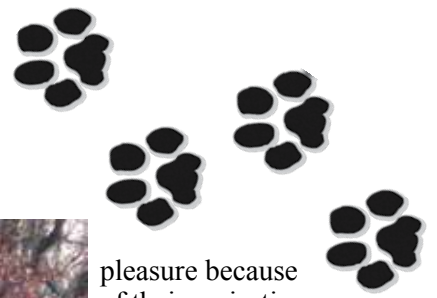


Complementary Health and Healing for our Animal Companions and Friends



pleasure because of their majestic beauty and awesome strength, for which we should have a healthy respect.

The feelings listed above are known as the Human-Animal Bond. This bond is an attachment we feel toward animals stemming from an emotional connection which expresses itself in forms such as; the need to be near or have animals with us, the pleasure we feel from their love, and yes, even the sense of loss we feel when they are no longer with us. All humans feel this connection to some extent, whether we have animals living in the same space with us or not. The fact is that animals, domestic or wild, are as much a part of our lives as we are a part of theirs. When we allow ourselves to feel the natural bond that exists between us, we begin to realize that we have a responsibility to take care of their well-being.

The animals that surround us, both in our homes and out of doors,

need to be loved and cared for, looked after, honored, adored, and told they've been good or have done a good job. These all sound very similar to our own human needs, don't they? They are. We have more in common with animals than you may believe. If we just take the time to really connect with them, and move past being pet-owners, and truly become their friends and companions, we'll begin to find ways to nurture and love them the way we would ourselves. For all the needs that animals meet, it's really the least we can do in return.

The first and most important thing you can do for your animals is to provide them with good quality veterinary health care. The importance of this particular piece of the human-animal bond cannot be stressed enough. Finding a good vet is as important to the health and well-being of your animal, as finding a good doctor is to your own health and well-being. Do some research on local veterinarians, go to the clinic to talk to them, make sure your animal feels comfortable with them, and you feel comfortable with the way they handle your animal. And yes, the level of trust between you, your animal, and the veterinarian should be the same as the level of trust you have with your own doctor. You wouldn't sell yourself short, so don't sell your animal short. Your veterinarian is your first line of defense when it comes to maintaining your animal's health. That care should include, at the least, shots, a general physical examination, a discussion of nutrition and diet, dental care, and ongoing health maintenance methods.

Beyond veterinary care, however, there are a number of other ways to provide good care for your animal, such as: Acupuncture, the use of Homeopathy and Homeopathic therapies, and then some more esoteric

We're energy beings, and people who work with energy can help bring it into line for me, for my dog, for my cat, and for anyone. Animals seem to be more open to these other modalities than humans because they haven't learned otherwise, so why not make them available to them?"

~ Marliesa Back

Veterinarian Dr. John Smith of Petcare Animal Clinic

Setting functionality as the key factor in an animal's overall health allows Dr. John Smith to explore options with his patients. "I don't have preconceived notions about what I'm going to do for a given patient," he said. "If I think chiropractic care or acupuncture would be beneficial, that's what I recommend."

By Mary Runser

The Choice

So angry was the Creator over Man's mistreatment of animals that he drew a line with his finger upon the ground. On one side were the Beasts and on the other were the People. The line grew so deep and so wide that neither side could be near the other again. But at the very last moment, Dog jumped over, to remain forever at Man's side.


Lakota Creation Story

What a wonderful idea, that even though we as humans have often mistreated animals throughout our history even to the present time, that dog would still choose to remain by our side. This story provides some insight into a level of intelligence that animals have, for which we often don't give them credit. In this story, it seems that Dog made a choice, and inherent in that choice is the ability to think and reason. For some, this might be a totally new way of looking at animals, but ask yourself, is it really that far-fetched an idea? How different would our lives be had Dog chosen to stay on the side of the Beasts? How lonely, and in many ways, unfulfilled would we be without the love and loyalty of our animal companions?

The reality is that we choose animals to be our companions out of a need we have within ourselves. If we have a need for unconditional love and acceptance, or absolute loyalty, our choice may, of course, be a dog. How satisfied we feel when we come home from a long day at work to a welcoming bark, a wagging tail, and eyes full of admiration and love. Or how thankful we feel when the dog barks, alerting us to a suspicious or potentially dangerous presence nearby. Or perhaps for the feline lovers, to come home to the soft, but insistent meows for food (treats), water, and a gentle rub that is then rewarded with a soft purr. And what of the days when we are feeling blue or ill and the cat stays by our side. Add to these the many animals around us that brighten our days, give us hope for better weather to come or a sorrowful reminder that winter is fast approaching, and those that simply give us

kinds of practices like Reiki and Animal Communication. With these particular things in mind, I decided to find some people in and around the Ann Arbor area who work in these areas that I could talk to, and then pass the information along. *However, keep in mind, these are not the only people in the area that practice these kinds of healing techniques.* The profiles that follow are meant to give you a sampling of the options available for you and your animals.

