

Six Hexagrams of the Screen: I Ching Wisdom Cards for the Digital Life

The Six Hexagrams of Screen Wisdom — I Ching Cards for the Digital Age

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Cover Card

Title: Six Hexagrams of the Screen

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The Six Hexagrams of Screen Wisdom — I Ching Cards for the Digital Age

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Origin: Eight out of ten visitors who come to Cloudland Dao ask the same question: "Daoist, how do I stop looking at my phone so much?" The Dao does not speak of "abstinence" — it speaks of "rhythm." It does not speak of "cutting off" — it speaks of "returning." So I selected six hexagrams from the sixty-four and made this deck.

How to Use: Draw one card each day. Read the teaching on the front, answer the three questions on the back, and complete today's action. Six cards, six practices. Don't try to read them all at once — do one card thoroughly. When you've done it, draw the next.

Card Specs: A6 (105×148mm), double-sided. Six hexagram cards plus one cover card — seven cards total. PDF printable, digital version optimized for phone reading.

Card 1 — Hexagram 52 • Gen (艮) — Mountain / Stillness

Front



Gen (艮) — Mountain • Stillness

Gua Ci: "Keeping his back still so that he no longer feels his body. Walking in his courtyard, he does not see his people. No blame."

Xiang Yue: Mountains standing back to back — this is Gen. The noble one's thoughts do not stray beyond their position.

Core Teaching:

Stop. You don't need to go anywhere.

The mountain doesn't speak. The mountain simply is. How long has it been since you just... were?

Gen is mountain upon mountain — true stillness isn't about not moving. It's about the inside holding still while the outside churns. Your phone calls to you every second. It tells you to scroll. To reply. To tap. How long has it been since you said "no" to these voices?

Ding Long Says:

Every year during Spring Festival, I go into retreat for three days. Day one, I want to run. Day two, unbearable boredom. Day three — only then do I truly stop.

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The first two days aren't stillness. They're struggle. Real stillness is when even the thought of "wanting to move" falls away. Having your phone nearby and not touching it, versus having no phone nearby and not wanting one — these are two different things entirely.

Back

Three Questions:

When was the last time you were completely still — no phone, no doing, no speaking?

Right now, if you open your phone, what are you really looking for?

If you had to spend ten minutes today doing absolutely nothing — what would you be most afraid of?

Today's Action:

Find ten minutes today. Go somewhere with no screen. Do nothing. Not meditation. Not thinking. Just — nothing.

Card 2 — Hexagram 23 • Bo (剥) — Stripping Away

Front



Bo (剥) — Stripping Away

Gua Ci: "The bed is stripped at the edge. To disregard perseverance brings misfortune."

Xiang Yue: The mountain rests upon the earth — this is Bo. Those above, by generosity, secure the dwelling below.

Core Teaching:

Most of what you think you need, you don't.

Strip it away. Layer by layer. The outermost first, then the middle. Strip until nothing more can be stripped

. What remains — that is real.

Five yin lines below, one yang line above — Bo is a single thread of yang hanging at the top. This isn't tragedy. This is truth: ninety percent of what you hoard is those five yin lines. Keep the one yang line. That's enough.

Ding Long Says:

I used to have three pages of apps. Now it's half a page.

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Stripping away one app does more than downloading ten. Every app you delete opens a space inside you. That space, later, grew something else — not more apps. More attention. More patience. More time. You didn't delete an app. You recovered a piece of your soul you had given away.

Back

Three Questions:

Does your home screen really need three pages of apps?

The last app you downloaded — have you used it more than three times?

Which app are you "afraid to delete but never use"? What are you afraid of?

Today's Action:

Delete five apps today. Not disable. Not move to a folder. Delete. Then look at the one page that remains — that's what you actually need.

Card 3 — Hexagram 24 • Fu (复) — Return

Front



Fu (复) — Return

Gua Ci: "Returning to the path. In seven days it comes back. Such is the way of heaven."

Xiang Yue: Thunder within the earth — this is Fu. The ancient kings closed the passes at the solstice. Merchants did not travel. The ruler did not inspect the provinces.

Core Teaching:

You broke it. Now come back. That's all.

Every return is a new beginning. No return is ever "too late." No return requires an apology.

Fu is Bo flipped upside down — stripped down to a single yang line, that line re-emerges from the very bottom. That bottom stroke is like the first blade of grass in spring. You thought it was over? Heaven and earth say: there is no "over." Cycles are the way of heaven. So is return.

Ding Long Says:

A client broke their streak on day three. They were crushed with guilt. I said: breathing is exhaling and inhaling. Has anyone ever exhaled and never inhaled again?

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Fu doesn't teach "perseverance." It teaches "return." Perseverance is white-knuckling it — you can't sustain that. Return is natural, like breathing. You don't need to "quit your phone." You just need to come back. Every single time — faster, with less effort.

Back

Three Questions:

The last time you "broke the rules" — what did you say to yourself? Whose voice was that?
If your relationship with your phone were a breath — are you exhaling or inhaling right now?
Is anyone waiting for you to "come back"?

Today's Action:

If you're carrying guilt about "slipping up," write it down today. Then tear it up. Tearing it up means: that is over. The next breath is a new beginning.

Card 4 — Hexagram 60 • Jie (节) — Limitation

Front



Jie (节) — Limitation

Gua Ci: "Limitation through regulation. It does not injure resources, it does not harm the people."

Xiang Yue: Water above the lake — this is Jie. The noble one establishes measures and limits, and deliberates on virtue and conduct.

