


EASE NEWS



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

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Editorial

***H**ello everyone, and a Happy New Year to our EASE Friends. Welcome to the winter edition of our newsletter, which includes an extract from Angela Garner's forthcoming book on Pet Bereavement, as well as an article from Deirdre Chitwood on giving animals the power of choice, together with some topical news stories about the wonder of animal relationships.*

I hope you enjoy the newsletter, and thank you for your continued support.

MELINDA HILL
EASE PROJECT MANAGER











***W**e are pleased to include here an extract from a forthcoming book by Angela Garner, the EASE Pet Bereavement Specialist, entitled **'Finding Sanctuary in Pet Bereavement – Journeying Together Through Grief'**. This concise, practical book has been written to support people through the loss of a pet – before, during and after bereavement. It has been created as a guide, and is intended to be like a friend walking alongside the reader, supporting them through each step of their personal grief journey. The book addresses many knotty areas that a distressed pet owner can face, and includes a number of different exercises to help the reader to stay focused and to regain their own centre of gravity in the face of their grief. Here is an extracted chapter on:*

Caring For Grieving Animals

The ongoing controversy about how animals feel and think will probably continue until such time as

the human race reaches a true understanding about these other life forms with which we share this planet. In the meantime, a conversation with fellow animal carers will soon reveal many anecdotes about the intelligence and sensitivity seen or sensed in their beloved charges. While there is clearly much room for natural research into this area, some of us have certainly experienced what looks like grief in a surviving pet. This may be from the loss of another pet or the human who previously cared for them. And sometimes the pet's distress may be a combination of their own loss and a reaction to the general upset and fall-out within the household.

If you are looking after a bereaved pet keep a good eye on them for any changes in the way they behave, for example:

-  Showing less interest in their food
-  Lethargy
-  Signs of anxiety
-  Being unsettled at night
-  Unusually not being able to cope on their own at home
-  Pacing around the house, the garden or their enclosure
-  Searching for their companion
-  Being uninterested in normal activities
-  Self-mutilation or intense grooming activity
-  Attention seeking

As mentioned before, some of these could be due to the animal's sensitivity to their guardian's grief. And in a multi-pet family there may be changes in behaviour as the hierarchy is re-established within the surviving animal group. However, when pets have been strongly bonded for any length of time it seems reasonable to consider that they may become distressed by the sudden disappearance of their friend.

Preparing an animal for separation from another pet or their guardian

When the death of an animal in a bonded pair or group is anticipated, it may be possible to adjust their routine in advance, so that it doesn't change

quite so dramatically when the sick pet is no longer there. For example, if there is a bonded pair, you could feed the healthy animal on its own, and possibly exercise or play with each separately. This would need to be done very gradually and gently to avoid upsetting either pet, with particular care being taken to make sure the sick pet doesn't become stressed.

It can be incredibly upsetting when someone with sole responsibility for a companion animal becomes terminally ill, or due to age or illness needs to go into permanent or long-term care. Planning ahead can make the transition for both the person and their animal easier and less traumatic. If they are able to arrange for their pet to be rehomed by someone they know and trust, the new guardian could gradually over time take on more and more of the pet's care. This would allow the animal to adjust more easily to the new home and routine, while giving the guardian much-needed peace of mind that their beloved pet's future is being secured. Alternatively, there are UK organisations which may be able to help, such as The Cinnamon Trust, a national charity for the elderly, the terminally ill and their pets. Again, this needs forward planning so early contact with the charity is vital.

Allowing companion animals to see the body of their deceased friend

Where possible it is considered helpful to allow surviving animals to see and sniff the body of the pet that has died. Some animals won't take much notice but there are accounts of others who spend time nudging, crying, sniffing and walking around the remains of their companion. Although this can be distressing to witness, it is thought that it prevents surviving animals searching relentlessly for their deceased companions.

However, there are times when you may feel it wouldn't help a pet to see the remains of the one who has died. As always, it is a case of doing what you feel is best for your pet, listening to your instinct and asking your vet for advice when necessary.

