

Developing an Inner Guide

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

- Heart Mind Body Breath Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

An inner guide can be a great ally for your emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Developing an internal nurturing and encouraging figure reminds you of your abilities and good qualities, while providing counsel in difficult times. An inner guide combines the benefits of a good friend (a shoulder to lean on) with self-inquiry and introspection, allowing us to make better decisions and improving our self-esteem and self-image when we need it most.

METHOD:

Summary

Find a figure and allow it to help sustain you.

Long Version

1. Choosing a guide may seem like a difficult task. There are many options to choose from. Your selection should be informed by your own personal needs: if you are hard on yourself, choose a figure you think will offer unconditional love; if you need steeling and unsparing encouragement, choose a figure that you respect as a caring but tough hero.

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2. You might choose a real person, alive or dead, whom you have known. Perhaps you had a grandmother who was always a source of intense love and affection, or perhaps your father always knew how to sternly but lovingly snap you out of lazy spells. These guides don't have to be accurate representations of the people they represent; think of them as archetypes put in easy-to-recognize forms.
3. You might choose a guardian angel-type figure, one that seems detached from this world but that nonetheless has a powerful investment in you. A divinity also can be a great guide, whether Christ or a bodhisattva. Figures from mythology that attract and inspire us can also be great guides, nurturers, and protectors.
4. You might pick a person or animal that appears in your dreams, if she/he/it seems to be a repository of love and useful wisdom. For more on dreams as a source of real guidance and inspiration, see DREAM TENDING LINK HERE.
5. Of course, there is a long tradition of animal spirit guides. Don't try to adhere to traditional indigenous totem traditions; if a hedgehog or a walrus seems appropriate, by all means let it be your guide.
6. When you have found your guide figure (when your guide figure has found you), you can proceed in many ways. You can allow its voice to come to you when in need, or you can actively engage with it.
7. When dealing with a difficult situation, you might want to think to your inner guide figure. She/he/it might begin to offer encouragement, advice, or a pep talk. This doesn't mean you're crazy! The guiding figure is your subconscious' way of helping you with what you need.
8. You may also want to enter a meditative state through deep breathing and physical relaxation. In this state, you can engage actively with your inner guide and ask she/he/it for help. Record what you learn and use it in the future.
9. Constantly engage with and build up your relationship with your inner guide, and its strength will increase.

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HISTORY:

Praying for guidance is a part of many traditions, and through the ages saints, bodhisattvas, and angels have acted as inner guides for many people in many different cultures.

The stereotype of the indigenous American spirit animal comes from many different traditions: from the totemism of the Pacific Northwestern tribes to the nahualism of the Mesoamerican people, animals were often seen as embodying traits that influenced and guided humans.

In the late 19th century, early new age groups known as Spiritualists and Theosophists began talking explicitly about “spirit guides,” often channeled spirits of the dead.

NOTES:

Sometimes your best inner guide might come to you in a dream. The characters in our dreams, both those based upon people and things we know in waking world and the completely mentally fabricated, offer insight into what we might need in a guiding figure.