

Other-Hearted vs. Otherkin

A(n) *Guide* written by *Marz* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

An expansion of terms, their usage, and importance to members of the community.

As the Otherkin community continues to grow the term is shaped and warped to encompass everyone and is often misinterpreted. A 'movement' that is gaining momentum now is trying to change the definition of Otherkin to encompass those who have strong feelings towards, or relate well with non-human beings. This thought process most likely comes from the lack of knowledge of a term that already exists for those who strongly relate to non-human beings. To fully understand these terms and their uses let's break them down one definition at a time.

Definitions to consider:

Identity- The fact of being who or what a person or thing is. (Identity [Def. 1.]

Relating (relate to)- Feel sympathy with; identify with. (Relating [Def. 2.4])

Definitions within the community:

Animal-Hearted- when an individual strongly identifies **with** a species of creature. (NLN, Kai)
Animal-hearted can be replaced with other-hearted when used in reference to non-corporeal beings, beings from folklore, etc.

· *example*: dragon-hearted, cat-hearted, shadow-hearted, fiction-hearted

Otherkin- A community of people who (non-physically) identify **as**, in part or in whole, one or more non-human beings. (NLN, Kai)

This is seen as an umbrella term for those who identify as anything non-human. Including but not restricted to Earthly animals (though normally going by the term Therian), angels, demons, elves, aliens, energy beings, and even cartoon characters.

· *example*: dragon-kin, cat-kin, shadow-kin, fiction-kin

Why is the difference so important to 'kin'?

When explaining your 'kin-self' to others if you use the phrases such as 'I have always related with' or 'I have always identified with' then you are more likely Other-hearted rather than Otherkin. Even though these feelings of relation can be expressed in the early years of someone being kin without knowing it, it is not the sole reason for their identity. Upon the discovery of the Otherkin community most people will do their best to question, meditate, reflect and research often using those strong relations as a stepping stone in their discovery process. Finding your kin-type or theriotype is normally a long, deeply personal, introspective experience. It is not uncommon for some 'type' discovery experiences to take time upwards to a year maybe even more. Besides feeling a relation to a non-human being you must be able to further explain how and why you identify **as** that non-human being.

Something as simple as 'something being relatable' is not enough to make one 'kin. No matter how much you feel related to something it is impossible to force an identity **as** said something. Being Otherkin is not a choice; a kin-type is not also not a choice. You may strongly relate to angelic beings, but sadly as much as you may relate to all things angelic you can't choose to be an angelic being if you are not one; in this case you could just be angel-hearted.

Being kin with a non-human entity is way more than just an extreme like of said entity. Liking something is a choice, and as I said before, being Otherkin is not. For example, I really enjoy wolves, and I can identify with and relate to the strength and freedom associated with the thought of a wolf; but it isn't so much that I would call myself that animal, no matter how much I related to it. While some Otherkin may have a like or appreciation of their kin-type, an extreme appreciation of one's kin-type is not necessarily required in order for someone to identify as Otherkin. (Some Otherkin have reported feeling drawn to their kin-type before their awakening experiences and such feelings should not be ignored if you are going to pursue figuring out if you are in fact Otherkin.) The only time I would begin consider a wolf kin-type would be if I started experiencing shifts of any kind that I could associate with being a canine or a wolf.

(As an interesting tidbit, there are actually some Therians and Otherkin who do not particularly enjoy their kin-type and just have to sort of live with it because that part of them cannot change.)

Those within the community often struggle with their non-human identity through personal hardships as well as hardships with maintaining relationships (i.e. coming out as Otherkin and being rejected) and often do not take very kindly to those who **choose** this way of life. In a way, the choice of being Otherkin can invalidate issues of those who did not choose to be non-human spiritually or psychologically; and so the distinction between the terms can become very personally important.

The confusion of the “I literally AM” statement:

By observing introduction threads on many kinbased websites, as well as several blogs on Tumblr I have come across the phrases “I literally am x...” or “...all of these are seen very literally”. It confuses people. Do you mean physically are x? Do you mean spiritually are x? Do you mean psychologically are x? The questions can go on and on and on.

When those who use these phrases, or phrases like them, are asked to elaborate on such phrases we again are met with just "I have always related to x" which is not solely what makes a 'kin be a 'kin.

Members in the community have also been met with responses such as "My personality is just like x" or "I share a lot of personality traits with x" used in terms of elaboration.

Something important to keep in mind as you are considering your identity is that humans have

bestowed a ton of qualities onto animals and other beings that are not actually a part of the entity itself (i.e. for purposes of personification when writing). For a fun example, male lions are seen as a symbol of nobility. In reality, however, lions are not exactly noble; they are more the lazy tyrants and 'bullies' of the Savannah. If you see yourself being drawn to an animal for symbolic reasons or humanized ideals about the animal or being that does not mean you are kin with them. Personality is not solely your identity and should not be treated as the only basis for your identity as an Otherkin. Again, if you are really drawn to them that way and have no other explanation for you being drawn to them other than 'I really like x trait or y trait' or "I have x trait or y trait" then you are Other-hearted.

Most of the time, simple likes or dislikes don't mean much when it comes to being Otherkin. Sure, there may be some likes and dislikes that are a part of your kin-type, such as a dog Therian enjoying to play and run, but simply having likes, dislikes, and wants to do these things does not make you dogkin. No amount of particular likes or dislikes, or a want to be non-human can make you Otherkin.

Understanding correction of your term use:

Some members of the kin community may have issues articulating themselves, and that is completely understandable. Do understand that you should try your best to answer the questions people ask you to clear up any confusion about who you are.

Questions about your use of the term to identify is not to invalidate you or bully you by pushing you into a corner. If you claim to be kin but others are pointing you more towards the term Other-hearted it is not the community members putting you down. Being Other-hearted does not and should not make anyone look down at you; it is not lowering your status in a community, nor is anyone mocking you by using the term.

The terms Other-hearted and Animal-hearted are not new terms. In fact there is an instance I found through a blog that shows that the word Wolfhearted was used and not dissuaded on AHWw.

[Blog that led me to my finding](#) [Wolfhearted example](#)

The term is not used to weed out any fakers or trolls and shouldn't be used as such.

The use of the term is not trying to criticize or invalidate the experiences of those who identify **with** something non-human. People who have experiences with relation to Other-heartedness are incredibly powerful and deserving of respect. Members of communities correcting your use of the term Otherkin, by replacing it with Other-hearted, are trying to connect you with others who feel and experience things more similarly to you.

If you aren't identifying **as** your kin-type, you aren't Otherkin. Nobody will call you a faker

unless you give them good reason to do so; and you should not get defensive as if members are trying to do call you a faker when they are trying to help you find a label or a community that would possibly better suit you and your experiences.

In light of this, their word is not an end-all-be-all and the decision to accept corrections is up to you. Do know however, that in other forum communities you can be met with the same kind of correction until you accept the correction yourself.

By uniting folks with more common experiences, it makes it easier for more relevant conversations to occur and that is what forums and communities that encourage learning need to flourish. It also allows for new discussion to spring up about the meaning of nonhuman identities and how those who identify *as* non-human are different and similar to those who identify *with* non-human things. Both sides have things to offer, and both sides are better served by having the Other-hearted community grow alongside the Otherkin community.

In conclusion:

Although the two communities of Otherkin and Other-hearted can be tightly connected, they are not the same thing and their definitions are not interchangeable. Otherkin is an identity as something and will never be a choice. Being called one term or the other does not make someone superior or inferior and everyone's experiences can be very powerful and moving. It is ok to mistake identifying *with* something for being Otherkin, but do understand that this is not what the term means, nor can it be molded to encompass 'identifying *with*...'. When corrected do not take it as being put down, and admit to the mistake by recognizing the difference between the terms.

Citations:

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Tags: Newcomers, Introspection, Community

Common Biases

A(n) *Guide* written by *Cipher* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

Some common biases to look out for when introspecting and answering questions about your identity, such as confirmation bias or anthropomorphism.

This is meant to touch on some common biases I see crop up a lot on tumblr, new otherkin, etc. Note that 'bias' doesn't necessarily mean a heavily slanted extreme opinion, but often just an illogical opinion that an argument should not be based on if it wishes to stand firm. Bias is building the house on sand, so to speak.

Definitions taken from Wikipedia, but these are quite common definitions you should find in any psychology textbook or scientific research manual. My additional comments are added in [*bracketed italics*], and any sections I find particularly relevant are underlined.

Confirmation bias - the tendency to search for or interpret information in a way that confirms one's preconceptions. In addition, individuals may discredit information that does not support their views. [*I feel like this is a major problem for the otherkin community.*]

Self-serving bias - The tendency to claim more responsibility for successes than failures. It may also manifest itself as a tendency for people to evaluate ambiguous information in a way beneficial to their interests.

Anchoring - The tendency to rely too heavily, or "anchor", on one trait or piece of information when making decisions (usually the first piece of information that we acquire on that subject).

Anthropomorphism - The tendency to characterize animals, objects, and abstract concepts as possessing human-like traits, emotions, and intentions. [*One of the most common biases I see in the community, for obvious reasons. Do animals experience emotion? Yes, but we cannot call it by human terms or claim that animal personalities are similar to our own, because we do not have a window into their minds that tells us exactly what they are thinking.*]

Bandwagon effect - The tendency to do (or believe) things because many other people do (or believe) the same.

Curse of knowledge - When better-informed people find it extremely difficult to think about problems from the perspective of lesser-informed people. [*I'm including this because I do see a lot of older folks being very aggressive in their correction of misinformation. I understand that having been in the community for such a long time, it is aggravating to see history repeat itself and definitions become more and more twisted plus humans are just plain stubborn all the time, but I don't know, maybe because I'm newer I still have an idealist idea of a gentle approach? ALSO please don't take this to mean I'm talking about anyone specifically, just that this is something I do see in general.*]

Focusing effect - The tendency to place too much importance on one aspect of an event. [*Dreams are a good example. I may be a dragon in one part of a dream, but the same dream may also contain me riding a rainbow through the castle.*]

Stereotyping - Expecting a member of a group to have certain characteristics without having actual information about that individual. [*Anti-kin obviously do this a lot, but it can also apply to stereotyping certain creatures based on assumed traits, such as "all angels are sweet and good" or "all demons are violent and angry".*]

Subjective validation - Perception that something is true if a subject's belief demands it to be true. Also assigns perceived connections between coincidences.

Tags: Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Introspection

Terminology & Lexicon

A(n) *Guide* written by *Shiro* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

A brief listing of terms used in the otherkin, therianthropy, and animal hearted communities, as well as the definitions for the aforementioned terms.

While it is by no means an exhaustive listing, this article provides a list of terminology that is commonly used in the otherkin community, as well as definitions for said terms.

Otherkin - People who identify either partially or wholly as one or more non-human beings,

entities, or concepts in a psychological or spiritual manner.

Transspecies - The term "transspecies" has been used to describe individuals who identify as otherkin or therians. This term is considered offensive to some in the LGBTQ+ community, and therefore it is not recommended for use.

Therianthrope/Therianthropy - A therianthrope is a person who is, feels, or believes he/she is, in part or whole, (non-physically) one or more currently alive or once-living non-human animals on an integral, personal level.

Cladotherianthropy - A cladotherian does not have a specific theriotype. They instead identify as a family or group of animals instead of a specific species. An example of this would be identifying as "canid" instead of "wolf".

Contherianthropy - A contherian is a therianthrope that does not experience shifting, but instead is in a constant shifted state. The strength of this shift can vary.

Vacillant Therianthropy - A vacillant therian is a therianthrope that does not shift, but instead has their theriotype fully integrated with their base personality. Informally, the terms "suntherian" and "syntherian" may be used instead.

Polytherian/Polywere - A polywere is an individual with multiple theriotypes.

Polymorph - A polymorph is an energy being with no set form. Instead, the polymorph can take on multiple forms. This term is also sometimes used to refer to an individual with multiple kintypes.

Theriomythic - This term refers to someone who identifies as an animal from myth. Example: Gryphons.

Other-Hearted - A person who is other-hearted identifies WITH one or more non-human beings, rather than AS.

Animal-Hearted - A person who is other-hearted identifies WITH one or more non-human animals, rather than AS.

Multiplicity - Multiplicity is the state in which a person shares their body with another being/soul/headmate etc.

Fictionkin - The term fictionkin refers to an individual who's kintype is a character or being from a work of fiction.

Factkin - The term Factkin refers to an individual who's kintype is a specific named being

(usually a person) who is either alive or was once alive. For example, a Factkin may choose to identify as President John F. Kennedy. This type of identification is widely considered to be invalid by the greater otherkin community.

Wishkin - The term Wishkin refers to an individual who wishes they were otherkin, or who pretends to be otherkin. The term is primarily used on Tumblr.

Copingkin - The term copingkin refers to an individual who identifies as otherkin for the sole purpose of coping with diagnosed mental illness.

Conceptkin - The term conceptkin refers to an individual who identifies as a concept rather than a being. For example, one who identifies as a thunderstorm. There is a lot of debate in the community if this is a valid identification.

Tumblrkin - Tumblrkin is a term that refers to people who identify as otherkin, but base the identification on information obtained solely from Tumblr.

Special Snowflake - The term "special snowflake" refers to somebody going out of their way to be seen as unique, different, non-conformist, or original. In the otherkin community, it often refers to people who like to collect kintypes like pokemon badges, or who claim to be ultra-rare or super-powerful beings.

Kintype - The term "kintype" refers to the type of being a particular otherkin identifies as. For example, "I am otherkin and I identify as a robot. My kintype is Robot."

Theriotype - The term "theriotype" refers to species a particular therian identifies as. For example, "Shiro is a therian and identifies as a wolf and fox. His theriotypes are wolf and fox."

Fictotype - Similar to "kintype". The term "fictotype" refers to the particular type of being a fictionkin identifies as. This term is especially used for fictionkin who identify as human characters, as the term "kintype" does not apply; otherkin must be non-human identities.

Factotype - Similar to "kintype". The term "factotype" refers to the particular being that a factkin identifies as. This term is especially used for factkin who identify as human beings, as the term "kintype" does not apply; otherkin must be non-human identities.

Awakening - The term "awakening" refers to the process of discovering that you are otherkin and/or therian and the process of discovering your tintypes or theriotypes. Although it's an extremely common experience, not all otherkin go through an awakening.

Shifting - The term "shifting" is primarily used in reference to therianthropy (but also applies to otherkin) and describes when an individual 'becomes' more like their theriotype/kintype in a non-physical manner.

(M)ental Shift - A shift in which a shifter takes on the mentality of their theriotype(s)/kintype(s).

(D)ream Shift - A shift in which a shifter shifts into their theriotype or kintype while dreaming.

(Ph)antom Shift - A shift in which a shifter feels a “phantom limb” sensation.”; For example, the shifter may feel ears and a tail, or paws instead of hands.

(C)ameo Shift - A shift into a being that is not the shifter's theriotype or kintype.

(S)piritual Shift - This is a rather vague term to describe any sort of shift with a spiritual undertone. It most frequently refers to when a shifer's Aura, Astral body, or spiritual self takes the shape of their theriotype or kintype.

(Se)nsory Shift - A shift in which the shifter experiences a state of perceived heightened or reduced sense of awareness often in-line with their theriotype or kintype; eg. wolves may claim better sense of smell, etc. This type of shifting relies on perception of information, as it is not possible to smell, see, hear, and so forth beyond what is humanly possible.

(A)ura Shift - A shift where a shifter's Aura (specifically) takes the shape of their theriotype or kintype.

(Bi)location Shift - A shift in which the shifter's theriotype or kintype leaves their “human” body and materializes elsewhere; It is very similar to an “out of body experience”, but instead of the “spirit body” being the human body, it is the body of the theriotype or kintype of the shifter.

(As)tral Shift - A shift that takes place in the astral plane. It is commonly used to refer to shifting which takes place during Astral projection.

(Be)serker Shift - A shift in which the shifter loses control of themselves and begins to act more like their kintype than human. This type of shift could be an extreme mental shift, or any shift combined with a manifestation of mental illness. The general community consensus is that these types of shifts are extremely unhealthy.

(P)hysical Shift - When one physically shifts into their theriotype or kintype. It is scientifically impossible to P-Shift.

Greymuzzle - The term "greymuzzle" is a term used almost exclusively in the therianthropy, otherkin, and furry communities to refer to people who have been in the community for an extended period of time. Greymuzzles are generally older folks (above 30) with significant community history.

Howl - A howl is a gathering or meetup of therians and/or otherkin.

