Ask A Card

CAREER GROWTH

Samuel, Your Path to Senior Product Designer

“How can I grow into a more senior role on my product team next year?”

Prepared for Samuel · November 12, 2026



YOUR QUESTION

How can I grow into a more senior role on my product team next year?

THE SHORT ANSWER

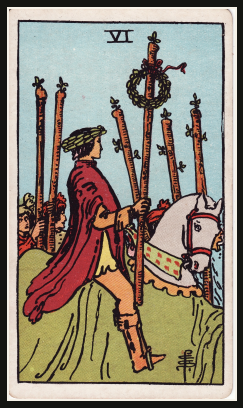
Your next move — choose one concrete step

Samuel, to grow into a senior role, start by asking your manager to name the explicit criteria for senior readiness on your team — the Hierophant in A useful question to ask points directly at this. Then run a focused four-to-eight-week experiment using the Eight of Pentacles: pick one specific skill your team underutilizes and practice it in real project work for about two hours a week. As you go, use the Six of Wands approach and make that work visible — share a brief written rationale after each shipped feature or research round. After four weeks, check whether your manager and peers are engaging with your contributions differently.

YOUR FIVE CARDS, IN THE ORDER THEY WERE DRAWN



Eight of Pentacles
A skill to develop



Six of Wands
A contribution to make visible



Three of Pentacles
Collaboration



The Hierophant
A useful question to ask



Justice
A sustainable pace

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.

Your answer, continued

That checkpoint, explicitly as a planning suggestion, is a reasonable moment to ask for feedback and adjust your approach before the year ends.



A SKILL TO DEVELOP

Eight of Pentacles

PRACTICE, DILIGENCE, CRAFTSMANSHIP

What the card shows

A craftsperson sits at a bench engraving a pentacle. Other completed pentacles line a post, with a town visible in the distance.

What it means for your question

The Eight of Pentacles sits in A skill to develop, and it points directly at the kind of focused craft-deepening that separates a solid contributor from someone ready to lead. The figure in the card is bent over deliberate, repetitive work — not rushing toward the finished pentacles on the post, but concentrating on the one in hand. For you, Samuel, this suggests that senior-level growth often comes not from doing more things but from going deeper into one craft area: systems thinking, accessibility standards, or design critique facilitation, for example. Three years of breadth is valuable; now a targeted deepening in a gap your team actually needs can make your expertise legible at a higher level. The distant town in the imagery is a reminder that this careful work eventually connects to something larger than the bench in front of you.

Try this

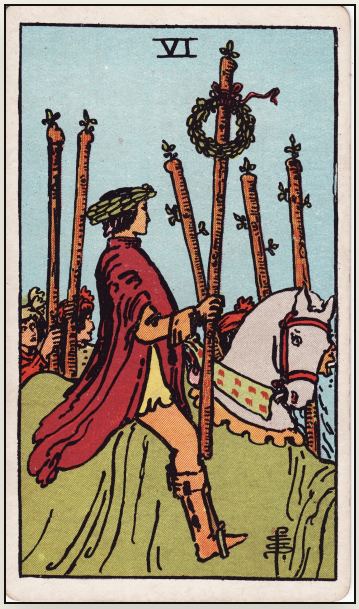
1. Choose one specific design skill your team underutilizes — spend two focused hours weekly for eight weeks practicing it through real project work.
2. After each week, write three sentences about what you learned and one open question it raised; review this log at the four-week mark.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

Which one design skill, if you mastered it, would most expand what your team can do?

WORDS TO KEEP

I am building depth in the craft that my team needs.



A CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE VISIBLE

Six of Wands

RECOGNITION, PROGRESS, CONFIDENCE

What the card shows

A rider on a horse carries a wand decorated with a wreath. Other figures accompany the rider carrying upright wands.

What it means for your question

The Six of Wands occupies A contribution to make visible, and that label is worth sitting squarely with: the card is not about ego but about legibility. The rider moving through the group is not hidden — the wreath on the wand marks something accomplished and shared publicly. Samuel, this card asks where your completed work stays invisible. If your research synthesis, your design decisions, or your process improvements exist only in Figma files or Notion pages that your manager and peers rarely open, the value you are already creating does not register at a senior level. Making a contribution visible might mean presenting a design rationale in a team meeting, writing a short internal post-mortem after a shipped feature, or framing your work in terms of the product outcome it supported. Visibility here is a professional practice, not performance.

