

## What Is a Spirit Guide?

By Patti Wigington, About.com Guide

### Benevolent Guides:

Many people believe they have spirit guides. Some refer to theirs as angels or guardians. Regardless, if you believe you have one, a spirit guide is there simply to guide, not as an entity that you need to give yourself over to. If a spirit guide has a negative influence on your behavior, then chances are good that it's not a spirit guide at all, but something else entirely. These are some of the more commonly found types of spirit guides:

### Ascended Masters:

These are guides often found by people who do energy work, such as Reiki. An ascended master who appears as a spirit guide is often a being that led a physical life and has moved on to a higher spiritual plane -- for example, Buddha, Krishna, even Jesus. Ascended masters usually work with collective groups of souls -- in other words, if you've got an ascended master hanging around you, you're not the only one he or she is helping. Their primary focus is that of helping all of humanity. It's not uncommon for an ascended master to have access to Akashic records. Also referred to as Master Teacher guides.

### Ancestral Guides:

An ancestral guide is one who can claim some sort of kinship with you, such as your dear Aunt Tillie who died when you were ten. It may also appear in the form of a long-dead ancestor. In some schools of thought, these entities are seen as reincarnated guides, because they are the spirits of someone who loved us during their physical lifetime, or who had some sort of blood connection to our family. Some people, depending on their religious upbringing, may see these types of guides as guardian angels.

### Common Spirit Guide, or Teacher Guide:

A typical spirit guide is archetypal, symbolic or representative of something else. For example, you may find your guide appears in the form of a warrior, a storyteller, or a wise woman, and they have appeared to you for a purpose. Typically, that purpose is to teach you and guide you along a particular path. They may also introduce you to other archetypes along your journey, and help out with problem solving, based upon your needs. They are known to provide insight by way of dreams or meditation, and may only hang around as long as you need them, then move on.

### Animal Guides:

Although many people claim to have animals as spirit guides, often these entities are more companions than anything else. It's not uncommon for a deceased pet to linger around, keeping you company through the grieving process. In some spiritual traditions, such as various Native American or shamanic paths, a person may have an animal totem, which provides teaching and/or protection.