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# EASE NEWS



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ENVIRONMENTAL ANIMAL SANCTUARY AND EDUCATION  
THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF EASE

Volume 9, Issue 1  
January 2009

## Editorial

**H**appy New Year to our Friends and welcome to another issue of EASE News. This edition contains news of our Preparing for Pet Loss programme and other updates on our EASE pet bereavement services.

We also have articles covering animal-related news and our attitudes towards animals, as well as this edition’s Book Review, offered by an EASE Friend, Michael O’Doherty.

Happy reading!

MELINDA HILL  
EASE PROJECT MANAGER

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## EASE Pet Loss Support Service

Since the new **Preparing for Pet Loss Programme** was launched in July 2008, I have received around 20 new requests for support. The feedback is that the service is really helpful, and that it is a relief for people to have someone to turn to at such a difficult time. The prospect of losing a much-loved pet brings a whole roller-coaster of emotions, worries and doubts; and it helps to talk through these things.

There certainly seems to be a real need for pet loss support, and it appears that EASE is unique within the UK in offering a service that assists people before, during and after pet loss. It is good to know that we have identified a specific need and are doing what is practically possible to fulfil this need.

There are still some people who request **ongoing pet bereavement support**, and I thought it would be of interest to EASE friends to read some feedback from one particular lady who has felt the benefit of the EASE services over the last year or so.

*“Dear Angela*

*As I've often said, your work has really helped me to be able to express my true inner feelings without feeling judged in any way. At a time after losing a dear pet, it is that which really reaches out as a helping hand. Lucy was such a big part of my life, and life without her is proving to be very difficult, as you know so well by now.*

*To be able to sit and write to you is so helpful, to know there is somebody there at the PC who truly understands is a true blessing. You've helped me so much – and even though I often type away with tears in my eyes, it really does help as your caring responses always shine through. It feels as if you knew how special Lucy really was to me without even meeting her – and that is one true gift that comes from your work. I do not know how I would have coped if I'd not found your help.*

*As you too are a pet owner you know first-hand how attached we can become to our pets – and that is something which means a lot. You've also been through the losses yourself so you know how tough our journeys can be, even though we all travel through them with different emotions and at different speeds.*

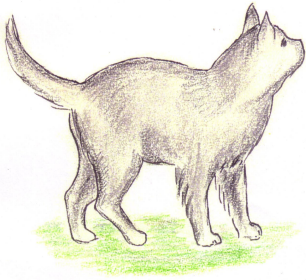
*Thank you so much for all of your help, your meaningful responses mean so much – and you always find the time to reply... you were made for a job such as this. I'm sure you've helped many, many people over the years; you've a gift of compassion and care and this shines through in all of your messages.*

*May your support continue for many years, for the gift which you were given is one which you share so freely. And a personal thanks from me too, your time and help really does mean so much! Thank you.....*

*Sue”*

I feel this says a lot about the importance of supporting people who have so clearly loved and lost a dear pet; and, of course, helping people and pets is what EASE is all about.

Another piece of news is that a few weeks ago I was asked by a radio station in St Albans, Herts, to do a **radio interview on pet bereavement** and talk about the work we do through EASE. Although it was slightly nerve-wracking, it presented a brilliant opportunity to get across to listeners the impact that pet loss can have on people. Kaye Ashlyn, who interviewed me, asked about various aspects of the pet loss support work, including things like,



‘How do you tell a child that the family pet has to be put to sleep?’ and ‘Should you get another pet when you have just lost one?’ and many other poignant questions. It was certainly good to draw on my seven years of experience in the interview, and perhaps there were some people listening in who will have benefited from hearing that it is a perfectly normal and natural reaction to go through the grief process following the death of a beloved pet.

Finally, we have recently added a **new Support Sheet** to the Pet Loss page on the EASE website. This is entitled “**Coping with grief in pet loss**”, which is included in this newsletter. This can be read online or downloaded for free, along with the other five Support Sheets. The audio-recording “**Support in Pet Bereavement**” is also available to listen to for free online, and we are hoping to develop a simple **In Sympathy** e-card, although the technology for this is proving rather challenging!

