

Animal Inspirations



Dr. Susan Wagner

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There is wisdom within and around us. It comes in the form of intuition, animals, coincidence, and the earth's beauty. It also shows itself as gamma rays, photon bursts, and magnetic resonance. Wisdom is spirituality *and* science. Animals are the bridge between the two.

INTRODUCTION

I've spent many years working to improve my health and well-being. I finally realized that both were dependent on discovering my life's purpose, which I like to call our *Spiritual Specialty*. Along my journey of self-discovery, I also came to understand who my best teachers were - my patients, nature, and of course, my beloved animal family.

Animal Inspirations contains short essays designed to stimulate personal growth, with the hope that you will become closer to your *Spiritual Specialty*. It uses animal wisdom to guide you toward your instinctive, spiritual nature. You can read and journal daily, weekly, or as you feel called to do. Feel free to start at the beginning and work your way through, or to intuitively choose an essay that is calling out to you. You may even have a particular issue on your mind, so don't hesitate to ask for an essay that will bring clarity to the situation, then see which one seems the most interesting.

Animal Inspirations is written for people who know nothing of animal consciousness or energetic principles, as well as those of you who are advanced on your spiritual paths. As you unlock your inner wisdom by reading the essays, doors are opened to greater self-awareness and healing. These essays are intended to work just as the animals do — under the radar, in different forms, yet knowingly leading humanity to wholeness. I hope you enjoy them!

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Nature's Spiritual Nature

Spirituality -- how do you define it? I see it as a way of living that requires a search for who we really are, the meaning of our lives, and honors our connection to a higher power and *all that is*. Humans are not the only ones with a spiritual nature. *Nature* has a spiritual nature. Every indigenous culture understands that there is a consciousness and spiritual connection that flows through animals and the earth, just as it does with humans.

Many of us don't think of our pets as being part of our spiritual path, but I believe they are. If you want to see the divine, look into the eyes of your pet - or any animal. Don't just glance -- take a long, slow, deep look into their eyes.

I once had the amazing experience of sitting next to a chimpanzee. I was in awe of this incredible creature, and being next to her was a delight. Then I looked into her eyes. I was never the same after that. Something shifted; a vibration altered. *My* light brightened.

I'll let you define divinity as it suites you – Source, All That Is, Universe, Buddha, Krishna, Allah, Creator, Grace, Mother Nature, cosmic lattice, energy. I believe the divine is all of these. Divinity is that presence that opens our hearts and gives us knowledge that all is well. It is the energy that guides us toward our perfect path in life, gives us the strength to overcome all obstacles, and assists in our ability to heal.

Animals are an ingenious manifestation of nature's divine energy. An animal's essence doesn't become diluted with issues of self-worth, guilt, or shame. Anger and judgment don't disrupt their connections to source. I have practiced energy medicine with many anxious, painful pets, and yet their heart center remains open. The intrinsic nature of an animal allows powerful loving energy to come channeling through.

This direct relationship to divine energy can also be experienced as wisdom, and one of the most important purposes of the animal kingdom is to model humans. Animals are a reflection of who *we* are. Wild and domestic animals show us the best and worst of humanity. They reveal our

weaknesses, tragedies, and wounds we are too hurt to see. Animals will model us even to their own demise. It is part of who they are.

Wild animals also show humans that we are every bit as playful as otters splashing about in a stream, as magnificent as the most majestic eagle, and as powerful as a polar bear guarding her cubs. Our pets have a more intimate connection to us, and teach us in many ways. They come into our lives just when we need them; exiting once their spiritual jobs have been realized. Animal companions teach us by putting knowledge right where it counts – in our hearts. Their connection to a higher power can help us do amazing things.

If we want to learn more about ourselves, we need only observe our pets. They will show us the joy we can bring to life, and the unconditional love all humans are instinctively capable of. They can also exhibit our weaknesses, so that we may gain clarity and overcome them. If you see an issue with your pet, look in the mirror. Not with judgment and shame, but with gratitude for the awareness and opportunity to heal.

This is one of the most amazing ways animals are of service to humans. When I use the term *service*, I'm not speaking of entitlement, or domination over animals. Being of service is *instinctive* to animals, and part of their consciousness. And is that not the highest spiritual state a human can aspire to? When one is completely of service to another, he is living a truly spiritual life. People must evolve to this state. Animals are *born* in this state. No matter how you view Jesus, I think we can all agree he was a highly evolved being. Jesus wasn't born in a manger because there was no room at the inn. There was no room at the inn because Jesus had to be born in a manger -- humble yet *sacred* surroundings.

So on that memorable day when I was sitting next to the chimp, it was no wonder that something shifted within me. The feeling was beyond description. The energy emanating from her eyes was divine – there is no other word that describes it. We are all part of this force; it is the physical manifestation of our spirituality. All species are made of divine energy.

Contemplation

Can you think of a time when you felt a divine energy? Write it down so you remember how it felt. Sit quietly and see if you can recreate the feeling. Doing this daily will guide you on your life's path.

Tuxedo Awakenings

How many times do we hear people say "it's not black and white". They may be talking about a particular situation in their lives, or an opinion on something important to them. They tell us that the truth is more complicated, and lies somewhere in between the black and white – in the gray zone. This gray zone is a blending of belief systems and circumstances supposedly beyond our control.

