

Ruby – Wise Woman

All the animals, who come into my life are special. Some, however, come as special teachers. So it is with Ruby.

When she came to us in November of 2008, Ruby was happy to accept a warm pillow, any affection coming her way, and definitely all the food she could get (including cat food, anything left on counters, as well as the Thanksgiving turkey, she stole off the table – in front of everybody standing around it . . . hhhmm). But she was still a vagabond, intent on long walk-about through the neighbourhood. Mind you, Ruby always came back – sometimes after a couple of hours (bringing me to new heights of anxiety), with a happy and contented look on her face (and often a pretty awful smell on her lips). Then, in the spring of 2009 - I remember the moment so well – I sat on a rock by our brook and Ruby sat down next to me. I rubbed her ears and we



connected. I talked to her and asked her please to stay home, because I worry so much. She looked at me, gave me a nudge and agreed. We walked up to the farm and en route Ruby side-tracked and walked off again. Oh well, so much for my skills in animal communication, I thought. But, lo and behold, mere 15 minutes later, she was back. And that was it. From that moment on, she only ventured across to Judy and Joe or next door to Wendell and Goldie for a neighbourly 'hi.'

Ruby had come home! And even she finally believed it and her whole being relaxed. In the meantime, I had become a much better housekeeper (no more food left on counters, dishes cleaned up quickly, and frequently vacuumed floors . . .). This year, she slowed down. Her body grew tumour after tumour (benign ones according to the vet) but so very heavy for her to carry around. However, she became more vocal. She greeted her family or friends with exuberant howls (after all, she took great pride in being a bloodhound) and demanded caress and attention before stopping her greetings.

Ruby was the most forgiving animal (or person, for that matter) I have met in my life – despite a life of repeated abandonment, she continued to love unconditionally, and accepted love graciously – in a way that seemed to spring from an understanding of it deep in her core. Her approach to people or other animals was non-judgmental. I have not seen Ruby dislike anyone, animal or person. At the same time, she never begged for attention either – this was clearly not her approach to life.

Ruby completely owned her power. She had developed a sense of independence that could not be erased anymore. She really did not need anyone to survive. But she

deeply appreciated being cared about and cared for. In the end, the two of us had an understanding (and I mean 'understanding'!) based on mutual respect and simply love for each other as very close friends.

Ruby is a beautiful soul – she came into my life at a time when I needed her as my mirror. She left at a time when I finally started to understand the lessons of a wise woman. Earlier this year I had to say good-bye to another wise woman – my mother. There were definite similarities in their passings. And, somehow, I am getting the feeling that I am being groomed to become the next bearer of that baton of wisdom . . . ?!?!?

Am I ready? – god no!! But, then, when are we ever asked whether we are ready for the true lessons and response-abilities in our lives??

I can say, though, that I feel great love and appreciation for having had the opportunity to walk alongside Ruby, as one of the wise women in my life, for this short but beautiful while . . .