Caring for a bereaved pet

While it is natural for there to be a period of adjustment following the loss of a companion animal or guardian, if the bereaved pet's behaviour changes suddenly and dramatically, or does not appear to settle down after a few days, they need to be checked by a vet. This is because there may be an underlying medical problem which coincides with the death or, as can happen with strongly bonded

equines such as donkeys, the loss itself can cause sudden and life-threatening illness.

I recall an incident when a guardian asked me about their West Highland terrier who had suddenly become very reluctant to go on his walks following the death of her other little Westie. The lady said she assumed that her dog was mourning and asked if there was anything she could do to help him to overcome this. Having listened to everything she told me, I strongly recommended that she took the Westie to her vet because we couldn't be sure there wasn't something medical going on, which just happened to coincide with her other dog's death. A week or two later I heard back from her and, sure enough, the vet had done a thorough check and discovered that the Westie had developed arthritis which was making it painful to walk. Once he was on medication he was able to enjoy his walks again.



This story highlights the importance of always getting a pet checked when they begin to behave differently, rather than assuming it is due to grief or other upset.

Generally it is a good idea to keep bereaved pets to their usual routine so that things remain as stable and calm as possible. Although extra care and attention can be beneficial, over-fussing may actually stress a pet because they pick up on the subtle changes of energy and emotions in the home. However, it is thought that in some situations slight adjustments in the environment may help to lift the spirits of a depressed animal. For example, taking a dog on a different route for their walk, or taking them somewhere new. Caged pets may enjoy some extra free-range time in secure circumstances, while extra play time or new toys may be appreciated by feline companions. With all pets it's a prime time to consider how their ecology could be enriched, perhaps with extra choices of things to do, hidden treats to find or new places for them to hide or shelter.

Safety aspects

Animals that are pining are likely to act out of character and therefore may not respond as they normally would. For example, you may need to keep a cat in overnight for a few nights in case they go frantically searching the surrounding streets for their lost companion. Or, with a dog, check that their recall training remains effective before letting them off the lead in case they suddenly bolt to look for a lost companion. Also, be aware that a stressed animal can be uncharacteristically reactive and anxious, so this should be considered especially when children or vulnerable people are handling them.

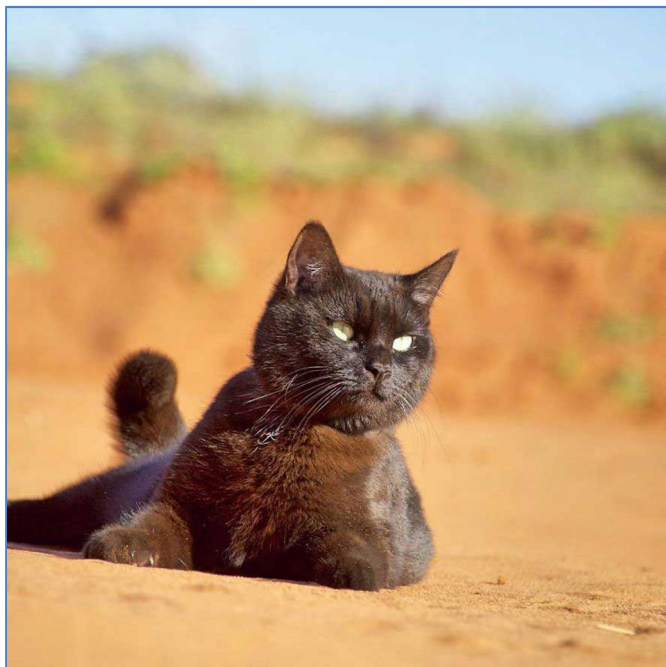
We will let you know when Angela's book is published and where to buy a copy.