Core Teaching:

Water without banks floods everything. So do you.

Boundaries are not cages. They are riverbanks. With banks, the water reaches the sea. Freedom without banks is called flooding — and flooding holds onto nothing.

Jie is Kan above, Dui below — water resting upon a lake. The lake itself is a boundary. It holds the water so the water doesn't scatter. What is your lake? What holds you?

Ding Long Says:

Rituals have protocols. Practice has its appointed hours. These don't limit you — they protect you.

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Freedom without boundaries is disintegration. Disintegrated freedom feels worse than no freedom at all. I've seen too many people "freely" scroll until three in the morning. That's not freedom — that's being led by the nose by your phone. Real freedom is: you set the boundary, and you keep it.

Back

Three Questions:

Where is your screen boundary? (After what hour? Which apps have time limits?)

Who set that boundary — you, or "I couldn't help it"?

If today you could only use your phone for exactly three things — what are they?

Today's Action:

Set a hard boundary today: screen curfew after 9 PM. Put your phone in another room — not on the nightstand. Set it, keep it. Not even once. Tomorrow you can adjust the time. Today, 9 PM is 9 PM.

Card 5 — Hexagram 41 • Sun (损) — Decrease

Front



Sun (损) — Decrease

Gua Ci: "Decreasing what is below to increase what is above. Its way moves upward."

Xiang Yue: The lake below the mountain — this is Sun. The noble one restrains anger and curbs desire.

Core Teaching:

You think decrease is loss. Decrease is what lets the important things rise.

Sun is Gen above, Dui below — reduce the lake below, and the mountain stands taller. Cut one unimportant thing, and what matters surfaces on its own. Leave one noisy group chat, and the important people will find you. Cut one hour of scrolling, and an hour opens up. What will grow in that hour? You don't know — but it will be better than scrolling.

Ding Long Says:

Sun is subtraction — cut what's below so what's above can rise.

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I've watched too many people keep adding: apps, groups, subscriptions, follows. Adding until their phone weighs heavier than their life. Adding until waking up feels like opening the morning memorials. Sun tells you: the path upward isn't built by piling things on. It's carved by letting things go. Get light enough, and you'll rise.

Back

Three Questions:

This past month, what have you been "adding"? (Apps / subscriptions / follows / group chats)

After adding it, who did you become? Better? More tired?

If you could keep only three digital habits — which three?

Today's Action:

Today, leave one group. Unfollow one account. Cancel one subscription. Not "later" — now. After you do it, sit with the feeling. Is it loss? Or relief?

Card 6 — Hexagram 15 • Qian (谦) — Humility

Front



Qian (谦) — Humility

Gua Ci: "Humble, doubly humble — the noble one pastures themselves with modesty."

Xiang Yue: The mountain within the earth — this is Qian. The noble one reduces what is excessive and adds to what is insufficient, weighing things and balancing distribution.

Core Teaching:

Of the sixty-four hexagrams, this is the only one where all six lines are auspicious.

You and your phone. Who is the master of whom?

— Answer humbly.

Qian is Earth above, Mountain below — the mountain, though taller than the earth, willingly hides beneath it. Flat on the surface, substance within. You don't need to prove to anyone how little you use your phone, or how well. You just need to know yourself: the mountain rests inside the earth. No hurry.

Note: All six lines of Qian are auspicious — no misfortune, no blame, no regret, no cause for shame. The only hexagram in the sixty-four with this distinction.

Ding Long Says:

Twenty-five years in, the more formidable people I meet, the more certain I am of one thing: the truly skilled are all like Qian — mountain within the earth.

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Flat on the outside. Substance on the inside. The mountain doesn't show itself, but you know it's there. Same with your phone: it's not about how long you use it. It's about whether you can put it down at any moment — and feel fine. The moment you can put it down, you're the master.

Back

Three Questions:

Do you believe you can "control" your phone use? Be honest.

If your phone were a person, would you want to be its friend? Is the relationship equal?

Qian — every line auspicious. In your relationship with your phone, what would "humility" be? Admitting you can't control it — or admitting you don't want to?

Today's Action:

Today, before every time you pick up your phone, ask: "Am I reaching for it, or is it calling me?" Ask first. Then pick it up. Or — ask, and don't pick it up. That's fine too.

Afterword

Six cards. Six practices.

Gen — Stop. You don't need to go anywhere.

Bo — Strip away. What you don't need, let it fall.

Fu — Return. You wandered off. Come back. That makes it new.

Jie — Draw the line. Water without banks floods everything. So do you.

Sun — Decrease. Decrease is not loss. It's what lets the important things rise.

Qian — Bow. Admitting you can't control it — that's where control begins.

This isn't about fighting your screen. It's about living well with it. Your phone is not your enemy. But it's not your master either. The I Ching doesn't teach "abstinence" — it teaches rhythm. It doesn't teach "cutting off" — it teaches return. Chinese wisdom has never been about black and white, never about severing in one stroke. It's about attunement. Harmony. Finding the right measure.

The moment you picked up this card, you already began.

— Ding Long, Cloudland Dao

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This document is the English edition of *Six Hexagrams of the Screen*, suitable for A6 (105×148mm) card printing. Each card is double-sided — six hexagram cards plus one cover card, seven cards in total.

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Digital edition and printable PDF available at cloudlanddao.xyz.

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Hexagram Unicode symbols: ☰ ☱ ☲ ☳ ☴ ☵