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nimals live in the moment and as nature intended, and part of the reason we are attracted to them is because there's a bit of us that would love to live that way too.

Life is complicated and full of responsibilities, tricky situations and tough emotions like guilt, disappointment, jealousy, anger...

A connection with animals takes us back to our true self, simple beings connected to planet earth.

As well as being exceptional companions and loyal friends, animals also have the ability to help us heal and rediscover our inner selves; many people allow themselves to open up emotionally to an animal, where they may not for another person. Perhaps this is because we know that animals do not judge us.

Not only that, animals have the ability to 'read' us and connect with us. Horses, in particular, have a highly developed ability to respond to our energies and emotions.

While we often cannot explain this incredible

equine perception, just being in the company of horses can help us feel happier and even more grounded.

Intuitive healer Sarah Jones believes that interacting with animals can increase levels of the 'happy hormone' oxytocin.

'Oxytocin has some powerful effects on us, for instance, helping us be in a state of mindfulness during which we physically heal and even regenerate new cells."

There are many retreats and workshops in the UK and overseas which give you the opportunity to connect with animals in beautiful, peaceful locations, and get those oxytocin levels flowing.

No matter what your budget, whether you want to experience a life-changing spiritual swim with dolphins in the Bahamas, immerse yourself in nature in the Amazon or simply strengthen the bond you have with your own beloved pooch in the Welsh countryside, we've put together a few ideas for where you can find some soul-healing creature comfort. >

## Bond with birds in the Peruvian rainforest

Prices for the seven-night full-board retreat including accommodation start at £3,927, excluding flights.