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Alternative Solutions



Medical conditions can be expensive, especially when you are talking about pets. Pets suffer from many of the same ailments as people, such as persistent coughing or sneezing from allergies, diabetes, low or over-functioning thyroid, arthritis, and spinal conditions.

In researching my own options for alternative health care (western medicine and I do not have a good relationship), I realized that the alternatives would also work on my pets. Some of the options I've successfully tried are homeopathic remedies, essential oils, stones and crystals, EFT (aka tapping), chiropractic, and energy healing. I have yet to experience acupuncture, but I will be trying that in the near future. Personally, I've found these alternatives to work equally, as well as the traditional "take 2 aspirin and call me in the morning" remedies, but without the added side-affects most western medicine has.

I first learned about homeopathic medicine when I adopted a wild mustang, who I named Raven. Horses, for being as large as they are, have a very sensitive digestive system. Within the first 8 weeks of adopting my little wild child (I say little as she was probably only about 7 months old), it was time to give her a dose of worm medicine. Raven probably weighed about 500 pounds and the tubes that the medicine comes in carries a dose for up to a 1200 pound adult horse. There is a safety catch on the tube that you can set in order to only apply the dose needed for the weight of your horse. It was set at 600 pounds (usually there is some wasted on the mouth and lips when trying to insert the tube into their mouths). The taste is less than appealing based on the reactions of the horses, so I had some tasty grain ready. When I put the tube in her mouth and squirted, the stopper failed and she received a full dose, which was for a horse, more than double her weight.

The following day she was miserable, slightly lethargic, itching, and rubbing furiously. She had rubbed a good portion of her neck hair and main completely off. Luckily a woman from the ranch knew what to do. She was very knowledgeable about homeopathic medicine. She gave me a cream to rub on her neck, and she placed some "pellets" into her mouth for the allergic reaction. Within 5 minutes, Raven calmed down and stopped rubbing. Three more treatments were applied that day, and by the following day



she was back to her normal self. After that, I had an occasion to use it on myself and the results were amazing. Homeopathic medicine became my new alternative medicine of choice.

Sounds too good to be true? The concept of homeopathy has been around since 450 BC, and was scientifically developed in Germany in the 18th century. Homeopathic medicine is made from raw natural vegetable, animal and mineral sources. The natural substance is diluted down into micro-doses. They also contain a “physical energy” that helps to stimulate the body’s own healing ability. They are recognized as drugs by the Food and Drug Administration.

Homeopathic medicine works by treating “like with like.” What does this mean? Instead of trying to suppress the symptoms of what is ailing you, homeopathic medicine works with your body to push through the illness faster. Homeopathic medicine triggers the body’s ability to heal itself by encouraging a specific reaction against the symptoms. The body will naturally react against any attempt to make it behave differently. So homeopathic medicine is created to cause a specific natural reaction or set of reactions in a healthy person. When a non-healthy person or animal takes the homeopathic medicine, it causes their body to have the same reaction (as the healthy person), but in effect is treating the symptoms that are unwanted. When the body reacts against the “remedy” it reacts against the symptoms too, and the patient gets better.

According to the “Doctor of Homeopathy” website, “based on the homeopathic principle, suppose a person has hay fever, with watery eyes and a burning nasal discharge. Instead of giving an antihistamine to dry up the discharge, a homeopathic might prescribe *Allium Cepa* – a tiny dose of onion specifically prepared by a homeopathic pharmacy – because onion is known to cause watery eyes and a burning nasal discharge.” Think about it, an onion in a high dose would normally cause watery eyes and nasal discharge, but when given as a diluted homeopathic remedy to a person who already has these symptoms, it causes the body to naturally react in an attempt to stop the same symptoms, which the person is actually suffering from.

There are many benefits of homeopathic medicine. First, there are no side effects or rebound effects. However, sometimes the symptoms do appear worse for a few days after treatment. This is known as “homeopathic aggravation,” which is actually considered a good sign as the remedy is considered to be working. If the remedy is not what your body needs or wants, there is simply no reaction at all. It also helps speed up the recovery time as the body is not fighting against a foreign medicine, but instead working with a natural remedy. The dosage is generally a lot smaller than traditional medicine. The effectiveness of the homeopathic remedy depends on its ability to provoke a cellular reaction, not on the quantity taken. It is only with the correct dosage the body’s cells will react. Also, you can combine multiple types of homeopathic remedies together without them reacting against each other. Most importantly, relief is almost immediate, usually with 5-10 minutes of being ingested or applied. Homeopathy is safe for babies, children, pregnant women, and animals.