Let's look at the beauty of a tuxedo cat. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of living with a tuxedo, they are black cats with white paws and bellies, and they often have white on their faces. The stark contrast between the shiny black fur and the glistening white patches create a strikingly handsome animal. I don't want to imply that black is negative and white is positive – they are both beautiful, but opposite. No gray exists anywhere on their bodies. Tuxedos are black and white – no in between. The contrast makes an individual full of character. Tuxedos teach us about loving and learning from both aspects of life.

There's something else you should know about Tuxedo cats. They define *cattitude*. They are loving, playful and very, very, ornery. This is especially true if they have a black nose. Why would a black nose have anything to do with their personalities? I have no idea. But any tuxedo companion will tell you that I'm describing them to a tee.

I had one tuxedo patient, Boots Jr., who was an expert jewel thief. If his guardian couldn't find a ring or necklace, she waited patiently until he became bored with it. He always brought it back. It was never about the value for Boots, just the thrill of the "job". I'm sure he had inside help from his equally ornery tuxedo brother, Shamu.

I could write an entire book about the escapades of our first tuxedo, Sebastian. His thievery revolved around food and toys. He even learned how to open the refrigerator. There we'd find

him, stretched out on his back, paws in the air, working on the bottom of the door until it would open. We had to make sure the door was sealed very tightly.

When my sister-in-law was visiting, I forgot to tell her about the door. She had been in the fridge and closed the door like she normally would have. We didn't tell her about the imperative extra hard push. She later came downstairs to find a smorgasbord of food in front of Sebastian. He had found his way into the fridge, pulled out the roast beef, and carried it over to his picnic blanket (also known as the kitchen rug). He then went back and got the turkey, and carefully laid it next to the beef. His last smuggle was the ham, which he deposited next to the turkey. All three were in a straight line. The chefs in my family would have been proud --- they always say presentation is so important. As Sebastian was ready to dig in to his lunch, my sister-in-law busted him. He was not happy, but I'm sure she saved him an upset stomach, or *agita* as my Italian-American husband would say.

So what do tuxedo cats and their escapades have to do with life? What can we learn about ourselves by watching them? Tuxedo cats are a duality, and so is life. They are funny and fiendish, and so is life. They bring us joy and sorrow, and so does life.

The key to living life as tuxedos would – with the gusto of *cattitude* and the unconditional love of their huge hearts – is not to resist duality, but to embrace it. The duality of life extends to its very essence. There is nothing in life that is free of a positive *and* a negative dual nature. The good news is that despite being in the midst of the negative, there is a positive solution. In every cloud, there *is* a silver lining, waiting to be discovered.

Contemplation

Where in life do you express *cattitude*? Or are you suppressing it?

Are you experiencing a situation that appears to be completely negative? Can you find the silver lining?

Pig Wisdom

I noticed the scar as soon as she sat down – it stood out like a red beacon over her heart. It quickly faded out of my site as I talked with the person whose life revolved around this seemingly insignificant concentration of tissue. Sarah is trained in veterinary nursing, and is also a gifted energy practitioner and speaker. Her passion is to bring energy therapy into mainstream veterinary medicine. She wanted my advice on how to proceed, because she believed she didn't have the credentials to be accepted in the professional world. How could she get people to hear her, and understand how important energy medicine is to animal healing?

As she told me her story, the animal connection was hard to miss. Sarah grew up on a pig farm. Her family saw the pigs as income, but Sarah connected with them on a deeper level. Her heart would break as she sobbed over a piglet that didn't make it. She talked about her empathy, and how she now chooses to do her energy work from a distance. It's easier than being caught up in the emotions surrounding a sick animal. If she isn't careful, each case makes her heart ache a little more.

Sarah's first heartbreak didn't occur because of the piglet. She was born with a congenital heart defect – a bad valve – and that has caused her many touch and go moments due to heart failure. There is no irony with the physical and emotional broken heart. They are energetically and spiritually linked.

As she told me about her most recent surgery – a valve replacement and the cause of her scar – I

said, "Let me guess, it was a pig valve".

We chuckled about her love of pigs, and how her life was saved by the very animal she took care of as a child. Now it was time for her to learn to empathize, not sympathize. Her physical heart was better, but it risks further damage from her emotions. Compassion and caring without taking on the emotion is one of the most difficult lessons of anyone in a healing or service profession. I knew pigs had more to teach Sarah, so we talked about what other things we could learn from them. On the outside, pigs smell, they love to roll around in the mud, have very bad table manners and make loud, snorting noises. Most people wouldn't choose to cuddle up next to a pig. But on the inside, pigs are *very* intelligent animals, and make loving companions. And how many hearts have been physically healed because their valves are similar to humans?

I suggested Sarah take on some Pig Wisdom. When she can get past the need for approval, and speak her truth no matter what people think, her professional path will open up. Pigs don't care if people are turned off by their noises, they snort anyway. They don't care if they smell, and they certainly don't trouble themselves over appearances. Those of us in complementary healing fields also need not worry about how people see us, or if our words will be received. It is the act of being true to ourselves and speaking up that is important. Of course that's true for everyone – it's about loving ourselves for who we really are.

