

My Animal Reiki Practice

BY ROSE O'CONNOR

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROSE O'CONNOR



Ace says thank you to all.

THE 25-YEAR-OLD pony named Ace walked stiffly across the small paddock where six of us stood offering him Reiki. During the session, in which he let us know he was receiving the energy by blowing, stretching his head and neck downward, softening his eyes, swishing his tail gently, and periodically turning his head sideways to look at us, he never moved from his spot on the other side of the paddock. Despite the space between us, we all felt the

powerful pull of Reiki fiercely lighting up our hands and the feeling of love that encased us. And then, after a time, he ambled over to where we stood and, one by one, he moved down the row, stopping to lick and smell each of our hands as if in thanks, then turned and walked away, his gait a bit less stiff, his energy regal.

Sometimes greatness shows up when you least expect it, like above a barn in a cozy classroom with six Animal Reiki students while teaching your first Animal Reiki class. It's something you've been dreaming of doing for simply years. You've been studying different methods. You've been sharing Reiki with animals, all the time wondering if you really knew what you were doing.

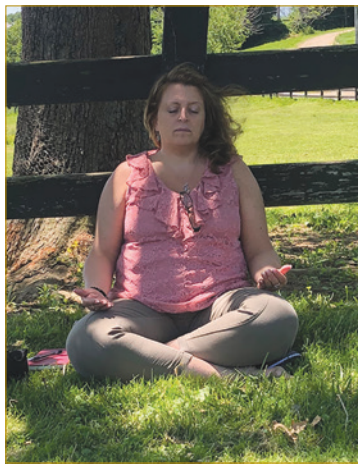
And then, finally, after six long years of waiting, sometimes patiently and sometimes not, the International Center for Reiki Training's Animal Reiki course was in your hands. A Master class syllabus completed, and a teaching manual in front of you. After many days of preparation, reading, and practicing your lectures, the day finally arrived. You see six faces filled with rapt attention, waiting for your next

word to spill out. Then, below you, are the sounds of horses blowing through their noses as they munched hay in the stalls. More horses grazed and ran outside the windows, catching your eye as you spoke.

To say this work was a dream come true for me would be an understatement. It finally combined my innate love of horses and my years of working with them with my deep desire to teach Animal Reiki, something I've been



Animal Reiki I & II.



Animal Reiki Placement.



Animal Reiki I & II in June.

training for since 2013. Then, as if to acknowledge its rightness, the Universe graced us with the biggest rainbow I've ever seen the day prior, appearing out of a cloudy sky just down the road from the horse farm where the class was to be held.

Gratitude swelled in my heart as I sat that first morning looking upon the student's beautiful faces, already filled with the love of Reiki, eager to learn to take this to the animals. I gently encouraged them to be in a receiving mode, explaining that the blessings and healings they were about to experience over the next two days were for them. The sacredness of this work flowed, with Reiki's guidance, from the first moment and continued to be present throughout the Animal Reiki Placements, the healing Experiences, and the practicum with their most magnificent teachers, the horses themselves.

During our Animal Reiki I Placement, one student saw herself running with a beautiful horse. She saw the very same horse out the window when she opened her eyes. The connection continued for them, the beautiful brown and white Appaloosa mare looking for her each time we appeared outside. The student, who knew nothing about horses before the class, felt an ancestral connection.

Another student felt her heart crack open during the Placement as if Reiki allowed her to come more fully into her Authentic Self. And another shared, through tears of joy, the feeling that the animals were calling her home. This feeling continued to blossom for her during the work with the horses.

Coming home to ourselves is such an apt description of this work. The animals continued to teach us as the students learned to shift their energy, be in the present moment, and exchange blessings with them. This exchange is so different from the centuries of dominion over the animal kingdom that it is simply miraculous

how much they still love us, despite what we have done to them in the past. Yet, as one student heard the animals say, "We have been waiting for you to return." Indeed, every loving interaction was received wholeheartedly by our equine teachers and returned in full.

Allowing the day to flow as it wished, I found we had some extra time in the morning on the first day. The sun peeked through the clouds, so we ventured outside to conduct a group session with the Divine Animal Kingdom. There were four beautiful mares in the field behind the barn where our classroom was located, and they looked up as if to say, "What took you so long?" The group was divided into pairs to work with three of the four horses as we invoked the Divine Animal Kingdom to come and work with us for this Reiki session. Three of the horses, including the fourth we hadn't specifically included, came forward to roll in the same spot, shake, blow, and snort. The energy was palpable throughout, and the connection surprised and delighted us all. The fourth horse taught us she wasn't to be left out! All were welcome in the circle of the Divine Animal Kingdom.

