

Becoming Vito, by Kelly Bateman, HTAP

How a timid boy from the racetrack blossomed into a confident companion with the support of energy medicine therapy and unconditional love from Team Vito

Editor's Note: Kelly is our Social Media pro, keeping the website, Facebook and Twitter feeds flowing, plus handles our Constant Contact mailings. And is Vice President of Just France (requiring extended travels to France, lucky Kelly) and somehow finds time for her husband & hounds and for yoga. And now for this new, fascinating endeavor.

Vito was a handsome boy who arrived at Grey Haven last summer a few months after his 4th birthday. His racing career ended after he re-injured a toe. It was time for him to transition from athlete to a retired companion animal. He did well with other dogs, boys and girls alike, and eventually passed his cat test as well. He was however extremely shy with people. Painfully shy. He arrived with Otis, another young male who was afraid of EVERYTHING. Initially it seemed Otis would require even more TLC than Vito to help him come out of his shell and gain confidence. It was in fact the opposite. Within a few weeks of his arrival Otis settled and started to come out of his shell on his own. Vito on the other hand had made little progress in his first month at Grey Haven. He seemed stuck in an anxious, insecure state. What could be done to help this special boy bloom?

GAF has turned to Eastern medicine including acupuncture and Chinese herbs with the help of Dr. Shauna Cantwell, a wonderful alternative vet and former professor at the University of Florida School of Veterinary Medicine, on numerous occasions when traditional veterinary care did not yield desired results. Marilyn Varnberg, co-founder of Greyhound Adoptions of Florida, knew I was actively involved with Healing Touch for Animals® (HTA), an energy field therapy which can be used on all species, small and large, so she wrote me to ask, "What can you do to help?!" A session I had recently donated to an auction to benefit GAF was generously gifted back to the GAF by the winner. Marilyn said she had a shy boy in mind. While I gladly make house calls where domestic animals are most comfortable, the 900 plus mile trip to Grey Haven was well outside of my normal travel area!

In Level 3 of HTA we learned about Distance Healing. I had previously done distance sessions on a dog 3 miles away, and others on my personal dog when I was more than 3,000 miles away on



business and a medical emergency struck, so conducting a distance session for Vito who was nearly 1,000 miles away was not a problem. A distance session was actually the perfect solution for our long-distance dilemma. There was in fact nothing to lose and perhaps something to gain. It would in any event be an interesting experiment. We set a day and time. I asked Marilyn to tell Vito he had an appointment with me. She did. She also let the kennel worker know that "something" was going to take place that morning so she could be on the lookout for any changes in his behavior, whether subtle or substantial. Vito was in Florida and I was in Pennsylvania. It is also worth noting the session was made possible by a supporter in Rhode Island. They say it takes a village. In this case Team Vito was suddenly an East Coast operation.



Becoming Vito, continued



Bree as Vito's surrogate

When I started treatment for Vito I had 88 hours of practical, hands-on training with levels 1-4 of Healing Touch for Animals®. I had done numerous hands on sessions for several different species of animals and humans, as well as distance sessions for pets and people. I was comfortable with the process which involves a detailed information intake, an initial assessment, a variety of different gentle, non-invasive light touch or near body touch techniques (20+ through Level 4 and an additional 5 Advanced Proficiency techniques) to clear, balance and stabilize the animal's energy system, a final assessment, discussion with the owner or guardian, and follow up a few days later to see how the animal is doing.

I had my treatment form and other session materials ready and was prepared to start Vito's first HTA session with a surrogate, in this case a large stuffed animal, similar in size to a greyhound, when my own greyhound suddenly presented herself and laid down directly in front of me. This was not the first time this had happened. In fact Bree has developed an incredible knack for appearing seemingly out of nowhere, even rousing from a deep sleep, when I am just about to start a distance session and makes herself available to facilitate the process. I therefore began the session by

assessing my own greyhound so I could document and compare her energy system to Vito's.

Once I was done assessing Bree's energy system I shifted my focus and directed my intention and the universal energy available to Vito. I visualized Vito's face, his eyes, the color of his fur, his collar. Through intention I began to assess his energy system through Bree's body and the feedback received was radically different not just from my own dog, but from any animal's energy system I had assessed to date. Vito's energy system was entirely blocked and his energy field pulled in as close to his body as I have ever experienced.

For those unfamiliar with the term "energy field" it is an electromagnetic field that surrounds and supports the body. The human energy field surrounds the body four to six feet outward. The energy field of a healthy, well-adjusted animal is ten times larger, or more, than the human energy field. If an animal is severely ill, seriously injured and/or emotionally wounded the field may contract and pull in toward the body. This constriction is indicative of one or more blockages in the flow of energy throughout the animal's body. If the energy field is not clear, the energy system (comprised of an energy field or aura, energy centers which are referred to as chakras and energy channels or meridians) cannot balance and health is compromised.

