

Ethical Guidelines for Animal Communication and Animal Energy Work

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Permission:

Conversations or energy work with an animal who is not in your animal family need to be initiated by **request/invitation** of the animal's person. In most cases, this will be the human partner/guardian ("owner"); in all cases it is the human who has the care and custody of the animal--the person who is responsible for the animal's care and wellbeing.

Permission should be clear and specific, and needs to be requested **in each instance of communication or energy work**, even if it's with the same animal, **unless** there is a clear agreement otherwise.

Permission is needed even in (and often especially in) informal situations, relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and fellow students, practitioners, or colleagues.

Some **possible** exceptions:

- a brief, casual greeting (similar to greeting a stranger or acquaintance on the street) e.g., "Hi! Nice to see you! What a beautiful day for a walk!"
- an emergency situation (for example, finding a stray animal on the side of the road who is lost or needs medical attention, and limiting communication to the specifics of the emergency situation)
- providing compassionate, loving witnessing to an animals' situation (be careful to not interject your own emotions and judgments, however.)

Confidentiality:

We are bound by the same ethical responsibility for confidentiality as any other health and wellness, medical, or spiritual professional. This includes:

- keeping client information, including names, contact information, online information, etc., private
- respecting the privacy and confidentiality of any information shared in a consultation by both the person and the animal
- if sharing as a part of a class, mentoring session, or teaching situation, always gain client permission to share a specific story, **and also** change any identifying information of both the client and the animal.
- Be particularly aware of the potential for confidentiality and privacy issues to arise in casual conversation, personal and family relationships, and teaching/coaching/class situations.

Respect:

Be aware of your own judgments, beliefs, experiences, preferences, and agendas, and do not ever impose them on a client. We all have preferences and beliefs. It's imperative to separate these from our work with clients.

You may offer suggestions based on your training and experience, and use language that is open-ended and allows the client to make her own decision. Be aware that people will often look to you as an authority, and that what you suggest and how you suggest it will carry a lot of weight.

Respect people's choices regarding the care and treatment of their animal friends, even if they differ from your own.

As practitioners, our responsibility is to both our animal clients and their human caretakers. Our commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards of integrity, and maintaining an attitude of non-judgment, open-heartedness, and compassion for ourselves and others will create a safe and sacred container for authentic communication and healing.

Integrity and Honesty

Translate as clearly and honestly as possible between the animal and the person. Don't alter what you get from the animal to please the person;

however, you may be guided to use language in translating what the animal is giving you in a way that the person can most clearly hear and understand.

Be clear and honest about your practice, your boundaries, and your training. Don't exaggerate or misrepresent what you do. Be clear, honest, and straightforward in all areas of your practice, including your promotional and business materials.

Be honest about your strengths as well as your limitations.

Be clear about WHAT you are getting, and HOW you are getting it. Differentiate between what is coming directly from the animal, your interpretation of what you are getting from the animal, and your own experience/expertise/awareness.

Scope of Practice:

Be honest about your training, modalities, and what you do and don't do. Refer to other professionals as appropriate.

Unless you are a trained veterinarian or physician, do not **ever** diagnose or recommend treatment, or recommend that a client change a treatment that has been prescribed by a licensed medical professional.

- ***Even when a client asks you to.***
- ***Even when you feel sure that you know what is going on.***
- ***Even when you are working with a colleague or other professional.***

If you are trained in several modalities (for example, animal communication, Reiki, Flower Essence Therapy, animal nutrition, etc.), be clear about which modality you are using in any instance. If you are making a suggestion based on your training, be sure that you are clear about what is coming from your training and experience, what is coming from the animal, and what your biases and preferences are.

Be very cognizant of potential conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest if you bridge modalities or recommend other products/services that you offer.

Boundaries, Communication, and Professional Practice:

It is always YOUR job and responsibility as a practitioner to set and maintain your personal and professional boundaries, and NEVER the responsibility of your clients.

It's an act of personal and professional integrity to refrain from working with people who are unable or unwilling to respect your boundaries.

Be very clear in your communication about the services you offer, fees or energy exchange involved, and your time commitment, availability, etc.

Clear communication is an art form that can be learned and practiced. Strive for clear, honest communication in all of your professional contacts.