

In your book *Animal Dreaming*, you have an interesting section on feral animals. Can you tell us a bit more about your opinions on the feral animals in Australia? Would you consider people (white settlers) a kind of feral animal as well?

Although some of the animals in Australia are considered feral, they are all indigenous to Mother Earth. I find it very narrow-minded of people to label certain animals vermin, indicating that they should be wiped out. Foxes, goats, rabbits, cats and in some places, wild dogs, pigs and deer, are here through no fault of their own. Although animals like rats and mice made their own way here on the ships that brought the first settlers, they would never have made the voyage had it not been for white man. We cannot insist on singling out the animals as invaders, while ignoring the intrusive history of our human relatives, so yes, we should view ourselves as ferals too.

When someone asks you about the meaning of a specific animal, such as in your *Witchcraft Magazine* column, what method do you use to find an answer?

Inner knowing affords me a great deal of understanding, but sometimes research becomes necessary too, in order to fully understand the feelings I get. Research supports my knowing and creates a foundation on which the knowing can evolve.

For example, a lady once wrote to me asking about wolves that she had seen in a dream. She said that they had begun eating themselves and then she noticed that she had also become a wolf and was eating herself. Throughout the dream she also saw hieroglyphs and pyramids – obviously there was an Egyptian connection, but I was unsure about the wolf.

I remember feeling the presence of an African hunting dog as I read her letter and becoming confused. After doing some research, however, I eventually found a relationship that was forged thousands of years ago between an archaic wolf-god and Anubis, the jackal. Up-Uat, the wolf-god, was a giver of new life, hence the wolves eating themselves in the dream. They were offering rebirth that could only be realised after a time of personal turmoil – a symbolic death of sorts.

So quit often I find that research is vital. It supports my inner knowing, while simultaneously strengthening and widening the inherent relationship I share with animals.

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What does it mean for a person to have an animal totem? Can they change or are they permanent?

Totems are archetypes: they are the spiritual or emotional ambassadors that best support or govern our physical existence. Totems step forward as soon as we are born, if not at the moment of our conception. Although we have a primary totem that has helped navigate our progress up until now, we also have a totem for each and every facet of who we were, what we have become, and what we are yet to be.

I believe that our totems surface as these facets emerge. They present themselves as representations of our potential, our weaknesses and our gifts. As we step into each phase of our life, or witness each rite of passage, the totem that best supports the process emerges. Subsequently, as the lessons that are presented with each event or stage of development are addressed, the totem energy supporting that stage will subside and step aside to make way for the totem(s) needed for the next cycle.



These animals never actually go away; just as a memory of bygone times may be revisited or prompted by a current event, for example, our totems may re-emerge when needed to support issues reminiscent of challenges past that triggered their initial appearance in the first place.

When you mention in your writings that each animal "has its own medicine," what do you mean by that?

To the western mindset, the word "medicine" automatically arouses images of pharmaceuticals, hospitals, or the local doctor's surgery. We see medicine as something prescribed to make ill people well again. It symbolises dis-ease being dispelled to make way for clarity, balance and wellness.

Medicine, in a spiritual sense, represents the same ideal. When we look to