

ample, imbued with the acumen to assist us with the more tangible facets of life: relationships, career, finance and so on. There is also an animal with the wisdom to support us internally in any area of spiritual work we might choose to explore. I have discovered that no arena of life is left untouched by the animals, either in the physical sense or symbolically. The Wheel of the Year is an interesting aspect, because it clearly illustrates our journey through life and the world as a whole. Elementally, there are animals innately charged with the guardianship of the four directions, the four stages of life, the phases of the moon, the ever-changing seasons and the bond we share with the Earth Mother herself.

*Are the native animals of a region universal as totems? Could, for example, a Bald Eagle be the totem animal of a person in New Zealand?*

Traditionally, totems were viewed from a cultural stance or from a family or clan perspective, but in our current practice, I believe there is no "universal" answer. I am sure there are people who say we should only look to the animals from our region or homeland, but I have never been limited by that concept. I have looked to the animals since I was a child, and as such I was oblivious to cultural principles or totems. All I knew was that the animals offered support. If I need short-term assistance with an issue or problem, I ask for the animal most suited to the situation. I do not place limits by specifying where that support is to come from. I have had Elephants turn up, Orcas, Monkeys and Red Kangaroos. It makes no difference. We may live in Australia, America or New Zealand, but we are indigenous to the Earth Mother as a People, and I believe that is the best way to honor our relationship to the animal spirits, our totems and each other.

*How can we incorporate animals into our magical work?*

The Earth is our Mother. We are her Children. Just as any mother will offer advice or support when her children are in need, the Earth Mother speak via the animals. They are her voice, her cradling arms, her heart and her tears. In this context, the animals can be called upon at any time, not just during magical work. By identifying the animal most suitably equipped, every aspect of life can be facilitated or enhanced by simply asking for their support. By asking the Earth Mother for assistance, she will reply immediately by sending an animal emissary. The approach should typically be done via focused visualization, with pure intent and a clear understanding of the desired outcome, but in reality, little or no ceremonial preparation is required. I call upon the animals while out shopping, while

driving my car or walking my daughter into school of a morning. If I need protection, I simply ask Eagle to fly with me; when I need financial support, I invoke Squirrel or Bee; and when I need to know which direction I should take in life, I ask Horse to share its wisdom.

We must look to the animals as our brothers and sisters, and treat them as such — with love and respect — not just when we require their support or assistance during magical workings, but during every moment of every day of our lives. We can develop a healthy, reciprocal relationship by changing our attitude toward them. No matter how the approach is made, always remember to give something back. Make an offering of thanks. How? Honor the animals. Instead of only looking at them as playthings, sources of power or as possessions, look to their physical ways and their spiritual wisdom for guidance every day.

By doing this, you will develop a deeper respect for them, and ultimately, them for you.

*How can we communicate with our animal spirits? Is there a meditation or ritual that you would recommend?*

I am a very practical person. I look to Spirit as I do a friend or family member. I believe that we all come from the One Source: Spirit. I believe that Spirit not only runs through our veins, but through every aspect of our lives. Spirit is in all things of Nature. My life is dedicated to walking a path of Spirit, but I am a physical person, too.

I believe that is why the animals and I have such a close bond. The animals live their physical lives in harmony with the world around them, as do I. They kill when they are hungry and they honor the territories of their brothers and sisters. They do not treat each other with contempt, nor do they worship or idolize one another. Instead, they live in the present and maintain equilibrium between all things.

I believe we should treat them with the same sensitivity. So long as the approach is made with humility, I do not believe we need any specific ritual or to slip into any particular meditatively induced state to communicate with the animals. We don't do this when we approach a friend, or when we call Tiddles the Cat or Shaggy the Dog to our side, do we? We simply think of them, feel their love, know that to call upon them is okay, and then we do. Full stop. I feel the same way about my totems, animal spirit allies and the animals on the physical plane. It is important to find the inner silence, to sit within that space while the contact is made, and then all that is left to do is to call upon them, making the reason perfectly clear within our hearts. Our intent must be pure and our approach, unassuming. That is all, in my opinion. The animals are our brothers and sisters. Treat them as such, and they will return the respect by be-

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