



No pet's trauma is so deep that it can't
be healed by Reiki's power of
love and compassion.

How To Create A Reiki Space To

HELP HEAL

YOUR DOG'S TRAUMA

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any of us who live with dogs have experienced working through some kind of trauma at one time or another. Many of us have dogs who have been rescued from a bad situation.

Others have dogs who have been through some kind of ordeal such as a long, difficult recovery from an illness or injury.

The system of Reiki gives us several tools to help us meet these challenges with grace and bring great healing potential to any situation we come across.

Reiki is a meditative practice that nurtures heart-to-heart connections with others. This creates healing because true healing starts where our hearts connect. Because of its gentle approach where animals lead each session, Reiki is ideal for helping even the most sensitive dogs heal from trauma.

Through Reiki meditation, we (as well as our dogs who sit with us) can experience a deep sense of peace and wellbeing from which joy will naturally arise.

When we find ourselves in this joyful place of heart-to-heart connection with the dog we love, a place where our dog can heal himself, I like to call it *the Reiki space*.

The Reiki space is a sanctuary where your dog can go to heal. It's not an outer physical place but rather an inner sanctuary of comfort and happiness where the body, mind and emotions can restoratively align.

The Reiki space is created through compassionate connection. It is alive,

here and now so that trauma loses power because it is simply dust of the past. But what exactly does that mean: to create a *safe Reiki space* for dogs so they can heal themselves? If we look closely at the Reiki precepts, we can see many keys to help unlock this natural, inner healing potential.

THE REIKI PRECEPTS

The Reiki precepts are, for today only: *Do not anger. Do not worry. Be grateful. Practice diligently. Show compassion to yourself and others.* If we can learn to embody the Reiki precepts, we can begin to experience a deeper and more balanced way in the world.

When we learn to stop and breathe, listen without judgment and look deeply to the heart of things, it is within our ability to transform and relieve the suffering of the animals we know and love.

The Reiki precepts *Do not anger* and *Do not worry* point to the power of staying in the present moment. When we are angry or worried about something that has happened to us in the past, our energy becomes very unsettled and it becomes very difficult (if not impossible) to be right here, right now.

As the caregiver for a dog who's carrying trauma from the past in the form of anxiety, fear or aggression, it's easy for us to get caught in the past. We might, without realizing it, focus beyond the trauma behaviors our dog is showing, spinning stories in our minds about what may have happened to them to cause this behavior. In this way, without meaning to, we might begin to identify our dog with

what is *wrong* rather than focusing on the positive. This can have a snowball effect of emotions within us such as anger, worry, bitterness or helplessness.

On the other hand, we might try to ignore the warning signs our dog's showing us, turning away from the unpleasantness or trying to power through our dog's anxiousness. In this way we're avoiding the difficulty and not listening with an open heart to our dog's experience and feelings.

REIKI AWARENESS PRACTICE: BREATHE AND BE THE MOUNTAIN

Helping your dog heal with Reiki begins with something as simple as awareness.

When your dog starts to show signs of anxiety, fear, aggression or any other trauma behavior, stop and breathe. Give your dog space and just be present and aware with her. Breathe in through your nose, filling your body with each inhale all the way to your belly.

On each exhale, imagine your breath slowly expands out your body, filling the space around you with peace.

Feel as if you have roots growing down into the earth, grounding you and keeping you stable. Stay with your dog, breathing, for several minutes and notice how she responds to your quiet awareness.

Our own emotional reactivity through anger, worry or avoidance is an energy that is out of balance and ungrounded (like an upside-down triangle) and easy to fall apart. The more you can be stable like



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a mountain for your dog at the first sign of anxiety or discomfort, the easier it is for her to shift from fear, worry or aggression back into a balanced, peaceful space.

ACCEPTANCE AND GRATITUDE

Taking the time to ground yourself, stopping to just be with your dog, you give her space to express herself without trying to avoid, fix or change the problem. It's a simple way to assure your dog that everything is okay, you are here at this moment, whatever it looks like, even if it's hard.

It's a powerful healing attitude to accept your dog even when she is not feeling her best and she will feel your open heart and be drawn to it.

When your acceptance comes from a place of peace without anger or worry, this peacefulness is contagious. Your dog will feel a great deal of strength and comfort from your presence. Notice how your inner positive attitude has a positive outer ripple effect in your dog's behavior.

The third Reiki precept, *Be grateful*, holds a key to opening the door to true acceptance. Even the most difficult moments in our lives shape us, help us to grow and make us who we are. If we look with eyes of gratitude, we will see the positive in our dogs even in toughest times: their strength at getting through the trauma, their courage in moving forward (at whatever pace they do so) and the depth of their forgiveness, compassion, love and joy despite their moments of anxiety.

REIKI GRATITUDE PRACTICE: THE WHITE ROSE

Imagine your mind as a beautiful white rosebud with many petals curled up, representing each different thought you have about your dog's issues. Drop this rose down into your heart; allow all the petals to relax and open into the most wide and beautiful flower.

As the white rose opens in your heart, allow yourself to let go of all the judgments, worries or fears and need to control or fix the issues with your dog.

Imagine the rose at your heart is surrounded in a beautiful sphere of light that shines out from your being. The light is so pure and bright that all worry, fear or imbalance is instantly dissipated.

Chant the mantra *thank you* as you visualize the light at your heart rippling out into the universe. Imagine your dog's heart also as a beautiful rose with opening petals shining out.

Together your two lights become one. Sit in that bright and open space.

If you find yourself getting distracted, start again with the rosebud in your mind, drop it into your heart and open the petals; imagine each thought can let go into the light as each petal opens.

Notice how your heart feels as your rose becomes more and more open. Observe how your dog responds to your open heart.

PRACTICE

Sometimes we want so much to help our dogs when we see that they're feeling worried or if we see they're suffering from an earlier trauma. It can be very difficult to let go of anger and worry and find gratitude at such moments. This is why the fourth Reiki precept is *Practice diligently*.

Through daily meditation practice we can begin to create a beautiful Reiki space of healing. Reiki time with your dog is a time to stop all *doing* and just *be*. It is time to open our hearts and be present with loving kindness. The power of this state of being is extremely strong and shouldn't be underestimated. There is no greater healing power than compassion!

COMPASSION

This leads us to the fifth and final Reiki precept: *Be compassionate to yourself and others*. Compassion is really about loving kindness, a way of being in the world that is mindful, open and full of gratitude. By practicing the first four precepts, we will inevitably find ourselves embraced by the fifth. As this precept suggests, Reiki starts with a shift of our own inner space and ripples out to others.

Often we think the system of Reiki is a way of *doing* something *to* our dogs but in reality it is a way of learning how to *be* with them in the world – in both happy and difficult moments – that is balanced, peaceful and full of love.

Our greatest healing power lies not in what we can do *to* our dogs but rather in how we *are* when we are with them.

Simply breathe, nurture awareness, find gratitude and radiate compassion. No trauma is so deep it can't be healed by the power of love, and this is the Reiki space that heart-to-heart connection creates. 🌿

Realize a new level of
Wellness
with your dog

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