

NATURE & SOUL

yoga wisdom cards

Written by Alison DeNicola
Artwork by Christine Zillich

Copyright © 2020 U.S. GAMES SYSTEMS, INC.

All rights reserved. The illustrations, cover design, and contents are protected by copyright. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review written for inclusion in a magazine, newspaper or website.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Made in China



Published by
U.S. GAMES SYSTEMS, INC.
179 Ludlow Street
Stamford, CT 06902 USA
www.usgamesinc.com

INTRODUCTION

*"Come forth into the light of things, let nature
be your teacher."*—William Wordsworth

Nature and Soul Yoga Wisdom Oracle is a vibrant set of 40 cards created to share and celebrate the divine union of nature and yoga for messaging, inspiration and insight.

We offer these beautiful and powerful images as the inspired pairing of nature symbols with the ancient practice of yoga. Many are familiar with the nature names used to represent yoga asana, or physical postures as they are known by. The natural world is filled with its own complex union of movement, color, light and shadow. Through this deck, we present a unique perspective on the powerful guides in nature, their symbolism and how they influence yoga postures and practice. Each unique card is meant to open awareness, share insight and soothe the soul.

Nature and soul symbolism taps into the universal language. Breaking through barriers of culture, we can relate to the images of nature in a universal way. The colors of the rainbow, the fire of the sun, as well as the unique attributes of archetypal images and earth's creatures all speak to us through their color, their form and their action. Open your heart and mind to receive the gifts of Nature and Soul Yoga Wisdom.

HOW TO USE THE DECK

You can use the cards as an oracle in various ways.

SINGLE CARD PICK

Select a card every morning to set your intention and focus for the day. Read the symbolism message and follow the suggested practice. Record your impressions in a journal as you relate to the images and as the images relate to your life in this moment. Single card picks are perfect when you begin a meditation, when starting a new project or when you are reorganizing your practices. If you choose, you can practice the pose represented and incorporate that energy into your day.

TWO CARD PICK

Choose two cards to represent supporting influences for you right now. Allow yourself to focus on a question or contemplation. Select your pair of Nature and Soul cards and carefully observe color, form, images and messaging as they relate to each other and as the pair relates to your current inquiry. Read the message and follow the suggested practices for greater insight.

12 CARD MANDALA

Choose 12 random cards from the deck to represent 12 months, 12 moons or 12 days ahead. Use the 12 cards to create a circular mandala. The first four cards chosen can be seen as the seed or intentions to be planted. The second four cards are insight into the energies supporting the action. The last four cards represent the structure or foundation of the manifestation. Use your creativity and imagination to connect with the deck in this way.

CONNECTING TO NATURE SYMBOLS THROUGH YOGA PRACTICE

Although we do not present instructions for the yoga in this deck, you may choose one or more cards and explore the poses they are representing on your own. For instance, if you select a card such as Lotus Pose, you may want to bring yourself into that seated posture and feel the pose in your physical body. Then read the information, message and practice suggested for this posture. Allow this to deepen your awareness to your own body and to the nature symbol represented. You might like to slide the card at the top of your yoga mat and reflect on it as you practice. Become aware of sensations and thoughts as you practice in this way.

THE CARDS

Bee	Lion
Butterfly	Lizard
Camel	Locust
Cat	Lotus
Cobra	Monkey
Cow	Moon
Crocodile	Mountain
Crow	Partridge
Dancer	Peacock
Dog	Rabbit
Dolphin	Rainbow
Dove	Rooster
Eagle	Scorpion
Firefly	Star
Fish	Sun
Flower	Swan
Frog	Thunderbolt
Goddess	Tiger
Heron	Tree
Horse	Waterfall

BEE

Accomplishment

This small insect is a mighty symbol of accomplishing the impossible. The gathering and pollinating conducted by bees is vital to the plant life on the earth. It is this kind of focused determination and busyness that creates a positive flow of productivity. This totem is also considered a symbol for sweetness as the honey they create is universally regarded as the nectar of life. Bee breath is a pranayama in yoga that mimics the buzzing sound created by the working bee. This breathwork requires the practitioner to close off the ears and eyes and focus on a soft humming breath in the back of the throat. This allows one to activate the higher levels of creativity and expression. It also helps to calm and clear the mind so that a focused mind can be attained.

Message: The bee flies in to assure you that with focus and organization, success is imminent! You are being reminded that there may be more work involved and a certain level of activity necessary for what you are hoping to accomplish. Let the energetic quality of the bee inspire you to notice if you are taking time to enjoy the fruits of your labor. If your tendency is toward over-

working, then take a break to enjoy the sweetness of all that you've been working towards. This message is a notification that we always need to monitor and balance our efforts with times of rest and reflection. Call on the community around you to help support bringing your dreams to life.

Practice: Try out Bee breath or Bhramari breathing as a way to focus your mind and efforts. Relax your shoulders. Close your throat slightly so you can hear your breath when you breathe in. Cover your ears with your thumbs and your eyes with your fingers. Keep your lips closed lightly and your teeth slightly apart with your jaw relaxed and breathe out slowly making a long, low humming sound like a bee. Make your exhalation long and smooth. Repeat 5–10 times and notice the effects.

BUTTERFLY

Manifestation

Butterfly is a unique totem of unfolding beauty. Butterfly pose is a seated posture inviting us to open hips and bow inward to our own unfolding. The gestation of butterfly reminds us that we may be in any of the important stages of manifesting and release. Butter-

fly migrates once it is fully formed to find harmonious places in the world. Supreme symbols of the air, butterfly reminds us that the beauty of our journey is in the lightness and willingness to fly. Honoring our own process, we can gain great insight into the phases of butterfly within our own life.

Message: Butterfly floats in to bring you awareness and inspiration. Notice where you are right now on the path. Is it in the seed stage with ideas just forming? Or are you in the cocoon, nurturing the inner potential? You may be fully blooming and ready to soar into the air. In any of those stages, honor this process of emerging and be willing to surrender anything that may hold you back from realizing your full potential. Butterfly teaches us to work with natural cycles and rhythms. Once our manifestation has been realized, we may then go back into the seed stage and continue to create our life through this process.

Practice: Taking a seat in Butterfly pose, close your eyes and connect with your breath. Breathe into the belly, ribs, and chest and as you exhale imagine that you can unfold your wings. In each round of breath, fill up on the inhale and on the exhale expand out even

wider. Now call to mind something that you are working to bring into being. Breathe into that vision and begin to see it expand out into the world, unfolding and coming to life in the perfect way. See yourself like the butterfly filling with air and inspiration. Use this visualization daily to bring your intentions into reality.

CAMEL

Fortitude

The camel is an ancient desert dweller known for its resilience and fortitude. Camel pose is an intense backbend that requires steadiness and courage to open. The symbol of camel shares its connection to journey, perseverance and willingness to continue into the unknown. Camels are known for their conservation of water and ability to survive in the heat with little nourishment. This in itself speaks to our own unique ability to find steadiness and survival in difficult circumstances. Camel pose invites us into the same space of intensity and challenge.

Message: Camel comes forward to encourage you to move out of your comfort zone and awaken your inner qualities of resilience as you uncover the hidden

center of your divine essence. Opening your heart to what might have seemed difficult, challenging or even impossible is necessary. Through this process, you will uncover your own inner strength. Challenge always leads us to growth and change. Receive the message of camel and welcome all that is within you.

Practice: Sit or lie down bringing awareness and focus to your heart center. Imagine a vast space within your heart as wide as the desert. Now see a desert flower emerging here in the center of your heart. The flower is a living, breathing representation of your heart. As you continue to bring focus to this flower in your heart, it continues to grow more vibrant, stronger and more resilient. Feel all of the qualities of this desert flower blooming within you.

