



FEATURE

Power of Homeopathy & Flower Essences in supporting behavioural change



An introduction to homeopathic remedies

My introduction to appreciating the power of homeopathic and flower essence remedies came in 2006, through my working with a dog called Buffy, a King Charles Spaniel. Buffy was diagnosed with genetic anxiety and from an early age, had difficulties in interacting normally with other dogs and people. At the time I meet Buffy, she was eighteen months old, was on veterinary anti-anxiety medications, and was showing fear and aggressive behaviours towards some family members. She was house bound, unable to be walked outside the family home due to intense anxiety. She could not cope with changes in routines, and whilst having a strong bond with her “mum”, was unresponsive with most other members of the family and certainly terrified of strangers. Buffy would often seek the comfort of spaces in corners and under beds when things got too tough to handle.

Vet visits were extremely challenging. It had been recommended to Buffy’s mum that she be euthanised, however the family wanted to try other options before making that decision.

Over a period of twelve months, Buffy was on tailored flower essence remedies and homeopathic treatments. Positive changes started to occur within the first four weeks and this continued to improve with further tailoring of remedies, as symptoms changed. In addition, Bowen therapy was incorporated, as Buffy was able to tolerate being handled and touched.

By the time Buffy was three years of age, she was walking on a lead and taking daily walks, interacting with family members and even accepting of a new dog in the house. Changes to routines within the household were less anxiety provoking and she was more adaptable in her behaviour. She was also completely off her veterinary medications and only needing homeopathic support in certain situations. Behavioural training was being maintained, in parallel to the use of homeopathy and flower essences. Buffy maintained this improvement, and ceased all flower essences and homeopathic remedies by the age of four years. This improvement was maintained right up till her passing in 2012, due to cancer. For a dog that was going to be euthanised at eighteen months of age, she went onto have a reasonably happy and productive life for nearly six more years.



Words Helen Anderson Animal Equilibrium

So what are Flower essences and Homeopathy and how can they help dogs facing emotional, mental and situational challenges?

Put simply they are remedies created from substances within nature in highly diluted forms. The ways in which flower essence and homeopathic remedies are made are very similar, but their use and application have layers of sophistication in prescribing, with flower essences being the easier of the two to select and use. Both are known as vibrational remedies, as they hold the energetic imprint of the substances they are made from within the water molecule.

Flower Essences-their history and use

Rescue Remedy is one of the remedies available from the thirty-eight Bach Flower Essences that were discovered in the 1930’s by Dr Edward Bach, a medical physician (see pictured). He based remedies for particular mood states and personality traits. Flower essences are extremely dilute, vibrational solutions which contain the energetic imprint of a particular flower, leaf, plant or tree. Parts of the flower or plant are diluted and then potentised to become effective. The essences were primarily designed for humans, but their success with animals became quickly evident.

The variety of flower essences available is endless.

There are many different flower essences that have been developed since the days of Dr Edward Bach, however Bach flowers have to date been most extensively used and documented with animals. In Australia Dr Ian White in the 1980’s developed sixty-eight flower essences based on Australian bush flowers and a body of research has been developed on their use with a range of companion animals. There are also Desert Flower essences from the USA and Alaskan Flower essences that have had reported use with animals as well.



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Regardless of the type of flower essences, they all have been developed along similar lines and the only difference is that some flower essences address different nuances of mood states that other essences might not capture. Therefore a practitioner needs to be knowledgeable of the different essences and their uses along with a good understanding of canine behaviour.

How do they support the wellbeing of dogs?

Animals are affected by the same emotional triggers to which we react, among them, fear, grief, trauma, jealousy, anxiety. Further stress, aging, illness and environmental factors can directly contribute to both physical and emotional imbalances.



It is important to note that flower essences are not and have never been intended as a substitute for good veterinary care and positively reinforced training practices, nor are they designed to change the inbred characteristics of a particular breed. It is always important to consider physical conditions when there are sudden changes of behaviour with canines. Likewise training and the variety of training aids can affect behavioural responses as well. So consider essences as an adjunct to the range of traditional, complementary and training options available to you as a dog handler/trainer.

Flower essences are non toxic and animals cannot overdose on them. They are extremely safe and gentle. Even if you choose the wrong essences, you will not hurt your dog. Also unlike certain herbal treatments, they are safe and effective to use in conjunction with allopathic drugs with no fear of drug reaction.

What situations can be helped by flower essences?

