

I Ching, Book of Transformations

Call Details

Sunday, May 10th
7pm UK time, 11am Pacific time

To participate by phone:

Call: **801-717-1157**(ordinary US phone charges apply)

Use Conference ID: **447495#**

To listen live online:

Visit <http://www.onlineClarity.co.uk/transformations.php>

How to get the most out of the call

1. Join in! Share ideas and ask questions.
2. Print out this handout (or download the [editable version](#))
3. Fill all the spaces with your own responses and ideas
4. Use one of those ideas to change something!

I Ching Class Details

This is a practical I Ching Class for richer, more confident divination. It includes:

- **Teleclasses** every Sunday from May 17th to July 5th at 7pm UK time (you can join the calls by phone or Skype)
- Three **bonus calls** for live reading practice, developing a confident, spontaneous response to readings
- **Worksheets** for each teleclass
- Downloadable **recordings** of all calls
- A private **class forum** for assignments, questions and support
- Complete I Ching course **lessons and reference materials** to download

[Click here for full details and 'early bird' discount](#) (valid *until Tuesday 12th*).

Change? What change?

'Beyond fortune-telling'

What *is* fortune-telling? According to the dictionary, it's 'a prediction of one's future' or of 'the lot that befalls one in life': your 'fortune' lays out what you will do and experience. This, of course, is off-putting to anyone who prefers to have some influence over these things... and it leads straight to the idea that 'depending on divination means giving up control over your own life.'

([Here's a blog post about that.](#))

Divination is something more... an attuning, aligning, participating, becoming aware of the underlying reality of things, entering into conversation with it...

Experiences of change

Just a few areas of life where Yi can help, can nurture growth and change...

- ◆ Family relationships
- ◆ Working relationships
- ◆ Friendships – human and animal
- ◆ Romantic relationships
- ◆ Choosing teachers and mentors
- ◆ Career
- ◆ Business
- ◆ Art, creativity
- ◆ Major purchases
- ◆ Education

Where is it especially powerful?

'Transformations'

Some ways Yi (the I Ching) helps with change; some examples of how it might do so; some suggestions on how to tap into these potentials.

Crisis

It's most often some kind of personal crisis that brings people to an oracle, of course: a loss, a conflict, impossible decisions or unmanageable demands...

Yi offers more than 'ways to cope'; it offers ways to transform your response, and tap into something beyond your own emotional capacity – or at all events, beyond any capacity you were aware of having. What's emotional virgin territory for us is still 'charted' somehow by the oracle.

Most of the examples I have in mind for this involve other people and are too personal to share. Some exceptions would be the readings I made during my mother's final illness, when I was oceans out of my emotional depth. Here are two blog posts from that time:

<http://onlineclarity.co.uk/answers/2006/06/09/hexagram-14-line-6/>

<http://onlineclarity.co.uk/answers/2006/07/05/one-clasp-of-the-hands/>

The second of those readings, just a couple of weeks before my mother died, was the key to transforming my relationship with her and opening up an emotional connection that had been closed off for years.

To have access to this kind of transformative guidance and support in times of crisis, you need to build up your experience with the Yijing now. It's a little like meditation: arguably, the moment when you *really* need it is the moment when you need to have started a regular practice six months ago.

What would be a gentle, enjoyable way for you to build up your experience of conversation with Yi?

Vehicles for Change

A vehicle is something that 'carries' the meaning of an image, and has the capacity to transport you to a different state. Yi offers 'vehicles' made of image and story: you can step into these, imaginatively, be moved, and find yourself in a new landscape.

These 'vehicles' come from many layers of the text, such as...

- The words themselves, their imagery and vignettes
- The *etymology* of the Chinese words – which often reveals a whole other layer of imagery
- The trigrams as images of natural forces
- Allusions to myth and history

Here's a recent blog post about the experience of hexagram 48, the Well, as inner change:

<http://onlineclarity.co.uk/answers/2009/05/05/book-of-real-change/>

How to allow yourself to be 'moved' into new experience by your readings?

First and most important:

Go to the real words of the Yijing itself

([Here is a longer rant about this.](#))

Second – allow yourself *time* for the readings to sink in, beyond that intellectual level where they either 'make sense' or they don't. That might mean doing fewer readings, so your attention isn't scattered between several.

And then experiment, intuitively, with how you 'feel' the reading. For instance, as you cast your hexagram, you could try imagining yourself 'made of' its component trigrams. The inner trigram might be below the diaphragm; the outer, upper trigram might be in your heart, shoulders and the way you hold your head.

What might you try?

Attuning

We may be naturally drawn to divination in times of crisis, but it also has its value when things *aren't* coming apart. A divination practice can be a way to be more aligned with the underlying reality of situations, people, one's own self – of being more in *dao*. In the process, it might even make it possible to avoid a few crises.

A blog post about the 'tuning' effect of divination:

<http://onlineclarity.co.uk/answers/2009/03/25/how-divination-is-like-being-a-cello/>

The simplest way to access this is through regular open readings, asking simply for advice, or a guiding principle, or just 'what to be aware of now?' The choice of how often to cast is an individual one: some people have kept up a daily reading practice for decades; I find a weekly reading is a better fit. This is a 'total immersion' way of learning (both about and through the Yijing).

An example of a weekly reading:

<http://onlineclarity.co.uk/answers/2006/11/15/free-flowing-answers/>

You could also ask more focussed questions about particular people and situations: 'How can I be more present?' 'How can I be of greater service?'

