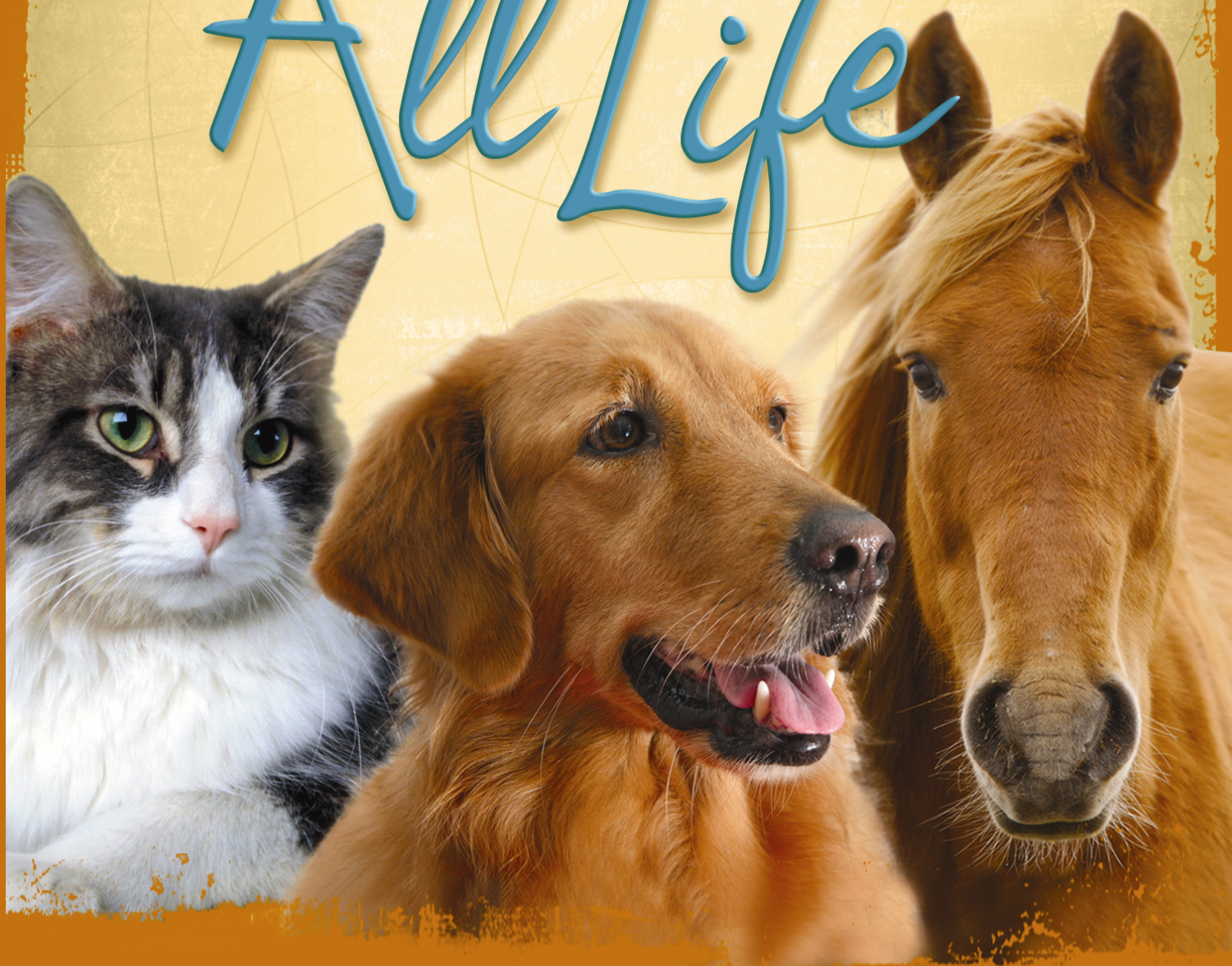


JOAN RANQUET

COMMUNICATION
WITH
All Life



REVELATIONS OF AN ANIMAL COMMUNICATOR



Communication With All Life
Revelations of an Animal Communicator
By
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This book is dedicated to both of my amazing parents. My mother woke up out of a coma on her deathbed and told me “Joan you have lost a book”. Here it is Mom!

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Preface

There once was a little girl who was so obsessed with horses that “horse” was the first word out of her mouth. She had her mother drive by pastures where horses were grazing just to see them. When she was old enough to ride a bike, she would pedal the long way home to watch them run, to see their manes and their tails blowing in the breeze. Their thundering hooves made her heart pound. She rode her bike the long way home to breath in their smells.

When the little girl was seven, her mother took her to a horse show. She watched every event with awe. At a break they announced that a horse would be raffled off. The little girl told her mother that it was *her* horse. The mother informed her that, yes, although they had bought five tickets these were merely chances to win; it wasn't her horse. “Oh, no, that's my horse,” the little girl insisted.

While playing in the backyard with friends after the horse show, the little girl announced she had won a horse. “No way,” her friends all said. But they couldn't rain on her parade. She knew better.