Tags: Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Community

A Guide to Multiplicity

A(n) *Guide* written by *Spiritual Hunters* and published in our *Multiplicity* section.

This is a simple guide to help you understand plurals

The guide to Multiplicity

Multiplicity is a very complex situation for anyone involved and it can get very confusing to those who don't know what they're looking at. This is a very basic guide to understanding Plurals.

So what is Multiplicity?

Multiplicity is the state in which a person shares their body with another being/soul/headmate etc. There are many names for what people call those beings that they share their body with. Usually, in the kin communities you will see the term headmate. You may also see alter/spirit/soul and other names that are unique to that particular system. An umbrella term for those with Multiplicity is Plurals. However, you may see that Plurals and Multiples are used in the same context.

How long has it been around?

Multiplicity has been around for longer than the otherkin community. There are cases of demon possessions in history those scientists now believe are earlier cases of Multiplicity. In the 18th century more detailed accounts began appearing. There was a case of a woman who suffered amnesia with a split personality all the way back in 1646 written by Paracelsus but it wasn't until 1791 that an account was written in great detail by Gmelin. Ever since then, the only known account of multiplicity has been a disorder called Multiple Personality Disorder but now referred to as Dissociative Identity Disorder. It wasn't until rather recently did the term Natural Multiplicity or Natural Plural occur in Western Society and is not exactly accepted by a large number of psychologists. There are many people trying to push for non-trauma based Plurals to be recognized but at the moment, it is simply a thing such as otherkin.

What does it mean to be a Plural?

Anyone with more than one person sharing the body is considered a Plural and there are terms under it that describe the type of plural they can be.

What are the different types?

- There is a multiple system, which you see many people call themselves. The headmates are distinct, separate beings with their own personalities and thoughts. Usually it incorporates the headmates sharing time in the front and cooperating with each other.
- There is a median system. These plurals are in between singlet and plurals. They share their body with fragments of themselves i.e. past lives or emotions personified. There is usually one sole fronter and the headmates are not always as distinct as with a multiple.
- There is a gateway system. It is believed these plurals have a headspace in another dimension/plane/reality and the headmates use the body as a gateway to interact with the world. These tend to have a very large number of headmates that come and go as they please.

What are some troubles a plural may deal with?

There are moments a Plural may have difficulties, especially if communication is not established. They can suffer time loss. They can deal with dissociation at times. If a headmate is in distress or upset about something it may influence the rest of the system and cause the person in front to act a little differently than they wanted to. For example, if a headmate is very angry about something it can cause the one in front to grow angry too even though nothing has happened to make the fronter angry. This occurs more with those who do not have good communications with their headmates. Communication is the key to a healthy system.

How should one treat a Plural?

Well, the worst way to address a Plural would be to act as if they have some kind of disease or disorder. Even if the Plural is trauma based, there is no reason to treat them any differently than you would someone else. If you are unsure of who is fronting, do not feel as if you cannot ask them. Plurals understand that it can be confusing for people talking to them and so they do try and make it easy for everyone to know but sometimes, they can forget and at this point it is perfectly okay for you to ask who is fronting. If you find that the Plural gets upset when you ask, well then that person has a few more issues than they would like to admit. It should not be a problem for them to say who is out. To Plurals, it would be the equivalent of someone asking us if we happen to have the time. If they do happen to get upset, for whatever reason, it may be best to just take a step back and give them a moment to breath, just as you would with anyone who was upset.

You said something about natural Plurals; what are those?

A Plural can be one of three things. There are trauma based Plurals. These are those who are more likely associated with Dissociative Identity Disorder. These Plurals were not born this way. They suffered from some kind of trauma at a young age that caused their mind to form these

‘masks’ that the person could hide behind until the trauma passed. These are typically called alters and they don’t always find their way to the kin communities. You have natural Plurals which are Plurals who didn’t have to suffer any trauma to become the way they are. Usually they are born that way or later develop it through the use of a tulpa or walk-ins. Then there are your mixed Plurals. These Plurals may start with trauma based headmates and develop headmates later on that are not born from trauma such as walk-ins or tulpas. It can also work in reverse where a natural Plural gets headmates based off trauma or stress.

When do headmates develop or are discovered?

This can also happen at any time. Once one develops multiplicity, there is a possibility of the system growing larger for no real reason or from stress of everyday life. A headmate could develop simply because of a new job that none of the other headmates are good at. The role becomes open and the headmate appears to fill it. However, it is usually unrealistic for a system to develop a large number of headmates in a very short period of time. It can happen with trauma based Plurals but it is usually only one or two discovered at a time. However these headmates did not develop then. They have been there for a while and they are only now discovering them. This is acceptable. However, if one discovers a large number of headmates, usually starting at four or five and increasing in numbers within a short period i.e. a week, it is usually not a good sign. If they are indeed discovering these headmates at the same time than it could show an underline problem that they have yet to discover. Headmates may also take a very long time to develop (in the case of tulpas) or can happen suddenly.

If you wish to look up more terms on Multiplicity a good source is [Plurality Resource](#). There you can find a glossary with basic terms and links to other glossaries as well.

Tags: Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Community

What's Therianthropy?

A(n) *Guide* written by *Shiro* and published in our *Therianthropy* section.

A therianthrope is a person who is, feels, or believes he/she is, in part or whole, (non-physically) one or more non-human animals on an integral, personal level.

First of all, what does “therianthrope” mean?

To understand what therianthropy is, we first must understand the definition of the term “therianthrope” as a whole.

Therianthrope /THi(ə)r êan THrōp’/

A person who is, feels, or believes he/she is, in part or whole, (non-physically) one or more currently alive or once-living non-human animals on an integral, personal level.

[Click to expand...](#)

Theriotype /THi(ə)r’ êo tīp/

The type of therian/otherkin you identify as; commonly a species or group of species.

[Click to expand...](#)

Can we get a bit deeper?

- Therianthropy is categorized by a deep integral or personal belief that you, are in some way, a non-human animal. External factors (being hairy, having heightened senses, barking, howling, etc.) are irrelevant to whether you’re a therian or not.
- Therianthropy is a self-identification. This means, nobody can tell you if you are a therianthrope or not. Others can help guide you, point you to resources, make suggestions and provide information, but ultimately, only you know if you’re a therianthrope or not.
- Therianthropy is not necessarily spiritual; some individuals believe it is spiritual, others believe it is psychological, and some believe it is a combination of both factors.
- Therianthropy is **NOT** the same as having an animal totem, or a guide. To be a therianthrope, you are identifying as a certain species.
- Therianthropy is **NOT** a religion; in fact, some therianthropes identify as atheist.

Please re-read the definition. (...in part or whole (*non-physically*) one or more non-human animals...) 99.9% of therians believe physically changing into an animal is impossible. Unless you have substantial proof otherwise, don’t go claiming you can do this on therian communities. It normally leads to an instant banishment.

Okay, so what’s this shifting stuff?

Shifting is a change of state. More specifically, it is when a therianthrope’s “becomes” more like their Theriotype. For your reference, some of the most common types of shifts and their definition are below. Along with a key indicated how accepted they are in the community.

- **(M)**ental Shift – Where you take on the mentality of your theriotype.
- **(S)**piritual Shift – When your Aura, Astral body, or spiritual self takes the shape of your theriotype.
- **(Se)**nsory Shift – A shift in which the shifter experiences a state of perceived heightened or reduced sense of awareness often in-line with their theriotype; eg. wolves may claim better sense of smell, etc.
- **(A)**ura Shift – A shift where your Aura (specifically) takes the shape of your theriotype.

- **(D)**ream Shifting – A shift into your theriotype while dreaming, commonly thought to be another type of Astral Shifting.
- **(C)**ameo Shifting – A shift into an animal that is not your theriotype.
- **(As)**tral Shifting – A shift that takes place in the astral plane.
- **(Ph)**antom Shifting – A shift in which you feel a “phantom limb” sensation; you may feel ears and a tail, or paws instead of hands, for example.
- **(Bi)**location shifting – A shift in which your theriotype leaves your “human” body and materializes elsewhere. Very similar to an “out of body experience”, but instead of the “spirit body” being your human body, it is the body of your theriotype.
- **(P)**hysical Shifting – Literally, physically “changing” into your theriotype in the real world.

Key:

Green: Generally accepted.

Orange: Controversy over this type of shifting exists within the community.

Red: Generally rejected and/or believed to be impossible.

Am I a Therian?

The simple answer to this question is that only you know if you’re a Therianthrope; Nobody can tell you if you are or not. Therianthropy is an internal and personal belief, it is not something others can sense about you.

There are many beliefs one may have that are related to therianthropy. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The belief of having the soul or spirit of an animal (or group of animals).
- The belief that you were a certain animal in a past life, which is somehow significant to your current life.
- Psychological factors which connect you to an animal (or group of animals).
- Identification with a certain animal (or group of animals).

Again, All the beliefs listed above are internal and personal. Therianthropy is an internal experience; it is not caused by external factors.

SIMPLY LIKING/LOVING/BEING OBSESSED WITH AN ANIMAL DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE A THERIAN, OR THAT SAID ANIMAL IS YOUR THERIOTYPE.

Just because you like a certain animal a lot, it does not mean you are a therianthrope. Your theriotype is also not necessarily your favorite animal. There is a thread on our community which discusses this in-depth.

On “Becoming a Therian”...

Although most therians go through an awakening (read: realization) process; it is generally not considered possible to “become” a therianthrope; either you are or you aren’t. Sometimes it just takes a length of time to realize.

In closing...

What’s written above should be the basics. If you’re still unsure of things, you should take a good look at yourself, and at the resources available to you. It may take time, introspection, and more studying, but eventually you should be able to answer your own question. Are you a therian, or are you not?

Further Reading

The article above was a simple basic overview of Therianthropy. If you are further interested in Therianthropy, you should review the articles linked below.

1. [Terminology and Lexicon](#)
2. [A guide to shifts](#)
3. [Awakening as a process](#)

Tags: Awakenings, Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Community

A Guide To Shifts

A(n) Guide written by *AshenFall* and published in our *Therianthropy* section.

An article detailing the types of shifts often discussed in the kin community

Shifting is an integral part of being therian to the vast majority of us. Whether we experience one type of shift or many one thing is for certain; it shapes all of us and often times helps us in discovering what we are. It can occur in varying strengths and frequency and be both a positive or negative experience.

In this guide I will be going into detail about the various types of shifts often spoken about in the

community in a bid to educate. Of those listed below, some are accepted, others are debatable or denied.

Types Of Shifting:

Non Shifting - Quite a rare occurrence in the therian community but this is when for one reason or another an individual is incapable of shifting. Sometimes they have never been able to experience shifts, other times have lost the "ability" to shift for reasons unknown. This can be temporary or permanent but it is good to bear in mind you don't necessarily need to shift to consider yourself therian.

Mental Shifting - One of the most common types of shifting in the community. These occur when one takes on the mentality of their theriotype. This can present itself in ways such as uttering sounds (e.g. growling, roaring, barking, hissing), being overpowered by non-human instincts (a predator may begin to crave meat or feel the urge to hunt or chase) or visibly acting like your theriotype(s). The actions are not necessarily voluntary and not to be confused with merely just "acting". And on that note: it is frowned upon to visibly mental shift in public as this could cause consequences for both yourself and for those around you. Though sometimes it is unavoidable, the best course of action if you feel a shift coming on is to move someplace private, *especially* if you feel you cannot keep yourself under a decent amount of control.

Phantom Shifting - Another very common form of shifting is a phantom shift. They can often tie in with other types of shifting or even provoke them. Much like the medical term of phantom limbs, it is the feeling/sensation of having a limb or other (usually movable) body part which is not physically there. Most individuals have therioypes that do not resemble the anatomy of a human body and so it isn't surprising they can feel parts of them that are "no longer" there/are absent. This can happen in two different ways: sometimes these phantom limbs will overlap parts of the existing body, but feel and "move" much more like the limbs of your theriotype(s). It may also be uncomfortable if the feeling interferes with other parts of the body (jaws, hands, knees, feet). In the case of phantom limbs such as wings or a tail, they don't overlap parts of the existing body for obvious reasons. They are completely separate from any physical part of your body, but this does not make them feel any weaker or less real. A common misconception I have seen is that one can actually 'see' their phantom limbs. This is not true outside of rare cases of extremely strong phantom shifts (unproven, but if they are true only the shifter will be able to see this). This goes the same for those who claim others have interacted with or felt their phantom limbs, it is most likely untrue.

Dream Shifting - This occurs when one takes on the form of their theriotype within their dreams. Though widely accepted as a form of shifting, it is vital to bear in mind that alone dream shifts are not "proof" of one's theriotype, as dreams are but a product of the mind. They should not be taken for granted because after all someone could dream of being a flying rhinoceros, but that does not make said person flying rhinokin if they have no other "evidence" to base it on. Dream shifts should be held with heavy skepticism if still in the phase of discovery and never relied on.

Sensory Shifting - Onto the less spoken types of shifting now, sensory shifts have been very debatable. It occurs when an individual gains the sensory perceptions of their theriotype(s). For example, someone whose theriotype is canine may find themselves to have a better sense of smell than usual. On the contrary, someone whose theriotype is a mole may find themselves with reduced eyesight.

Bear in mind that sensory shifting can only occur within what is physically possible of the human body and extremely likely that it is all in the mind, or a product of paying attention to that specific sense more than usual.

Aura Shifting - This is a type of shifting where one's aura takes on the shape of their theriotype(s), essentially shifting. Of course, this kind of shifting is debatable, especially as not all therians believe in the existence of aura.

Astral Shifting - Like Aura Shifting, this is again a debatable type of shifting dependent on one's belief in the astral plane. Quite self explanatory, this happens when one shifts into their theriotype(s) in the astral plane, their "astral body" changing to take this shape. This can often be seen by the individual, as it takes place within the astral plane and is not a product of the physical body changing. Astral shifting is likely to incorporate some of the other forms of shifting, such as mental shifting.

Bi-Location Shifting - This is again another of the types of shifting dependent on one's belief. The basic idea of bi-location shifting is that the "spirit" leaves the body and travels elsewhere to roam in the form of the individual's theriotype(s). In that sense, it is most likely a form of OBE experienced, with the exception that the spirit body appears in its nonhuman form. Again, bear in mind that this type of shifting is questionable and does not mean you would appear visible to others in the area where you were "roaming" if you believe the bi-location shift takes place in the real world.

Cameo Shifting - This kind of shifting can manifest itself in any of the above ways. The key difference is that the individual experiences a shift that is not of their theriotype(s) and instead is of another creature. These can happen a few times or just once, but often do not stay for long. If they do keep recurring then it is unlikely they are a cameo shift and may actually be another theriotype surfacing.

Physical Shifting - This is the one type of shifting that the majority of the community agrees is completely impossible. Physical shifting entails the individual physically changing into their theriotype(s), much like the werewolves of myth. This is impossible for a number of reasons, the main being that it is not physically possible and would mean the body would have to rewrite genes, change bone structure and placement of organs and the like. Even if it were possible in some way it would likely be agonizing or life threatening to go through the change. With this in mind, always be wary of people who claim to be able to physical shift and you should stick to the belief that it is not possible until proven otherwise with *reliable* evidence.

Contherian- Though not exactly a type of shifting, it is still applicable to this article. An individual is contherian if they are constantly in a state of shifting. Thus it should not really be called a shift but for the sake of simplicity often is. Some may feel this very strongly, others may only have a very mild case but any of the types of shifting above can be part of this, only instead of being temporary, are permanent. For example, a catkin may constantly feel phantom ears and a tail that never leave.

Tags: Awakenings, Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Shifting

Falsities of Fae

A(n) *Guide* written by *Nyht Myst* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

This article takes a look at common and uncommon aspects of the fae that are either completely untrue or confused, and why these aspects have been pinned to the varied race that is faekin. Things like 'fae are unable to lie' and 'iron is harmful to fae', as well as seelie and unseelie, and modern shaping of what fae look like are explained; faekin are confusing enough without all the extra lies making it tougher.

We get asked the same question or hear the same comments about fae over and over again to the point it makes our blood boil and we wish we could scream it out to the world that isn't true, its a misconception, a rumor, a wives' tale! We've found ourselves getting irate when responding to them, having to put down the keyboard and take a breath, explaining why that's a lie, wearily brushing it aside, or even laughing at them, these falsities of fae. Every kin has these falsities and goes through trying to spread the truth through word of mouth, forum posts, discussions, and even articles and its time the fae do it too; here is a list of fae falsities and their explanations.