The HTA techniques used to clear energetic congestion depend on a variety of factors including the animal's current condition. An HTA session which typically lasts 45 minutes to an hour may involve one specific technique for the entire time or a few different techniques, including if appropriate, the incorporation of therapeutic grade essential oils, sound therapy, or possibly both. The healing vibrational frequencies of all the above can be felt by the intended recipient through the power of intention regardless of distance. This is due to resonance which allows the unique vibration of every being the ability to return to a state of balance.



dedicated to saving lives

Becoming Vito, continued

I shared the findings of Vito's first HTA treatment session with Marilyn. Based on his deep seated emotional trauma of an unknown nature I did not anticipate any immediate signs of improvement. While confident we would be able to help him, I advised it might take time and at least several sessions to see any real changes take place. To my surprise I received not one but two encouraging reports from Vito's caregivers later that day. The kennel worker reported that after turnout Vito went into his crate and laid toward the front, looking around as all the dogs do after a turnout. He normally went to the back of his crate and stayed there, especially if a human was in the kennel.

Later in the afternoon Marilyn reported the following observations to me: *"Normally Vito flies out of his crate and runs outside as fast as he can. His moves in the turnout yard can be rather frantic. Today he trotted out and sniffed for that perfect spot at a much more relaxed pace. It was very obvious. I sat on the corner of the cement as I usually do and many of the dogs will come up for pets, hugs or to lick my face. Vito never does. He hangs back, will wag his tail but won't approach. This afternoon he came up to me, tail wagging, licked my hands and trotted back out to the yard. He came into the kennel with the others as he always does. As soon as he realized his crate door was closed, he went back outside. He did this two or three times till I got everyone put up and once he realized his door was now open, he trotted in. I did not see the frantic running and checking things out that I usually see. This was a much more settled dog."*

An important aspect of the healing arts is to not have an attachment to a particular outcome or end result. The intention is for the greatest good of the client whether animal or human. I knew I had to remain impartial, never say or even think "Poor Vito" and stay focused on his innate ability to open up, start to trust humans and begin to self-heal. My intention was that in his own time he would become more at ease and comfortable with people. Instead of a greyhound's usual 45 mph, we would go 4-5 mph and that was okay.

During the second session I used a level 2 HTA technique which can be useful for animals who feel ungrounded or disconnected. At two different points my greyhound who once again volunteered herself as a surrogate for Vito's session displayed very obvious reactions to the technique being done. Having worked with her frequently I knew what was coming through was not Bree. The reactions were immediate, clear responses and expressions of strong emotion that I felt reverberate through my own body. As a result of the relaxation response an animal's eyes usually soften and there are often yawns and deep sighs, as well as physical shifts such as stretching out or change in body position. The signs may vary from animal to animal. In this case once I reached a certain step in this particular technique Bree's head suddenly lifted from the mat where it had been resting for well over a half an hour. She turned and looked at me with an intense gaze, proceeded to gently lick my hand and then sank back down to the mat with an enormous sigh. I had received a brief yet crystal clear message of appreciation from Vito which had poured through Bree and into me. This unexpected breakthrough moment, especially at this early stage, was the most rewarding experience I could have imagined. His response to HTA had exceeded all expectations and we were just getting started.

During Vito's distance sessions I received an e-mail from a potential adopter. She was aware he had been dealing with some emotional issues. She had heard about his sessions and was interested in his progress. This wonderful person, a longtime volunteer and adopter with GAF, had adopted Vito's grandmother, MizB, a number of years ago. Would her grandpup feel at home with them? Initially we were not sure he would be comfortable as part of any family, regardless of how wonderful. In time the mutual feeling was yes. But he was not ready to pack his suitcase just yet.

As part of the certification process for HTA I have also studied the use of flower essences through a new pet specific course approved by the Bach centre in England along with extensive related reading. As a result I



Becoming Vito, continued

incorporated a combination of flower essences in Vito's overall treatment plan to be carried out by his caregivers in Florida. The essences were administered up to four times daily for a period of three weeks. Vito's custom blend of flower essence drops were given in different forms based on the comfort level of the person who was working with Vito: dropped in his water bucket, on a treat, rubbed on his fur when returned to his kennel or sprayed on bedding in his crate.

The essences were specifically selected for Vito to help with his known fears, unknown fears, overall stress, and last but not least, the recent change in his life from that of a racer at the track to a dog in kennel at a rescue. There are 38 different essences in the original Bach Flower Remedy system and many others now available through other reputable providers including FES based in California. A vial of a therapeutic-grade blend of essential oils, a drop or two* of which could be gently massaged into his fur or simply offered for inhalation from the caregiver's hand once or twice daily, was also provided and recommended to further promote deep relaxation.

