

INNER GUIDANCE Step by Step

In describing the steps for obtaining inner guidance, there is a short list and a long list. The short list is important for emphasizing simplicity. Inner guidance is not difficult and should be approached as something natural like walking or humming a tune. The short list is this: **Center - Ask - Receive**.

Centering is a very subjective experience that can be accomplished a number of ways. Guidance comes from Spiritual Reality. In order to connect with that reality, we must let go of tension, urgency, analysis, comparison, judgment and ego-dominated habits of mind. This may sound like a tall order, but it doesn't have to be a big deal. If you already have a means for centering, stay with what you already know. If not, here is one way to do it.

Begin by finding a location where you can minimize distractions. Set aside a significant piece of time, at least an hour, so that you can really get into the process in some detail, especially when you are first learning how to do inner guidance.

Get yourself into a comfortable seated position with your back relatively straight and supported, your feet flat on the floor and your hands resting comfortably in your lap. An open, symmetrical and comfortable position will help you relax and receive. Tune in to your body and notice if there is pain, tension or discomfort. If so, make whatever adjustments are necessary so that you can be comfortable.

If necessary, you can do inner guidance work lying on your back on a firm surface such as a pad on the floor. You may want to bend your knees and use pillows to support your head and legs. Doing inner guidance lying in bed is not recommended because you are likely in the habit of falling asleep in that location. If you learn to do inner guidance work in a lying down position, it will also make it more difficult to write down your questions and answers as you go along. And it may make it a little more difficult to bring inner guidance into other environments in your life. If for whatever reason you decide to do your inner guidance work lying down, you may want to raise one forearm to help you stay awake, especially if you are a bit sleepy.

If you are not able to get physically comfortable, then you will need to address that issue before focusing on anything else. If you need food, water, or rest, take care of those things. This may seem obvious, but so much in our culture directs us to override and ignore the messages of the body or feed the need in ways that numb us or lead us to unhealthy habits and addictions. These patterns are not conducive to inner guidance.

If you have pain, you should deal with that before going on to other issues if at all possible. Pain is an important form of guidance directing our attention to attend to our physical well-being. It's important to listen to this guidance and address the underlying physical issue. If you are dealing with chronic pain, inner guidance work can become a very important means for understanding your condition and helping you decide what to do about it. (See [Reducing Pain Recommendations](#))

When you have a comfortable position, allow your awareness to shift to your breath. Notice where in your body feels like your physical and energetic center.

Seek the “eye of the storm,” a place inside that feels open and spacious, without any agenda. It is still, quiet and empty, unattached to any needs, desires or fears. Breathe in and out of that center place, allowing any distracting thoughts to fade into the distant background. Experience the whole of your body and the energy field around your body gently expanding and contracting from this center place as you inhale and exhale. When you find yourself settling comfortably into a rhythm that feels easy and smooth with a strong sense of where your center is located in you, then you are ready to ask your question.

If you are very upset or agitated and unable to get to a place that feels calm and centered, do the best that you can and then ask for guidance to assist you in finding the inner resources that you need. If you know energy clearing and calming methods from Energy Psychology or Energy Medicine, you may need to do these first.



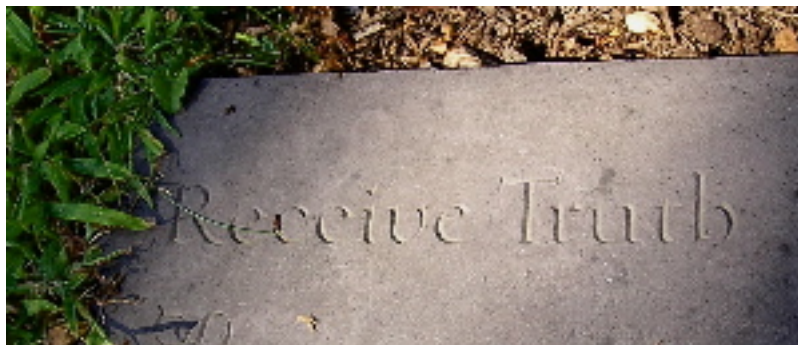
Asking questions for inner guidance can be quite simple and straightforward or quite complex. Put some thought into how you formulate each question. The assumptions and presuppositions in each question will affect the answer. Think about asking questions in inner guidance as you would ask questions of an infinitely patient, accepting and wise teacher. You must start from where you are and then adjust, based on the feedback that you get. If you are stuck and don't know what question to ask, or you don't get any answer to your question, then ask for guidance on what to ask. *What question do I most need to ask at this time?*

When you are first learning to do inner guidance work, you may want to follow a formula to help you think of ways to approach your issues and formulate questions to gather information through inner guidance. Try not to become overly dependent on any formula for asking questions. Build your confidence by trial and error. There is no failure, only feedback.

If you are encountering repeated difficulty obtaining answers to your questions, consider the issues described in the article [Obstacles to Inner Guidance](#). If you are still not able to identify the obstructions and resolve them, you might want to consider scheduling an Aligning Energies session for yourself. Sometimes we need others to help hold energy for us so that we can discover, learn and heal. Inner guidance may be blocked if we do not have the support we need to deal with the message that is trying to come through. Do not judge yourself harshly if you find that you need help. Needing help is part of the human condition and giving help to others is largely why we are here. (So it seems to me.)

Receiving the guidance that comes your way is sometimes more difficult than it sounds. When you have centered yourself and formulated your question, center again and ask your question. If another person is available, give them your question and signal when you are ready, then they can ask the question for you. Receiving answers from inner guidance requires a particularly open form of awareness, that is why it is so important to center first. The answer will come very quickly as soon as you ask the question. It's important and sometimes a little tricky to recognize and accept the first answer that comes.

