



Lessons from Reiki Horses

BY MARY BLAKE

THERE IS A SAYING, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” My teachers appeared in the form of a 17-year-old bay gelding named Hershey and a four-year-old mustang gelding named Justice.

Almost as soon as I relocated to Colorado from L.A. in 2012, Reiki began working with me on a deep level. A lot of old stuff came up to be healed. At that same time, I became very drawn to working with horses. I wasn’t a rider, didn’t grow up with horses and hadn’t spent much time around them. I had a lot to learn.

I began to volunteer at Zuma’s Rescue Ranch, a horse sanctuary in Littleton, Colorado that is very supportive of animal Reiki. At the time I first became a volunteer, one of the requirements for new volunteers was two short courses, Horse 101 and Horse 102. The course leader was a horse trainer who was also a Reiki Master. She taught me first about safety and then how to use my energy in ground training. She also taught me how to open my heart to a horse in partnership and respect before working with him or her. That was the easy part. I also took a horse Reiki workshop at Zuma’s taught by Anna Twinney of Reach Out to Horses. Both teachings from these two Reiki Masters were amazing and profound.

At the time, I wanted to offer Reiki to Zuma’s herd, but I felt that I had to prove myself first and worked very hard mucking out pens, setting grain and just helping out with whatever chores needed to be done.

Once a month, a group of us energy healers would meet at Zuma’s to work with the herd, offering them Reiki and sound therapy and using Healing Touch for Animals techniques to help them adjust to their new home and heal. I was comfortable being part of this group, but didn’t feel “good enough” to approach horses on my own and offer them Reiki.

Little did I know that I was about to embark on an advanced, equine-taught course.

Hershey Gives a Lesson

One day, I was mucking out Hershey’s pen with about four other volunteers. Hershey was into all the attention we were lavishing on him and he seemed to enjoy our presence. After we finished, I was standing about three or four feet outside the pen talking to a Zuma’s staff member when Hershey stretched out his huge neck and bit my right side just above the waist. The staff member did a double take and said, “Did he just bite you?” I pulled up my top to check for blood, but the skin was not broken; there was just a huge bruise that really hurt. I rubbed it with my Reiki hands, and it soon felt much better. We were mystified about why Hershey bit me. The staffer attributed it to “he can be full of himself sometimes.”

Justice Follows Up

We continued to the next pen where Justice was waiting for us. As soon as the staffer entered his pen, he went after her, getting in her space and just messing with her. She shooed him off and then he came after me, but I was ready. I looked him in the eye and said in a stern voice, “Stay away!” He stopped, backed off, turned his head to the side and looked at me, afraid to approach. I held his gaze for a minute, and then turned away to muck. He came right after me. As I was trying to push him away and protect myself, his chin caught my eye just above the eyebrow and left a gash, which sent blood cascading down my face. I ran for the fence and ducked out of the pen.

The horrified staffer took me into the barn where there were several trainers and then called Zuma’s founder, Jodi, who rushed in to examine the wound and see if I needed stitches. It wasn’t that bad of a cut, but I was really shaken—bitten and then a bleeding cut, all within 30 minutes. The trainers and Jodi all agreed there was a message here. Horses are amazingly perceptive beings that can read our energy, our thoughts and see into our unconscious mind.

Jodi highly recommended that I work with a BodyTalk practitioner named Tricia. BodyTalk techniques tell you what your body has recorded in your cells as a result of your life experiences.

Now the Homework

I left, nursing my wounds, and set up an initial session with Tricia, which led to a series of sessions with her. Those sessions were the start of an amazing journey that went deep into my childhood to uncover a profound level of much-needed healing. After each session I was exhausted, but made amazing progress.

I also decided to work with a psychotherapist who used a powerful method to reprogram traumatic past life events called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). It is thought that when a traumatic or distressing experience occurs, it may overwhelm a person’s normal coping mechanisms. The memory and associated stimuli are inadequately processed and stored in an isolated memory network.

Before starting the EMDR therapy, the psychotherapist gave me homework—write down the traumatic events in my life. For each memory, I was asked to list my age when it occurred, the negative belief I had developed about myself as a result and a positive belief that I wanted to replace the negative belief with. I realized that this was my story and I could turn it into a stage play, which my therapist encouraged. I subsequently took a playwriting course at Lighthouse Writers Workshop in Denver and began



Photo courtesy of Zuma's Rescue Ranch



Photo courtesy of Zuma's Rescue Ranch

Left: Hershey was a very effective Reiki Master teacher for me.

Right: Justice, a 4-year old at Zuma's Rescue Ranch, who turned out to be another Reiki teacher for me.

reading Pulitzer Prize-winning plays that inspired me and several that my playwriting teacher recommended. I am still writing my play and hope to get it produced.

