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Horse showing Reiki registers.

# Learning the Language of Love

## Part One

BY ROSE O'CONNOR

IT'S BEEN ALMOST TWO WEEKS since our Reiki for Horses class with Anna Twinney, and the connection is still most powerful in my mind and in my heart. We were learning the language of the horse, the language that will allow us to bring Reiki to these magnificent animals.

Anna Twinney's Reiki class is one offshoot of the important role she has played in the natural horsemanship movement. Ever since the domestication of the horse more than 6000 years ago,<sup>1</sup> many of the methods for bringing a horse under the control of its rider have been less than gentle—like the cowboy 'tradition of the American West' in which force is used in order to break a number of horses in a short amount of time.<sup>2</sup> Yet gentler training methods have been used as well. In the early to mid-1900s Tom and Bill Dorrance of Oregon were influential in the conception of the natural horsemanship movement.<sup>3</sup> One of their most famous students, Ray Hunt, started teaching natural horsemanship clinics in the mid-'70s. Ray was known to start each of his clinics by saying, "I'm here for the horse, to help him get a better deal."<sup>4</sup> In the 1980s, natural horsemanship gained even more recognition and popularity with the help of trainers like Monty Roberts<sup>5</sup> and Pat Parelli.<sup>6</sup> Monty started the International Learning Center (MRILC) for horses and Anna became the MRILC's first head instructor, developing the program and even originating several of the courses at Roberts' California ranch.<sup>7</sup>

For the past two weekends, I've had the privilege of watching and listening to Anna, first at the Denver Horse Expo and then at a workshop in Littleton, Colorado at Happy Dog Ranch, a non-profit facility that offers a home to horses, alpacas, sheep, dogs and other rescue animals. Happy Dog provides educational, vocational, and therapeutic programs for people of all ages and backgrounds.<sup>8</sup> This particular workshop is called Energy Healing for Horses, and most of the participants are trained in Reiki. After several full days of listening to Anna and working with her and the horses, I am just beginning to fully understand the measure of her mission in life. Her Divine purpose is to give horses a voice. She is an Usui/Holy Fire and Holy Fire Karuna Reiki® Master, a internationally acclaimed natural horsemanship clinician and trainer and an animal communicator. Horses speak to Anna and she listens. When offering Reiki to the horse, Anna explains, we are merely the servants of the horse, just as we are servants of Reiki. We are the conduit for the energy. And in order to be that conduit,

we must allow our ego and personality to step aside in order to give way to the horse's voice. He or she cannot speak to us in the same way another human can, and we cannot hear him/her with just our ears. We must learn to listen with all of our senses and feel from our heart—to begin to learn the language of love.

This is something we can all connect with, whether we have horses or not. We think, rather egotistically, that we are perhaps the most intelligent species on the planet, and yet we fail to live in the moment; we are so often distracted by the world that we fail to live in it. Horses do not fail. Their language is clear and purposeful and rich. It is quite possibly more sophisticated than our own.

Before we go outside to have our first encounter with a horse and do chakra balancing, I strengthen my light with Reiki. I bring Reiki into my heart space and set an intention for clear communication and pure Reiki to flow through me for the remainder of this day. Many of the other students in this class have just finished Reiki Level I & II with Anna over the previous two days, and they bring much enthusiasm to sharing this newfound gift with the horses.

But first we must learn to dance. As Anna explains, when offering Reiki to a horse, the horse is the one choreographing and leading the dance, and we must learn to follow. The language of the horse is visual, energetic and spoken through body language. We must learn to see as the horse sees; to be visually aware of every nuance from him and from his surroundings. We must open energetically, using our Reiki, to sense what is happening to the

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia. Retrieved April 5, 2015, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestication\\_of\\_the\\_horse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestication_of_the_horse).

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia. Retrieved April 14, 2015, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural\\_horsemanship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_horsemanship).

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia. Retrieved April 15, 2015, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom\\_and\\_Bill\\_Dorrance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_and_Bill_Dorrance).

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia. Retrieved April 15, 2015, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray\\_Hunt\\_\(horse\\_trainer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Hunt_(horse_trainer)).

<sup>5</sup> MPRI, "Join up." Retrieved April 14, 2015, [www.montyroberts.com](http://www.montyroberts.com).

