



All About Cancer

The sign Cancer is all about feeling, about exploring the heart and emotional self. The inner world and especially their own fabulous imagination, is rich territory for them. The purpose is to discover the depth and complexity of who they are as a whole, not just as a mind or a consumer or an employee or any of the other emotionally numbing roles we can find ourselves in that leave our hearts not much room or time to breathe or feel.

The creature that represents Cancer is the crab. This symbol is appropriate because a crab is a soft, delicate thing. Its shell serves to protect it from predators, and when it needs a new home, it finds a bigger shell. I am not implying that Cancers are weak and therefore need to hide; their strength is not in question here. It is because Cancers are so aware of their insides that they know the need for protection. Not everyone is fit to walk that journey inside of them. It is not appropriate for them to reveal themselves to everyone who may want a peek. People must rightfully be judged as to whether they may be friend or foe, because once a Cancer reveals themselves, they are profoundly vulnerable. That outer shell might seem pretty tough, but that's to discourage any but the most tender and trustworthy from breaking through. The toughness is what keeps them in tact, it is the shell.

Cancer has been named 'the great mother'. Traditionally it is assumed that every Cancer is all about home and family and that they must have children. So are you out of luck if you are a Cancer out there that doesn't want to have children and doesn't have a green thumb? No. The source of those emotions, the essence that those descriptive and traditional interpretations of Cancer contain, is about the ability to nurture, not just children or plants – this is not only literal. It is whatever they give their heart to. Find what they care about and we can see that they have the touch of someone who knows how to care for something; who knows how to protect and strengthen the life in something. They are very protective of themselves and that extends to those they love. They may spend their lifetime getting closer and closer in trust and love to those people they have decided to let into their life, but the beginning starts when they step onto that path with someone, because at that point, they are family, and they will protect those they consider family fiercely.

What are the disadvantages of having a nature that just desires to feel and love? There would probably be none if we lived in a world with no predators, no pain, and no fear, and no human failings. But in reality, there are times when they have to protect themselves, times when the person sitting across from them may need something that Cancer can't

give even if they wanted to, because one simply has to find it inside of oneself. There are times when a Cancer, like all of us, actually needs that tough skin.

There are a couple of dangers here, where Cancer can experience their shadow side. One is that they never come out of that shell - that no one really gets to ever see them. They may get so used to protecting themselves that their shell becomes not a home but a prison, where they are unable to grow because their shell keeps them stuck and confined in their outdated fears. True intimacy and appropriate interdependency in a relationship can be thwarted when Cancer plays the mother role too well. In this situation, they only get to play the nurturer, not the nurtured. Those that love Cancer are convinced they are the sweetest person in the world, but Cancer has not shared any of themselves and their own needs. Then Cancer is left lonely, invisible, not really seen or nurtured themselves because they give too much to someone, and exhaust themselves.