I can only imagine the wise words the Muppet character, Miss Piggy, would offer us: "There is no one on the planet to compare with moi."

Contemplation

Do you hold back your gifts because you're worried about what people will think of you?
What would it feel like to fully express yourself - to find your inner Miss Piggy?

Red: The Color of Strength

As I was gazing out my picture window at yet another snow fall, I gave thanks for the beautiful birds inhabiting our back yard. We have quite a variety, and the cardinal is one of my favorites. The males stand out like bright red rubies in the snow covered bushes.

Cardinals are amazing birds because they do not migrate for the winter. We have some tough ones here in central Ohio -- snow, ice, and occasional wind chills at 20 below zero. Yet, despite the bitter conditions, they continue their vibrant songs. Did you know that the pitch at which birds chirp is the ideal frequency for plant growth? And we thought they were just talking to each other each spring.

Even more amazing are the robins. They have always flown south for the winter, and their return cheerfully marked the beginning of spring. Our robins have stayed around the last few winters, which I've found puzzling. I've heard different theories as to why this is happening. One possibility is that they are re-adjusting to the change in the earth's magnetic field. I've also read that our winter robins may actually have migrated from further north. Seems to me they'd prefer

southern weather over Ohio's, but when I think about what my brother experiences in Minnesota, I guess Ohio looks pretty darn good.

As I look at these extraordinary birds known for their red coloring, I think of the intense root chakra strength needed to survive their winters. Red is the color of the root chakra, our energy center concerned with survival. A healthy root chakra helps us stay grounded. It also enables us to feel safe, no matter what comes our way.

I believe we can all learn something from these wise red beings. The world has been going through some tough winters – literally and metaphorically. We are all bracing against the winds of corruption, gun violence, war, and disease. Basic rights are being taken away. As agents of energetic change, we are here to provide what shelter and assistance we can during this difficult time. We are also here to call out the injustices all around us. Illuminating the darkness can be frightening, but healing can't begin until the wound is identified. If robins have chosen to stay in the midst of blizzard conditions, I think we can too. If they can survive, so can we.

Enduring turmoil requires a strong root chakra, and a positive outlook. We must feel the emotions associated with difficult times, instead of hiding from them. It's imperative to stay in tune with what is happening to us, and all around us. It's critical, however, that we avoid slipping into the murky water of negativity hiding just under the surface. Negativity shows itself as woe, judgment, and bitterness. Negativity demands that we feel sorry for ourselves, and hate those whose contributed to our suffering. We can take a hit and go further into anger, or we can learn from the situation and propel ourselves forward. It is our choice.

We can also learn from the loving nature of animals. In addition to their root chakra resilience, their heart chakras emanate profound love and wisdom. You may want to try this exercise to open your heart chakra, and take advantage of its power. Think of something so wondrous that it brings tears to your eyes. In this state of being, ask for help, and "place" the issue into this frequency. Know that when we reach out through this vibration, we connect to our inner wisdom, as well as those energies all around us ready to lend a hand. We may not receive a miracle (although we could), yet the outcome guided by this frequency *will* be the best that it can be. But when we stay in anger, fear, and woe is me, help can't get to us. The winter storm is too strong.

We can all assist one another through these transformative times, whether it be through a kind word, a smile, or speaking the truth even when others don't want to hear it. We can sing as brilliantly as the magnificent cardinal. And let's not forget the wildlife going through this time

with us. Robins are adjusting to their new winter home, just as we are working through our changes. Taking care of them with some extra bird seed and fruit opens our hearts and strengthens our own roots. May I suggest that tomorrow morning, we all sit quietly and listen to the birds, knowing they are singing for us.

Contemplation

Write down where you're feeling insecure in life. Consider wearing red today. You can also visualize red light at the base of your spine. This will help strengthen your root chakra.

Life is a Cat Abscess: Open That Wound and Let It Flow

Those who have heard me lecture know I love metaphors. Simplifying difficult concepts makes them so much more palatable. And besides that, they're fun!

One of my very favorite metaphors is seeing life as a cat abscess. My veterinary professional friends and cat lovers are probably understanding this metaphor right away. For those who have not experienced a cat abscess, let's start with what they are.

Abscesses usually begin with a bite resulting from two cats fighting. Often times the puncture is very small, and the cat "walks it off" as my Italian-American husband would say. But a tiny

amount of mouth bacteria is deposited into the body part (let's say a leg), and this bacteria takes hold. We vets know the bite is somewhere on the leg, but the puncture is so small, it makes it difficult to find.

After a few days, the cat begins to limp as the bacteria is gaining ground and creating inflammation. There may be heat at the site, but still no real visible sign of something bad going on. Yet the danger is there — hiding in the shadows.

Then the swelling begins, and boy does it swell! Now the inflammation is gaining ground, and lots and lots of puss is forming under the skin. It's very obvious that something is amiss. And the only way to heal the abscess is to rupture it.

Is it gross and stinky? Yep.

Now, if a lay person came around just in time to see the abscess rupture, what might they say? I can think of a few choice words — ick, ugh, yikes — you get the idea. But if a veterinary professional sees it, what do they say? Great! Flush that beauty! Let's get all that bad stuff out! We need to allow granulation tissue to form.

What's granulation tissue? It's the beautiful pink substance that forms as the abscess heals *from the inside out*. Slowly but surely, the wound heals, and the cat becomes whole again.