You get what you need to know, not what you want to hear.



If your answer does not come quickly, the answer that you get is more likely to be the result of wishful thinking. If there is something about the answer that is troubling or problematic, you can and should raise your concern in your next question.

When you begin working with inner guidance, you will need to be especially careful to discriminate between inner guidance and other voices within yourself. With practice, you will learn to recognize the voice of guidance just as you recognize the voice of a family member or close friend. Inner guidance reflects the characteristics of spiritual reality and can be separated from projections which have a very different quality.

Don't listen to any voice that is trying to sell you anything. **TRUTH HAS NO INVESTMENT IN YOUR HEARING IT.** If a voice is elevating you or putting you down, rest assured that it is partially or wholly distorted and not the guidance that you are seeking. Inner guidance feels like you are "on the beam." Guidance can be described as warm, expansive, light, integrated, soft-spoken, patient, confident and accepting. Any communication that can be described as cold, contracted, dark, scattered, loud,

urgent, fearful or judgmental is not guidance and may more accurately be described as a voice of fear, projection or some other distortion. If you are unsure about an answer, you can ask, "Can I trust this information?"

Fearful and troubled places inside need to be heard. Centering and asking for guidance creates a framework that can help us listen to our own feelings with patience and compassion. When we become aware of troubled places inside us that are cold, contracted, dark, scattered, loud, urgent, fearful or judgmental, we can learn to hold those parts of ourselves in love and forgiveness. Seeking guidance, we seek the place inside ourselves that knows how to do this. We look for the qualities already described: acceptance, warmth, expansiveness, light, integrated, soft-spoken, patient, and confident.

Here we begin our discussion of the Long List. The additional steps are: **dialogue, evaluate, plan, apply, receive, appreciate, offer thanks and give back.**

After we have centered, asked and received, we may well need to engage in a dialogue with Spirit. **Dialoguing** continues the process of communication with Guidance while allowing parts of ourselves to raise their concerns and issues.

The advice we get from guidance will not be helpful to us if we never acknowledge and address those parts of ourselves which hold a different view and may sabotage our efforts to follow the guidance. The spiritual journey described here is not about control, manipulation or the domination of one particular point of view. It is about holding all aspects of oneself in loving-kindness and opening to communication and cooperation so that healing can proceed in a natural way within us. It is about trusting a process that is sometimes simple and clear, and other times challenging, paradoxical and mysterious. It is about opening to receive the gifts that life presents to us while honestly acknowledging and expressing the difficulties we may have with what comes our way.

Let me give an example from my personal experience. One morning this summer I suddenly discovered a lump on my forearm that appeared overnight. I had no idea what might have brought on such a strange physical symptom. When I show the lump to my doctor, she immediately arranged for me to see a surgeon. After his examination, the surgeon ordered an MRI to determine the nature of this thing on my arm. All of this took several days and the lump on my arm was getting bigger and slightly red. It was about 1 1/2 inches across and half an inch or more deep. It was nearly two weeks before I got the MRI results. In the meantime I was feeling fearful about what a rapidly growing lump might mean.

I turned to inner guidance for assistance. The message I got was *Stop worrying. Accept help. Broaden your focus. Don't be so narrowly goal-directed that you fail to see the guidance and help around you.* The imagery was my European grandmother-ancestor in her kitchen. I kept going to her and showing her my arm and asking for help. She held my forearm and sent love with her eyes and her smile. It told her that I was afraid of running out of time, which also related to my fears of running out of

money. The guidance that came back was that I needed to find a stronger faith, a more relaxed and joyful way to live, less isolated, more connected and more truly free. I asked how I could follow that advice. What would that look like? In regards to my health, I was advised to proceed one step at a time and to do whatever emotional and energetic work I needed to do along the way. In terms of financial decisions, I was advised to make smart decisions based on facts and careful optimism, like the old expression, "Trust in God, but tie your camel."

The lump on my arm began going down. I knew that my worries were over before I got the MRI results. As it turned out, the lump was not a growth at all, but some kind of liquid-filled swelling. I still don't know exactly what caused the problem, though I have a few theories.

In any case, you can see that the advice that we get from spiritual reality is not necessarily easy to understand, accept or follow. By staying engaged in communication to take the process further, we can arrive at answers that can be applied in our lives.



Before we take action based on inner guidance, we should **evaluate** the advice we have received, checking with common sense and engaging the talents of our analytical minds, especially if we are considering any major life changes. Although we ask that analytical thinking take a back seat while we gather information from spiritual reality, we would be truly foolish to reject analysis and sound reasoning completely. It is important to consider causes, consequences and relevant factual information when making decisions.

Inner guidance is not just matter of gathering advice. If we do not use it to make a **plan** and **apply** what we have learned in our lives, the voice of guidance will grow silent. After taking action, the process is not really complete until we **receive** the results of that action, **acknowledge** the gifts we have received, **offer thanks** and **give** something **back**.

Gratitude is an immensely important aspect of the spiritual journey. If we cannot recognize how many blessings come our way as a result of the hard work, sacrifice and generosity of others, and the gifts of Spirit, then we are unlikely to find wisdom or happiness. We may spend our days lost in arrogance or self-pity. Developing an attitude of gratitude can help us find our way through difficult challenges and stay balanced through times of good fortune. Gratitude leads us naturally to a life of service, which can be the greatest blessing of all.

See [Obstacles to Inner Guidance](#).