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Totem Truths

In the past, a totem pole was carved several reasons. For example, to on a deceased elder who was important to the carver, to show the number of rights and names a person had acquired over his or her lifetime, or to document an encounter with the supernatural. Today, totems are carved not only for those reasons but to also tell the story about the person commissioning the pole. You and your team are about to design a totem pole to discover your group's strengths and weaknesses.

1. In a moment, the facilitator will divide you into teams, each of you will be handed a piece of cardboard and a list of totem. You are to design a totem figure that best represents your strengths in the group. You may use one of the totem symbols given or make up your own.

2. Once you have completed your drawing, you and your team will tape them one on top of the other on a portion of the wall. Be prepared to explain your strength to the group.

Materials Needed

8.5" x 11" Cardboard Piece for Each Participant

Markers

List of Animal Totems (pages following)

Time

Allow 20 minutes for the entire process.

This exercise is excellent for teambuilding.

SYMBOLS

Alligator - Maternal and revenge oriented

Ant - Group minded, patient, active, and industrious

Antelope - Active, agile, and willing to sacrifice

Armadillo - Safety oriented, and has boundaries

Badger - Courage, Aggressive, healer and energy conduit

Bat - Rebirth and long life

Bear - Industrious, instinct, healing, power, sovereignty, guardian of the world, and great strength

Beaver - Determined, strong-willed, builder, and protector

Bee - Organized, industrial, productive, wise, community, celebration, and enjoys life

Buffalo - Sacredness, life, and great strength

Butterfly - metamorphosis and transformation

Cat - Guardianship, detachment, sensuality, mystery, magic, and independence

Cheetah - Swift, insightful, and focused

Cow - Nourishment and mother figure

Coyote - The trickster, intelligent, stealthy, and mischief

Crane - Solitude, justice, longevity, independent, intelligent, and vigilant

Crow - Keeper of law, shape shifting, change, creativity, spiritual strength, energy, and justice

Deer - Intellectual, gentle, caring, kind, subtlety, gracefulness, femininity, gentleness, innocence, and seller of adventure

Dog - Noble, faithful, loyal, teaching, protection, and guidance

Dolphin - Kind, salvation, prudent, capable of deep emotion, wise, and happy

Dragon - Longevity, infinity, wisdom, power, and fiery

Dragonfly - Flighty and carefree, a d strong imagination

Eagle - Divine spirit, sacrifice, connection to creator, intelligence, renewal, courage, illumination of spirit, healing, creation, and risk-taker
 Elephant - Strength, power, and wisdom
 Elk - Strength and agility, pride, independence, purification, strength, and nobility
 Falcon - New beginnings, adventure, passionate, and leadership
 Fish - Graceful
 Fox - Cunning, agility, quick-witted, diplomacy, wildness, feminine magic of camouflage, shape-shifting and invisibility
 Frog - Water energy, cleansing, rebirth, sensitivity, medicine, hidden beauty and power
 Gazelle - Aggressive
 Goose - Self-demanding, reliable, prudent, rigid, vigilance, parenthood, and productive
 Hawk - Messenger, intuition, victory, healing, nobility, recollection, cleansing, visionary power, and guardianship
 Horse - Freedom, stamina, mobility, the land, travel, power, and freedom
 Hummingbird - Messenger, timelessness, healing, and warrior
 Jaguar - Chaos and shape-shifter
 Lion - Family, strength, energy, courage, guardian and protector
 Lizard - Conservation and vision
 Llama - Comforting to others
 Lynx - Keeper of secrets, guardian, and guide
 Moose - Headstrong, longevity, steadfastness, and wisdom
 Mouse - Scrutiny, order, organizer, and an eye for details
 Opossum - Diversion, strategist, and deceiver
 Otter - Playful, friendly, dynamic, joy, helpfulness, and sharing
 Owl - Deception, clairvoyance, insight, messenger, detachment, wisdom, change, and silence
 Ox - Sacrifice and self-denial
 Peacock - Immortality, dignity, and self-confidence
 Porcupine - Innocence, companionship, and trust
 Rabbit - Fear, timidity, nervousness, humility, rebirth, intuition, balance, fertility, and new life
 Raccoon - Curiosity and cleanliness
 Raven - Introspection, courage, self-knowledge, healing, initiation, protection, trickster, and magic
 Salmon - Proud, intense, confident, wisdom, inspiration, and rejuvenation
 Seahorse - Confidence and grace
 Seal - Love, longing, dilemma, active imagination, creativity, and lucid dreaming
 Shark - Hunter, survival, and adaptability
 Skunk - Reputation, presence, and strength
 Snake - Impulsive, shrewdness, rebirth, transformation, healing, life energy, resurrection, initiation, and wisdom
 Squirrel - Planner and gatherer
 Stag - Lord of the forest, masculine power of regeneration, giver of bounty, beauty, and mystical signs.
 Swan - Grace, balance and innocence, soul, love, beauty, awakening the true beauty, and power of the self
 Tiger - Strength, valor, power, and energy
 Turkey - Generosity, life-giver, and sharer
 Turtle - Nurturer, shy, and protecting
 Weasel - Strength, energy, ingenuity and stealth
 Whale - Wisdom and provider
 Wolf - Loyalty, perseverance, success, intuition, learning, the shadow, guardianship, ritual, loyalty, and spirit
 Woodpecker - Sensitive, protective, and devotion

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