



# Pawsitively Healing

by Faye Pietrokowsky



If you conducted a random survey asking people on the street what animal they associate with healing, most will say DOG. Perhaps the media is partially to blame for this perception. We often read articles and watch television shows about healing dogs. In my practice as an animal communicator, I too have heard many stories (told in person or emailed) about how dogs have been best friends to people in times of emotional and physical need.

Bill owned a small company and was forced into retirement by his physician and family when job stress was mentally and physically impacting his level of wellness. Bill was ill prepared for retirement, and quickly fell into a depression that left his family feeling helpless, as they could only witness. Day after day Bill hugged the sofa and continued withdrawing from those closest to him. Bill's son decided to get him a dog and met Barney, a mutt who needed a home. Barney was the perfect medicine for Bill. Soon Bill was leaving the house to walk Barney! Within months they could be seen together in Bill's car on their way to the store or to pay someone a visit. Bill credits Barney for saving his life. "I tell him things I don't even tell my wife."

## BASSET ON A MISSION!

Lisa couldn't remember when she had experienced a more difficult time. Jim, her husband, was dying of cancer. She felt alone. Wanting a dog for comfort and companionship, she went to a local humane society. That is where she met Lucy, a Basset Hound. They found each other, one needing a home, the other needing companionship and both definitely needing some old fashion TLC. Just hours later Lucy was sitting in the car's front seat next to Lisa. This four-legged friend seemed to understand Lisa's life. Somehow she knew that Jim was ill and understood her role as a companion for this distressed wife. Lucy wanted into the house and went right up to greet Jim. During the last months of his life, Jim spent much of the day in bed with Lucy by his side. The dog also kept a close eye on Lisa, often sitting on her lap or in the kitchen on the floor keeping Lisa company.

As one who connects people with their animals and is sometimes the go-between, mediating for all involved parties, I am privy



to many stories. Some have reached my ears via telephone consultations, while others have visually unfolded in my physical presence during in-person private sessions. Most people who use my services are very attached to their animals whether or not they acknowledge this verbally. It is in their tone, their eyes, their mannerisms and in their intentions. These characteristics seem consistent regardless if their beloved is a rabbit, cat, dog, lizard, bird, horse or other furry, reptilian or feathery friend.

Most of my human clients might not call their nonhuman companions healing, but if you asked them if their stress level decreased or if they are comforted or soothed by these friends, you would hear a big YES. If you pressed the matter a little more and inquired if living and interacting with pets can affect blood pressure levels, few would disagree.

## SAM IS ALL EARS!

Years ago I first became acquainted with the concept of cats serving their humans in a healing way. Christina lived with a cat she loved dearly and valued more than many friends, family and co-workers in her real estate office. "When I come home from a long day at the office, I tell Sam all my

problems. He looks at me the whole time that I talk. I swear that he understands me." She then turned her head an angle to demonstrate how Sam held his head while listening to her. "I feel so much better after I have talked to Sam," she said. I wondered if Sam sent her a bill for his therapeutic sessions, and if so, was it a You Owe Me 10 cans of the most expensive tuna fish or perhaps Sam preferred lamb and rice.

Denise's cat Alice followed her outside and sat on the grass while she weeded the lawn and worked in her garden. Denise had been through a difficult divorce, and Alice was one of the very few beings that she would spend time with during this time of healing. A year or two later when Alice passed away, Denise was heartbroken. Losing this feline was one of the most difficult losses in her life.

## "THAT CAT IS SO SPECIAL"

Bill called me from his girlfriend's mother's house where they were temporarily living. Their black kitten named Baby was missing. Bill apologized for sounding panicked. He had looked everywhere in the neighborhood and was hanging up missing cat posters as we talked. "You don't understand what this cat means to my girlfriend. She

will freak if she comes home and the cat isn't here. That cat is so special. We have been through a lot." Baby had been a constant companion to his girlfriend, sitting in her lap, sleeping next to her on their bed at night, and spending time with her while she cooked in the kitchen. It was obvious that this young kitten recognized that she was needed. Bill began to tell me how much they both loved Baby. "I have to find her," he said as he started crying.