Petcare Animal Clinic

 Dr. John Smith, the veterinarian at Petcare, an animal clinic on Washtenaw Avenue in Ypsilanti, considers nutrition to be at least 75% of an animal's good health. "Feeding an animal a poor or inferior food with toxins and filler type ingredients will cause the animal to develop health issues," he says. By the same token, if you feed them too much of a good food, they're going to develop a problem there as well. Everything else is sort of a footnote on nutrition."

Six years ago, Dr. John Smith was diagnosed with a medical condition called Trigger Finger. "What that means is that when someone bends their trigger finger, it becomes locked in place. The conventional treatment is surgery that must be repeated every three years," he explained. These were unacceptable conditions for him, yet as a veterinarian, the complete use of both of his hands were necessary. After refusing the surgical procedure, the doctor who diagnosed him with the condition told him that when he was in enough pain, he would be back. "Not likely," Smith told him. Having been a vegan for more than twenty years, he knew the importance that food played in a person's overall health, and also knew that many chronic problems could be attributed to food allergies; using that knowledge, he discovered that when he cut wheat (gluten) out of his diet, the Trigger Finger was no longer a problem for him.

That particular situation, according to 'Dr. John', (as he is commonly known in his office), transformed and reinvigorated his professional life. Now, he is an advocate of "maintaining the optimum functionality of an animal", and one of the best ways to achieve that is to give an animal proper nutrition. "Almost any holistically oriented veterinarian is going to address nutrition. Chinese medicine, we think of it as acupuncture and herbs, is based on nutrition." Simply stated, nutrition is the cornerstone of good health and optimum functionality. Functionality is different for each animal. Some dogs, for example, have the function of being the family pet, while others are athletes, or are trained for service. Each of these kinds of animals must have the nutrition they require to perform their particular function. "Most animal owners want to have their animal around for fifteen or twenty years, and through proper nutrition and disease prevention, you can do that."

Setting functionality as the key factor in an animal's overall health allows 'Dr. John' to explore options with his patients. "I don't have preconceived notions about what I'm going to do for a given patient," he said. "If I think chiropractic care or acupuncture would be beneficial, that's what I recommend." 'Dr. John' shared a brief story about a client, a Great Dane that had some disk issues. "By conventional terms, the dog needed surgery, but even with surgery, he stood a 50% chance of being completely paralyzed for four to six weeks afterwards. The owners decided to try something different. They knew a chiropractor who adjusted the dog one time, and he's been fine since then, and that's been two years ago." So there is definitely some benefit to chiropractic care for animals.

There are often several different ways to treat a condition. "The first principle of medicine is to do no harm," says 'Dr. John'. "In other words, try to find the best thing that you can for your patient that will help, but also won't hurt them". The options for animal healthcare -- whether they are conventional medicine and surgical procedures, acupuncture, chiropractic, physical therapy or hydrotherapy (especially for athletic animals and those that do agility kinds of sports), or massage and energy work -- all are like a toolbox. All options should be explored until you find the right one for your animal.

"At nearly 70 years of age, I have no plans to ever retire," Dr. John Smith says, "unless Michigan State University (which is where I got my DVM in 1972), and other veterinary schools, begin teaching functional



Veterinarian Dr. Monica Turenne of the Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Turenne became a certified Veterinary Acupuncturist in 2005. "It has brought me so much reward, has made me a better veterinarian, and has given me something to offer when nothing else has worked, or when owners are just interested in trying a different approach."

medicine. There are so many animals that are suffering because conventional veterinary medicine is 'barking up the wrong tree' when it comes to chronic disease." I'm sure his local clients and patients will be glad to hear this!

Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital

While there are several traditional medical approaches that can be used to deal with health issues, there are also many non-traditional methods that can be used to address them. Many of these approaches can and should be used in tandem, and with your veterinarian's knowledge. This is another important reason to have a solid level of trust with your veterinarian, as well as a strong level of communication.

Dr. Monica Turenne, at Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital on Packard Road, received her doctorate of veterinary medicine in 1999 at Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine. She explained that several years ago, she had a back problem from which she was unable to get any relief. She finally found a Doctor of Osteopathy who performed acupuncture, so she gave it a try and found out that it worked! While attending veterinary school, she had the opportunity to work with an equine acupuncturist for one week. "That hooked me," she said, knowing that once she finished school and got comfortable with western medicine, this was something she wanted to pursue. And she did. She attended the Chi Institute in Reddick, Florida, and became a certified Veterinary Acupuncturist in 2005. "It has brought me so much reward, has made me a better veterinarian, and has given me something to offer when nothing else has worked, or when owners are just interested in trying a different approach."

