

## *Interview with Lindsay Croom, DVM*

### *May 12, 2007*

Lindsay Croom began her career as a veterinarian in 1991 working with horses, dogs, cats, and some pocket pets. She has resided and has worked in Oakdale, California since 1995. About 10 years into her work in a conventional practice, Lindsay began to feel that she was no longer helping the sick animals that came to her and actually considered giving up her practice. "I had gotten to a point where I felt I was hindering the healing process. I was prescribing medications and administering vaccinations that were harming the animals. Intuitively I knew that I had not tapped into my full potential as a healer. I felt like I was just patching and treating symptoms rather than treating the whole animal, the whole individual." Five years ago a friend from Veterinary School encouraged her to take an Acupuncture course and she loved it! That first class led to an exploration of alternative therapies. As Lindsay says, "I now had an entirely new avenue to help the animals. I love going to work now. I have a better understanding of what the animals need when they come to me for help."



Lindsay at home with her animal companions.

**Grace:** Tell me about your connection to animals.

**Lindsay:** When I am with the animals I feel happy and joyful. They make sense to me. I understand them. I know that the animals are here to teach us about life and I am grateful that they are willing to do that.

**Grace:** What is your definition of health and wellness?

**Lindsay:** A healthy well animal is an animal that has good shen. Shen is a term used in Traditional Chinese Medicine to describe

the spirit aspect of the life force energy which is present in all of nature. A healthy animal is happy and emotionally sound. Their eyes are bright and alert. They are of good weight with no apparent lameness, signs of allergies or disease and are energetically balanced.

**Grace:** What alternative modalities do you utilize in your practice?

**Lindsay:** Acupuncture, chiropractic, homotoxicology, and nutrition. I have also completed courses for Western and Chinese herbs. Homotoxicology is basically homeopathy but it involves combination remedies rather than classic homeopathy where you use a single remedy. It adds to the acupuncture because I can use it as aqua puncture by placing homeopathic remedies in acupuncture points.

**Grace:** How would you define acupuncture?

**Lindsay:** Acupuncture is a technique of stimulating the nervous and the vascular systems to create balance through the movement of energy. When the nervous

and vascular systems are stimulated at specific points along meridians, chemicals, are released that enable the body to heal. It is ultimately a way of supporting the body to heal itself.

**Grace:** How do acupuncture and chiropractic work together?

**Lindsay:** Acupuncture can help relieve pain and chiropractic enables joints to release adhesions in order to move correctly. For example I often treat animals for back and hip pain. Stimulating acupuncture points around the hip will trigger the brain to release chemicals for pain control. Manipulating the joint through chiropractic releases adhesions and promotes blood flow to that joint ultimately helping to control the degenerative progression of the joint.

**Grace:** How many visits will an animal need for an observable change?

**Lindsay:** It really depends on the condition we are treating. Most people see a change after the first visit. It might be as simple as the animal seems happier and or feels better. There is often an immediate improvement in sleep patterns. Neurological disease or injuries generally require frequent treatments over a short period of time. An animal that has a disk problem, is paralyzed, or has a neurological injury will often take longer to observe a change in the existing condition.

**Grace:** How many treatments are usually needed?

**Lindsay:** Generally, I have people schedule two to four visits in one to two week intervals and then I may not see that animal again for another three to six months. I am

fairly conservative and spread visits out as soon as possible. As the animal ages I will see them more often due to the aging process.

**Grace:** What are the typical conditions that you see?

**Lindsay:** Chronic disease, cancer, allergies, immune conditions as well as musculoskeletal problems, lameness, sore backs, and senior citizens with arthritis. Many of these conditions are related to poor nutrition, excessive vaccinations, and exposure to toxins in the environment. I would like to do more preventative work rather than simply managing chronic issues.

**Grace:** Tell me about the parameters you use to assess your patients.

**Lindsay:** I look at the animal as a whole. When I was in a conventional practice I had to have a history before I could walk into the room. I needed a problem like, itchy skin so that I could start thinking about what I was up against. What could I rule out and what could the diseases be. Now when I walk into



Lindsay treats her patient Snoopy.

the room the first thing I notice is the emotional status of the animal. I want to know about their environment and

relationship to their people. I am more concerned about energetic imbalances rather than a specific disease process. What are the other things that we need to help first to get to the core issue. I am not necessarily going to prescribe an antibiotic but I might prescribe a change in environment, a change in diet, or increased exercise.

**Grace:** When you take a history what types of things need to be included?

**Lindsay:** A history will include not only a history of the illness but I also want to know about vaccinations, diet, sleep, and exercise patterns. Are they panting at night, are they cold or hot, how much are they drinking?

A history will include not only a history of the illness but I also want to know about vaccinations, diet, sleep, and exercise patterns. Are they panting at night, are they cold or hot, how much are they drinking? These questions are based on Chinese Medicine. Do they paddle when they are sleeping? Do they have hyperactive dreaming? I want to know about eating patterns, are they hungry at different times of the day? If they vomit what time of the day is the vomiting occurring? For example someone might say my dog is not sleeping at night. This might be a result of internal heat but during the day the animal is laying in the sun. This tells me a lot about their Yin status. They could be Yin deficient so I would choose herbs and acupuncture points that would nourish that animal on the inside.

**Grace:** What generally motivates a pet guardian to try an alternative approach?

**Lindsay:** Unfortunately, many come to me as a last resort. Sometimes people find me

because they are not satisfied with the limited choices conventional medicine offers. I also get people looking for that miracle cure.

**Grace:** Do Veterinarians refer to you?

**Lindsay:** Most people find me on their own. I need to become more proactive and begin teaching conventional veterinarians about holistic alternatives. Over this last year I have received ¼ of my new clients from veterinarians.

