

When Healing Is Right in Front of You (and free)

An “Aha” Moment

By Mara Bishop, MS,
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The nature of the cells, thoughts, and faiths that comprise our unique identities have all been demonstrated to affect our health. A study by the NIH titled *Negative and Positive Beliefs Related to Mood and Health* demonstrated that an optimistic approach to one’s health has a ripple effect; beliefs affect emotion, emotion affects action.

I’ve spent over 20 years in the world of “mind-body-spirit” healing and have seen remarkable transformations. Sometimes it’s through deliberate work—research, disciplined practice, healing interventions—that we make changes to the health of our bodies, minds, and spirits. Sometimes it’s through serendipity, or surrender. From my work with clients and my personal experience, I’ve observed that often a simple shift in perspective or habit can be a catalyst for big change. “Aha” moments are frequently light, feeling less like work than a gift. I had an “Aha” moment some time ago. It improved my well-being on all levels. It’s very simple. You don’t have to come into my office to experience it, and the odds are you already have access to it in your own home.

I have pets and I adore them. If you live with animals, I expect you feel the same way. I had an epiphany that not only deepened my relationship with them, but also strengthened my daily spiritual practice, which in turn improved my state of mental and spiritual health.

Previously, when I wanted to do meditative practices I went into my bedroom, or upstairs to the office where I see clients for shamanic work. I shouldn’t be disturbed in either of those places—in theory. However, after I settled in and started a journey or meditation, I would frequently hear one cat’s distinctive deep yowl, announcing the gift of a mouse (stuffed, thankfully). It was sweet,



but distracting. Or perhaps a doorknob would begin to turn. That would be the other cat, using his spookily dexterous paws trying to get in. If, once allowed in, the cats would settle down while I did my thing, that would be fine, but they wouldn’t. They would want to explore these otherwise off-limits spaces.

A while back I decided to stop fighting it. I love spending time with my pets, and connecting spiritually happens most easily for me through nature and living beings. I had several of nature’s most adorable creatures trying really hard to get my attention during these moments when I was shifting consciousness. Had I been missing an opportunity? I’ve spent much of my career helping others see and interpret their worlds to craft more fulfilling lives; to pay attention. Perhaps I needed to reinvigorate my own practice of being mindful each day, paying better attention to what was happening around me.

I started meditating with my pets each morning. Admittedly, it was a little more distracting at first. It’s a bit harder to focus on your breathing, your posture, or your mantra when there’s an adorable little beast on your lap purring with gusto; but how glorious

is that? It is incredibly healing to give and receive love in this pure way. They gaze up at me, or let me hold their sweet faces or paws while they sleep. I close my eyes and sink into meditation, beginning my days in a connected and calm way. My body relaxes and stress falls away.

Several things happened after practicing like this for a while. By sharing this deeply loving state with these creatures each morning, my relationship with my pets expanded, and our level of communication heightened. And, increasingly, I wanted to meditate more. I looked forward to it every morning more than

I had in the past. It was one of the most restorative and meaningful parts of my day. Creative ideas flowed easily, I felt peaceful. I could journey, or just be still.

My work became more joyful and my spiritual practice was enhanced. I felt the healing benefits to my mind and spirit right away. And we know that a cat’s purring is healing to the body and improves bone density, so I’m actually getting my pets to do body work on me for free! If you have pets, try it for yourself. If you don’t, perhaps a rescue cat or dog could become a good companion for your daily practice too. **h&h**

Mara Bishop is a shamanic practitioner, intuitive consultant, teacher, author, and artist. In her Personal Evolution Counseling™ practice in Durham, she combines shamanic healing, intuitive consultations, and energetic healing. She works with clients locally, nationally, and internationally. She is the author of Inner Divinity, Crafting Your Life with Sacred Intelligence, and the companion CD of guided meditations.

She holds master’s degrees in Energy Medicine and Theology and a bachelor’s degree in Art and Communications. She is a graduate of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies Three-Year Program in Advanced Shamanism and Shamanic Healing, Sandra Ingerman’s Shamanic Teacher Training program, and advanced training with Betsy Bergstrom. Mara is the only Harner Certified Shamanic Counselor® in North Carolina.

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