

the link to the receiving of Spirit and its messages.

The knowledge animals can impart is a pathway to power – a pathway that must be carefully trodden. The power lies in the understanding of our role in life, honouring every living thing as a teacher, maintaining a reverent attitude, and treating everyone and everything as an equal.

By slipping into a meditatively induced altered state and requesting the wisdom of the animal spirit world, you will inevitably meet your totem or power ally. This beast may be of a species with which you already feel a bond. This creature will become your friend, your teacher and your life partner. The same technique can also be used to call upon an animal with specific medicines to assist an individual on a temporary basis when clearly defined talents or knowledge is required.

Once the medicine has been shared and the trust of the animal is assured, it is important to honour the presence of your animal and to show it recognition. Allow it to become part of you and your life. This can be done by wearing jewellery representing the animal, hanging pictures of them in your home, keeping a small statue on your desk or altar, or by donating to a cause that focuses on helping these animals, such as the Free the Bear Fund, World Wildlife Fund or any zoo or sanctuary that focuses on conservation and education.

### A GUIDED JOURNEY

Before you begin the journey to find your animal totem, smudge to cleanse your aura and to invoke spiritual protection. To smudge, burn the clippings of dried sage or lavender, rub your hands in the smoke and then gather the smoke and brush it all around your body, the whole time praying for the unseen powers of the plants to cleanse your aura and to surround you with a veil of protection.

### The Introduction

Still your conscious mind and silence the inner chatter. Wait for the moment when you intuitively feel the need to open your consciousness to the other realms. Ensure that your subconscious mind is receptive and alert by speaking

to your conscious mind. Allow visions and symbolic images to waft through your mind. Keep your focus within yourself. Let any thoughts just go on by. When you catch yourself engaged in an external conscious thought, just take a deep breath and allow yourself to come back to your centre.

### The Visualisation

Picture yourself standing at your front gate, with your garden behind you, overlooking a great grassy field. From where you are standing you can see two very different sights. To your right a path leads up to a steep mountain peak, and to your left a path leads down into a deep valley. The point at which you are standing is an intersection of time and reality – a mingling point of reality and the 'other worlds' – of the physical and the mystical. It is a sacred place where the miraculous may be sought and found.

Visualise yourself taking the path that leads down into the deep valley. You walk until you are standing at the edge of a forest beside a huge standing stone that seems to be guarding the path that leads into the forest. On the side of the standing stone is a word, engraved into

the surface. This is an affirmation word, which describes and represents your present potential. Remember this word.

As you start down the path, you notice an animal standing to the left at the edge of the path. It says nothing, but will follow you as you pass. It means you no harm, but rather, for this meditation, will act as your guardian to ensure your safe passage.

Continue walking down the path, which, although the forest is pitch dark, seems to self-illuminate, enabling you to see and not stumble. You see many things as you walk: thick, over-hanging branches, incredible, brightly-coloured butterflies and birds, sweet-smelling flowers and huge insects, like beetles and spiders, all too beautiful to be afraid of. All the while you feel eyes watching you from amongst the trees. They are not threatening eyes, but rather curious and caring eyes. You know you are safe, because your guardian is not far behind, keeping a close watch on you.

You continue to walk until you come to a great clearing. The area has been carefully cleared, and here, and only here, is the forest floor covered in a lush green lawn, as if manicured. In the centre of the clearing, surrounded by huge

