

## Bistro Metaphysics

by Frank K. Darmstadt

**A**DMIT IT. The mere mention of a "psychic" or "tarot card reader" unleashes scary images of Dionne Warwick and Esther Rolle hyping the now-defunct Psychic Friends Network. Or maybe scenes from the old "Wolf Man" movies in which gypsy Maria Ouspenskaya uses her fortune cards to tell Lon Chaney, Jr., to chill at home when the moon is full. While some may scoff at the credibility of a psychic or tarot card reader, millions of men and women all over the world take what these individuals have to say very seriously. But what about those of us who are merely curious? If you want to find out about a new job, a new girl, or a new haircut, many coffee bars offer their customers the chance to sit in with a psychic or tarot card reader. Dante Sabatino, a tarot card reader, and Marcus Goodwin, a psychic, are two such gentlemen who maintain busy schedules between a private client base and public sessions offered in coffee shops in NYC.

### TAROT CARDS AT BIG CUP

**CUPS:** How long have you been a tarot card reader?

**DS:** I've been reading for more than 13 years (I'm 30 now) since I was a teenager. Experimenting with myself, and I was lucky to have a whole library available to me from my family. Also, I was just very interested in it. Then, it led me to reading family members and steadily reading other people.

**CUPS:** Where do you usually conduct readings? How often?

**DS:** I do them publicly and privately. It's amazing how much this process got involved. I first started doing one night a week at Big Cup (a coffee bar in Chelsea) but it got too big and I had to expand my business to two nights a week here. The timing was great! When I moved to New York in September of 1995, I came to Big Cup to see if they wanted a reader just after the woman who used to be a reader left the week before. It's very satisfying to do this as a public reader for so many people. There came a point where I wanted to increase my business, so I decided to read more privately with clients at home with less distractions and more privacy to concentrate on my work.

**CUPS:** Describe what you do when someone wants a reading.

**DS:** When they sit with me, I ask when was their last reading or if they've ever had one before. If they've never had one, I say that everyone reads in a different way and I like to find out if they believe at all in the process of reading. If they want a reading, they might want a specific issue discussed or resolved. Usually it's on the serious side. Some people do it on a whim, some through a referral, and they are intrigued to meet me and find out more about what I can do. I want to make people feel comfortable no matter what problem they need solving.

**CUPS:** So you have to be nurturing sometimes?

**DS:** It can be nurturing, therapeutic for people. Where am I going? What can I do to cope with conflicts? Some people have more practical questions. There are certain needs involved and I have to create a right atmosphere. Using all of these elements illustrate my needs as a reader built upon

my previous reading experiences, research, and life experiences. I want to create a calm and relaxed environment so as not to lose concentration from the noise of the coffee shop. I create the energy for what I'm giving to the client to give him satisfaction. I like to make eye contact and have a definite place to sit with the person opposite me. I read the cards on a table which I neutralize from distracting marks or colors with a velvet tablecloth, and I burn two red or white votive candles, and burn incense. And I have the cards.

**CUPS:** What can you offer someone in the coffee shop?

**DS:** I read the entire 78-card deck for someone who sits down. It's a purely subjective experience. The client shuffles the deck and cuts the deck into piles with the left hand (closer to your heart). I have many kinds of card spreads depending on the type of reading. As long as the person has an open mind, I can unfold their life or prepare them for what will happen to them. The incense helps for ambiance and I control the energy so the client can be focused and not distracted. Usually it lasts about 25 minutes in public but about an hour in private sessions. It's really fulfilling to know that you've made a difference in someone's life. People sometimes cry especially if their emotions have not been able to come out and if I can help them that's great. If I can help bring out someone's repressed feelings, that makes me feel like I'm in touch with their soul and that's so rewarding and remarkable.

*Dante Sabatino conducts readings at BIG CUP, a coffee bar at 228 Eighth Avenue in Manhattan, on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. He may also be contacted at 212-727-7362.*

### PSYCHIC AT DRIP

**CUPS:** When was the first time you realized you had a special power? What happened?

**MG:** I was seven when I first realized that I was psychic. However, I believe I was born psychic, but only began to get a handle on it around that time. I began to have strange encounters with what I believe to be spirit guides who guided me towards becoming a bonified psychic medium. They would visit me in both the waking and sleeping state, and would make me aware of the special sensitivities I was born  
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