A week after I started HTA sessions with Vito Marilyn left Grey Haven to meet with members of the Northeast Chapter of GAF including myself. Would Vito's progress come to a halt or might he even regress in her absence? We did not know how he would react to the sudden disappearance of one of a few humans Vito had learned to trust. When she returned to Florida a week later I received the following report. *"Vito was a pleasure to come home to. We could see the improvement and changes he is making after being gone a week. While we still have a way to go, I now have high hopes for this boy! He approaches on his own, either with a goose in the back end or to my out-stretched hands while I am in the yard. Today I stood and held the kennel door open and called to him. Normally, he approaches and then backs up. He doesn't want anyone standing there when he comes in. I just walk into the kennel and let him come in on his own. Today he ran past me (okay, it was his third try) and came in on his own. I am so pleased!"*

Over a month I had several sessions with Vito. During the first few sessions the initial assessment revealed multiple blockages which would open by the end of each session, however by the next session at least some of the energetic congestion had returned. I turned to Healing Touch for Animals® founder, Carol Komitor, for advice during a monthly teleconference available to HTA practitioners. I sought suggestions about different techniques to help keep his energy system open and flowing consistently. In explaining Vito's situation and what I had done so far it became clear what was needed to help him keep moving forward. In the session that followed his energy field started to expand, his field stayed clear of energetic congestion and remained balanced.

Six weeks after Vito's first HTA session he was ready to leave the safe haven he had called home for two and half months and start a new life with his forever family. Hours before Vito was to leave Grey Haven and make the 15 hour trip back to Delaware to his forever home** a short but meaningful transfer of ownership ceremony was performed. As part of the Healing Touch for Animals® Transfer of Ownership protocol taught in Advanced Proficiency, I had provided Marilyn with a sample script to read in advance and pledged to participate in mind and spirit since we were separated by such distance. With Vito's leash in hand she talked to him about his time at Grey Haven, gave praise for his progress, and let him know he was about to start a new life with people who would love him with all their hearts and ensure his happiness and well-being forever. With that she handed his leash over to his new mom, Sylvie.

At 3 am it was time to load up the greyhounds headed for their forever homes up north including Vito. Marilyn reported the following about Vito's reaction. *"I know he understood. When I let the kennel dogs out about 3:15 he peed (good boy!) and then stood still and watched the movement in the house. I know he was looking for Sylvie. He never bothered going back to the kennel when I put the two remaining dogs up. He just waited by the gate to start his journey."* Vito had found himself and was ready to head home on the first day of the rest of his life.



Becoming Vito, continued

Fast forward four months: Vito's family reports he is doing well. Now separated by a single state line and less than 30 miles, I hope to meet Vito in the near future and have an in person session with him. In January his new family wrote: "Yes, Vito is doing very well. He's the easiest going dog. A lot like his grandmother MizB. Very well behaved (didn't have to teach him that - like MizB), not a barker (unlike Jay and Niko), but still a little shy with strangers. I wish I had more dogs like Vito. That was my wish when I had MizB and now I have Vito, actually 'Vito Baker' for his grandma."

HTA techniques can provide pain relief, stress reduction, accelerated wound healing and improve immune system function. For questions or to schedule a free consultation or appointment contact Kelly at kelly@handtoearthholistichealing.com GAF adopters are eligible for special rates. For more information about Healing Touch for Animals® visit: www.healingtouchforanimals.com

Would you like to learn more about Energy Therapy for Pets & People? For a basic introduction to the concept of energy medicine for you and your pet check out *Choosing Energy Therapy – A Practical Guide to Healing Options for People and Animals* by Wanda Buckner, EdD. For a more thorough exploration of the subject read *The Healer's Manual – A Beginner's Guide to Energy Healing for Yourself and Others* by Ted Andrews.

*When working with essential oils always practice a less is more approach, especially when used with animals. It is important to use high-quality oils and to have a good understanding of how they work, their use and careful selection of oils for a particular animal. Essential oils are introduced in Level 3 of Healing Touch for Animals®. Curious to learn more? Join the free monthly hour-long teleconference on the 3rd Tuesday of every month in collaboration with Dr. Susan Albright, owner of Chenoa Veterinary Clinic in IL (register here: <http://bit.ly/1BHZcDs>) or sign-up for



Sylvie and Jesse meet Vito at Grey Haven

Essential Oils for Animals and Their People, a new 4-hour introductory course offered by Carol Komitor, founder of Healing Touch for Animals®, in person in Lakewood, CO, or streaming on-line on January 31 (Sign-up: <http://bit.ly/1uccaZ4>).

** The following is adapted from Lesley Osborn's story about Vito in the fall of 2014: *Sylvie and Jesse have been an important part of GAF for many years and have been involved in greyhound rescue since 2003. Vito is greyhound #12 for Sylvie and Jesse and all of them have come from Marilyn. What a wonderful tribute to Marilyn! They adopted Vito's grandmother, Miz B, in 2006 at age 8 and she passed away in 2011 at the age of 13. When they learned that Marilyn now had her grandson they were thrilled! Vito is not lacking for greyhound company. He shares his new home with Rosie (age 9); Jay (age 7) and Niko (age 5). He also has three feline friends as well!*

