

Chapter 8

CALLING ALL ANIMAL LOVERS

Do you want to change the world?

Do you dream of a world where animals are loved and respected?

Do you seek clarity about your unique path for changing the world?

Could you use some extra emotional support or help with achieving your vision? Or perhaps, you need to address a particular physical problem first, so you can be pain free and full of energy—ready to focus on your mission?

And, perhaps, you'd like to enlist your beloved pet to help you with your undertaking? Because as you probably already know, this animal really 'gets you' and wants you to succeed! Talking about changing the world... Yes, I too want to change the world. And no, wanting to change the world is not an outlandish statement.

In a way, we all are changing the world at every moment by the way we greet our neighbour as we leave the house in the morning; the way we react to the person cutting in front of us in peak-hour traffic; the way we choose to focus on our work; and the way we choose to love others—humans and other-than-humans. These all leave an imprint on the world and set a chain reaction of change.

Please let me introduce myself... I am Grażyna Witkowska: kinesiologist, hypnotherapist, and Human-Animal Partnership Coach. I am passionate about creating a world where animals are not only respected and valued, but where animals and humans

operate from a platform that I call partnership.

If that sounds odd—I can explain. To do that I need to first tell you how I arrived at choosing my path. I tried several approaches before deciding on my personal, unique way of contributing to the world. We have many role models and yet even when we sing the same song, we sound different—not to mention songs that we write for ourselves.

Possibly you can relate to my search for ‘my sacred contract’. I saw many people who were doing good things for animals: people who protested, people who uncovered the cruelties, people who fostered animals...

I wanted to find a way that would make the most use of what I could offer on all levels. But to define that way I needed to try different things; to walk along the paths that had previously been walked. Some people know in early childhood what they want to be when they grow up. Others keep searching for and evolving ideas of their true direction. I fall in this latter category.

I arrived in Australia as I turned 21. I was alone and in order to support myself I chose a very practical solution—I gained qualifications in computer science at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). At this stage I had no idea that one day I will be working with animals and for animals. I worked diligently to develop into the best IT professional I could be. And this decision served me well. I had an aptitude for creating technical solutions that were attractive to humans that need to work with them. This made me successful as a catalyst of change. With good qualifications and a successful career, I was feeling satisfied, ticking off one level of Maslow’s needs after another. And I was always on the lookout for more challenges and more personal and professional development. As I frequently dealt with organisational change, I knew that intra-and inter-human dynamics have a great impact on the outcomes of any change. So I decided to study that

phenomenon further and enrolled in the Master's level course in social ecology. The course was run by the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and involved two, week-long residential programs at its Richmond campus. Richmond was also the campus where the university's agriculture program was conducted and where it had farms. Walking around in the evenings, I smelled the long-forgotten farm aromas and my mind was drifting back to the times I had spent on my grandparents' subsistence farm in Poland. There I named all the chickens, played with the dogs, pinched cream to give to the cats, and baked potatoes in the hot coals with other kids while watching the grazing cows.

From that moment forward, things happened at lightning speed—oh well, it took something like 12 years, but so much has happened that it seems it happened with the speed of light.

To name a few key things:

- I was introduced to kinesiology and the magic it can do;
- I got a new job in Adelaide that allowed me to fulfil my desire to live in a semi-rural area while still hanging on to the work I knew and a job in town;
- I got a cat and chickens, spent time with neighbours' sheep and donkeys, learned horse riding and got to know local people;
- I expanded my interests in conservation, started restoring the grasses on my property and connecting with a great network of like-minded people;
- I volunteered at Adelaide Zoo and became a fully qualified zoo guide;
- I volunteered at the local land group documenting the results achieved by the local people 10 years after receiving grants for environmental improvements on their properties;
- I decided to do my final research project in social ecology on the dynamic—not between people—but between people and animals.

And then I had a big scare—I hurt my back and no doctor could

help me. I started to worry that I would have to sell the farm; maybe even stop working. My neighbour encouraged me not to lose faith and to keep looking for help. And then I remembered kinesiology... I found a local kinesiologist and started to improve.

Two years later I was myself again. I wanted to share the benefits of kinesiology with my beloved animals and found out that this was possible.

And when I felt like I was doing well, things started to fall apart again. I was losing heart in my day job and I started having reactions to strong smelling chemical substances such as washing powders. I felt burned out so took a long holiday. I liked it. I thought I could maybe do something else; something with animals, but I knew the work I knew, and I went back to it. But I started to get sick again. Like clockwork, I would start refreshed each Monday and by Thursday I would start feeling flu-ish. I would rest on the weekend and the cycle would repeat itself for the whole three months of my contract.

