

## Connecting with Animal Spirits

Like most people, do you feel an inexplicable connection with a particular animal, bird or reptile?

Connection with Animal spirits or Totems is a tradition that goes back many thousands of years. Nine out of 12 of the Zodiac symbols are animals. Archaeological records indicate the use of Totem symbols in almost every area of the Globe and date back as far as 1200ACE and as recently as 100 years ago.

In today's society we are increasingly separated from our earthly roots, living in large cities and relying on science and technology. To connect with one's own Animal Spirit can be a wonderful way to reconnect with nature and its nurturing energies.

Finding your special animal or animals is not that hard. Sit down and think about the animals that keep turning up in your life. Which ones are you especially fond of or have some interest in? For example, perhaps you always watch documentaries on Tigers? Or perhaps although you have never seen a live dolphin, you feel some sort of rapport or distinct respect for them? You may find that friends send you cards or pictures of dolphins for presents. Make a list of animals that you like/ love and then, do some research into their attributes and FEEL which ones are connected to you.

If this kind of energy is apparent with any animal, it's worth analysing what the symbol itself means in history, literature and folklore. Once you do this, you will be able to see how that energy relates to you personally. There is a very good book about animal totems by Ted Andrews called "Animal Speaks" which you may find helpful to your understanding.

Another way to contact your "Totem" or Spirit Animal is to meditate or Ask in a sacred manner for your animal to reveal itself to you. You can simply pray to the God / Goddess/ ether/ all animal spirits, asking for help to find your guide before you go to sleep at night. You can make this as simple or as elaborate as you like. Perhaps you could perform a cleansing of yourself and environment before you retire or just a simple thought/ prayer every night before you sleep.

Many people do an actual Totem search, involving a fast, maybe a sweat lodge ceremony and a physical trial. Sometimes finding the space and the solitude for a physical trial is difficult but this method throughout time has been effective. If possible a mentor or a wise woman/ man would be best to help you along. If this is not possible do some research into Native American religious practices and find those elements that would work best for you.

After you do this keep your eyes open. If you have any dreams write them down, especially if there is an animal in them. It is traditionally said that your animal will reveal itself to you four times in order for you to confirm that is indeed 'your' animal. These revelations may take the form of dreams, visions, physical encounters or contact with representatives of the animal such as art or films. In some cases you will see four individuals of the same species in the same encounter (for example spotting four Geese together on a lake), in other cases you will have four separate experiences of the animal.

Fish, fowl, reptiles and animals are all potential Animal Spirits. As you search for yours you may find your close attachments to several types. A fish may give you the energy of freedom of movement, of being released from conventional boundaries. A bird may create the encouragement to aim for higher goals in life, while a snake may connect you to the course of all creation. Each individual will find special meanings and insights from their own Totems – ideas to be applied personally and uniquely.

When you truly are in tune with your Totem, it will speak to you in various ways. Some people can go into the meditative state, find the animal and carry on instructive and helpful dialogue. Others can get information simply by thinking of the Totem's characteristics and abilities and seeing the answers to current problems by applying those energies as translated to human action. Often the Animal Spirits will come to us in our dreams. It doesn't matter how it is done, the Animal Spirits will find a way to guide and support once you look for them.

While many Totems seem exotic because they are not domesticated species, remember also to check out your in-house animal companions. Just because entities like dogs and cats are so totally familiar does not exclude our dearest four-footed friends of everyday life. They observe our journey through life and if we listen, can tell us wonderful and important things about our progress and ourselves.

Respect is one of the major elements in discovering Animal Spirits. A seemingly simple species like a shellfish deserves the same respect as the noble eagle. Its message is different but every bit as worthwhile and valuable, too.



**Kaz Thorpe** is the Director of the **Asclepius College of Healing**. Seeking to enhance your knowledge of healing, parapsychology, spirituality? The Asclepius College offers wonderful courses and studies can even lead to a Diploma of Intuitive Sciences. Need guidance for your spiritual journey? Individual consultations are of course available. **Ring Kaz on 02 49 562 263.**