"Acupuncture is a method of restoring balance to the body. When an animal is born, they're born with a certain amount of energy, and as they age, that energy basically gets depleted because they work, their bodies are moving around, and their bodies metabolize things. So as they're doing these things, they lose energy. The only way to put the energy back is by eating foods that have energy, or by breathing." Dr. Turenne explained.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine are based on the balance between the Yin and the Yang. Medically speaking, Yin corresponds to cold and Yang corresponds with hot. As an animal gets older, one or the other can be depleted, thus causing an excess in one area and a lack in another. The lack of

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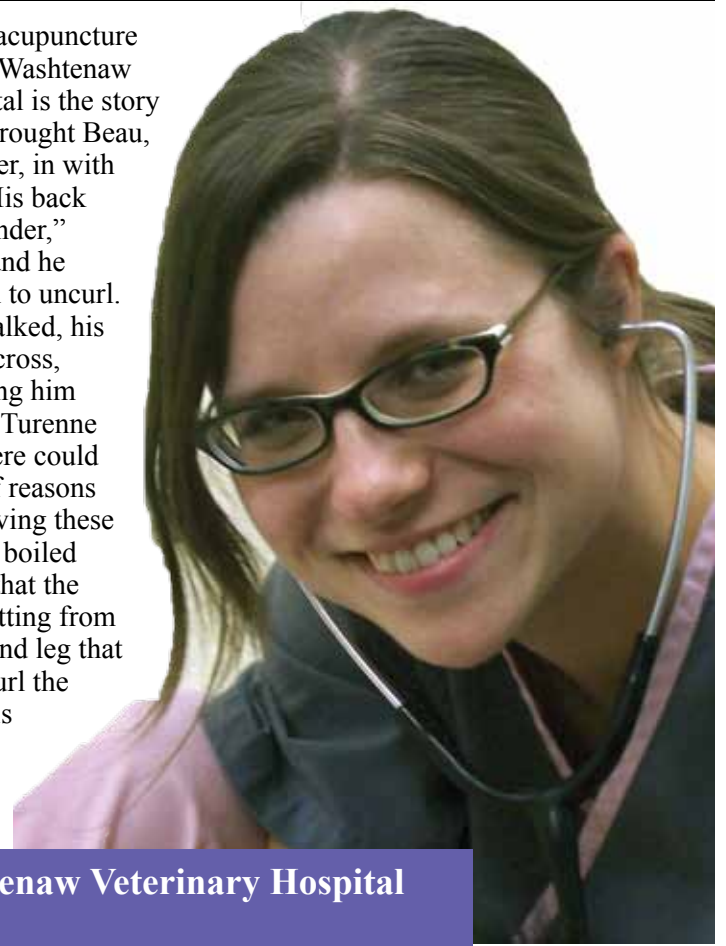
either Yin or Yang then corresponds to physical malfunctions in the body. “In Western Medicine,” Monica explains, “You could have five different dogs that all have hip dysplasia, and they would all be treated in the same manner. But in Chinese Medicine, the reason for the presence of hip dysplasia is different for each of those dogs. After conducting the Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medical exam, also known as the Tongue and Pulse exam, the underlying cause of the ailment can be discovered and treated according to the deficiency present.” Once diagnosis is made, acupuncture can then be used by placing needles in sites that correspond to the underlying cause, thus treating the overall health issue. “It’s pretty amazing,” Monica adds, “because it goes beyond what Western medicine provides, which is often just merely placing a band-aid over the problem.”

Kaya, a ten year old Yellow Labrador Retriever/Husky mix, has Hip Dysplasia. Lisa Bain, Kaya’s human companion, did not realize that she was in pain. The telling sign that the dog was uncomfortable was that she no longer wanted to go for walks, an activity she had previously always enjoyed. Lisa took the dog to her veterinarian to have her checked out, and explained how she was behaving. After examining Kaya, the veterinarian explained that the Hip Dysplasia had advanced and was causing the dog pain and discomfort, and was making it hard for her to perform normal activities. Lisa and the veterinarian talked and decided on a traditional method of non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving medication. While Kaya seemed to experience some relief from the medication, Lisa felt as though there should have been more of an improvement. She talked to a friend who told her about getting acupuncture treatments for his dog. Lisa talked to her veterinarian about the possibilities, and he told her that she should definitely try it and see if it helps. None of the doctors at that practice are acupuncturists, so she had to go outside of that care facility to find someone who could work with Kaya. Her veterinarian was not at all upset because it was in the best interest of the health of the dog.

Lisa and Kaya went to the Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital, and began acupuncture treatment with Dr. Turenne’s colleague, Dr. Jennifer Wass. While Dr. Wass suggested that results may not be seen for up to a month, Lisa saw definite signs of improvement almost immediately. “She seemed to have more energy, she wanted to go for walks again (though only for shorter distances), and she just seemed happier. I was afraid that I was going to have to put her down by the end of the summer, but now, I think she can be with us for some time yet, having a good life and not being in horrible pain.”

According to Dr. Wass, “Kaya is a sweetie, and it really seems like we’ve seen her personality emerge as we’ve gone along. She doesn’t act like an old dog anymore. She still has her lameness, and obviously still favors that leg, but if she’s feeling well enough to do the things she wants to do, that’s what we want.” She explained that for Kaya, she does some points to stimulate her Chi and improve her energy, some points for pain relief in the hips, and some points to reduce anxiety. “Lisa told me that Kaya dreams a lot, meaning she isn’t always sleeping well, and that could be from anxiety.”