Misconception: Fae are kind and friendly

The first thing you need to know when dealing with fae is not all of them will be friendly, welcoming, helpful, and great company; just as many of them prefer to be left alone to do what they want to do and can become angry or violent if you mess with them. That's like someone saying all humans are kind and friendly, sure there are a bunch that are, but there are many that are the opposite. Its best to let the fae come to you on their own, and don't automatically assume they will answer every question you have or help you with something.

Misbelief: Seelie are good and Unseelie are bad

If you start looking into the fae you'll learn there are two ruling bodies, or courts, that many fae are lumped into, Seelie are seen as the friendlier and more light hearted whereas Unseelie are

seen as evil and dark, but that isn't the whole truth. The word Seelie means happy, lucky, and blessed, Unseelie would be unhappy, unlucky, and cursed, but fae are just like us in personality and just because they are prone to being happy or lucky doesn't mean they don't get upset or make bad things happen (and the same goes for the Unseelie being happy or friendly or helpful). A person who is normally good natured can have a bad day or be irritated, and that fluctuation of mood is the same for fae.

Misbelief: Fae are seelie or unseelie

This is a common falsehood, this stems from outsiders' view into the world of fae, and can be confusing to understand; fae can align themselves with one of the two courts (seelie or unseelie) but can also remain neutral. There are fae that aren't actively a part of either court and go about their lives as they want, but when an outsider looks in they often fall to labeling fae based on their nature and not on their political alignment, yes political. The courts are the fae's version of political parties that adhere to different laws, some fae don't find interest or actively avoid the politics and remain neutral, and this fact goes under the radar of many that lump the fae into 'seelie or unseelie' by their nature, I refer to this as having a (un)seelie nature instead of lumping them into one party or another.

Misconception: Fae are tiny, beautiful humanoids with butterfly or dragonfly wings

That is a myth made up in the Victorian era when artists decided to give fae an artistic twist to sell art, in fact there are very few (but some!) that look like that; fae encompass a huge number of beings ranging from goblins and trolls to pixies, and many aren't what humans normally call beautiful. They also widely vary in size from being the size of your thumb to being literal giants, many fall into the range of roughly a foot to human size but there are always types that reach the extremes. Very few have wings in the true form, the wings can also vary to feathered, bat, draconic, fin-like, or look like elements formed into wings, and other fae can look like mermaids, have horns, or animal traits.

Falsehood: All fae fall into one of the four types: Air, Earth, Fire, or Water

Fae are very close to nature and because of such are more often known to have some connection to at least one element, but it isn't a requirement. There are a lot of fae that are element based or have strong connections to elements; air, earth, fire, and water are not the only elements that a fae can be linked to, and there are some that aren't linked to an element in any way.

Misconception: Fae are demons

This misbelief as well as the 'fae are fallen angels' misconception stem from their natures, going back to the fae courts, seelie natured fae are prone to moods where they welcome others company and generally offer aid to amuse their self and appease their curiosity but still go through moments of extreme anger or mischief which leaves behind some damage, and earned them the slightly better misconception of fallen angels as they aren't quite good enough for heaven but still too good for hell by christian belief. On the other side the unseelie natured fae are prone to moods where they cause mischief and grief with little care of the path of destruction and are given the misconception of being demons even if they do have moments of being kind or

helpful; in the end many fae are different from the christian depictions of angels and demons and many fae dislike being referred to as such since it seems to wipe away their rich histories and identities.

Falsity: Fae are immortal

This misconception is a little harder to explain, its more truthful to say fae are timeless; fae come from a different dimension in which time passes radically different than in this dimension and it is not well known how or when a fae dies of old age as it is far more likely it would die by some other means, I don't mean this physically but strictly spiritually. From myth and lore it is said that a human that is enchanted by the songs of a fae celebration will dance the night away only to find a decade has passed without so much as touching them and that hints at the human, unknowingly, having been carried into the fae realm where time passes a great deal slower.

Misbelief: Fae are shallow

This isn't so much a known misconception but the thought that follows after learning fae love beautiful things, whether it be a beautiful maiden or handsome man to the untouched beauty of nature, fae have a weakness for it; humans are notorious for coveting beautiful people but the fae don't see beauty the same way as humans. Fae find beauty in everything as it is a part of nature or a thing of curiosity made by the hand of another, fae can look at a rose bush and call it beautiful but turn around and call a brier bush beautiful in the same sentence; to fae there is beauty everywhere.

Myth: Fae can not lie

This is an amusing falsehood for many fae that started out an old wives' tale, fae can and some often do lie, this may be a simple omission of information or half-truths to elaborate and detailed lies all dependent on the individual; all in all they are the exact same as humans in this regard.

Misbelief: Fae are spirits of the dead

This falsity and the misconception 'the fae realm is the realm of the dead' most likely stemmed from the issue of mistaken words, fey which is also pronounced like fae means fated to die or point of death in old Scottish and German; it probably doesn't help the issue when sighting some fae there was the legend that the one that saw them would die.

Falsehood: Fae and cats hate each other

There are several different reasons this misconception came about, whether it be the old wives' tale that cat's could ward off magic to the Victorian inspired issue of cats hunting tiny fae like prey, but many fae not only love cats but are cat owners and their companions love them back (and also share the trait of amusing their selves at the expense of others).

Misconception: Fae have issues with certain metals

This misconception stems from the same myths and lore that the fae themselves stem from, in some cultures its iron or steel and others it is lead, physically this isn't an issue unless the individual has an allergic reaction or intolerances for cheap or impure metals; on the subject of

spiritually this can vary from person to person on what metals neutralize their power or is harmful.

Falsehood: Fae are flighty and impossible to take seriously

While Disney has no doubt helped this along with their fairy characters this also comes from the fae's unpredictable and entertainment seeking nature, but fae take great offense to not being taken seriously when serious and this can lead to knife-edge situations with their temper. It is best to get to know the individual before making calls on what is a joke and what isn't to better save yourself the trouble of meeting their darker side, and by getting to know the individual you also may save yourself from more of the boredom induced antics.

Tags: Newcomers, Kintypes & Theriotypes

The Company Of Wolves

A(n) *Essay* written by *Cayto* and published in our *Therianthropy* section.

An informative essay seeking to enlighten the misinformed about the real wolf and wolf pack

The wolf...the beautiful majestic wolf. For thousands of years the wolf has been both revered and misunderstood, hunted and feared. Whether being a symbol of truth, family, loyalty, power and mystery or a symbol of death, evil, fear, aggression, and dominance-- there's something about the wolf that leaves a strong impressions on people's minds since the first encounter of wolf and man. The problem is these impressions are rarely (if ever) accurate. With many wolf therians the misinformation becomes very apparent, especially with the young ones. From a young age since I discovered myself as a wolf, I always felt confused by what I was seeing portrayed in media and by people. Is this what wolves really are? Why don't I feel these instincts if I'm a wolf? Well, I eventually did a lot of research and finally found the truth about wolves. As a Wolf-Man, I seek to help others who identify as of wolvenkind understand the true nature of the wolf. I'll tear down some major areas of confusion, wolf pack hierarchy and behavior/general life.

Pack, Dominance, Hierarchy

The truth is this, the whole idea of the some all dominant, aggressive "alpha" wolf is largely false. It was in 1947 when a Swiss animal behaviorist named Rudolph Schenkel came up with this term. From there on the concept grew wildly and misconstrued the image of wolves even more. This was later further reinforced by David L. Mech's (another animal behaviorist) book, ***The Wolf: Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species*** *The Wolf: Ecology and Behavior*

of an Endangered Species in 1970. Which, while having a lot of good information about wolves, gave a lot of inaccurate information as well. Wolf packs were now seen as strict units of beasts concerned with who was the biggest and baddest of the group. Well... this may come as a blow to some out there who would like to think wolf packs are that way, but new flash...they aren't.

This concept is a purely human notion and is how a lot of humans behave, but in reality this is not at all how a wild wolf pack operates. The notion of the Alpha male wolf is based on bad science with many scientists, etc. who perpetuated the theory in the first place, now admitting it's fallacious and refuting it. This includes even David L. Mech a well established expert in wolf behaviors, can be cited saying this

"Schenkel's 1947 "Expressions Studies on Wolves." This is the study that gave rise to the now outmoded notion of alpha wolves. That concept was based on the old idea that wolves fight within a pack to gain dominance and that the winner is the "alpha" wolf. Today we understand that most wolf packs consist of a pair of adults called "parents" or "breeders," (not "alphas"), and their offspring." [1]

"...You know I'm very much to blame for the term alpha being used with wolves. I published a book in 1970...and in that I labled the top wolf in the pack, the alpha. And I did that at that time because that's all that science knew, but we've learned a lot"[2]

So what happened? Why did the information get so messed up? Well, first let's talk about how the pack hierarchy really is for wild packs.

It's pretty simple, a male and female wolf breed together and have pups, these pups grow to be their pack. BOOM! That's about it. There's no fight for power or overthrowing the previous alpha's throne, no battles to the death, just parents and their children. Later the pups grow old enough and they leave to start their own packs and this process repeats. What does this sound like to you? Sounds a lot like what humans do with their families right? Now lets break it down some more. What used to be referred to as "alpha male" and "alpha female" scientist are now calling the "breeding male" and "breeding female" or "male parent" and "female parent". In more rare packs where there is more than one breeding wolf you have the "dominant breeder" and the "subordinate breeder". Ranks such as beta and omega don't really exist in wild packs, and any source still perpetuating that they are is outdated. They simply aren't appropriate in describing the social relationship.

So with that established, what caused the misinformation? Well, it's because the initial studies of wolf behaviors from over 40 years ago were done on captive wolves! Wolves plus captivity equal an interesting result. That is because the natural process of parents raising pups and then those pups growing up to start their own packs is completely halted. The social environment becomes stagnant and eventually contentious as the now grown pups have instincts that need to be fulfilled, but cannot be. Not to mention stranger wolves are put together. This creates a stressful environment full of outburst of dominance battles and aggression. This is what created the notion of the all dominant, aggressive "alpha wolf" along with this beta and omega thing . Wolf packs

do not have this innate sense of strict hierarchy. It is not the natural order.

Now this word “alpha”, it can still apply to wolves, so long as one really understands what it is and isn’t. The alpha wolf would really mean: the leaders, the parents, the providers and the teachers of their packs-- their children. Just as the human mother and father are. To be an alpha wolf isn’t a competition of egos, who is strongest, who and kill fastest, taking many mates or fighting.

The terms beta and omega don't really work because wolf packs are the parents and their children and those children are all siblings typically all being the same age range. No innate secondary or tertiary levels of dominance or command exist among them. It's much more natural and fluid than that. It's time to lay these notions to rest that keep us from gaining true understanding of the wolf(and if you are of wolf kind, yourself). In the next section links will be provided to sources for more information.

Acting Like A Wolf (Wolf Behavior)

“I want to kill so bad”

“The moon is making me (insert here)”

“My wolf is making me angry” or “I can't control it”

“I’m an alpha so (insert here)”

...Stuff like this has nothing to do with being a wolf. There are so many misguided statements made by supposed wolf people that it’s impossible for me to tackle them all. I’ll just start with those very common statements above.

Wolves are not innately violent animals and like most wild predators, hunt for food, not for arbitrary needless urges to kill. Hunting is actually a very dangerous task and wolves can incur fatal injuries from their prey. In fact the success rate of wolf hunts compared to some other predators is kinda low :(So really killing is on an as needed basis for survival and energy is best conserved. But anyway, I say this to point out the fact that if you are experiencing some need or instinct to just kill, that’s not wolf like at all. Now, perhaps you just mean you are having hunting instincts which is to be expected, that can be attributed to being a wolf. I get those myself. However, lets clarify that just wanting to kill things is likely the sign of something. What that something is I don’t presume to know, but it’s not caused by being a wolf.

The subject of hunting brings me to my next point, wolves and the moon. Wolves use howling for a variety of reasons, two of them being to relay location to the rest of the pack and to give status on the hunt. Maybe they found a new prey or caught one, stuff like that. When wolves howl we lift our heads high and sing almost as if calling to the sky. On full moon nights wolves tend to get very active, the light of the moon makes for great hunting visibility while still providing cover. Howling also increase with this activity. As we all know, humans are legendary for seeing patterns and jumping to conclusions. To the humans, wolves seem to have this romantic and fanatical relationship to the moon when in reality it's a far more pragmatic thing. The moon has no special magical effect on wolves in particular-- no more than humans or any other animal. So, wolf folks out there, you can stop attributing magical moon effects to being a wolf. However, someone can have their own spiritual connection to the moon and have their own relationship with it-- I do. For thousands of years, this myth of wolves and the moon has been perpetuated, making it understandable for people to think that, however times are changing and knowledge/understanding is growing. Let's grow with it.

"My wolf is making me angry"... Oh, it is it? "Your wolf". Let's get something straight here. Everyone kin or not is responsible for their actions and emotions. Do not blame violent tendencies or temperamental outburst on being a wolf. Likely people are doing this due to the whole misconception about wolf packs I discussed earlier, thinking wolves must be aggressive so they must behave that way also. Whatever you identify as YOU are responsible for your feelings and controlling your actions. Blaming it on "your wolf" not only isn't an excuse, but also makes no sense and has nothing to do with wolf behavior.

"I'm an alpha so..." So nothing. Being an "alpha" entitles you to nothing, nor does self proclaiming the title bestow you with any real wisdom, strength, power or authority over anyone. I once again also bring up what I discuss earlier about pack hierarchy. People who feel the need to control other and manipulate them are in fact the furthest thing from what a real leader is meant to be and need to let go of the obsession with the term.

Now, at the risk of becoming preachy... If you desire to be a leader and respected by others than you earn that through how you carry yourself, your actions, and how you treat others. You set an example and you guide. Like the real "alpha" wolves do with their young pups in their packs. It's not a matter of holding others down with your dominance but lifting them up with your strength and bonds with them. If you really feel you are a wolf and feel like you should be a leader then follow the example of our wild brothers and sisters. This should be an instinctual thing. "Alpha wolf" doesn't mean what we all have been raised to think. Discovering this information when I did, cleared up a lot about my personal instincts-- why it didn't seem to match the image that was being perpetuated by the... unaware.. to put it politely.

Here are links to some very good websites that will help inform you on wolf behavior. Please make use of these resources

<http://www.wolf.org/learn/basic-wolf-info/biology-and-behavior>
<http://wolfcenter.org/site/learn/wolf-behavior-101.html>
<http://animals.howstuffworks.com/mammals/wolves-howling-at-moon1.htm>
<http://www.sketchyscience.com/2014/08/the-alpha-myth-real-science-of-wolf.html>
<http://io9.com/why-everything-you-know-about-wolf-packs-is-wrong-502754629>

If one is going to identify as something the time should be taken out to really research and connect with that.

With with all this said I hope all the wolf kind out there and people in general have gotten a better understanding of wolves. Thanks for reading.

Citations & Souces

[1] [Graduate Student/Post-doctoral Fellows Openings - L. David Mech](#)

[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNtEgdwTsbU> (David L. Mech speaking on wolves)

Tags: Awakenings, Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Community

Awakening as a Process

A(n) *Essay* written by *Skylark* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

An essay detailing the process of awakening, various steps, and discussing the perception of the community during this process.

A recap, with definitions from from [@Shiro](#) 's [Lexicon](#), before I begin:

Awakening - The term “awakening” refers to the process of discovering that you are otherkin and/or therian and the process of discovering your kintypes or theriotypes. Although it's an extremely common experience, not all otherkin go through an awakening.

I recently wrote an article on a personal tumblr, about awakening and its role in the modern nonhuman community, which gained a lot of traction. Being that this is Kinmunity, and not tumblr, this community faces problems tumblr doesn't, and has strengths where tumblr doesn't. However, I would venture to say that Awakening is something that can be talked about in *all* communities, especially communities where tumblrkin may come here and not necessarily know what it is, or what it entails.

My personal view is that **awakening begins when one's Other side first begins to stir (thus, "awaken")**, or when one is first aware of being Other, or nonhuman. Sometimes this is a first

shift. Sometimes it isn't. Some otherkin don't have this first moment of awakening - they have *always* been aware of their nonhumanity - but I would approximate that those people are rare at best. (3 people out of ~100 have mentioned it to me since I first wrote about it.)

After this first moment or change comes **the realization we've come to call "Awakening."** This sometimes happens through friends, or through independent research online or in books. We begin to see mirrors of ourselves in specific animals, or specific types of creatures. We learn about the labels, the terminology, and we learn that our experiences aren't so different from everyone else in this group of people. Many of us think, **finally, we've found people that understand us.** We begin to engage in these communities, with a desire to be accepted, welcomed, and "adopted" into the proverbial fold.