How is this seemingly ugly mess of puss a metaphor for life? There's several reasons. First, what we push down deep and not face gets bigger and bigger, until we finally “explode”. You see, if that cat hadn't gone to a vet to have the abscess opened, what would have happened? You guessed it — it would rupture on its own. Always. The cat instinctively has the power to heal, and so do we.

But if we don't recognize and face the difficulties in our lives, the rupture can be difficult. Will it be a small abscess, or one that's huge with a putrid smell and a few maggots? (Got ya there, didn't I?) By the way, those maggots are just trying to clean up the wound. Don't we often see opportunities to clean our wounds as too difficult, so we don't?

The next important reason life is like a cat abscess is because of perspective. Let's take a look at the completely different perspectives from the lay person and vet professional. One sees disease, the other sees healing. And I'll acknowledge that a normal cat's leg “shouldn't” look like that.

We'd prefer that fights don't happen. But at this stage of the game, it must look this way in order to heal.

Humanity seems to be experiencing one big abscess right now. I can think of many examples of "pus" that has been hidden — greed, abuse, control, and narcissism. It's been around for centuries, and now the evolution of humanity requires that it is illuminated. No more hiding, no more lack of consequences. The abscess has to rupture, and we have to see the pus in order to flush it out. We also have to have compassion for the wound, because tending to it with care and dignity will allow it to heal faster and more completely.

So, let's receive wisdom from our amazing feline friends, who are some of the best self-healers on the planet. Look powerfully at what you're avoiding — stare it down. If it gets too big, welcome the rupture! I promise there's a healthy, beautiful life waiting underneath.

Contemplation

Is there anything hiding beneath the surface that has been difficult to see or experience? What support do you need in order to let it be released? Don't hesitate to reach out to a professional. Just as it's easier for a cat to have a veterinarian lance the abscess, it can be safer for us to receive help from someone trained to guide us.

A Little Bird Told Me

Bam! My husband and I heard that dreaded sound. A bird had flown head first into our window. I saw it flapping around in the front yard, obviously unable to fly. It finally settled under a bush, but was cawing loudly. I was so happy to retrieve it before one of the outside cats came upon the scene.

The grackle quickly went into shock, and I knew our local wildlife center had closed for the evening. I set her up in the Wagner family sanctuary, also known as our storage room, which has seen its share of other critters in need of temporary housing. Since I'm a Healing Touch for Animals[®] practitioner, I began energy therapy with her. How did I know it was a she? I didn't, but around my house, no animal stays an "it" for long. They all receive a moniker, so we borrowed my niece's nickname, Birdie Lynn.

As life would have it, we had to leave town at 5:00 am the next morning, hours before the wildlife center opened. A good friend offered to pick up Birdie and take her there if she survived the night -- an unlikely outcome based on her condition when I went to bed.

Birdie looked even worse the next morning – she was barely alive. I chose to do more energy work to help her transition, and let her pass in peace. I made her as comfortable as I could and headed out. I knew I could continue the energy work from a distance.

When I returned that night, she looked a bit better! I couldn't believe it. She wasn't able to eat or drink, but she wasn't "going to the light" either. It was late, and the wildlife center had already closed, so I continued the energy work. I felt so guilty – I should have had my friend take her there. What kind of vet was I? At least I could find some comfort in doing more energy medicine.

The following morning, Birdie Lynn looked great. She was alert and moving around in her cat carrier 'hospital room'. I knew she needed time to get through the shock and neurologic trauma from the window collision, but this truly seemed miraculous. Even given intensive treatment, most animals don't make it through what I had witnessed the morning before. The energy work could have been the key, and I started to feel much better about myself. I took her to the wildlife center, and was relieved to finally have her in their caring hands. (Just for the record, she was given a good prognosis for a complete return to health.)

Then I realized the wisdom Birdie Lynn was giving me. I was going through the typical human emotions of approval and guilt – right and wrong. When I made the decision to let her pass in peace and she didn't, I was the bad guy. When she improved, I was the heroic energy practitioner and veterinarian. But in reality, was I *any* of those things?

I had lost sight of my spiritual and energetic teachings, and had been coming strictly from ego. Perhaps Birdie was doing all the work, and I was the student. One of the greatest gifts we can contribute to each other's healing is to be a compassionate, devoted participant, *without seeing*

ourselves as the “fixer”. We must do what we think is best, not attach to outcomes, and know that our contribution is exactly as it should be.

The lesson this little bird has brought me is that true healing occurs when we come from the desire to be of service to those who are suffering, and it is the *healer* who is the real recipient.

Contemplation

This essay may take some time to sink in. Can you see that the recipient is often the true healer? Does this change how you approach helping others?

Living Like Wolves

How about behaving like a wolf today? Yes, I said wolf. Wolves are perhaps the most

misunderstood of all animals. Often portrayed as vicious predators, they are truly wise and wondrous creatures.

As seen in the 2007 documentary, *Living With Wolves*, researchers Jim and Jamie Dutcher studied the Sawtooth Pack in an enclosed nature reserve for six years and made many amazing discoveries. Their findings revealed a completely different perspective on the creatures often associated with scary movies and full moons.

