



**A VETERINARIAN DEFINES TTEAM
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[NOTE: This paper was first prepared as a 'handout' to accompany a TTEAM/TTOUCH demonstration Marnie Reeder presented in Austin, Texas before a group comprising veterinarians and officials with animal shelter, wildlife rehab, and animal sanctuary organizations.]

DEFINITION

TT.E.A.M. (the Tellington-Touch Equine Awareness Method) is an easily taught system of fairly precise finger and hand TTOUCH, passive movements and guided exercises. It provides humans with gentle yet potent techniques to affect body mind functioning in animals. First developed for horses, it has proved to be equally effective with a wide range of mammals, birds and reptiles.

BACKGROUND

Linda Tellington Jones developed TTEAM after years of work with animals and intensive study of human mind body learning with Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais. Linda's dual background, hard work and creativity produced techniques, which provide ways to make inputs into the animal's inner environment of tissues, mind, body.

TTEAM hypothesizes that many animal problems arise from the following sequence:

- Awareness blocked or underdeveloped
- Poor function of mind and body
- Poor response to environment
- Inappropriate behaviour/functioning
- Inability to learn/change
- Discomfort and Anxiety
- Stress
- Injury
- Failure identity

'Failure identity' leads to active efforts to avoid any similar situation/experience, further shutdown of awareness during similar experiences, and this produces a spiralling repetition of the cycle.

The products of this cycle are mal-adaptive responses repetitively employed because they are "programmed" as neural patterns, which exist below the level of awareness. This mind/body 'program' operating beneath the animal's awareness habitually repeats (or continues) an inherently 'bad' response or a response only appropriate in situation "A" long after the conditions of situation "A" no longer apply. TTEAM utilizes the insight that non-habitual touch and movement

are inputs, which can bring such habitual responses to the level of awareness in non-threatening ways. At this aware level the mind/body can break up the old "program" and form new alternatives. Fortunately, the animal (or human) has an inherent system bias to 'reprogram' towards more efficient, healthful functioning, so modest guidance towards 'better' alternatives will produce good results once the animal is 'aware'. Linda took these basic insights and created for animals the touch and exercises, which would harness this potential for change. The benefits of aware functioning are wide ranging. Movement becomes more efficient and less stressful. Voluntary actions chosen are better suited to the "here and now". Life processes are altered so that self-healing is mobilized and a healthier homeostasis results. Improved functioning produces a happier, more confident animal. The mechanism behind these effects is sometimes understood and sometimes partly mystery. TTEAM does elicit these effects and they are repeatedly observable. TTEAM skills are readily transferable and hundreds of people in at least 17 countries regularly use TTEAM in their work with many species.

GENERAL FEATURES

1. TTEAM is not petting, stroking or massage. The circular Tellington TTOUCH elicits changes in brain wave patterns. The waves are different from those elicited by petting, stroking, massage etc.
2. TTEAM does not build the relationships of dominant all knowing human versus submissive robot animal achieved by less evolved methods. With TTEAM human and animal relate as two autonomous thinking creatures with increased self-confidence, enhanced communications and mutual respect. This is partly because the human's confidence managing her end of the encounter reduces her fear and the related need to dominate.
3. TTEAM does not promote the addictive relationships implied by the term "bonding". The interaction is more a voluntary one between two self-sufficient individuals. TTEAM encourages wholeness of functioning in the animal. The human, confident of his helping skills and ability to relate, has less psychological need to build dependence into a particular animal. This keeps the workers from getting "stuck" in "one-person-one-animal" bonds since he knows he can help other animals, and that other workers with TTEAM skills can help this animal.
4. TTEAM does not change the animal's basic nature. It helps the animal to explore the potential within its nature. A lynx plus TTEAM does not yield a big housecat; it yields a lynx with more options, more confidence and more ability to make aware choices.
5. TTEAM does not use force, fear or pain handling, treating or managing animals. These factors block learning, create stress and favour panic related injuries. TTEAM helps to eliminate fear and pain, to reduce the need for forceful physical restraint and to lessen dependence or risky chemical restraint.
6. When training is required, TTEAM does not rely on the endless repetition of older methods. The awareness and effective communication TTEAM creates can yield "one trial" learning. This is useful in managing "neurotic" or mal-adaptive behaviour in animals requiring long-term care.
7. TTEAM reduces the physical and mental stress created by human contact, handling, confinement and other sub-optimum environmental conditions. It reduces chronic pain and poor functioning which also cause stress.
8. TTEAM helps normalize cardiovascular parameters in shock caused by pain, trauma, fear, and other factors. It has many wide ranging beneficial effects in helping the animal handle the local and general effects or injury and other insult. This is especially valuable in species for which the

safety and efficacy of analgesics and other drugs are unclear. TTEAM used during anaesthetic recovery also often speeds and smoothes recovery.

9. When pain or impaired nerve or muscle function disable a part of the body, TTEAM induces the animal to activate any available alternate neuromuscular pathways to restore function. This can produce some dramatic benefits during rehabilitation. A bonus is that the awareness TTEAM brings often appears to relieve associated pain.

10. Injuries often leave a holding pattern of pain and impaired function in the injured area. The pattern persists below awareness long after healing is complete, blocks aware use of that body part and thereby creates stress on distant areas, which must overwork to compensate. Such chronic distress affects general health, "mood" and behaviour. TTEAM uses the TTOUCH to bring these patterns to awareness and exercises, which guide the organization of more healthful, balanced movement.

11. With continued exposure to TTEAM, animals develop more ability to operate in a calm focused mode. Responses to new situations become less automatic and more considered. The animal learns to learn. This along with more body awareness and awareness of environment yields more adaptability, more appropriate action.

12. The three qualities just listed make TTEAM especially useful in the rehabilitation and restoration of function following injury. By focusing and guiding awareness, TTEAM enlists the resources of the animal's mind and body into its own rehabilitation. The animal is led to activate movement and choose an optimum "works best feels best" mode. The partnership or aware animal and sensitive human working within the TTEAM matrix can evolve a safer more effective process. This is especially appreciated when rehabilitating a species/injury combination for which no existing models or previous experience is available.

13. TTEAM has been used to correct distorted mating behaviour and improve reproductive performance in several species. Those working with rare or endangered species may find a need for this facet of TTEAM.

14. As mentioned above, humans who use TTEAM also experience change. Brain wave patterns often mirror those attained in the animal. Effects noted include a calm focused state which favours communication, learning and creativity. Self-esteem/self confidence is enhanced. Awareness of self and animal is increased. These personal factors plus the systematic approach, structure and noticeable results, which TTEAM provides to serve to empower, direct and reward volunteers and other workers. Valuable TTEAM skills can be learned quickly. They can be included early in volunteer training to break through the powerless feeling many novices have. In many ways it is harder to define or explain TTEAM than it is to demonstrate TTEAM -- also harder to convince that TTEAM will work than it is to show that TTEAM DOES work.

What we hope you carry from this paper:

- a. The idea that there is a system, a rationale -- a paradigm, if you will.
- b. The understanding that this paradigm has to do with 'awareness'; and,
- c. An openness to the notion that manipulating animals' awareness using TTEAM can both help the animals and make your jobs easier

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