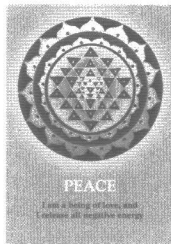
*I accept that everything
happens in Divine order*

Earth has become a place of instant gratification. You must focus on the maxim *It's not about the destination; it's about the journey*. This card has come to you because you need to learn the joy of *anticipation*. The process of "doing" is so rich in lessons, but when you concentrate only on the goal, those experiences are disregarded. Life is an unfolding, and the more patience you practice, the more you

will let the Universal energy celebrate itself through you and bring the experiences and situations your soul requires.

You need to learn that there is a rhythm to everything in the Universe, and the more you are living with patience, the more aware you are of the lessons your soul is studying. You are on a path. There are signposts. If you are speeding down the path, you will miss the little miracles and treasures that have been placed there.





Peace

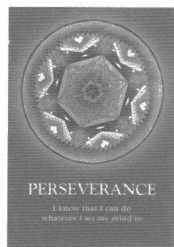
*I am a being of love, and
I release all negative energy*

This is a gentle reminder that balance in the mind is imperative in order for your soul to live its true nature. At this time in your life, you are to learn the value of peace and quiet and the joy of being still. One can never be truly connected to the Source when the mind is engaged with unneeded chatter.

Look around your life and be conscious of what elements are taking you away from the

peaceful nature of your soul. Who or what is interrupting this solitude? It is time to reconcile past hurts and perceived injustices. Your peace may also be fostered by changing your outside view. Create harmony around you physically with order and calm. Trust the voice of your higher self to create an environment in which you can truly be in tune with your soul.





Perseverance

*I know that I can do
whatever I set my mind to*

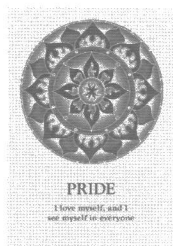
As a soul, you are on a mission in this physical dimension. You are the only one who knows the correct path to take. Your intuition—your connection to Spirit—is your compass. You have the power to stay the course, and you are stronger and more determined than you might first think. In order to experience many successes in life, you must

mature and realize the strength within yourself and the quality of inner courage.

Life doesn't just happen—we must *make* it happen. It is natural for us in this human school to shy away from what we believe to be difficult, because we concern ourselves with how others will perceive us. We are afraid of failure, ridicule, or coming up short.

Now is the time to make the proper changes and take risks and do things you never thought you could before. Your soul must learn to become aware of its “inner strength.” Live the joyfulness your soul yearns for and engage in activities you have always wanted to try but were afraid you'd fail at. Your soul would not yearn for something that you couldn't accomplish. You have the strength and fortitude to be capable of greatness.





Pride

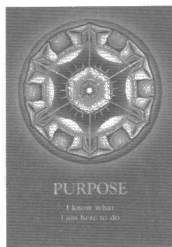
I love myself, and I see myself in everyone

You need to take time to honor and acknowledge who you are and what your soul has accomplished with your life thus far. You should look at your past soul choices and be mindful of how through your positive actions, compassion, and understanding, you have made a better life for yourself and others. How have you changed the world in some little way? How have you shared insights with others? Reflect on what you have mastered.

You should never underappreciate or underestimate yourself or your accomplishments. Now is the time for you to remember how brave you have been throughout your journey. Celebration is required!

Humans tend to spend too much of their energy and time on negative emotions or what they have *not* done. This card signifies that you should take rightful ownership of who you are and how you have shared your unique light with the world. It may also be a perfect time for you to look around and acknowledge those other souls who have also accomplished many great things and who need to be reminded of them.





Purpose

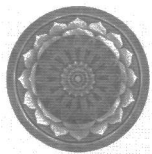
I know what I am here to do

You have chosen to reincarnate on Earth for one major goal: to express love in all that you do. The obstacles of this physical dimension can distract you from that goal, and it's easy to lose your way. Life on Earth is full of obligations that require your conscious attention, but that doesn't mean you can't infuse all of your decisions with caring and compassion.

Your purpose in life is not your career; rather, your *career* is guided by your *purpose*. What activities speak to your soul? What

brings you joy? That is the direction your soul is calling you toward to best convey your own unique expression of love and make a contribution to the world. If you are not happy with your current circumstances, then that is your soul telling you that there is a better way to manifest your own distinct gifts. Listen to your intuition. It is your connection to Spirit and the voice of your soul.





REGRET

*I know that I
cannot change the past*

Regret

I know that I cannot change the past

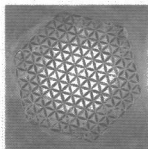
The soul doesn't know time; time is a construct of the physical dimension. To your soul, there is only one big *now*. Think of the "past" as the *now* that has already been created, and the "future" as the *now* that has yet to be created. You don't have the power to *un*-create the past, so let that go. Your power of creation lies in your awareness of the present.