<sup>6</sup> Pat Parelli, Retrieved April 14, 2015, "Parelli." [www.parelli.com/pat-parelli.html](http://www.parelli.com/pat-parelli.html).

<sup>7</sup> Anna Twinney, Retrieved April 14, 2015, "Reach out to horses." [www.reachouttohorses.com/background.html#anna](http://www.reachouttohorses.com/background.html#anna).

<sup>8</sup> "Happy Dog Ranch." Retrieved April 6, 2015, [www.happydogranch.org](http://www.happydogranch.org).

horse and to the space around us. And we must learn to read the horse's body language, which can be as soft as the whisper or as loud as the shout.

### Saying hello

Our conversation with the horse begins as soon as we arrive and set our intention for working with the animals. They know we are here before we even walk out to the paddock area to put halters on. As we engage with them initially, it is appropriate to introduce ourselves to the animal we will be working with that day and give him or her a few strokes in greeting. The first horse I was to work with was already waiting at the gate. We locked eyes and connected immediately. Anyone who doesn't think much of animals communicating with us would do well to work with Anna for a period of time. She brings alive a sense, an inner knowing, that there is much more here for us to discern than we've ever imagined. My horse's name was Kiwi, a bay gelding, and my partner for the Chakra Balancing work was Tom from California.

Kiwi, Tom and I were instructed to wait until everyone had arrived with their horse, and Anna had a chance to demonstrate the exercise. Kiwi had other ideas, however, about this very moment, and gently began to nudge my hands. I'd already asked him if he would like Reiki today and the answer was yes. Now he seemed to be asking, "What's the holdup?"

### Asking permission

So how did I ask Kiwi if he wanted Reiki? As with humans, we must gain permission from horses. And, in a situation such as this one, we must also have permission from their legal guardian. (In the case of wild animals, who are God's creatures, we only need the permission of the animal.)

Once we have permission from the legal guardian, we can ask the horse. I began, as instructed by Anna, by introducing myself and asking Kiwi, by name, if he would like to receive Reiki that day. I held my hands out and allowed Reiki to flow through. Then my immediate job was to observe what Kiwi did, both energetically, visually and through body language. If he turned or walked away that would probably be a no, but not always. If he licked and smelled my hands, or if he stepped forward or put his weight on his left leg, I could read that as an initial yes for Reiki. Remember, horses live in the now. When he says yes, it means yes for now, but in ten minutes, he

might be saying no. This teaches us to hone our senses and use our Reiki to help guide our intuition, our sense of reading the horse, our connection to living in the now. If we aren't sure it's a yes or no, we can use the Sway Test, a simple form of muscle testing that will allow us to speak to the horse's Higher Self.

### The Sway Test

1. Plant your feet firmly on level ground.
2. Imagine that you are growing roots just as you would ground yourself when doing Reiki on a person.
3. Clear your mind, take a deep breath and ask the Higher Self of the horse if they would like Reiki.
4. After a moment or two, your body will distinctly move either forward or backwards. Forward is a yes; backwards is a no.
5. If you don't move, reconnect and try again. Usually you will get a clear answer almost immediately.

When using the sway test, your muscles automatically react to the Higher Self. It is not unlike using yourself as a kind of human pendulum.

### Checking the Chakras

Tom and I observed that Kiwi stepped forward with her left leg, smelled our hands and gave us both a yes on the sway test. Our next job was to check the chakras. As with humans, horses too have a series of chakras that run along their spine. These chakras can indicate areas where a horse might need Reiki and also give us a place to start from. The chakras can act as clues to other things that might be going on in the body or with the emotions of the horse.

Anna guided us to check the chakras on our horse using one of three methods. We can hold the pendulum over the horse's chakras, if this method is available to us. The second method is



Checking the throat chakra with one hand on the throat and the other hand holding the pendulum.

Photo courtesy of Rose O'Connor



Photo courtesy of Rose O'Connor

Anna demonstrates using the intuitive method to go to horse's higher Self to check chakras.

