

# STORYPLAY CARDS AS VISUAL PROMPTS FOR CREATIVITY

## How to Use Symbol Cards in School, in Therapy and at Work



*"In Western culture, we often seek truth through confrontation. But our headstrong ways of charging at truth scare the shy soul away. If soul truth is to be spoken and heard, it must be approached 'on the slant.'"*

—Parker Palmer, [A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life](#)

StoryPlay Cards are an excellent tool for connecting kids and adults with the deeper, shyer part of their selves. This part is not only immensely creative but also vital for developing meaning and purpose—something that educators, therapists and trainers will find great value in as they seek to engage kids in a real way.

Symbolic images have been used throughout time—in books, movies and myths—because of their ability to tap into the deeper archetypes of life, including obstacles and allies, that speak to everyone on their journey in the world. StoryPlay Cards allow you to have your own set of archetypal symbol cards. There are 88 "everyday symbols" from around our world in the deck (like Tree, Water, Path, Sword, Gift), plus two wild cards. They can be used in a variety of ways: storytelling, conversations that matter and even playing card games for fun.

StoryPlay Cards were designed by and for educators to enable kids and adults to "stretch into another intelligence". They are ideal for developing:

- Symbolic thinking and expression  
(e.g., developing metaphor, allusion, symbolic mapping)
  - Critical and creative thinking
    - Abstract thinking
  - Self-awareness and personal meaning
    - Storytelling
  - Community or Teambuilding

### 5 Simple Ways to Use the Cards:

1. Lay out some or all of the cards and ask "What's up for you today?" or "How are you feeling today?" Pick the one that describes it for you.
2. Lay out the cards and have kids or adults pick out the one or two they are attracted to and talk about why, either in a small group or in pairs.
3. Lay out the cards and use them as story prompts or when studying ancient myths and legends.
4. Lay out the cards and have adults use them in a strategic planning or visioning exercise.
5. Use them as journaling prompts.

©2011 Think-a-lot Toys; [www.think-a-lot.com](http://www.think-a-lot.com); 303-449-2737

Thanks to Laura Weaver and Mark Wilding of PassageWorks Institute for contributing to this handout.

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT STORYPLAY CARDS...

*"StoryPlay Cards are a wonderful way for educators to tap into the storytelling power of the archetypes. This unique deck is an amazing interplay of psychology, art, and story and will certainly help kids and adults embark on their own hero's journey. I highly recommend them."*

—Carl Spetzler, Social Studies Teacher, Denver  
Center for International Studies

*"... a potent and yet down-to-earth collection of symbols that offer young people and adults a lighthearted means to express themselves and meet each other in unique ways. The card set is a marvelous addition to the educator's toolkit."*

—Mark Wilding, Executive Director, PassageWorks  
Institute

*"Imagination is essential. It keeps alive our access to embodied compassion, inner reflection and delight. In these times of dependence on digital communication, StoryPlay Cards are a gorgeous and stimulating way to enliven imagination, make meaning, and drench ourselves and/or our children in the visceral delight of sharing our stories."*

—Laura Simms, internationally renowned storyteller  
and author

*"My (9 year old) daughter was freaking out when she opened the card deck, she loved them so much!"*

*"This card set is a revolutionary multi-tasker with beautiful illustrations and is 'chock-a-block' with fun. This game is sure to delight people of all ages."*

—Noelle E., 9 year old

*"The card set is beautiful, thoughtful and makes you think about our world. The images are a great way to remember the things in your life you are grateful for and some things to aspire to."*

—Angela L., Mom

*"StoryPlay Cards encourages creativity and imagination and takes traditional card games to a whole new level."*

—Jeannine E., Mom

*"Think-a-lot Toys has done it again! They've created a toy or a game that we've never seen before, and given a new twist on how to play it. Truly impressive in idea and execution."*

--WTS Toy Review