When the phone rang that evening, she was sure it was about her horse. She heard her father repeating, “No, I can't believe it!” He was laughing and even cussing: She had never heard her father cuss before. When he got off the phone, he confirmed that she had, indeed, won the horse. The horse was moved to a barn in the neighborhood and now she could ride her bike to visit her own horse. She learned all about grooming and equipment. Even though the horse was an untrained two-year-old, he treated her carefully and lovingly. He took her on his back through trails and together they learned many things about the basics of riding in an arena. She *loved* this horse and this horse loved her.

Nevertheless, her parents feared this was too much horse for a young girl. After all, he was a Quarter horse, descended from a famous racehorse. He would need further training and it would be more appropriate for her if they were to get a different kind of horse—a safer horse—later on. They arranged to sell the horse and put the money in the girl's bank account. The little girl was devastated. When she stood in the bank with people explaining savings and interest, she was aware their lips were moving but she heard nothing. She was standing on a rug now instead of in the sawdust shavings. There were no good smells. There was nothing.

In hopes that she would get over her disappointment, her parents promised that if she learned more she could, in time, get another horse. In the meantime, she got a puppy named Penny. After a couple of years working at a local Arabian horse farm where she continued learning, the little girl's parents kept that promise and bought her another horse.

Her love of horses never abated, and years later she attended a riding camp. She saw a horse that looked like her first one. When the horse spotted her, he went crazy in his pen, screaming and hollering to get her attention. She asked a groom what the horse's name was, and it turned out, indeed, to be her old horse. They got to meet once again.

That little girl was me. The horse was Hanky Panky. That one chance pulled out of a hat in a raffle ushered in a lifetime of horses, other animals, and love: A life where very little else matters nearly as much as those things. Living in that world of silent communication with another being, sharing love, being brought to laughter, holds more currency for me than anything else.

Lessons in Horse Sense

I always joke that I haven't really changed since the age of seven. Some neighborhood girls and I started a club, for which I still have the by-laws. We were all good Catholic girls but also witches that could perform magic. (Yes, “Mary Poppins” is still my favorite movie because she is the only female metaphysical hero I know.) We were obsessed by horses, as are many girls. The intention of our club was to buy a horse, and the how was to perform plays that I had written and then sell the script after the show.

That was the year I won Hanky Panky and the world was spared my plays written out with bad penmanship. (Not a single relative was ever spared my performances at holidays, however.) The four themes of writing, performing, horses, and some form of mystical/spirit-driven adventure that permeated my childhood have remained driving forces throughout my entire life.

Hanky Panky was just the beginning of the horse adventure. My sisters also became horse-obsessed. Rather than pay board on many horses, my parents bought five acres in a suburb outside of Seattle where I grew up. At one point between the three of us girls, we had 10 horses. My father wasn't always aware of just how many horses my mother bought! When we designed our barn, my brother was very young and wanted to be a fireman so we even added a fireman's pole out of the hayloft. Our barn was unique!

My connection to horses continued even when I went to Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, and received a degree in theater, still writing my own plays. While there I joined the Prince of Wales Club, one of the oldest continually active riding teams in the country. But my theatre schedule conflicted with the horse show season and I simply rode two to three days a week, getting a physical education credit each semester. The most mystical adventure I had in those days was ghost hunting in haunted theatres after hours, or trying to define a presence in haunted dorms.

The theater took over as the winner of the four dominating themes in my life and upon graduation, I moved back to Seattle and started a theater company. Soon after that I went to New York City to continue studying and pursuing my dream of acting. And, of course, I wandered through the horse barns in Central Park regularly.

My life in New York life was very stimulating; I could have overdosed on excitement. One minute I was in an off-Broadway play for a day, the next I was in an independent film. I did crazy odd jobs and rode a bicycle to auditions. I was always on the verge of ... well, something. Then came the phone call from my mother that my sister Laurie was diagnosed with a stage four cancerous brain tumor. Laurie had to have surgery the following day and begin radiation the next week.

Still in shock, I went to the New York University alternative health library and started reading up on healing options. Then I packed what was necessary, sublet my apartment, and headed back to Seattle for what I thought was just the summer. I was 24. In my luggage was the beginning of me putting the mystical part of the four themes in my life to work. I believed in my heart of hearts, God's will permitting, that a healing could occur for Laurie. I was as sure as I am sitting here now typing this, that we were due a miracle.

All of that hope was shattered in a New York minute. I couldn't have been off the plane an hour when my mother poured out her heart about how she was losing a daughter. In my naiveté, I spouted off about visualization, about figuring out how to move the bad cells out of the way. I suggested we pictured Laurie's 22nd birthday party. "Let's talk to the cancer," I said. The piles of books I trotted out were put on the bookshelf where they remained, collecting dust. While I was the oldest of four, I was suddenly treated like the youngest (maybe even the delusional) sister for having such grandiose ideas and for what the rest of family believed was being in denial. I was incredulous over the idea that my entire family had surrendered, splayed out their arms, dropped their belief, and handed over such almighty power to one doctor who said my sister was going to die.

After that long summer when Laurie was undergoing radiation and I was soul searching, I decided to let go of the New York apartment. I needed to go back and get my things. So that fall, right after my 25th birthday, I took Laurie to New York with me so she could see the city before she died. On many occasions, like while hailing a cab on Bleeker street, she would briefly lose her vision. We'd go back to the hotel, regroup, and then have another adventure. That trip to New York was the last time she ever walked, that her nervous system cooperated, and that she saw anything out of her eyes. She died on December 16, 1986, 10 days shy of her 22nd birthday.

