

## *Dog Attack*

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Jill\* is a doctor of psychology with vast experience working with athletes and trauma. She has made a tremendously positive impact within our community. She also is a recent client of mine following a brutal attack.

In 2013, Jill attended a holiday gathering. As she bent down to talk to the hostess, the woman's pit bull attacked Jill, lunging at her face. She described the attack as "intensely quick and stunning." Jill suffered lacerations to her face and arms, a dislocated jaw, whiplash injuries, and a severe head concussion. She was unable to chew food, read, drive, concentrate, or use a computer for months.

At the time of this story, she has not worked in nine months because of the concussion. She therefore has been unable to provide an income for herself. Her legal options are limited because the owner of the dog did not have renters insurance, which would have covered a dog bite. In addition, our town has a "one bite rule," which stipulates that there are no consequences for the first bite, other than the dog being quarantined for ten days (which didn't happen).

Adding salt to Jill's wounds, the owner of the dog has completely dismissed her and will not support or help her in any way. Hence, their relationship is completely destroyed. Jill is working to overcome this betrayal to the best of her abilities. She has found resources in the medical and alternative medicine community to help her along her path to recovery.

A friend of Jill's, who is also a client of mine, told me the story. (It was traumatic for her, too.) I suggested she mention to Jill that CranioSacral Therapy (CST) and SomatoEmotional Release (SER) may help her to heal on all levels a bit faster.

For days I couldn't get Jill's story out of my mind. Although I am scheduled a year in advance in my CST practice, I was determined to figure out a way to see her as soon as I could.

Over the past few months, I have seen Jill several times. Layer by layer the trauma is peeling away. My counseling degree, SER work,

and years of CST and bodywork experience coupled with her background, willingness, and determination has resulted in some profound experiences for both of us.

We are usually silent during our sessions. Jill's central nervous system has been compromised, so rest is extremely important during our time together. She has demonstrated a number of startle responses, which are decreasing each time she has a session.

Our last session was fascinating for both of us. As I silently communicated with Jill's Inner Physician, I began to focus more intently on the right side of her head. This was new (the attack was on the left). It felt like my hand was glued to her right temporal lobe and occipital base region. Her Inner Physician told me to stay there and not to move for a while.

Information came into my awareness that the fear and anger the dog felt when he attacked went directly into Jill's head and brain. I could sense it and see the entire scenario in my mind. It presented itself as a large, thick gray rod that went through the left side of her mandible (jaw) and out through the right side of her head. She was in a deeply relaxed state, so I didn't verbalize anything. I kept talking to her Inner Physician about what to do, while staying as "empty" as possible to facilitate healing.

All of a sudden I began to feel thick, gray dog slobber releasing out of her head into my hand. If I had opened my eyes, I imagine I could have seen it. Her Inner Physician and I kept gathering the substance into my palm and removing it into my right hand to allow the dog slobber "energy" to release from her head. The rod was disappearing as this occurred. I knew something big was happening, and both of us breathed a sigh of relief in unison.

After the session, I felt a little hesitant to tell my client that dog slobber had come out of her brain. But intuitively I know when I am supposed to mention things (I get tingles on the left side of my head), so I found the courage.

I always check my intention when verbalizing anything. Clients respect our opinions and often look to us for guidance. I want to be uplifting and encouraging, while diminishing anxiety and fear. Therapists have a huge responsibility in these situations. Gentle, lov-

ing, non-ego communication can be just as significant as the physical session. We want our clients to have hope. That is what Dr. John E. Upledger would want, I suspect.

Afterward, my client informed me that at the same time I was removing “dog goo,” she was seeing the dog in her mind’s eye near the left side of her face. She said he popped in. During this particular session, he was oversized with a gigantic head and biting teeth. Her first inclination was to jerk her head away. She resisted that impulse and used her breath and logical mind to begin releasing this image from her brain. It was powerful.

It seemed appropriate to process the experience from both of our perspectives. In so doing, it created space for healing to occur and for our rapport to strengthen. The synergy created between practitioner and client utilizing this modality enabled a powerful transformation to occur that was integral to Jill’s healing. In her words, “This was a pivotal session in the recovery of this trauma.”

I believe Jill’s road to complete recovery is inevitable. I am grateful to be a part of her healing path and adore the mystery of this work.

\*Name changed to protect client confidentiality

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