**Grace:** What are your thoughts and feelings regarding fresh food diets?

**Lindsay:** Fresh food diets are essential. I believe that processed food is not good for any living being. I understand the convenience and while I do not demand it of my clients, I make it very clear that we will have limited success with an alternative treatment program if the client insists on feeding processed food.

**Grace:** Many Veterinarians are not only afraid of these diets but they do not think that people can successfully feed a fresh food diet. Could you speak to this?

**Lindsay:** I think conventional veterinarians often underestimate their clients. I know what my clients can and will do for their animals. There are numerous ways to feed a fresh food diet. It is easy and fun!

**Grace:** Do you have any thoughts about this paternalistic attitude that many Veterinarians have toward their clients?

**Lindsay:** My nutrition book at Vet school was written by Hills. The nutrition classes which were available might have been six

weeks. We learned nothing about nutrition in school and I could buy a 40 pound bag of Science Diet dog food for \$8.00.

Veterinarians are not taught nutrition in school. It is a brain washing of our society to think that you can put vitamins and minerals and all these things in this one food and everything that you need is right there. It is simply impossible to provide that. These attitudes are propagated by corporations in Veterinary School. As Veterinarians, most of us do not take the time to learn about nutrition. Unfortunately, veterinarians are not investing their time to learn and be passionate about nutrition which is the essential key to life.

**Grace:** Tell me about how you use vaccinations in your practice.

**Lindsay:** I think vaccinations serve a great purpose for serious diseases but unfortunately we are over vaccinating our animals which results in an over stimulation of the immune system. Many of the autoimmune diseases are a result of over vaccination triggering the immune system to go haywire. I would like to see people question vaccines, especially for the diseases which are not life threatening. We live in a state of fear of disease but the reality is disease is not always bad, but vaccines can be. There is a purpose for some vaccines. Do animals need them every year? Absolutely not, there are new vaccination protocols but the research is limited, so many veterinarians are reluctant to change current vaccination practices. Most veterinarian schools recommend vaccinating every 3 years, and they do not recommend vaccinating for many of the diseases that conventional vets are still vaccinating for. Vaccines should be individually considered for each animal. We

as guardians of our animals need to take responsibility for the choices we make. I empower my clients by encouraging them to trust their intuition. I am seeing healthier animals as a direct result of informed decision making rather than making decisions based on fear. I find that when I empower my clients to make choices they come to me with creative solutions.

**Grace:** Have studies been done to support current vaccination practices?

**Lindsay:** No, there have been no studies to support yearly vaccinations. Veterinarians have been told by the Pharmaceutical companies that the vaccinations are labeled for yearly use. Unfortunately, nobody questions whether or not there are studies to support these practices. There are studies that show that puppies that have been vaccinated with a vaccine for distemper have titers for life. Now research is being done to determine the frequency for rabies vaccinations. Unless you take the time to read the research it is either not there to support current practices or it is saying something entirely different than what we are doing. The insert with the vaccinations clearly state not to vaccinate an ill animal, unfortunately, many veterinarians will vaccinate an animal that comes in with diabetes, Cushing's, any of the autoimmune diseases or cancer. These should not be viewed as well animals. It all goes back to one's definition of wellness.

**Grace:** How do you deal with the death of your clients?

**Lindsay:** Euthanasia was one of the things that I almost quit practicing over because I was faced daily with euthanizing animals that were healthy. I thought death was bad,

that death was a failure on my part. I was euthanizing animals that were healthy but had behavior issues. I was angry and upset and actually started refusing to do euthanasia. When I backed off and looked at it and started really understanding where the animals were coming from and learned about animal communication I realized that the animals are not afraid to die. We are afraid of death and often get hung up on it but the animals don't. They might be afraid of a needle but they are not afraid to pass. When I started understanding that this life and death process is all natural and it is my job to facilitate an animal's passing through a comfortable easy, safe, way which is with their people at home in a loving manner. Animals do not have to get to the point that they are actually suffering for us to let them go. It is a gift that we can give them to help them pass.

**Grace:** How do you support those animals that want to pass over on their own in a hospice type situation?

**Lindsay:** This is more involved as I need to spend much more time with the people helping them to understand the process. It is different for every animal but it is critical to be able to communicate with your pet during this process. You have to sit down and really get on floor and talk with them. I often recommend the use of an animal communicator to keep every body on the same page. Animals are totally OK with death and if the people understand this from the animal' perspective then they can go

through the process with the understanding that it is a natural, peaceful and beautiful event. I have witnessed some wonderful rituals that my clients have preformed during this time such as writing and reading poems and prayers, lighting candles and playing music.

**Grace:** What would you like people to know about you?

**Lindsay:** I am passionately involved in my job and love what I do. I love the and working with their guardians. I think that conventional medicine has to be integrated with an alternative approach. I hate to use the word malpractice but I almost think it should be considered malpractice not to offer an integrated approach with conventional medicine. A large part of my job is to help conventional veterinarians understand that it is not scary or voodoo medicine.



*Love brought Lindsay to Oakdale from the South, and an intense love and commitment to the animals keeps her here. Both Penny and Snoopy give Lindsay 5 paws on her gentle and understanding approach!*

Dr. Lindsay can be reached at 209-541-7884 or by email at [alcroom@aol.com](mailto:alcroom@aol.com). She will return phone calls during the week between appointments or in the early evening. Dr. Lindsay no longer practices conventional western medicine and requires her clients to retain their regular veterinarian for routine care and emergencies. Appointments are scheduled Monday thru Friday with some Saturday hours for chiropractic visits. Sessions may occur in your home, Dr. Lindsay's home, or in your regular Veterinarian's office. She would be honored to meet and help heal your animals.