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Animal Reiki – Bringing Comfort to a Dying Animal

Driving with friends through a remote town in South Dakota last summer, I spotted a dog lying on the side of the road. “Stop the car!” I jumped out and approached the dog, who appeared to have been hit by a car.

I sat down and started sending him Reiki energy but, as there are many feral dogs in that area, I didn’t know if it was safe to get too close, so I stayed about 4 feet away from him. His front paws were on the curb and I realized in retrospect he had been trying to pull himself onto the sidewalk and out of the street, but his hip or spine was broken and he was unable to do so. It was obvious he hadn’t had an easy life – there was puss coming out of his eyes and his coat was full of sores. In spite of his injury, after a few minutes of my offering Reiki, he used his front paws to shuffle himself around 180 degrees to get closer to me. It seemed he could feel the healing energy and knew I was trying to help him.

A woman driving by pulled up and said, “you’d better get him out of the street or they’ll run over him again. That’s how they are around here.” I asked one of my friends to help move the dog and, as I continued offering Reiki, he gently picked the dog up and carried him to a shady area of the lawn of the closest house. The dog didn’t whimper or complain – either because he didn’t feel it because his spine was broken, or he was so grateful to be out of the street. Surprisingly, my friend recognized the dog and knew the owner – the dog had been hit in front of his own house. Once on the grass, the dog just laid his head down, closed his eyes and died shortly thereafter, seemingly at peace, all while I continued offering Reiki. It was a heart-wrenching experience for me, but alleviated by knowing I’d brought some comfort to a dying animal.

As fate would have it, my experience with this dog is what started me on my journey of becoming an animal Reiki practitioner.

Reiki is a Japanese form of stress reduction that is increasingly being used in hospitals and medical practices around the country. It is similar to acupuncture in that it balances the energy of the body to improve its ability to heal. The proven benefits of Reiki include reduced anxiety, lower use of pain medications and faster recuperation from surgery and injury. It can also reduce the side effects of drugs, including chemotherapy. It is increasingly used in hospice care for its ability to bring emotional comfort and pain relief to patients.

Because they’re so sensitive to energy, animals respond extremely well to energy therapy, and the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association lists nearly 100 members as also practicing Reiki.

In addition to relieving physical ailments our animals suffer, Reiki can be used to keep them in good emotional health. Out of their love for us, our animals often take on our

emotional pain. Years ago I had a cat who showed me in innumerable ways how much he adored me; when I was sad, I'd bury my face in his big, soft belly and cry until I felt better. After ten years, he suffered a fatal heart attack after an undiagnosed stomach tumor burst. I think it quite possible that tumor resulted from all the grief he took on for me. When our animals do so much to lighten our spirits, which in turn keeps us healthier, doing something to keep them in balance and release their stress is a wonderful way of giving back.

Anyone can learn to practice Reiki; all you need is the desire to learn and a Reiki Master to teach you. After taking a one-day Level I class, Reiki energy begins flowing from the student's hands at will. All animals can benefit from the healing aspects of Reiki. For healthy animals, Reiki can help maintain energetic balance and promote health and well-being. For animals suffering from illness or injury, Reiki is a powerful complement to both conventional and alternative healing methods. For dying animals, Reiki gives them gentle, loving support. To learn more about Reiki with animals, find a Reiki Master near you. Your animal companions will greatly benefit from your healing hands and will thank you!

About the author:

Nancy O'Donohue is a Reiki Master/Teacher who treats humans, pets and horses in southwestern Michigan. She studied Reiki for animals with Kathleen Prasad, author of *Animal Reiki*. You can visit Nancy's website at www.LakeshoreHealing.com