Another acupuncture success from the Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital is the story Sue Remington brought Beau, Labrador Retriever, in with two problems. “His back feet would curl under,” Sue explained, “and he couldn’t get them to uncurl. Also, when he walked, his back legs would cross, often times causing him to fall over.” Dr. Turenne explained that there could be any number of reasons that Beau was having these difficulties, but it boiled down to the fact that the signal was not getting from his brain to his hind leg that he needed to uncurl the foot or uncross his legs. Sue had not taken Beau to see any kind



Veterinarian Dr. Jennifer Wass of the Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Wass explained that for Kaya, a ten year old Yellow Labrador Retriever/Husky mix, she does some acupuncture points to stimulate her Chi and improve her energy, as well as some points for pain relief in her hips, and some points to reduce anxiety.

“Lisa told me that Kaya dreams a lot, meaning she isn’t always sleeping well, and that could be from anxiety.”



of specialist, but instead opted for a more holistic approach first. “After four treatments,

Beau was almost completely normal,” Monica Turenne said. “And after five treatments he was completely normal. Now, he won’t even allow you to curl his paw.” (Dr. Turenne demonstrated, and sure enough, Beau would have none of that.)

For those who are concerned about the pain factor with the acupuncture needles, Dr. Wass explained that there is very little pain involved. “There may be points that are uncomfortable, especially in the areas where an animal is experiencing pain, but because the needles are so small, very little (if any) actual pain is felt.” Kaya tends to be more sensitive with acupuncture points in her hip area, and Beau is not too fond of the points between his toes, but they do tolerate them.

So, how exactly does acupuncture work to help heal and restore the health of Kaya and Beau? “Looking at it from a more scientific standpoint,” Monica said, “there are three reasons why acupuncture works. First, when you place a needle into a point, you increase blood flow to that area and that promotes healing. Second, many animals, like humans, when experiencing pain will contract and tense their muscles, so the placement of the needle helps reduce muscle spasms, which in turn causes them to feel better. And then the third thing it does is release endorphins, and when you release endorphins, an animal is going to feel better. That is why many animals feel so much better when they leave, even after only one treatment, because they have that endorphin high.”

The array of animals that can experience help and relief from acupuncture is nearly limitless. Neither Monica nor Jennifer could think of an animal that could not be helped by acupuncture, although it is easier to perform on domesticated and farm animals, as well as some more exotic animals like rabbits, ferrets, and birds.



Homeopathy, Craniosacral therapy and Other Modalities for Animals



Judy Stone

Another well established avenue that can be taken with your animals is Homeopathy, a holistic therapy that treats the underlying cause of disease and illness while addressing the whole animal on the physical, emotional, and mental levels. Its focus is to treat the symptoms that are exhibited by an animal rather than focusing on a given disease. Homeopathic therapy promotes health by strengthening internal defense mechanisms, which begins the recovery process that is ongoing with continued use of the proper remedies.

The cornerstone principle behind Homeopathic medicine is the Law of Similars, meaning like cures like. A substance that produces adverse symptoms in a healthy animal will cure those same symptoms in a sick animal. Homeopathic remedies are diluted substances derived from mineral, plant, and animal sources. The medicines made from these sources are presented in either pellet or liquid form, and when administered, release the energy inherent in the original substance, thereby initiating the healing process.

The trend, in general, in this country, is to take better care of ourselves. With the rising cost of healthcare and the ongoing turmoil over healthcare reform, it's becoming necessary to step outside of conventional thinking to accomplish this goal. We must become the guardians and stewards over our own bodies and health, and the same holds true for our animals.

"People are thinking differently about their own healthcare today, so why not think differently about the healthcare of their animals?" said Judy Stone, a well-known



Animal Lover (and Nutritionist) Judy Stone with Coby Louis (Boxer-Siberian Husky mix) and Jessam (a Standard Poodle)

"People are thinking differently about their own healthcare today, so why not think differently about the healthcare of their animals?" said Judy Stone, a local nutritionist who works with humans, but still has some pretty solid ideas, as well as relevant personal experience, as to how homeopathy can work very well with animals.

Photo by Liz Brauer Photography



Animal Lover (and Herbalist) Linda Diane Feldt and Nala, a 4-year-old Rhodesian Ridgeback

"I prefer to teach animal owners to do the work themselves, because all of these things can be easily learned."

local nutritionist who works with humans, but still has some pretty solid ideas, as well as relevant personal experience, as to how homeopathy can work very well with animals. Homeopathic remedies are much less expensive than conventional medicine and prescriptions, and the risk of side effects is greatly reduced. Healthcare for animals should be viewed in a similar fashion as human healthcare. You should use your veterinarian as a partner who will listen to you about your concerns, and work with you to achieve your healthcare goals for your animal.