World Watch

Rescue Cat Travels 48,932 km around Australia on the Trip of a Lifetime

In early 2015, Rich East decided to sell his house, leave his job, sell all his possessions and take the trip of a lifetime in a camper van around Australia, but there was somebody that he just couldn't leave behind – his cat Willow.

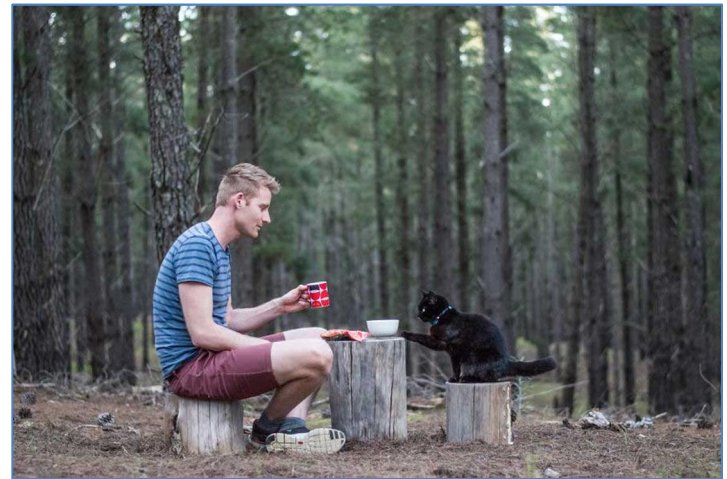


In February 2017, after 2½ years on the road, these travelling companions made it to South

Australia, marking Willow's official completion of visiting all six states and two territories of Australia, known to the Aussies as 'the perfect eight'.

Side by side they have achieved so much together and seen some amazing sights. They have even sailed the Great Barrier and have camped high up in the mountains of the Northern territory.

Rich says: "Some people think it's odd that I'm travelling with a cat, but Willow is so chilled out and absolutely loves our new lifestyle. Willow is kept safe with a tracking collar which allows me to always know where she is. She spends most of her time off the leash and is always keen to explore around our camp. With the tracking collar, I have the peace of mind that if she decides to go for a hike I will be straight onto her."



"It's been so much fun sharing our adventures with the world. It makes me so happy when someone messages me and says that they saw our photos and it brightened their day. It gives me the motivation to keep on doing what we are doing."

He adds: "I'm so proud of Willow, she's the cat that made my van a home and the whole of Australia her backyard. She's the best travel buddy ever!"



When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

John Muir

The Power of Choice

"The animal gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear, they are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other Nations caught with ourselves in the net of life and time."

(Henry Beston)

When I sat down to write about this subject, I realized it was such a huge area that I did not know where to begin. So, I thought, what in my mind is the most important thing about choice? After some deliberation what I came to was, we live on a planet where we are offered a myriad of possibilities, so being born with an ability to choose or select is fundamental to life. Animals, like humans, are affected in every way – mentally, emotionally and physically – by their ability to choose or not choose. Therefore, it must be as much a natural prerogative for animals as it is with us.

How is it then that we do not, in the main, extend this same privilege to animals in our care? We know that taking away choice for humans, such as in prison, is considered a form of punishment yet we think nothing of micro-managing the lives of our pets. We choose what part of the house they can go in; where they can sit or lie; where, what and when they can eat; when they can go out and where they can go when they do go out, and for how long. There is a saying, "If you want to understand another man, walk in his moccasins". My version of this saying is, "If you want to understand your pet, walk in his paws".

So take a few minutes and try to imagine being your pet. Imagine being in receipt of your commands and demands, of eating the food you offer them, the same food day after day after day, in the same bowl. Next time you take your dog for a walk on a lead think, does he get to choose where he sniffs and for how long, and with which dogs he can interact? This is, of course, not to say that we do not need to manage and make certain rules where our pets are concerned for their safety and ours. It is just a gentle nudge to take a peep behind the curtain of living your life as your pet and to see where perhaps the balances may need adjusting.

So how does the ability to choose affect us and our animals? The more we can choose the less subjective we feel. With the ability to choose comes confidence, and thinking processes begin to engage.