I told him that I thought the cat was inside the house. He argued, "No." He defended his words by saying that he had searched the entire house. After we concluded our conversation, Bill heard a crying that seem to come from the basement. He opened the door and out ran Baby!

Jeff learned of my services while searching the Internet for an animal communicator. A week earlier his seven year old Art had in catlike fashion strolled outside and had not returned home. There had been Art sightings by neighbors, but this adventuresome one had not made his way back to Jeff. Everyday Jeff left food out for his friend. "I really miss him. I just want him back." I told Jeff to send Art a telepathic message to let him know that he knew how to find his way home. A few weeks later, I received a telephone call that Art had come home and didn't look too worse for the wear. Perhaps he had enjoyed dining out. Art never said, but he wasn't letting Jeff out of his sight.

I was just beginning to understand the natural and supernatural-like abilities of these regal creatures. Zucky lived in Portland, Oregon. Zucky's cancer returned almost four years to the day of her first diagnosis. Understanding the seriousness of the illness, her sister Klee left her home in Israel to be with her sister. She left her beloved cat, Mr. Kuchinski, in her mother's care. Now the story becomes more interesting. Zucky's cat, Timmy, took an immediate liking to Klee, and slept with her at night. It wasn't long before Klee's mother telephoned to tell her that Mr. Kuchinski ran away and crossed a freeway to go back to Klee's house. Fortunately, Mr. Kuchinski was found



Maggie at work with a friend. Photo © George Piter.

unharmed, and was returned. Timmy continued to sleep in the bedroom with Klee and Mr. Kuchinki continued running back to Klee's house. As Klee was telling me this story, I told her not to let Timmy sleep with her. She took the advice and Mr. Kuchinski stopped running away. Did he know about Timmy? Only Mr. Kuchinski can say for sure.

As Zucky's cancer progressed, Timmy became more attentive to her. At first his company soothed her. When her stomach hurt, Timmy knew to lie next to her, not on top of her. As the cancer spread to her bones, Zucky couldn't stand any pressure, including Timmy jumping up on the bed to be with her. She asked those around her to not let him in the room. His eyes became dull and he appeared to be suffering from depression. He avoided Zucky's bedroom, and only entered it after she passed away.

### MAGGIE KNOWS

George and Karen are honored to live with Maggie, the ten year old cat who chose them. The couple had been on one of their daily walks and noticed this cat following them home. She had been inside their abode only a short while before jumping on Karen's lap and then wrapping her paw around her new human's arm. Did she know that this couple, who already lived with three other cats, would not turn her out in the cold? (The truth might be that Maggie wanted another home and sensed that this couple would be two good humans for her.)

George and Karen posted flyers, contacted a humane society and placed an ad in the paper looking for Maggie's humans. Their noble efforts went unanswered.

It seemed as though they had a new family member, and this feline needed a name. They both agreed upon Maggie. It didn't take the couple long to realize that this was one special cat. George and Karen noticed that Maggie seemed to understand words and emotions. When one of them needed attention, Maggie was right there on their laps, sitting next to them or on the bed with them.



Maggie genuinely enjoys her interactions with people. Photo © George Piter.

When this feline wants to give a little extra touch, she literally puts her paw on a person's cheek and leaves it there for a minute.

George is a healthcare practitioner and it didn't take George long to realize that Maggie had such a healing nature that he could share her with kids and sick and aging, or with people who just need some TLC. He decided to bring Maggie to the nursing home where he worked. She was such a natural agent of healing that he had her certified as an assisted therapy animal and also takes her to Salem Hospital. Maggie seems to know when it is time to do her service work. George brings out the cat carrier and she gets right in. When they get to the hospital or the nursing center, she sits on his shoulder as they walk through the halls. "She seems to know who needs attention." Maggie can be put on a bed with a patient and will snuggle next to a patient. George believes that Maggie knows where a patient is hurting and how close she can cuddle without invading a person's space. A patient named Corrine, who was dying of heart failure, loved her visits with Maggie. "It is the only time that I relax."

