



Animal Reiki Heals the Whole Family

BY KATHLEEN LESTER

MANY PRACTITIONERS FIND THEIR WAY to Animal Reiki because they prefer to work with animals. What many do not realize is that working with animals often leads to also working with their human companions. Animals reflect their humans, take on ailments that their humans are suffering from or reflect their humans' behaviors. So, the presenting issue for an animal session is often the same issue we see in their humans too. When we share Reiki with the animals, we are often also sharing Reiki with the humans and the whole family benefits.

Animals as Mirrors

The mutual relationship between humans and the animals seems to have originated about 14,000 years ago.¹ Through this partnership, they offer humans companionship and healing, a significant, yet often unnoticed contribution to our families. While pets appear to be “hanging out” all day and relaxing, they are actually checking in constantly with their humans—they know how we are doing, our mood, if we are sick and so much more. They process this information and may respond by reflecting the behavior back, taking on the behavior, healing us or taking on our illnesses.

Most veterinarians will tell you that they see animals have the same stresses and issues that they see in their human companions. They commonly see anxiousness in animals that is reflective of their humans. A recent study in Austria confirmed this knowledge known by veterinarians for decades. According to Dr. Iris Schöberl's research through the University of Vienna, dogs and their humans are social dyads, and they influence each other's coping mechanisms.² Dogs can either reflect or take on their humans' behaviors.

In addition to reflecting or taking on their humans' illnesses, they also share illnesses. “Pet owners share their homes, their exercise habits and sometimes even their food with their four-legged companions. And increasingly, they are sharing

the same diseases; dogs and cats suffer from obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and asthma, just like humans.”³ Some of this is environmental, where both are subject to the same pollutants, such as chemicals or pesticides. But, as a result, both may develop similar diseases.

Our animal companions also work to heal us when we are not in balance, are ill or injured. Just like Reiki practitioners, animals access the universal life force energy and share that with their human companions. Most animals are Reiki practitioners, always one with all life, never faltering in their connection to the universe. So, often when the animal companions get sick, it's because they could no longer heal themselves and they need aid.

Animals also take on our diseases for us, so that we may continue in our work here on Earth. It is common for a human to have cancer or some other disease and not long after the human becomes cured of the illness, the animal suddenly has the same disease, as though they took it from their human. Many companion animals' lifespans are short, and they will come back for use again in our lifetime, so it's easy for them to give their humans such a gift.

Reiki's Infinite Wisdom

As an Animal Reiki practitioner and teacher, I have many clients who seek out Reiki for their animals for all types of ailments; and in most cases, the animal is reflecting one or more family members in some way. Animal Reiki often starts with a session with an animal companion but has far more reaching effects. Reiki is healing energy that goes where it is needed most, not directed by the practitioner, while the practitioner sets their intention to share healing with the animal companion. Because Animal Reiki is often conducted in the home or on a farm where other family members and animal companions are present, the practitioner's presence allows Reiki to be shared by all—including other animals, human companions, and any being present for the session.

During a Reiki session, human companions often report feeling calm and relaxed or may report that a shoulder or a knee that was sore before the session no longer is after the session. As a result, and after seeing the benefits of Reiki for their animals, human companions often ask to schedule a session for themselves.

The joy of the work of an Animal Reiki practitioner is that as animals so often reflect or take on the illnesses of their human companions, we have the opportunity to treat both and work toward a holistic resolution for the issue. Conversely, if the presenting problem is anxiety that the animal is mirroring from the human companion, if I only work with the animal, the issue may keep presenting itself until the anxiety in the human resolves. However, if the animal and human come to the session together and the human is open to Reiki, Reiki will go where it needs to go, and both have the opportunity for healing. Even more, if the human companion schedules separate sessions, the healing for both can be much more efficient.

For animals with chronic issues, I recommend that the human companion take Reiki classes, at least Level I and possibly Level II, depending on their commitment to the practice of Reiki. It is more beneficial and cost-effective for clients to learn Reiki, if they are interested, to share regular sessions with their animal companions. Learning Reiki also eases a process by which they begin their self-healing and the more self-healing the humans do, the better they can aid their animals. This step is another way the humans begin their own healing journey with Reiki.

A Case Study

Cindy sought my services for her cat Sophie for arthritis, digestive issues, constipation, loss of appetite and overall anxiety. Sophie also paces at times and goes into hiding at other times, depending on her level of stress. Sophie had been to the veterinarian many times and treated for all issues, which included dietary changes and continuing pain medication for arthritis. The doctor acknowledged that the digestive and kidney issues are likely due to anxiety.

During our first in-person session, Sophie and both her parents were present. We shared Reiki, and all experienced a deep sense of calm. Over time, we shifted to distant sessions, and Sophie's anxiety and symptoms always subsided for several days after a session. However, with the distant sessions, the whole family was no longer present, and the core of the issue was Cindy's anxiety.

At my urging, Cindy took Animal Reiki Levels I/II, began her own self-healing and has taken over giving Reiki to Sophie. Sophie has been able to reduce the number of pain and



Sophie's family is doing well, and Sophie has reduced her pain and digestive medications.

digestive medications she takes, and both Cindy and Sophie are doing so much better. There are situational stresses that still arise due to some family circumstances and I still work with Sophie during those times. However, Cindy is aware when those situations occur and can ask for help. Overall, both cat and human are doing very well and experience significantly less anxiety and improved overall health.

Whether it is Reiki in the home with human and animal companions or teaching Reiki to the human companion, humans and animals receive healing energy. The beauty of Reiki is that it goes where it is needed; the practitioner is not in control of what gets healed. So, when practicing Animal Reiki, we are blessed to have both the animal and human companion in our sessions. Although we intend to heal the animal companion, Reiki's wisdom also knows to heal the human companions too. As teachers, we are also blessed to be able to share the system of Reiki with our clients, so that they can bring healing to themselves and their entire family. Animals

in their infinite wisdom allow us an entry point to work with the whole family so that everyone benefits from what Reiki has to offer—holistic well-being. ❄️



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Endnotes

- ¹ Bates, Mary. "Prehistoric Puppy May Be Earliest Evidence of Pet-Human Bonding." National Geographic. February 27, 2018. <https://news.national-geographic.com/2018/02/ancient-pet-puppy-oberkassel-stone-age-dog/>.
- ² Schöberl, Iris, Manuela Wedl, Andrea Beetz, and Kurt Kotrschal. "Psychobiological Factors Affecting Cortisol Variability in Human-Dog Dyads." *Plos One* 12, no. 2 (2017). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0170707.
- ³ Konkel, Lindsey. "Pets Share Owners' Diseases." *Scientific American*. September 25, 2012. Accessed December 09, 2018. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/pets-share-owners-diseases/>.