

stones, is a massive bonfire. This fire is so big, you cannot see the top of the flames. The glow is so intense that you see perfectly, as if in daylight. You would think that with a fire this big, the trees would be scorched and the grass would be withered, but they are not. You would also think that with a fire this big, the heat being radiated out would be so ferocious it would be impossible to venture too close, but it is not.

## The power lies in understanding our role in life, honouring every living thing as a teacher ... and treating everyone and everything as an equal

The flames of the fire are golden orange in colour, but are cool to the touch. The fuel under the fire is burning, yet it is not diminishing. This is a sacred fire, protected by the forest.

This is the Father Fire, sent to Mother Earth by Grandfather Sun when time was new. It was sent as the original spark destined to ignite the fire of life and all new beginnings. It is the Fire of Spirit, the one thing that links our inner fires to the Great Fire of Spirit. This fire means you no harm, and even if you were to put your hand into the flames, you would never receive a burn. Put your hand in and see. Feel the flames licking your hand. Feel the sensation of the flames enveloping your fingers and your wrist, but without any heat.

You sit in front of the fire, cross-legged on the ground. Close your eyes and find your inner peace. Feel the glowing love of Spirit fill you to the core, sent to you by the raging flames of this gentle fire.

Open your eyes and stare into the flames, the whole time asking for your true and powerful totem animal to present itself to you, even for just a little while. Focus on this thought, and clear your mind of other things. Keep your intent pure and your eagerness at a minimum. As with all animals, you will not be approached if you are radiating urgent and unsettling energies.

As you stare, you notice a pair of eyes staring back at you. They are not

human eyes, and you know this, but you cannot, as yet, make out what sort of eyes they are. Gradually a face forms around the eyes, and you notice a neck, body and legs. The animal is now whole and gingerly steps out of the flames and sits in front of you, perhaps to have a scratch or a roll.

This animal is your totem animal, and may be a bird, a beast, a reptile or an insect. It may even be a fish, in

which case your environment may have changed without you noticing.

Watch how the animal relates to you. Does it circle around you, or rub up against you? Does it sit in your lap, or touch you with its nose? Does it make any sound? Does it make any threatening or sudden moves? If it has ears, are they upright, or laid back? Does it have a tail? If so, is it erect, hanging down, or tucked under its body? Take note of these things and any other obvious features.

After spending time with your totem ally, becoming familiar with each other, and possibly communicating about this and that, ask it to give you its spirit name so that you may call upon it in the future. To know its name ensures that when you call, this animal and this animal only will come. All future meetings can be made with freedom from fear of deception.

Say goodbye to your animal totem and allow the animal to return to the flames. It must not follow you out of the forest, so insist on it returning to the Father Fire. Wait patiently if you have to.

Once the animal has returned to the realm of Spirit, look down to the ground beside you. In the grass you will notice a word. A word of wisdom meant as a message to guide you and link you to this animal once you part. This word will open up the communication link between the animal and yourself, and will act as a symbol of its medicine gift to you.

Begin walking back up the path. You will notice that your guardian animal is still following you. You will also notice that it made no gesture towards your totem animal, as they have already met.

Spend some time returning up the path. Notice the things you saw on the way in, and notice that although the forest is as black as pitch, the path continues to be illuminated. At the end of the path, where the forest meets the grassy plain, your guardian will step back to the side of the path, where it met you, and nod a farewell.

Make your way to the standing stone, and take note of the engraved word. You will notice that the original word is still there, but underneath another word has been added. This word symbolises your possible potential now that you have the power of your totem animal walking beside you. Take note of this word, and add it to the other two words. You now have three words. Say them in your mind. Do they prompt any feelings, thoughts or emotions in you as you say them?

Take your time to walk across the grassy plain once more, again stopping to observe and enjoy the wild flowers, etc. Return to the gate, and make your way through it. Make your way into your front garden, to the place where you began your journey, and observe that everything is as you left it.

Make a silent prayer to Spirit for a reason sacred to you and to offer thanks for the messages and visions experienced during the meditation. Ask Spirit to surround the earth in a protective green light and to focus it mainly on the animal kingdom.

Take three deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth to ground yourself, and to bring your conscious mind back to the physical realms. Wiggle your fingers and toes as you return to the physical room and open your eyes when you are ready.

✦ *Scott King runs Circle of Stones, a retail shop in Warburton, Vic. For information on totem shield workshops, spiritual development classes, animal totem readings, correspondence courses in shamanic studies, and more, phone Scott on (03) 5966 5138 or via email at: barnowl@foxall.com.au*

