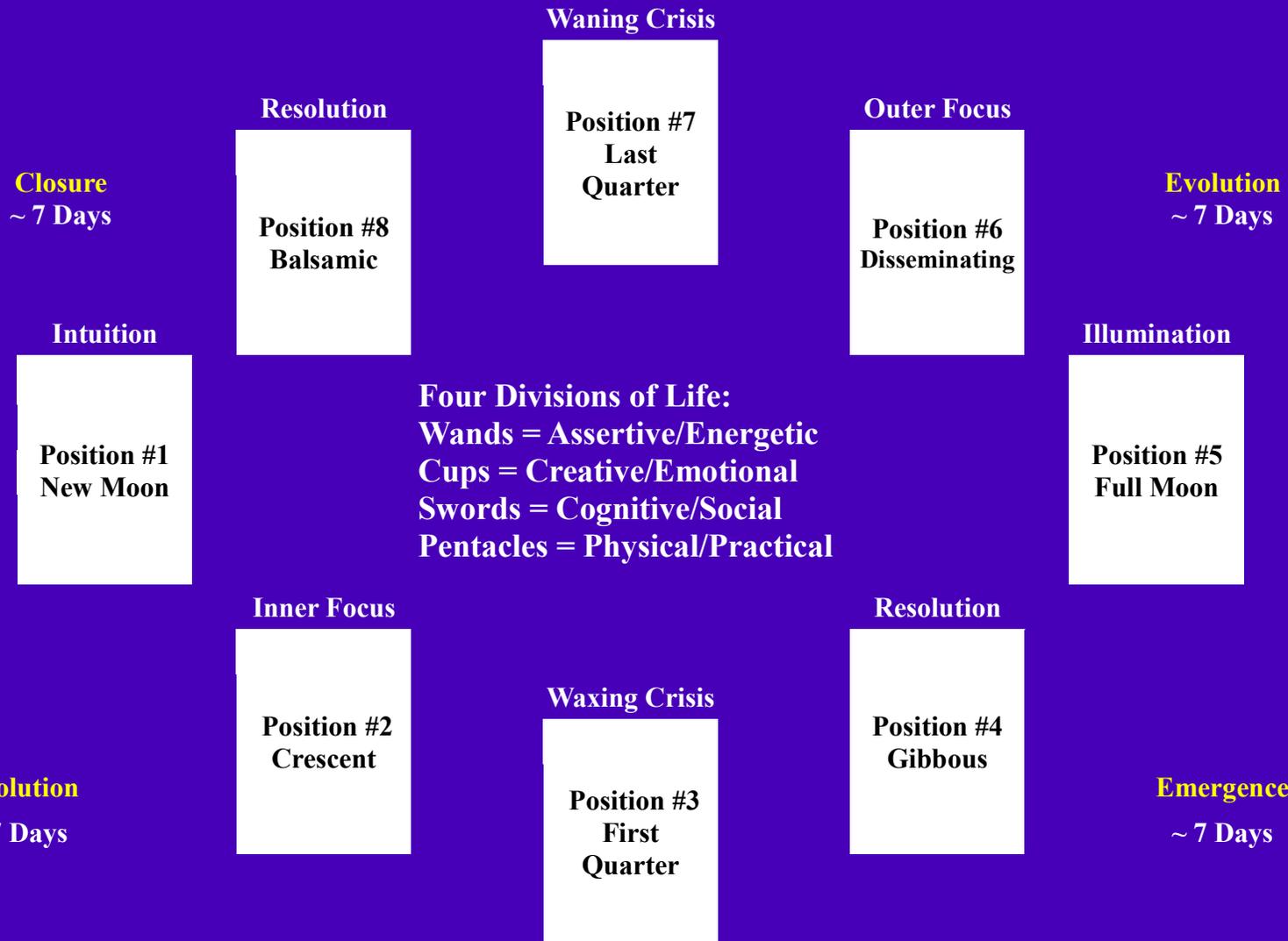


“8 Watches” Lunar Month Look-Ahead Spread



8 Stages of Growth

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In 1967, the psychological astrologer Dane Rudhyar wrote a book called *The Lunation Cycle* that subdivided the Moon's month-long journey through the zodiac into 8 stages, the traditional four (New, First Quarter, Full, Last Quarter) and four intermediate phases (Crescent, Gibbous, Disseminating and Balsamic). His purpose was to portray eight "personality types" using lunar symbolism, but I see it as a way to enjoin the cards in expressing attitudes and circumstances that could prevail during the course of a given month.