CAT

Intuition

The cat has long been a domesticated animal that represents the feminine aspect and the qualities of mystery and magic. Cat pose is a four-limbed pose of stabilization and spine opening. When a cat arches its back, we are reminded of their fluidity and connection

to the earth through paws and feet. Our own connection to Mother Earth can be felt through this pose as we feel ourselves firmly on the ground while gazing inward. As we adopt the stance of the four-legged cat, we can connect more to our primal feminine and open that doorway as well.

Message: Cat awakens the energy within you now to reconnect to the hidden, intuitive aspects of yourself. Become a keen observer of this energy as you open to more of the magic and mystery in the unseen world. Cat uses its cleverness, sensing and intelligence to navigate through the spaces that some may deem closed. It is in this world of intuition that we realize the depth and multidimensional nature of life. It is in this place that the mystery and magic of life begins to emerge more fully. Have you denied that part of yourself who is more sensuous? Cat calls you to reclaim that part of yourself as well.

Practice: Imagine yourself in a comfortable space at twilight. Envision the sky as a blending of darkness and light. Feel yourself merging with the energy of the senses—inner-knowing. Begin by sensing your whole physical body. Then bring that same awareness to your breath. Now go beyond the breath to experience the

twilight air around you. The space between darkness and light. Become aware of yourself resting in this place of mystery. Let the magic of this place reveal itself to you. Sense its feeling on your skin and on your breath. Feel the whole body now enveloped in this energy.

COBRA

Healing

The mighty cobra is an impressive symbol of hidden wisdom and healing. Cobra with its powerful venom is quick and graceful in movement. In India, the cobra is highly regarded as connected to Shiva, the transformer. Cobra pose requires the graceful lift of the chest and heart while connecting to the earth. Backbends, like cobra pose, offer the opportunity to transform through the heart. Like the shedding of snakeskin, the heart center opens to release old grief, pain and disappointment in this posture.

Message: Cobra invites the rising and shedding of old energies in the present moment. Like the cycle of birth and recreation, the release of what no longer serves you will assist in moving you forward. King cobra is

supremely spiritual in nature and this vibration supports the dissolution of old structures. Move into cobra with the intention of releasing and then allow yourself to fill with the new potential that awaits you.

Practice: Find a quiet space to sit or lie down. Bring to mind without any fear the image of snake or cobra. Allow yourself to merge with this powerful symbol, feeling your body becoming long and fluid. As you embody this energy, invite the outer level of you to begin to peel away. You may sense it as a release or a lightening. In this process, actively invite anything that has been weighing you down to release as well. Feel your heart opening. Feel the power of your mind to the third eye center. Become cobra.

COW

Nurturance

The cow has long been a symbol of the mother. Gentle, loving and feeding others, the cow grazes in nature with stability on the earth. This posture of spinal opening allows the belly to soften towards the earth as the tail tilts toward the sky and the heart center opens.

The softness of cow pose reminds one to embrace the

sweetness of slow movement and gentle opening. The cow supports all through her generous offerings as this pose supports a gentle stability in the body and spine.

Message: Cow pose walks across your path to invite you to slow down and take in the now. Feel yourself grounded to the earth and reflect on where you have been rushing things forward. Have you lost sight of where you are because you are so busy looking at where you are going? Many gifts and lessons happen in the present moment and now is a time to pause, soften, reconnect and reflect. Once you feel this reconnection, you will be in the perfect place to lovingly gaze forward with open eyes.

Practice: Come onto hands and knees if that is comfortable for you. Feel the hands connected to the earth. Notice the knees under your hips and soften your belly. Begin to slow breathe into the belly as you exhale softly out of the mouth. Take a few rounds of breath here feeling yourself on each exhale connecting more and more in a soft and stable way to the ground. Gently tilt your tail and allow your heart to open forward. Feel everything fully in this moment.

CROCODILE

Adaptability

The mighty crocodile is a symbol of primal force and integration. The largest of the reptiles, crocodiles are powerful hunters and patient watchers. Crocodiles float on their bellies waiting to emerge at the right time. Crocodile pose invites us to find our own flexibility, patience and adaptability as we tune into our bodies. In this way, we can find the spaces to create change. In the prone position, we are more attuned to earth and water in the front of our bodies.

Message: Crocodile brings with it the message of being the objective observer. Through the connection to water and earth element, you are being encouraged to slow down, pause and observe. Opportunities often come in the most synchronistic ways. Like this skilled hunter, use your own sense of right timing. When the opening occurs, move through it and seize new opportunities. Your adaptability and flexible approach will ensure success.

Practice: Lie down for this simple meditation. Imagine yourself floating in a warm stream. Sense a lightness in your body and mind and feel that primal part of your-

self as a creature of the earth adapting to the water. Begin to imagine your ears under the water and your eyes looking up at the sky. Slowly notice all sounds and become aware of what you see and sense through your skin. Feel yourself gracefully concealed as the conscious observer. Take in all sensations and receive the gifts of awareness.

CROW

Messages

Of all the black birds, crows are the most social. Their high intelligence and loud vocal “caw” encourages us to be alert and pay attention. Crows often perch on lower branches of trees, testing their skills of observation and balance at the same time. Crow pose is a skilled arm balance testing visual focus and core balance. Building inner strength and staying closer to the earth, we can be ready to respond and communicate as needed. The magic lies in the duality—both heavy and light at the same time as we move beyond our usual form and open to the wonders waiting to be discovered.

Message: The call of crow reminds you now that you may need to hone your communication skills and pay

attention to messages coming in. A community of crows indicates that messages are usually coming from more than one source. Have you been busy squawking and not listening? Crow allows us to move into air element, which rules communication while still having hands on the earth. Stay connected and observant as crow often leads us to discover universal truths. This could be a bigger piece of information or an 'aha moment.' The wisdom of crow allows us to share these truths with those around us.

Practice: Bring awareness to the throat center, Vishuddha Chakra, as the seat of higher communication and the gateway to higher consciousness. Begin to produce a gentle hum into the throat center with the lips softly closed. Hum or tone the sound HAM softly for a minute or two. Begin to sense the sound and vibration in your throat center clearing away energy. As you inhale, invite a beautiful clear blue color like the light of the sky to fill your throat center. Allow your throat to expand with the blue light. Feel your ability to communicate with crystal clarity, as you expand and grow.

DANCER

Connection

The dancer is our human form in the natural world. We interact with nature and all that surrounds us from this point of view. Dancing is a natural expression of joy and movement in the physical body. In yoga, we honor the dancer as Shiva in the form of Nataraja—the cosmic dancer. Shiva is the deity of transformation and as the cosmic dancer, he dances through the flames that burn away illusion and the ego. This pose is demanding as a standing balance asking us to open our heart and walk through our own illusion. We can find focus, opening and a higher connection to nature in this way.

Message: The dance of life is always taking place. How you place yourself within this dance is the concern coming through this message. Have you forgotten that you are a part of nature and one with nature? Has all of your attention been focused on the material or technological world? Was the last time that you danced or played in nature so long ago that you can't remember? Become the divine dancer by reconnecting through movement and activity outdoors. There is a particular benefit to connecting to the cosmic dancer within you.

You will realign with the nature elements that are a part of who you are. The greater our connection to this aspect of our self, the easier we flow our way through the dance of life.

Practice: Embark on a moving meditation in a place outdoors of your choosing. It can be on a path or the beach or a trail in the woods. Begin the walk slowly, aware of your footsteps and the way your feet connect to the earth. Each time that you step forward, feel your connection to the ground becoming lighter and more fluid. Go at your own pace, moving faster and slower until you begin to find your rhythm on the earth. Each step like a drumbeat, a dance with Mother Earth. Feel your natural realignment and take that with you into all areas of your being. Make each time you step out into nature this dance between you and the earth.