With lack of choice we feel out of control and this can lead to stress, feelings of fear and depression. There is a power in choice.

Several experiments were conducted in the latter half of the twentieth century that showed that a lack of control also produces increased stress in animals just as it does in humans. They also proved that increased stress leads to a compromised immune system and to ailments such as depression, asthma, colds and flu, heart disease, stomach ulcers, post-traumatic stress disorder, eczema and other skin disorders. Excessive stress can impede learning and shuts down the ability to think. Many so called 'behavioural issues' can be directly related to stress, such as excessive barking, reactivity, chewing objects, fooling around, possessiveness and even urination problems. Choice is particularly important in situations involving fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour and anxious behaviour.

Picture yourself at the dentist, if suddenly the dental nurse strapped you to the chair and the dentist forced your mouth open – you did not have the choice to get away or to stop them if they hurt you. How would that feel? Fortunately, most dentists these days realise we need to feel in control and will suggest you raise your hand if you want him to stop. Your pet, however, probably does not have this luxury at the vet or the groomers. Add to this the memory of something painful having happened to them on previous visits and you have a recipe for an extremely stressful experience. How less stressful would it be if the animal could have more control in that situation and say, "Stop", "Back off", or "That is a little too much"?

The best techniques shift control from the environment to the animal. For example, when introducing your dog to nail clipping, the best way is to allow him to move his paw away when he wants to. With the help of treats and a lot of patience initially, you can teach your dog that having his nails clipped is not an experience to be avoided at all costs. Begin by gently touching his paws and claws with your hands until he becomes used to you touching them in a respectful way. Gradually, introduce him to the clippers by stroking them gently on his paws. Rather than having an agenda, clip only as many claws as he feels comfortable with on any of his four paws. If you only manage one claw on one day and another on another, that's fine. As soon as he realises he is in control and that you are listening to him, his trust in you will increase.

Allowing animals to choose is an integral part of the Tellington TTouch Method. As a practitioner I do not try to control the animal, I aim to encourage the animal how to have self-control. We do this by giving them new experiences that inspire their self-confidence. One way that we teach puppies how to be on a lead is by putting a long rope through the back ring of a step-in harness and with one person either side of the dog we walk them slowly round a series of obstacles. We also use this technique with dogs who are reluctant to go on a lead, have separation concerns, freeze, are nervous or lean against the lead. It is especially useful for owners who tend to micro-manage their dogs on a lead. As the line is not fixed, the opposition response is lessened and the dog will come into his own physical balance very quickly, which eliminates pulling on the lead and increases self-confidence.

Whenever I begin to touch an animal I am not familiar with, I start with the back of my hand, which is less invasive. I will only touch them for three or four seconds and then stop to see if the animal moves away or stays with me. I give them the choice as to whether they want to be touched or not. Indeed with cats, especially ones I do not know, I will sit down on the floor and provide the space for them to choose to come to me. I may make encouraging signals or try to entice them with a toy or a treat if they don't, but I will never try to confine a cat and I will only ever start by having one hand touching them. If the animal doesn't want to be engaged, then I leave it for another day. Perhaps they are not feeling well. I am sure they have their reasons.

Once you begin to understand how important choice is to the happiness levels of your pet, you will begin to find ways to introduce more choice into their lives. Food is very important to animals. I live with four cats and I offer them a variety of food. I rotate the food on different days, and sometimes I put two or three types of food in

one bowl. One day one cat will like one thing and not another, so I move the bowls from one cat to another. Some cats like certain shaped bowls better than others, and they all have different places in the house where they like to eat. I always provide at least two kinds of dry food so they have a choice.

It is best to always provide at least one more litter box than you have cats so they always have a choice of which litter box to use. Even if you have one cat, let him have the choice of two litter boxes. One may not smell good to him that day. Yes, it does make for more work but they will be a lot happier as a result. I also feel it helps to offset what they have given up by living in our homes. After all, they did not choose to become domesticated.

