



Animal Reiki Practitioner Guidelines and Code of Ethics

BY KATHLEEN PRASAD

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Just a few years ago, it was nearly unheard of to find a Reiki practitioner whose practice was dedicated solely to animal clients. Today, there are hundreds of animal Reiki practitioners starting their businesses all over the world. In teaching so many of these enthusiastic and dedicated practitioners, I found myself motivated to bring together the Animal Reiki Community. Many of us have felt isolated, not only from the animal health field (as Reiki is just on the cusp of becoming well-known in holistic veterinary circles), but also from other Reiki practitioners, who may ask us, “Working with animals is the same as working with people, isn’t it?”

Working with animals involves many of the same principles as working with people, but there are some additional factors that

deserve mention, such as our approach to the animals, our relationship with human companions, and art and nuance unique to the inter-species Reiki dialog. A need began to present itself: a need to define and validate the uniqueness of the work that we do; to find a common starting ground as professional practitioners, and a language to express what it is that we do from our hearts for the animals, and the need for a statement that would help others understand where we are coming from. And so, the Animal Reiki Practitioner Code of Ethics was born.

Before presenting the Code itself, I’d like to share a few words about our commitment as Animal Reiki Practitioners—a commitment that begins with our own healing journey and moves

outward to the animals, the animals' families, the animal health profession and the animal community itself. It is this inner commitment that motivates us in our mission not only to bring the wonderful healing of Reiki to the animals in our lives, but also to uphold the highest standards and protocols for our new and developing profession.

1. Commitment to Pursue a Healing Path for Ourselves and for the Animals

Animal Reiki Practitioners are committed to personal growth and healing through Reiki. We know that the more committed we are to our own personal practice of Reiki, the more effective we will be as healing channels for animals. Thus, it is important to incorporate Reiki into our daily lives—to really “make it ours” in an authentic and unique way. The experience of Reiki in our own lives is in essence the experience of the healing that happens in the space of “oneness.” It is in this space that we realize we are not separate from animals, that we can commune and connect with them at the deepest levels, and that we can view the world and its animals with compassion, reverence and gratitude. It is in this space that we find our heart's motivation to be truly committed to animal healing. As we work on our own issues, setting a daily intention for healing, we become clearer and stronger channels for Reiki healing. The animals will sense our pure intention to help them, as well as the energy we offer. It is amazing to see animals come and ask for a treatment! It is a profound lesson in the intuitive depth of the animals, their energetic wisdom and the connection of all things at their very essence.

2. Commitment to Support the Animal's Family

When we work with animals, we also work hand in hand with their animal companions. In addition, when animals are sick, injured, or otherwise in need of healing, the whole family is affected (both animal and human members). Invite family members (human and animal) to sit in the room with you during the animal's treatment to absorb some Reiki as well. Sometimes human companions may even decide to set up a separate appointment for their own treatments.

There's another reason it's important to support the whole family, not just the animal client. By giving support to the family, you are compassionately validating the significance and difficulty of caring for an injured, ill or dying animal, and the importance of the role the animal plays in the family. This kind of validation is frequently missing in our society. For example, many human companions of my clients have shared with me that when they went to work after their beloved animal companion had died, if they showed sadness or grief for more than a day or two, people would say things like, “It's only a dog (or cat, etc.). Get over it.” Others have shared with me that when they decided to care for their animals despite chronic illness or disease, people would say, “That's a lot of work and expensive too. Why don't you just put him down?” In bringing Reiki to the family, healing, peace and comfort will come to all aspects of the situation.

If you are working with an animal that is very ill or approaching his or her transition, you can find yourself in a very emotional and stressful environment in the animal's home. Everyone in the family will be dealing with the situation differently, and it's important as the healing practitioner that you remain open and accepting of the feelings and needs of each family member. Staying centered and peaceful is important, as you can hold that vibration for everyone, creating a “healing space” in which everyone can feel comfortable to open themselves to the healing that Reiki offers.

Animal Reiki practitioners often receive intuitive information from the animal during treatment. This information may be helpful to the human companions in their understanding of what the animal is going through. In this case, it is good to share the information with them. It can provide comfort and clarity to the humans, which in turn brings stress relief to their animals. It's also important to remember not to overstep your bounds as the Reiki practitioner. Allow the human companions to find their own way, with the advice of a trusted veterinarian, in choosing the journey of the animal. For example, stay open, flexible and without judgment, even in the midst of difficult and emotional decisions, such as the decision to euthanize. Bringing Reiki to the situation will help things unfold in the best way for the animal.

3. Commitment to Support Other Animal Health Professionals and Needy Animals in the Community

As allies to the veterinary profession, who are the leaders in our community when it comes to the health and well-being of our animals, we must work to create partnerships and cooperative relationships with both veterinarians and other practitioners in the animal health field. This can often be difficult since Reiki is still relatively unknown in the traditional veterinary profession and among many other animal health practitioners. It is important to see ourselves as working in tandem with vets and other supportive professionals such as animal chiropractors, animal acupuncture and acupressure practitioners, massage therapists, trainers, animal communicators, groomers, pet sitters and dog walkers. All of these people work toward the same goals: happiness, wellness, and a good quality of life for our animal companions. Each animal's path to balance and wholeness may require a combination of many healing modalities. Reiki can be an integral and supportive component of any regimen chosen for the animal. Building professional alliances, sharing knowledge and creating friendships with other practitioners bring new knowledge, depth and insight from the wisdom of a multitude of healing disciplines to our own work. We can accomplish so much more together than separately.