Here are a few of their “surprising” revelations. Wolves are affectionate, compassionate and loyal to their pack. Although there is an alpha male and female who lead the group, all adults have a role in raising the young. The resources of the pack are shared. Wolves care for the sick and wounded, and grieve deeply when a member is killed.

What I found most interesting in the documentary was the relationship of the omega male to the other animals. He *appeared* to be the least of the pack. He was not permitted to eat until after everyone else, he was frequently picked on, and generally seemed to get the “short end of the stick”. But when it came time to move the pack to another sanctuary, it was the alpha male who guided the fearful omega out of his cage. He would not be left behind.

When we look at the omega from the perspective of what he taught the other wolves, he clearly wasn’t the least important. This male allowed himself to be the “last” in order for the rest of the wolves to learn survival skills. Without this training, they would not be able to protect themselves from outside predators. In actuality, the omega may be the most *spiritually* advanced of the wolf pack.

Humanity’s evolution parallels our awareness of wolf social behavior. We previously viewed wolves as aggressive and cold-blooded. The same can be said of some human kind. Some people can be conniving, cut-throat predators who only care about themselves. Human greed has contributed to the creation of poverty and violence, and we abuse other humans and animals in ways only fit for monster movies and werewolf legends.

But these characteristics don’t describe the *real* humanity. Cruel traits can be a reflection of people who are deprived of basic nurturing, who exist in the world without caring, and who may very well have been victims of abuse themselves. Some hold only pain and sadness in their hearts. Many have yet to experience true joy. They have lost their connection to true human nature, and when that happens, I believe a darker force takes over.

But there is always hope, even for those who appear to have no redeeming qualities at all. Where there is a spark of light, there is a chance for healing. Pit bulls confiscated from an infamous dog fighting ring exemplify this message. Many believed these dogs could not be rehabilitated; their vicious natures were too engrained. From over 40 dogs, all but two became happy, healthy *safe animals*. Many even acquired new occupations as therapy dogs!

Wolves teach us about who we really are. Humanity is intrinsically good. Our instinct requires that we care for each other, we do what's best for all children, and that we protect the most vulnerable in society. And many humans take on the role of omega, sacrificing for the sake of the whole.

As each of us chooses to face the mythical wolf within, we help all of humanity become *true* wolves. And we *are* doing it! Despite what we see around us, changes for good are occurring daily. Power and greed based institutions that were once thought to be indestructible are being forced to operate with integrity and transparency. People continue to help each other when economic or natural disaster strikes, despite their own suffering and any differences they may have with those they are helping. It is a new age, and all of us have a role in it. We are the alpha and the omega. We *are* creating a time when the viciousness formerly attributed to wolves and humans will only be found in the movies.

Contemplation

Sit quietly and see yourself as part of the human "pack". Can you send compassion to those who seem to have no good qualities? Consider doing something this week that supports your local "wolf pack".

Slow But Sure

I've always loved turtles. From the time I was a young girl marveling at the tiny creatures we purchased at the five and ten cent store, all the way up to now, as I enjoy sitting near the massive tortoise at the Columbus Zoo. Turtles are just plain cool. Their shells are a home they carry with them, allowing a safe retreat at a moment's notice. Sure, turtles move slowly, but we would too if we had to carry our houses around.

Indigenous cultures honor and love turtles as well. In Native American traditions, turtles represent Mother Earth. I love the beautiful symbolic drawing of a fir tree growing up from a turtle's shell, with an eagle perched in the tree. Grounded in their homes, turtles are a backbone for earth's creatures — whether they be plant or animal.

Turtles also represent longevity. Jonathan, a tortoise believed to be the oldest living land animal in the world, recently celebrated his 190th birthday! The land tortoise I visit at the zoo isn't quite that geriatric, yet as I sit near my gentle friend, I can feel powerful, grounded energy emanating from his immense physical presence. And those eyes — oh, those soulful eyes! They exude wisdom. One can only wonder of all the things these tortoises have seen and experienced.

I have a turtle pendant my sister bought me when she was visiting Hawaii, and I wear it nearly every day. What a wonderful gift — the symbol of an enlightened, enduring energy from a place whose frequency is tough to match. Even before I became an energy practitioner, I sensed Hawaii was unique. It just felt different - peaceful and safe. Although I suppose that's not exactly the sense I would have gotten had I been standing near an exploding volcano!

So if you find that life's a bit tough right now, volcanos are erupting all around, and you're not sure if you can go the distance, think of turtles. Bring to you the longevity and resilience they harbor, and know that just as turtles carry their houses with them, you have everything you need right with you.

Contemplation

When you need extra resilience, sit quietly and take a few calming breaths. Picture a magnificent land or sea turtle for several seconds, and ask them to help you go the distance. Whenever you become concerned about an issue, take a calming breath and remind yourself that turtles have your back. Pay attention to how you feel as you gain needed resilience and wisdom.

Taming The Cougar Within

Ever try to give a pill to a resistant cat? As my Serbian grandmother used to say – yoi! You may be thinking -- what's the big deal? It's a cat for goodness sake. What could be so hard? Some of

you are smiling as you remember your salivating cat spitting mushy pills and froth all over the room. I'm sure he looked like he was possessed! I hope there aren't too many of you rubbing your scars.

