

TROUBLESHOOTING THE JOURNEY PROCESS

You Can't Think Of an Entrance It is important to first try hard to recall an entrance to the earth that you have actually experienced in your life. Many people need a little extra time to remember such a place. Take some time and really think this through. Take a break and let your subconscious join you in the search. Finding such a place is often like remembering the name of a person



you can't recall in the moment. You try and try to remember with no luck. Then you go on to something else and later it pops up out of nowhere. Remembering your departure place can be the same. Give it some time to percolate. Maybe even overnight.

Your entrance doesn't have to be bigger than you are because once you make your first move into it, your journey has begun and there is no time or space. You could fit down a small rabbit hole, even the tiny hole a sand crab makes in wet sand. The important thing is to have a vivid image to provide the gateway for your journey.

Another thing you can do is go for a walk and see if you can find a departure point. A tree in the woods, an animal burrow, drain at the curb of the street, an open manhole cover, etc.

If you don't have a memory of such an entrance to the earth from your own experience or can't find one on your walk, it is very important to search your memory again. If you have given a sincere effort and stepped back from the search of an entrance in hopes that your subconscious will reveal one and you still come up short, try this. Scroll down to **Alternative Departure Points** at the end of this Troubleshooting section. There you will find several pictures and a grid which may work for you. Select one that appeals to you and start your journey from there.

You Are Claustrophobic

Remind yourself that a fear of being in an enclosed space like a tunnel have no power in this experience because they can only exist where there is an actual material structure to move into. The tunnel or passageway you use to enter the lower world exists only in your mind and you can stretch it as wide as you like to suit you. Our experience is that once people who are claustrophobic start the journey, this issue simply disappears. And remember, you are in control at all times and can stop the journey instantly at any time you feel uncomfortable.

You Don't Have a Clear Intention

Having a Departure Point and a clear Intention for the process are the two most important elements of the successful journey. In the learning stages of journeying keep the Intention simple, something like: "To journey to the lower world for relaxation" or "To meet and thank my power animal for being my guide" is perfectly legitimate.

You Try To Accomplish Too Much

If you have more than one item on your journey agenda, do more than one journey e.g. one for each item. Put simply, if you have multiple intentions before you begin your journey, you won't know which intention is being addressed by your power animal.

You Are Tired and Fall Asleep

If you are really tired, forget the journey and enjoy your much needed rest. Don't try to tough it out and do the journey only to continually fall asleep. On the other hand, if you are tired but want to journey, lie down on your back with arms at your side and your elbows bent. Point the fingers of both your hands at the ceiling, then if you doze off, your hands will fall towards the floor and awaken you.

You Are Concerned That You Are "Making It Up"

Is the journey really an experience being initiated from another realm or is it something that you are creating as you go along. Often people might see or read about a particular animal a few days prior to journeying and when they see it in the journey they think they are making it up and that they put it there. Another interpretation is that the animal was making itself known before the fact. Understand it is quite common that people on their first journey will think they are making it up.

The fact is there is no way to answer the question, “Am I making this up?” And if there is no authoritative answer then you are free to pick your own. If you are free to pick your own, why not pick this one...”I am not making it up.” When you choose that one, you continue and reinforce what will be a significant and rewarding experience. The point of the journey process isn’t about the source of the experience. The point is to trust that however the experience happens, it has the potential to be rich and helpful.

You See Something That You Don’t Like

Though it is rare to see something distasteful while you are journeying, it can happen. If you see something that you don’t like, something that seems menacing or bothersome to you, you have three options:

1. **CONTINUE THE JOURNEY:** Simply go around it and continue your journey
2. **RETURN TO YOUR DEPARTURE POINT:** Retrace your steps and return to your entrance to the earth.
3. **STOP THE JOURNEY:** Simply open your eyes.