I remained for a year in Seattle: I had to rearrange my thinking while navigating through epic grief. An avid reader, I was constantly searching, searching for answers. I still believed in miracles, and knew somehow I had to come to terms with considering the countdown of a 21-year-old body, along with the death of all of her hopes, dreams,

and spirit, as a positive event. And she was not just any 21-year-old, but my own sister. For a while, it seemed like an endless pit of grief.

During that year in Seattle, I was co-writing and performing plays with some friends. When I was ready to move on, I decided that since I had done so many small films in New York and Seattle, I should go to the film Mecca itself, Los Angeles. One of the first things I packed was all of my horse gear: a jumping saddle, a western saddle, bridles, boots, riding pants, chaps. Just as when I was a child, I *knew* I was getting a horse.

In Los Angeles, there was plenty of running around to auditions. And still I was drawn to spiritual growth; it was imminent, pressing. Then something else came into the forefront of my consciousness. Because I was working in theater, I knew an extraordinary number of gay men, and slowly but surely they were dying off in the droves from AIDS. I found myself once again sitting bedside, but now for very sick young men. Living in Los Angeles in the late '80s had to be like how it was to lose your whole high school class in Viet Nam or Iraq. The loss of these talents, these one-time forces of nature, was beyond tragic. As I watched their bodies, their hopes and dreams, and their spirits just withering away, I searched to find some meaning. I honestly thought that I was there to help these guys because having walked through the experience with Laurie, I had the ability to do it. So there was one gift that came from her death.

One of the young men I knew, Barry, had a horse—a big, red thoroughbred full of vim and vigor. Barry was not only too sick to ride Kubla, but even too sick to care for him. So I did. Every few days I was able to put a smile on Barry's face with Kubla stories, especially if Kubla took off with me through Griffith Park!

Then Kubla died of colic—a disorder that can sometimes be just a gassy stomach, or at its worst, can lead to death. He died before Barry. It was as if Kubla was loaning Barry a little more time and would be there waiting for him when he crossed. They were a team, and I was just a mere caretaker.

For a long time I was too sad to go to the barn, but eventually had to as my equipment was still there. Just as I arrived, the barn manager Elaine turned a horse out in the arena. The horse was the most beautiful I'd ever seen: very dark brown—nearly black—she was an exotic beauty with an ebony mane and tail and a little white star on her face. She put on a show for me, running and bucking and hurling her big spirit around. Her name was Pet One, and she was for sale.

At the time I was very invested in my starving artist routine, doing 40,000 odd jobs: plays for free, the occasional film role, writing performance pieces for myself and for other people. But I had never really cashed in on all of that creativity, so how could I afford this horse? But an unsolicited credit card arrived that day and I used the money to put down a deposit on her and then spent a year paying her off.

If there was ever a soul mate in animal form, Pet One was it. She was me in a horse suit! She was funny, very social, affectionate with me, and like me, she had a wild streak. When I rode her, we were a unit; we were no longer separate species, but one.

Horse people know the purchase price of a horse is just the beginning; the real cost is the care, the shoes, the lessons, and the equipment. And every month, miraculously, I paid for it—though sometimes barely. Pet One made everything worth living for.

Then my other sister Mary was diagnosed with an immune disorder, and her life was threatened. Suddenly, my nay-saying family was pulling out the books I had brought home not two and a half years before. Suddenly, we needed that miracle. Suddenly, my rays of hope meant something. We couldn't lose another. It was touch and go for the first few years but I'm happy to report, she's doing well now.

During those years while my family in Seattle was once again focused on combating my sister's illness, in Los Angeles I was performing and writing a lot. I toured on and off with a show for a year that I co-wrote, co-performed, and co-produced but still, the most solid thing in my life was Pet One. I even called her from the Edinburgh Festival and sent her post cards that were to be hung up in her stall. While on tour I missed the grounding experience of sneaking off each day to the dirt, the smells, the oneness in the riding, and the quiet time of just "being" after an adventure.

My horse/soul needs were being met by riding and caring for Pet One. I also explored energy classes and lectures, meditation methods, mass, yoga, Alexander Technique, moon dances, flamenco

dancing (okay that wasn't really spiritual, just fun!), and sweat lodges. In my horse, I had such a big spirit-activating hobby that it was almost a challenge to continue studying acting, let alone do some dumb job. I also seemed to booby trap, or booby prize, myself with a series of mismatched boyfriends. Lovely guys individually, but with me, a bad chemistry project. Yet, every minute of every day was power packed.

Around this time, Elaine invited Lydia Hibby, a well-known animal communicator, to the barn for us to have our horses "talked to" or "heard." I was not only intrigued (around the time of my sister's death I learned the Tarot Cards), but this was a different reading of energy: It was really talking to the horse. Lydia expressed how much love Pet One and I had for each other: It was so strong. More than that, she talked about how willing Pet One was to do anything with me—to take her as far as I wanted to go with my riding. I felt very close to Pet One after the experience. It confirmed a lot of the depth of feeling I had with her. It also confirmed a lot of the things I seemed to intuitively know about the other horses.

