

Timeless Medicine From The Owl

By Annie Thoe

*“The owl offers the inspiration and guidance necessary to deeply explore the unknown and the magic of life.”
~Native American Teaching*

What are you are seeking in your life? Health - Direction - Inspiration?

Every aspect of nature has a unique gift that goes beyond the obvious food or materials each provides. In many cultures, visitations from animals or other creatures are considered “medicine.”

For example, an eagle, who is the national bird in United States represents freedom, power and keen big-picture sight. The mouse has the gift of sensitivity of vision and smell to find details in front of its path. Ants are revered for their great strength and remarkable unity with their colony. Plants, trees and stones also play a large part of “medicine” for us.

As humans, we also have special gifts to offer with our communication, creativity and healing. Each of us has the power and aptitude to connect to the natural world for problem solving, art, music and healing.



Throughout my life and practice in the healing arts, I’ve been blessed with medicine from countless teachers in nature: from domestic dogs and cats to a wide range of wild animals, including monkeys, gorillas, dolphins, coyotes and birds of all kinds.

Over the past year, I made a conscious choice to use nature as my co-teacher in my healing work and retreats. Since that decision, owl feathers began showing up directly on my path in various locations right before teaching my retreats. And as time goes on, the appearance of owl feathers or encounters has become even more frequent.

One recent afternoon, I walked in a Seattle park where I’d previously seen signs of resident Barred owls. Silently, I had the thought, “*I’d sure like to see*

the owls who live here.”

Immediately I felt my eyes drawn to look near my feet, a few yards to my right. I noticed a ball of gray feathers, about the size of a medium cat, hunched on the dirt between a fir and cedar tree. I had to blink a few times to believe my eyes. An owl stood right before me! His close proximity startled me.

He seemed mesmerized by something at his feet. His eyes were fixed downward for nearly a minute before he swiveled his round head and looked directly at me. His giant, dark eyes engulfed me. As our eyes locked, I immediately felt quiet. The intensity of his gaze blotted out my thoughts.

Then he swiveled his head back down toward his feet and my mind picked up again with rapid-fire questions: *What was he doing on the ground? Did he have a fresh kill with him? What was underneath him— perhaps the beak of a bird?*

As if in answer to my question, an alarming raspy call of a nearby crow startled me from my reverie. Normally, crows dive-bomb an owl who is exposed in any open area. A crow will scream and summon an entire mob or “murder” of crows to help chase an owl out of their territory.



The whole experience felt so odd. I'd never been this close to a wild owl on the ground. After 5 minutes, the owl flew a few feet nearby to a low cedar branch. He looked at me again, eyes locked with mine, and spoke with several soft "shurrriek" calls for a few minutes. His subdued call was barely a whisper. I heard another soft shurrriek-shurrriek answer from a nearby tree and noticed a second owl perched only 10 yards above me!

My eyes were drawn once more to the ground near my feet. A few small owl feathers lay inches from my feet. I had totally forgotten I was hoping to find an owl feather that day! How funny. As if I needed any more gifts that day!

When experiences like this happen, it's a good practice to notice what you were thinking or intending before encountering wildlife. As I left the owls, their stealthy camouflage and powerful eyes remained with me like food I had ingested. I thanked them and walked away feeling keenly aware of a renewed trust in my unconscious ability to sense where and how to navigate through life. This deep trust and gratitude is the owl medicine I received.

Messages from nature are personal and always changing. Perhaps you've noticed an animal, bird or insect appearing to you in an unusual way in your waking or dreaming life. Or you keep "running into" a certain animal or bird. These unexpected encounters with animals may be teachers, sent to share an important message with you.

Would you like to learn more from your interactions with nature? If you have an unusual encounter with an animal, follow these 5 steps to help receive the message and gifts from your animal messenger.

1. **Pay attention:** Notice unusual disturbances or patterns in front of you
2. **Go inside:** Slow your breathing, let go of your thoughts, and feel your feet, sense inside your body.
3. **Observe the behavior in front of you:** Stay in your body, let go of your thoughts
4. **What question or intention have you been carrying in your life?**
5. **Thank this animal or element of nature for their medicine**

I'd love to hear your medicine stories from nature and comments. Feel free to write to me at annie@sensingvitality.com

**Tom:
New Bio copy**



Annie Thoe, GCFP gives private sessions and offers retreats using Feldenkrais Method® and nature awareness for healing chronic injuries, improving movement, life direction and performance. She is author of self-guided audio series, Sensing Vitality. www.sensingvitality.com

Thumbnail & Excerpt:

Over the past year, I've made a conscious choice to use nature as my co-teacher in my retreats and healing work. Since that decision, owl feathers began showing up directly on my path in various locations right before teaching my

Ad:



Walking in Balance
Retreat
Sept 26-27, 2015
with
Annie Thoe
Feldenkrais Practitioner
www.sensingvitality.com
*Feel your place in the world
around you!*

A photograph of a person hiking on a rocky trail. The person is wearing a backpack and is stepping over large rocks. The background shows a stream and more rocks.