You Are Nervous About Losing Control

Unlike with use of hallucinogenics or certain prolonged exercises which can induce a trance state which are part of other practices, you are never out of control during a journey because you can always decide to stop the journey at any time. It is ironic that while you are in this fun and engaging voyage to another realm we call the lower world, where you can hook up with an animal totem, you are always in complete control...always. The reason we emphasize this is that we understand that many people have a very powerful concern about not being in control and it would be a shame if this concern mistakenly prevented them from attaining the benefits that journeying has to offer.

You Don’t Like Your Power Animal

Many people think they know what their power animal will be and when it doesn’t turn out to be what they thought they are disappointed. If this happens to you, you can be pretty certain that you’re letting your ego dictate what you need and it really isn’t a very reliable source for knowing what is best for you.

As pointed out earlier, of the many power animal retrievals we have witnessed, on only one occasion has an individual correctly predicted what her power animal would be.

Instead of getting hung up on your “preferred” power animal, think of this process as an exploration that opens new avenues of learning.

If for instance, you get a snake, don’t just assume that you’ve gotten an evil power animal because of the story of the Garden of Eden and its reputation for being untrustworthy like the proverbial “snake in the grass.” In many cultures, snakes represent profound transformation because they shed their skins. They also symbolize the natural healing energy of your body as seen in the caduceus, the medical symbol that has two snakes intertwined on a sword.

A wolf might remind you of fairytales where the Big Bad Wolf scared the Little Red Riding Hood, but in many indigenous cultures, wolf is a symbol of family (the wolf pack) and of cunning and strength as a hunter. Each power animal has its own unique character and when you get comfortable with it, you will see how yours is always a perfect fit for you.

You Have Performance Anxiety

For many people there is initially a pressure to perform. The inner voice is alerted and deeply concerned. “Will I be able to do this?” “Am I relaxed enough to be able to do this?” “I struggled with regular meditating, why do I think I can do this?” If this happens just try to relax.

Acknowledge the part of you or the “voice” who is concerned and then refocus your attention on the effort at hand. Deep breathing at this time helps. So what if you don’t do a journey the first time! Stay with it. Try again and again and, if need be again until you successfully make it.

You Have a False Assumption about Journeying

Even though you have never journeyed, you may have an expectation as to what it will be like, and when the actual experience doesn’t fit your conception, you reject it. For example you might expect full color and end up in a journey that is in black and white. Or you may expect to see things but end up feeling or sensing with little or no visual input.

That is probably because you are not visually oriented and you learn best by feeling and sensing. This is not a problem and is no doubt the primary way you will experience your journeys. Learn to get comfortable with it. If that’s the way the journey is... that’s the way it is. Don’t reject it because it doesn’t fit a picture you have conjured up based on assumptions and no prior experience.

Your Journey Doesn't Match Your View of Reality

“Ordinary Reality” is where you live day in and day out. It is the only reality you know. When you journey to the Lower World you are immersed in another reality...one in which there is no time or space. You can merge with an animal, fly, or swim through the earth...clearly things you cannot do in Ordinary Reality. A critical point is that instead of accepting that another reality exists (it is called Non-Ordinary Reality) and enjoying it you discount it because it doesn't fit with your normal reality. The remedy is, once again, to relax, let go of your need to control, and enjoy.

You Try Too Hard

Sometimes you want to have a successful journey so much that you try too hard. The key here is to have a clear intention but don't let it turn into a performance goal. Relax and follow the directions and bring to the effort the beginner's mind of a child who is excited in anticipation of the experience upon which he is embarking. See this as a magical tour rather than a task to be completed.

We hope these are helpful and guide you to many productive and enjoyable journeys.

Happy Journeying!

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ALTERNATIVE DEPARTURE POINTS

We have said that the best departure point for you to use for your journey is one you carry in your memory, a real place you have experienced first hand. We strongly encourage you to try recalling such a place before you begin your first journey, but if you simply cannot think of one, consider substituting with one of the images we have provided on the following page. Stay open, though, to the possibility that at some point your memory will.