Pet One was so fantastic that when offered a breeding, I thought it was a fantastic idea: I wanted part of this line for the rest of my life. Once she was pregnant and no longer able to be ridden, we walked every day to a place to where she grazed and I just hung out in the dirt. I found myself eating in restaurants alone, absorbing every word of books on foaling and preparing for the big day.

Many nights both my horse and non-horse friends hung around the barn, having pizza parties waiting for this baby. Everyone wanted to see the birth. Secretly, I knew Pet One would allow me to be present for it; I had the sense she really wanted me there. Close to midnight on May 9, my friends gave up and went home.

I was about to leave myself when Solomon, the Mexican groom who was deaf and mute, gestured to me in one of his typically excited pantomime paragraphs that the moon was just right and that I should stay. So I pulled my car into the barn aisle next to Pet One's stall and slept in the passenger side with my window rolled down, right next to the window to her feed tub.

At about 3:00 A.M. I woke to the sounds of Pet One moving about in agitation and then the sound of water splashing. Her water had broken, and I knew a baby would be out in 20 minutes if everything went right. I woke up Elaine and her daughter Patty and then ran back to the stall to coach, breathe, do whatever it took to ensure a perfect birth. Twenty minutes passed; there was no baby. That meant it was time to call the vet. Elaine, Patty, and I realized that a hoof seemed to be coming out of Pet One's anus. On contractions, Patty and I had to go inside her to redirect the hooves and try to bring the foal on down through the birth canal.

Our efforts worked. Somewhere around 4:00 A.M. the cutest foal was born: a little chocolate drop of a guy, absolute perfection. He was a bay; brown with black mane and tail and a star on his forehead that was as bright as the light on a miner's hat. I put my hands all over him to imprint him to accept me as well as his mother as an important part of his life. I also paid a lot of attention to Pet One. It was truly one of the happiest moments of my life.

And when I say moments, I really mean moments. I went home that afternoon and lay down on the couch for not even a minute when the phone rang. Elaine was horrified; Pet One was in the throes of colic.

I made what was normally a 45-minute drive through traffic in 14 minutes. When I got there Elaine was walking—more like dragging—Pet One to keep her from rolling on the ground and twisting her gut completely. Horses can't throw up so when they have extreme indigestion, their delicate intestinal system can twist and kill them. The baby was screaming and desperately chasing Pet One around, trying to nurse. Pet One was drenched in sweat, and so weak she could barely stand. There was a possibility that the gut had already twisted. When my vet got there he suggested we ship her to surgery immediately.

Surgery would be in Chino, about an hour away on a good day, and we were looking at rush hour traffic. If a horse does have a twist in their gut, generally you have one hour before tissue dies, and then the horse dies.

I didn't have a trailer to transport her to the hospital. But literally at that moment a cowboy named Carl came driving by with an empty trailer. Solomon flagged him down. Carl didn't ask any questions, he saw how weak Pet One was and got her and the baby right in the trailer. Solomon rode in it

with the horses to ensure that the baby wouldn't get crushed if Pet One went down. I followed in my car, praying the whole way.

When we arrived at the hospital in Chino, Pet One's big 17-hand tall body was sprawled out in the horse trailer. Solomon's face was white. After years of seeing me riding every morning, the time I'd spend just hanging out with her, the birthday parties, the baby shower, and tack-cleaning pizza parties—Solomon, more than anyone, knew how much Pet One's life and my life completely revolved around each other.

The baby was unwieldy and bouncing around and hadn't had food now in over an hour. Food for baby horses must be available on a continual basis, and they usually don't go more than an hour without nursing. Solomon, Carl, and I could barely control him. I was terrorized by the event. One of the vets came out to look at the situation and even though Pet One still had a pulse, the vet suggested euthanizing her right there in the trailer. I came unglued. "Try. I know you got a pulse. Just fix her," I screamed. That's the cleaned-up version. In truth, there were some swear words involved. They took Pet One into surgery immediately.

You could always hear Carl coming before you saw him; he had a distinctive hard walk accompanied by the jingle of his spurs. That night I heard him pacing in the lobby, the sound of his boots expressing more caring than he would ever articulate. Solomon was completely distraught. I was in a stall with the baby sobbing and hoping someone could find goat milk or I could potentially lose both of them. The baby couldn't be left alone because he was throwing himself against the stall trying to get to his mother. It was in those hours during surgery that I realized he might never be with his mother again. And since he might end up with a human mom, I named him Pony Boy.

During those dark hours I wondered whether Pony Boy had gotten enough colostrum from his mother's milk within the first 12 hours to build his immune antibodies. I agonized if giving Pet One a warm bran mash right after the birth had sent her stomach into hell. I questioned everything. Finally the surgeon came out and announced that she was still alive, but Pet One had a 360-degree twist of the intestine. They had to pull her intestine out, clean it, cut out some of the damaged part and put her back together again. Between the small intestine, large intestine, and the large colon there is approximately 100 feet of tubing involved with a horse's digestion. In other words, it was a very complicated and harsh surgery. And only time would tell if it took. The measure would be if she provided solid poop.