My first cat Sebastian was a loving as could be, until he was restrained. I once had the grand idea of doing bloodwork to be sure he was healthy. I asked two strong veterinarians who were experts at restraining cats to help me. As Sebastian proceeded to humble us all, we decided that there was no need for a blood draw; he was just fine.

Several years later Sebastian developed cancer, and needed a series of chest x-rays. I was teaching at a local veterinary college, so he came to work with me for treatment and testing. Shortly into the procedure, a couple of terrorized veterinary students made a fast exit from the radiology room. Not wanting to offend their teacher, they sheepishly asked me if we could sedate Sebastian. I'll never forget the look on their faces when I explained that he *was* sedated.

Luckily we didn't require a perfect image, so the students didn't have to restrain him as much as they normally would have. The radiologist and I knew that if we wanted a detailed x-ray, we would need to completely anesthetize Sebastian to minimize his stress level, and collateral student damage. We compromised with Sebastian – he got his dignity, and we got our picture.

The energy surrounding negative emotions are just like a fractious, unruly cat. They have to be dealt with in the appropriate way to avoid someone being hurt. Our anger, fear, and resentment can show up in aggressive ways -- spitting, scratching, and biting at our hearts and minds.

The first rule of dealing with a difficult cat is to be aware! Observe his behavior, so you can intervene before he reaches threshold and explodes with scratching and biting. Dealing with our emotional cat requires that we don't resist our feelings, but that we catch them early in their development. If we ignore or suppress them, we are restricting them. And just as over-restraining Sebastian brought on negative consequences, not facing our negative emotions can also have dire ramifications for us.

Intense negative emotions are usually an energetic replay of a past experience that hasn't healed. If not addressed, it will repeat over and over again. The names and situations change, but the emotional outcome will remain the same. Until the root of the emotion is revealed and dealt with, the energy continues to oscillate, creating a déjà vu feeling. And with every replay, your "fractious cat" gets a little more difficult to deal with. Each time you assert control over your

negative emotions instead of facing them, “kitty” becomes stronger and more determined to express itself. By the time you reach mid-life, you are restraining a cougar instead of a house cat. Your cat may rest in-between, but it *will* wake up and let you know it wants to be free.

We can't become angry at our fractious cat. It has the right to express itself in any way it sees fit. We must stay compassionate, because it is afraid and trying to defend itself. As a veterinarian, it is *my* responsibility to protect a difficult patient even when he is getting ready to claw my eyes out. With calmness, I release the cat, let it go to a safe hiding place in exam room and chill out with pleasing lavender scents and calming music. Then we make a plan to go forward compassionately.

So how do we deal with our emotions in a positive way? Just like my exam room cat, we release them in a safe place. That could be the office of a mental health professional, a spiritual minister's sanctuary, the living room of a dear friend, or the privacy of a nature walk and meditation.

As a very wise teacher of mine once said, “Create the space for whatever is painful”. Feel the emotion brewing, but stay calm. Let it be, let it dissipate, then rise above it by allowing ourselves to go to the safe place within us. We can open our hearts and ask for help. Our inner wisdom will guide us on how to proceed. Later we can address the real energy behind the fractious state. Once we have a better understanding of our emotions, we can begin to heal. A wise teacher, indeed.

Having greater awareness of our emotions makes it easier to stay calm and peaceful as we go through life's challenges. Our fractious cat will roll over and purr for us. By approaching life with purrs instead of hisses, we make the world a better place for all.

Contemplation

It's important not to beat ourselves up when our inner cat becomes a bit fractious. While we contemplate what it's telling us, some warm milk and compassion can make the pondering easier.

Gone Fishing

Call me crazy, but when I experience something more than once, I pay attention. I believe there are no coincidences – life is a series of connections. Many take place on a level we are not conscious of, until they “break through” disguised as serendipity. If we are alert, we can receive the message intended for us. That’s what intuition really is – a clear signal from divine wisdom.

My wisdom recently showed up in the form of a fish and a couple of funny moments. I was at a party, and a friend caught her earring on her sweater. She looked a bit odd with her neck kinked as if she were the RCA Victor dog, until her husband came to the rescue. I didn’t think a thing about it until a short while later when I snagged my fingernail on the lining of my jacket. Hmmm – two “catches”.

The next day, I was waiting for take-out at our favorite Indian restaurant, enjoying the large fish tank in the lobby. I often place my order in person instead of calling ahead, just so I can hang out with these beautiful beings. On this occasion, I noticed a fish at the bottom of his tank. I wondered if he was alright, so I took a closer look. He slowly made his way over to my corner of the tank. We sat and stared at each other for a bit, and then it hit me. What happens to fish? *They get caught*. Looks like some wisdom coming through.

As I drove home I thought about how we humans are caught up in life. We are prisoners of our own creations, not realizing that unlike fish, we are able to cut the line and set ourselves free. We are not victims of circumstance, and we *can* choose to live a life free of entanglement and attachments. But setting ourselves free starts with the choice to do so – the choice and courage to look at life from a different perspective. As Einstein said, one can’t solve a problem with the same thinking that created it.

I then realized that there are those who choose to stay caught in order to set others free. Some walk through suffering – “caught” in circumstances that would weaken most of us – in order to serve those around them. There’s really no line attached to them – the trap that we see is really a divine illusion. By hanging out in fishing nets, they catch those who need a helping hand.