DOG

Trust

The messenger of loyalty, dog is often the most beloved of domesticated animals. Dogs have a natural ability to stretch themselves through their limbs, lifting the tail and connecting to the earth. Dog pose is the

natural gesture of spinal stretch and physical reset for dogs and babies as well! Softening through the back of the heart with palms on the earth and allowing thoughts to tumble to the ground, we can reconnect to our more elemental and loving self.

Message: The friendly dog strolls in to remind you of your original nature. Loving, compassionate and kind are all energies embodied by this ally. Dogs are creatures of earth element and as such, are naturally more grounded and trusting. Allow yourself to find the friendship, trust and support that you desire. This may be a time for you to reconnect to those relationships that support you rather than those that create struggle or disharmony. Allow the playful nature of dog to lead you there.

Practice: Find a quiet place to come into resting pose. Feel the body heavy and supported on the earth. Picture in your mind a long field of grass or any other visual that would make a dog's heart leap with joy. Sense yourself running down the grassy field filled with playfulness and ease. Feel the space of your inner child receiving this as light-hearted expression. See where the field leads you: rolling and playing here in the space of your mind.

DOLPHIN

Inner Voice

This mammal of the sea is particularly playful, fluid and intuitive. Dolphin energy is also connected to vibration and sound. Like the yogic posture, we are invited to tune into opening more of the upper back and breath into that space, finding lightness and play in the legs and tail. Dolphin invites us to become more fluid in our approach and use our sensitive intuition to open the gateway to a more natural rhythm. Dolphin pose brings us upside down so we can change our perspective and create a new vision for creation.

Message: Allow yourself to flow into the primordial waters where dolphin lives. In this space of water, begin to tune into sound as the creative life force. Have you been hearing the call of your inner voice? Do you sense sound and breath uniting in a unique way? Dolphin can guide you into the waters of life so that you may begin to call forth what you need most. Allow your sensitivity and intuition to assist you as well. Notice what you hear and what you feel as the witness. Once you align with the powerful energy

of water, sound and breath—use this powerful trio to breathe new life into a creative idea or situation.

Practice: Take an easy seat with palms facing each other just in front of the navel center. Begin to inhale and gently float the palms away from each other. As you exhale, allow the palms to slowly float back towards each other without having them touch. Breathe into this movement several times as if you are opening and closing a spring of energy. As you continue, feel the spring of breath and energy opening in your body. Feel the breath flowing freely like water, expanding you. Become aware of the flowing energy filling your body.

DOVE

Open Heart

Bringing us the energy of peace, dove is very much connected to the feminine energies of motherhood and goddess symbolism. Dove pose is a challenging backbend used to realign the entire body and open the spaces in the front body like the abdomen and feminine organs to breath and softening. The song of dove is quite unique and that song calls our own spirit to a place of peace. Opening the heart to cultivate more

peace within ourselves helps us to create the change we wish to see around us.

Message: Connect now to the essence of dove and the energy of peace. It is vital for you to begin to cultivate more peace in your inner and outer life. Let go of the part of you that is pushing, striving and always working effortfully. Find the softness that is a part of your original nature, like finding your own personal song to be sung. Remember that the energy of peace is universal. As you start to discover your connection on the inner plane through practice and meditation, you positively effect the world around you.

Practice: Come to a comfortable place for seated meditation. The practice of Metta is universal and based in peace. Begin by offering yourself salutations and centering. Use the following phrases: "May I be happy, May I be peaceful, May I live in harmony and May I know peace." Now offer those chants in your mind to others, starting with family, your community, anyone who is suffering, the plant and animal kingdom, to the world as a whole. Choose to offer each round of chanting as you are guided as a warrior for peace.

EAGLE

Higher Vision

Often regarded as the greatest bird of prey, eagle commands attention just by virtue of its majestic qualities. Eagle is an astute hunter and an incredible visionary teaching us the value of balance—being of the earth but not weighed down by it. Eagle pose mimics that energy of grounding, balance and flight all at once, calling us to have steadfast concentration and focus. The eagle is revered in many cultures as a sacred bird who has access to the wisdom of the heavens. Through its effortless soaring through the sky, eagle lifts us up off of the earth and opens our higher vision.

Message: Embrace the great power of eagle as you move forward into new territory. Eagle comes forth to remind you to stop and find balance. Trust in the power of flight, whether it means taking a risk, trying out a new venture or envisioning a new future. The connection to air element assists in changing old structures and constructs of the mind that would keep you tethered to the old ways of doing things. Hold onto your dreams and visualize them as you would like to have them manifest. Use the gift of eagle to see yourself ready to soar.

Practice: Feeling balance and lightness in the physical body is a good way to conquer fear. Come to standing with feet firmly on the ground. Practice finding your balance first on the right leg, then on the left. Go back and forth a few times. When you are ready, try to balance on one leg then the other with eyes closed. Feel the lightness, sway and unsteadiness fully. Envision yourself moving through challenges and awakening to higher perspective. As you do, remember you are always supported by the earth.

FIREFLY

Brilliance

The gentle firefly is a beautiful reminder of the power of light. Fireflies illuminate the warm summer evenings with their softly glowing lights. They are reminders that no matter how small, they can share their gifts of brilliance. Most often firefly pose is seen as a skilled balance where we are challenged to use our core strength to open our inner light. Confidence and risk are called forth to move into this posture, just as we are called to step out of the dark and into our own light in our lives.

Message: Firefly is connected to the elemental world

as a nature being and is a natural messenger of attracting the perfect circumstances for you to shine. If you have been keeping yourself hidden or not acknowledging your unique gifts, firefly encourages you to come out now. Sometimes this means moving beyond your comfort zone and welcoming the spot-light. The perfect set of circumstances are coming together to support this action. If you already know when or where this needs to occur, then ask to see it with more clarity. If the situation or opportunity is just beginning to unfold, then invite the light of firefly to make it grow brighter and more apparent. Get ready, change is on the horizon.

Practice: Find some time to spend outside in nature. Choose the early morning or late afternoon and connect with the light of the sun that is either rising or setting. Have a soft gaze into the light and set an intention to allow that light to fill different points in the body. Feel the light filling the crown of your head and the space between your eyebrows. Invite the light to flow into the base of the throat, the space where the ribs meet. Welcome light in the navel and belly. Each time that you inhale, feel the light expanding within you like a firefly.

FISH

Flexibility

As inhabitants of water, fish are fluid and adaptable, like their surroundings. The sea is a vast world of nature all on its own. We are reminded by the world of fish that there are many varieties and species with their own distinct qualities, skills and adaptations. They have had to adapt not only to survive but to thrive. Fish pose is a front body stretch that opens the heart, lungs and ribs to create more spaciousness. Like the fish, we can find more space for breath and energy to move in the intercostal muscles—like our own gills—and create an energized feeling in the body and mind.

Message: Swim now into the watery world of the fish. This messenger brings with it the idea of becoming more fluid and adaptable in your life. If the tendency has been to be rigid or stubborn in your approach, begin to adopt a more fluid and flexible way of doing things. Taking a different route or swimming upstream can be the key to shaking up the status quo. If you have experienced stagnation in certain situations or over a period of time, it is time to let go of hard control and flow. Let the energy of water wash over you. This

element is cleansing, clearing, and assists in helping us awaken creativity and energy with ease and grace.

Practice: Imagine that you were lying under a beautiful stream of water. Sense the water as a soothing blue color like the color of the ocean pouring softly over your head. As it flows down, feel old energy dissolving and releasing slowly downward. Begin to feel yourself softening even more and becoming adaptable, flexible and fluid in your body and mind. With greater fluidity, creativity and new ways of doing, things arise naturally. As you continue to absorb all this energy, you move easily with life's ever flowing-stream.