Solomon rode in the back of the trailer with Pony Boy as we made our way back to the barn in LA once Pet One was in the recovery room. Pony Boy was learning to walk with humans; usually a lesson way down the road in the training of a foal. My sister Mary had flown in from Seattle, rented a car, bought the entire supply of goat milk from a grocery store, and was waiting back at the barn for our arrival. I ride English style (dressage) but my sister is a true cowgirl in every sense of the word, and has a knack with animals like nobody else. I was grateful for Mary's help, yet we had to be careful about her own immune system. So I sent her home to my apartment in West Hollywood and I stayed at the barn.

I tried to rest in the stall, setting an alarm to replenish Pony Boy's supply of goat milk every hour. Buckets had to be cleaned of any previous food. When the alarm buzzed at 6:00 A.M. I called the hospital to make sure Pet One was still alive. The guy on the phone could barely speak English but to the best of my knowledge, she was still alive. I couldn't quite make out from his broken English whether she had pooped or not.

When my sister arrived to relieve me of Pony Boy's hourly feeding, I headed straight for Chino. I cried the whole way, but as I pulled into the parking lot, I gathered strength to be hopeful for Pet One. She was in ICU, hooked to six tubes and had a muzzle over her mouth so she wouldn't eat the straw. My beautiful horse still had placenta and blood from the surgery all over her legs. There was diarrhea sprayed on the wall, but nothing solid, and she would not be coming out of ICU until there solid poop for a couple of days. She was so inside herself trying to find the place to recover. I put my hands on her where I knew the most damage had been and rested against her.

It was obvious to me now that mother and baby would never be together again and that I had to find an alternative situation for Pony Boy—quickly. I contacted veterinarians all over the area to find out

if there was another orphan colt that Pony Boy could be with. I called everyone I knew looking for any mare that had lost a foal and would take Pony Boy. Nothing. Those calls went on for weeks.

Sleep was just something I dreamed of for the next few weeks. That first 36 hours after the birth, there would be none. Within three days Pony Boy developed an ulcer from the trauma of the event, even though he was loved and adored by all of my friends and fellow barn boarders. Everyone I knew stopped in to see the little foal or even hold the bottle for him. His stall became a party place. There were charts for everything, Pony Boy's goat milk feeding, foal formula, medication, and poop schedule. I even had a diagram of which Los Angeles county stores my sister and I had bought out of their entire supply of goat milk. Another chart told when stores would be replenishing their supply. And everyday I made the trek down to Chino.

After three weeks, Pet One was able to come out of ICU: There had been a solid poop. But she was still trying to recover and I spent time with her, walking and grazing, and laying my hands on her. There was only the ghost of the very social, funny mare that threw her food out of her stall in the aisle to make sure that she didn't miss a beat of people and/or horse gossip.

At the five-week mark, Pet One was allowed to come home and that was about the time I stopped sleeping at the barn. After five weeks of hourly feeding; of letting Pony Boy out in the arena to run and frolic before other horse owners got there; of listening to the freight trains in the distance, and feeling the wind off of the LA river at night, I returned to urban living. No longer did I walk through a barn aisle to be greeted by the horses sleepy-eyed loving nature, but now looked into apartments and houses and it was odd to see people in the windows.

One day I walked Pet One over to Pony Boy's stall. Pony Boy desperately tried to connect with his mother, calling out to her as he did to me. Sadly, she was very remote. She still really needed every ounce of her energy to stay alive. And that was the last time—ever—that Pony Boy tried to connect with a horse.

Two weeks later Pet One suffered another colic. It wasn't as bad as the first time, but still she ended up back in the hospital. I spent another few days of laying my hands on her and trying to calm down her system. When we were both quiet, I could get into her being, so to speak. But I'd been unable to get her to come back out of this fragile, battered body since the first surgery.

We scheduled an exploratory procedure and found out is that this time her colon had flipped and her entire system was full of adhesions from the first surgery. The surgeon actually said that all the places he had seen me lay my hands were fine, but that the rest of the tissue was dead.

I had no choice but to let her go. There are still no words to describe this loss. I zoomed back on the freeway as if I couldn't flee from the pain fast enough. At one point I was so hysterical and screaming so loud that I had to pull over on the freeway. The loss was more than I could take. I would never feel her stride again. I would never hear her little low grumble "hello" again.

I had a few horses growing up and they were the most fantastic love of my life at the time. But after college, great homes were found for them and in my imagination they are still alive. Even now I pretend that Honeyhorse is still bucking some kid off into a mud puddle and truly teaching her how to ride. In my mind, Tammy is still jumping cross walks on the way home from a jumping lesson. In my imagination, Tigo is still learning things too quickly and the new human can't keep up. I lost a dog at age 12 and was so devastated that it took me a long time to connect to another dog, although I did eventually. And there were family cats that I loved, particularly the one I snuck into the house in my teens. But there are still no words to describe the loss of Pet One.

Pet One's father was a race horse named Petrone, who was known for his quirky personality and back at Elaine's barn, I still had an offspring of those two entertainers. Even though I was shattered, I had an orphan colt to care for.

As delightful and engaging as Pony Boy could be, there might be no bigger heartbreak than the sight of a teeny foal in a big stall by himself. It was very unnatural to see a two-month-old like that. And the story of how he was virtually orphaned when just 14 hours old would be repeated to anyone who walked by. That he was adorable only added to the sympathy being poured out to him. As a young,

yummy, little colt, he got more attention than anyone should. His stall was the magnet of the barn, until he grew up some and was teething.