Hershey had tapped into my negative memories and was telling me that I needed more work on myself before I could effectively practice animal Reiki. Hershey was saying, "Lady, if you want to offer Reiki to us, you need to get your act together first!"

Graduation

After completing the BodyTalk and psychotherapy sessions, I returned to Zuma's with a new-found confidence. The difference was amazing. It was like I was a whole new person, and of course, the horses knew that.

Another energy healer and I wanted to work with a mare who had gone to sleep with a rider on her back. We brought her into a stall, but she was so agitated that we moved her to an arena for safety reasons. I asked the other practitioner to hold her halter because I wanted to work on her energy field first to help her calm down. After about 10 passes on each side, extending my Reiki hands to comb her energy field, she was standing still and dropping her head, completely relaxed. I was then able to place my hands on her chakras and soon she was licking, chewing and snorting, releasing that which no longer served her.

Zoie, the gentle giant herd leader at Zuma's, had two colic attacks due to impaction,¹ and the vet had to intubate her to get more fluid into her stomach. I placed my hands on her flank near the stifle (the joint much like the human knee) until she turned the other side to me and then I did the same on that side. I also worked on her root chakra on both sides. She then turned to face me, and I beamed Reiki to her for a while. We went through this dance for about two hours as Zoie constructed her own Reiki session. Finally she walked away and sat down, sighing and making grunts of relaxation. Reiki had so completely relaxed her that she closed her eyes and just sunned herself.

There are other stories of horses I have worked with at Zuma's since the lesson I received from my equine Reiki Master teachers. Cookie, a 26-year-old mare, blind in one eye, had injured herself, so she was placed in an indoor pen by herself. I went up to her and asked her if she would like Reiki, and she very emphatically

¹ The term impaction refers to a blockage within the horse's gastrointestinal tract. It is usually caused by a build-up of solid material, usually food or partially formed feces, which prevents the normal passage of gut contents. Impactions cause discomfort or pain, leading to classic signs of colic in horses. Any colic should be considered a serious matter and veterinary advice sought immediately. www.horseandhound.co.uk/horse-care/vet-advice/colic-in-horses-coping-with-impaction-colic-58508



Photo by Mary Blake

Zoie, the herd leader at Zuma's, after a long Reiki session.

nodded her head several times. I beamed Reiki to her for about five minutes. She snorted, yawned and gave other signs that she was releasing stress and tension. Cookie then lay on the ground, rolled around on her back a few times, got up and went about her business. That was all she needed.

Savannah was recovering from a traumatic experience with an inexperienced rider who fell off her back. I came to the pen and Savannah and her pen-mate Singer both soaked in the energy from about 15 feet away with lots of licking and chewing, half-closed eyes and cocked back legs. Then Savannah faced me for a while, took a few steps closer, stopped, took another few steps closer and did this dance until she was about five feet from me. Then she presented her side for a while and rotated until her back end faced me. I beamed to her root chakra and visualized the Mental/Emotional symbol as well as the Master and Holy Fire symbols. Soon, she sat down on the ground in the sun and nearly laid her head on the ground several times. I tiptoed closer, still beaming Reiki. Then two people returned Twilight to the pen and Savannah rolled over on the ground, got up and was done. Singer, who had been soaking in the energy all along, walked toward me for some petting.

While I was beaming Reiki to Savannah, GoGo and Azul in the neighboring pen were very still and relaxed. My approach is to open my heart to these horses in unconditional love, which to me is Reiki. I have found that I don't need to actually lay hands on the horses. They just soak in the Reiki energy that I beam. If

I am offering Reiki to one horse, pen-mates and horses from neighboring pens stand still with their eyes soft and heads lowered too: a group Reiki session.

The power of intention and the compassionate power of Reiki never failed to amaze and astound me. Sometimes I wonder just who is healing whom! I go with the intention of unconditional love and find that this is what I receive from these beautiful spirits. It is such a gift to see them relax and release, and I'm often overwhelmed with gratitude for the gift of Reiki.

Thanks to Hershey and Justice, I am doing what I am supposed to do at Zuma's: being a healing Reiki presence. I don't doubt that there are other lessons that I need to learn, and I'm willing to do the work. I visit Hershey now and then to thank him, but I'm still keeping my distance! 🌿



Mary Blake is an Usui/HolyFire II Reiki Master and a content strategy consultant. Mary works through the focused, grounded power of unconditional love for all animals. She began studying Reiki in Los Angeles in 2009 and became an Usui Reiki Master in 2012. She is a volunteer at Zuma's Rescue Ranch in Littleton, Colorado. Mary can be contacted by email at mary@mbwriting.com.

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