FLOWER

Blooming

The nature symbolism of flower is one of birth and unfolding. Flowers are often considered the mother of the fruit that comes ahead of it. Think of the delicate tree blossoms that precede the apple. Flower pose is a seated balance that is very accessible. It is both grounding and uplifting, bringing balance to your physical body and to your emotions. It is often practiced in parent and child yoga classes and reminds us of this very sweet

relationship. Flowers are often fragrant and inspire well-being and joy. This is certainly a wonderful benefit from simply observing a flower blooming in nature.

Message: Welcome the energy of the flower now into your heart and mind. This has a practical aspect and gives us a certain awareness of our connection to earth. Like a flower with roots in the soil, you can now rise up towards the sun with ease. Let yourself feel this grounding and lifting as a balancing act for emotions. If you have been feeling dull and uninspired, flower is here now to help you to bloom. Reflect on your own parent/child dynamics and see where that may be affecting you emotionally. Let go of over complications and simplify your actions and relationships. Take pleasure in the small acts and allow yourself to feel joy all on its own.

Practice: Find a comfortable seat. Allow your roots to drop down into the earth and your head to rise towards the clouds. Picture your favorite flower in your mind. See it with all of its details. Place the flower in various places in your body. Sense this flower as a healing, uplifting symbol. As you inhale, feel the flower's essence filling you with energy. As you exhale feel yourself filling with joy. Practice this for 10–20 rounds of breath.

FROG

Cleansing

The small but powerful frog is a symbol of water and rain in the form of cleansing. Many cultures regard frog as a symbol of good fortune and prosperity, indicating that to align with the energy of frog will assist you in creating abundance. Frog pose is a simple but deep inner thigh and inner groin stretch that assists in opening the water element located in the pelvis and low back areas. Like the cleansing of rain, this posture can help in decongesting and creating more openness in the lower body. Connecting with the energy of frog can lead us to release long-held emotions stored in these areas.

Message: The sound of rain aligns with the message of frog. Noticing sounds and reflecting on insights can be powerful indicators of areas of your life that are in need of cleansing. Now is a good time to unclutter your mind and clean out your physical and emotional closets. Look at this cleansing as making room to receive abundance that is already on the way or will soon be flowing to you. If you have been asking for prosperity to flow, be assured now that your desire has been heard. Patience and willingness are key to creating the perfect

opening to receive. The unique song of frog is the voice of receptivity and emotion. Honor your feelings and release what you no longer need.

Practice: With eyes closed, tune into your natural breath. Bring awareness to all the sounds that are around you. Once you tune into the sounds outside of yourself, allow the energy of sound to travel inward. Begin to sense sound moving through you, clearing away energy and creating space. Feel the sensation of sound and vibration as it fills your body and breath. Allow this sensation to grow softer and then stronger, alternating in its intensity. Feel all vibrations and sensations within you like healing, cleansing waves of energy.

GODDESS

Empowerment

The association between the goddess and yoga is a strong one. We first regard Mother Earth as a goddess in herself. The many forms of the divine feminine are represented within the goddesses of yoga. This energy is what we call *shakti* or divine creative life force. It is through this shakti that everything is born and created. Goddess pose is a powerful posture for opening the

hips and stretching the inner thighs and groin. It is also a strengthening posture and invites us to reconnect to our own goddess-inspired power.

Message: The goddess calls you to revisit your feminine nature. Each of us possesses an aspect of the divine masculine and divine feminine whether we are male or female or do not identify as either. The goddess energy is soft and strong, fierce and empowering all at the same time. If you are unaware that you have access to this combination of attributes, you are being urged to call them forth now. Living in a changing society, we are all being asked to change our point of view and approach things from a different direction. If you typically push your way through with hard control and force, you may now begin to soften this way of operating in the world. Use the fierce aspects of the goddess sparingly and realize that you possess all of the tools you need for each and every situation that arises.

Practice: Take an active meditation to meet a goddess of your choosing. See yourself walking into the forest. In the center of the forest is a small grove of trees that creates a circle. In the center of the circle, see a visual of the goddess coming into form. You may see

her emerging from the earth or dropping from the sky. Step forward to meet her and allow your eyes to rest on hers. Feel all of her softness, strength and energy filling you. Feel the grace of the goddess flowing over you. Ask her for any advice or just for her support. Allow the answer and wisdom to flow to you. Offer thanks and bow to the goddess within.

HERON

Reflection

In mythology the heron is a symbol representing the space of inner reflection and finding balance. This wading bird represents the union of the water and earth element—grounding energy and seeing the reflection of earth in the fluidity of water. Heron pose in yoga invites that grounding, balance and reflection in the physical body. Requiring a sense of connection through the root chakra and extension through the leg, it is essentially a movement that draws our awareness and attention inward.

Message: Through the eyes of heron, begin to see all the places in your life that are being called into balance. This card encourages you to take some time for

self-assessment and to notice places where you have not been following your own unique path. The power of heron is to find what path is right for you rather than what you may follow based on the opinions of others. Through a renewed sense of self-determination and resilience, allow this harmonious combination to help you find balance and stability in the process. Use the power of heron to overcome any old tendencies to disregard your instincts. Your innate wisdom is unique and will lead you to opportunities when you choose to follow it.

Practice: Take some time to slow down, close your eyes and follow your natural breath. As you breath, picture yourself standing in the center of a large circle of light. The light flows around you and you can feel yourself as the center of this energy. Feel the light begin to pulse and grow brighter around you. As it does, begin to see a path opening from where you stand through the circle of light. This path is unique and perfect for you. Welcome this opening and visualize all the gifts on this path. Feel your sense of balance and inner knowing growing stronger.

HORSE

Intelligence

The beauty of horse is in the grace and intelligence of this powerful and skilled animal. Horses are all about freedom, strength and using power wisely. To travel on horseback instills a certain sense of connection between the rider and the animal. The horse and rider require a subtle communication to ensure their positive collaboration. Horse pose, which mimics the stance of the rider, strengthens the legs and supports posture. The inner thighs must be able to activate in both circumstances to adapt and adjust to the demands of the posture and the ride. In this way, the hard and soft control happening in the yoga pose mimics the actual physical experience of being on horseback. Horse reminds us to temper power with a mindfulness and a softer approach.

Message: Horse arrives to share the message of understanding your own mental power. If your tendency has been to push hard and headlong as a way of achieving your goals, you may realize that the over-use of force can be exhausting. If you have been too passive and reluctant in your approach, horse encour-

ages you to feel your intelligence and use it for your highest good. There is a certain subtle awareness that needs to arise so that we may begin to know where and when to tap into our personal wisdom. As a result of learning and reflecting on this, you will feel a greater freedom begin to flow through all of your actions and decisions. You have the spirit of horse—use it wisely.

Practice: Using the horse stance allows us to feel the effort and ease within our physical bodies. Place the feet apart wider than hip distance with toes pointed slightly outward. Begin to bend the knees so they track right over the toes. Then drop the hips while you lengthen the spine, creating the horse stance. Feel the power of your feet, legs, and thighs and allow hands to rest softly on legs. Take 10–15 slow long breaths, feeling the strong power and soft power of your body and mind. Notice all tendencies, sensations and wisdom of horse.

LION

Power

The lion's roar gives us the immediate image of their ferocious, powerful voice. Lion has been called the king of the jungle for good reason. They are strong, confident, vocal and often in charge. Lion is also a social animal, living with their family in a group called a "pride." All of these details point to the energy of lion in the animal kingdom. Lion pose in yoga is an active expression of the face, tongue, eyes and vocal cords. Lion pose creates a stimulation of the face, relieving stress and activating the throat and third eye center. The strong or soft roar requires the use of breath and invites us to feel our inner lion.