Try this

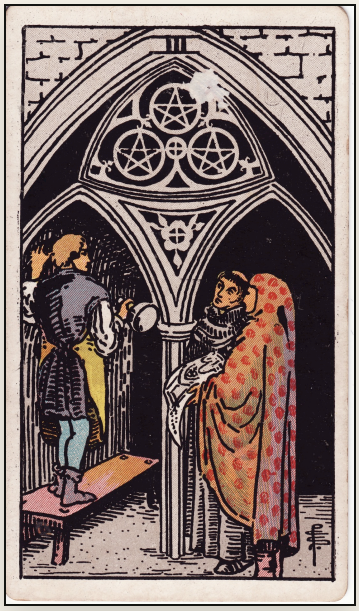
1. After each shipped feature or research round, write a one-paragraph summary of your decision rationale and share it in your team's existing channel.
2. Volunteer to present one piece of completed work per month in a team review, framing it around a product outcome rather than design details alone.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

Where does your best work go unnoticed, and what is one low-effort way to surface it?

WORDS TO KEEP

I make completed work visible across the team.



COLLABORATION

Three of Pentacles

CRAFT, TEAMWORK, COLLABORATION

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 falls in Collaboration, and in this reading it names a real tension to manage rather than a barrier to fear. The card shows a craftsperson working while two others review a plan together — three different roles engaged with the same structure. Samuel, senior product designers are rarely promoted for individual craft alone; teams and managers look for people who can coordinate across stakeholders, incorporate feedback without losing the design intention, and help others do better work. If collaboration currently means executing on other people's decisions, the shift worth practicing is moving from receiver of briefs to shaper of them. This does not require authority you do not yet have; it can start with asking one more clarifying question before work begins, or proposing a small workshop rather than a solo deliverable.

Try this

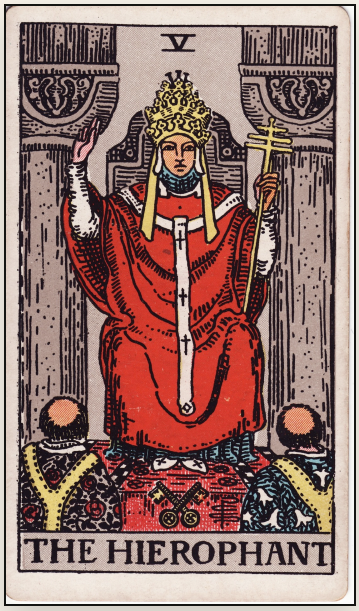
1. On your next project, propose a brief alignment session with one or two stakeholders before you begin designing; facilitate it and document the outcome.
2. After a critique or review, explicitly incorporate one piece of feedback and explain your reasoning in writing to the person who gave it.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

In which recurring meeting could you shift from participant to someone who shapes the agenda or outcome?

WORDS TO KEEP

I bring people into the design process rather than working around them.



A USEFUL QUESTION TO ASK

The Hierophant

TRADITION, SHARED FRAMEWORKS, TRUSTED GUIDANCE

What the card shows

A religious figure sits between pillars with one hand raised. Two figures kneel below him, and crossed keys lie at his feet.

What it means for your question

The Hierophant in A useful question to ask is about structure, shared frameworks, and the people who hold institutional knowledge in your organization. The figure in the card sits between pillars with keys at his feet — access, in this imagery, comes through a recognized system, not around it. Samuel, this card suggests that one of the most direct moves available to you is asking your manager or a senior designer to name the explicit criteria your organization uses to assess readiness for a senior title or project scope. Many designers assume they know what senior means without ever hearing it stated. The Hierophant's energy here is practical: find out what framework your team already uses, then work within it deliberately rather than guessing. Your manager is supportive — that is an asset worth using directly.