Judy Stone, like Dr. Smith, is an advocate of good nutrition. "In order for the body to function well, we have to feed it properly," Judy said. And this same principle applies to our animals. Healthcare costs for animals are increasing as well as human healthcare costs. There are several viable and valuable healthcare options for animals, but the first thing that should be considered is the nutritional value of the food that you feed them. Check the labels on the food to make sure that they are nutritional, and, preferably, whole ingredients. Nutritional food is the building block for overall good health. Beyond feeding your animals well, there are a variety of ways that you can maintain their health, and even treat certain conditions homeopathically, without having to run to the veterinarian for a shot or a pill.

Judy found out, in an emergency situation, the power of Belladonna. One night her Sharpei, Rocky, suddenly woke from a deep sleep and began having difficulty breathing. "It was as though he was having an asthma attack or an allergic reaction to something, but he'd never had asthma, and it was late at night and he'd been asleep for hours, so I couldn't imagine what he might be reacting to. But, it is really quite scary to see him struggling for breath, and I wasn't sure what to do." Judy explained that she mentally went through her list of "potions" she had on hand that might be useful. "I had never used the remedy Belladonna before, but I remembered its descriptive characteristics—that it was for things that were acute, and with sudden onset." Since there was no doubt that Rocky's symptoms fit both criterion, Judy got the bottle from her remedy kit and gave him a few globules, "and literally within a couple of minutes, he was breathing normally and was sound asleep, as though nothing had happened." Judy shared another 'acute with sudden onset story' about using the same remedy on herself while traveling. She woke up with food poisoning one morning, a day that she needed to travel via buses and planes, activity that was definitely not conducive to food poisoning. But she took a few globules of Belladonna, and it sped up the process of expelling the toxins from her body quickly so that she could travel without needing to do anything other than to sleep it off. "Those two incidents," Judy said, "have really cemented in my brain that Belladonna can be very helpful in a variety of situations that look very different, when the symptoms come on strong and fast."

Photo by Ruth Schekter

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Many illnesses can be treated homeopathically. Judy suggests using Wormwood, Garlic, and Paud'arco as an anti-parasitic treatment for animals. "A course of these types of remedies can be used quarterly to keep the 'cooties' away." Turmeric is good for anti-inflammatory issues, while oil of Oregano is a good, natural antibiotic. Judy also told me the items that she keeps in her "first aid" kit for her dogs, along with their indications: Belladonna -- as noted above, it's a good remedy for instantaneous onset of symptoms; Traumeel -- used for trauma, sprains, and ligaments; Apis -- great for bee stings. In addition: Arnica is good for trauma, both emotional and physical; Staphysagria is a good healing agent when cuts inside the body are necessary; and Milk Thistle protects and restores the liver; these two are great remedies that can be used before and after surgical procedures.

Linda Diane Feldt

I also spoke with Linda Diane Feldt, a highly respected holistic healer in the Ann Arbor area, who does work with Herbs, Massage, Polarity and Craniosacral therapy, primarily with humans. She has done work with animals in the past, and still does, though infrequently. "I prefer to teach an animal owner how to do the work themselves,

because all of these things can be easily learned," Linda Diane said. From her own experience with her dog, she suggests using St. John's Wort for animals that display fear-aggressive behavior. Tea tree Oil, a natural antibiotic, can be used for things like puncture wounds, or for healing wounds left from declawing a cat. In general, she suggests that Essential Oils are not good for use with animals because they are too strong. Bach Flower (the essence of flowers in a diluted tincture) combinations, on the other hand, make a wonderful "rescue remedy" for animals. In a rescue situation, an animal may experience different states of emotional trauma, so different essences are used for each different emotional state.

Linda Diane has also found Cranialsacral therapy to be very beneficial to animals, especially cats. This is a gentle massage therapy that works to balance the flow of the Cranial Sacral Fluid. It is a subtle technique consisting of light touch that is relaxing to the recipient and produces positive change in tissue. It is an excellent method of releasing long lasting tension caused by accident or trauma, or simply from being forced to maintain a particular posture for an extended period of time. Cranialsacral therapy is deceptive because of its subtle nature. "It looks like very little is actually being done, but sometimes those are the most productive kinds of healing modalities," says Linda Diane. (For an in-depth look at craniosacral therapy practiced on humans, see the interview in this issue with Karen Kerns.)

I would like to use Judy Stone's own words, taken from her nutrition article 'Creating Your Own Health Reform' in the last issue of the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*, as a closing thought on using complementary and alternative healing modalities on animals. "Before there were pharmaceuticals, people used herbs, homeopathic remedies, essential oils, and healthy, chemical-free, grown-close-to-home food to nourish the body, in order to restore and maintain health, and these tools still work." And they can work for your animals as well as they can for you.

Reiki

Ray Golden

Further removed from conventional approaches to healthcare is the energy work of Reiki. Reiki is an ancient spiritual practice which promotes healing through the transfer of universal Ki (life-force) energy. It is also a holistic therapy which brings about healing on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual levels. Reiki can be performed by placing the hands on or over a recipient, using either fixed hand positions or allowing intuition to guide them to where treatment is needed. And Reiki can also be performed across distances, generally using a special symbol to form a temporary

connection between the practitioner and the recipient. Since Reiki spurs the natural ability of the body to heal, spontaneous or miraculous healings are not unusual occurrences. Reiki treatments can be used with the aim of maintaining well-being, and can be practiced daily in self-treatment situations.



