

INSTANT CASH: THE STORY OF BILL

By Richard Webster

When I left high school I worked for a publishing company for seven years. On a couple of occasions since then, my financial situation demanded that I work for someone else, but I quit those jobs as soon as I could. This was because I always saw more fun and greater opportunities in self-employment. Consequently, when a friend of mine lost his job a few years ago, and couldn't find another because he was "too old" (imagine, the guy's 42 and is too old!) I suggested he stop looking for a job and start reading Tarot cards.

Initially, Bill was horrified at the idea. I told him he could make himself a couple of hundred dollars every weekend, and still have all week free to try to find a regular job. About fifteen years ago, I taught another friend how to read Tarot cards, and she made so much money reading them at flea markets that she gave up her regular job and now works two days a week as a reader. She has a large clientele of repeat customers who have readings on a regular basis. I introduced them, and between the two of us, we finally managed to encourage Bill to give it a shot.

I loaned him my copy of Joe Ridings's *The Tarot Made Easy*, which teaches how to read the Tarot in seven days. Sadly, Joe Ridings died in 2005, and the booklet is no longer available. You may be able to find a copy on eBay or at a magic shop. (I've listed other books at the end of this article.) Joe's system uses the Rider-Waite Tarot deck. This is the best-known deck, and is one most people interested in readings would recognize. I suggested Bill buy the *Universal Tarot* deck (published by Lo Scarabeo). It is very similar, but is more modern looking.

During the seven days it took Bill to learn the cards, I paid for him to have readings from a few professional readers. This was market research. I wanted Bill to see how other readers worked. After each one, I asked him questions about them. Did the reader make you feel comfortable? Did you like him or her? Was the reading enjoyable? Helpful? Did you gain any insights?

Bill had never had a reading before. All of the readers assumed he was visiting them because of his career. None of them mentioned "unemployment." They were all upbeat and positive about his future. They spoke in terms of "relationships." Bill has been married for nineteen years and has three teenage children. One reader correctly picked the three children, but the others talked generally about a happy family life.

Bill was initially impressed with his readings, but after analysing them decided they were all exercises in positive thinking. He left all of them feeling that the future was going to be positive and successful. He also left confident that he'd be able to do at least as good a job at reading Tarot cards as they had.

I deliberately chose the specific readers for a number of reasons. I wanted Bill to see different styles of reading, but I also wanted him to notice the different environments in which they worked. One reading was done on a kitchen table in a small house in a poor part of town. Another was in a small semi-private room at the back of a New Age shop. One reader had a special room in her home for readings. Bill found this almost too "new age." In addition to a table and two chairs, this reader had a large display of crystals, photographs on the wall showing her with a variety of celebrities, a large Buddha, and a candle that was so large it sat on the floor. She lit this at the start of the reading, and told Bill that a clairvoyant had told her that she'd be able to remain a reader only as long as the candle could still be lit. According to Bill, the candle was so large she'll be able to read cards for the next 5,000 years.

I asked Bill to think about how he'd like to decorate his table at the flea market where we had decided he'd read. I suggested a tablecloth decorated with the signs of the zodiac, a small business card holder that enabled people to help themselves to a card without interrupting his readings, and a card that said: Bill Burrows, Tarot Card Readings.

During the week, I tested Bill several times on the cards. He had no problems remembering them, thanks to Joe's clever system. By the end of a week, he was able to give professional quality readings.

Now it was up to him. He specifically asked that I didn't visit the flea market on his first day there. I was tempted to send Margaret, my wife, to check on how he was doing, but decided against it. At the end of the day, he phoned me. He was excited, as he'd made \$100 after expenses. I congratulated him, but secretly I was disappointed. I thought he'd have made at least double that amount.

This flea market is held in the car park of a large market that caters mainly to tourists. It is open seven days a week. The flea market is held on Saturdays and Sundays. People who buy a site every weekend have preference, and operate their businesses from the same site every week. People who turn up every now and again are free to choose from any of the unoccupied positions. Consequently, most people arrive at about 6.00A.M. to make sure they get a good position.

On the Sunday morning, Bill arrived promptly at six, and gave his first reading just ten minutes later to a fellow exhibitor. Bill had asked me not to go on his first day, but had said nothing about the second. I arrived just after 10.00 A.M., and had a good look around the market before pausing to look at Bill's stand. There were three other readers at the flea market. Two were reading Tarot cards and the other was offering palm readings. I had seen none of them before. One of the Tarot card readers was noticeably busier than the others.

