

Our Animals as Teachers: Exploring Animal Consciousness.

By Alexa Linton, CBP, Equine Sport Therapist

Published in Synergy Magazine, Jan 2009

In our animals we recognize a loyal friend, a faithful family member, or perhaps even a brilliant teacher. Cats, dogs, horses, birds and many more furry, scaly or feathery friends, join us willingly on this journey through life, keeping us laughing and light through even the hardest of times. Each one brings their own gifts, sharing with us their knowledge of tribe, fun, or unconditional love. Recently, with the help of both human and animal teachers, I developed a deeper level of understanding of animal consciousness. With this new understanding, my own experiences with my animals even as far back as childhood gained new significance and clarity and along with this, an overwhelming sense of awe. What amazing beings we are lucky enough to spend our lives with!

My understanding of animal consciousness only encompasses what I would consider the tip of the iceberg. It would seem that along with the natural consciousness of each animal, which differs for every species, is something deeper still. Being so closely connected to human beings and our responses to the world, domestic animals seem to experience all the states of human consciousness. In a sense, they hold and reflect back to us our consciousness as human beings to move us towards a more evolved and harmonious existence.

Each species provides us with a different mirror to experience our consciousness as humans. Dogs, in their essence, would like to take everything on for us, so that as their pack leader, we can be healthy and happy. They desire to fulfill our needs, whether this is simply a physical need, such as feeling less pain or stress, or a deeply ingrained emotional pattern requiring release. Illness or imbalance in your dog(s) can be a good indication that you or someone else in your "pack" is not well, on a physical, emotional or energetic level. Toxicity, allergies, digestive discomfort and arthritis can all be indicators for stuck or toxic energy manifesting in the physical body. Once the human pack member is able to recognize the pattern, pain, or stagnancy in themselves, the dog is no longer needed to hold it and can return to wellness. Often a massage, energy work or flower essences can be powerful healers to aid them to let go of any accumulated stagnation.

Cats, as you might have guessed, reflect back to us in a very different manner. They are much more subtle and discreet, resorting to more dramatic methods if change is slow to occur. Cats are brilliant energy beings, holding space for processing and movement of energy, emotions and patterns no longer serving us. Their purr, studied countless times over the years in reference to its healing potential, is thought to bring balance to the energy body. If you watch your cat closely, you can often gain very obvious hints as to which areas of your body require balancing. They will lie directly on the area which they feel is the highest priority. In my experience, cats don't take on "baggage" in the way our dogs tend to. However, keeping their bodies well-aligned is imperative to moving out any energy that they no longer need. A cat with a spinal imbalance or a slow flowing meridian can be quite grumpy!

Horses, as far as far as consciousness is concerned, seem to be a combination of a cat and a dog. Like cats, horses hold baggage only when it is required for the owner to learn from. Like dogs relationship with their tribe is crucial, although horses, as prey animals, have a very strong drive for survival which can exclude an "unsafe" owner from their herd. This may be someone who is unable to be a strong, confident leader due to fear, lack of ability to create boundaries, or emotional reactivity. In my experience, horses can be the most clear and powerful reflection of human consciousness. My horse, for example, can sense my energy before I walk onto the property. Her instincts as a prey animal are sharp, and her ability to pick up on subtle energies is amazing. Any resistance, pain or emotion not acknowledged in my body or mind will almost

immediately be reflected in hers. Incongruency, where the outside self does not match the inside self, is exposed. It is no wonder that self-development facilities are being created across North America which honor horses for these natural instincts to show us exactly where we are. Horses benefit greatly from structural work, including massage, energy work and chiropractics, to balance and harmonize the physical and energetic elements in their bodies.

To give our animals gratitude, for being our friends and teachers, is a great first step on our journey. Acknowledge their natural animal consciousness, those things required by your animal to feel safe and supported. A dog, for example, desires a pack leader who is able to set and maintain consistent boundaries for themselves and those around them. I tend to see two parts of an animal, their natural consciousness as an animal and their higher consciousness. These parts are constantly interfacing, and in reality are completely inseparable. As an owner it is important to honour both parts as vital and indispensable, and find ways to fulfill the needs of your whole animal. Most importantly, always remember that one big reason our animals are here on earth is to teach us how to enjoy every moment! I hope you will join me in saying thank you to all of our furry friends for just being here. Until next time.

Copyright 2009. BalanceWorks Equine Services Inc.