

Therapist Adrienne Herman talks to the animals

By DENNIS TAYLOR

SHE HAS a difficult time describing how or why she's able to do what she does, but Adrienne Herman says four-legged creatures speak to her, and she listens, and very often she's able to help them resolve issues and lead happier lives.

Herman, 67, is a "dog therapist" — a sort of psychologist for the canine set — whose clients also include cats, horses, goats, rabbits, and domestic rats. She describes herself as an intuitive healer and a dog listener. "I can help you understand your dog better," she declares on her website.

Business in animal-friendly Carmel is good, she says,

aloud every night. Another began sleeping through the night, at long last, after her human began serenading her. A sometimes-berserk horse calmed down after Herman says she discovered a vortex spinning in a nearby field, and instructed the animal's owner to avoid that route. And multiple pet guardians credit Herman with helping them locate their lost animals by describing the animal's surroundings, which, Herman says, appeared like a photo or video in her mind.

Edmond Benech, a Herman client, says his dog, Portia, was suffering from urinary incontinence and was uncomfort-

able around other animals until he scheduled a session with Herman.

"Portia shared her feelings and needs with Adrienne (and) became more relaxed around people and dogs," Benech said. "Her incontinence improved significantly. Her strength, stability and walking improved to about 80 percent. She seems much more content, affectionate, and at peace."

Another client, Deborah Blankenberg of Lodi, credits

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PHOTO/PAUL MILLER

Adrienne Herman in her office on San Carlos Street with a satisfied client — Zira, a 3-year-old boxer owned by Cathie Young of Monterey. Young adopted the dog from West Coast Boxer Rescue.

with enough clients (whose humans pay her \$35 per half hour) to keep a shingle hung outside her small, cheery office on the corner of San Carlos Street at Eighth Avenue, where she's been for five years.

She also makes house calls — lots of them — often preferring to visit troubled animals in their own environments to assess what's bugging them and consider how they might be helped.

Spoiler alert: Herman's methods are intuitive — not scientific — based largely on her own self-belief that she's blessed with an unique ability to communicate with animals, and vice versa.

'Connecting with the energy'

Although she was classically trained in human psychology — a field in which she earned bachelor's degree from UCLA and a master's from CSU Hayward — her own life experiences convinced her that the spiritual world is very real, that all animals (including humans) have "guides," and that Eastern concepts, such as Ch'i, are to be respected and embraced.

"I do a lot of energy work," she said. "How do I describe 'energy work?' It's somewhat inexplicable, in my case, but some seem to correlate it with Reiki [a form of alternative medicine developed by a Japanese Buddhist]."

She added: "To me, it's just about connecting with the energy of the animal, checking out what's not flowing properly, and also connecting with my guides and the animal's guides."

The belief that living creatures are surrounded, assisted, and protected in life by "spirit guides" is popular among mediums and psychics and certain spiritualist churches with historic threads in Native American and Eastern religions.

Herman says she communicates regularly with her own guides, as well as those watching over her animal-kingdom clients.

"We are all surrounded by lots of beings who are usually there to help us. Tapping into that on the highest plane possible usually provides us with helpful knowledge, information, answers to questions," she said.

One dog instantly stopped chewing up the family library when, on Herman's advice, the owners began reading to him

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