You have the power to not only create your future, but also create acceptance of your past. You should realize that you are the total

summation of every single experience you have had. These experiences have helped shape you into the person you are today. Train yourself not to judge past events as good or bad but as opportunities. What have you learned from the past that will help enrich your future?

Focusing on the past and letting it dictate the direction of your future is taking your power away from yourself. You are the creator. You hold the power. Reflect on the lessons of the past and use your current power to create your bright future.





RELATIONSHIPS

*I am attracted to those
people who serve my higher good*

Relationships

*I am attracted to those people
who serve my higher good*

In this three-dimensional world in which we live, there is a sense that we are separate from one another and also that we meet by chance. This is an illusion. The people in our lives are drawn to us and are here for a reason. It is through sharing experiences and having relationships with others that we begin to understand ourselves.

When someone appears in your life, you must see what is not resolved or whole in the person and understand the lessons he or she brings home to you. You draw others to you like magnets, in order to learn various aspects of yourself. The people you have close relationships with on Earth are usually members of your soul family. You have chosen to incarnate together to help each other learn lessons—even though it may not seem that way to you now. Once a lesson is learned, don't be surprised if that person fades away. People are in your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime.





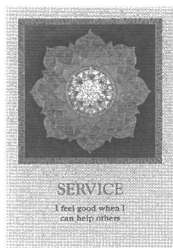
Self-Esteem

*I possess gifts of the soul
that benefit me and others*

It is easy to perceive others as being better than you. This is a trap of the ego. There is no one greater or lesser than you; there are only those who have learned how to reveal their gifts to a greater or lesser degree. Everyone is born with unique abilities of the soul, and just like snowflakes, no two are ever alike. You have a unique perspective to share with the world and have come back this time to put your stamp on it.

Perhaps you may not be aware or even “in tune” with your incredible and gifted self. Why not try to make a list of ten aspects of yourself or abilities you possess that you love and hold in high regard? It is not always easy to write about yourself, but sometimes you need to be reminded just how special you are. Remember that you did not come down to this schoolroom by accident. You have meaning and a reason for being. You are a treasure chest of incredible gifts and insights. Now is the time to celebrate *you!*





Service

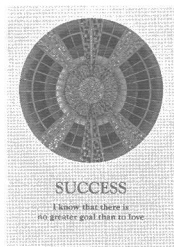
I feel good when I can help others

One of the most evolved gifts that a soul possesses is giving of itself. There is a reason why it feels good to give—it is because your soul resonates with that vibration. Your soul should be aware that it might currently be in a situation in which it needs to be fulfilled on “higher levels,” and this can only happen through the attribute of humbly serving and supporting others.

Put yourself in a position in which you can benefit another soul in any way possible and demonstrate unconditional love toward others. This might mean bringing yourself into your heart space and letting everything you involve yourself in come from an attitude of giving freely. You have to learn to direct your green heart-light energy through all your thoughts, actions, and deeds.

Look around and see where and how you can serve another. Perhaps one way would be asking a friend if you can help clean up his or her office or run errands. Maybe volunteer to watch your neighbors’ kids so the parents can have a night out. Make a meal for someone who might be sick. Volunteer in a hospital or hospice. Perform an activity that enriches someone else’s life.





Success

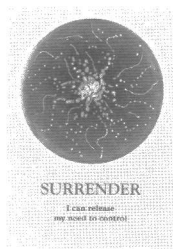
*I know that there is
no greater goal than to love*

Success can mean many things to the ego self. But the soul only knows one triumph, and that is to love. When your soul is no longer manifested in the physical dimension, it is a time of reflection on how successful it was with that endeavor. The soul doesn't care how big your house was or how nice your car was or how many bank accounts you had. The soul

only cares about how you expressed love and compassion.

In the infinite wisdom of the Universe, the more love you demonstrate, the more you will receive . . . and even your ego's definition of success is altered. Your notion of how you would be perceived as successful will change. The material things that you thought would make you happy will not have the same appeal.





Surrender

I can release my need to control

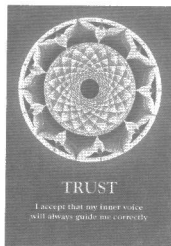
You need to understand the distinction between power and control. You have the power of *internal* control, but very little *external* control over people or situations. The majority of your external control is through the power of influence. You can lead by example.

Every soul has its own unique path, and it is not your job to dictate it. Giving advice or direction in a compassionate manner is the way to go. Your soul, too, has a path, and you

possess the power to control it—but you must surrender the illusion that you have control over another.

Remember that this is a process, and from time to time your ego will rise up and demand that things be the way they “should be.” Envision a hot-air balloon being loaded up with all of the things you think you need to control, and let them ride away in the balloon. You’ll be surprised to find that when you release the energy of control and accept the energy of surrender, doors will open that you never expected, because you have now given the Universe space in which to materialize what is needed for your highest soul growth.