Try this

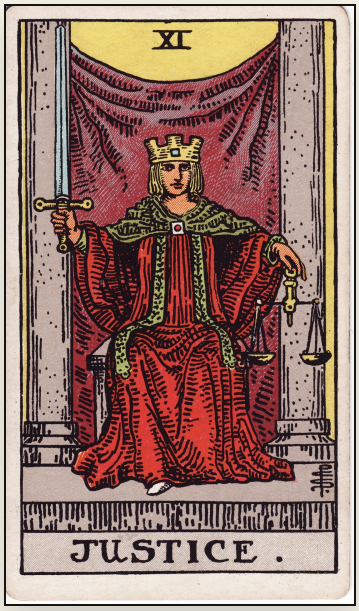
1. Schedule a thirty-minute conversation with your manager and ask specifically what criteria or behaviors your team uses to evaluate senior-level readiness.
2. Research how two or three senior designers in adjacent teams describe their own role scope; note one difference from your current responsibilities.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

What is the one question you have not yet asked your manager about how senior readiness is evaluated here?

WORDS TO KEEP

I ask direct questions about how senior readiness is defined and measured.



A SUSTAINABLE PACE

Justice

EVIDENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, PROPORTION

What the card shows

A seated figure holds a raised sword and balanced scales between two pillars. A red robe covers the figure, with a curtain behind the throne.

What it means for your question

Justice in A sustainable pace is a steadying card for an ambition question. The figure holds a raised sword and balanced scales — evidence on one side, a clear standard on the other. This is not a card about slowing down; it is about making your progress measurable so you can assess it accurately. Samuel, senior growth built on a sustainable pace means you are not burning through goodwill or bandwidth trying to do everything at once. Instead, you pick one or two of the directions this reading surfaces — deepening a skill, making work visible, shaping collaboration — and track your progress against something observable. The scales in the imagery suggest proportion: matching your investment to the available evidence that it is working, then adjusting. A checkpoint after a few weeks of a focused experiment lets you evaluate plainly.

Try this

1. Choose one experiment from this reading, run it for four weeks at a defined weekly effort, and schedule a solo thirty-minute review to assess what changed.
2. Create a simple running document listing three to five senior-level behaviors you are practicing; update it weekly with one concrete example or gap.

A QUESTION TO KEEP

What is one observable signal that would tell you, after four weeks, that your experiment is working?

WORDS TO KEEP

I measure my growth against clear evidence, not just effort or intention.

What your cards say together

Short answer

Samuel, the clearest path forward combines deliberate skill-deepening from the Eight of Pentacles with active visibility from the Six of Wands, guided by an honest conversation with your manager about what senior readiness actually looks like here.

How the cards connect

These five cards form a connected argument rather than separate pieces of advice. The Eight of Pentacles establishes the foundation: targeted craft development is what distinguishes a senior contributor, and the card in A skill to develop asks you to identify the one area where going deeper would most benefit your team, not just your portfolio. The Six of Wands in A contribution to make visible then addresses why strong craft alone rarely leads to promotion — the work has to register with the people who make scope and title decisions. Making contributions legible is a practice that runs in parallel with skill-building, not after it. The Three of Pentacles in Collaboration adds a productive tension: even excellent, visible individual work is not quite enough if you are not yet shaping how the team solves problems together. Moving from executor to collaborator and occasional facilitator is where senior product design role expectations typically begin. The Hierophant in A useful question to ask grounds all of this in your actual organization. It redirects energy away from general ambition toward the specific framework your team uses — your supportive manager is a direct resource here, not just a background condition. Finally, Justice in A sustainable pace connects everything by insisting that growth built on proportion and evidence is more durable than a sprint. It links back to the Eight of Pentacles by asking you to track your deliberate practice, back to the Six of Wands by suggesting you review whether your visibility efforts are landing, and back to the Three of Pentacles by reminding you that collaboration habits take consistent repetition to become recognizable to others. Together, the cards describe a sequence: deepen, surface, collaborate, ask directly, and pace yourself with evidence.

What your cards say together (continued)

YOUR NEXT STEP

As a planning suggestion, consider running a four-to-eight-week experiment combining one skill-deepening practice and one visibility habit. At the end of that window, bring this question to your manager or a senior designer: 'Based on what you have seen from me in the past few months, what is the one area where more growth would most support a path toward leading bigger projects?' Their answer gives you a concrete next direction to calibrate against.

> *I grow toward senior work by deepening craft, sharing it clearly, and asking direct questions.*

Carry one thing forward

Samuel, what this reading maps out is already within your reach — you have three years of real experience, a supportive manager, and a clear goal. The work now is choosing one or two concrete practices, running them long enough to generate evidence, and using that evidence in an honest conversation with the people who can help shape your next scope.

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