Pictured here: Ray Golden and his "grand-dog" Moose

Reiki Master Ray Golden leads Animal Energy Healing classes

Animals seem to be more in tune with their bodies than humans are. "When I work with animals, I always ask for their permission to give (when actually touching the animal) or send them positive healing energy,"

Ray said, and he explained that an animal will basically absorb that energy until they've had enough.



Ray Golden, a Reiki master for 17 years explained that "because Reiki is natural and non-invasive, it is a good therapy to use for animals. Treatments are deeply relaxing and energizing and bring about a sense of well-being and harmony." According to Ray, Reiki is a powerful, natural, and easy to learn healing technique that can be learned by anyone. And, especially when working with animals, it is often more effective to teach the owner how to perform Reiki when health issues are chronic and terminal because the technique can then be performed on a daily basis, without the need for travel or spending extra money.

Ray also explained that Reiki is *not* one of those kinds of healing modalities that leave you drained and exhausted after a session. "The key is in understanding that it's not my energy that I am using, but rather I am allowing the universal life energy to flow through me and into someone else. It's not me; I'm not doing anything other than opening myself for the universe to do the work."

"It is not uncommon for animals to contribute their own energy toward trying to heal someone else," Ray said. He had both a dog and a cat, and they were frequent energy contributors during workshops and healing sessions. Animals, in general, are more accepting and loving of themselves than humans, and they want to please and help us, so it shouldn't be surprising that they want to contribute their own positive energy to a healing endeavor. Ray was even able to help his own dog, through Reiki and his intuitive capabilities, to transition from life into death. The dog had been ill with cancer for some time, and Ray was able to understand and know that he was ready to leave this life. He used Reiki energy to help the dog be as comfortable as possible, and encouraged the dog to let him know if there was anything he needed. "It was a very peaceful transition," Ray said.

Animals seem to be more in tune with their bodies than humans are. "When I work with animals, I always ask for their permission to give (when actually touching the animal) or send them positive healing energy," Ray said, and explained that an animal will basically absorb that energy until they've had enough. "Often times, I've noticed, after having received energy from me for a period of time, they will get up and turn another part of their body towards me, basically asking me to now focus the energy on that area." Because animals are so in tune with their bodies, and more loving and accepting of themselves, it is so much easier for them to receive this kind of healing and positive energy, and it works very well for them.

Animal Communication

Betsy Adams



Because of their sensitivity to the physical, emotional, and even spiritual needs of humans, animals can, in fact, be seen as “people whisperers”. Many institutions including schools, prisons, nursing homes and other healthcare facilities have employed different varieties of animals to help people of all ages, abilities, and disabilities. The unconditional love and loyalty that animals possess is an invaluable factor in the health and well being of humans.

And this brings us back to the Lakota Creation Story in which Dog made a choice to remain by man’s side. That choice was a form of communicating animal’s desire to nurture and be nurtured by humans. Because animals do not use words the way that we do, does not mean that they cannot communicate with us. Animal Communication is the process through which impressions, thoughts, images and feelings are transmitted between animals of different species. Communication between animals and humans happens far more frequently than you might think, whether it’s through a loving expression, a purr, or the actual transmission of a thought or feeling.

For more than 24 years, Betsy Adams has been using her heart and thoughts to communicate with animals. Throughout those years, animals have shared with her how they work with their people, nature, Earth, and each other. “Communicating with animals is the same to me as communicating with humans,” Betsy said. “My main goal is to help humans and animals share their unique experiences with one another.”

When considering domesticated animals, Betsy explained, “we must realize that these animals have chosen to live with us, to be our companions and friends, they have also made an contract with the Creator to take care of us, and that contract says: ‘I will do anything to make you happy. I will do anything to help you be happy. I am in total service, through love, to you.’” That being the case, they have a tendency to download all of our emotions and feelings, and then try to process those things within their own bodies. Unfortunately, this can be a contributing factor to the sicknesses and ailments and behavioral habits that they develop.” Communication with animals can sometimes be difficult for humans, because sometimes their demeanor, and even their afflictions, mirror back to us those things that we need to take care of in our own lives and bodies.

She went on to explain that we need to communicate with them, verbally and through our thoughts, the love we have for them, and to let them know that it is our responsibility to take care of our ‘things’, that we do not want them to take on that responsibility as their own. A prayer that Betsy suggested we say over them several times throughout the day, whether they are near us or not, is: “As of this moment, I want you to stop downloading my stuff. I will, with the help of God, heal myself. It is harder for me to watch you suffer, or feel you suffer, than it is to heal myself through the help of God.” From this simple prayer, it becomes obvious that the relationship between animals and humans is much deeper than what we generally tend to think. This is something that can be communicated with them whenever we have a moment to do so, and it can be communicated through distance as well. Animals are so willing to love, and as humans, we are willing to receive that love; but we need to come to a place where we understand that we also need to return that love to them for their health and well-being.

