DEEP CLARITY READING

Maya, is your own studio the next step?

“Should I leave my stable design job to start my own studio next year?”

Prepared for Maya · November 12, 2026



YOUR QUESTION

Should I leave my stable design job to start my own studio next year?

THE SHORT ANSWER

Not settled — a small test will clarify it

Maya, the cards do not ask you to resign today, and they do not ask you to give up the studio either. The Two of Wands shows you already planning from a secure place, while the Three of Pentacles points to the clients who are already interested in your work. Together they suggest a short, defined test: one small paid project alongside your job, with honest notes on money and energy. After about six weeks, you will have evidence instead of guesses to decide with.

YOUR FIVE CARDS, IN THE ORDER THEY WERE DRAWN



Two of Wands
The core

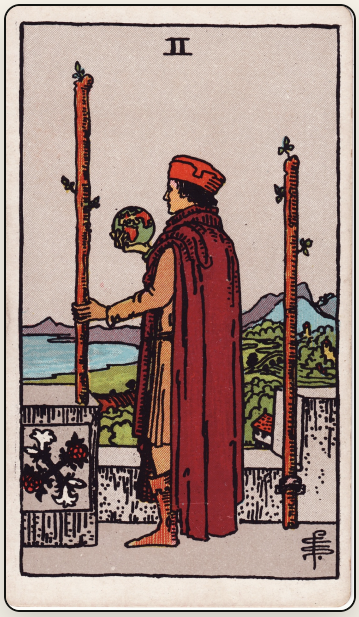
The Hermit
What may be overlooked

Eight of Swords
The constraint

Three of Pentacles
What is in your hands

The Star
The next step

This reading was written with AI assistance around the cards you drew and the question you asked. It is a reflection to help you think clearly, not a prediction of the future or of anyone else's feelings.



THE CORE

Two of Wands

PERSPECTIVE, ATTENTION, CHOICE

What the card shows

A figure stands on a battlement holding a globe and one wand. A second wand is fixed beside the figure, overlooking land and water.

What it means for your question

Maya, the Two of Wands puts the real tension of your question in plain view. A figure stands on a battlement holding a small globe, one wand in hand and a second fixed beside them, looking out over land and water. That second wand reads like the job you already have: planted, reliable, part of the structure you stand on. The globe is the studio, something you can already hold and turn over, but not yet walk into. At the core of this reading, the card does not ask you to pick a side today. It asks you to admit that you are already planning, and that planning from a secure wall is a strength rather than a hesitation. The choice in front of you is less about courage and more about how far you can see before you step down from the wall.

Try this

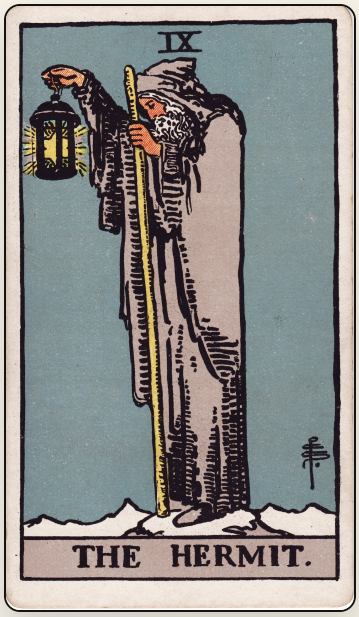
1. Write two short lists tonight: what the current job reliably gives you each week, and what the studio would need to give you to feel worth the change.
2. Spend thirty minutes sketching a one-page plan for the studio's first quarter, including the work, the hours and the money, without deciding anything yet.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

Which parts of the studio can you already hold in your hand, and which are still only a view from the wall?

WORDS TO KEEP

I can plan from a steady place.



WHAT MAY BE OVERLOOKED

The Hermit

PERSPECTIVE, ATTENTION, CHOICE

What the card shows

A cloaked figure stands on a mountain holding a lantern with a six-pointed star. A staff supports the figure beside the rocky ground.

What it means for your question

The Hermit shows a cloaked figure on a mountain, holding a lantern with a six-pointed star and leaning on a staff. In your question, Maya, what may be overlooked is how much of a studio is quiet, solitary work. You mention the routine and the team you like, and the Hermit gently suggests that this is not a side detail. A studio of one can mean long stretches of your own company, decisions with no colleague to check them against, and a lantern you have to carry yourself. This is not a reason to stay. It is information worth gathering before you choose. Some people find that solitude sharpens their best work, while others discover they need a small circle around them. The Hermit asks which kind of designer you are when nobody is in the next room, and that answer will shape the studio you build.

Try this

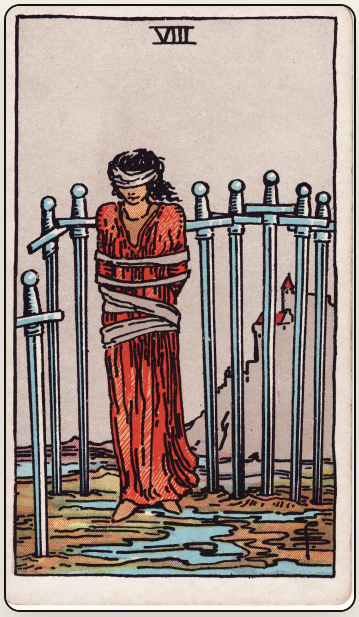
1. Choose one working day in the next two weeks to work completely alone, then note your energy and focus every two hours in a simple log.
2. List three designers or friends who could become a small peer circle if you went independent, and message one of them this week.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

How do you work, and how do you feel, after a full day with nobody in the next room?