Homeopathy may not be able to cure all ailments or be for everyone. Some people, especially those with long chronic ailments may not respond to treatment. If you are already on medicine, don’t stop and begin homeopathic remedies. Check with your doctor, or seek out a homeopathic pharmacy/doctor to review what remedies might work in addition to the medicine you are already taking. Also, sometimes once you begin a homeopathic remedy, as your body heals, your symptoms might change, and therefore the original remedy may no longer work. Keep in mind that the remedies would need to change as your symptoms change. Finally, in order for any treatment to work, you have to believe it will. This is true for any treatment you seek out. If you believe that nothing will work, then you will get that result (it is called the Law of Attraction – your thoughts are energy and they create your reality).



Some of the common homeopathic remedies that I use are included below.

| Symptom | Remedy |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Allergies | Histaminum hydrochlorium (pellets) |
| Burns or cuts | Calendula (cream) |
| Colds | Zicam (nasal gel or lozenges) |
| Infection | Colloidal Silver 30ppm (drops) |
| Inflammation | Arnica Montana (pellets) |
| Joint/Muscle Pain (improved by motion) | Rhus Tox (pellets) |
| Joint/Muscle Pain (not improved by motion) | Ruta Graveolens (pellets) |
| Nerve Pain | Hypericum Perforatum (pellets) |
| Pain/Trauma/Stress | Arnica Montana (pellets) |
| Punctures | Ledum Palustre or Hypericum Perforatum (pellets) |
| Stress | Rescue Remedy (drops) |



Animal Chiropractic

When my horse Raven was about 2 years old, we started training her to carry a rider on her back. She had already been trained to wear a saddle, but not to carry a rider because she was not old enough and her leg joints were not fully developed. The ground-work and foundation for carry a rider had already been laid, but due to my lack of experience, I hired a trainer to do the actual in saddle work. After the first session, the trainer was pleased and predicted he would be riding her in less than 30 days due to the training she had already received and her willingness to cooperate. Due to other responsibilities, he was only able to work with her 3 times a week. Exactly 2 weeks after he began, I met him at the ranch and watched as he worked with her. We had just moved her to this location the day before, and I wasn't expecting a lot of progress due to the stress from moving. She amazed me as that evening, he gently and quietly climbed onto her back and began riding. She quickly took to the trainer and responded to his every request. Raven never refused any request and learned to work off of his leg pressure, with light pressure being applied to her mouth/bit.

One day, while out playing, she and her sister were running around their enclosure, when she came running up to the back fence. She was going too fast, and wouldn't be able to slow down in time or turn without crashing into the metal fence. She chose to attempt to jump the fence instead. Unfortunately, Raven was less than 14 hands high (pony size), and the jump was less than successful. Instead of jumping the fence, she landed on top of it, her belly smack dab in the middle. To my horror, she began to teeter-totter back and forth, finally sliding backwards, until her rear legs touched the ground. She lifted her front feet off of the fence, and continued running as if nothing happened. I immediately called her over to check her, and there appeared to be no damage or injury.

A week later, when working with her trainer, she became stubborn and began refusing to work. When he would get on her back, she would turn her head to the left and attempt to bite his leg/foot. The vet was called in, but he could find no injury to explain the behavior. He chalked it up to the “terrible twos” and advised the trainer to “push” her through the behavior. After 2 weeks, Raven finally refused to do any work at all. I know my horse and her personality, and knew that there was a physical issue going on and that it wasn’t just stubborn refusal. I learned about an animal chiropractor named Dr. Troy Stevens. I called and scheduled an appointment that weekend.