Then the next phase - Questioning. Many otherkin begin to doubt here. Many are new - many, but not all. They feel disillusioned, they feel betrayed, and they feel lost and hurt. At least, that's what the recent trend has been. Flimsy foundations, built of sand, begin to crumble under the weight of the questions placed upon them, and the otherkin in question begins to feel the weight themselves.

Here, I would draw attention to my wording: **I retain that they *are* otherkin, even under questioning.**

It's my personal belief that the practice of thorough questioning stems from the early days of nonhuman communities online. In 1995, a handful of therians from alt.horror.werewolves (AHWW) were conned out of their money by an individual claiming to know the "secrets" to physical shifting. [1] Without that practice of questioning and skepticism, combined with the longing many of us have to be able to truly physically shift, these people were totally caught unawares, and in an effort to ensure that no such thing ever happened again, the community began to double down.

This process is one of necessity, not desire. No one *wants* to tear down another member of the community. No person does something if they truly believe it's a bad idea, and all of us only want the best. 'Kin are kin, for better or for worse - We have no other family in this aspect of our lives, aside from ourselves. **We want to build each other up.**

It doesn't only happen to "new" otherkin - far from it, nor do the questions only come from the outside. Many, many otherkin will tell you: the questioning sometimes doesn't stop. You *will* question yourself. Others *will* question you. That doesn't mean you aren't otherkin.

To otherkin struggling with questions: You aren't alone. You aren't being attacked, hated, or ridiculed. Answering the questions asked of you will help you. And if you don't know? That's okay.

If you really, truly don't know the answer to something, you *can* ask for advice. This isn't a firing

squad execution. We're here to support each other, even though we may need to be cautious to take things at face value. If you have questions, you *can* ask. If you genuinely don't know, or haven't thought of a particular topic, you *can* say "I don't know, let me get back to you on that."

You aren't expected to know *everything*, but you are expected to put in effort, to think, and to have facts and experience to back up your more unusual claims. You're expected to share and share alike, to better the community through your involvement, and when you are curious, or when something seems off, to question things yourself.

If you are new to the community, welcome. If you've been here practically all your life, welcome. Welcome here for the first time, or the hundredth, and welcome back to the family.

[1] [Therian Timeline](#)

Tags: Awakenings, Experiences, Spiritual, Psychological, Community

The reaction to subculture's in the sight of Kübler-Ross model

A(n) *Essay* written by *kiror* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

An essay that attempts to explain the social reaction to subculture's community using Kübler-Ross model (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance: DABDA).

Abstract

An essay that attempts to explain the social reaction to subculture's community using Kübler-Ross model (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance: DABDA).

Introduction

The definition found in Wikipedia [1, 2] of the Kübler-Ross model is "a series of emotional stages experienced by survivors of an intimate's death, wherein the five stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance."

Using that definition, we'll try explaining what and how expect social reaction to the info that you identified yourself with the otherkin, therianthrope, vampire, or animal hearted communities.

Stage -1: You don't exist.

This comes from the hypothesis of a "closed world" [3] (which is pretty egocentric): I know everything of this world, so, if I don't have knowledge that something exist, it doesn't exist and is automatically false - for that person you don't exist.

Stage 0: You're alive

This stage starts since the person knows you and creates an image of you into their mind. For that person, you're, now, alive.

Stage 0.99999999...: You die

Now you reveal something about you that changes significantly the image that they had of you into their mind. At this point you can compare your image with an ancient and rigid iron bar: will it bend or will it break? If you're a really lucky person, it'll "bend" and you'll jump to stage 5; but reading personal stories online, we conclude that the majority "breaks" (in other words, that image that they had of you into their mind just dies).

Stage 1: Denial of the changing

Usually followed by small laughs and a lost sight, they will try confirming with some sentence like: "You're just kidding with me, aren't you?". This is the sign that the image they had of you - and they do give some emotional value to it - is being destroyed. Everything they want to hear is you weren't talking seriously and the image can continue to exist. It's reversible at this point, but your image will have marks of that "prank" that you made him believe. If you insist in the idea that it's not a prank, your image will be destroyed in your listener's mind and it'll give space to the next stage.

Stage 2: Anger

This is when the person stops talking with you, looks mad at you, defames you with other people and attacks you. You becomes a target that should be eliminated. This is the point that many people just loses some ties of friendship. However, for some reason, the attacker sees that his anger won't make a huge change in your life that should bring you back the way you was; then the next stage begins.

Stage 3: Bargaining

In this stage, the person you are near to will try to bargain your old self back, will try making easier for him changing fewer aspects of you to match easier with the destroyed image that they had in their mind because they do still have some emotional value for them. This "fewer aspects" usually includes your self-identification with a subculture community (otherkin, therianthrope, vampire, and/or animal hearted communities) and the reasons that you have to self-identify better there than with the general "mainstream" society. After resisting to the "anger" stage, this may be easier to deal with. After concluding that you won't change back, comes the next stage.

Stage 4: Depression

They will feel partially responsible for not changing your head back where they thought it was. Maybe this comes to your friend's head: "My friend became nuts and I couldn't help him...".

They accepted that you changed, but they don't accept in what you "became". This is the right moment to talk about things that they consider that "normal" talks about, but denying that you're member of the subculture you said may throw you back to the stage 1 (denial). With some time, they may accept the idea and go to the next, and last, stage.

Stage 5: Acceptance

At this point they accepted completely the idea that you're otherkin, therianthrope, vampire, and/or animal hearted. If they will continue your friends, or they will have a deeper friendship with you, or if the friendship will be ceased, nobody knows; but if you let your door open for them, they may return when they want - but this time, they will understand why you did some things in the past and why you were reluctant to give the answer.

Conclusion

Telling someone that you identify with a subculture can be a long and thorny pathway, but understanding what happens in the others' mind might help you while preparing yourself for their reaction within all their stages and correlated actions; and with these information, now, you might be prepared to opening yourself without having big traumas.

Bibliographic references:

- [1] [Kübler-Ross model - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
- [2] [Modelo de Kübler-Ross – Wikipédia, a enciclopédia livre](#)
- [3] [Prolog – Wikipédia, a enciclopédia livre](#)

Tags: Psychological, Community

Draconity, dragons and the media

A(n) *Guide* written by *Allos* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

A Guide to provide information about the diversity of dragonkin, a brief look into basic mythologies surrounding dragons and then opinions and personal explanations on the misconceptions of their portrayal in the media. I can't and don't claim to speak for all dragons with this, it is just a personal interpretation.

Diverse range and beliefs of dragonkin

Dragonkin are a very diverse group of individuals each having there own beliefs and experiences relevant to their own draconity. No one dragon will have the same experiences as another, all

have some similarity to each other as to be expected but dragons cannot just be meshed into one group there's just so many and there just too different from each other, categorization beyond anything but basic body plans/colors is impossible. When it comes down to it nearly every dragonkin seems to be of there own species some really small, some completely huge, some scaled, some feathered/ have fur (although from what I've seen many fall predominately under the western body plan) each having there own customs/behaviors which I find really interesting many say they're from different planets few say they're from earth I just find that it highlights the sheer diversity that we have and that modern media and mythology doesn't really do a good job at describing the majority besides some generalizations. I myself fit well into one of the dragons described in modern fantasy so it's not all bad some stereotypes I find ridiculous though and I'll go into that later on in this article. So if your a newly awakened dragon and your not sure what kind of dragon you are I hope the below mythology is helpful. Obviously there are some limits here even with mythological creatures but generally speaking each dragon seems to be different in some way and the chance of you meeting a dragon the same as you if you're not like any specific species described in myths or fantasy is, from what I've seen, very uncommon. The point here is, every dragon is different, but all dragons seem to follow the body plans of what is seen in mythology.

Basic Mythology

In mythology and folklore very broadly speaking dragons are most commonly viewed in three body plans, the western dragons, eastern dragons and the wyverns although there is more than this which I'll list some of. I'll briefly go through some common mythology of these three.

Western dragons- also called European dragons due to the origins of the myths are generally speaking described as four legged, having two leathery/bat like wings and a long tail. Most commonly associated with fire-breathing but have been depicted as breathing other things, hoarding riches and living in caves. European dragons are largely depicted as malevolent in legends and mythology most notable would be the legend of St' George and the dragon, although there are some exceptions to this such as the dragon in welsh legends and ouroboros.

Eastern dragons- also known as and include Loong, Asian, Chinese, Korean and Japanese dragons, they are dragons from eastern cultures generally seen as serpentine with no wings and 4 legs and represent nature usually more strongly associated with water and are largely revered as benevolent beings of wisdom. There are differences between the cultures in regard to appearance, with Chinese/Korean dragons having four toes, Japanese having three toes and then Imperial dragons been the only ones with five toes.

Wyverns- Wyverns are dragons most commonly confused with western as they are similar in appearance, however a wyvern is generally smaller, has only two legs and there front legs are instead replaced with wings with have claws on the end which they use to move around on. The are very often depicted as having a venomous barbed stinger on the end of their tail and been

unable to breathe fire like westerns. They may also have a venomous bite also and are most commonly displayed in medieval heraldry. There are considered to be less intelligent than western dragons and often viewed as vicious and malicious creatures.

Other dragons/draconic beings-

Wyrms- serpentine dragons with no legs or wings, the lambton worm is a common story in English history.

Lindworms- A serpent like dragon with two legs and no wings, usually depicted with a venomous bite.

Amphipteres- A serpentine dragon with no legs but two wings that are usually depicted as feathery. The Quetzalcoatl is the most famous one from Mexican history.

Sea serpents- Serpentine dragons that inhabit the sea, usually depicted with no limbs but sometimes have two or four limbs and fins.

Ouroboros- a dragon or snake biting it's own tail, symbolizing eternity and the cyclic nature of existence.

Hydra- A serpentine dragon seen in Greek and Roman mythology with multiple heads and no wings each time a head was cut off two more would take it's place. Hercules was sent to slay the hydra and succeeded.

Portrayal in the media and misconceptions

Common Stereotypes-

Ah stereotypes , everything seem to have them and dragons are no exception I'll just list the most common ones here and go into more detail about some of them further down this article. These include hoarding shiny things usually gold/gems, breathing fire, generally considered stupid and/or evil. Fire breathe is a common one and while not wrong there are a lot of dragons that used other things as breathe weapons such as ice, acid, electricity, water, etc. I didn't use fire myself I used acid though usually you only see breathe weapons other than fire only in modern fantasy or some games rather than the actual media itself. Most shows or movies usually involves some "brave knight" willing to risk there life to kill the dangerous beast and become a "hero" when really you basically just killing an animal to inflate your own ego so I do question who the villain is here myself, and then you have the classic preferring to eat maidens or some nonsense like that (although red dragons do have this listed in there mythology occasionally, over-exaggerated nowadays though). Yes I'm aware this isn't always the case but it is the majority.

Intelligence-

When it comes to dragon intelligence in the media I've noticed that there doesn't seem to be that much of a differential from stupid/animalistic and relying solely on instinct to ancient and wise with seemingly human level intelligence I'm talking about western dragons and wyverns here eastern from my knowledge rarely appear in the media as much as these two but are generally depicted as great beings of wisdom and seldom unintelligent. Really dragons in my experience I think fit in-between the two I and I'm sure many others won't claim to be of human level intelligence but I wasn't like an animal nowadays either. I was capable of logical reasoning/thought and problem solving and had my own morals (albeit bad ones) and was aware of choosing everything I wanted to do rather than only following instincts. I also had my own preferences for certain things and behaviors that instinctively did nothing to benefit my survival. I understand the extremes of either end can and do exist though but it's not the general consensus that the media puts out.

Malevolence/Benevolence-

When it comes to dragons in the media especially in films/TV there are almost always seen as malevolent beings or shown to be "evil" just because they're following their natural instincts this brings me back onto intelligence and if they're viewed as having the mental capacity to understand good from evil (even if both can be considered subjective anyway) then they are usually on the villainous side or if not depicted as intelligent then just made to look like they are when really they just want to be left alone. Been a malevolent dragon myself I just don't like the way the media handles these things in general it's just too stereotyped especially in regards to how good always triumphs over evil because that's what they think the general population wants to see. I respect that it's not all as clear cut as this and that some are shown to be benevolent (the movie dragonheart was a great example of showing a polar opposite side to the usual western dragons you see) or a mix of both. Modern fantasy games such as dungeons and dragons does a good job of balancing between malevolent and benevolent dragons with the whole chromatic and metallic categorization, the media at large though just warps everything into something it shouldn't be. This brings me onto the biggest misconceptions that I've found.

Mainly wyvern body plans-

Now this is one of the biggest gripes I have when it comes to modern media and games. They basically shove the body plan of a wyvern onto the qualities of a western dragon and create this fire-breathing non-venomous two-legged lizard with fore-arm wings that in reality doesn't really exist in mythology. Popular franchises like the hobbit, Harry Potter, Game of Thrones and games like Skyrim all use this misrepresentation. Wyverns are dragons yes but a different kind of dragon as you would have read above but whenever the general public thinks of dragons they're really thinking of wyverns that have the fire-breathing capabilities of western dragons rather than them being separate animals. Personally I think this is just due to the fact that the wyverns body plan can be made to look a lot more menacing than the standard western one and that for

cgi/animation purposes it's a lot easier to animate a wyvern as it's anatomy resembles that of a bat or other flying animal and so more details can be put into how it moves and flies. Fire-breathing was then just added for good measure and a more public wow factor and then this kind of dragon just sort of stuck. Don't get me wrong I do like these dragons a lot, but it doesn't help the general population get an idea what what dragons actually are and just adds to the confusion of categorizing western dragons and wyverns separately.

Granted everything I've personally said here can't really be proven and it's just as valid as how the media portrays use and what is in mythology as nothing is scientifically proven so there's always going to be fluctuations in peoples beliefs. I just hope that this has helped any dragons new or old and anyone that's interested in us to realize were very diverse and not really like how the modern world wants you to think.

Tags: Awakenings, Newcomers, Introspection, Experiences, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Rants

Experience as a Rare Kintype

A(n) *Guide* written by *Hyphero* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

An article on rare kintypes and the experiences of being a rare kintype, as well as a guide on how people of rare kintypes to succeed in the otherkin community.

Rare Kintypes

A rare kintype, for the purpose of this article, is a kintype that's held by very few other people. A rare kintype is rare because it may be obscure, seen as undesirable, or, rarely, simply unusual. Obscure kintypes are not well propogated, so it will take some effort to even find out its existence, and undesirable kintypes will take a lot of effort to eventually accept. Rare kintypes can be daunting to have sometimes, as there is little or no people to help verify that you're going on the right track, so you'll usually have to figure it out on your own.

Awakening as a Rare

The awakening process can be somewhat harder for someone who is of a rare kintype than someone who's kintype is pretty common. Awakening may even feel uneventful, which may lead to doubts. While most of awakening is a process that you yourself have to do, people with rare kintypes don't have the luxury of being able to share their experiences with someone who is of

the same kintype as them, so they are effectively on their own in that respect. They can, however, check other people's awakening stories to make sure that they aren't terribly off though.

Even figuring out you have a rare kintype is pretty hard, since as a newbie you'll likely be biased toward common kintypes, and likely identify as either common kintypes or uncommon kintypes you personally would want to be. Rare kintypes are rarely considered, so therefore looking deeply is very important if you could potentially have one. Introspection is the most important thing for awakening, regardless of what you could potentially be.

Research is especially important for people with rare kintypes, since most of your info will come from research. Research is even how most people figure out they have a rare kintype! Meditation and past life memories can help you as well, and potentially solidify your kintype. Be aware that it is possible to misidentify as a rare kintype.

Kin Experience as a Rare

As a rare kintype, shifts will still occur, however the details of your shifting might be seen as unusual. Species dysphoria can be harder than normal to quell as a person with a rare kintype, and not having similar people can be a problem if kin experiences are really getting you down. It is possible to cope and be resilient. Even then, your kin quirks are not likely to be reciprocated.

Community Experience as a Rare

As a rare kintype, your experience in the community will be an interesting one. You'll more than likely be asked how you found your kintype. Be honest, and don't try to fabricate info that you think will be seen as favorable. Once people accept you, you'll likely be seen normally. Rare kintypes tend to be well accepted in the community if there's nothing glaringly wrong.

Places like Tumblr should be avoided at all costs. It's better to be in a community where questioning is accepted as part of being a member, and as a person with a rare kintype, questioning could potentially allow you to grow in your identity, while being in a place where everyone is accepted without question could eventually damage your concept of otherkin, and even your credibility. If you lack credibility, you will not be accepted, plain and simple, so therefore your credibility is precious.

