

A MAGICAL LESSON

by Barbara Janelle

Some months ago, Robyn, you printed my article on using TTEAM™ work with cats. I mentioned my cat Magic and the lessons he was teaching me. A recent lesson has had a major impact on my understanding and use of TTEAM work.

Magic came to me as a kitten, fresh from living with his mother and siblings in an outdoor dryer vent. While local children had petted him, I believe that some of his aloofness and wildness can be attributed to limited contact with humans.

His black, short-haired coat was dull in places and his body, particularly the tail, was very stiff. I recognize in my work with horses, cats, dogs etc. that areas of tension and relaxation appear as dull and bright areas in the coat. In tense areas where the skin is tight, the coat hairs stand more upright, absorb light and are dull. In areas where the skin is loose and more relaxed, coat hairs lie flat and reflect light giving the coat a glossy appearance. Magic's coat was dull along the spine and around the hindquarters.

When Magic was a few months old, I returned from a three week trip to find his aggressiveness toward my husband, son and our other cat, Houdini, growing beyond bounds. I sat Magic on my lap and with gloves on. I began to do TTEAM Touch work on him. After a few sessions, he stopped biting and scratching when we picked him up. However, he would not settle long in our laps and he continued to show occasional aggression to Houdini and to us.

A friend and I worked on Magic and Houdini simultaneously one day and the cats immediately showed greater and long lasting tolerance of each other. They did not truly become friends but they tolerated each other more. Now they will sleep peacefully in the same room together. I also used TTEAM Touch work to increase Magic's agility as I described in my previous article.

In all this work, I felt a bit uncomfortable about what I was doing but I did not know why. In July, animal telepathic communicator, Penelope Smith came to my home to give a clinic and to work with my cats. Houdini explained to Penelope that he saw Magic as an intruder in his home. In saying this he seemed to release some antagonism and he finished by adding that he was getting used to Magic and might get to like him.

Magic helped me understand the discomfort that I was feeling about my work with him. He told Penelope that he did not need to be fixed by me, that he was fine just as he was. I suddenly realized that I had approached him with a "fix-it" mentality and that this had reduced my empathy and ability to hear and learn from him. I had imposed my ideas, my touch work on him without honoring the being that he is and working with that being in a

TTEAM dance. My work was not "team" work but an imposition by me on an animal. In my attempt to fix Magic, I shut off much of my awareness of him.

There is a major lesson for me in this and it is one I offer to others. TTEAM work can be effective in a "fix-it" mode, but it is considerably more effective, beautiful and satisfying in a receptive, mutually aware and exploratory dance. It is a matter of listening and allowing and noticing and feeling. In truly acknowledging the animal being that we work with, we can develop greater gentleness not only in the animal but in ourselves. We can help that animal flow in movement as we flow in our thinking and awareness.

After Penelope's visit, I touched Magic with more awareness. I watched his breathing, eye and body movements more and tried to find ways of touching that made him happy. I began to truly feel each touch circle, to feel the skin move with my fingers, to feel the pause and then the sponge release that invites the skin to follow. I worked slower with this awareness and I worked from the very quiet, listening inner center. In that place, it is possible to feel the entire world and to be one with the animal.

I began to work in a vertical direction on his rigid, upright tail, rather than trying to straighten it horizontally. Instead of walking away from me when I touched his tail, he stayed with me and invited more. Magic follows me now. He asks to be touched. He is friendlier and more trusting and it is because I changed my attitude in my work with him.

I am taking this depth of quiet and receptivity into my work with other animals now. I find that by truly feeling each TTEAM circle, I can help an animal focus and relax in moments instead of minutes. A few days ago, during a clinic with dogs, I worked on a 15 month old Dalmatian. The animal was insecure and unfocused. I tried Clouded Leopard and Abalone circles without noticeable affect and then started Tarantula's Pulling the Plow. The dog settle immediately and within seconds lay quietly while I worked over most of her body. I felt every finger move and I felt the response of her skin. While people were moving around us getting lunch and other dogs were moving in and out of our space, the Dalmatian and I shared a quiet and wonderful experience.

The next day in a clinic with horses, I found horses responding sooner and with more attention to the receptive hand and mind. I didn't work to "fix" them. Instead, I invited the animals to enter into a dance of listening and exploration. Oh, and by the way, their behavior and their bodies changed and changed faster and more dramatically than I experienced in earlier situations. After eight years in TTEAM, I feel that I am entering a new level of understanding and experience in my work.