When Dr. Stevens arrived, he did an initial examination. Then he asked the trainer (who was also present) to show him the behavior she was doing. When the trainer climbed on her back, and gently squeezed his legs (to prompt forward movement), Raven turned her head to the left and tried to bite him. Dr. Stevens did lots of testing on the left side of her ribs and noticed a slight displacement of one of her ribs. It was the exact area where a rider’s leg would lay and apply pressure when requesting forward movement. Dr. Stevens worked on her ribs to align them back into place. He also instructed no riding for the next 2 weeks, in addition to massage therapy. I also used the homeopathic remedy arnica to help relieve any trauma or pain she was experiencing. After her 2 week reprieve and massage therapy, Raven was happily back doing saddle work and carrying a rider without any further refusal or stubbornness.

I’ve since worked with Dr. Stevens on multiple occasions, including using him as my own personal chiropractor. Besides people and horses, Dr. Stevens has also gone to school for and has been certified to perform chiropractic on cats and dogs. He devotes Tuesdays and Thursdays to working at 2 different holistic vet practices where he helps cats and dogs. On the weekends and/or evenings, he will schedule appointments for his equine clients. It’s always amazing to watch him work with the horses. He comes armed with carrots, and you can always tell when he finds something out of place. The horse will briefly tense, until the adjustment is made, and then they relax and breathe a sigh of relief. When he massages the area, their head usually drops and they start to fall asleep.

Dr. Troy Stevens can be found at:



Dixon Family Chiropractic
1330 N. Lincoln Street, Dixon, CA 95620
707-678-0170

Integrative Veterinary Center
5524A Elvas Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95819
916-454-1825

Integrative Animal Medicine
635 Anderson Road, Suite 20, Davis, CA 95616
530-405-4000



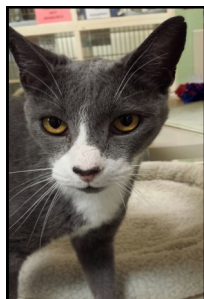
Shelter Stars

Being able to communicate with animals has been a blessing in my life. Animals have given me so much comfort and joy, that I felt compelled to somehow pay it forward. So in December 2010 I started volunteering at the Solano County Animal Shelter. Every Sunday, I select 2-3 dogs or cats to work with. I send them healing energy and help them work out issues such as fear, trust, abandonment, sadness, etc. Some just need to be touched and loved. Others need to understand why they are there. Whatever the need, I do what I can to help them.

I wish I could adopt them all, but my home (not to mention my budget) is not large enough for them all. So in addition to working with the animals, I decided to start a Facebook campaign. I take their pictures and I write a bio story on

their personality, and likes and dislikes that they communicate. Here are a couple of the adorable animals that are still available for adoption at the Solano County Animal Shelter in Fairfield, CA. Each animal is assigned a special ID number that starts with A.

If you are interested in adopting one of them, contact the shelter at 707-784-1356 or visit them Tuesday-Friday 10:00-6:00 or Saturday 10:00-5:00. Don't forget to mention their ID



#A172767 (Jasper)

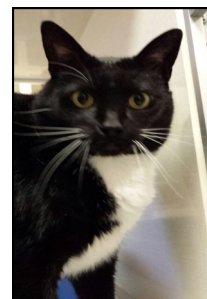
Meet Jasper, a male gray/white domestic shorthair. His age is unknown. He has been at the shelter since 2/16/13 and was found as a stray in Rio Vista.

Jasper is a gentle soul, with a very soft energy. He is a love bug with the most gorgeous eyes. He has a soft purr and kind soul.

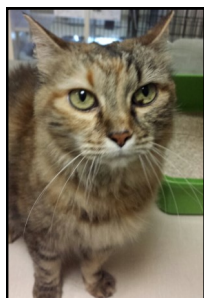
#A172860 (Rio)

Meet Rio, a female black/white domestic shorthair. She is 7 years old. She has been at the shelter since 2/21/13 and was found as a stray in Vallejo.

Rio is very outgoing. She is super friendly and likes to be the center of attention. Don't let her age fool you, she has lots of energy and love to give.



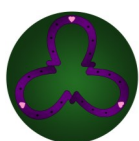
#A174446 (Muffin)



Meet Muffin, a female tortie domestic longhair. She is 6 years old. She has been at the shelter since 4/23/13 and was found as a stray in Vacaville.

Muffin is a little sad. She really wants a home, but gets depressed a little more every day she is at the shelter. She is cute and a little sassy. She would be better in a home with no other animals.

If you can't adopt, consider volunteering. Contact your local animal shelter for more information.



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