

NJROPE Animal Totem/Spirit Guide Class

Totem animals are spirit guides that serve a purpose, whether it's lifelong or for a certain amount of time. Is there a particular animal you have always loved or been drawn to? Do you see certain qualities of the animal in yourself? If so, this could very well be your totem animal. Different Native American and even some shamanic traditions believe that a totem animal offers a person teaching and protection.

There are 4 types of Animal Totems:

1. **Life Long Animal Totem**: This totem, as its name suggests, is permanent: it's with you for life. It can consist of one animal, or a few. This totem reflects your inner spiritual nature.
2. **Journey Animal Totem**: this is a totem that is only with you for a specific amount of time, as long as it takes for you to learn the lesson or understand the message it represents. It could take a day, a week, months or years. It could come in and out of your life over the course of time.
3. **Message Animal Totem**: this totem, per its name, has a specific message. It can be about a spiritual message, a warning, or self growth. It is usually blatant, like a smack in the face. It has a very brief time period, whether it's a day or a week. This totem can actually assist you, making sure you are in a certain place at the right time, such as being late to avoid an accident or meeting someone you are supposed to.
4. **Shadow Animal Totem**: This totem has great power, but it will initially work against us, as we must go through a series of tests before the power works for us and with us. As such, at first, one fears the Shadow Animal Totem. It represents our inner fears that we have to eventually overcome. If something continuously frightens you, you haven't accepted the lesson that it has to offer. But once you accept it and overcome that fear and learn that lesson, this totem becomes your most powerful. The goal is to learn its lesson, and include it in your life.

How to find your Animal Totem

You are probably wondering how to find your animal totem. Here are a few questions that could help you get started:

- Is there a specific animal you have always been drawn to or even feared?
- Do you collect items of a specific animal? (pictures, knick knacks, etc)

- When at the zoo, which animal are you most interested in seeing?
- Do you have constant dreams about a certain animal?
- When out in nature, do you happen to encounter the same animal at different times?

A couple of exercises to help you find your Animal Totem:

Meditation

Meditation is an excellent way to connect with your animal totem. You want to start out sitting somewhere quietly and comfortably, when you won't be disturbed. If it helps you, play soft instrumental music, light a candle or burn some incense. Clear your mind, and ask your animal totem to present itself to you. Just let images come to you. It would be beneficial to keep pen and paper close by, so you can record your experiences once your meditation is complete. Don't be discouraged if nothing happens the first time. It takes time and patience, and your totem animal will not reveal itself until it feels you are truly ready for it and willing to learn from what it has to teach you.

Journal

Make a list of the animals that you have been extremely drawn to, or even afraid of. Make a practice to keep a journal for about a month of the animals that show up in your dreams or interact in your day to day life. Make a note of how you felt when you saw the animal, and how the animal interacted with you. If you are lucky enough to meet your totem animal during your daily life, it will act quite differently than a "normal" animal will. For example, it may get unusually close to you, without fear or aggression, or it could stare at you for a long period of time, when it would normally scamper away.

Once you find your animal totem, you must build a relationship with it. This will take time, practice, and patience. It's not something that will happen overnight. You must have respect, and learn their point of view. You both have to learn to trust each other and your limitations.

In order for the meaning of your animal totem to be effective in your life, you must honor it. Learn all you can about it, hang pictures, draw it if you can, you can even buy figurines or tokens of your animal totem. The more understanding and acceptance you give towards your animal totem, the more powerful and effective it will become.

I highly recommend the book "Animal Speak" by Ted Andrews to help you get started on your journey into discovering your animal totem.

Sources:

<http://www.animaltotem.com/find-your-totem.html>

<http://www.spiritualnetwork.net/totems/index.html>

http://www.starstuffs.com/animal_totems/

<http://www.spiritanimal.info/>

Andrews, Ted. *Animal Speak – The Spiritual and Magical Powers of Creatures Great and Small* Llewellyn Publications, Woodbury, Minnesota, 1993