Betsy explained that her “meditative method with animals is the same, whether it is domestic, wild, stock, or companion. I allow myself to enter into a place of love, a place where all that matters is love, and when I do, I welcome animals into that place to join in my meditation. And then I simply allow them to communicate their unique experiences and needs.” Once she has an understanding of the animal’s experiences and needs, she can share that knowledge with the human companion and help them to meet those needs through homeopathy, the use of flower essences, nutrition and diet, and body care. She can also help with the difficult issues of the death and dying of humans and animals, and the grief we experience surrounding those events.

Gloria Keefer and Patricia Harroun, two clients with whom Betsy has worked for years, shared the experiences they and their animals have had. Gloria said: “Betsy has been great about being able to meet with us and our animals, do an energy reading to find out what is going on with them, and then recommend things to help. She introduced us to using homeopathic remedies on our dogs as opposed to having them vaccinated. Understand, there are some things that you have to vaccinate dogs for, but you don’t have to do the full complement of vaccinations that a veterinarian usually gives. So, we have been vaccinating our dogs homeopathically for years now.” They also explained that by working with Betsy for so many years, they have learned how to do many things on their own, like knowing what homeopathic remedies are right for their animals at a given time for a certain ailment. Their current dog is a gentle-natured Rottweiler named Zena, and she is a rescue dog. Zena came to Gloria and Patricia with heartworms, though they weren’t immediately aware of it. Betsy encouraged them to use some homeopathic remedies before having Zena vaccinated, in an effort to build up her immune system, and they did. Zena now has much more strength and energy in a much shorter period of time than even the veterinarian had anticipated. “Zena wants to go on power walks and long walks.” Gloria said, “She’s raring to go in the morning, and on the go all day, where when we first got her all she wanted to do was sleep. I think using the Wormwood and Black Walnut to boost her immunity was a key factor in her progress and healing.”



Animal Healer and Communicator Betsy Adams and her friend, Zena, a Rottweiler saved from euthanasia on the day she was to be put down. Betsy lives with seven cats in a “wilderness setting (close to Ann Arbor) with thousands of wild animal friends, plant friends, and spirits”.

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Marliesa Back



Marliesa Back is another animal communicator. After communicating with an animal, she can easily tell someone that their animal needs medical attention, or that they would appreciate some energy work, and can point them in the right direction.

Marliesa enjoys teaching others how to communicate with their animals, “It’s a lot of fun, and it’s exciting to see people connecting more deeply, on an energetic and psychic level, with their animals, and with other humans, because really it’s the same thing. Sometimes, it’s easier to communicate with animals because, although they have personalities, they do not have egos. They have ‘issues’ just like we do, but for some reason I believe that they accept themselves more easily than we do.” Communication with animals is an exercise in intuitive development, which is about being in the moment and not hanging onto the past. When you hang on to issues from the past, all you do is block and weaken your own energy field, making communication difficult, if not impossible.

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Complementary Health and Healing for our Animal Companions and Friends



Marliesa explained that we have to keep in mind that we are energy beings, humans and animals alike. As humans, we carry energy around with us. Whatever kind of energy we've picked up and experienced throughout the day, we also carry home with us, whether it is positive, negative, or perhaps even just anxious. The animals who share our living space can sense that energy when we walk through the door, and they respond to it, sometimes in some not so appropriate ways. And it is usually at this point, when animals act out inappropriately, that we see the need for change, and we generally tend to place the blame and the need for change on the animal. However, when we begin to realize that the bond that exists between our animals and ourselves goes so much deeper than the superficial owner/pet relationship, we can then communicate with them on an energetic level and try to come up with solutions to some of those behavioral issues.

Some simple things that can be communicated to animals are: your daily schedule has changed and you are going to be late getting home; you're checking in to see how they are doing, and do they want or need anything? You want their perspective on having a new animal companion in the house, or what do they need to make them happier? Animals can communicate to humans why certain behavioral issues are occurring, and they can certainly communicate how they're feeling. Getting their perspective on their behavior may result in figuring out a solution. And listening to what they have to say about how they feel may help you and your veterinarian decide on a course of action to help them feel better.

When asked why she would suggest complementary care for animals, Marliesa answered, "Because they deserve it! They do so much for us. Mine really ground me, they keep me in line, they love me no matter how much of a butt-head I am; and they deserve it. To think that allopathic medicine is the only way is for me to think that being a Catholic, or a Jew, or a Protestant is the only way to God, and there's so much more, there are so many healing modalities available. Don't get me wrong, I think allopathic medicine is great; I wouldn't work in it if I didn't believe in it, but I believe there is more than just that. We're energy beings, and people who work with energy can help bring it into line for me, for my dog, for my cat, and for anyone. Animals seem to be more open to these other modalities than humans because they haven't learned otherwise, so why not make them available to them?"