Another example of how I offer choice to my cats is I never disturb my cats if they are sleeping on my bed. I do not order them off the bed. I simply make the bed around them and then when I come back in the room, they have always chosen to move onto the part of the bed I have made, allowing me to make the rest. With all animals, having a quiet, safe place to retreat to when they want to is essential and helps to relieve stress. I firmly believe animals want to do what you want them to do, you just need to communicate it to them.

If you want to take talking to your pet and giving choices to another level try asking them, "What do you want?" "Are you hungry?" "Do you want to go out?" Open your mind and see what answers you get back. With practice you will find a whole new world of communication opening up between you and your pet.

***Deirdre Chitwood, Certified Tellington TTouch
Practitioner for Companion Animals***



Animal Companions

The extraordinary scene was captured by photography student Casey Gutteridge at the Santiago Rare Leopard Project in Hertfordshire. The 19-year-old, from Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, who was photographing the leopard for a course project, was astounded by the mouse's behaviour.

He said, "I have no idea where the mouse came from – he just appeared in the enclosure



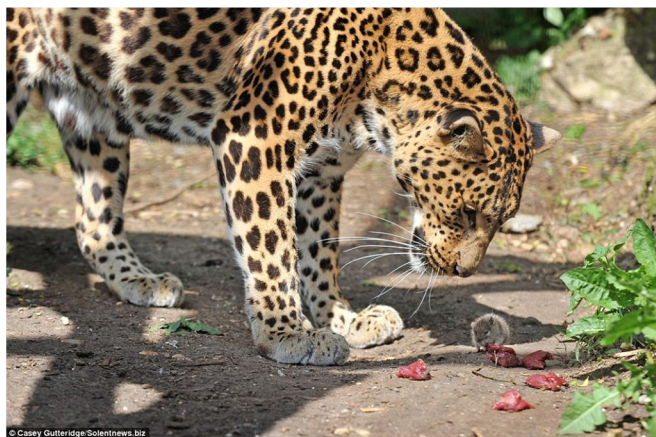
after the keeper had dropped in the meat for the leopard. He didn't take any notice of the leopard, just went straight over to the meat and started feeding himself. But the leopard was pretty surprised – she bent down and sniffed the mouse and flinched a bit like she was scared. In the meantime the mouse just carried on eating like nothing had happened.”

But even a gentle shove does not deter the little creature from getting his fill. “It was amazing, even the keeper who had thrown the meat into the enclosure was shocked – he said he'd never seen anything like it before.”

Project owner Jackie James added, “It was so funny to see – Sheena batted the mouse a couple of times to try to get it away from her food, but the determined little thing took no notice and just carried on.”

Sheena was brought in to the Santiago Rare Leopard Project from a UK zoo when she was just four months old. She is one of 14 big cats in the private collection started by Jackie's late husband Peter in 1989.

The African Leopard can be found in the continent's forests, grasslands, savannas, and rainforests.



Two beluga whales begin their journey to sanctuary

The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Trust recently announced the establishment of the world's first whale sanctuary, and have posted on YouTube a video so that people can 'meet' Little Grey and Little

White, the first two beluga whales who, from spring 2019, will call this sanctuary 'home'.

The two female whales are currently at Changfeng Ocean World in Shanghai, China. When Merlin Entertainments bought this facility, they vowed to work with WDC and Sealife Trust to create a new home in the ocean for the two whales who came into their care.

Next spring, Little Grey and Little White will take part in a 6,000-mile journey and will be transported by air, land and sea to a large sanctuary in a natural bay at Heimaey, one of the Westman Islands, off the southern coast of Iceland.



Around 3,000 whales and dolphins are held captive around the world, including 300 to 400 belugas. The dream of the WDC is that this sanctuary, and others that follow it, will eventually provide a home for many of them or provide the first step on their journey to release.

To see the video visit:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBgINmXGZmM



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