*Angela Garner  
EASE Pet Bereavement Counsellor*

‘DID YOU EVER WALK INTO A ROOM AND FORGET WHY YOU WALKED IN? I THINK THAT IS HOW DOGS SPEND THEIR LIVES’

*SUE MURPHY*

## World Watch – 1

### RSPCA slams Crufts for encouraging 'deformed dogs'

In a move welcomed by many animal-lovers across the nation, earlier this year the RSPCA pulled out of the national dog show Crufts amid claims that the judging criteria encourage owners to breed disabled and deformed dogs.

The animal welfare charity cancelled plans to have a stand at the show, where it has exhibited for the past four years. It said that judging should focus primarily on the health and temperament of the dogs rather than their appearance.

Mark Evans, chief veterinary adviser at the charity, said: "Dog shows using the current breed standards as the main judging criteria actively encourage both the intentional breeding of deformed and disabled dogs and the inbreeding of closely related animals. There is compelling scientific evidence that the health and welfare of hundreds of thousands of pedigree dogs is seriously compromised as a result."

This has been an ongoing debate in dog-breeding circles, highlighted by a BBC television programme shown in August this year of dogs and cats with increasingly serious disabilities – ranging from blocked tear ducts to severe hip dysplasia – due to breeding in line with the conformation criteria of particular breeds. To the lay-person these can often appear to be randomly chosen or with only aesthetic considerations in mind, rather than the animal's health and well-being.

The Kennel Club, which runs the annual show, said the comments were regrettable and that it regularly reviewed the judging criteria. "The fact that the RSPCA continues to make such unhelpful statements with regard to the health of pedigree dogs is extremely regrettable," said Caroline Kisko, secretary of the Kennel Club.

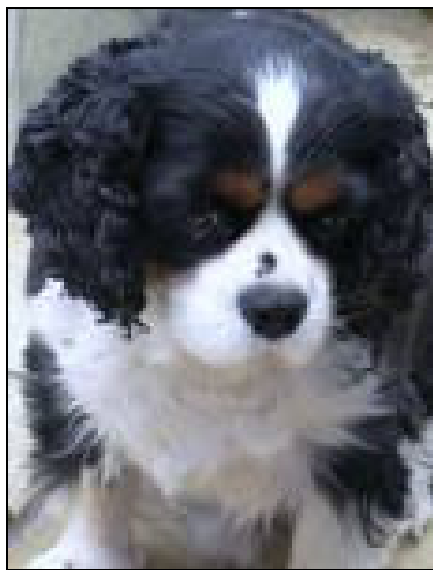


### BBC ditches Crufts in 'cruelty row'

Then at the beginning of December the BBC revealed that it has pulled out of Crufts in a row over the health of pedigree dogs, leaving the event untelevised for the first time in 40 years.

The Kennel Club refused to comply with the BBC's 'unreasonable demands' that 14 breeds be excluded from the competition because they are deemed to be at risk from genetic deformities. As a result there will be no television coverage of the March 2009 show. The Kennel Club is furious, and says the 2009 show will continue without the BBC's backing. Because the Kennel Club is tied into a contract with the BBC until 2010 it cannot offer the rights to a rival broadcaster. The BBC pays an annual six-figure sum for the television rights and could face a legal battle if it suspends payment. There is no guarantee that the event will return to the screen in 2010. A BBC insider told the Daily Telegraph: 'We want Crufts back on air, but not at any cost. The welfare of the dogs is paramount'.

The contentious breeds are the basset hound, clumber spaniel, doge de Bordeaux, mastiff, Neapolitan mastiff, Pekinese, share pei, St Bernard, chow chow, German shepherd, bulldog, bloodhound Rhodesian ridgeback and Cavalier King Charles spaniel.



*The Cavalier King Charles spaniel, which suffers syringomyelia, where the skull is too small for the brain.*

**'A CAT IS A PUZZLE FOR WHICH THERE IS NO SOLUTION'**

**HAZEL NICHOLSON**



## Our Changing Attitudes about Animals

*by Deirdre Chitwood*

**W**e are in a time of radically changing views where pet care is concerned. We are moving into a time of progressive thinking where the old approach to animal training of fear and dominance is being overtaken by attitudes of respect and understanding, which are not only more effective in influencing animal behaviour but are also more morally correct.

Thankfully we are beginning to appreciate animals in their own right, and to realise that their reason for being here on this planet may be more profound than being in service to the human race. Of course, this calls for a great deal of humility on our part and the ability to be able to surrender our old ideas of control and suppression. Slowly we are beginning to move forward in a new way, realising that working with and in harmony with our animals will effect real and lasting changes in their behaviour. In the place of pain and punishment we are learning that building a bond of trust borne out of patience and compassion is the only ethical way to proceed.