Tags: Awakenings, Newcomers, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Community

Finding Reputable Sources

A(n) *Essay* written by *Skylark* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

How to identify sources on otherkin topics that will be able to support your point, and how to present them. Part of the monthly article project for December, "Navigating the community."

The nonhuman community as a whole has, for a long time, had deep roots in fact and reason. Members are encouraged to question things, and bring new information to the table when it arises - so it's no surprise that there are a number of articles and resources on nonhumanity. However, just like picking wild berries, some of these resources may not be as good as they seem. **It's important to be able to tell which are "good," and exactly how far you can take that "goodness."**

A lot of the basics of finding reputable sources stems from academia - things we might have learned in grade school. **Capitalize the first letter of the first word in a sentence, always capitalize I as a pronoun, don't use text-speak, and so forth.** A lot of these are obvious. This is a pretty decent way to narrow down what's "good" and what isn't. If it's hard to read and has a lot of mistakes, it usually isn't a reputable resource.

Check any possible resource for a name. This is a tricky one in the otherkin community, because a lot of us don't use our "real names" online, but that's simply a fact of the community. **In the case of a pseudonym, try to see if you can trace that pseudonym to other places.** Jarandhel uses the same pseudonym in most communities, and so does House of Chimeras, just to name a few. If they're willing to put their name on it, that's a good sign. If it's left anonymous, be careful.

Another good way to tell if a resource is accurate is to **check when it was last updated.** For example: Let's say you have two online articles about a crime. Both were published ten hours ago, but one was updated eight hours ago, to include more recent news from the police chief. The *most* accurate article in this situation is probably the updated one. You want to get the freshest, most applicable, most up-to-date information, after all.

Most well-written articles will cite their own sources. They had to get their information from somewhere, after all. Look for this. If an article cites faulty sources, it may not be very factual itself.

When the more technical aspects are checked off, it's then time to examine the content of the article. Trust your gut. If something doesn't sound right, Google it. Can you find something else to back up the claim? Is there anything strong against it? If that piece of information is sourced, does the source seem reputable? **Double check, then triple check.**

Check your source for other information, too. If an article says mixing orange and yellow

paint makes green paint, they might be getting other facts wrong, too. Again, double check.

Examine the article for bias. If an article claims that abortion is wrong because it's "not what God intended," that's bias, whether you believe it too or not. If an article says blue is the best color because the author likes the color blue, that's bias. If it's an opinion, it's not a fact, and even if that bias isn't present in the specific piece of information you want to cite, you may still want to lean away from using it. Also, pay attention to who is writing the article. If the owner of a pencil factory writes an article about pens being unhealthy, there might be some bias in play.

And lastly, check the resource at hand for logical fallacies. Yourlogicalfallacyis.com is a great at-a-glance explanation of all the various logical fallacies. While logical fallacies don't necessarily invalidate a claim, they don't provide a very strong factual basis. If your source includes any of these, you may want to look for another one.

And now that I've cited a source, it's time to put me on the firing squad! Ready? **We're assessing Yourlogicalfallacyis.com.**

Technical aspects: Is proper grammar and spelling utilized? Looks like it! They do use some "artful" lowercase letters when you hover over certain fallacy buttons, but otherwise, it all looks pretty good. **Did they put their name(s) on it?** Yep - right there at the bottom, and they even linked to the creators' personal websites.

Is there a date listed from the last update? No, it doesn't seem like it - but it does list their publishing year (2015) and this kind of material isn't necessarily time sensitive. We'll call that a strike against them.

Did they cite their sources? A lot of the information they're using borders on common knowledge, if it isn't common knowledge already, but if you look at [their FAQ](#), they *do* reference two sites. We'll give them 3/4ths of a point.

Now that we've examined the technical aspects, we can move onto content. **Does anything seem off about this information?** Well, I can recognize most of these logical fallacies from things I've learned previously, so it seems like everything so far is correct. **Is any "extra" information correct?** Yes, on the same count, since this is a bit of a one-subject deal.

Is there any bias? No - information relating to religion or other sensitive topics, if it appears at all, is written in a very neutral tone. And while the website *does* sell poster versions of the logical fallacies, **the interactive website and a downloadable version of the poster are available for free.** Yes, the owner is making money off of it, but *only if we choose to have this resource in tangible form*, and even then, I could still just print it out. The rest of the time, they're just asking for donations. That's about as much bias as a birdwatching guide book, except it's probably about

\$20 cheaper.

Are there any logical fallacies present? No, and boy am I glad.

So as it stands, the only strike against Yourlogicalfallacyis.com is that they don't list their last-updated date. **Not too shabby!** My sourcing here is probably pretty solid, but I should be prepared to acknowledge that my information may not be up-to-date. If I were trying to make a stronger argument, I would probably want to find a second source, just in case. It never hurts to have multiple correct sources.

Little mistakes aren't the end of the world, nor do they mean that a source is completely unusable and you, the person who sourced it, should be exiled to the moon for the rest of your life, but little things add up. Be aware of what you're sourcing, where you're getting your information, and as the saying goes - when you go to a gunfight, don't bring a knife.

Edit 12/7/15: [@kior](#) pointed out that I had mistakenly referred to a name as a pseudonym when it actually wasn't. That's been removed. Thank you!

Tags: Newcomers, Community

Personal Discovery Tips

A(n) *Essay* written by *Skylark* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

A few general tips for a path of personal discovery in the otherkin community. Part of the monthly article project for January, "Personal Discovery/Awakening."

Personal discovery is not an easy path. Anyone who has attempted it knows this. However, despite its hardships, it is an important one, and deserves every moment of time it is given.

In the nonhuman communities, particularly the greater otherkin community, we are united by our discovery of ourselves. We differ in many things, but our identities allow us to consider one another friends, even brethren. With this one uniting factor, it comes as no surprise to think that one may feel a lot of pressure to know exactly who and what they are - and, as a result, may rush it.

The reality is that while there is no magic answer to figuring out one's identity, there are possible ways to help find and solidify it. The aim of this is to introduce those, and make suggestions.

First: Participation.

Reading documents only provides you with so much. Even watching videos only provides you with so much. When you are talking to others, interacting with others, and using the knowledge you have, you learn more, and solidify what you know.

Sometimes, new people hesitate to speak up. They feel unqualified to speak, perhaps, or just shy. **However, I would suggest that they are the people who should be among the most active.**

The community will be here to support and correct you, should correction be needed. You don't need to be qualified to welcome someone. When you join the community, you're one of us. Say hello! Greet other new people, relate to them, and have fun. Engage in discussions and share your personal experience when it is relevant. Watch threads you're interested in, and talk to people who bring new information to the table. You don't need to be perfect, and you don't need to have all the answers immediately.

Second: Reflection.

When I wrote [“Awakening as a process.”](#) I touched a little bit on this. There is, needless to say, a lot of self-reflection that happens in your first year, and a lot every year after that.

Doubt is okay. You don't need to know everything, and chances are high that you will doubt. That's natural, even healthy, because we as a community don't encourage blind belief.

Question yourself. Test yourself and your beliefs. Evaluate what you perceive, and see how well it matches up to your beliefs. When questioned by other members of the community, respond. Seriously consider their questions - they aren't just questioning you for fun, trust me. We ask questions because we want to know about you and your journey, and we want to see where you are in your path.

Journaling is a common tool of reflection. Luckily, Kinmunity has a nifty little journal tool right on-site - the blog tool! You can use that, or you can use one of the many online journals, or you can have your own physical in-paper journal. Do what works for you. Write down when you experience something new, when you learn something new, and when you just feel compelled to write something down. This is a good way to have a personal record to reflect on, and an easy way to be able to look back on your personal development. It's especially useful if you're trying to figure out your kintype.

Third: Try new things.

There's a saying that goes, “if the shoe fits, wear it.” But how do you know the shoe fits if you never try it on? You can measure up against the sole, sure, but in the end the only sure way to know if it fits is to try it on.

Kintypes are often the same way. Don't be afraid to look into different possibilities. You know you're a quadruped, but you don't know what kind? Look into bears, try to see what they're like. If that doesn't work, try horses.

That being said, when you find something that does work, don't stop. Keep looking, and don't

discount anything. When you have multiple options to choose from, you can more accurately narrow it down.

Additionally, be aware that there may be more to your kintype. Using the same example of a quadruped, you could find that a horse fits you - but you might also find that about a centaur, a hippocampus, a Pegasus, a unicorn, and a donkey. Keep your mind open to all possibilities.

Ask people for help, advice, guidance or opinions if you want to, but always remember that we aren't you. We don't know what you feel, and ultimately the decision is yours.

Tags: Awakenings, Newcomers, Introspection, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Community

Questioning your Kintype: What are the right questions to ask?

A(n) *Guide* written by *RosaChaiKitten* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

A guide on Questioning your Kintype and the right questions to ask yourself, recommended for new Otherkin and people questioning their kintypes.

Written in an easy-to-read format including definitions and TLDR's.

Questioning your Kintype: What are the right questions to ask?

[IMG]

What is an Otherkin?

P1

Firstly, we need to understand what the definition of Otherkin is, so we know if we agree with the statement before continuing exploration.

"Otherkin are people who identify either partially or wholly as one or more non-human beings, entities, or concepts in a psychological or spiritual manner."

- Kincommunity Definition

Am I an Otherkin, Or a Therian? What's the difference?

P2

Now, all therians are Otherkin, but not all Otherkin are therian.

⌘ *Why is this?* ⌘

Otherkin is an umbrella term for the whole spiritual and personal belief that an individual is non-human.

However, Therian or Therianthropy/Therianism is a **sub-category** of Otherkin who believe themselves to be **animals found on Earth** (E.g. Cats & Dogs) , this **includes extinct animals** such as Dinosaurs and the Dodo.

However this is not limited to Earthly animals and can refer to individuals who believe themselves to be **creatures not found on Earth**, such as Dragons and Elves. And some people believe they are Aliens, Demons and Angels.

❀ **“But I identify as (non-animal on Earth)! Am I a therian?”** ❀

Yes and No. Therians refer to animals found on **Earth**, if you are, for example, a Dragon; You could be considered a therian, but are generally in the sub-category called Theriomythical.

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❀ **TL;DR/Summary:** ❀

Otherkin: A person who identifies as non-human except for physically

Therian: Earthly animals (*Eg. Cats and Dogs*)

Theriomythical: Non-Earthly Animals (*Eg. Dragons and Unicorns*)

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I really like ‘X’ ANIMAL/BODY, is that my Kintype?

P3

Liking something≠Otherkin

Now, let’s discuss the difference between:

- **Liking** an animal/certain being
- Identifying **with** said animal/being
- Identifying **as** said animal/being

❀ **Liking an animal/certain being** ❀

Liking an animal is to **have a preference for it**, it simply means it’s an animal or being that you’ve **taken a fondness for**. But nothing more.

☼ **Identifying *with* an animal/certain being** ☼

To identify ***with*** an animal/being is to see **characteristics within the animal or being that you can see in yourself or relate to**. This creature or entity is not you, but you can see the resemblance.

The term for this can also be called ‘Otherhearted’

(A proper article on Otherhearted vs Otherkin can be found: [HERE](#))

☼ **Identifying *as* an animal/certain being** ☼

An *Otherkin* is someone who identifies ***as*** said animal or being, a deep personal belief that’s who they are and are meant to be physically. **This creature or entity is you**

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☼ **TL;DR/Summary:** ☼

Liking: Preference for an animal/being.

Identifying *with*: Seeing characteristics in an animal/being that you can relate to

Identifying *as*: Knowing an animal/being is you completely, and believing yourself to be non-human.

☼ **Other Terms used:** ☼

Otherhearted: Identifying with the characteristics and personality traits found within a certain animal/being. Not seeing yourself as them, but relating to them.

=/= : Unequal to, or not connected/meaning to something.

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I’m definitely ‘X’ Kintype!

P4

So ask yourself, how do you know you’re definitely that kintype?

☼ **A couple questions to ask yourself:** ☼

1. Am I feeling Phantom limbs?
 - How long have i felt these phantom limbs?

- How long do these phantom limbs remain present?
- Are these just *cameo shift* limbs?
- Have i ever felt these limbs before?
- Have i ever felt these limbs before knowing what otherkin was?

2. Do I just like this animal or identify with it? (See P3)

- Am i identifying as this animal because we're alike?
- Am i identifying as this animal because everyone else is?
- Am i identifying as this animal because that's what i want to be?
- Am i identifying *with* this animal or *as* this animal? (See P3)

3. Are you sure you're that specific animal?

- Have you researched more animals?
- Have you researched into the animal sub-category to find more species?
- Why do i believe i am this specific animal?
- Am I simply identifying as this animal to hide my real kintype which i don't like?
- Am I lonely and most people identify as this animal so i want to belong?

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⌘ **Other Terms used:** ⌘

Cameo-Shift: A cameo shift is when an otherkin experiences astral limbs or a mental shift that is not their Kintype, for example a shark therian experiencing wings.

Just because you experience a cameo-shift, it does not mean the cameo creature is your kintype!

Phantom Limbs: The feeling of astral or spiritual limbs that you can not see but can sense and feel, you can learn more about phantom limbs here:

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How to research into your Kintype more thoroughly P5

Let's use an example kintype to explain this part!

⊗ *"I believe i am wolfkin!"* ⊗

Now let's dissect this statement so we can further explore the kintype

Wolf Breed < Wolves < Wild Canine < Canidae < Mammalian < Vertebrates

"I believe i am a wolf because i have impulses to howl and growl"

What other subspecies in the Canidae family howl and growl?

- Domestic Dogs (Labradors, Husky, Tibetan Mastiff)
- Wild Dogs (Dingo, African Wild Dog, Dhole,)
- Coyotes
- Foxes
- Culpeo
- Jackals

"I believe I am a wolf because i remember living in forests and tundra"

What other Canidae live in the forests and tundra, but also howl and growl?

- Foxes
- Some Domestic Dogs
- Dhole
- Coyotes

“I believe i am a wolf because i remember eating/hunting deer”

That leaves us with three options:

- Wolf
- Coyote
- Coywolf

Breeds of Coyote/Wolf that eat deer, live in forests/tundra and howl/growl:

Coyote:

- Plain Coyote
- Northern Coyote
- Mountain Coyote
- Northeastern Coyote
- Northwestern Coyote

Wolf:

- Timber/Gray Wolf
- Arctic Wolf
- Labrador Wolf
- Manitoba Wolf
- Tundra Wolf
- Tibetan Wolf
- Alaskan Tundra Wolf
- Newfoundland Wolf
- Northern Rocky Mountains Wolf
- Mongollon Mountain Wolf

- Cascade Mountain Wolf
- Bernard's Wolf

Coywolf

"Is there a term for identifying as a whole group of animals?"

Yes! This is known as 'Cladotherianthropy'

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⊛TL;DR/Summary: ⊛

Ask yourself why you believe you're the animal, if the answer for example is that you have the impulse to howl and growl and are a canine. Find other species within the canine family that howl and growl etc.

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~Rosa Chai~ (〇人〇^⊛)

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Tags: Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Shifting

Falistics of Fae Vol. 2

A(n) *Guide* written by *JodiDoe* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

A second and more personal opinion on "Falistics of Fae" written by Nyht Myst.

Falistics of Fae Vol. 2

I wanted to write something to go along with Nyht Myst's article, as there really isn't enough information on Fae around here. There are so few of us, it's a subject rarely discussed. There is so much random information online, but none of it matches us exactly, it is impossible to do so. I can't explain to you every Fae, no sooner than I could explain to you every human.

Each of the Falsities, Misconceptions, Myths, and Misbeliefs she listed effect me differently. Some more so than others. With her permission, I've written a response to the ones that I felt needed more explanation, reiteration, or just a personal point of view, to diversify the source. I hope this is helpful.

Fae are kind and friendly/Seelie-Unseelie

Yes, I am very kind, and very friendly, about 75% of the time.

The other 25%, I would be more likely to verbally tear your heart from your soul rather than give you a hug. I am a mother, I am an empath, I hold people's feelings and desires close to my heart, closer than anything. I reach out for the lost and misguided, I advocate protection, and security, and peace. I also, have a line. I have a boundary, a threshold, when it's pushed I do not lose all of those things that describe me, that define me, I simply tire of them. I will never push to someone's failure, but I will rescind my reach, and quiet my advocacy, when things become overwhelming. To some, this change is perceived as cold, unfeeling, and hurtful. This is where my empathy shuts down and is overrun with apathy. I no longer care about anything other than my own feelings. This is natural for me, this is how some of us grow neutral to politics. We thrive in the middle of the crowd until we have had too much. Then we ignore the crowd until we are rested. Some Fae, are like that 75% of the time, and only kind and friendly 25% of the time. Much like a Yin Yang, there are two sides, but there is a little of each in both sides.