I began to plot my alternative career path. I looked at different role models, people I admired, people who made a positive difference to creating awareness of animals as much more than objects for our use. Step by step I began to draft my path, my role. And it was not easy. I turned to my good friend, an IT professional, for support. When I asked him what he thought of me launching a career that helps animals – his response was: “If you have money then you can have such hobby”. Well, I was not wanting a hobby! I wanted a career, a career which is in great demand!

Needless to say, I felt a little deflated for a while. Then I realised that I knew this friend in a context of IT. For him IT was the ‘worthy career’, his passion, and his professional world – just as it was for me some years before. Ok, so he wasn’t unsupportive, he was just speaking *his* truth! I just needed to stick to *my* truth.

About a year later, after I left IT and before I was getting any traction in my ‘animal business’ my father volunteered his opinion (delivered with contempt): ‘You used to be someone...’. I think that cut me deeper than I was prepared to admit. Fortunately, I was too far gone on my path to be paddling aback and too proud to even contemplate to admit that I made a mistake. Over the years to come I would doubt myself at regular intervals, and each time, somehow, I was able to find strength and support to push on.

I loved my IT career while it lasted, but then it was time to move on. Thankfully, I had some savings and they sustained me as I studied kinesiology, engaged in animal issues, presented at animal conferences, began healing practice and tried several versions of what I wanted my business to be like.

Persistence helped. And along the way I found some like-minded and supportive people who heartened my flagging soul. My clients—people and animals—were instrumental in increasing my confidence in the value that I was delivering and helped me develop my current format of services that is exciting, engaging and helpful.

Today, I call myself kinesiologist, hypnotherapist, and Human-Animal Partnership Coach. This is because I want to let people know that I use alternative therapies and that I am working towards improving the quality of animal and human lives by reframing the relationships people have with animals.

I talk about creating partnerships between humans and animals. In a nutshell, relating as partners means being interested in the other (partner) and their preferences about how to live their lives, how to express their aliveness.

Such partnerships are the foundation of emotional support in our lives, manifesting in:

- Greater resilience dealing with daily stresses;

- Stronger resolve in, and more creative capacity to, accomplish important life projects; and
- Improved physical wellbeing.
- - for both partners!

If you have had an animal with whom you have built a close bond, then you would probably have experienced a sense of greater freedom to be you; to take risks, while at the same time feeling you are protected; that someone has your back. And it probably felt as if more than your animal had your back—it probably felt as if the Universe had your back. Remember that time?

Researcher Daphna Shir-Vertesh documented what people tend to say about their companion animals:

- ‘They accept you unconditionally’:
- ‘It gives me a sense of intimacy I don’t reach in my relations with human beings’;
- ‘It is an opportunity to be completely free of defences, masks, no matter what’.

We can feel comfortable in our own skin in the company of animals; we trust that they won’t judge us—and we feel free to be truly, authentically ourselves.

With humans we have more baggage; we feel compelled to wear masks—perhaps, to demonstrate our worth within society according to prevailing social criteria. With animals, we can be ourselves; we can admit what we truly long for, even if people around us judge it as crazy. We have someone in our corner—which is such a comfort.

Imagine, if you can, the possible, positive difference that animals—as partners—can bring in our lives.

Naturalist Joe Hutto in his book, ‘Illumination in the Flatwoods’, gives us a taste of the possible magic when we begin to engage with animals as partners; as companions.

Joe Hutto explained that he had been walking through the Flatwoods for over 10 years before someone found an abandoned wild turkey nest and brought it to him. Joe raised the chicks and played ‘mother’ to them until they reached full maturity and left. In the book, he compares this experience of walking with turkeys to the times when he walked through Flatwoods by himself. He says that when he walked with turkeys, it was as if an invisible door opened in the landscape... and when the turkeys left, this door closed shut again. But Joe’s understanding of life and what’s possible have permanently changed.

Wouldn’t it be nice to find a state within us that unlocks such doors and allows us to see life from a new perspective? A new perspective that opens up our options for the way we are living.

If you have tasted some of this magic in your life, or you have a sense that this is possible; if you hold the intention of respecting all life and want to remove the limits on what’s possible in your life—both in your relationship with your animal and in your relationship with other people—then you will love working with me.

I guarantee that your outlook and appreciation of the present will broaden, and that your creativity will be boosted so that you can respond in a fresh and effective way to life’s challenges.