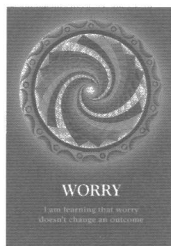
Trust

*I accept that my inner voice
will always guide me correctly*

The earth can be a tricky place, but you have been given a tool to help you navigate through the murky waters: your intuition. You must learn to tell the difference between ego-talk and soul-talk, and then trust your *soul*. Once you get into the habit of following your intuition, you will come to practice that discernment externally. You will be able to know if a person or situation is trustworthy.

But it all begins with listening to your inner voice. Exercise it like a muscle, and when you determine that it is always right, that wisdom will spread out and influence everything that you do. Decisions will seem easier. Your soul only wants what is best for you, and you must learn to trust it.





Worry

*I am learning that worry
doesn't change an outcome*

Worry is a wasted emotion; it does nothing other than give you the illusion of control. When you expend too much energy worrying, it limits you and has an adverse effect on the natural energy of the soul. Worrying destroys the hope, faith, and excitement that are wonderful elements of this schoolroom called Earth.

Remember that *you are what you think*, and you have the power to create positive thoughts, which beget positive outcomes. Worry is a negative emotion and sets you up for a negative result. What unnecessary worries are you carrying around with you now? Examine them objectively in the light of love. Help your soul by releasing them, and be fully connected to the current moment, which is where your power resides.



About the Author

James Van Praagh is an internationally renowned #1 *New York Times* best-selling author. He has written extensively about life after death, spirit communication, grief, and healing; and his messages have brought solace, peace, and spiritual insights to millions, changing their views on both life and death.

James introduced the world to mediumship on the NBC daytime television show *The Other Side* in 1994. Since then, he has appeared on nearly every national radio and television program, including *Oprah*, *Larry King Live*, *Dr. Phil*, A&E's *Biography*, *Nightline*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *The View*, *The Joy Behar Show*, the *Today* show, *Dr. Drew's Lifechangers*, *Chelsea Lately*, *Coast to Coast*, and many more. His international reach expanded even farther when he hosted his very own daytime talk show, *Beyond with James Van Praagh*.

James is also a successful producer in network television, with one of the most-viewed miniseries in CBS history, *Living with the Dead*, starring Ted Danson, portraying James in a biography of his life; and *The Dead Will Tell*, starring Eva Longoria. He also co-created and produced the highly successful series *The Ghost Whisperer*, starring Jennifer Love Hewitt.

James teaches workshops and classes and performs mediumship demonstrations throughout the world. For more information, please visit his website: www.vanpraagh.com.



About the Artist

Prints and cards of many of the images in *The Soul's Journey Lesson Cards* deck (without the borders or words) are available directly from the artist's website: www.mandalavisions.com. Some images are also available on custom wall tiles and glass at www.mybacksplash.com. Neither Hay House, Inc., nor James Van Praagh assumes responsibility for any sales conducted between you and the individual artist or an outside party.

All Artwork by Charlotte Backman

For **Charlotte Backman**, painting mandalas evolved from a fun diversion to a form of artistic expression, a spiritual practice, and ultimately a life's work. Charlotte says, "As a contemporary mandala artist, I improvise on traditional forms with modern colors and materials, with attention to the effect the artwork has on the energetic and emotional receptors of the

body/mind. Living into the many spiritual and psychological teachings of the mandala keeps my heart and mind engaged and wanting more. Some days I paint for the sheer joy of it, and some days there is a message or emotion that wants to be expressed."

Charlotte's artwork appears in private collections as well as spiritual centers, churches, and hotels. She is a contributor to two books, including *Women, Spirituality and Transformational Leadership*. In addition to teaching art to adults and children, she also designs and facilitates collaborative art projects for fundraisers and team-building through the Many Hands Mandala Project. One of these collaborative pieces is featured in her TEDx presentation, "The Beauty We Create Together."



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The SOUL'S JOURNEY

Lesson Cards

With this guidebook to accompany *The Soul's Journey Lesson Cards*, you'll learn how to perform a "soul spread," and with every turn of the cards, your higher self will deliver you soulful wisdom and guidance. **James Van Praagh** has drawn upon his 30 years of experience in Spirit communication and counseling in order to bring you this healing tool to facilitate a clear understanding of your spiritual growth. Each page of the guidebook highlights a life lesson such as *Forgiveness*, *Empathy*, or *Surrender*, and the various ways in which you may utilize it for the optimal growth and evolvment of your soul.



James Van Praagh is the internationally renowned #1 *New York Times* best-selling author who has worked as the voice of the Spirit World for the past 30 years. He has appeared on *Oprah*, *Larry King Live*, *Dr. Phil*, *Coast to Coast*, and many other programs. He is also the successful creator and producer of CBS's long-running series *The Ghost Whisperer*, starring Jennifer Love Hewitt. Website: www.vanpraagh.com

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