The Animal Reiki Source Guide to

USING REIKI SYMBOLS AND MANTRAS WITH ANIMALS

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Using Reiki Symbols and Mantras with Animals

I think this is a really important topic because you hear and read a lot of different things about symbols and mantras in the system of Reiki. And I think they’re some of the most favorite tools that people have of all the different tools that Reiki gives us. But I’ve found here is a specific way of working with them that really resonates with animals. I learned this over the years by observing the responses from thousands of animals.

When I first learned the symbols and the mantras, I learned how to “give them” to the animal or put them “on” the animal or draw them “over” the animal. And I had very little luck with that. The animals would get up and walk away. They weren’t very fond of that kind of practice. And then I took a class with Frans Stiene; he talked about a deeper inner spiritual practice of using the symbols for yourself. And so I started to experiment with that focus, and the animals loved it and they were drawn to it.

And so for several years previous to my taking that class, I had stopped using symbols and mantras with the animals, because when I used them, it seemed disturbing to them. What I realized through using the inner spiritual practice was that it wasn’t the symbols and mantras that were disturbing them; it was my focus with them. It was my active “doing” something “to” the animals using the symbols and mantras that was not helpful. As soon as I turned my intention and energy inward, using them for my own focus, then the animals became very agreeable.

The symbols and mantras in Reiki really help the practitioner to uncover a deeper layer of being, one where we remember that we’re all connected. So in truth, Reiki helps us remember that we’re all One in this universe. I am the universe, and the universe is me. You are the universe, the universe is you. Your dog is the universe, the universe is your dog. And so on. There really is no separation between any of us, and all of the tools of Reiki help us to uncover this, but especially the symbols and mantras are really a fun way to discover it.

So the symbols and mantras, in my view, are simply tools to help us remember Oneness and compassion. When we remember how connected we are, that there is no separation and that we are all one in the universe, then automatically compassion arises. Because we realize that if I hurt someone else, I hurt myself. If I hurt a forest, I hurt myself. So it’s not just animals that this Reiki concept goes with, it’s everything in the universe. We begin to realize compassion and we are motivated to act with loving-kindness.

So the symbols and the mantras are not meant to be “given” to the animals to fix a particular issue or a problem, like, for example, "Oh, you have a broken leg, so you need the power symbol," or "Oh, you're a really nervous cat, so you need the emotional healing symbol." Instead, each symbol and mantra actually has a particular meditative focus for you as a practitioner, because you are the one that is creating the beautiful openhearted space of presence for the animal. When you can create a space that causes the animal to come forward with an open heart and connect with you heart-to-heart, that is the space where all healing possibility exists. That is the space of miracles. That is the space where true healing happens.
So symbols and mantras are really about us as the practitioner and about our own meditative focus. Where do these really come from? And if we look back—and I'm really grateful to Frans Stiene for exploring some of the roots of the system of Reiki—Reiki relates to different spiritual practices, such as Shingon Buddhism and Mikkyo esoteric practice in Japan. Japanese spiritual traditions teach something called the Three Secrets. The Three Secrets are mind, body and speech. And these practices relate to Reiki because we can see the Three Secrets in Reiki practice as well. And in these teachings it is said that the Three Secrets allow us to uncover our true self, or our true nature. And our true self, our true nature, exists within us and within the entire universe. So, in other words, the Three Secrets help us uncover Oneness.

So historically over time in Japan, practitioners of these different systems would use mudras, which are hand positions; they would use mantras, which are words to chant or to speak; and they would use visualization for their mind to help purify and harmonize the Three Secrets of mind, body and speech. So in the system of Reiki, we can see this reflected because Usui’s goal was the same: to help us uncover our true nature and this Oneness with the universe. And we can also see mind, body and speech in the teachings of Reiki, including the symbols and mantras. So with mind, we can see Reiki visualizations such as the Joshin Kokyo-Ho “breath of light.” We can also see it with the Reiki precepts, since they are there to contemplate with our mind to focus our mind. And also the Reiki symbols; we visualize and draw them, and they help us focus our mind.

So the Three Secrets are mind, body and speech. Let's move to body, which can be symbolized by mudras. But does Reiki even have mudras? Well, we can see them in the hands-on healing positions that we use with people. That is a type of a mudra. We can also see it in the Reiju, or the initiation process. So those of you who are Reiki teachers who have learned how to do initiations, you can see there are certain hand positions that we'll use there. So that is also a way to focus our body. Even something as simple as the gassho, where you place your hands palm to palm in front of your heart at the beginning or at the end of each Reiki treatment; this is a way to harmonize your body.

And finally we come to the third “secret” of speech. We see this in the Reiki teachings of speaking the Reiki precepts and also speaking or chanting the mantras. When speaking or chanting the mantras, you can chant them as they’re written, or you can chant them using the primordial sounds, which is the way that I teach them in my classes. For those of you who've have taken Reiki 2 or 3 with me, you've learned primordial chanting, which Frans taught me.

You also can repeat those mantras silently in your mind, and you can also use them together with the corresponding symbols. In this way, you can draw the symbol and say the mantra three times. For the symbols to purify your mind, there are different ways to use them. You can draw a symbol in the air or you can draw it in your hand, you can draw it on your body, you can draw it in your mind, you can draw it in the air with the tip of your nose. It really depends on where you are. If you're out in a shelter situation, you probably don't want to walk around drawing things in the air. You can just draw it in your mind.