I work with:

- Animal guardians seeking improvements in: animal health, animal behaviour, own health, or growth in their human-animal relationship;
- Rescue workers or foster carers seeking similar outcomes as animal guardians;
- Animal activists who are feeling emotionally or physically overwhelmed, stressed, angry and helpless; who want to regain their emotional balance and cultivate new levels of creativity in order to deal with the insurmountable obstacles they often meet;
- Professional animal keepers who want to explore new ways to assist their animals to achieve optimal health and who want to

improve their own resilience in the face of unexpected challenges.

When working with me, some clients prefer to start from the big picture of what they want to achieve and then, together, we look at what barriers need to be addressed to move forward to achieve the desired Gestalt of results.

Other clients come with a need to deal with a specific health issue (their own or the animal's) or with some kind of frustration related to an undesirable behaviour from an animal. As we address and resolve one issue at a time, a new perspective may reveal itself of new paths to pursue or old patterns to address. This, in turn, will open up new possibilities for both of you to stay resilient in the face of life's challenges.

Let me give you some examples...

One time, I was approached by the guardian of a cat called Maggie. The guardian told me that Maggie would run away and hide when visitors came to the house. She was okay with the family, but not with visitors. The guardian wanted Maggie to be more friendly with visitors.

My first step was to explore where all the stakeholders were coming from. Humans share language and they can express their wishes easily through verbal explanation. Animals tell us about their preferences non-verbally. They behave the way they do for a reason—even if this reason may not be immediately evident to us.

Working with Animals in Need

So in the case of Maggie, we needed to account for the possibility that she was a very private cat and she didn't want to share her space with visitors. Of course, Maggie might have been frightened in a situation that, in her mind, resembled visitors invading her home space. And in this latter case, we could help her with a range of techniques. The key was to give Maggie more choices, allowing

her to choose, allowing *her* to maintain her innate self-governance. (And through that demonstrating our respect of Maggie as an autonomous being).

First, we used special techniques to make sure that every one of the human stakeholders understood what we wanted to achieve and had agreed with how we would do it to support Maggie's dignity and self-determination. Then, we agreed to work in the context described as: 'Maggie feels safe and supported to be fully herself in the presence of the visitors.'

To loosen up and dissolve any previous trauma around this context, I performed a kinesiology balance using one of the guardians as a surrogate standing in for Maggie.

About three weeks later, lo and behold, Maggie's guardian contacted me saying that they had visitors a few days before and Maggie chose to be friendly. And the visitors commented about what a great cat she was.

The guardians were delighted. And I anticipate Maggie was also delighted: choosing to enjoy the attention from others while being completely herself. Not doing it to please her guardians; not doing it to avoid punishment—just being fearlessly herself and revelling in the delights of what freedom brings.

We did two follow ups to this intervention to make sure that Maggie's emotional state and family interactions reinforced this new relationship dynamic.

This is where energy medicine is particularly powerful—dissolving emotional issues that prevent one moving forward towards being the best version of themselves. Vets are exceptionally good with dealing with physical trauma. When it comes to emotional trauma they rely on things like 'Feliway' spray. And in very difficult cases, vets may use sedatives or feline equivalents of Prozac.

Fortunately, we have more and more vet clinics offering alternative healing methods such as homeopathy, kinesiology and acupuncture.

And with Maggie... we could have given her a crutch in the form of a 'Feliway' to cope with the visitors. But instead, we gave her the inner resilience so she could feel safe and in control of herself even in the presence of visitors.

The wellbeing of a guardian is also important to the animal and not only when the guardian is the main provider of basic needs such as food and shelter. The wellbeing of the guardian is far more important. Stressed guardians create stressed animals. Frazzled guardians trigger nervousness in their animals. Worried guardians provoke anxiety.

Stressed animals concern their guardians, and so a vicious circle of ever-increasing stress in the home eventuates.

You probably already know that. Me too. But I keep forgetting—especially when I am rushed or stressed. One late afternoon, I was rushing to leave to go to the theatre, but first I needed to lock up my chickens in their coop for the night. I did the usual routine: opened the coop door and attempted to move the chickens inside in the usual way. The chickens ran around in a panic. I took a few seconds to reflect on what was going on, noticing my own scattered energy. I realised that I first needed to create calm within myself if the chickens were to be willing to follow my instructions. I took a few deep breaths, adjusted my state, even put a joyful smile on my face, then repeated the routine. And this time, they relaxed and felt safe to follow my instructions. Phew!

Staying grounded and internally balanced feels good. And many people have their own routines that maintain an inner balance and calm. Yet from time to time they may need an extra 'tune-up' to ensure that not only they but also others in their environment will stay calm, cooperative and fun to be around.