I asked if Maggie knows when a patient has passed away. He seems to think so because she doesn't go back to the room that the patient was in before passing away. George believes that this cat grieves when she loses one of her friends that she has come to visit. He notices a difference in her mood, perhaps a little melancholy. However, she does not take too long to come out of her grieving.

Before she leaves to go home, Maggie likes to greet the staff and wanders from cubicle to cubicle, saying hello and sharing her affection.

George limits the visits to two-three hours or when Maggie gives him a look that lets him know that she is ready to go home. After returning home, Maggie finds a place in the house away from the two humans and three other cats to recharge.

Elisa knows how healing cats are. She has four cats, including Midnight, whom she adopted from a local humane society. Elisa was looking for a cat that wasn't too



Maggie and Corinne shared a special bond. Photo © George Piter.

needy and could be left at home with three other cats and her husband while she was in the hospital. When she first met Midnight, she seemed like a quiet spirit who was a little aloof and wanted to come home with her.

It didn't take Elisa very long to realize what a special cat she had indeed brought home. Midnight showed signs of being different than her other cats. "She seemed to understand words and my health condition," said Elisa. One day Elisa was standing next to the bathroom sink when Midnight suddenly jumped up on the counter. Elisa looked at her and said "Bandit (a younger cat who was sitting on the bathroom floor watching Midnight) needs you to wrestle with him." Midnight jumped down from the counter and began to wrestle with him. Elisa says that Midnight takes her role as big sister seriously and often looks after the one year old Bandit.

### MIDNIGHT ACCOMPANIES ELISA TO HOSPITAL

Midnight takes her role as a protector and companion for Elisa seriously too. She has been Elisa's constant companion both after she was diagnosed with cancer and while she received radiation treatments. Elisa describes this cat as a "protector" who seems to know when she needs attention and affection. She took her with her in the car when she went to have her treatments. (The cat stayed in the car and waited for her to return from her treatment sessions.) This

cat seemed to know where she was in pain. When Elisa was experiencing abdominal pain, Midnight sat next to her, instead of on her lap.

Nancy is no stranger to pain. Unfortunately, she and agony have become all too cozy as joint, muscular and skeletal pain regularly plague Nancy. "I must manage on a daily basis." Learning how to manage pain is challenging. Nancy credits her two adopted cats, Audrey (named after actress Audrey Hepburn) and Pearl (named after singer Pearl Bailey), with playing a "vital role" in helping her cope with the chronic pain. Audrey is a small calico cat who has her own sense of humor and knows that she is funny. Nancy asks, "Where's my monkey?" and Audrey comes running toward her. Nancy says that Audrey fetches like a dog and enjoys discovering new tricks. Audrey makes Nancy laugh, which she describes as "great medicine indeed."

Pearl is healing in a very different way than Audrey. Nancy describes her as a "full bodied" black cat with a wee bit of white hair on her chest. She is twice the size of Audrey. Nancy says that Pearl can be "worn like a shawl" and has a healing and comforting "amazing deep and soft purr." Pearl likes to visit her in the morning, and greets her with a light brush-like touch with her paw as she pats Nancy on her cheek.

Who says cats aren't healing? Keep your eyes and ears wide open. Observe like a cat! You might just discover something wonderful about these mystical four legged ones. ■



Faye Pietrokowsky with her bird Kiwi. Photo © George Piter.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Faye Pietrokowsky, owner of Inner-Design-Applying Intuition, is a pet and a people psychic. Through her individual consultations and classes, she assists people in understanding and developing their intuition to make good choices regarding personal, business and animal issues. Faye is committed to helping people improve their relationships with their furry, feathery and reptilian friends through understanding and communication. She does in-person, email and telephone consultations. Faye also works with kids to assist them in listening and using their intuition to make good decisions. She lives in Portland, Oregon. For more information, please visit [www.inner-design.net](http://www.inner-design.net). She can be reached by telephone at (503) 221-2123 or by emailing [faye@inner-design.net](mailto:faye@inner-design.net).