To further support the healing community, Animal Reiki Practitioners reach out to the animals that need it most: those in shelters, sanctuaries and rescue centers. Many of us already donate our time and/or money to these organizations, and by



adding the gift of Reiki, we are simply stepping up to a new level of commitment. In donating our time and knowledge for Reiki treatments for the animals and/or classes for the staff and volunteers of these facilities, we receive blessings and gifts that repay our efforts many times over. Many of Reiki's deepest lessons in animal healing are to be found within the walls of a neighborhood animal shelter, or tucked away behind the fence of a nearby animal sanctuary. In addition, by becoming valued volunteers for these organizations, we build community friendships that will last a lifetime.

4. Commitment to Educate Others about Animal Reiki

We are pioneers in the holistic animal health field and so must learn to educate other animal health professionals and veterinarians about what we do (even if we are not at first comfortable with being "educators"), so that they can understand the value of integrating Reiki into the animal's healing program. This education extends to the human companions of the animals with whom we work. We must learn to create a language about what we do so that humans feel comfortable in letting us treat their "fur kids." This includes explaining what they should expect a treatment to look like and common behavioral reactions to the

energy. It also involves letting them know that the animal, not the Reiki Practitioner, is in charge of exactly how (and indeed whether) the treatment unfolds.

Luckily, in addition to our own explanations about Reiki for animals, the experience of the treatment speaks more powerfully than anything we ourselves can say. Animals, so wise and well-versed in the language of energy already (as is their nature), show us clearly in their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual responses not only that they feel the energy of Reiki, but also that they benefit greatly from it. Yes, animals are often the best Reiki teachers. The lessons they teach are best learned when accessed from a place of humility and respect, where the animals are active partners in the process.

We are also pioneers in the Reiki world, as most practitioners train and work solely or primarily with humans. Our human-client counterparts are often very interested in the differences in approach and method when working with animals. We can learn from their human treatment experiences. In addition, sharing lessons animals have taught us can benefit every Reiki practitioner. We can gain insights into Reiki treatments, the profound nature of the healing process, the universal language of energy, as well as life lessons in courage, joy, hope, forgiveness and gratitude, just to name a few.

The Animal Reiki Code of Ethics

DEVELOPED BY KATHLEEN PRASAD

Guiding Principles:

- I believe animals are equal partners in the healing process.
- I honor animals as being not only my clients, but also my teachers in the journey of healing.
- I understand that all animals have physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects, to which Reiki can bring profound healing responses.
- I believe that bringing Reiki to the human/animal relationship is transformational to the human view of the animal kingdom.
- I dedicate myself to the virtues of humility, integrity, compassion and gratitude in my Reiki practice.

In working on myself, I follow these practices:

- I incorporate the Five Reiki Precepts into my daily life and Reiki practice.
- I commit myself to a daily practice of self-healing and spiritual development so that I can be a clear and strong channel for healing energy.
- I nurture a belief in the sacred nature of all beings and in the value and depth of animal-kind as our partners on this planet.
- I listen to the wisdom of my heart, remembering that we are all One.

In working with the animals, I follow these guidelines:

- I work in partnership with the animal.
- I always ask permission of the animal before beginning, and respect his or her decision to accept or refuse any treatment. I listen intuitively and observe the animal's body language in determining the response.
- I allow each animal to choose how to receive his or her treatment; thus each treatment could be a combination of hands-on, short distance and/or distant healing, depending on the animal's preference.
- I let go of my expectations about how the treatment should progress and/or how the animal should behave during the treatment, and simply trust Reiki.
- I accept the results of the treatment without judgment and with gratitude toward Reiki and the animal's openness and participation in the process.

In working with the human companions of the animals, I will:

- Share information before the treatment about my healing philosophy, the Reiki healing system and what to expect in a typical treatment, as well as possible outcomes, including the possibility of healing reactions.
- Provide a clear policy ahead of time regarding fees, length of treatment and cancellation policy, as well as "postponement" policy, should the animal not want the treatment that day.
- Never diagnose. I will always refer clients to a licensed veterinarian when appropriate.
- Honor the privacy of the animals and their human companions.
- Share intuition received during Reiki treatments, with compassion and humility, for the purpose of supporting their understanding of the healing process.
- Respect the human companion's right to choose the animal's healing journey, selecting the methods, both holistic and/or conventional that he or she deems most appropriate, with the support and advice of a trusted veterinarian.

In working in the community, I hold the following goals:

- I model the values of partnership, compassion, humility, gentleness and gratitude in my life and with the animals, teaching by example.
- I work to create professional alliances and cooperative relationships with other Reiki practitioners/teachers, animal healthcare providers and animal welfare organizations in my community.
- I strive to educate my community in its understanding of the benefits of Reiki for animals.
- I continually educate myself to maintain and enhance my professional competence so that I uphold the integrity of the profession.
- I consider myself an ally to the veterinary and animal health community. I work to support their efforts in achieving animal wellness and balance. I honor other disciplines and their practitioners. 

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