That is how I see Seelie/Unseelie. I know this better as Summer/Winter or Solar/Lunar courts, but that's just me.

Tiny, Beautiful, Dragonfly Wings/Fae are shallow

Anything with that specific description (to me) would be a Pixie.

We are not ALL Pixies. You don't describe the entire human race as "Tall, blonde, and pale skin." Just like I can't describe to you what every human looks like, I can't do the same for Fae. I have large wings, very large, that fall under no common description of anything. I have Glamour, which astrally would allow me to take the form of whatever I wish, but doing so drains an extensive amount of energy. To some I am beautiful, in both Fairy and Human form. It depends on how an individual person perceives me, their personal preferences, etc. I can be vain, I take my public appearance seriously, and it does make me feel electric when complimented, but I have also learned to be humble, in turn. I've learned from my mistakes. People tend to say "Fae are Shallow" in a way that better says we are incapable of evolution. That we are Tricky, Manipulative, and we do not change. We do change, we grow just as you do. If you meet a Faekin who is Shallow, Manipulative, etc. I would say they are probably also young in their Fae *and* human age. That, if given time, they will eventually grow out of these things, to an extent.

Fae are Demons/Cannot lie

I've heard that Fae (faeries, at least) are the offspring of Angels and Demons. The world I come

from believes this very much. This doesn't mean it's true for *every* Fae. From what I've learned, almost every Fae comes from a specific place that matches them. Their own natural environment. I have yet to meet anyone from mine. It's like, if the entire Fae species and subspecies had their own planet, you would have hundreds of independant countries. Each equipped with their own environment, culture, and beliefs. My country believes we come from Angels and Demons, the country Nyht Myst would represent could believe something different. So while some Fae may be, or at least believe that, they descended from Angels and/or Demons, some do not. The same goes for "Fae cannot lie." Some Fae believe it to be equivalent to a sin to lie, some believe lying is an art form. It depends on where they're from, and how they were taught.

Fae are Spirits of the Dead/Cats and Fae hate each other

Ok, look at the stories these stem from, for example, you only see a Fae right before you die. Scenario: It's 1632 A.D, you live in Scotland where religion is still some sort of Pagan, but generally pretty spiritual. (accuracy in facts is kind of irrelevant, this is just an example) So you are a very spiritual person, and as you near the end of your life, your spiritual self starts to really wake up and see things, like, maybe a spirit that looks like a Fae. As your soul prepares to depart, your sight charges, you see things you would have never seen before. This is, of course, only a theory, but it's again one of those things some Fae believe, and some do not. The same with cats, how they are able to see things humans don't see, and other animals as well. Even from a psychological view, it's easy to find ways this could have come about in the past. None of it means it's true, not for all of us at least.

Elements/Aversions to certain Metals

I am a Lunar/Winter Fairy, but I love swimming and water, and the sun and day time and all that fun stuff. I have a metal hip, it's made of titanium. I am allerigic to some cheap metals, they give me a rash. Large amounts of copper or iron do bother me. This is because I have a specific culture, environment, and personality pertaining to being Fae, and also because I am, in this life, human. No matter species/sub species of Fae you meet, you must also remember if they're in a human body, physically, then they are in fact human. They can have certain biological traits that are not "normal" for Fae, but there is no such thing.

And last, but most certainly not least-

Fae are flighty and cannot be taken seriously.

I saved this one for last because it means the most to me. It is so highly offensive, and frustrating, when someone does not take me seriously because I am a "Flighty Fairy." That is painful, it is discrimination. In many Fae cultures, humans are not taken seriously, and are seen as toys, things to play with, and this is a well known thing. This is terrible and not all of us feel that way. Because of this image people feel Fae cannot commit to anything, they can't be trusted,

so therefore, you cannot take anything they say or do seriously. Contrary to this belief, most Fae are in fact very serious when the moment is called for. Some of us are light hearted and like to have fun/be silly, but are not incapable of being something solid. I personally have experienced this several times, and it's a rejection like no other. To be disregarded because I am Fae, assuming I hold no wisdom or experience, I can offer nothing. That's a feeling I wouldn't wish on anyone.

The entire point is, we are **all different**. We cannot be judged as a whole, no easier than the entire human race can be judged as one. We have our own multi-faceted piece of reality, our own origins. All we ask is that you **do not define us as a generalized group**. That you give us the time to show you who we are, and listen to what we have to say. I doubt you would regret it.

Tags: Kintypes & Theriotypes, Uncategorized

The Story of Sera

A(n) Essay written by Seraphyna and published in our Therianthropy section.

How I came to find my identity aka the journey from spiritual to not so much and everything in between. There really is no good Cliff's Notes version...

Some background: From as far back as I can remember, I haven't felt quite human. Many human concepts and emotions have always made little to no sense to me. Certain human conventions seem alien. I often have to try to "act human" in situations, usually those that involve the emotions of others or emotional responses expected of me. I expect that often makes me come off cold and unattached...and maybe I am. I'm adopted and I've always known to the point where I often felt that my parents used my being adopted as a way to distance themselves from taking responsibility for "how I turned out". I also look nothing like any of my family members. Thus, I've never felt like I fit into my family. From a young age I was bullied for being different, either because I was overweight or how I dressed, you know the usual things children use against each other. That being said, while I never felt human I could always fit in as a human. If I was in a different part of the country, I'd find myself taking on the regional accent. If I spent enough time with the same people I'd find myself taking on some of their more prominent mannerisms and adopting often used figures of speech. In short, I'd find myself altering behaviors and so forth to best become what I subconsciously figured people wanted of me or what I subconsciously figured would make me fit in best. I say subconsciously because never once was this a conscious choice. All of it was done without me even noticing until it was

pointed out...but humans are natural mimics. I make mention of this because it will become important later, so file it away.

The bullying was all but constant until I reached college age when the main issue was my hatred for my (still overweight and out of shape) body. I learned, especially in high school to embrace being different because if people fear you they're less likely to hurt you, so I became a "goth" kid. Ah the angst.

The otherkin stuff: I was raised Catholic, but never found myself "at home" with the religion and, when a friend in the 7th grade came in with a book on paganism one day, I found myself finally finding a spiritual system I could identify with. I quickly began reading up on Wicca, delved briefly into Satanism, and settled finally into an eclectic mix of my own beliefs. In high school I read up on vampirism a bit, but it wasn't until my freshman year of college that I found a group of pagans, that included a psychic vampire, that I really started looking into why I felt so not human. Also in college, I had a professor whose wife is a spirit medium and who taught a course jointly with her on the paranormal and sociology (he's a sociology professor). During this time, I took part in a guided meditation past-life regression twice, once with said professor's wife and once at a pagan shop in Gettysburg, PA. I also started meditating daily as homework for that class. During these regressions and meditations I found myself viewing what I believed was past me and snippets of that past life. Me standing atop a waterfall where there was a silver city in a verdant landscape, being someone's "other half" so to speak. Betraying that person and deciding to try to destroy myself, landing myself incarnate here. Those "memories" started my search for their meaning and brought me to the online otherkin community. I started off identifying as some sort of angel (after seeing myself so many times as a winged humanoid with flowing red hair in a white-silver gown) phoenix (because of how that life ended). Discarding the phoenix part, and drawing on further memories, I then thought I was a Balancer (a type of polymorphic being I've written an article on...long ago). After a smack upside the head from a friend, I abandoned that identifier and broke down my identity to non-denominational angel with a few forms (namely flaming tiger and reptilian feline). Finally, I realized that any form seemed to "fit" so I landed on polymorphic non-denominational angel, ultimately settling on my job description being an angel of death and divine wrath. This was circa 2007 or so I'd wager (I first entered the community in 2004, just for reference).

The logic hammer: In college, I majored in biology and environmental science and prided myself (still do) on applying the scientific method to identity, meaning develop a hypothesis, gather data, see what said data says about the hypothesis. I also think of myself as a rational person, despite my past spiritual and current otherkin beliefs. I think that the best way to get people thinking about why they believe what they do and to weed out the "fluff" from the serious people is to ask questions, especially to ask people why they believe something. Asking someone to think about what they believe is, I've found, the best way to weed out the serious people from the trolls, fluff, and lulchasers.

The relationship: I said I've never felt human, right? Like ever? Well, that all changed around

the spring of 2011. After years of being single, I met a guy at work and we started dating...and being with him, I actually felt human for the first time in my life. I broached the topic of otherkin with him and he had the initial knee jerk reaction of "well I can accept souls ending up in the wrong body, but people who think they're incarnate energy beings like angels and stuff are just insane." Needless to say that conversation ended quickly. I abandoned ship...later he said he was kidding but that kind of killed it for me so I never brought it up again. What does *that* have to do with anything? Well, I was just me around him, no explanations aside from the human ones, no excuses, just me. And he was cool with that...and it was kind of awesome to have someone just accept me like that—as is, quirks and odd behaviors and thought processes and all. Anyway, that relationship is now over, but it changed my personal identity from a spiritual one to a more psychological one.

The book: I read the latest book by Michael Shermer a while back ago called "The Believing Brain". It's really interesting and I recommend it to everyone, *especially* otherkin. It's all about how and why we (humans) form beliefs and how we are hard-wired to believe something and then find supporting evidence (sound familiar?) even in the face of conflicting evidence (to the point where we will simply ignore it). This book got me thinking further, what if I took what I had been feeling since birth and simply jumped at the first seemingly plausible explanation for it: that I was an incarnate angel. Furthermore, what if my brain then simply filled in the grey spaces with more stuff that reinforced the identification. Sufficed to say, I started re-analyzing everything I've ever experienced, going through every detail, forming a new list of "traits and experiences" to pick at. I broke my identity down to its parts and then sought to put it back together.

This meant tossing out the whole "angel" thing and seeing what shifts, mental states, etc. have been consistent. What I found was that I have always, in some way, identified as a large feline and something aquatic.

The present conclusion: Right now, I identify as a polywere (polytherian if you prefer), my theriotypes being an African lioness and black tip reef shark. Period. I am an atheist, of the a-spiritual persuasion, and believe my identity stems entirely from my brain. I have experienced shifts to all sorts of animals and beings, phantom and mental primarily. I've found myself randomly experiencing the gills of an axolotl, regularly experiencing what I deem reptilian feline (lioness meets dragon) especially in terms of musculature/claws/shoulderblades/teeth/urges, and often experiencing sets of wings along my back, among other randomness.

Why lioness and black tip reef shark? Well, at one point I identified as an angel of a sort with "preferred forms" of mermaid, big cat (tiger at one point), mountain lion, and reptilian feline. Over time, I came to realize that all of the feline (or partly feline) experience could be attributed to one theriotype: African lion. Similarly, I started identifying as a "mershark" and not a mermaid and then realized that my kintype was not some sort of shape-shifting shark, but that "mershark" was my brain attempting to make such an alien body plan more relatable.

Now the big change came from putting together the feelings I've had from birth, the crap I've lived through from a young age, and all the rest, to reach my present conclusion for why I identify as a polywere. I identify as a *psychological* polywere...psych-kin if you want to slap a cute little label on it. I presently believe that my brain adapted from a very young age to always "fit in" be it with other humans or other creatures entirely. I find myself understanding other animals, altering my behaviors/accents/etc. to fit in with other humans without meaning to (the latter I feel is from being adopted and wanting to so badly fit in with other people for fear of abandonment). It is apparently common for adoptees to not feel human, to feel separate from the rest of the human race. The other side of the coin is the belief that my brain's chemistry/wiring/whatever you want to call it is simply different from a "normal human" brain's. To sum up, I now identify as a polywere for psychological reasons, mainly that the identity comes from a combination of abnormal brain wiring and unconscious adaptations of my brain to my life experiences and emotional traumas in my childhood.

The psych-kin connection: I can still trigger a phantom shift if I really want to, but who knows if that's psychosomatic or not. Does my otherness being a psychological deal instead of a spiritual one make it any less "real"? Heck no. I experience the same things I always have, the only thing that's changed is the specifics of my identification and the mechanism for it. Back when I believed my identity was other due to spiritual reasons (incarnation), I felt the same phantom/mental shifts that I do now, had the same disconnect with the rest of humanity.

I do not view being psychologically other as a defect. I am able to hold down a job, make and keep friendships, live with other (non-kin) people, pay my bills, and overall function in society. Being psych-kin does not in any way impair my ability to lead a productive life. Therefore, it is not a "detrimental condition" such as schizophrenia or manic depression can be and does not require any sort of professional intervention or treatment. Psychological otherkinity (to give it a name) is not a mental dysfunction, it is not a gift, it is not a curse, it simply is. It doesn't need fixing, it just takes adjustment just like spiritual otherkinity does. Would my life be easier to lead if I weren't otherkin? In many ways it probably would be, but that was the case when I identified as otherkin for spiritual reasons.

Does being psych-kin make me somehow less "credible"? Honestly, I'd say it makes my experiences more credible if anything. After all, I can prove my brain exists, but I cannot prove my soul exists. But that's a topic for another article thinger.

The bottom line (aka TL;DR): Being "other" is an intrinsic part of me, regardless of why I am "other" in the first place. I am a psychological therian, specifically I believe that a combination of "abnormal" brain wiring and psychological adaptations to emotional traumas from my youth have led to my identification as polywere (lion and shark).

Tags: Awakenings, Introspection, Experiences, Spiritual, Psychological

A Shlion's Experience

A(n) *Essay* written by *Seraphyna* and published in our *Therianthropy* section.

An essay on how I experience my identity.

This is not going to be a topic concerning itself with whys. Why do I experience what I do and don't? Why do things present themselves as they do? Where does it all come from? Nope, none of that. If you're interested in the whys, I have an article here on that very subject. No, this is a topic about that what. What do I experience? To what degree? That sort of thing. So, if you haven't read the whys...go do it. Seriously, it might just help put the whats into perspective... because my whys are not exactly the traditional otherkin case of past lives, reincarnation, and new agey stuff. Not at all. Read it? Good. On with the show.

What is a typical day like. Let's start there. Well, there is no such thing as a typical day. There are days I walk around in a haze and don't shift at all. There are days when I'm all over the place. There are days when I'm constantly a lion/shark the whole day. What I *can* say is that, when on land I predominantly experience my lion theriotype. That isn't to say that the shark is then absent, but more like it's swimming around in the back of my mind. When I'm swimming, it's the opposite. I primarily experience my shark theriotype and lion is padding around in the background. So I always experience both of my theriotypes simultaneously, but the extent to which I experience them flip flops.

Do I shift? Well, yes and no. I am a suntherian, leaning towards some kind of funky polytherian contherian. Whichever habitat I'm in, the theriotype that is "dominant" is one that I experience as a constant state of animality. The theriotype that is "in the background" is the one where I will experience shifts. Since I live on land, here's the example. I am in a constant state of lion. That is to say that I have constant phantom limbs and a sliding scale of lion mindset. I will experience random shark shifts, both mental and phantom as well as cameo shifts (shifts that pertain to neither of my theriotypes).

I guess I'll start with cameo shifts. They are called such because this refers to a shift that's is not related to one's kintype(s)/theriotype(s) For example, I was watching a youtube video on baby sloths (which was utterly adorable) and I found myself feeling like my arms were longer, my nails were super long, and I was moving in slow motion, but it ended as soon as the video did (it was only a few minutes long) and was limited to fleeting phantom limbs only. Nothing vivid here, just randomness that has nothing to do with my theriotypes. Some people's cameo shifts can be recurring or last for an extended period of time, but mine seem to be provoked and fleeting.

When it comes to shifts that have to do with my theriotypes you're probably going to ask me first off if I "lose myself" if I "lose my humanity" (especially if you're coming off of Tumblr)...and the answer is no. I have never had a shift so deep where I *am* the not human thing to the point where I could kill a puppy because I lost myself. In my personal opinion, our human brains give us the power of self control and it behooves us to exercise it.