Message: Like the mighty roar of lion, you are being encouraged to find your own voice and assert your power. There are many times when we need to step forward, take charge and feel confident in our decisions. The gift of lion is that you have the inner strength, courage and support to do so. If you have been feeling low energetically or discouraged about the future, use the energy of lion to create some fire and spark. Choose to see everything through the eyes

of this messenger. When the timing is right, you will be ready for any and all situations that arise.

Practice: Lion pose is a wonderful remedy for releasing stress and stimulating the sensory organs in the face. You can practice seated in a chair or on all fours on the ground. Take a deep inhale through the nose, open the mouth, stick out the tongue all the way, open the eyes wide and send your gaze up to the space between the eyebrows as you exhale. Allow the breath to have a strong “Haaaaaa” or soften the roar as needed. Take 2 or 3 roars on each round and then slowly return to closed eyes with a natural breath. Feel the effects of activating the lion power within.

LIZARD

Dreams

The small reptile is adept at climbing and maneuvering in and around all sorts of spaces. They have the ability to defy gravity and slip from sight as quietly as they enter. Lizard often represents dreamtime and our inner world of symbolism, visioning, stillness and reflection. Lizard pose is a deep release of the hips and thighs with a focus to draw inward. In this pose close to the

ground, we can actively choose to go deep inward to release tension, energy and doubts. Our breath helps to open the spaces, like opening our minds to the dreams and visions that arise.

Message: The dreamlike nature of lizard invites you to journey into the realm beyond waking. Paying attention to your dreams and noticing any reoccurring messages or symbols is the place to begin. Lucid dreaming is the awareness of being in the dream state as it is occurring. You are now being guided to explore these states of the subconscious whether you are daydreaming or night dreaming. Explore the inner landscape for valuable messaging and symbolic information. When we go beyond the active, thinking mind and allow the symbols of the subconscious to arise and be noticed, we are journeying into the land of lizard. Make a note of messages, symbols and themes as they are valuable messengers from the inner realm.

Practice: Make time to practice a dreamtime ritual at night before bed. Lie down and envision yourself being covered in beautiful white light. Bring awareness to the third eye center between the brows and see a line of energy flowing inward to the pineal in the center of

the brain. Imagine the pineal gland filling with the light and energy. Ask your guides or spirit helpers like lizard to travel with you in the dreamtime. Set your intention to open to dreams and visions and ask for information about something that you need insight or guidance with. Then, rest in the awareness that you have set the perfect stage to flow with the dream realm.

LOCUST

Expansion

Most often regarded as a wisdom keeper, locusts are a type of grasshopper that have the uncanny ability to leap forward in a boundless way. Also seen as a messenger of prosperity and good fortune, the small but agile creature has its own powerful way of moving ahead into a successful outcome. Locust pose is a prone pose focused on back strengthening and spinal extension. It invites us to lift and expand in our own way. Lengthening through the back body, this posture stimulates the endocrine, nervous and reproductive systems making it a powerful agent for creating positive change.

Message: Locust brings a unique message of learning to take new steps forward. This could be encouraging

you to take a chance and go for a new opportunity that is presenting itself. It may also indicate that the time has come to follow your own instincts and inner voice. The guidance encourages a 'leap before' you look mentality to know that a big step ahead will lead you to a solid and successful landing. Take a look around you and see where opportunity lies. Once you identify the area, then take steps forward.

Practice: Visualize yourself sitting outside in a beautiful grassy meadow. Feel the newness of the grass that springs up from the earth and sense the openness of the sky all the way up to the clouds. Feel yourself as a powerful connector of earth and sky. Bring into your mind the sense of opening and spaciousness that is present when new opportunity arises. Picture yourself leaping forward over grass and touching the sky. Notice your inner voice and hear it as a positive guide leading you ahead to what is manifesting.

LOTUS

Opening

The sacred lotus is a symbol that primarily represents untouched beauty and non-attachment. The lotus is

rooted in the mud but floats on the water without becoming wet or muddy. Each energy center or chakra is associated with a lotus flower with varying numbers of petals. In yoga, we commonly find our seat in lotus pose with legs crossed. From this particular seat, we take the journey inward, finding breath and centering. It is a pose that reminds us to draw inward and reflect on the quality of the breath and our inner landscape. Like the lotus rising from the mud, we can connect to more of who we are in that very moment.

Message: Embrace the beauty and energy of the lotus flower within. The lotus invites you to slow down and take the time for inner work and reflection. You might take up a daily practice of gratitude, meditation or breath awareness. Lotus can also be inviting you to call more on the practice of non-attachment. Seeing everything from that perspective can release you from the suffering of attachment. All of these suggestions come with the underlying message of honoring yourself and the place within you that is pure and whole. Seeing yourself from this viewpoint will empower many of the interactions in your life.

Practice: Find a comfortable seat in lotus pose. Allow the palms of your hands to come together in Anjali mudra or prayer hands. Take a few rounds of long, deep breaths

and feel yourself going inward. Picture a beautiful lotus flower in the center of your heart. Breath into the flower here, awakening the pure lotus that sits in the heart. See this lotus beginning to blossom—a twelve-petalled lotus flower opening in your heart. Feel the untouched beauty in your heart. Keeping palms together, open the middle three fingers outward like the lotus blooming. Hold this lotus mudra in the hands for a few breaths.

MONKEY

Perspective

This animal messenger has a universal reputation for being clever and sometimes tricky in its interaction. Monkey calls us to have strength, courage and ingenuity in our experiences. Monkey pose was named for Hanuman, the great Hindu monkey god of service. This deity embodied all the mentioned traits as he served the divine Ram with unconditional love and service. The yoga pose is a full splits pose extending both legs long and dropping the tail down to the floor. Like Hanuman leaping across the ocean, this pose may ask us to defy what we think we can do and trust in our strength and abilities. Monkey is always reminding us to watch the chatter of the mind as it can distract and undermine

our ability to move forward in the most positive way.

Message: Monkey swings by to remind you of all aspects of your humanity. We sometimes like to view ourselves through a narrow lens of past experiences. This messenger embodies all aspects of our human selves—both positive and negative. If you've been lost in the world of the endless mind chatter and repetitive thoughts, call on monkey's ability to leap, climb and soar above the mind. If you have not been able to figure out the solution to a current problem or issue, call on monkey's perspective to guide you. See yourself through the clever eyes of monkey and the open heart as well. Most importantly, see where you can invite more service and love to flow in your life as this will lift all situations to a higher level. Once there, you will find the strength and confidence you already have within.

Practice: See yourself lying outside on a warm patch of grass. See the blue sky above you and all of the treetops overhead. Feel the warmth of the sun flowing down into you, illuminating your body and your mind. As you take in all the energy of the sun, the sky and the earth, see a stream of clouds begin to float by overhead. Watch the clouds as they pass from left to right like thoughts

passing through the mind. Not attaching to any one of the images, become aware of your thoughts like the clouds floating by. Feel and sense all of the clouds like thoughts just passing by. Allow your whole mind and body to fill with this sensation as the witness.

MOON

Receptivity

The moon is an important nature symbol that has many different attributes. Illuminating the night sky, it reflects our subconscious mind and the unseen and receptive qualities of the feminine. The shape of the moon changes in its cycle and is another important rhythm that we naturally follow. Moon salutation is a yoga practice that honors the energies and qualities of the moon. It is a slower and less rigorous practice than the sun salutations and offers the opportunity to slow down and feel into the body. Honoring the moon in this way we can uncover the subtle levels of our breath, sensing and feelings in the body.