Contemplation

You may want to take some time today and ask yourself where you feel trapped, and what

wisdom must be gained in order to cut yourself free. It may have something to do with being aware of those around you. By making their lives in the nets just a bit easier, you may be able to eventually free yourself.

Merry Catmas

Three French hens, two turtledoves, and my cat in our Christmas tree...

I remember that Christmas well. Coming home exhausted from a long day at the clinic, I called out for our kitten, Sebastian. Sebastian was also known as Bud, Buddy, Lil Guy, and *don't think for a second that he won't do it* Guy. He was the quintessential kitten – into everything. And I mean everything!

So when Sebastian didn't show up right away, I knew he was up to something. I looked everywhere – under the beds, on top of shelves, in the manger. Yes, I said manger. The year before, my brother in law had made a beautiful ceramic manger for my husband and I. Of course Sebastian thought it was his, and proceeded to knock over camels, sheep, Mary, and Joseph so that he could curl up in the straw next to baby Jesus. I think he felt slighted that no barn cats showed up in traditional nativity scenes. Point taken.

But there was the nativity, with no additional characters. I couldn't imagine where he was. Then I had the feeling that someone, or something, was watching me. As I slowly turned, I saw two golden eyes staring at me from the middle of the Christmas tree. There sat Sebastian, happy as he could be, perched on a branch deep in the tree. I'm sure he thought we had brought it home just for him.

As Sebastian got older, he chose to sleep under the tree with his new cat brother, Vinny. They spent so much time amongst the Christmas village that I had to remove sap from their fur. My husband and I later came to realize that cutting a tree down just didn't seem appropriate for us anymore, so we switched to an artificial one. Sebastian and Vinny loved those trees, too. But I was always tempted to put a little maple syrup on each of their heads for old times sake.

I also clearly remember the morning I walked into the kitchen, half asleep, heading straight for the coffee pot. Out of my peripheral vision I noticed the green carpet in our living room. Then I realized that we didn't have green carpet. I turned and found our tree on its side – ornaments

everywhere. Just like most cat brothers, Sebastian and Vinny enjoyed wrestling. They must have had a standoff turned pounce-fest in Christmas village. We had to buy a new tree topper that year.

Thank goodness Sebastian never knocked over my mother-in-law's tree. He loved riding in the car, so we took him home for the holidays. He took full advantage of Italian Christmas at Nana's house, and came back a little heavier every year. As soon as we would arrive, Sebastian would stalk the tree, pick one stuffed ornament off the bottom limbs, and hang on to it for the entire visit. I guess he figured it was his Christmas present.

Each Christmas, as my husband and I hang ornaments on our tree, we remember all of the friends and family who gave them to us. After 42 holidays, we have acquired quite a few. And one of us will always bring up the story of the day Sebastian discovered the joy of a Christmas tree.

Whichever holidays you celebrate, I hope that you, your human and animal companions will have a wonderful, cat-like season. I do just that, and thank my lucky stars that I don't have to write about the day Sebastian knocked over the burning Menorah.

Contemplation

Sit quietly and bring in the spirit of your favorite holiday. It doesn't matter what time of year it is, holiday energy can be accessed at any time. If the holidays are difficult for you, consider reaching out to a professional. And please know that you are dearly loved, every day of the year.

Quantum Environmentalism

For

all the wonderful environmentally conscious readers, I thought I'd give you another perspective on helping our planet. I call it Vibrational Sustainability. This "green" concept allows us to go beyond recycling, planting trees, and using lawn and personal care products free of toxins. It takes global warming and controlling emissions to an entirely new level.

I'd like to teach you about your own *energetic* emissions, and how you can aid the welfare of the planet and all her creatures simply by controlling your emotional output. Emotions are waveforms that influence all life around us, because everything is based in energy. Scientists have shown that all animate and inanimate objects are made of vibrating waves of electromagnetic energy. When we feel an emotion, we *literally* send off waves, as if we were a pebble thrown into a pond.

The earth has a natural, healthy vibration that is created by the energy of the soil, planets and animals. Animals serve many roles when it comes to energy of the planet. Their energy fields are far more expansive than ours – a dog's energy field is approximately ten times that of a human's. A horse's field will encompass a large arena, and a cat's will fill an entire property. The energy of wildlife is especially important to the survival of the planet. They create frequencies that maintain stability and promote healing.

The earth's frequency, called the Schumann Resonance, is approximately 8 - 10 Hz, and is created by vibrations that bounce between the ground and clouds. We can't see them, but they cycle up and down, as sound waves travel through the shaft of a wind instrument.

There was an interesting experiment done in Europe in the 1960's. Human subjects were placed in a shielded underground living space, blocking outside electromagnetic radiation. Eventually the humans became confused and agitated. Their biorhythms were disrupted. Researchers then pulsed in varying frequencies and measured the effects on the subjects. The frequency that helped them regain normalcy was 10 Hz – the same as the earth's natural resonance.

8-10 Hz is the identical frequency range as alpha waves in our brains. This brain activity is produced when we are in a state of relaxation. Being in an alpha state gives us a sense of well-being, increases creativity, and enhances our immune systems. Our optimal vibration is the same as the earth's inherent frequency. We are meant to live in harmony with nature, not in discord.