We are coming to realise that many of the same ingredients that are necessary to forge a meaningful and lasting relationship person to person are also true when it comes to our pets. This starts with learning to observe and listen to them and not assuming that they are the ones that need to change their behaviour and that we are the ones that are in the right. It is an animal's very nature to want to please us and if they refuse or are hesitant we are either not communicating with them well enough or they have a very good reason that we have not yet perceived. If we take the trouble to look a little more closely we will find that their behaviour is mostly based on either some deep-seated fear, insecurity or lack of confidence or on ill health.

As the being with a capacity for superior intelligence, we have a moral responsibility to try to understand animals and to offer all the protection and kindness that we can muster. There is so much for us to learn if we can only drop our own psychologies of fear and needing to have all the answers long enough to look at what is really going on in our relationship with our pets. It is so easy to put our own human psychologies onto our pets as a way to understand them, with ideas such as 'he wants to take over', 'he only does that to annoy me' or 'she is spoilt', when in reality animals really

don't have intelligence that thinks this way. They are just not that complicated. What they do have is a huge amount of love, loyalty, willingness to try, and a fairness of spirit that often goes far beyond what we have to offer.

Whenever we catch ourselves coming up with labels for animal behaviour such as 'aggressive', 'submissive', 'dominant' or 'separation anxiety', we need to stop and think. The minute we put a label on something we feel safe and then we stop trying to work out for ourselves what we think is actually taking place. There are so many views and opinions in the world where pet care is concerned it is often difficult to know where to begin. One good place is to 'treat your best friend as you would want to be treated' which is a Tellington Touch canine golden rule. Another is the mindset that 'we have the opinions and they have the facts'.

Also we can realise that the way we are is the single most direct and powerful external influence on our animals. If we change our behaviour it will change our pet's behaviour, which is a wonderful tool if we have the desire and the ability to do it. Perhaps it is our level of stress that is stressing out our cat and causing it to urinate for apparently no reason outside of its litter box. Perhaps it is our lack of attention to our dog that is causing it tear up the furniture when we are not there. Or it may be that your 'Yorkie' constantly asks to be put in your lap – which has now become a nuisance to you – because you were forever picking him up and putting him there as a puppy. The examples are endless.

Often it takes someone outside of the circumstance to see the objective truth of a situation and to take a hand in helping both the carer and the pet. A remedy and way forward will not come from hanging on to old ideas of pet training that force an animal to change its behaviour because of fear of pain or reprimand. Neither will it come from trying to do the same things over and over again and wondering why you are not getting a different result. Observing and listening to what the animal is trying to tell you will take a little practise, but is far more humane as well as effective in determining a positive outcome. It also goes a great deal further towards building a meaningful relationship which is, after all, why you decided to have a pet in the first place, and will deepen trust and your connection with your pet rather than undermine it.

So often we try to do things the hard way, to force things into the way we think they should be or have been taught they should be, when a little easement is all that is needed. A good example of

this is the way we hold on tightly to our dog's leash and then wonder why he pulls. Every force has an equal and opposite reaction and the more we pull and tense our body, the more the dog will pull in response. Perhaps also he is trying to get away from us because he doesn't like the way we are treating him. Sometimes all the dog may need is a loose leash and a more relaxed body posture by the handler.

Another very important way that we can help our dogs is to take pressure off the neck. This can be done by using a harness and by letting the dog off the leash whenever it is safe to do so. Having tightness around the neck causes a dog to feel that it is being choked – as it does us – which is a stressful experience. Add to this the stress of not being able to get away or respond in a way that he feels he needs to and you further compound the dog's feelings of anxiety. Giving an animal choices decreases anxiety. The more in control they feel, the less anxious they will be. There are many ways to address behaviour issues which are practical and humane that work with the animal's natural behavioural responses rather than against them.

There is always a reason why animals do what they do, and if we try to understand what that is we can be proactive in bringing about a positive outcome rather than being reactive to it. To work towards building a bond of trust with our pets means becoming responsible for the consequences of our actions when dealing with them; and this is at all times not just when it is convenient to us. Remember you are training your pet every minute of the day that you are with him, not just when you have decided 'to have a training session'.

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GOD LOVED THE BIRDS AND INVENTED TREES.