Bill was finishing a reading as I drew near. I could hear his client thanking him, and extolling his virtues to her friend. The friend almost had a reading herself, but decided against it. Bill was happy to see me. He'd almost equalled his first day's takings.

"Come with me for a second," I said to him. I quickly took him past the other three readers.

"What did you notice?" I asked him, once he was sitting down again.

"Well, I have opposition, I guess."

"You don't need to worry about the opposition," I said. "The important thing is that only one of them was doing a reading. Twenty minutes ago, when I first went past, she was giving a reading and at least one person was waiting. What is she doing that the rest of you are not?"

"Maybe she's a regular here and has built up a clientele."

"It's possible, but I doubt that's the reason."

A young man sat down and asked for a reading. "Think about it," I said. "I'll be back."

The flea market was getting busier and Bill read constantly for the next two hours.

"What a great day!" he said, when we had a chance to talk. "I'm rapt!"

"It's easy to make money when the place is buzzing with people," I said. "All of you were flat out. Have you worked out why that woman gets clients in the quiet times?"

Bill shook his head. "She probably knows lots of people."

"I'm going now," I said. "When it gets quiet, walk past her stand again. I've taken some photos, so I'll show you tonight if you don't pick it up."

Bill walked past her stand a couple of times, but was unable to see what I was getting at. However, he saw it as soon as he looked at the photographs.

“Her set up is classier than the others,” he said. “It looks, well, more professional.”

“How much did you make today?”

“\$320,” he told me proudly.

“I wonder how much more she made,” I said pointing at the photograph.

“Okay. Next week I’ll copy what she’s done.”

“No, no, don’t do that,” I said. “She’s got her own special things. You need to do your own thing, something that differentiates you.”

“What about the stone?” This reader had an oval stone, approximately three inches by two. She asked her clients to hold it for a moment and then place it on the table. Then, while she was giving the reading, she’d rest the fingers of her left hand on it, as if receiving vibrations from it. A nice touch, I thought.

“No, you can’t use that. That’s hers. Don’t worry — we’ll think of something for you.”

I wasn’t surprised that Bill hadn’t noticed how attractive the other reader’s stand was. Men often don’t notice the finer points. Bill’s stand was functional and looked fine, but this woman had window-dressed her stand in a variety of subtle ways, and this attracted people to her. She also made herself look the part. She wore violet robes, had a large ankh hanging around her neck, and a number of large rings on her fingers. Her hair and nails were immaculate.

Bill was thrilled. He’d made himself more than \$400 in his first weekend. As he pointed out to me, that’s an extra \$20,000 a year for pleasant work in his spare time.

The following weekend Bill made just over \$600. He had spent all week working on subtle ways of improving his stand, and his appearance. He bought a beautiful wooden box from an import store to hold his cards. I suggested he use a pendulum to help him confirm various things he saw in the cards. He changed his sign to read “Atlantean Tarot Readings.” This created interest, and separated him from the other readers who did “ordinary” Tarot readings. I helped him devise a story to explain how he was able to deliver Atlantean readings. He bought some smart casual clothes. These gave him additional confidence, as he felt good in them. They also made him look successful.

Bill is still looking for a “real” job, but in the meantime he’s making between \$600 and \$800 every weekend. Not bad for someone who didn’t know what the Tarot was a few months ago.

There are two lessons here. The first is that, with your psychic skills, you can make money virtually anywhere, at any time. No matter what happens to you, you can generate instant cash as a psychic reader. The other lesson is that window-dressing pays huge dividends. If you look successful, have attractive props and a clean deck of Tarot cards, there is no limit to how far you can go.

Suggested reading:

STEP-BY-STEP TAROT by Terry Donaldson (Element – HarperCollins)

THE SANGREAL TAROT by William Gray (Red Wheel/Weiser)

21 WAYS TO READ A TAROT CARD by Mary K. Greer (Llewellyn)

THE TAROT READER’S NOTEBOOK by Ron Martin (mevproshop.com)

TAROT FOR A NEW GENERATION by Janina Renée (Llewellyn)

MASTERING THE TAROT by Juliet Sharman-Burke (Connections)

1-2-3 TAROT by Donald Tyson (Llewellyn)

I hope this has given you some insight into the lucrative world of readings for entertainment. It can be exhausting work at times, but the pay is good, and the chances are you'll have no competition whatsoever.

This is one of a series of occasional essays produced by Richard Webster, 8 Napa Court, Shamrock Park, Manukau 2016, New Zealand (esp@psychic.co.nz).

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