Flower essences can be used to help in a range of situations:

- Separation anxiety
- Noise phobias and fears
- Fear aggression or dominance aggression
- Travel stress/anxiety
- Adapting to changing circumstances (e.g. new home, training environments, new dogs/puppy)
- Obsessive behaviours (e.g. over grooming, tail chasing or biting)
- Reluctance to being touched /groomed
- Hyperactive
- Lacking focus and direction or failing to learn from past experiences

To determine the essences that should be blended together for a remedy, I often work with a behavioural inventory which gives me a good sense of that animal's personality, daily routines, training schedules and particular problems. From this information I determine the essences and make up the remedy and decide whether the remedy should be taken daily or in certain situations. The manufacturers of individual essences provide information on their use and this helps in making decisions on blends to prepare. Usually if a remedy is to be taken daily, it is taken for 3 weeks and then reviewed. The remedy may need to be repeated or a new remedy prepared based on changes and feedback, or no remedy at all. In other cases the remedy is only for a particular situation, which triggers the emotional reaction, e.g. a thunderstorm in the case of noise phobias. Remedies are made using spring water, the flower essence tinctures and usually a water preservative such as alcohol, apple cider vinegar or vegetable glycerine.

Homeopathy - what is it and how do they support emotional wellbeing



Homeopathy was discovered by Samuel Hahnemann (who died in 1840), when he noticed that an extremely small amount of a substance could cure the symptoms caused by a substantial dose of that same substance. For example, symptoms caused by arsenic poisoning would be cured by taking an infinitesimal amount of the arsenic poison through progressive dilutions known as "potentization". He also showed that this only worked in a person who did already have the symptoms which needed to be cured. This paradoxical finding Hahnemann called it "curing likes with likes" - is the basis for Homeopathy. Hahnemann used many preparations as remedies in his day, and since then about 4500 homeopathic remedies has been developed. Each one has a well-defined set of symptoms associated with it, and the remedies and their symptom sets can be found in books called "Materia Medica of Homeopathic Remedies".



Power of Homeopathy & Flower Essences in supporting behavioural change

Ideally, to treat a dog of a set of unwanted symptoms, one must find the homeopathic remedy, which has the most closely matching set of symptoms (both physical and emotional) associated with it. The symptom set must be similar not necessarily identical.

Homeopathic remedies are prepared the same as flower essences, however unlike flower essences there are ranges of potencies (strengths) representative of the degrees of dilution. The more diluted the remedy the higher the potency. In most homeopathic remedies over about 6X potency there is so little of the original remedy substance in the homeopathic preparation, instead the water contains the vibrational energetic imprint of the substance. Quantum Physics is now starting to understand the effects of vibrational medicines more fully.

Selecting a remedy

Once you have all the relevant symptoms, you look them up in a repertory. A repertory is a listing of symptoms, and next to each one, is a whole list of remedy names - in fact all the remedies that happen to include that symptom. So what you end up with is a list of remedies associated with each of the listed symptoms. Next you look for the common remedies. You will look for the remedies that are listed over and over again opposite the various symptoms listed.

Those are then on the short-list to look up in the materia medica and choose the remedy that best approximates the symptom set - the one most similar - called the "simillimum". There are some situations where more than one remedy may be used or alternated. The potency then has to be determined and this will vary depending on the acute or chronic nature of the symptoms and the animal's general vitality.

Now the challenge with all of this is that up until very recently, materia medica and repertories were written as if treating only people, so this would have to be taken into consideration when looking at suitable remedies for animals. The other challenge in finding the right remedy is that we rely on owners and trainers observing behaviours and symptoms accurately so that the full symptom picture is obtained. There is also a need for some level of interpretation of the behaviour to appreciate the emotion underpinning the behaviour, where normally a person could simply tell you they were frightened or anxious. So there is an "art" in using homeopathy to good effect, which makes it a little harder at times than using simply flower essences, but homeopathy can be very powerful and quick acting, if the right remedy and potency is found. Like flower essences they are non toxic and safe to use.

Putting all of this into action- Case Study 1

'Fogel' - too much of a healthy bark creates a problem for the neighbours

Fogel was a happy, energetic and fun loving thirteen month old French Bull dog who did not like being left alone. In 2013 Fogel and his family moved house, closer to the city and also closer to the neighbours! Fogel was very distressed when his owners were at work and would bark and whine and scratch the door. Some enrichment toys were suggested by a local trainer and whilst that helped initially, after a few hours the whining restarted. Fogel's parents received complaints from the neighbours.

A behavioural inventory was completed with Lisa, Fogel's mum, and it was decided to use a flower essence remedy. The key issues to consider with the selection of flower essences for a blended remedy were the following: adjustment to the change in environment and surroundings, and the associated stress with this; separation anxiety; and boredom, as he was still a young dog.

