

Little-Known Therapies Giving Pets a Second Chance on Life

They're not the typical tools found in most veterinarians' clinics, but when used on animals in need, the results can be truly miraculous. For this veterinarian, it took a newly crippled dachshund, picked up and shaken by a neighbor dog, to open her eyes to these natural healing methods.

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Dr. Christine Woodford, an integrative veterinarian and founder of Veterinary Integrative Performance Services in Robins, Iowa, was nominated for a Game Changer award by Leah H
- Woodford uses modalities from chiropractic care and acupuncture to nutrition and stretching — and she's using her gifts to improve the lives of the canine and equine world alike
- While it was animals that brought Dr. Woodford to the veterinary field, one of the things she loves most about the work she does is the relationship she develops with people
- Getting to see the difference in the animals she treats and experiencing the human-animal bond on a daily basis make it all worthwhile for Dr. Woodford
- She wants others to also follow their heart and passion to realize a fulfilled life

Dr. Christine Woodford, an integrative veterinarian and founder of Veterinary Integrative Performance Services in Robins, Iowa, was nominated for a Game Changer award by Leah H. During her 21 years as a veterinarian, she's expanded her toolbox to include modalities from chiropractic care and acupuncture to nutrition and stretching — and she's using her gifts to improve the lives of the canine and equine world alike.

Growing up in Dubuque, Iowa, Dr. Woodford always loved animals but initially went into the medical research field. After realizing it wasn't her passion, she went to veterinary school and started out as an equine veterinarian. It wasn't long before a unique experience turned her course toward integrative medicine:

"What triggered me for more of the integrative path, we traveled to a show in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and one of the horses, when she got off the trailer, I could just tell something wasn't right. And all the tools in my toolbox, anti-inflammatories, the other things, it just wasn't getting to the heart of the problem.

Thankfully, I found somebody at the show to do some bodywork on her, and she was really out of alignment in her upper cervical, in her withers, her rib cage and her shoulder. And that made the world of difference, and then she went on to perform well at that show. And I was like, 'Wow, there is something to this.'

A Paradigm Shift Toward Natural Healing

Soon after, Dr. Woodford got certified in animal chiropractic and pursued further education in veterinary acupuncture. "I really saw the need for it for animals and an opportunity to start my own practice offering the chiropractic and acupuncture to animals. And then it just developed out of there," she says.

Along with treating horses, cattle and sheep, she also sees small animals, including dachshunds, which opened her eyes further to the power of natural healing:

"A horse friend of mine, her dachshund had got picked up by the neighbor's dog, and shook, and dropped, and acutely was not using its legs. She came to me actually at a horse show, and I was doing range of motion on her spine, did some acupuncture, and I had just invested for the horses into a Magna Wave machine, pulsed electromagnetic field therapy.

And I thought to myself, "Hmm, let me try to stimulate the needles with this." Because in acupuncture training, we could stimulate the needles with the electroacupuncture. I started stimulating the needles with the Magna Wave machine, and that little dog got better.

She went back to her vet, and she was like, 'Wow.' And that vet actually had another dachshund with a similar injury that she referred to me and that dachshund got better. And so it just started to open up my world of how powerful these therapies are, and we're giving these animals a second chance on life. It's so exciting."

She also learned about the power of nutrition, after seeing miraculous weight loss and health gains in her own dog when she switched to a species-appropriate diet.

"That really inspired me ... And so I took a food therapy course ... Learned a lot more about the energetics of food ... And so this winter ... Just learned so much about the importance of macronutrients and micronutrients and how we can get good and complete balanced diets through whole food nutrition. And I'm just so excited to share that with my clients and other pet parents," Dr. Woodford says.

Follow Your Heart and Passion

While it was animals that brought Dr. Woodford to the veterinary field, one of the things she loves most about the work she does is the relationship she develops with people:

"Typically, people find me for a problem. Either their dog is injured, or the geriatric dog is maybe not doing the stairs quite as well as they were, or the performance animals just not performing like they should.

So they find me for a problem, but I really try to educate them on the wellness program. It's not a one-time fix. So again, I usually recommend three treatments. And then if we see a difference, whether we treat the animal once every one to six months, depending on the animal. And it's just so fun. Over the years, I've developed great relationships with my clients too, learning about their life."

Getting to see the difference in the animals she treats and experiencing the human-animal bond on a daily basis make it all worthwhile for Dr. Woodford, and she wants others to also follow their heart and passion to realize a fulfilled life:

"In the beginning, my college career took me to the sciences. Even though that research is definitely necessary, I wasn't passionate about it. So I went back to college. Some people ask me, 'How many years have you had in college?' More than most, but it was so worth it, the journey that I took, because now I'm so passionate about what I do.

And even though it is work, it doesn't feel like work to me. It's just so many great experiences. I get to meet great people with great animals, great pets, and I feel like with what I'm doing and what I'm teaching the pet parents and the animal owners, that we're making a huge difference in the animal's life.

So just follow your passion, and then it will never feel like work. And also, continue to be a lifelong learner. It's not like we just learned something here and then we're done. Just continue to learn along the way and enjoy the journey."

If you'd like to learn more about Dr. Woodford and Veterinary Integrative Performance Services, you can find them at their website, [**vipsvet.net**](http://vipsvet.net) as well as on social media.