And that's why I also offer a unique double session that offers the animal and their guardian to be balanced together.

Working with Persons in Need

Animal rescue workers and animal activists work tirelessly to create a better life for animals and a better world for all of us. And these are people who are continuously under high stress: an enormous workload, physical strain, and often also emotional agony.

When I work with rescuers, they often have great focus on the animals they are looking after, but they may neglect themselves. One time, when working with an animal rescuer named Joyce, it became evident that she could benefit from a vitamin B supplement. With laughter, Joyce explained that she had yeast flakes for human consumption (high in vitamin B) in the kitchen cupboard and that she regularly added them to the animal feed. Occasionally she would have the urge to eat a spoonful of flakes herself. So on some level her body was already telling her that she needed some of that food—she just didn't allow herself the space to make it a regular supplement.

Our healing session not only rebalanced energy, but also refocused Joyce's attention on the need to take care of herself in specific ways. Within a couple of days Joyce called me and reported feeling more relaxed, being more creative and able to imagine new possibilities. She had much more energy.

I have learned from my clients' journeys that the weariness doesn't come so much from too much physical work, but more so from feeling depressed about the anticipated future and one's ability to cope. When our energy is re-balanced a person's confidence in being able to cope increases, their creativity intensifies, and their energy flows—seemingly without bounds.

My Mission

So now you know who I am and what I do. I am here to help animals and their people to stay in their optimal physical and emotional energy space so they can create brilliant and positive changes in the world: for themselves and for others.

I wonder whether you remember a particular TV pasta commercial? You know the scene: a big family with Italian accents comes together, has a fantastic, warm, jovial time—the kind that fills the soul to the brim and makes everyone glow from the inside out. And then, at the end of the evening, they all said goodnight and returned to their homes—apparently without helping to do the washing up. The catch phrase of this advertisement was, ‘How come everybody wants to save the world, but nobody wants to do the dishes?’.

Well, **I am here to help with doing the dishes**, to dissolve the obstacles (physical or emotional) that keep us stuck. Once those dishes are cleaned, then once again we have a full set of tools with which to create that next celebration, that next project that makes us all feel nourished, content and rejoicing in life with our human and other-than-human family.

So if you'd like help with doing the dishes... contact me via www.BestVersionsOfUs.com

Handy Tip

When stressed or frustrated or annoyed with a particular situation, put one palm of your hand on your forehead (so that you are touching the upper part of your forehead right across it) and put the other palm at the back of your head. Sit next to your animal, breathe, and tell your animal what upset you. You don't need to be refined in the choice of words or even logical in what you are saying. Just be truthful about what you're feeling. Your animal will support you without judgement.

As you talk and breathe you might notice that your speech slows down and your concentration on the subject that bothers you

dissolves. Talk for a little longer until the charge of your upset dissipates, and you feel renewed.

Don't forget to thank your animal for supporting you. And remember that you are a great fountain of inner resources that can sustain you and that your animal can be your channel to accessing them when you need this extra support.

And if you do not have an animal at this time of your life—use your imagination to invite an imaginary animal (known to you or unknown) to come to you and support you. And do remember to thank them too.

For more tips check out my blogs: www.BestversionsOfUs.com/Blogs

Offer

Mention this book and you will receive a 10% discount on your first session. Contact details below.

Practitioner



Grażyna Witkowska is a practising Kinesiologist, Hypnotherapist and Human-Animal Partnership Coach. She is passionate about co-creating a world where animals are valued and respected.

Grażyna uses kinesiology, hypnosis and coaching skills to create greater physical and emotional wellbeing for animals and their guardians.

‘Best Versions of Us’ is Grażyna’s

business name and her life motto. It reflects her dedication to enabling humans and non-humans to evolve into better and better versions of themselves: to exercise their intrinsic right to develop their full potential, to be authentically themselves, and to bestow their unique gifts onto the world.

Qualifications

- ❖ Master Practitioner, Specialised Kinesiology
- ❖ Master Practitioner, Hypnotherapy
- ❖ Practitioner, Neuro-Linguistic Programming
- ❖ Practitioner, TimeLine Therapy
- ❖ Instructor, Hypnotherapy
- ❖ Instructor, Touch for Health
- ❖ Master of Arts, Wisdom Studies (Ubiquity University, USA)
- ❖ Master of Education, Social Ecology (University of Western Sydney, Australia)
- ❖ Bachelor of Science, Computing (University of Technology in Sydney, Australia)

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