WORDS TO KEEP

I can carry my own light and still ask for company.



THE CONSTRAINT

Eight of Swords

PERSPECTIVE, ATTENTION, CHOICE

What the card shows

A bound and blindfolded figure stands among eight swords. Water lies at their feet, and a castle rises in the distance.

What it means for your question

The Eight of Swords shows a bound and blindfolded figure standing among eight swords, with water at their feet and a castle in the distance. As the constraint in your reading, Maya, it points to the pressure of the decision itself. Eight months of savings is a real resource, yet it can feel like a countdown that makes every option look dangerous. The figure in the card is not trapped by the swords so much as by not seeing where the gaps are. Your concerns about money and routine are reasonable; they become a constraint when they stay vague. Naming the actual limits, such as the monthly amount you need, the minimum number of clients and the point at which you would return to employment, loosens the bindings. The card asks you to take the blindfold off the numbers before you judge the risk.

Try this

1. Calculate your real monthly costs and write down how many months your savings cover at that rate, plus the number that would make you feel safe.
2. Decide on one clear return point in writing, such as a savings level that would prompt you to look for a new role, and keep it visible.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

Which fear about leaving would shrink if you wrote down the exact number behind it?

WORDS TO KEEP

I can look at the numbers and stay calm.



WHAT IS IN YOUR HANDS

Three of Pentacles

PERSPECTIVE, ATTENTION, CHOICE

What the card shows

A craftsperson works inside a stone building while two figures examine a plan. Three pentacles decorate the arch above them.

What it means for your question

The Three of Pentacles shows a craftsperson working inside a stone building while two figures examine a plan, with three pentacles carved in the arch above them. What is in your hands, Maya, is the craft and the collaboration you already practice. You have two possible first clients, which means people are already looking at your plans and taking your work seriously. The card suggests that you do not need to leap from employee to studio owner in a single move. You can build the arch stone by stone: shape one client project well, agree the scope clearly, ask for feedback and see how the work feels when it is yours from start to finish. The team you would miss can also become collaborators in a new form. Agency here means turning interest into a concrete brief rather than waiting for certainty.

Try this

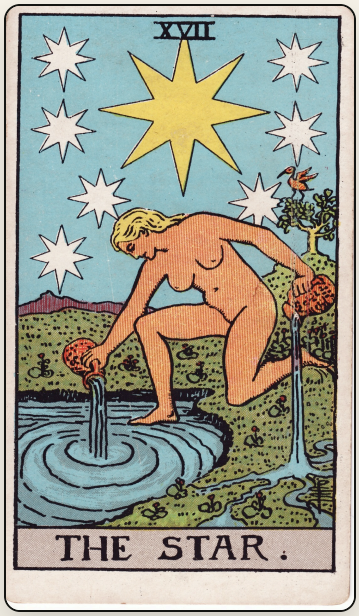
1. Ask one of the two possible clients for a short call this month to define a small paid project with a clear scope, timeline and fee.
2. Show your studio portfolio draft to one trusted colleague and ask which two pieces best represent the work you want to be hired for.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

What would a first small project with one of these clients need to show you?

WORDS TO KEEP

I can build this one stone at a time.



THE NEXT STEP

The Star

PERSPECTIVE, ATTENTION, CHOICE

What the card shows

A kneeling figure pours water from two vessels, one into a pool and one onto land. A large star and seven smaller stars shine overhead.

What it means for your question

The Star shows a kneeling figure pouring water from two vessels, one into a pool and one onto land, with a large star and seven smaller stars overhead. As your next step, Maya, the card describes a balanced pour rather than an all-or-nothing jump. One vessel can keep feeding the pool you already have, your job, your routine and your income, while the other waters new ground with real studio work. The Star carries a calm kind of hope that grows from small, steady actions you can see working. It suggests a season of testing in which you keep the job, take on one or two client projects at a pace you can sustain, and watch what happens to your energy, your finances and your confidence. That evidence will make the decision clearer than any amount of thinking alone could.

Try this

1. Set aside two evenings a week for the next six weeks for studio work only, and protect at least one evening for rest.
2. At the end of each week, write three lines: what went well, what drained you and what you learned about running your own work.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

What would you need to see after six weeks to feel ready to take the next step?

WORDS TO KEEP

I can let hope grow from small steady actions.

ALL FIVE CARDS TOGETHER

What your cards say together

Not yet as a single leap. Your cards point to a short, protected test of the studio while you keep your job, so the decision rests on real evidence rather than pressure.

How the cards connect

The Two of Wands sets the scene: you are already planning from a secure position, and that security is a resource rather than a sign of doubt. The Hermit adds the piece that is easy to miss, the solitary side of running a studio, which matters because you value your routine and your team. The Eight of Swords then explains why the choice feels heavier than it needs to: the money and the risk are still unmeasured, so they look larger than they are. Against that pressure, the Three of Pentacles shows what you can actually do, which is to turn interest from two possible clients into a defined, paid project and to keep collaboration in your working life. The Star ties these threads together by describing a balanced pour, keeping one vessel in the pool you have while watering new ground. Together the cards suggest that the clearest answer will come from a small, honest trial with clear numbers and a set time to review it.

YOUR NEXT STEP

For the next six weeks, keep your job and run one small paid studio project in two protected evenings a week. Track hours, income and energy each Friday. A clear signal is finishing the project on time while still feeling rested and interested.

> *You do not have to choose between security and your own work today; you can test both.*

Maya, you came to this question with real resources: savings, interested clients and a craft people already trust. Give the studio a fair, protected trial, look at what it actually shows you and let that evidence guide the next decision. Whatever you choose, you will choose it with clear eyes.

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