Message: Invite the moon to become your ally. The magical qualities of the moon and moonlight have an energy all their own. This is a call to connect more with

your inner world, intentions and intuition. Reflect now on the intuitive gifts and sensing that have been developing or expanding for you. Are you able to perceive more information through your intuition than in times past? Have you been experiencing an intuitive awakening? The moon cycles are an excellent system to work with for manifesting and intention as well. Use the cycle of the moon to take ideas from seed to harvest. Don't forget that intention is an active practice that can be enhanced by the subtle energy of intuition. Use both together to bring your dreams into reality.

Practice: Align your manifesting intentions with the cycles of the moon. In the void of the moon, you may create space for a clearing meditation of the mind. On the new moon days, write down your new intentions and place them either on an altar, in a nature place (under a stone) or somewhere safe and protected. On the full moon day, place a large pitcher of water in moonlight to absorb the energy and then drink the moon water while recalling your intention. In a gesture of offering, send the intention out to the universe. You might burn or bury the intention in the earth. Use the balance of the month to invite the moon to assist you in the creation of your desire.

MOUNTAIN

Transcendence

As a nature symbol, mountain is universally seen as mighty, immense and dignified. Mountains are solid, stable composites of dense earth material. Figuratively, we can view the mountain as a strong support or as an unmovable obstacle. These definitions depend on our point of view. Our mountain pose in yoga is a pose of foundation and stillness. An invitation to being here now, no matter what is happening around you. This seemingly simple yoga posture challenges the mind to be quiet and find center. It is within this place of calm that our powers of observation can discern what is happening physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually in our lives.

Message: This nature message guides you to reflect on where you are now on your journey. The power of mountain is physical and tangible and can be felt in the physical body as well as in the thoughts. If you have been facing obstacles, mountain is calling you to ascend and rise above matters where you can. An examination of your beliefs, ideals, and where you stand is helpful in transcending things that are imped-

ing your forward movement. You may be in the process of reevaluating your journey and goals for the future. Use the stillness of mountain to go inward and reflect on what you truly desire. Mountain calls you to recognize your own power as the force that supports every action, choice and decision. It is with this power you can recognize the greater potential in all things.

Practice: Approach the mountain with openness either by finding the physical pose or in a seated position. Invite stillness to fill you, welcoming it inward. Reflect in the stillness how it feels to not be running somewhere. Reflect in the stillness as an observer. Ask yourself where you want to be and where you want to go on your journey. Allow this to be a practice of the present moment. See yourself, feeling and taking stock of the support in your life. Envision yourself like a mountain rising higher, above obstacles.

PARTRIDGE

Knowledge

We commonly associate partridge with the pear tree and seasonal imagery. This bird is closely linked with other members of the galliformes species, such as the

quail and grouse in North America. Partridge has a long history of association with the goddess, fertility and alchemy. The pose in yoga is a challenging balance requiring strength and focus. This posture as either the standing or side plank version elevates our image of partridge to skillful, adept and filled with knowledge. It also reminds us about the alchemy of yoga and its ability to transform our energy and build strength in the body and mind. When we choose to embrace new knowledge, we open to new possibilities.

Message: The call of partridge is clear: you are now ready to acquire new knowledge and teachings. This message brings with it the notice that the time is ripe to learn, learn, learn. Partridge shares the energy of transformation through focus and intention. If there is a new topic, practice or path you have been considering, you are being invited to move toward it now. It might require you to go out on a limb and trust your own ability to grow and evolve. Once you do, be prepared to step up to the next level and see where it leads you. Use this fertile time to grow in wisdom and strength. There is no end to the potential and gifts being offered to you at this time.

Practice: Creating a vision board of images and words that are calling your interest and attention is a powerful practice. Begin with a large, blank piece of paper or board. Choose images that inspire, excite and intrigue you, even if you don't know much about them. Find words and colors that support the feeling of opening, inquiry and focus. Choose at least one item that feels right to hold the center spot. Once you have represented a variety of images, interests and desires you can display the vision board on an altar or wall. Take time to reflect upon it daily and see where it takes you. Let your dreams and visions become your reality.

PEACOCK

Assimilation

The bird of royalty and resurrection, peacock is a symbol that appears in many cultures and traditions. The eye of peacock represents wisdom and the third eye chakra or ajna—the seat of intuition and greater vision. Peacock also has the unique ability to digest poisonous objects and turn that poison into nourishment. In the yoga posture, the hands become the “feet” of peacock with legs long as the tail feathers. Through this intense

action, all of the digestive organs are activated and strengthened. We can engage with peacock when we need assistance in aligning with the beauty around us and assimilating our life experiences.

Message: Join with your inner wisdom and power through this message from peacock. Gather up the special powers of peacock by connecting to your inner fire element which is a place of transformation. You may already know about the natural power that lies dormant within you. The time is right to allow the flame of your inner fire in the form of passion, courage, divine will and strength to arise. Open your tail feathers and let the world see the light that is within you shine. On a more subtle level, this energy burns away toxins, residue and old patterns so that more of who you are can rise to the surface. Allow the alchemy of peacock to assist you in owning your power and dissolving anything that has held you back.

Practice: Come to a seated meditation posture. Bring hands onto the rib cage and actively breath into the space of the belly, ribs and chest. Feel the warmth of this space, the inner fire of your digestive organs and solar plexus chakra between the ribs. Continue to

breathe like this for a few cycles. See a flame glowing in this space, burning away any sluggishness or resistance. Feel the whole inner space growing brighter and more expanded. Within this expansion, see your energy growing more vibrant, assured and coming into alignment. Feel yourself filled with the power of your own energy now.

RABBIT

Fertility

The imagery and symbolism of rabbit is associated with renewal, fertility and vulnerability. As rabbit is prey for many creatures, it is particularly quick moving and energetic in its approach. The rabbit has a very short gestation and signifies the quick turn around and development of project and ideas. Rabbit pose lengthens the spine and stretches the back, arms, and shoulders while stimulating the immune and endocrine systems. The activation of the crown chakra and the ajna chakra between the brows stimulates the glands in the brain that support the endocrine system and link the mind to new ideas.

Message: Get ready for the birth of new ideas and

opportunity. The gentle rabbit pauses in between the great leaps and bounds forward to take a look around. You may be entering a fast-moving cycle or a situation that calls for you to stop occasionally and find an extra breath. Reevaluate the creative process and what is unfolding, make any adjustments and then move ahead with another great leap. This is the energy of rabbit. There is a purity to rabbit as well. Trust yourself and trust in the universe to guide you. The quiet pause helps you to reflect on what might be a threat or another opportunity. Use this valuable medicine to create with abandon.

Practice: Month-long practices are excellent for aligning with your creative cycles. Choose the cycle of 30 days for manifesting ideas and projects. Use the new moon to work on setting intentions around uncovering opportunity. The two weeks up to the full moon is the growth phase so working on projects and ideas with intention during this time is extremely beneficial. The full moon honors the realization of ideas and the phases that follow invite you to put ideas into action. The dark moon is the pause—like rabbit pose, go inward for insights and reflection on the process as a whole.

RAINBOW

Vibration

The rainbow is a universal symbol of light, energy, joy and expression. The colors of the rainbow are connected to the colors of the seven main chakras giving the rainbow a unique connection to the energy body. Full Wheel pose allows all of the energy centers to activate and cultivate more opening, spaciousness and flow of prana. With this fully-expressed heart opener, you may allow the physical to experience being a living rainbow of light.

Message: The rainbow mandala of this card is inviting you to connect with the universal consciousness of light, sound and vibration. Each color of the rainbow is a powerful energy ray bringing balance inward on every level. Rainbow is inviting you now to open, clear, and reconnect with your original nature. Allow the unique qualities of the rainbow to assist you in balancing and reclaiming wholeness. See and sense the rainbow color flowing through you and attuning you to new energies and vibrations. This is a recalibration of the energy field and an upgrade to a higher level of awareness.