Now we know why natural surroundings are good for us. But energy transmission goes both ways. We receive from the earth, and the earth receives from us. When we feel scattered and chaotic, we transmit those frequencies to all the people and animals around us, and to the earth. By being joyful and at peace with ourselves and those around us, we can help heal the planet. Who would have thought tree hugging was really quantum physics in action?

So when you can, stop, smell, and be grateful for the roses – it will help you *and* Mother Nature!

Contemplation

If you're not able to get with nature everyday, try having a landscape picture near you. Take a moment several times a day and look at the picture. See if you feel calmer!

Heart to Heart Communication

One of the most controversial topics surrounding our pets is animal communication. I remember when I first heard about the concept of talking to animals. I was a practicing neurologist, and an internist friend told me about a client whose animal communicator told her that her cat had pancreatitis. Boy, did my righteous indignation have a field day with that one! What nonsense, I thought.

Now that I comprehend the human-animal bond as an energetic force, and understand that we can translate energy into a state of knowing, or even words, I understand it. Have I seen a few communicators who were way off base? Sure. Have I witnessed what I believe is true communication? You bet.

My first experience with animal communication came years before I even understood what was happening. I had a patient named Buster, who was a fabulous cat. Buster had undergone surgery to remove a life threatening tumor. As do most cats with this procedure, he did very well. Unfortunately, complications occurred a few days later, and Buster found himself fighting for his life.

Buster's entire medical team was giving it their best. I stayed with him most of the night and the following day, but I had tickets to a Santana concert that night. In my house, there are three spiritual holidays: Christmas, Easter, and Santana. I knew Buster was in the best hands in ICU, and a dear internist friend of mine was working ER that night and would look after him as well. I knew Buster would be fine while I got some needed R&R, so I went to the concert.

During the entire concert, I kept worrying about Buster, but knew that I would be checking on him after the show. After all, he was in great hands. All of a sudden, this intense, incredible feeling of peace came over me – a feeling that Buster was fine and happy. At first I thought my intuition was telling me he had turned the corner for the better. Then I realized it might be something else. I looked at my watch – it was 10:15.

Later that night, when I walked into the hospital and saw the look on my vet friend's face, I knew what that meant. She opened her mouth to speak, and I filled in the words – Buster had passed, right? What time, I asked? She said she wasn't sure exactly – sometime after 10.

Now that I am an energy practitioner, and know that science has shown the energetic basis for all life, Buster's story doesn't surprise me a bit. And we also know from science that matter and energy are neither created nor destroyed, they merely change forms. That means that life of all kinds is neither created nor destroyed, it always *is*. We and our beloved animals always *are*.

A dear intuitive friend of mine said that when animals pass, they go home, change clothes, and come right back. I wonder what Buster is wearing now.

Contemplation

Here's an effective exercise to create a deeper connection to your beloved animals. Sit quietly and think of something that brings you joy and peace. Feel your heart open up. Then intend that you are connecting with your pet through this energy, and feel the love that you have for them. You may receive a message back in the form of a picture, words, or knowing.

Finding Gratitude

"Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how'd ya like the play?" is one of my very favorite phrases. In the midst of any difficult situation, it brings in just a bit of laughter.

The last few years have made many people around the world feel like *Mrs. Lincoln*. The pandemic, war, and climate change have brought many to the breaking point. Spiritual activists Andrew Harvey and Carolyn Baker call this time our Dark Night of the Globe. Some people may feel it's impossible to stay positive, let alone be grateful for anything.

Yet, as one who looks at life energetically, I know that even though we may be in despair, we can still cultivate resilience and maintain our power. In doing so, we can weather the storms much more easily. The high winds and pelting rain will still be there, but it is *us* who determines who we will be when it is over.

How do we find our solutions in the midst of tragedy? Choose it. I know to many of you this sounds totally bizarre. But life is energy – a duality of positive and negative waves. Where there is negative, there *must* be positive. And we know from Einstein's work that reality changes according to one's perspective.

So even in the midst of pain and suffering, choose to see the positive in the situation. The only way a solution can manifest is if you believe it's there in the first place. All of our advances in society have started with the belief that something better was possible. If we stay locked in darkness, we can't see the tiny pinpoint of light beginning to show itself.

Animals are masters at energetic living. Many years as an energy practitioner have shown me that in most cases, despite pain and abuse, the energy center associated with an animal's heart stays open and flowing. They understand and *live* duality – in the midst of suffering, joy remains.

If we would like to get through our *Mrs. Lincoln* times a bit easier, then let's act like animals. We must not resist our difficulty, but stare down the pain and deal with it — all while keeping our hearts open. Gratefully, we have professionals who can help us through the tough times.

It helps to stay grateful for what remains in our lives instead of focusing on what we've lost. Our energy fields create our reality, so we must be wary of blaming others for our problems –even when it appears that they are at fault. If there is one thing I have learned from studying energy principles, it's that life is not what it seems. If we can stay out of judgment and blame, and remain grateful, we may actually like this play called life.

Contemplation

In a world where the negative news is front and center, try taking time everyday to think about things you are grateful for. You may even want to write them down. This exercise will open your heart, increase your connection to your higher self, and create hope for the future