And, oh, was he smart. There was a pay phone outside of his stall that I used a lot. When he walked out of the stall, he would pick up the phone! I realized that this was a case of monkey see, monkey do, entirely based on my behavior. So when it came time to teach him to eat hay—you guessed it . . .

I continued the search for companionship for Pony Boy. Once I was pitching a television show idea at Fox Studios. All dressed up in a beautiful suit (but undoubtedly with dirt under my fingernails!), I was fully prepared and was half way through my pitch when there was a ringing from my purse. I interrupted the meeting and answered the phone—back then cell phones were about the size of a small Volkswagen. It was someone with goats, but they wouldn't sell me only one. Needless to say I didn't sell the TV show idea. And I never got goats, or any other companion for Pony Boy. Truthfully, at that point he had no horse sense and he would have been beaten up by colts his own age.

As he started maturing he began exhibiting young stud colt behavior. A young horse's mother would turn or kick out if a young stud colt tried to mount her. In fact, the only thing a young stud *respected* was his mother. He would learn all of his manners from her. Sadly, I couldn't do that. I had to resort to creative measures. For example, when he started rearing up and striking (and as he got bigger he had very sharp hooves), I started carrying a large metal garbage can top, which I called the magical shield. His hooves hitting the magical shield would surprise him, and that more or less ended that behavior.

Having once been prey, horses have a built in fight or flight mechanism, just like humans. Additionally, they understand and comply with herd behavior. Pony Boy didn't have any of that instinct. I would walk him down to the police barn around the corner where they rehearsed for riots and big events that would terrify the average horse. Pony Boy was unimpressed. Once he slipped on the cement after a big rain and as he tried to get up he kept slipping even more. So he just laid down and waited for me to help him. My vet happened to be there and he was so impressed that Pony Boy listened to me. There was no panic in Pony Boy; there were no horse traits. Another time my friend and I jokingly walked him into the bathroom. In the mirror he could see Judy on one side and me on the other, then I saw shock in his eyes when he realized he was that horse looking thing in the middle.

There were times I would just sit in his stall, reading and I could feel his desperation about being born into this "horse suit." His anger was mounting toward others if they didn't pay attention to him as they had when he was a cute little foal that they could hug like a puppy. He and I could sit in another world and just be. However, with other people, he would lunge out violently and bite. And then his eye would soften as if to say, "I'm sorry; I just want your love." He became very scary to people. Even after he was gelded, this dominant behavior continued. I knew I had to get him into a setting with other horses where he could learn to be a horse. Another horse wouldn't put up with his shenanigans, and would have the ability to back him off. I had the ability to back him off, but other people didn't.

I found a place to turn him out into a pasture about an hour and a half out of town. I wanted him to watch other horses and learn to eat grass (I had not bent down and chewed the lawn!). He was still more interested in the pay phone outside the stall or picking up people's cigarettes with his teeth or trying to drink a coke out of a cup.

Two days before he was supposed to leave, he was out running and I noticed he was three-legged lame. He wasn't putting down his left hind leg. X-Rays revealed he had Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD), which means a necrotic lesion, or death, of a portion of the bone, joint, or cartilage. His bones looked like Swiss cheese. This condition comes as a result of not getting enough mineral intake from the mother and too much protein in the foal formula.

My options were to euthanize Pony Boy, which is what a lot of breeders would do in a case this severe, or make dietary changes. If I hadn't been there that morning in May, both mother and baby would have died. I had lost the mother and now I was facing losing the son. I chose to keep him alive, which meant he need to be confined in small enclosures so as not to shatter the barely attached bone, and to get less protein.

Now at eight months old, he was going into a smaller turn-out area. He was getting what appeared to be less nutrition, and developed a hay belly. The quality of his life was getting down to nubs. Yet there was this undying devotion from Pony Boy for me like I've never felt from an animal. I had veered away from doing energy work after the Pet One experience, but now I found myself cupping his joints with my hands and breathing from the Divine source, funneling every bit of it through my hands into his legs.

Around this time, I had been riding other horses at the barn and neighboring barns. Pony Boy must have seen me on a dozen or so different horses. At some point before he was a year old, one of the other boarders didn't have time for his horse, Gabrielle, anymore. Gabrielle is a striking little bay Arab mare, her brown body has a golden tone to it and she has a very long black mane and tail. Although Gabrielle had very little training, she had fancy bloodlines and her owner could have asked a pretty penny for her. Instead, he simply handed me the papers; and I had another horse! She is, to this day, a stunning mare. Even a horse hater like Pony Boy tolerated Gabrielle.

For six months or so I went along with the vet's plan for Pony Boy's OCD, even though he wasn't hopeful anything could change. But I also continued with my own plan. I did everything from praying to visualizing Pony Boy's bones as perfect. I did energy work on his legs, massaging them to bring more circulation to the area. I even lit candles for him at St. Victor's church in West Hollywood. At the time I was also working with a Lakota Sioux man named Butch Artichoker. One night, Butch had a sweat lodge ceremony for Pony Boy in South Dakota. Simultaneously, I followed Butch's instructions and walked Pony Boy down to the LA River at midnight under the full moon, and broke a gourde over his back.