Practice: See yourself lying outside in a beautiful place

in nature. Above you, a rainbow begins to form as a unique bridge of light. Imagine yourself floating up to meet the rainbow in the sky. Feel the colors of the rainbow filling you as you do. Feel the unique vibration of the rainbow filling you as well. Become aware of yourself as the light of the rainbow—and that light clearing and balancing you on every level.

ROOSTER

Vitality

The male form of chicken has a universal symbolism connected to sexuality and solar energy or the sun itself. The rooster possesses the ability to fertilize an entire group of hens and maintain its role as proud overseer. Rising and crowing with the sun has earned rooster its reputation of a bird waking up with the sun or awakening sexual and solar energies. These energies are connected to the sacral and solar plexus chakras and to a sense of vitality and creative force. Rooster pose is a dynamic arm balance requiring wrist, shoulder and core strength, which activates the same essential energies. Exploring rooster pose can assist in awakening the kundalini energy, which lies dormant in the base

of the spine. Like the awakening of our sexual energy, the kundalini can be directed to the creative fire within.

Message: The crow of rooster calls you to check in with your sexual and creative nature. This wake-up call may be needed in the area of physical relationships or in fertilizing new ideas. If you have been neglecting this part of yourself, consider setting aside some time to reconnect with this important aspect of self. Perhaps you are ready to meet a new partner or rekindle an existing romance. You may hear this call as revitalizing your creative life force, the same force that creates physical life, and channel it into a creative passion or pursuit.

Practice: Chanting or toning practice is the perfect way to awaken your sacral chakra called Svadistana, which means "The inner dwelling place." The bija seed sound for this energy center is VAM. In a seated meditative posture, place your right hand over this space just below the navel. With focus on awakening the energy of this area, chant 11 rounds of VAM. Pause at the end to observe sensations and to notice your natural breath. Continue for another 11 rounds and release.

SCORPION

Rebirth

The multi-legged arachnid has in fact many variations within its species. The colors range from pink to vivid red and indicate the intensity of this powerful symbol. The yoga pose, like the creature, is often feared as it looks scary. Strengthening upper body and requiring concentration, focus, and a certain degree of vulnerability, this pose mimics the energy of scorpion: fierce, intense and direct. The fiery red scorpion points to the cycles of death and rebirth. This process in nature is often intense but completely in sync with the laws of the universe. To venture into the energy of the scorpion, one acknowledges that there will be fire, fear and reward as well.

Message: Scorpion crawls its way forward to alert you that a new cycle is emerging or already here. This shift is a symbolic death of the old way and a clearing to prepare rebirth. This may apply to any number of areas in your life, from simply releasing old material belongings and revamping your space to a more intense release of people or situations that have outlived their place in your life. Take a look around and see what is

already falling away. When you find this happening in an organic way, it is much easier to surrender to the cycles of death and rebirth. This process is the ultimate path of transformation. Through this message, know that there is always wisdom in the cycles of nature and that everything is in perfect alignment to support this much-needed change.

Practice: Create a transformation journal. Begin by listing all of the things that you would like to release within a period of time. Writing them down makes this process more powerful. This could be material items, relationships, ways of thinking, beliefs about yourself and others. Once you've created this list, pause and reflect on how you would feel if you let go of it all. Capture that feeling in words and write it on a blank page in your journal. As you move forward actively releasing one or more items on your list, come back to that feeling again and welcome the rebirth.

STAR

Inspiration

The star represents wonderment and is an icon of the human microcosm. It also inspires us with its brilliant

light and the power to aspire to the highest places in the universe where the stars reside. As stars live in space and are filled with fire, they bring a potent blending of the elements together to light the way. In the yoga posture, star pose is all about freedom and expansion of energy. Extending arms and legs, spreading fingers and toes is a gesture of filling the space that surrounds us. All of these attributes come together to inspire us to shine our light like the stars up above.

Message: What lights you up right now? Star has come forward to pose this question and to ask you to let go and expand beyond your current limit. Have you lost sight of your higher inspiration and calling? Have you forgotten that the light resides within you? Use this message to begin to reconnect to the qualities of inspiration, wonderment, expansion and magic that lives in the stars. Science tells us that the light of the stars is a result of powerful chemical reactions—fire and space—coming together out in the cosmos. As humans living on the earth, we rely on that powerful energy that we call the sun. In the night sky, millions of stars appear to be infinite. Like those stars, be reminded that your potential is also

powerful and unlimited. Let this inspirational connection begin to guide you in a new direction. Find your own personal star and rise higher.

Practice: Stargazing can be a powerful and expansive practice. Take yourself outdoors on a clear night. Gaze up into the night sky and choose a star that appeals to you. Undertake a star meditation (either indoors or outdoors) with the intention to connect to the star you have chosen. Imagine a silver thread rising out of the crown of your head and traveling all the way up to your star. Feel your body firmly on the earth and become aware of your consciousness expanding through the thread. Feel your connection to the star and to the element of space. Draw in the magical star energy through the cord all the way down into your body. Feel your body and breath filling with inspiration and light. Stay here and expand. When you are ready, allow the cord to dissolve and feel the effects of your practice.

SUN

Growth

Our sun is the star that provides all life on the earth. Worship of the sun dates all the way back to the beginning of time as ancient man knew that the sun was providing heat, health, growth and rebirth over and over again. Sun salutation is a yogic practice of honoring the sun energy by aligning the prana with movement. Opening our hearts to the sun and then bowing in reverence allows us to reset and realign energy in the body. We rise day after day with the sun and follow the rhythms of nature in this way.

Message: Let the sun shine in! Awaken now to new light, energy and experiences that are arriving or are just on the horizon. This nature message alerts you that you will be receiving the brilliance of light in one or more areas of growth in your life. This energy is positive and reflects work that you have been doing. It may come in the form of recognition or reward. You may find yourself receiving a gift or some other form of abundance. Whatever you receive, do not forget to bow to the sun in gratitude. Acknowledge this positive experience with grace and humility.

Practice: Candle flame meditation allows us to connect with the fire energy of the sun and fill with that positive, transformative visual in our minds. Light a small candle and dim the lights. Sit about 12 inches away from the flame in a comfortable position and allow yourself to gaze into the candlelight. Feel the focus on the flames and the color and energy of fire filling you. Light fills in behind the eyes into the pineal gland that sits in the center of the brain. Feel all of the positive qualities of sun filling you—warmth, positivity, vitality, growth and confidence—or say the qualities out loud.

SWAN

Beauty

The elegant swan is a messenger of embodied grace. The majestic birds glide with ease and beauty and are often thought of as having a magical quality. The invitation is to recognize and realize the true inner beauty that lies within. Swan pose is a graceful hip opener and a surrender of the heart. Through opening the hips and water element of the physical body, we align with the aquatic nature of swan for our own nurturing and acceptance. When we add the heart opening, we

invite the self-love aspect to arise. All of these qualities become powerful healers for the self.

Message: In floats the message of awakening to grace and beauty. This totem reminds us of the importance of honoring our own inner beauty. Do you see those qualities in others and not in yourself? Have you neglected self-care? Swan is calling you to make yourself a priority for all the right reasons. Seeing the value and inner beauty of yourself will allow you to create more value and beauty out in the world. Taking time to reconnect to your emotional self, you may discover some hidden gems and magical abilities that have gone dormant. This part of you provides important information on how to glide through the waters of life with ease.

Practice: Self-care practices are vital to our well-being. Make a date with water whether that is through bathing, swimming or a spa. You can take a long soak in a bath or a shower giving yourself time to connect to the water. You may even find a place in nature to gaze at water like a lake or the beach. Choose one of these connections to water that feel wonderful for you. See any choice as a gift to yourself to honor the beauty of water within.