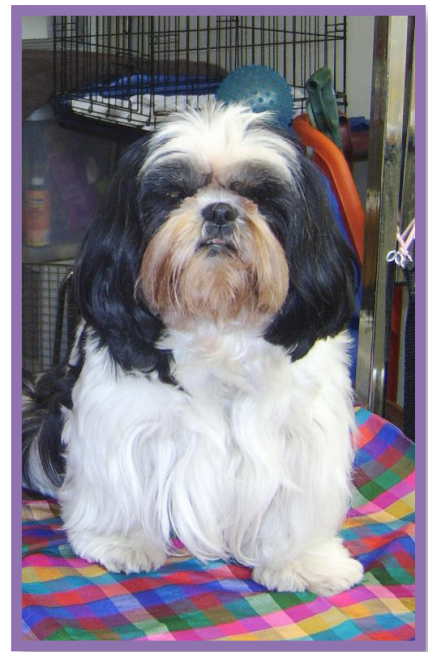
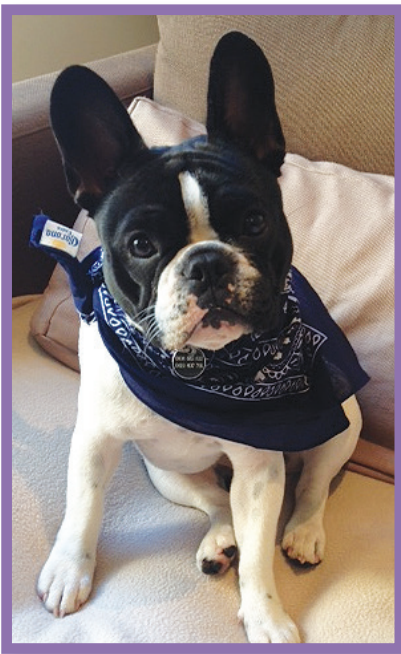
A blended remedy comprising of the following Bach flower & Australian Bush flower essences was prepared:



- Crowea (Bush essence) – for worry
- Walnut (Bach) , Bauhina, Bottlebrush (Bush) – for adjustment to change
- Chicory (Bach) , Bluebell (Bush) , Red Chestnut (Bach) – for clinginess, specific worry about not being with persons
- Heather (Bach) – for loneliness
- Star of Bethlehem (Bach) – for trauma
- Impatience (Bach) and Cherry Plum (Bach) – for acting out behaviour

The remedy was used for three weeks and there was improvement over that time, the remedies were varied slightly and over a further four weeks there was a significant improvement with no more complaints from the neighbours.

In other cases of separation anxiety where flower essences have not provided adequate support along with behavioural and enrichment programs, homeopathy has been used. A common homeopathic remedy is Ignatia, however depending on the behaviours that the dog exhibits when home alone, some other remedies may be selected. For example Arg Nit might be a better remedy where there is anticipatory anxiety associated "shutting down" behaviours as opposed to "acting out" behaviours. Aurum may well be a better remedy where the behaviour is self-destructive.



Case Studies (left to right): 'Fogel', 'Maddie' and 'Panda.'

Case Study 2

'Maddie' – the rescue Maltese cross with past abuse issues

Maddie was about three when she and her new mum, Kate came to see me in 2009. Maddie had been with Kate for a short time and had recently had one of her back legs amputated due to some past abuse as reported by the rescue agency. It was clear from the outset that she had been badly abused; she was frightened of feet, hands, loud noises and any fast actions towards her, even patting her head.

She also developed a habit of obsessively licking anything that was in reach of her tongue when there were major changes to her routine or in the household generally. This was particularly the reason for Kate bringing Maddie to see me, as Kate herself had recently changed jobs and her working hours significantly changed.

This in turn was creating a lot of stress for Maddie. Kate was receiving support/advice from her vet.

Maddie received Bowen Therapy, but in addition she was on a series of flower essence remedies and homeopathic remedies. The initial issues for Maddie were, past trauma, adjustment to new environment and to her physical condition, fear of people and touch and noises, recovery from surgery and general lack of confidence and obsessive behaviours.

A remedy was prepared that included the following essences:

- Crab Apple (Bach) – for emotions attached to physical change and illness
- Star of Bethlehem (Bach) & Sunshine Wattle (Bush) – for past trauma & stuck in past patterns
- Dog Rose (Bush) – for shyness and insecurity
- Flannel Flower & Pink Mulla Mulla (Bush) – for fear of touch and aversion to people
- Mimulus (Bach) – for known fears
- Bottlebrush(Bush) – overwhelmed by major life changes
- Boab (Bush) – enmeshment in negative patters and for recipients of past abuse
- White Chestnut (Bach) – obsessive thoughts and behaviours

Taking into consideration the emotional/behaviour as well as physical symptoms that Maddie displayed, we placed her on Nat Mur homoeopathically for a week followed by Arnica at high potency. Whilst most people know of Arnica to help with physical pain, at high potency, it helps with release and resolve emotions attached to painful traumatic events.