After about six months, Pony Boy was X-rayed again. The bones were perfect. In fact, the vet accused me of swapping out X-rays. I told him the whole list of things I'd done. He laughed; he had always been amused by my methods. The vet and I decided now Pony Boy could go out to pasture. Pony Boy was so unsocial at this point that he terrified the people handling him. Besides me, the only other person who could or would handle him was Solomon. I had hired Carl to teach him ground manners a few times, but Pony Boy was getting bigger and intimidating people.

I knew some gals in a mountain town an hour and a half north of Los Angeles. I had already checked this place out many months before and now was the time for Pony Boy to learn to be a horse; to be "weaned" from me. The idea was to board him there and I would go up twice a week and take him on hikes. But the first night the calls started and over the next weeks the reports were pretty grim. Pony Boy was terrified of the other horses and would have nothing to do with them. He was getting increasingly aggressive with people that were going into the pasture to get their own horses. He was picking on whomever came into the pasture to feed the horses.

I would take him on long hikes and he would behave. One afternoon when we had climbed to the top of a mountain and were overlooking the valley, and I thought to myself, *what if I just slip on his back?* He was a little over two years old. In a perfect world, I would have waited until he was about three before I did any training, but he was way too smart and I was running out of ideas to entertain him. We had done all sorts of groundwork and somehow I felt he was just waiting for me to get on his back.

So I climbed on. He just stood there. It was the most peaceful moment I've ever had. And then as though someone spoke right into my ear I clearly heard the words, "I've been waiting for this." I had to look around to make sure someone wasn't talking, but there was no other human for miles and miles. We just stayed there a while and took in the view together.

Still, calls started coming from the ranch that Pony Boy was so aggressive that they were calling him "evil." The final straw came when he cornered one of the grooms behind the giant metal feed bin. Pony Boy was evicted.

My sister arranged for Pony Boy to go to Seattle where she would continue his ground work that would lead up to his riding. But matters didn't improve and before long Pony Boy had pretty much attacked everyone there. And when I say attacked, I mean ears pinned back with a very cold look in his eye, he'd go onto his hind legs and come after you with a front hoof.

My sister arranged for him to go to a “horse whisperer” trainer. This was the early '90s and the concept wasn't hip or well-known. A horse whisperer is a trainer using methods based on the equine psychology and horses' natural herd behavior. Ultimately it is using their way of communicating with each other to communicate with them.

The trainer had an excellent reputation and so off went Pony Boy. I flew up for the first few days of training. The challenge for the trainer became very clear within minutes. Pony Boy had no horse instincts. Over the next few months the trainer concentrated on the groundwork and riding him lightly just to occupy his mind. Pony Boy excelled and was able to master every training technique. But because he was so young, there was only so much that could be done.

On one of my visits, I went on the most fabulous trail ride on Pony Boy. He seemed in heaven and so proud of his ability. He was still working out his balance, but he was gentle and careful with me. It was as if we were always supposed to be as one together out there in the woods.

Then the calls started coming in. Nobody could safely get in to clean Pony Boy's stall or to turn him out to pasture. I flew up to see him, and at first he seemed his normal self to me. Then I turned to leave the stall to get his halter. I felt a huge thud from a hoof in the middle of my back and I was knocked to the ground. He ran out of his stall and with nobody there to catch him I was terrified. In all of my years of being with horses, I had never been scared. It might be one of the worst feelings on the planet, being terrified of someone you love, someone you raised, someone you trusted.

Crying, I called out to him that nobody would catch him so he needed to just get back. He immediately trotted back into his stall and I shut the door. The next day I had Pony Boy in the cross ties that secure the horse from both sides of his halter. Still, he struck out at me again and nailed me in the shoulder with his front foot. I was still terrified from the day before and now I was beside myself. I had an excellent trainer and I loved Pony Boy, but the situation was very bleak.

The trainer had me read a book by a horseman named Mark Rashid. He said to pay particular attention to the last chapter. As I suspected, it broached the idea that some horses can never be turned around and the most humane thing is to euthanize them.

I was beyond bereft. Here I had lost his mother and now the horse I had raised as my own terrified me. He was a criminal, a walking law suit. He was so angry there was no turning him around. Pony Boy didn't even know how to eat grass so I couldn't put him out to pasture somewhere where he would never come into contact with another human.

In the wild, he and Pet One would have died at birth. If he had survived, it wouldn't have been for long. Anyone else would have put him down when the severity of the OCD was revealed. Perhaps the kindest thing to do was to let him go, to hit the restart button on his Karma and allow him some peace and a chance to start over. And that's what we did.

In my despondent state over the loss of this lineage and all of my failed attempts at keeping Pony Boy alive, Gabrielle was my one ray of hope. However, she had a mysterious lameness. She and I had an accident and a year later it seemed scar tissue was limiting her movement. X-Rays weren't proving anything. I wanted to consult with the animal communicator, Lydia Hibby, but couldn't find her phone number. Then one day I saw a class advertised with another well-known animal communicator, Carol Gurney. So off I went.