First things first: the cycle starts with the day and hour of the New Moon, not the first day of the month (unless they coincide). Each of the eight phases lasts around 3.5 days (using the sidereal cycle). One-quarter of the cycle is approximately one week long.

The "quarters" show the square, or 90°, aspect between the Sun and the Moon, which is a stressful time, astrologically speaking. So I fashioned those into two "crisis" intervals followed by two "resolution" episodes. These will not always blow up into serious crises, but they do suggest vulnerable periods that agree with standard astrological practice.

I set up a "divisions of life" model that follows the usual meanings of the suits and elements: Wands show assertive and energetic tendencies; Cups show creativity and feelings; Swords show mental and social stimulus; and Pentacles (also called Coins or Disks) show practical considerations and physical pursuits. Cards representing any of those qualities would be read as indicators of an area of life that is in "high focus" during the 3.5 day period of its influence.

In predictive astrology, the Moon describes one's habits and daily routine. Because it moves so fast, the transiting Moon by itself seldom shows significant or long-lasting developments; it changes constantly, presenting a new face every few days with a concurrent opportunity to behold the “small stuff” in a different light and make minor adjustments. Life-altering events usually aren't “in the cards” For this reason, it is best to use only the 40 minor cards for this spread, or at most the 56 minor and court cards.

One card should be dealt into each of the eight positions in counter-clockwise order, starting at the “New Moon.” Another approach is to deal out four cards in each position and treat them as a mini "life reading" for the few days of each phase. It might also be reasonable to use the different phases as "trigger" points in the upcoming month, during which the potential inherent in each position could be activated via the energy offered by the cards.

The New Moon (or “dark of the Moon”) is a time of contemplation and preparation for the upcoming monthly cycle. The principle it conveys is “intuition,” or following one's instincts and impressions in setting a course for the next few days. This card will show the kind of plan that occupies the querent's attention.

The Crescent Moon favors inner-directed awareness and building of a personal stronghold from which to confront a possible First Quarter crisis. As such, it represents the next stage of preparation: developing a “mission statement” to focus the emerging plan.

The First Quarter Moon results from the waxing square of the Moon to the Sun, during which the Moon is increasing in light. This is a period of heightened sensitivity to negative effects caused by ill-considered or poorly-planned actions on the querent's part. Refraining from action at this time may be the best bet, unless the card here is very favorable.

The Gibbous Moon advances toward fullness, evolving past the crisis point and bringing increased awareness regarding the cause of the upset. The card here should be read as “advice” since it offers insights on ways to cope with the impact

The Full Moon is the period of the Moon's maximum brightness. Its principle in the cycle of situational awareness is “illumination,” optimizing the precision and validity of the querent's insights and raising the likelihood of any actions being well-favored.

The Disseminating Moon brings the epiphany of the Full Moon into the realm of outward affairs. The card here will show the “meet-and-greet” potential during this period, when social concerns become uppermost among the querent's priorities.

The Last Quarter Moon reflects the waning square of the Moon to the Sun, during which the Moon is decreasing in light. This is a period of increased sensitivity to the influence of unbalanced thoughts and emotions. Refraining from making decisions or commitments at this time may be the best bet, unless the card here is very favorable.

The Balsamic Moon is the time during the month when “the pigeons come home to roost: “ the consequences of past actions and attitudes are visited upon the querent as the Moon closes in on its next “tete-a-tete” with the Sun. It's a time to bring any loose ends to closure. The card here will show the status and something of the nature of any remaining challenges for that month.