And you can use the oracle to 'tune in' to yourself, also: 'What am I looking for from this?' 'Why do I get stuck here?' 'What is it about this that I'm reacting to?'

It's also possible to involve the oracle in modest, non-epic decisions, those where you *don't* have an urgent need for its help. Not to take over from your own decision-making capacity and become dependent (and if that seems to be a danger, I'd recommend putting the book on the shelf and forgetting it for a few months), but as a way to practice making intuitive decisions and staying 'in touch' with something deeper. The oracle doesn't make the decision; you ask, 'What if I do a? What if I do b instead?' and it offers you an *image* of each option to explore.

Any areas in your life where you could use some 'attuning' and 'aligning' to the flow of the situation?

What could you ask Yi from time to time to help with that?

Changing your story

We all tell stories about ourselves, all the time. We might be telling and enacting the story of the self-sacrificing mother, or the dutiful child, or the adventurer and explorer, or David battling Goliath, or Beauty whose love transforms the Beast. Or we might only dare imagine more modest stories for ourselves – or something more like *Waiting for Godot*.

To change the story we're telling is to change our whole idea of who we are, our whole picture of the situation, and of the possibilities open within it. (What if the Beast's castle were actually Bluebeard's?)

Here's a real-life example from the Sorrells' book, *I Ching Made Easy*:

'Her husband was being constantly abusive to her, both physically and mentally. This situation was causing her to feel ashamed and insane. She was so beaten down that she had lost any sense of self-worth. She no longer had any certainty as to the rightness of her own opinions. True brain-washing. The constant stream of invalidation from her husband was causing her to believe that she was the one who was sick and in trouble.

Q Am I the one who is crazy, or is my husband?

A She received Hexagram 36, with line 5 moving.

Hexagram 36 has to do with the denial of your reality.
Line 5 tells you to maintain your inner light at all costs.

When the caller heard the title of the hexagram and the story of Prince Chi, who had to pretend to be insane in order to survive, she burst into tears. She immediately recognized the rightness of her own feelings.'

Tapping into Yi's 'story changing' capacity can be as simple as this: knowing the stories alluded to in the text, and using them to re-tell your own. (The best single source for these stories is SJ Marshall's book, *The Mandate of Heaven*.)

There is also the story told through the Sequence of hexagrams; you can find the brief text that describes the sequence from one hexagram to the next in translations of the Yijing such as Wilhelm/Baynes ('The Sequence' in Book III),

Karcher's *Total I Ching* ('Charge to the Oracle') or Alfred Huang's *Complete I Ching* ('Sequence of the Gua'). This will give you hints as to the kind of story that might be unfolding – whether you are dealing with challenges raised by the preceding hexagram, or responding to it, or growing from it, or building on it.

To work with this in greater depth, it's good to study Yi's wider repertoire of ways to describe different kinds of connection and cause within a reading, such as

- Sequence of hexagrams
- Paired hexagrams
- Paired lines within hexagram pairs
- Nuclear hexagrams
- Patterns of Change (what Stephen Karcher now calls 'change operators')

Any stories you're living that you can recognise? Any situations in your life where you're curious to know how Yi would tell the story?

Connecting the dots

Working with Yi generally has the effect of dissolving away the barriers we use to compartmentalise our lives and keep, for instance, 'relationship' apart from 'life purpose' or 'business decision' apart from 'spiritual growth'.

This effect is greatly magnified when you start looking at the connections between your readings in these different 'compartments'. It might turn out that what you're learning at work is what you need to understand at home, or that what you learned about your desire to purchase a new car is just what you need to know to train your dog. Or to choose a spiritual teacher. There are no barriers.

This can have two effects. One is that your pace of growth and learning can accelerate, as you see how different areas of life are still teaching the same lesson, and you start to live more fluently as you apply what you're learning.

And the other is that you develop a sense of how your life is woven together into a single cloth instead of a lot of loose ends, and the large-scale patterns of the cloth might start to come into view. Or you develop the ability to read your life together as one story instead of lots of little anecdotes, and so you might get a sense of what it's about and where it's headed.

Look for connections between your readings in...

- Recurring hexagrams – primary and relating, but also all the less 'visible' hexagrams in a reading
- Related hexagrams – eg hexagrams that share the same nuclear figure, paired hexagrams, complementary hexagrams
- Recurring trigrams
- Recurring myths and legends
- Recurring and developing imagery

And to have a place to look for connections,

keep a reading journal!

If you already organise your life through a computer program, keep your readings in the same place, so they're integrated into your thinking and planning.

If you want to start an all-purpose journal that can include readings, try <http://www.stevpavlina.com/the-journal/>

If you want specialist software to record I Ching readings, try Ewald Berker's software with journal:

<http://eclecticenergies.com/shop/select.php?item=6>

This is not the only Yijing program available, and doesn't necessarily have the best contents: it includes Ewald's translation, which is interesting and very straightforward and direct, but doesn't have the same depths to explore as Stephen Karcher's *Total Yijing* program. However, it's the best I know of for ease of searching and finding patterns in a journal of readings.

What would be the most natural – and integrated - way for you to keep a reading journal?

I Ching Class discounts

The early bird discount expires on Tuesday 12th May.

If you're a Friend of Clarity (if you've [joined](#) the free membership), you can pick up a further discount from the [Friends' Area](#).

And if you're a [Change Circle](#) member, your additional discount is available from the [Change Circle home page](#).