

The Healing Touch

By David Alan Morrison

To the person who doesn't own an animal, the billion dollar pet accessory industry seems like an outrageous waste of money. A neighbor of mine once sneered sarcastically, "If you cut your cat's allowance and bought clothes, you'd have a completely new wardrobe." I explained to her that I didn't need the new clothes, but my cat, Syren, absolutely had to have the hypo-allergenic window seat at \$29.99 plus shipping and handling (plus the padded seat for an extra \$5.00). If Syren didn't get it, how was I going to sleep at night knowing she is banished to the couch? My neighbor never saw my point; proving why she would never own a T-shirt stating, "It's a cat thing - you wouldn't understand."

The American Pet Products Manufacturers report of August 1, 2006, showed pet owners ponied up an estimated \$38.4 billion on their animals, up from \$17 billion in 1994. A stroll through your local Petco would suggest that figure is understated. Among the shelves stocked with ubiquitous leashes, harnesses, and brushes, one can find gifts a bit more... opulent: fleece booties for your kitten, car seats for the puppy and meatless dog treats - tastes just like beef!

To those of us who are devoted animal lovers, such expenditures make sense. After factoring into the equation that many pets are active members of the extended family, luxury items cease to be frivolous.

Equine lovers, in particular, understand this concept, because they see first-hand the enormous amount of energy a horse exerts. Whether it is physical exertion training for dressage, or mental exertion as the team prepares for the show ring, horses are, like athletes, routinely honing their skills. And, like athletic trainers, equine trainers also understand the importance of rewarding both themselves and their steed for that mental and physical exertion.

"Integrated Energy Therapy is a non-invasive technique that I use for overall healing and general health maintenance," Crystle Martin explains. One of a growing number of practitioners in the field, Martin's interest in I.E.T. was first piqued by her interest in caring for her horses on both a physical and non-physical level.

"Horses are extremely sensitive to

people's moods," Martin says. "They know when I'm stressed or depressed and they begin to become distressed themselves."

Because of this subconscious sensitivity, she knew it was important to attend to her horses' emotional needs if she was going to have healthy and happy family members. Her research led her to take classes in Integrated Energy Therapy and eventually, to become a Certified I.E.T. practitioner. These days she cares for her own horse, and does work on other horses as well.

I.E.T. is one of the emerging holistic healing modalities that are growing in popularity. As with Reiki (an ancient Japanese form of relaxation and spiritual healing), Integrated Energy Therapy operates on the theory that the muscles in the body "hold" stress which blocks the natural energy flow through the muscles. I.E.T. is used to clear this unseen blockage, leaving the tissue free to benefit from the body's natural healing process. I.E.T. works on all levels of healing simultaneously: emotional, mental, and karmic. It is referred to as an 'active' therapy, because it is initiated as a way to withdraw and release energetic blockages along the body's power points. Similar to Reiki, I.E.T. is a method of energy transference that is designed to relax, refuel and refresh the body of the recipient and is often used with Reiki during the healing session.

For Martin, this intimate approach to physical and emotional well being has multiple benefits. "It brings me closer to my boys." She continues. "In my busy life, I sometimes feel guilty that I don't spend enough quality time with them. So when I do IET work, it reassures me that I'm showing them how much I love them."

Does this concept of an electro-magnetic energy field around living tissue sound a bit far-fetched? Something left over from the "Flower Power" period of the '60s? Consider this: Acupuncture dates back to 2500 to 100 BC in the writings of a text from Huang-Ti-Nei-Ching Su-Wen *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine or Nei-ching*. Thus the philosophy of Vitalism is not New Age, nor is it an invention of fly-by-night charlatans. In India, the art of Therapeutic Touch using the prana (a Sanskrit word referring to the 'life force'

within all living things) is a popular form of healing. In Japan, the Ki is the natural 'life force' that must be aligned periodically to maintain the body's balance. And in the 1930s, a trained medical doctor, Dr. Wilhelm Reich, coined the term 'Orgone Energy' as a way to describe the bio-energy circulating in humans.

"It's not as odd as it first sounds," Crystle says with a good-hearted chuckle, "We all know animals are extremely intuitive and react to their environment. Just like physical tension needs to be worked out, so does this intuitive tension. Using that theory, it makes perfect sense to apply a loving touch to relax and clear blockages from any blocked areas."

If all this still sounds outlandish, there's always the more practical viewpoint of horse owner Holly M. "I just don't like the idea of shooting my babies full of medicine. I'll try something else before subjecting them to needles," she says. "Besides, I notice a definite increase in energy and mood after any kind of hands-on treatment. The scientists can nay-say all they want, but I can see the results and I like it."

And isn't that what love is all about - making those we care for feel good?

To read more about Integrated Energy Therapy and the process to become a Certified I.E.T. practitioner, check out these sources:

Integrated Energy Website: <http://www.integratedenergytherapy.net/>

Center for Inner Healing: <http://www.centerforinnerhealing.com/iet/iet.htm>

Practitioners: www.chandrama.net/info.php?info_id-1 · www.wholistichealing.ca/integratedenergy.html

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