

# Are You Ready to Shed Your Skin?



By Eva Starr

**T**he word rebirth brings to mind the 13th card in the Tarot deck: the Death card. As you may or may not know, there are many varieties and versions of the Tarot, depicting just as many diverse images – but the meanings remain the same.

In this particular Tarot deck, a Marseilles deck, there is an image of a skeleton carrying a blood-red scythe, while at his feet lie the dismembered bodies of two human beings. Also, in this 13th card of death are sprouts of newly formed grass protruding through the earth around the dismembered body parts.

This illustration is far simpler than some of its more complicated counterparts in other Tarot decks. The interpretation of the death card is the release of former beliefs, ideas, and activities – thus creating an avenue for new growth in one's way of thinking and life.

**These creatures will bury themselves in the sand and shed their exoskeleton – and leave it there for me to dispose of.**

I can recall several dreams over the last two or three decades in which I was trying to put on an old comfortable pair of my shoes, and couldn't figure out why they no longer fit. I've had this dream at various intervals in my life, that it's now become like an old friend. Of course, it was clear to me that this dream depicted old beliefs that I stood upon, which no longer fit who I am and who I am becoming.

With spring soon upon us, we see evidence everywhere of rebirth. It doesn't matter if you live in California or Cleveland; the trees still shed their leaves in the fall, are bare in the dead of winter, and form buds in the spring.

If we look around us at nature and the animal kingdom, the evidence of rebirth is rampant. Snakes and lizards shed their skin, dogs shed their furs, and birds their feathers. I have a few Hermit Crabs. One is Yang (Yin died while I was in Cleveland last fall). My daughter Shayna bought me two new ones while she was visiting California

last December; she name them Curious George and Big Boy. These creatures will bury themselves in the sand and shed their exoskeleton – and leave it there for me to dispose of. I recall the first time I saw the crab's skin lying in the sand; I thought my crab was dead, only to find him hiding under his cave with a brand new skin.

We, as humans, are constantly reinventing ourselves. It may be after an ugly divorce, an unforeseen accident, or a physical illness. I know of a man who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a brain tumor, and a heart condition back in the late '50s or early '60s. He was told he had no more than 15 years to live – at best.

I was a child, and I remember watching him struggle to move about in his wheelchair. Then one day I thought it was over; he had a stroke, went almost completely blind and was paralyzed. As he lay in his bed, with one hand on the Bible and the other hand clasped to mine, he said to me: "I'd like to see a grandson before I die." With the tears streaming down my eyes, I thought, 'My God I'm still in high school.' Not to mention, I hadn't even thought about exploring the birds and the bees.

This man refused to believe the doctors. He set out to not only reinvent himself but to prove them all wrong. Since then he has seen the world, gone on an African safari and moved to the place of his dreams. He got to see that that grandson, plus two granddaughters. He recently celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in good health. I have him to thank for my drive and determination.

Do you know why snakes shed their skin? When a snake grows, its skin becomes uncomfortable because it doesn't expand like ours. Since snakes grow throughout their lives, they are constantly shedding until the moment they die.

Like my dreams about old shoes, we are constantly outgrowing our beliefs and need to continually reassess what is working, what is not. We shed our skins to allow for continued growth. Are you ready to shed your skin?

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