Tom he wanted Reiki near his solar plexus. When I placed one hand over his heart chakra at the wither (the ridge between the shoulder blades) and slid my other hand toward the middle of his chest, the second heart point, he stood quietly for a few minutes, then showed me by turning his head toward me that he preferred my front hand on his brachial chakra instead of his chest. He acted as though he could stay all day and receive Reiki in this way, but soon after I had this thought, it was like a switch had been turned off, and he was finished.

to hold our own hand over each chakra, with the pendulum in the other hand. The third method of checking the horse's chakras is a more intuitive method but equally as effective. It involves holding the pendulum over your own hand and asking the horse's Higher Self to show you each chakra's movement. Tom and I tested all three methods of checking the chakras and found most of Kiwi's chakras open, though the third eye was less open and the solar plexus was drawing Tom to it.

We took turns offering Reiki to Kiwi, while the other person held him loosely. Kiwi was, as Anna pointed out later, very subtle in his responses but no pushover. He moved forward to show

Anna explained that sometimes horses need a break. They may take hands on Reiki for a few minutes, then want to move, only to return for more. Or sometimes at the beginning of a session it just takes the horse a few minutes to settle into the treatment, much the same as it might take us a few minutes to settle into our own Reiki treatment from someone. Kiwi showed us some of the registers—active signs that show acceptance of the activity (see sidebar)—indicating that he was accepting Reiki: his ears were at half mast, he licked and chewed, his eyes became half closed and his breathing changed. I was thrilled to be reading the signs! The language of love had begun.

### Location of the chakras on a horse

- Crown chakra
- Third eye chakra
- Throat chakra
- Heart chakra
- Solar plexus chakra
- Sacral chakra
- Root chakra
- Brachial chakra (not shown): Runs along the shoulders towards the chest



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### Reiki Registers

Registers are movements, or actions the horse makes that tell us that we are connecting with the horse in a positive way (see opening photo). They are the way the horse speaks to us, letting us know that he or she is receiving, processing and accepting the Reiki. These registers act as responders to our treatment and let us know that the horse is enjoying the treatment. Signs that the horse is finished or that the energy may be too intense in one area can include things like turning the head towards you, nipping at your sleeve, walking away, pinning the ears or swishing

the tail, trying to kick, moving away from your touch, or even more intense reactions, if you aren't paying attention. If we miss the whisper we may get the shout! We need to be mindful when working with any animal that our antenna is tuned to a different station than usual. We as humans often live in our heads, while horses live in their hearts. If we wish to work with them and understand their language, the language of love, we must be aware of the world as it appears through their eyes. The following is a list of some of the more common Reiki registers:

Ears half mast • Eyes: half closed, glazed, softening of the eyes • Nostrils slightly flared but relaxed • Mouth relaxed; lower lip drooping  
Licking, chewing, sighing, blowing through nose • Head dropping forward • Weight on left leg in front • Skin softening  
More gut sounds than usual; deeper breathing • One hip dropped and toe rolled over • Soft tail; passing gas

### Bladder Sweep

We finished this session with the Bladder Sweep, which is very similar to brushing a person's aura. We must remain mindful that all parts of this session are being orchestrated by the horse, so we can do the sway test to ask the horse if he wants the bladder sweep, or read his body language and visual signs. The idea is that we don't impose anything on the horse with Reiki; we ask and we listen.

The bladder sweep begins at the third eye chakra, keeping both the hands together, lightly sweeping over the top of the horse's poll (the spot just behind the ears) all along his spine to his rump and down his back leg to his fetlock (the leg projection above the hoof). The bladder sweep runs along the bladder meridian and acts as a way of connecting the energy of the horse's body at the end of the session, as well as smoothing the aura.

### Ending the session is up to the horse

Just like the rest of our session, it is up to the horse as to the time to end the session. As we work with the animal, we periodically check in with the sway test to ask if the horse wants more Reiki healing at this time. We never want to assume that we know more than the horse, as the horse is the ultimate judge of what is best for him or her in terms of Reiki energy. We ask, we watch, we listen.

Anna explains that once we start to give a horse Reiki, we need to be prepared to continue giving it, no matter how long the session may last. It may be ten minutes or it may be two hours, yet once we've entered into this Reiki agreement with a horse, we are bound to stay until the horse is finished.

Normally when we give Reiki to humans, we might stay in one hand position, for example, for a set amount of time or until it feels balanced, and then move our hands to another place. It is different with the horse. As long as the horse is giving us registers, we stay as long as he asks for it.

Horses can teach us so much about ourselves and about sharing Reiki. They teach us about unconditional love in its purest form. This magic increased as we moved into the second part of our class, the Love Lessons, which I will share with you in the next issue of this magazine. 



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