



Dogs Never Lie: What My Dog Taught Me About Acupuncture

Dr. David Perrine

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Dogs bark because that's what dogs do. Dogs wag their tails because that's what dogs do. Dogs eat because that's what dogs do. So was the case for our twelve year old Lab named Ripken (yes, named for the baseball player). That is until about two weeks ago.

As he has aged, Ripken no longer jumps up to greet us when we get home, but instead wags his tail vigorously, thumping it loudly on the floor as if to say, "Glad you're home!" That night, no thumping. When I arrived home that Friday evening, my wife explained how he had been in intense pain, refusing to move. When I went over to check on him, he recoiled, wincing in pain. It appeared he was having trouble with his left front leg. On top of that, he was refusing to eat, never a good sign for a dog.

We waited until the next day to see if a nights rest would help. No change. He remained very lethargic with still no desire to eat and in a great deal of pain. Unfortunately, similar incidents were becoming more frequent for him, this episode by far being the worst to date. As the day progressed, my wife and I wondered if it was time to say goodbye to our old friend. The thought of his continued suffering would just be too much to bear. We talked about a time that upcoming week when we could all be there as a family to say goodbye.

Sunday morning brought more of the same...no improvement. As I was getting ready for church, visions of discussing Ripken's future with my kids kept racing through my mind. They had grown up with him. Then from left field (remember, he's named after a baseball player) acupuncture popped into my head. I had been using acupuncture in my practice for more than a decade with some truly amazing results. "Why not try it on my dog?", I thought. Knowing the specific acupuncture points I would use on a patient, I envisioned how those points would correlate on a dog.

He tolerated the treatment very well with no reaction as the needles were applied (as most patients will attest, they are virtually painless). Upon completing his care, I left for church. A few hours later, I returned home to Ripken standing in our bedroom doorway. Although better, he was still limping significantly so I decided another treatment was in order. By late that same afternoon, our buddy was up walking around (no limp), wagging his tail and eating as if nothing happened.

As I mentioned, I have been utilizing acupuncture for over a dozen years and have witnessed numerous miracles. However, this experience has truly inspired me. As a physician, I am well aware of the placebo effect and believe it can play a significant role when it comes to positive therapeutic outcomes. The mind is the most powerful healing tool your body has at it's disposal. Ripken, on the other hand, had no idea that he was undergoing treatment. He only knew it hurt to stand. Acupuncture took away his pain and allowed him to return to do what dogs do.

The power that made the body, heals the body. Acupuncture simply removes the interference to this process, allowing the body to do what it is designed to do...heal itself.

For many, acupuncture remains a strange therapy with little scientific proof to behind it. Nothing could be farther from the truth. For thousands of years, billions of people from all over the world have experienced the healing power of acupuncture. After extensive investigation, The World Health Organization itself has endorsed the benefits of acupuncture. Also, some of the worlds most respected medical schools (including Harvard and Stanford) are now offering acupuncture training to their doctors.

It has been said that all great truths go through three phases—at first they are ridiculed, then violently attacked, and finally accepted as self evident. If you or someone you know is struggling with health issues of any type, I encourage you to look towards acupuncture. My dog would highly recommend it.