But really it's the visualization that gives your mind focus, and with the mantras, it's the sound that vibrates through your body, especially with the chanting. I think that's such a powerful way to use the
mantras, because with the chanting, you breathe into the hara with each breath, and on the out breath as you chant the Reiki mantra so you feel it resonate through your whole body and then out into the universe. So you're becoming or embodying this sort of radiance of Reiki through the chanting.

So how does this then relate to animals? If we look at the meanings of the symbols and the mantras, they're really about focus. The first mantra means, “focus,” going straight to your center, and it's really about grounding. The second symbol and mantra is sort of the compliment to that. It's about harmony and earth and sky: the harmony that comes from expansiveness. So being really grounded like the earth and really expansive like the sky, that's like the yin and the yang that you have coming together and the harmony that results. And then the third symbol and mantra, it's really about connection and the heart. It's really about the Oneness of all things. In reality, we can see these teachings about connection, compassion and Oneness in all parts of Reiki, not merely in the symbols and mantras.

So once we learn the meanings of the symbols and mantras, we have different ways to practice and to focus on them. And again, the key with animals is to get away from the idea that you're giving the symbol or the mantra to the animal to fix a certain problem. That will cause a lot of resistance with the animals, as it would if you were too pushy in your approach with any other tool in Reiki. When we have that active state of mind of “doing” and “fixing,” the animals get very disturbed by that approach.

So any of you who have taken my classes, you've learned what I always say: whether you're sitting in meditation with the animal, if the animal comes forward for you to touch them and there's physical touch involved, whether you're doing a breathing technique or some sort of meditation with them or if you're working with symbols and mantras, it doesn't really matter, because they always use the same approach. This approach is that you go inward to your true self, to your inner essence, and there's a beautiful radiance that shines out from you from your practice, without judgment and ego. That radiance is like a beautiful healing light filled with peacefulness, love, harmony, and compassion, and animals can feel that so they are drawn to your radiance.

So the power of Reiki is not in something that you're sending from here to there, but it's about the space you create within yourself and how you radiate that space for the animals. Being able to have this space come from grounding and expansiveness (earth and sky energy) is really important because it helps us to make that connection. Reiki symbols and mantras are really about first, getting us really grounded; and second, helping us to open our mind and to expand. Once we create the earth and the sky within ourselves, then we have a beautiful space of connection that happens, and then the healing power of compassion shows itself.

We can also see earth, sky and connection in the meaning of the first and second and third symbols and mantras, and we have many choices of how to use them. We can just focus on the symbols (visualize them, contemplate them, go inward with them), we can also just focus on the mantras and we can either speak them, say them or we can chant them. And we can practice with the mantras as they're written or with the primordial sounds. We can also draw the symbol and say the mantra together, and sit with that. There are so many different ways to work with these different concepts; the symbols and mantras are beautiful tools.
Now, how do we do that with the animals? Well, it depends on what animals you're working with. If you're sitting with your cat, you can have your eyes closed for this meditation. Or perhaps with your dog you could also be walking your dog and chanting the first symbol. For example, if you're out in a park with your dog or walking down a trail, you might feel the power of the earth under your feet and the trees and all this grounding, and that’s a perfect time to work with the first symbol and mantra. You're supported by all the natural elements around you: what a beautiful way to shine.

The more that we uncover our inner radiance, our inner light—that beautiful inner healing that we have inside of us that often gets covered up—through the practice of the Reiki symbols and mantras, the more that we serve as a mirror for our animals. Our animals might be facing a difficulty, they might be suffering a physical illness or they might have some kind of emotional issue, or they may even be transitioning, so there can be a lot of emotions for us around that of grief and so on. And so if we can shine this beautiful light, it helps our animal get in touch with their true self when they're having a difficult time. So in one way we mirror back to their animal their perfect, beautiful inner light. It’s always bright, always beautiful, even when they're struggling. That can be tremendously helpful to them to remember their inner power so they can heal themselves.

We can also guide them back to the light. So if you take an animal who’s really traumatized—I've worked with a lot of animals in shelters who are completely shut down by the abuse they've suffered in the past—and through these practices, we create this beautiful shining light. From wherever they are in the darkness, they can see the light and they can come forward and connect and remember their own inner light. And so we're almost like we are lighthouses; in fact, one of the meditations I teach in my level 2 class is the “lighthouse meditation” where we visualize our heart as a lighthouse, and we are guiding the animals back to the light. So we can be that mirror or that guiding light to bring them back.

And the thing that I love about Reiki is that, using the symbols and mantras, we often think that "Well, it’s about me helping the animals," but the truth is that many times the animals are the ones who help us. And they don’t have to practice a system of Reiki to do this; they just “are” healers. So they shine just through their presence, a beautiful light, and often it mirrors ours back to us. And we remember our strength, we remember our courage, we remember our patience, we remember our kindness, just by being in their presence.

Or sometimes if we're very sad, if we've lost our way, when we spend time with our animals, they help bring us back. They help bring us back to us, to our true selves. They bring us back to hope. When we feel sad, they bring us back to life. They do this by just being very present without judgment and very grounded and connected. And those are things that the symbols and the mantras actually help us do, so it becomes a really beautiful circle of healing that we are doing these Reiki practices to help us go to that inner space of heart and light and love, and in turn the animals are already there. They're already in that space, and so they can meet us there. And when our hearts connect, that is the space where all the healing happens.

So I invite all of you to think about how you can work with the symbols and the mantras by going inward for your own spiritual practice, and allowing the radiance of that to shine out, and inviting your animal to join you in that beautiful space of Reiki light and love and joy and healing.