THUNDERBOLT

Awakening

Symbolic of the moment when lightning immediately follows thunder, the thunderbolt is a powerful flow of energy precipitated by the atmosphere. As a nature symbol, it reminds us of the fierce force of electricity, which is the fire element ignited. Thunderbolt pose is sometimes referred to as diamond or hero's pose and is an excellent position for the flow of prana through the physical body. Beyond the stretch of thighs and lengthening of spine, we can access the energy channels, inviting vital breath to flow from the base all the way to the crown. Through the merging of symbol and practice we are reminded that everything has a duality and needs to be balanced and harmonized within. When that occurs, we can access the higher consciousness of ideas, focus and inspiration.

Message: Thunderbolt is calling you to attention. Like the mighty energy that merges between thunder and lightning, you are being invited to sit up and notice the flow of energy within and all around you. This energy is fast moving and can be the force that creates change. When we experience change, there is always a coming apart and flowing back together, which is the dual nature of the

universe. Use this power wisely through focusing your mind, balancing your breath and energy, and noticing where you can let go. The diamond is the hardest and most resilient mineral on the earth. Like a diamond, you possess these qualities and will be supported through the transitions. Once you release what is falling away, find center and balance once again by going inward.

Practice: Connect to the energy of the thunderbolt by practicing Vajra mudra. In a comfortable seated position, connect the index fingers with the thumbs on both hands. Draw the connected fingers to touch at the tips making two circles. Then, touch the tips of the middle fingers together to create a diamond shape. Bring the hands in front of the ribs with the middle fingers pointing outward. Breathe into this space of inner light and resilience. Feel your light flowing out and focus it on an intention. Rest in this place of light for 20 breaths.

TIGER

Strength

The power of tiger steps forward now as a reminder of strength and resilience. All of the large cats have powerful feminine associations as protective mothers

and leaders. As a nocturnal hunter, tiger invites us to consider the work or activity we do at night. Tiger pose warms and stretches the back muscles and spine as it strengthens the core body and stimulates the nervous, lymphatic and reproductive systems. The tiger breath or Hara breathing of this posture activates our fire center, inviting new adventures, energy and passion to flow.

Message: The roar of tiger steps into your path to awaken you. This messenger of power is a reminder of the necessity of owning and embracing passion. This can be a bold move or a subtle process but it is required. Being complacent, continuing with the mundane or just feeling stuck are all energies that need to be dissolved. The tiger carries the message of adventure and risk as well. Allow yourself to take that risk, ignite that passion and go for it. Creativity and expression will be met with strength and grounding. Like the tiger, see past the obvious and move forward with stealth and determination.

Practice: Tiger pose with hara breath is an excellent way to move energy in the body and fill it with renewed vigor. Come onto hands and knees on the ground. Extend the right leg back and then lift it off the ground at hip height. Bend the knee and send the sole of the

foot up to the sky. As you inhale, push the sole of the foot higher. On the exhale, bring the knee in toward your nose and breathe out a soft or loud “HA.” Take 5 rounds on the right side and then repeat the movement and breath on the left side.

TREE

Grounding

The importance of the tree physically and spiritually is connected to the secrets of life. This ancient symbol of strength and fortitude displays the connection of earth and sky in our everyday experiences. We know that trees are vital to the air we breathe and provide shelter, food and cooling for many different species. Tree pose in yoga is a one-leg grounding balance that requires steadiness, focus and alignment. Not only do we need to find our roots system to hold us but we need to allow ourselves to rise like the mighty tree and touch the sky. This pose helps us to enhance our understanding of ourselves in the world.

Message: The steadiness of tree is calling you to reflect on your interactions with the earth, air and sun as well as all of the relationships around you. The tree

is a living system that provides support in many ways. You are being asked to take a look at yourself through the eyes of tree. Where have your roots spread? Where do they get their nourishment? If you have been taking care of others and not yourself, you may be limiting your ability to thrive. Looking at yourself through this symbol may provide insight you have been seeking. If you are unyielding like the mighty oak or willing to bend like a willow you may realize that some adjustments in your approach are needed. Like the tree, we have the ability to be grounded and open hearted at the same time. When we are connected in this way, it is with ease that we find the light.

Practice: This practice can be done outside. Find a tree to connect to by leaning back against the trunk with both feet on the ground. Bring your hands to Anjali mudra or prayer hands and close your eyes. Lean into the support of the tree and envision your roots running down into the earth from the soles of your foot. Drink in the energy of the earth from your feet and feel yourself rising taller as you do. Bring awareness all the way up the body and feel yourself rising and growing towards the light. Notice any thoughts or images that come into your mind.

WATERFALL

Cleansing

The visual of a waterfall shows us of the beauty and power of water. Mother Nature offers us the waterfall as a reminder: cleansing and harmonizing are as essential to us as they are to the earth. No matter how large or small, most of us delight at the visual of water cascading. The waterfall pose in yoga invites us to release and flow in a downward fashion utilizing the power of gravity. Commonly called 'Legs Up the Wall,' we can invite cleansing and harmonizing to the physical body in this restorative position. Revitalizing for the legs and feet, every time we hold an inversion we have a chance to reset energy and find a new way to be in the world.

Message: The waterfall is calling you to the great cleansing of your body, mind and spirit. This can be a detoxification process such as cleaning up your diet, juicing or fasting. It may indicate that you need to cleanse the mind of habitual or negative thoughts. This cleansing may be called by your spirit to let go of the external world and come back home to yourself. Allow this process to be seen in a positive light. The waterfall is always flowing from the highest point or con-

sciousness and being caught by the earth. In this way, the waterfall connects the higher consciousness and grounds it for the greater good.

Practice: Find a place to practice legs up the wall or over a chair. Use a blanket under the low back if you need support or across the belly to help you feel grounded. Soften the feet and close your eyes. Envision a waterfall of light flowing down from the soles of your feet to the pelvis and washing over you. Sense the waterfall of light clearing and cleansing energy as it flows downward. You might see the light as white or cool blue like water reflecting the sky. Stay here for 5–10 minutes for a positive effect.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alison DeNicola is a yoga and meditation teacher, energy healer and award-winning author. She has studied yoga, shamanic practices, sound healing, aromatherapy, IET and many other subtle body practices over the past 15 years. Exploring areas for self-healing and divine connection are her passion. Common themes in her work include symbols and practices of yoga, goddesses, angels and shamanic journeying. You can find her living and teaching in Connecticut and around the U.S. Visit her website www.alisondenicola.com for more information.

Alison is also the author of *Mudras for Awakening the Energy Body*; *Mudras for Awakening the Five Elements*; *Yoga Dogs Deck and Book Set*; *Yoga Cats Deck and Book Set*, and *Divine Feather Messenger Deck and Book Set* all published by U.S. Games Systems Inc.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

As a young woman Christine Zillich perceived her calling to the arts. In music, as a pianist and through her painting she found her ways of expression.

She studied visual communications, graphics and design at the Kassel College. Later, she continued her studies in Italy, where she worked and lived as an artist for an extended period.

Christine Zillich worked as an art director for Vogue and several publishers as a freelance illustrator. Later, she founded her own creative label. The artist lives and works in a castle in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

She is also the creator of *Zillich Tarot*, published by U.S. Games Systems, Inc.

NOTES

For our complete line of tarot decks, books, meditation and yoga cards, oracle sets, and other inspirational products

please visit our website:

www.usgamesinc.com

Follow us on:



U.S. GAMES SYSTEMS, INC.

179 Ludlow Street

Stamford, CT 06902 USA

Phone: 203-353-8400

Order Desk: 800-544-2637

FAX: 203-353-8431