The horses spoke, and we practiced listening. We learned that by listening to the subtle signs with our outer vision and inner awareness, the messages we received were of love and compassion, oneness, and understanding. The animals showed us beyond any doubt they are always here for us if we can be present and listen. Can we let go of expectations? Can we let go of ego or the need to do anything, fix anything, be anything other than the Divine presence we already are?

The lessons for us all are profound and so needed. We are being called to pay attention by the animals and nature. The richness we have to receive from them knows no



Top: Is it my turn yet?

Middle: Honeybrook Farm at sunset.

Bottom: A Reiki moment.



limits and can teach us what it is to love ourselves genuinely. But, beyond that, what else do we need to do?

Ace, the older pony, reminded me of the answer to this question a few weeks after our class. Already carrying ill health, he injured himself, and I offered my help with Reiki. I now found myself in a vastly different place, where I could allow myself to feel the human pressure of “doing something” to help. But when I visited Ace and offered him Reiki, though he accepted it gracefully as he continued to graze and even came over and thanked me, the message received by my subtle senses was clear that he was okay the way he was. He knew his life was ending, and he was okay with it. He didn’t need me to fix him or save him. It was a valuable reminder that we all have our time, purpose, and path. The animals are here to teach us genuine compassion. This compassion sees and respects one another on our individual journeys in life, both animal and human.



As incredible as this first class was, the next class was equally so. I had two students for an online Animal Reiki I & II class a few weeks later. During the Animal Reiki II Placement, one student embodied each animal in the Divine Animal Circle, exactly feeling what it was like to be that animal, an experience so visceral she wished she could share it with everyone. The other student met my Animal Reiki guide during her healing session with a dog who had crossed the Rainbow Bridge. He came forward to say he would be proud and pleased to help me with these classes and showed himself as being a highly enlightened being. I’ve written about him in one of my previous articles in this magazine and, ironically, had his photo on my altar for that class.¹

Just a few days ago, I had a gathering of the students who attended the first class to see how their lives and their relationships with their animals had changed since then. What followed is a great example of the question often arising about why one must first learn human Reiki to take this course. It becomes clear quickly that ease of communication and understanding around Reiki with the animal’s human companion is vital to working with their

animal companion, as the two are intricately connected. You reach one, you can reach the other, and the two become more entwined.

Reiki illustrated this beautifully to one of my students while working with an autistic nine-year-old boy. She is a counselor who uses Reiki in her practice, and after she gave the young boy Reiki, he asked for Reiki for his frog, saying he knew it could help his frog. She complied, knowing it was a way to connect more deeply with the boy, and was amazed at the frog's response, first moving its legs rapidly and then falling asleep! Later, the boy contacted her, saying he thought the Reiki really helped his frog, who was still sleeping deeply! She now looks forward eagerly to exploring combined sessions with her clients.

The students shared that the animals talked to them and sought them out as if a door had been opened. Inspiring work naturally allows a deeper level of communication with the animal kingdom, a greater appreciation of oneness with nature and all of life, and a deep sense of being grounded in our human bodies while simultaneously connected to our Divine Light.

Animal Reiki is not just for animal lovers but for anyone who loves Earth and seeks a greater sense of unity, something so needed in the world today. Therefore, it feels important to share the impact this energy is giving to us.

While much of the outer world moves through waves of rage and revolution, twists and turns, fears, and judgment, I feel Animal Reiki has allowed me to become like a lighthouse on the edge of a stormy sea—grounded, centered, and filled with a steady light of love. I know it has moved my consciousness to develop the Holy Fire® III energy fully in me, making sense for both my body and my spirit, weav-

ing one to the other, unifying me with all that is, no longer separate from it but part of it and it a part of me. Peace and harmony are what the animals wish to teach us right now—how to get along, respect each other's differences, and remain in a state of love.

Gratitude abounds for those who listened and nurtured the patient birthing of this energy - Colleen Benelli, Sioux Strong, Robyn Benelli, and Pamela Allen-LeBlanc. A special note of thanks to William Rand for bringing it forward through the ICRT so many others can experience its wonder. And many thanks to Kaitlyn McGarvey and Callie King of Honeybrook Stables and the staff who made our Animal Reiki class possible.² Finally, deep gratitude and love to the animals themselves for welcoming us home. ■

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Rose O'Connor is an Usui/Holy Fire® III Reiki Master, a Holy Fire® III Karuna Reiki® Master. She is also certified to practice and teach Animal Reiki in the Let Animals Lead® method founded by Kathleen Prasad. Her passions include sharing Reiki with animals and their human companions, writing, teaching, traveling, and communing with nature. She shares Reiki in Colorado and Pennsylvania, and around the world. Please write to her anytime at rose@reikislove.com, as she would love to hear from you!

Endnotes

¹ "Letting Animals Lead," *Reiki News Magazine*, Winter 2019, 58.

² Honeybrook Stables, Honeybrook, PA. <https://www.horseclass.com/honeybrook-stables>.