In terms of mental shifts, I would say the most common for me is prey drive. Here's where I can start to sound a little "odd" because I primarily experience such shifts with regards to humans. No, I'm not confessing to being a serial killer. I have *never* acted upon a shift (except for chasing after the odd squirrel/fish). But it's worth noting that lions are one of the last natural predators of humans. We are, technically, on their menu...so my "lion brain" seeing people as prey isn't exactly weird. I have found myself, especially in crowds, getting the urge to bite into the spine of the person standing in front of me. I often get the urge to chase down prey with tooth and claw. I get the urge to "scent rub" people I am close to and view as part of my "pride" (my group, my family) and this is primarily centered on those I am romantically involved with, wanting to rub my face on them. I also do it to my pillow when I'm in bed, whatever that means. I also have a visceral hatred of hyenas. I really don't like them (don't worry hyena therians, I mean the literal animal). So that's the lion mental shifts, shark ones involve chasing after fish when I'm snorkeling or diving, a strong longing to be underwater among coral reefs to the point where I could easily forget to check my oxygen level when I'm diving (this is why you don't dive alone, kids), and the occasional gut feeling that if I stop moving I'll die.

I've had the urge to taste blood and experience various mental states in a NSFW sort of way, but this is not the place to talk about that. If you're over 18, we have a subforum for that sort of discussion.

In terms of phantom shifts, in my daily terrestrial life, I experience constant lion phantom limbs...well, some anyway. I find it awkward to close my mouth all of the way due to my phantom teeth, I have phantom claws, a phantom muzzle, and phantom shoulder musculature (meaning I feel my shoulder blades should move in the vertical plane as opposed to the horizontal like human shoulders do). I also tend to yawn full on wide open jaw, teeth bared, tongue out...just like a big cat does. In terms of the shark, I experience phantom skin (a shark's skin is made up of interlocking "scales" and has the feeling of sandpaper), a nictitating membrane in my eyes, fins of all sorts of types, teeth in rows, and a tail (I often try to swim with my legs together moving side to side which is ridiculously dysfunctional).

Some phantom limbs become more prevalent in various situations. Fore example, when I'm defensive I often find myself experiencing phantom claws and lion teeth more strongly. Same goes for the random mental shift, for example growling under my breath when annoyed.

I also find human babies and children repulsive. I hate the noises they make (especially when high pitched), dislike how they smell intensely, and am all around awkward when dealing with/handling them. Lion cubs, on the other hand, strike me as offspring. I would love to raise

one, though I would be bothered by the fact that I couldn't care for it like a mother lion would. Yes, lion cubs are the babies I "should have" and human babies...no thanks.

A lot of human concepts don't make sense to me, regardless of whether or not I'm shifted. I find my parents most often commenting on it because they have a serious notion of what "should be" and I often don't share the sentiment. I don't have a sense of morality that lines up with a lot of peoples'. Is it more animal? I don't know. It's not "normal human". My ideas of right and wrong are often not everyone else's. I see a lot of greys where most people see black or white. A lot of my morality is situational instead of absolute. I honestly don't think anything is "morally" right or wrong. It's either beneficial or it's harmful. I don't get the close family bond thing, especially the owing people things when they don't seem to feel the same towards me...and I don't understand money. I mean I cognitively understand it, but I really don't see its importance other than "I need money to live because that's how society works". I'm sure there are more examples, but they allude me. I often can't find the words to describe what I think or feel, like human words can't get it across ...I guess that's another example.

Last paragraph, here we go. So what is the bottom line, while we're discussing whats? I identify as a psychological polywere, a psychowere if you will (though maybe that title makes me sound like a crazy axe murderer) and am something of a suntherian (or some odd flip flop contherian).

Tags: Introspection, Experiences, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Psychological

Of People Who Identify As Plants

A(n) *Essay* written by *House of Chimeras* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

An introduction into the little discussed topic of people who identify as plants (often called plantkin though some prefer other terms such as phytanthrope). They are a kind of otherkin who are not often talked about and almost never recognized due to their rarity.

Otherkin are people who identify as nonhuman on an integral and personal level. What otherkin specifically identify as can vary greatly, though animal-identified people (called specifically therians for Earth animals or animalkin for animals in general) are some of the most common. Less common, but still off and on seen in the otherkin communities are plant-identified people. They are people who identify as a living organism that gains energy through photosynthesis which exists or once existed on Earth, or as they are simply referred to in everyday life, a plant.

Now to define what and who such plant-identified people are a little more thoroughly, they can

be defined as people who feel they are (non-physically) some kind of plant on an integral level. They are people who are, feel, and/or believe they are a plant or something plant-like on an integral and personal level. This identification is a long term feeling of being nonhuman somehow. It's something which persists even after evaluating one's experiences and trying to come to other possible conclusions. They are people that, regardless of their human body, identify as some species of plant. Like other kinds of otherkin, some possible experiences plant-identified people are things along the lines of phantom sensations of nonhuman characteristics (in their case likely roots, bark, stems/branches, etc), mindsets and viewpoints that are attributed to certain nonhuman species (in their case thoughts one might associate with being plant-like), dysphoria over some or all aspects of the human body and feeling some or all aspects of another species to being more appropriate, possibly having dreams about being or related closely to their nonhuman identity, a persistent feeling of being a nonhuman species, etc. The only real differences between plant-identified people and nonhuman-identified people in general is the plant focus rather than another kind of human creature. Yet still, just as there are otherkin of same nonhuman identity who experience some things differently, so to can plant-identified people. Different people of the same or different kintypes can easily have similar or different experiences. The core feature in the end is just that a person honestly identifies as something nonhuman in an integral, personal, etc way.

The number of people who have been noted as plant-identified people or such people have been mentioned are very few and far between. As far as a few mentions that I am personally aware of, they are sadly limited. On Alt.horror.werewolves in the 1990s someone claimed to have met three plant-identified people though none such people appeared to have ever posted on the usergroup personally. In 2004 a small website was created over the topic of plant-identified people. In 2004 and 2006 two different groups on Livejournal were created for plant-identified people. Also in 2006, a forum was created in an attempt to give plant-identified people a place to discuss their experiences among themselves. In Lupa's *Field Guide to Otherkin* published in 2007 one of the people who responded to Lupa's survey and whose experiences were talked about in the book had had a past life as a species of flower. To name a few instances over the years.

Due to their being so few (at least active online in the community) plant-identified people over the years, there is also very little information or shared experiences of such people out there online. Because of this various terms have been used over just within two decades to describe plant-identified people due to the lack of plant-identified people to help set down a stable term within the communities. However since roughly the mid 2000s to present, the term plantkin is the most accepted and most commonly used term to refer to people who identify as a plant. Plantkin is a portmanteau of "plant" and "otherkin" and thus is constructed the same way as many other subsets of otherkin such as angelkin and faekin have been coined. (The word otherkin itself is a portmanteau of the words "other" and "kin[d].") The term plantkin came about back in 2003 (along with term "greenkin" to mean the same thing). Phytanthropy comes from the Greek word *phyton* meaning "plant" and the Greek word *anthropos* meaning "human/man." The term is not an old one as far as I am aware. I coined the term for myself in February 2013 on the therian forum, Werelist. It is a term constructed similar to the term therianthropy which comes

from the Greek words for beast and human. Other terms which I have heard other plant-identified people use over the years include weretree (once used in the early therian community), greenkin (once used mostly during the mid-2000s), and woodkin (also once used during the mid-2000s though not as often as greenkin).

Plant-identified people are certainly not common otherkin, at least based on the number who are active or were once active online in some part of the otherkin community. There are all sorts of animal-identified people, but there simply aren't that many people who identify as plants at all. So, why are plant-identified people so uncommon to the point of being almost unheard of? Well, that goes into the eternal question of why any kintype is more common or less common than others. There are a lot of ideas running around on many levels depending on who, how, when, where, and why you ask. However, when thinking about why plant-identified people are so rare, it seems easy to see no matter how one views what causes being nonhuman in identity, that identifying as a plant in a human body is just an extremely alien idea to find an understanding of such a thing. At least for a number of nonhuman animals, they are not nearly as alien as any plant in comparison to a human. A large number of therians are mammals of some kind, which are not as alien as other animals such as insects or fish (which are rarer as theriotypes). At least with most animals, they share many biological functions if not even some level of behavioral traits in common with humans given that humans are animals as well. However, compare that to plants and they are even more alien.

Broader still to other kinds of otherkin, creatures such as dragons, angels, and elves are familiar to many people both in form and by nature through stories and art. Plants are familiar by form (obviously) but not too often or at all really do we have a chance to see things from a plant's (anthropomorphized obviously) perspective. In stories wolves and dragons, for example, are characterized and anthropomorphized giving some form of view into how they might think and feel. Also, any education into plants rarely if ever goes much beyond how they obtain energy, compared to the wealth of information given on animals in some form or another. Whether one sees being otherkin as spiritual or not, if one knows nothing about something it's hard to know if one identifies as such. After all, it's hard to begin to label what one might identify as without having an idea on what and how other creatures might act in real-life let alone how that might be mimicked in some fashion in the mind of a human being. Yet, even if they are uncommon, there still are people who identify as plants regardless. It might be hard, it seems, for people to identify as a plant, but it is not impossible.

So, though they are uncommon, plant-identified people do exist and have appeared around in the otherkin community over the years nevertheless. We are indeed out there though and have been around the otherkin community for years. Therians are not the only otherkin who identify with something nonhuman which actually exist. There are also people who identify as a plant. Plant-identified people, whether they are called plantkin or phytanthropes, are simply not that common.

- Darahagh (male, southern live oak)

Tags: Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Community

On "Astral Limbs" and "Phantom Limbs"

A(n) *Essay* written by *AshenFall* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

A short essay on the difference between two commonly confused terms and why it can cause confusion and frustration.

In my time in the community I have seen many common misconceptions younger and newer members have fallen into using through confusion and uncertainty. I could perhaps write a huge article on so many of these, but I've decided to settle on just one for this piece and that is a misconception that has been cropping up very often lately.

Many people, especially (but certainly not exclusively) those who come from Tumblr often are seen using the term "astral limbs". Which at first glance makes sense. There is such a thing as astral shifting after all. However, it becomes confusing when you realize that in actuality they are not talking about limbs they experience in astral shifting, but referring to the limbs they feel when experiencing a phantom shift.

And in fact the correct term is "phantom limbs" which really makes sense considering the name for that particular type of shifting is phantom shifting. Whereas "astral limbs" would really only make sense if you were referring to an astral shift where you felt those limbs on your astral body (if you believe in one of course).

Of course, not all individuals caught using the term do so because they genuinely have the terms confused. In fact, more often it is because somewhere along the lines they have been told it is wrong to call them "phantom limbs". This is supposedly offensive or a mockery towards amputees and sometimes even stretched to say it cannot be a phantom limb unless you have actually once had that limb on your body. Where this point of view originally came from is unclear, but this is completely false. A phantom limb is a term that covers any body part one feels that isn't physically there; whether it has once existed there or not. If someone truly gets offended by this, then they are the one in the wrong, because the term is being used completely in its correct context.

This causes much frustration for older members of the community who have perhaps heard this

numerous times before and have to go through the processes of explaining the differences once again. This isn't the fault of the individual using the terms wrongly at all, just comes out of pure misinformation. But it certainly would be nice if the confusion and worry about using the correct terms dwindled.

So if you are one of those people who does confuse the terms, or uses it because of what you've been told elsewhere, here's a little pointer in the right direction. No matter what anyone says it is not wrong or offensive to use the term "phantom limbs" to describe your experience and no group exclusively owns the term. Although perhaps the fully correct term would be "supernumerary phantom limb", shortening it doesn't make it any less correct.

"Phantom limb" for limbs felt when in a phantom shift, "astral limb" for limbs felt in an astral shift or related shift/experience.

Tags: Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Shifting, Spiritual, Psychological, Community

Forum Etiquette

A(n) *Guide* written by *Nyht Myst* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

In the theme of the elders' project, December's subject is 'navigating the otherkin community'; this an article to help explain the thoughts behind joining a forum and the expected behavior once joined.

The change in temperament and quality in communities found on social sites that have little ways of controlling the stream of information (tumblr, facebook, reddit, youtube, etc.) versus the otherkin forums is drastic and intimidating. This sudden change in community process has been known to make those new to the forum welcome wagons feel violated, defensive, attacked, angered, sometimes even intimidated to the point where they flee the forum and swear off forums period. This contributes to the constant flow of misunderstood information, confused ideas, and even blatant lies that continue to be spread in the otherkin social groups, with the better information and more reliable members almost exclusively limited to the forums because of the cries of "gatekeeping!", "Discriminating!," and "Unfair!" being put to the people that try to make the correct information available to more of the community. This leads to more people, new to otherkin, being misled, confused, or even refusing to accept they're otherkin.

Step 1: Finding a Good Forum to Join

In an attempt to help those new to the forums adjust to the change; I'm going to explain what to

expect and how to act in forums, why things are done the way they are, and the best place to start is looking for an otherkin forum to join. Not all forums are the same, some are focused on therians, some on fictionkin, some on mythickin, some accept all of them, and some aren't so friendly toward others (some therian sites don't believe or accept otherkin and fictionkin, some mythickin don't allow therians and don't accept fictionkin, etc.); so it's important to take the extra few moments to see how the forum operates and if it's a good fit for you, as an example if you are a mythickin you wouldn't want to join a therian forum that is unfriendly to mythickin. While most forums have some areas of the site open to the general public, there are some that don't allow you to see anything unless you are a member, so it's perfectly OK to create an account and check out the site before posting to make sure you will get a friendly greeting.

Step 2: Getting Acquainted with the Rules and Expectations of the Forum

Once you find a forum you feel good about and make an account, it's both expected and encouraged for you to read things like Rules, Etiquette, and things that are tagged or labeled for newbies, these things can help you learn how to navigate the forum. Reading that can tell you what subjects to avoid (things like physical shifting or p-shifting can get you automatically banned), and where to post things that are too mature for kids 13 and up to avoid trouble. Even though it's troublesome and takes up a little time, it's both helpful and important to read those things, and all it can do is aid you in your adventure.

Step 3: Making an Introduction

It's common for forums to require or encourage new members to make an intro thread, this is where you will get your first true taste of the forum and its members as they will respond to you (it's the sometimes called the scariest step). It's not only normal but encouraged for members to talk to and ask questions of the new members in their intro thread, this can be seen as an attack or being told they are not otherkin, but that's not what is happening. Questions serve to allow the new member explain themselves and give everyone a chance to meet, greet, and understand, but it also helps weed out trolls and correct any confusion or misunderstandings. When you make and respond in an intro thread you need to try and keep a level head, it's not often someone is actually trying to attack you and, if you get angry or defensive, when people ask you questions it can cause a chain reaction that can spiral into a bad situation. Everyone has went through that and go through it every time they join a new forum; the key is to answer to the best of your ability, be truthful, and know that no one can tell you whether or not you are otherkin, they might simply suggest you look at another term.

Things to expect:

- How you found your kintype (if you have before joining)?
- What kind of shifts you experience (if any)?
- Possible second explanations to why your are otherkin and your kintype
- Suggestions of possible other kintypes or being something other than otherkin
- Possibly more

Step 4: Making Threads

Everyone has questions they want to ask, but it's important to look through threads posted by others before making one to see if someone has already asked the question you have in mind, there is a good chance someone has asked that question and has gotten an answer, and this can save you time. If you can't find the answer, then make that thread and ask away. Some forums have a rule against posting in threads that have been inactive for a set limit of time (an example of why you shouldn't skip step 2) and would have you make a new thread, and some forums would prefer if you posted in an older thread over making a new one to ask the same question. Don't forget to put your thread in the right section, if it's in the wrong section it might not get the attention or replies you are needing.

Step 5: Being Respectful

Forums will encompass many different people and beliefs (members from other countries, various different spiritual beliefs, various different religions), you need to give the same respect to people that are different from you as you would someone like you. This will help you make friends and get information you seek easier. It's OK to be have different beliefs or belong to a different religion because no one is the same as you and needs the same things you do, and you may not always agree on things and that is OK too. What isn't OK is to shame someone, harass or coerce people to your beliefs/religion, or argue with someone over the differences.

Something to Remember: Belief vs. Fact

When taking part in forum discussions you'll come across a situation where you have to figure out if what you're going to say is your personal belief or actual fact, and this is a common mistake; fact is something that has been proven and has evidence behind it. It's ok to share personal beliefs in forums, but you are usually required to tell people that it is your belief; if you don't it will be assumed that you are trying to pass off something that can't be proven as fact, and you may face some negative backlash. There is a lot of stress put on what is and is not fact, because it can confuse and mislead those new or inexperienced with the otherkin community; another reason is that what you believe can clash with what someone else believes, and if you present it as fact they will fight that.

Tags: Newcomers

Guide to Meditation

A(n) *Guide* written by *Alistair* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

A guide for those who would like to add meditation into their journey of finding out themselves

What is Meditation?

