

## **Reiki and Herding Cats**

by Lori Wilson

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My first Reiki feline client was Buster, a medium-sized, black and white domestic shorthair. Buster had a mild asthmatic condition and several benign abdominal tumors. His human wanted to avoid surgery for the tumors if at all possible and was looking for a noninvasive way to control them, so she was considering Reiki treatment for him.

That was where I came in. I suggested treating him in four separate sessions at his home. Before Buster, I only had opportunities to offer Reiki to dogs. How naive I was to believe that treating felines would be as straightforward as treating canines.

Buster's first session challenged me. Even though he was said to be mellow, his freak-out threshold was still typical for a cat. He darted out of the dining room and through an open door to the basement. I sat on the floor, offered Reiki at a short distance, and waited while his human coaxed him out of his hiding place.

Meanwhile, his brother, Ben, a domestic tabby, decided that the Reiki energy I was offering was somehow intriguing and moved himself closer (but still safely out of reach) on the dining room table in order to stare down at me. Clearly, he was picking up on the energy.

After a few minutes, Buster returned. He marched about for a solid 10 minutes before settling in, facing away from me in the shape of a bread loaf within six feet of where I was still sitting. He remained there for a few minutes until Ben jumped off the table and padded upstairs. This movement seem to set off another couple of cycles of marching and breadloafing in Buster, but he did edge a little closer to me each time.

Buster's human seemed a little discouraged (and I felt that way, too, but kept it to myself). She did invite me back to treat him again, however.

Treating Buster became easier in subsequent sessions, to the extent that he stayed calm enough so that I was ultimately able to hover my hands on his belly for 10 or 15 minutes. During the sessions, Ben would wander in and hang out for a while, taking whatever he needed from the energy.

And, later, Buster's human shared some test results with me: Buster's abdominal tumors had shrunk a bit. I'd like to think that perhaps the Reiki energy moving through me had helped Buster.

It's been a few years since then, but Buster, Ben, and their human are all doing well. I look back on this experience and realize that there is so much in it that relates to not only to maintaining focus but also the beginning of the Reiki precepts: "Just for today...."

It's probably all too obvious to most people, but maintaining focus on whatever we are doing at any one moment is not always easy, given the many distractions around us and the blurring pace of life.

The practice of Reiki constantly reminds me to pull myself away from that blurring pace, return to the now, and do what needs doing. No matter how many metaphorical or real cats I have to gather in, I use what I'm learning through Reiki to stay focused in the moment. And sometimes I have to wait to do what I need to do, the way I waited for Buster to come around. But I trust that I will get it done.

And, as the opening for the Reiki precepts, the phrase, "for today only" is a verbal signal to me that, like the maintaining of focus, I need to make the effort to stay in the present and not worry about the outcome of what I'm doing right now or what happened last week. Buster's first treatment was a lesson in focusing on the task at hand and learning to not set expectations.

Animals are great Reiki teachers. Life is quite a Reiki teacher, too, especially in a culture full of endless distractions and demands, virtual and real. So, whether I'm herding flesh-and-blood cats or those electronic cats from my workday office world, the focus and the "nowness" of Reiki helps me prepare for those pop quizzes that my teachers surprise me with from time to time.