



Animal Reiki at Brighthaven:

Dancing with Horses, Meditating with Cats, Chanting with Geese
at Brighthaven Animal Healing Arts Center for Animals

Recently, I was privileged to take Kathleen Prasad's Reiki III training, held at the Brighthaven sanctuary, in Sebastopol, CA. (Pictured at left: Bailey, in his wheelcart, approaches the front entrance.) Although I was first attuned to Reiki I in 1995 and have been a Reiki III practitioner since 2005, I took Kathleen's Reiki Okuden and Animal Reiki II training last year to enhance the effectiveness of offering Reiki to animals. It proved so effective and game-changing that I wanted to take it to the next level. From beginning to end, the Reiki III class was a beautiful and transformative experience. *(Photo courtesy of Brighthaven)*

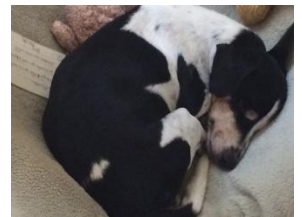


Brighthaven

First, some background about the wonder that is Brighthaven. Founded in 1990 by Richard (pictured at left, with Sam the cat) and Gail Pope, Brighthaven is a special animal sanctuary, hospice and teaching foundation dedicated to the care and well-being of senior, disabled and terminally ill animals. Hundreds of elderly and infirm animals have received a blend of allopathic and holistic care, including a natural diet, love and

attention, Reiki and other forms of energy work, in addition to care by homeopathic veterinarians. (Sam the cat and I had two lovely Reiki sessions over the weekend.) *(Photo courtesy of Brighthaven.)*

Brighthaven has an amazing track record of unusually long life spans for the animals -- up to 30 years for cats, and 23 years for dogs -- and when an animal's time has come, they gently support each individual through the dying process. Brighthaven also participates in animal rescue, creating programs designed to save as many as possible of the senior and disabled animals it cannot adopt, who would otherwise be euthanized. Pictured at right: Lily, a blind dog, curls up during our Reiki III class, soaking up the vibes. (For more information, please visit Brighthaven.org.) *(Photo credit: Kathleen Prasad)*



What is Reiki?

With the goal of keeping this entry a reasonable length, here's a greatly abbreviated explanation (for more details about the history of Reiki, please visit www.acureikihealing.com/what-is-reiki.html.) "Rei" "Ki" are Japanese words that literally translate into Spiritual Energy, or Universal Life Force Energy. In reality, everything consists of this life force energy, so therefore, everything contains Reiki. That being said, when most people think of Reiki, we associate it with the system developed by Usui Mikao in Japan in the 1930's. When we work with this system, we might become more aware of the energy as it moves through practitioners to us when we need healing, or as energy moving through our hands as practitioners to

someone else. Reiki is often experienced as warmth, heat, tingling or magnetic kind of sensation, or simply feeling profoundly calm and peaceful. *(Image from Reiki I and II class manual by Karen Miller, Reiki Master, to me via Kathy Lopez, Reiki Master.)*

Stories from the Reiki III Class

Dancing with Horses...



Nattie & EJ's Reiki Session

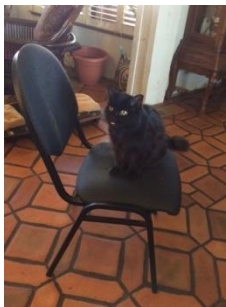
For the first treatment, Kathleen led us into one of the corrals, instructing us to mirror how the horses interacted with us (i.e., if one approached, we approach him/her, if they turned sideways, we should do the same). We were to refrain from "beaming or sending" Reiki, but to just open up a Reiki space. One of the horses went to Kathleen, another one (Nattie) went to the other student.

There was a small white donkey standing a ways off. No horses approached me, so I was content to just open up Reiki and be there.

After a few minutes, I noticed that the small white donkey (EJ) was looking at me intently. I moved just a bit to the side, and he matched my movements, getting closer and closer, until he was standing with his left side to me, his belly right over my feet. EJ is small, just waist height on me. I gave him hands-on Reiki for several minutes, and then became aware of a disturbance from Nattie and another horse. She shooed that horse away and came to stand parallel to EJ, just on his other side. As he shifted position to adjust how he received Reiki, I mirrored him, and Nattie precisely duplicated his movements, accepting Reiki right along with him. Once they were done, they slowly moved off. Kathleen commented afterwards that Nattie is like EJ's mom, protecting him from the other horses who tend to pick on him. She observed that Nattie wanted him to have his Reiki without being disturbed.

(It should be noted that most of the horses housed at Brighthaven actually belong to Vicki Sims, founder of Sadie's Haven, a nonprofit horse rescue. *(Photo of Nattie courtesy of Brighthaven and Sadie's Haven. To see photos of EJ, please visit www.sadieshaven.org. To see a slide show about Sadie's Haven, please visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkX2PO67F84&feature=youtu.be>)*

Meditating with Cats...



I was able to share Reiki with several wonderful cats. Chelsea (pictured) assisted us in learning Reiki III attunements. While Kathleen was initiating us, and as we practiced attunements on each other, Chelsea was under the chair or right nearby, and when we came back from a break, there she was on the chair, waiting for us to return. With all of the many places she could go to, she persisted in staying right with the attunement chair. This happened a couple of times. Later on, I was able to share Reiki with her one on one. I sat in her very own large chair, and she settled in on my lap, soaking up Reiki for several minutes, then she moved a few feet away, curled up very still, for the remainder of the treatment.



(Photo credit: left, Kathleen Prasad; right, courtesy of Brighthaven)



The benefits for animals are similar to the benefits for people. Reiki can:

- Promote deep relaxation, reduce anxiety and stress;
- Accelerate healing of illness and injuries, and recovery from surgery;
- Reduce inflammation and pain;
- Lessen side effects of conventional medicine;
- Assist in healing from past trauma or abuse;
- Reduce behavioral problems or aggression; and
- Support the animal in hospice care or in transition from life.

Photo: Rosie, who spent most of the lecture and meditation instruction time over the 3 days of the class in my lap. She is the official kitty hostess/greeter at Brighthaven and 22 years old. You'd never know it. Courtesy of Brighthaven.

Dancing with geese and Tarka, the kitty who digs qigong... Part II of Reiki III at Brighthaven, will be posted soon! There will also be more information about animal Reiki sessions.

Note: all information in this blog regarding Reiki comes from the class manuals of Kathleen Prasad, owner of Animal Reiki Source, with original copyright to International House of Reiki.