Within four weeks, Maddie started to show improvement in her level of confidence and in her reactions to noise and people. Her mood had certainly lifted and she was far less depressed. We continued Maddie on essence remedies for six months, slightly changing the selection of essences each time. Homoeopathically we used two other remedies, all for short periods of time to deal with some of the more challenging obsessive behaviours that tended to linger on over a period of 12months. Today Maddie interacts with visitors and enjoys her cuddles and pats like most dogs. She still has the occasional reaction to loud noises but significantly improved and the obsessive licking ceased.

Case Study 3

'Panda' – retired show and obedience dog

Australian Champion Kachinka Domino Dolly is 10 years old this year, and is a retired show and obedience dog. Panda disliked the show ring and lacked confidence in obedience. She seemed to be worried that something was going to happen to her. Whilst she loved being bathed, groomed and presented for the ring, at the ring's entrance she would become anxious and not want to show. She was also very reactive to thunderstorms and most loud noises.

A tailored remedy was made for Panda back in 2012 to help with noise sensitivity and to support confidence and adjustment in new situations. This included both Bach and Australian Bush Flower essences and low potency homeopathic remedies.

Through the use of the remedies before and during trigger events, Panda's confidence increased, noise sensitivity lessened considerably and her performance in competition improved. The remedies were only used for a short period of time and have not needed to be used now for a few years.

Di Milne, co-owner of Panda, says, " The remedies have been invaluable. Panda is a well adjusted lovely girl , so obedient and she remembers all she was taught. She is an absolute joy!"

"It should be noted that homeopathy and flower essences are not a substitute for veterinary assessment, diagnosis or care, nor can it replace the importance of appropriate behavioural, positive training which is critical in all of these types of situations, but they can go a long way to complement such approaches improving the overall emotional wellbeing of the dog."

Helen Anderson

Animal Equilibrium – Promoting Health, Wellness & Performance with Natural Therapies
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B.AppSc; Grad Dip Hlth Ed; M.Ed; Dip Equine & Human Bowen Therapy ; Cert 1V Small Animal Bowen Therapy; Cert IV Kinesiology & Neural Organisation Therapist; Cert Small Animal Nutrition (NCTM); Dip Animal Homeopathy(BIH). Dip Biochemic Therapy; Animal Reiki Practitioner Level 111.

Bio

Helen has been involved in the breeding, showing, and trialling of dogs for just on thirty years and has been an active competitor in agility and herding with her kelpies over the last ten years. Helen originally worked as an Occupational Therapist in rehabilitation settings but moved into the area of natural therapies specialising on their application with animals eight years ago and has qualifications in a number of natural therapy modalities. Not only does Helen provide therapy and consultative services for animals in areas of physical and emotional wellbeing, but she also lectures and instructs for Smart Bowen College. Helen runs workshops for trainers and groomers on the effective use of flower essence remedies and also introductory workshops on the use of homeopathy for general situations.

You can find out more about Helen and her services by visiting her website www.animalequilibrium.com. She also runs an educational Facebook page posting regularly on tips for managing a range of physical and behavioural problems using natural approaches. <https://www.facebook.com/AnimalEquilibrium>

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- July:** Cocker Spaniel / Cocker Spaniel (American)
- August:** Afghan Hound
- Sept:** Saint Bernard
- Oct:** Belgian Shepherd Dog (Groen) (Laek) (Mal) (Terv)
- Nov:** Hairless Breeds - Xoloitzcuintle /
Chinese Crested Dog / Peruvian Hairless Dog
- Dec:** Dachshunds (Long), (Min. Long), (Smooth),
(Min. Smooth), (Wire), (Min. Wire)

For more information please contact Kerry Christofi on (02) 9834 0217 or kerry@dogsnsw.org.au

Chow Chow

History

It is believed that the Chow Chow's ancestors originally came from the north China area where they were kept as a guard dog, and also as a companion. The breed was first recorded in the early 1800s when it was brought to the United Kingdom by a British merchant who had been in the Far East. The breed was first recorded in the United Kingdom in 1835 when it was brought to the United Kingdom by a British merchant who had been in the Far East.

Appearance

A massive, solid, powerful dog, with a thick coat, with long, shaggy hair, especially on the face and ears. The head is large and well set over the body and is set on a thick neck. The ears are small and set far apart. The tail is thick and set on a high level. The coat is thick and shaggy, especially on the face and ears. The head is large and well set over the body and is set on a thick neck. The ears are small and set far apart. The tail is thick and set on a high level.



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