Animal communication can be learned, and while it may sound easy, there is a catch. In order to truly love, care, and communicate with your animal, you have to do it from a place of love. Not just out of love for the animal, but out of love for yourself as well. True love, accepting love. The kind of love that recognizes one's issues and faults, accepts them for what they are, but then goes a step further by encouraging you to love yourself through them, until a change is realized. This kind of love exists on a deeply emotional and spiritual level, and it is not easy for humans to spend time in those realms. Throughout our lives, we are taught over and over again through different venues, to ignore the emotional self. But to really have access to our spiritual selves, requires us to sit with and acknowledge our emotional beings. Once we do this, then we can approach our animals from a place where only

love exists, and can love them, care for them, and nurture them the way they deserve. From here, we can begin to see them as not just our pets, but as the friends and companions that they truly are. *But at the very last moment, Dog jumped over, to remain forever by Man's side.* It is time to truly honor Dog's decision, and to reciprocate their trust and unconditional love.



**Marliesa Back teaches classes on Animal Communication
(She is pictured above with Lotus Blossom, an 8-year-old Japanese Chin.)**

Marliesa enjoys teaching others how to communicate with their animals, "It's a lot of fun, and it's exciting to see people connecting more deeply, on an energetic and psychic level with their animals..."

It may seem as though we randomly choose animals to share our living space, but really it is anything but random. We choose animals that we connect with on some level, or we choose the one that will give us that certain something that we need. We need to begin to understand that our animals have chosen us also, or have made an agreement to share their lives with us. We need to come to a point where we honor and nourish that commitment and do everything we can to maintain their health and well being, as well as our own. For all the things animals do for us, for all the love they shower on us, it really is the least we can do for them in return.



The Author's Own Story about the Human-Animal Bond

I have been fortunate in many areas of my life, but one area I have been most fortunate in is my relationships with wild animals. When I was doing my undergraduate work at Kent State University, I had a biology professor that developed and ran a program called Mother Nature's Children, that was geared toward teaching people about the things they could do to protect wildlife that were endangered, or at risk of becoming endangered. Two of the animals that she had that were part of this program were a Pennsylvania Brown Bear and a coyote, and for some reason, I really bonded with them. She would bring the animals to school with her, and I would take care of them while she was in class, and she would always tell me to make sure that I allowed them to interact with other students. So I was often seen walking through the halls and around the school grounds holding the bear's hand or carrying the coyote pup while they were young. On one occasion, I was able to babysit the bear for the day and take her to see my family. We made our rounds to my sister's and my aunt's, and we all got to enjoy playing with and interacting with the bear. When I got her to my home that day, she was tired and needed a nap so she crawled up onto my sofa and lay herself down. I sat down on the floor beside the sofa because she wanted me close to her. She placed her paw in my hand and I held it and rubbed it as she went to sleep. After not seeing the animals for about a year, I went to visit them at my professor's home, and without thinking I walked up to Genie Bear's den



and stuck my finger in the cage as she walked toward me. It was only as I saw her open her mouth that I had the first hint of fear. I was looking at a 6-foot tall bear that weighed around 250 pounds -- she was no longer the cute and cuddly cub that slept on my sofa, now she could do damage. Those things didn't register quickly enough in my mind, and as her mouth came down over my hand, all I could hope was that she would remember me. Amazingly, she did remember me. She took my finger in her mouth, slightly firmer than when she was a cub, and began to suck on it and trill. When I heard her trill, I knew I was still safe with her because bears trill when they are happy, safe, and content. It is similar to a cat's purring. On that same visit, as though I hadn't been lax enough in my thinking, I also walked into the coyote's pen unannounced. Again, I was in a potentially dangerous situation, but she came right to me, rubbed against my leg, put her paws on my chest, and then sniffed and licked my face. Still, thinking about the bond that I shared with those two animals brings tears to my eyes because it was like a magical time for me. I felt a communion with them that I have never quite experienced with another animal since then. To this day, I feel lucky for having been able to share in their lives; it's not something that everyone gets the opportunity to experience.

...Without thinking I walked up to Genie Bear's den and stuck my finger in the cage as she walked toward me. It was only as I saw her open her mouth that I had the first hint of fear. I was looking at a 6-foot tall bear that weighed around 250 pounds -- she was no longer the cute and cuddly cub that slept on my sofa, now she could do damage. Those things didn't register quickly enough in my mind, and as her mouth came down over my hand, all I could hope was that she would remember me.

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How to contact the animal health and healing professionals written about in this article

Petcare Animal Clinic
2894 Washtenaw Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI 48197
734-434-9055; www.dogdoctor.us

Washtenaw Veterinary Clinic
2729 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734-971-5800; www.washtenawveterinaryhospital.com

Ray Golden -- 734-663-9724; IntuitiveHealth@aol.com
www.RayOGoldenReiki.com

Betsy Adams -- 734 475 4230; ShohNahHahLieh@provide.net

Marliesa Back -- 734-649-6878; marliesa@provide.net

Linda Feldt -- 734-662-4902; lfeldt@umich.edu



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