Meditation is a journey into the unknown and into the mind. It can help relieve stress, help with chronic pain, can make you sleep better, feel happier, be more peaceful, as well as be more present and discover more about one's self.

Some Otherkin / Therians use meditation to get answers about their past lives/kintypes and unlock secrets that their brain has locked away from them. Since meditation is a wide subject and others can experience it differently, I will be touching the surface of this and teaching how you can try it for yourself. You can also be "Awakened" while meditating for the first time, this happened to me and how I discovered I was Otherkin.

The easiest form of meditation is "Guided Meditation" where a speaker is guiding you through your mind or helps you focus on what you're using meditation for. A lot of the time you can find these guided meditations on Youtube and most people starting with meditation will use these to get used to the feel of what meditation has to offer. After awhile you can depart from these and try it for yourself.

Guide to Meditation

I will be giving you a guide on what I use while meditating, this works every time for me as long as I can remain relaxed. It's simple and it can be used in different ways, it all depends on the comfortability of the person trying this. A lot of my meditation is based around reincarnation but can be modified for those who just want to find out more.

One of the best things to do before starting to meditate is to relax your mind, better yet take a good 30 minutes beforehand to get all of the negative thoughts off your mind, do something that relaxes you before laying down to get completely relaxed. To be completely relaxed is when both your mind and your body is at peace and you will be able to let go easier. When you're completely relaxed, most of the time it will feel like something warm is weighted on your body or like your body is feeling gentle vibrations.

To get started after being completely relaxed is to imagine yourself in a calming and peaceful place to you. This could be by a stream or anywhere of your choosing, you will have to imagine all of the sounds by that stream or place, it could be the rustling of leaves in the trees next to the stream or the stream itself, trickling water through the rocks. After this, you can imagine yourself laying someplace- when you know that you are completely fine with lying there, you can get up and head towards a "doorway" or entrance to another place. Imagine a tunnel after opening that entrance or "doorway" then walk through it. Make a countdown for yourself, probably 10 seconds to remain as relaxed as you can, when you get to the end of the tunnel there will be another door. After you open that door, light will flood in... you have arrived "there".

Being "there" is basically a "name" of the place that you want to be to find out more knowledge.

You could be reliving a memory, you could have complete control over your body as your kintype, or you could be from a third person view and watching a memory that happened. This part of the process is different for everyone.

After you finish reliving or watching a memory, maybe even spending time as your kintype. You will have to leave. To do this, imagine the same doorway and walk through the tunnel again. When you reach the end of the tunnel and out the doorway you came in. Open your eyes.

Personal Experience

When I finish, I feel like I'm extremely pleased that I know more than when I started the meditation, even after a bad memory. Sometimes when reliving a bad memory you will want to pull yourself out of the meditation quickly, this can happen and it's okay to jump out of bed. I've had it happen to me once.

Reminders

Getting the right answers takes a while and it's best not to rush them. The answers will come spilling out at some point so don't get frustrated, give it a few times. Another thing to remember is that it takes awhile to get used to meditating so if you can't do it the first time, try it again. "Practice makes perfect."

If these examples of meditation do not work for you, look around and discover more types that you are comfortable with.

Tags: Awakenings, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Memories, Spiritual

A Newbie's Guide to Otherkin Forums

A(n) *Guide* written by *Gryff* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

Joining the online kin community can be overwhelming. As much as we try to be welcoming, there are certain things you should know going in to have the best possible experience. This short guide is designed to provide five tips for getting the most out of your time here at Kinmunity, and at other kin forums as well. Take it from a veteran; I've been at this for over a decade. The super short version is that there will be a lot of questioning and a lot of pushing for explanations.

We'll also likely disagree on some things. And that's a good thing; that's how we refine our beliefs. This guide will hopefully help keep things productive.

One of the first things I tell people when I join an otherkin forum is that I've been part of the online kin community for a long time; in Internet terms, that means about 15 years. This isn't just to stroke my ego; I want to make sure people know that I speak from experience. I've been in many positions on many forums, and certain things always remain the same. That's where this guide comes in; it's my way of helping to prepare you for what you'll encounter here. There are all sorts of guides out there to help newly awakened kin in general, so I wanted to do something a bit different and write a guide to specifically help those new to kin forums. The good news is that Kinmunity is one of the best kin forums I've ever seen, so you're off to a good start. With all of that said, these are some important things to know when you join.

1. We question because we care. For newly-awakened kin, there's always a drive to figure out your kin type, and we're here to help with that. For experienced kin, it's natural to describe what you are to the forum. Whether you consider what you're presenting to be a theory or a sure thing, we're going to ask you why you believe what you do. We may question your reasons, and we may suggest that maybe you aren't what you think you are. If you've come this far, I don't have to tell you that you shouldn't take it personally. But it's also worth noting that only you know what you are. It's up to you how much you want to listen to us. It can be discouraging when you're trying to figure things out, so make sure you don't let the answer pass you by because other people disagree. It's a fine balancing act, which you'll find to be a pattern here.

2. The battle against fluff is difficult and will have casualties. Let's be honest, people: our beliefs can be kind of ridiculous from an outside perspective. Talking about not being fully human and the like has earned us some understandable mockery. What becomes a real problem for us, though, is when we have to deal with trolls. On any Otherkin forum, you'll encounter members who make outrageous claims. These range from people claiming to know exactly what they are without any significant soul searching, to people claiming to have ridiculous kin types, to people claiming to physically shift. The last one is obviously from trolls only, but the first two present a challenge: is this person a troll, or just severely misguided? Only the person knows for sure, so it's up to the community and the staff to tell the difference. This is difficult, because you'll have some people who immediately condemn anyone who makes bizarre claims, and on the other side you have people who are way too forgiving (that's usually where I fall.) The best thing that you, a member, can do? If you aren't sure how genuine someone is, ask them questions. The answers will hopefully make it more clear, as discussed above. If you do think they're trolling, tell the staff. But if you think they're legitimate, don't be ashamed to help the person out. We were all new once, and we've all jumped to extreme conclusions at some point or another. You might be the one person who keeps this new member on the right path.

3. We often don't share each other's beliefs. The kin label is so wide that you're going to find as wide a variety of beliefs and opinions as you will kintypes. This can lead to conflict, and far too often it does, so it's helpful to know some of these ahead of time. The "legitimacy" of (at least certain types of) fiction kin is a big one; there are a lot of debates here alone about that topic. Similarly, there's debate about whether mythical creature otherkin like myself fall into the fiction kin category. Outside of that, we may have different beliefs about the effectiveness of

some activities, such as tarot reading. The bottom line is this: as long as you're keeping an eye out for fluff, you should respect the beliefs of your fellow members. After all, like I said up in number 2, by definition we all have some pretty crazy beliefs.

4. We are all human. This is another topic that's going to come up, and it's going to cause some level of controversy. Just remember: no matter what your kin type is, and no matter what other unusual traits you might have, every single one of us is human. I'm making a point of this because far too often we see people on forums saying things like "I hate humans" or "I hate human society." In extreme cases we might even see someone saying "I think all humans should drop dead" or something like that. Not only is this kind of thing offensive, it virtually never leads to any sort of positive conversation. I'll admit that this is a tip not everyone will agree with me about, but I think it's important to remember.

5. Only you know what you are. We've discussed the questions other people will ask about your identity, and we've discussed the questions you'll ask other people about their identities. Now, let's talk about the questions you'll ask others about your identity. Obviously it's difficult to figure out your kin type, or even whether you're kin at all. Even some veterans of the forums aren't 100% sure. That's a large part of why we're here: to bounce ideas off each other and work together to interpret the signs. However, as we will always remind people, only you can ultimately figure out what you are. Believe me, I know how much that sucks. The search for identity is long and difficult, and it would be nice if there was some way to get an answer externally. But as I'm sure you know, it doesn't really work that way. The good news is that you can discuss any troubles you're having with us; chances are, at least one fellow forum member will know how you feel.

Five seems like as good a number as any. While it may seem like some of these tips are just common sense, I've seen the trouble caused by people not following them. The forums allow us to enrich each other's experiences and help each other out, but they only work if we all know what's expected of us.

Tags: Awakenings, Newcomers, Community

Introductory Guide to Spiritual Otherkinity

A(n) Guide written by *Grey* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

The guide is meant to serve as a brief, simple introduction to common spiritual beliefs and practices that are relevant to Otherkinity

There are nearly an infinite number of personal spiritual beliefs that are held worldwide to this day. Although personal spiritual beliefs are highly subjective and personal, the rules are hardly “anything goes” when it comes to spiritual Otherkinity.

Otherkinity is characterized by identifying as non-human on a deeply personal and integral level in a non-physical sense. Most Otherkin generally share the same kinds of basic experiences. It is not so much the “what” of our experiences that makes all Otherkin different, but the “why”. For spiritual Otherkin, this “why” is answered by one’s personal spiritual beliefs.

Otherkinity and Religion

Personal spiritual beliefs may be a part of one’s personal religion or they may not be. Otherkinity in itself is not a religious belief. There is no religion that specifically mentions identifying as non-human in one’s current life as a physical human being. This is not to be confused with the widespread beliefs about reincarnation, as one can still believe in reincarnation and experience past lives, including non-human past lives, without identifying as non-human now.

Otherkinity, Spirit Animals, and Totems

It is important to make a distinction between these three ideas. Although similar, they are all fundamentally different, but similar enough to be confusing for many.

Otherkinity, as stated above, is characterized by identifying as non-human. This identity is an integral part of the individual, and therefore cannot be seen as separate from the individual.

A Spirit Animal or Spiritual Guide is a spiritual entity that is typically seen as one’s personal guide in life or spiritual matters. This entity is seen as a separate entity from the individual. Therefore, a spirit animal or spiritual guide is not one’s kintype.

A Totem is a non-human creature that is used to represent an individual or a group of individuals, such as a family or clan. For example, the country of Wales uses a red dragon to represent their nation. A totem animal is not an integral part of one’s identity, and is therefore not a kintype.

Finding Reliable and Relevant Resources

There are tons and tons of resources and ideas regarding personal spiritual beliefs and practices that are available on the web today. Not all of these guides and practices are plausible, healthy, or safe, and many of them are either not relevant or may even be misleading when it comes to spiritual Otherkinity. Here are some tips on what to be wary of when looking at spiritual resources, and what to avoid.

Avoid resources that claim the impossible. Many spiritual guides claim to be able to teach you to achieve feats that may be considered miraculous or outside of the realm of human possibility. But if it sounds too good to be true, then avoid it. Namely, avoid resources that claim to be able to teach you or guide you in physical shifting. Physical shifting is highly implausible given what we know about physics and the human body. Even magic wouldn't be able to make it possible.

Avoid resources that claim to be able to teach you how to “become Otherkin”. Otherkinity is an integral part of one's identity, and therefore one can never “become Otherkin” through magical means.

Be wary of resources that claim to be able to cause you to awaken. Remember that awakening is just the slow gradual process of discovering that you identify as non-human and discovering your kintype. The same goes for guides or techniques that claim to be able to “find your kintype”. Finding your specific kintype is normally a slow process of gradual self-discovery and research. There are no magical means for speeding up the process.

Finally, be wary of groups or individuals who claim to be able to “read” your kintype or who try to tell you what your kintype should be. Otherkinity is a part of who you are. No-one, not even other people who are Otherkin, can tell you whether you are 'kin or not or what your kintype is. Only you know what your internal experiences feel like, therefore only you can decide for yourself whether you are Otherkin or not, or what your kintype is.

Lucid Dreaming, Astral Projection, and Meditation

What these three techniques have in common is that they are all altered states of mind commonly used by Otherkin as tools for self-discovery and exploration. While practicing these techniques it is important to remember to keep a level head about what one experiences through them because they are states in which the mind is altered, and therefore heavily subject to the user's thoughts and desires. This is especially true with lucid dreaming and astral projection, since the user has control over the dream or the astral plane.

These practices are often used by Otherkin to aid their experience, whether it is for self-discovery or just for relaxation or the joy of the experience. However, because these experiences are heavily influenced by the subconscious thoughts and desires of the user, they are not a solid foundation to base one's identity upon. Dreaming that you are a fox is not enough to make you a fox therian, and so on. Granted, Otherkin do certainly experience dreams in which they are their kintype, but it is not the entire basis of their identity. Dreams in and of themselves are just a result of the brain processing memories while one is asleep. Dreams are highly symbolic representations of the dreamer's subconscious thoughts. Therefore, always take things experienced in dreams with heavy skepticism.

Tags: Awakenings, Newcomers, Terminology & Definitions, Kintypes & Theriotypes, Spiritual

Introductory Guide to Psychological Otherkinity
A(n) *Guide* written by *Grey* and published in our *Otherkin* section.

This guide is meant to serve as a basic tool for understanding psychological otherkinity, what it is and what it is not.

An otherkin is someone who, on an integral, non-physical level, identifies as non-human. Psychological otherkinity is for those who believe that the cause of their experiences is partially or wholly the result of psychological or neurological phenomenon. “Psychology” refers to the study of the mind, whereas “neurology” refers to the study of the physical brain. Currently, there are no widespread psychological or neurological studies about non-human identity. Therefore psychological otherkinity is based on personal belief and experiences rather than scientific fact.

When trying to determine whether a certain behavior is a result of identifying non-human or not, always try to find explanations in medical/psychological explanations. For example, feeling headaches in a specific place most likely has a medical explanation, and is not a result of otherkinity or experiencing supernumery phantom limbs, such as horns. Even “acting like an animal” isn’t typically a result of identifying as non-human. Otherkin are still fundamentally human, and therefore have the ability to practice self-control. If one is “acting like an animal” then it is usually upon choice. This is especially true for children/childhood experiences, since playing pretend and pretending to be an animal is a fairly normal and common childhood pastime. However, otherkin may experience the urge to behave a certain way, such as the urge to walk on all fours, without necessarily acting upon those urges. Otherkinity is not an excuse for abnormal or unhealthy behavior.

Here are some of the common psychological beliefs about otherkinity

Psychological Otherkinity as a result of coping or trauma. This is characterized by the belief that one’s non-human identity came about as a result of significant trauma or prolonged coping with personal hardships. This is not to be confused with a coping mechanism. A coping mechanism is what someone chooses to do in order to deal with stress. An integral identity is never a choice; therefore otherkinity cannot just be used as a coping mechanism.

Psychological Otherkinity as an inherent/innate part of one’s Psyche. This is characterized by the belief that one’s non-human identity was present in the mind/brain from birth. It is possible to believe that whatever causes one to identify as non-human was present from birth

even if the identity developed later in life. Similarly, many believe that they were not “born with” a non-human identity, but perhaps that they were born pre-disposed to certain elements of the identity that result in developing a non-human identity over time

Otherkinity and Mental Health Counselling/Therapy

Otherkin are human, too, and it may just so happen that some otherkin seek mental health counselling or therapy for issues that may or may not be related to identifying as non-human. Psychological otherkinity in and of itself is not a mental illness. Otherkinity is not caused by nor does it cause any form of mental illness. However, some otherkin suffer from what is known as “species dysphoria”. Species dysphoria is a term that describes the stress, displeasure, or disassociation that may arise from identifying as non-human. It is mainly characterized by displeasure with identifying as something other than one’s physical body. This feeling can also be characterized by feeling as though one “does not belong” on Earth or within human society due to identifying as non-human. (Please note: species dysphoria is not an "official" name or diagnosis) Sometimes, depending on the severity of the dysphoria, an individual will choose to seek mental health counselling in order to help alleviate some of the effects of species dysphoria. The choice to seek mental health counselling is the choice of each individual. Not all otherkin experience species dysphoria, and not all otherkin who do experience species dysphoria seek counselling for it.

Should you choose to breach the subject of non-human identity with your therapist or with another party, I would highly recommend this resource

[http://www.therianthropedia.com/files/ Therapist’s Guide to Therians and Therianthropy .pdf](http://www.therianthropedia.com/files/Therapist's_Guide_to_Therians_and_Therianthropy_.pdf)

Otherkinity and Delusions

If someone claims that that they identify psychologically as non-human, it does not mean that they are claiming to be delusional. A delusion is a persistent false belief regarding the self or persons or objects outside the self that is maintained despite indisputable evidence to the contrary. Since there is no indisputable evidence stating that a person cannot identify as non-human *in a non-physical sense* (such as spiritually or psychologically), otherkinity cannot be categorized as a delusion. This is not to be confused with clinical Lycanthropy, which is a condition that is characterized by a delusional belief that one has transformed, will transform or are transforming into a non-human creature in a *physical sense*.

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