MAN LOVED THE BIRDS AND INVENTED CAGES.

*Jacques Deval*

## World Watch – 2

**G**razing cattle and sleeping deer tend to align their bodies along the north-south axis of the Earth's magnetic field, European researchers said on Monday, giving new meaning to the phrase animal magnetism.

*Herdsmen and hunters have long known that cattle and sheep tend to face the same direction when grazing, but had believed they were simply positioning themselves according to prevailing winds or the sun's rays.*

*Sabine Begall of the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany and colleagues had a different idea. The researchers studied 8,510 satellite images of cattle and deer herds derived from Google Earth from around the globe, including 308 pastures and plains.*

*They also looked at deer beds – impressions left in the snow by resting deer – from nearly 3,000 deer in more than 225 locations in the Czech Republic.*

*They found that whether grazing or resting, these animals face either magnetic north or south. And since the direction of the wind and sun varied widely where the images were taken, the researchers believe the Earth's magnetic field to be the polarizing factor.*

*Although not seen before in large mammals, birds, turtles and salmon are known to use the Earth's magnetic field to guide their migrations, while rodents and one bat species have been found to possess an internal magnetic compass.*

*The researchers noted that humans and even whales are suspected of having an innate magnetic compass. Some studies suggest humans who sleep in an east-west position have far shorter rapid eye movement or REM sleep cycles, in which dreams occur, compared with north-south sleepers who get more REM sleep.*

*"Our results call for an in-depth study of this phenomenon, and challenge neuroscientists, biochemists and physicists to study the proximate mechanisms and biological significance of magnetic alignment," Begall and colleagues wrote in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.*

**PROPERLY TRAINED, A MAN CAN BE A  
DOG'S BEST FRIEND**

**COREY FORD**

## Finnegan the squirrel

Debby Cantlon, who plans to release Finnegan, the young squirrel, back into the wild, bottle-fed the infant squirrel after it was brought to her house.



When Debby took in the tiny creature and began caring for him, she found herself with an unlikely nurse's aide: her pregnant Papillion, Mademoiselle Giselle.

Finnegan was resting in a nest in a cage just days before Giselle was due to deliver her puppies. Cantlon and her husband watched as the dog dragged the squirrel's cage twice to her own bedside before she gave birth.

Cantlon was concerned, yet ultimately decided to allow the squirrel out and the inter-species bonding began. Two days after giving birth, mama dog Giselle allowed Finnegan to nurse; family photos and a videotape show her encouraging him to suckle alongside her litter of five pups.

Later on Finnegan mostly used a bottle, but still snuggled with his 'siblings' in a bundle of puppies, rolling atop their bodies and sinking in deeply for a nap..



## Coping With Guilt In Pet Bereavement

**What is guilt like?** Guilt often arrives on its own account to burden us when we are in the very vulnerable state of coping with a recent loss. Guilt brings the uncomfortable sense of feeling that things aren't quite right and makes us question everything, sometimes over and over in our minds, bringing up 'what if', 'should have' or 'shouldn't have' and suchlike.

**Why do we feel this way?** Bereavement, indeed loss of any sort, causes shock, distress, anguish, disbelief, and anger – a whole emotional roller-coaster. Our normal every day routine is shattered and we face the difficult task of having to rebuild life in a new way, adapting to the changed circumstances, which of course is very challenging. It feels as if the rug has been pulled from under our feet, leaving us in a vulnerable, shaky state and making us doubt and question everything to do with the circumstances leading up to the loss. It's as though this uncertainty leaves the door open to the unwelcome visitor called 'guilt' which arrives with a ton of unwanted baggage that weighs us down with all sort of negative thoughts.

### What does it cause?

- 🐾 Feeling more guilty if we stop thinking about the pet we have loved and lost or if we find ourselves smiling or laughing
- 🐾 Recurring worries about having fallen short in some respect
- 🐾 Not being able to settle to the loss
- 🐾 Feeling a weight or cloud over us that never seems to lift
- 🐾 Not being able to move on
- 🐾 Not wanting to move on
- 🐾 Feeling that we don't deserve to be happy ever again

**What can you do about it?** Like all unpleasant things, you need to bring into the open what you're thinking and feeling so that you can see what is really going on. Once you see and recognise guilt for what it is, you can begin to deal with it. There are different ways of coping with guilt – here are some ideas:

- 🐾 Understand that guilt serves no useful purpose whatsoever, and therefore ask, 'Do I want to spend the rest of my life carrying around this useless feeling?'
- 🐾 Work it through and out of the system by talking to someone you trust – a friend, a member of the family or a counsellor. This way you externalise it. Whilst it remains bottled up inside it will sooner or later develop into something much bigger than it actually is
- 🐾 Accept that even when you've done your best in difficult circumstances, there are times when it will never feel enough

An important aspect of coping with guilt is to reason through what actually went on and establish a balanced view of the circumstances – it is so easy to fall prey to negativity, when in fact there may be a number of positive things which are not getting a look in! To do this you have to step away from the emotional turmoil surrounding guilt and get an objective view. Here are a few tips to help in this:

- 🐾 Look back over the time you shared with your pet to add up the many small things you did that showed how much you cared (and there will be many)
- 🐾 Realise that even if you weren't able to fulfil all that you might have wished for your pet, at least you did your best
- 🐾 Consider what you can learn from this recent experience to take forward as new wisdom (and maybe even share this with others in similar circumstances in the future)

**Finally:** Remember that guilt serves no positive purpose, and it is important to work through this so that in time you will be able to move on through the grief process towards healing and settlement.



## Book Review

### **‘THE EMOTIONAL LIVES OF ANIMALS’ by Professor Marc Bekoff**

*This is a wonderful book offering compelling and moving insights into the rich emotional lives of animals and, by reflection, of humans. It is written by Professor Marc Bekoff, one of the world’s foremost experts on animal emotions, and is a very readable mix of hard scientific data, amazing animal stories and human being musings.*

What people have always known intuitively is given depth and breadth, making the world a bigger and richer place. ‘Just what is going on in animals?’ a person might well ask after reading this book.

The case for animals having emotions and why they matter is made with tales about magpies and other creatures mourning, foxes grieving and burying their mates, elephants caring for their weak, elephants finding solace in the music of Mozart, the joyful abandon of dogs playing, the empathy and bond between humans and animals especially that between children and animals, the tales of Jasper the bear and Pablo the chimp, the devotion of lamas, the awe and wonder of chimps dancing in waterfalls, the gratitude of whales, the humour of donkeys, and the extraordinary antics of the smart horse Jim Keys.

In fact, seeing emotions in animals is sometimes easier than in humans because animals don’t filter them: what they are feeling is clearly expressed by tails, ears, odours, facial expressions, postures and behaviour. Animals are honest with few exceptions.

Emotions are vital in bonding individuals both within a species and between species, as is well known to any pet owner. Moreover, from this a strong case is made for emotions and fairness providing a basis for morality in animals as well as in humans.

The subject matter of the book is animals and their emotions, but it is ultimately very humanising and points the way to a more elevated, respectful and ethical dialogue with these other beings we share the planet with, enriching their lives and our own human lives as a consequence.

*Michael O’Doherty*

## *Just a Dog*

*From time to time people tell me ‘Lighten up, it’s just a dog’, or “That’s a lot of money for just a dog”. They don’t understand the distance travelled, time spent, or costs involved for ‘Just a dog’. Some of my proudest moments have come about with ‘Just a dog’. Many hours have passed with my only company being ‘Just a dog’, and not once have I felt slighted. Some of my saddest moments were brought about by ‘Just a dog’. In those days of darkness, the gentle touch of ‘Just a dog’ provided comfort and purpose to overcome the day.*

*If you, too, think it’s ‘Just a dog’, you will probably understand phrases like ‘Just a friend’, ‘Just a sunrise’ or ‘Just a promise’. ‘Just a dog’ brings into my life the very essence of friendship, trust and pure unbridled joy. ‘Just a dog’ brings out the compassion and patience that makes me a better person. Because of ‘Just a dog’ I will rise early, take long walks and look longingly to the future.*

*For me and folks like me, it’s not ‘Just a dog’. It’s an embodiment of all the hopes and dreams of the future, the fond memories of the past, and the pure joy of the moment. ‘Just a dog’ brings out what’s good in me and diverts my thoughts away from myself and the worries of the day.*

*I hope some day people can understand it’s not ‘Just a dog’. It’s the thing that gives me humanity and keeps me from being ‘Just a man or woman’. So the next time you hear the phrase ‘Just a dog’ smile, because they Just Don’t Understand.*

*Anon*



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