The animal communication class was not only fun but confirmed something for me. I did indeed have communication with animals. Getting quiet and entering the silent world to connect with them also reconnected me with the labyrinth of co-existence I felt when I ripped through the woods bareback on my horse Honeyhorse in my teens. Nevertheless, I harbor a healthy skepticism and at a cellular level I'm a huge smartass! In fact, at that time if you had told me that this would be my life path, I would have thought you were crazy. I thought at that time I was only taking the class because of my own needs and for my own amusement, as I was sure there was plenty of humor in what some of the animals would tell me.

I even went into Carol's professional program, still assuming it was just to deepen my connection with my own animals. Here's where everything I'd learned in all the years of energy classes came together. Having meditated for so long gave me a huge leg up throughout the whole process. I could

navigate through my own internal chatter and really hear or see what was being expressed to me by a non-verbal being. All the years of studying acting and writing gave me the ability to dissect a story that an animal told me, and separate it from what the human was telling me. It enabled me to objectively take the situation or the dynamic apart and put them back together in such a way that the person was able to understand the animal's behavior and make an adjustment in the household.

I had a breakthrough one day when I asked my friend's horse, Flash, if he wanted to learn to jump. I heard "Yippee," in the same way I had heard Pony Boy speak to me. Flash was a stellar student and it was like he had been waiting for this. Perhaps he had been sending us the picture all along that he wanted to learn to jump and we were just now responding to it.

Around that time, I also learned TTouch, a type of healing animal massage created first for horses then for companion animals by Linda Tellington-Jones. My own cat, Alexandria, would run from me when I tried it on her, yet other animals loved it. I learned an energetic healing technique called the Bio Scalar Wave, a technique for redistributing the energy in the body's electromagnetic field to correct disease. Again, my cat ran from me because she didn't want to be poked at, but other animals truly responded. Gabrielle was receptive. In due course I was able to manage her lameness, which turned out to be a vaccine related nervous system breakdown. (And now my cat loves body and energy work!)

I still had little writing jobs, but more and more people wanted me to help them with their pets. Telling people in Los Angeles that you're doing this work is like lighting hay on fire; word spreads fast. I became very busy just doing my newfound hobby. As I look back on Los Angeles, good and bad, one thing is for sure: it's an energy work gymnasium and I was working out regularly. I always say that the smog traps the broken dreams in Los Angeles; you learn to negotiate for inner peace there.

Increasingly, I was driving around to the homes or barns of people I didn't even know; sitting down, getting quiet, and connecting with their animal. I would write down all the impressions of what the animal told me through feelings, words, and pictures and then express them to the person. Through my knowledge of human behavior (studying acting for years) and animal behavior (living in a stall) I was able to come up with reasonable suggestions to rectify most problems, or give referrals to professionals who could. I found the names of great dog trainers and referred them. I found the names of holistic vets and referred them. I found the names of equine or canine massage therapists and referred them.

Even when I was just doing this for fun, I had to start charging gas money as the volume of consultations grew. Eventually, I had to admit to myself that this was a full-time occupation. I had to release the acting dream, the screenwriter mentality (where everything is a movie), and totally immerse myself in my new life. The stories I tapped into within the walls of every home I visited were way more compelling than anything I could have created at the computer.

On the one hand, I released the acting and screenwriting lifestyle; on the other hand, I brought a lot of it into my work as an animal communicator. Through all my training and experience as an actress and a writer, I had to look at a play objectively at first, regardless of which character I identified with the most (or would be playing as an actress). Every home became a play for me, an opportunity to dissect the household objectively and put it back together harmoniously for all the beings living there. Also, as both a writer and an actress I was primarily drawn to comedy, and I truly believe nothing is worth doing if you can't get a good laugh out of it! Through humor, I can diffuse a situation for people so that they don't feel so guilty or so badly about it, and can make a healthy attempt at rectifying things whether it's a people/animal problem or an animal/animal one. The other remarkable thing that happened when making this lifestyle and career change was that unlike when I was an actress, I was in demand. I've always joked that I finally got a steady job when I became a pet psychic.

In the end, as much as I have studied this work, or as many classes as I continue to take, Pet One and Pony Boy were not just great teachers, they were my University! I continue the learning process now with my ground crew: Gabrielle and my other horse, Rollie; Alexandria; and Olivia my dog.

With what I know now in terms of nutrition and behavior, I probably could have kept Pet One and Pony Boy alive. However, I have learned that even though they are no longer in their physical bodies, they are always in my heart. In my extreme grief over the loss of Pet One, I wasn't able to see how much Pony Boy was losing his horse instinct. Animals have an intelligence and an understanding that is beyond

our words, and I believe there is a reason they have incarnated as these beings, and we must respect the laws of their contract as that particular species.

If I hadn't slipped down the rabbit hole of indescribable pain and gone through that particular rite of passage, I wouldn't have been able to help as many dogs, cats, horses, ferrets, turtles, zoo animals, wild animals living in rehab centers, and the people caring for them.

Here on planet earth, we get to transmute with the circumstances, whether we call that change good or bad, happy or sad. It's all an opportunity to move ourselves along. This work has been proof to me that you never know where an odyssey is taking you, and that good and miracles still exist in any given situation.

Obviously, part of Pet One and Pony Boy's covenant with me has brought me here writing this book now. It's work that we are collectively doing; my name will go on the book simply because I'm still here in physical form (and I know how to type!). And the work is a continuum because you and I will be here together as you read these words. If I close my eyes, it's as if no time has passed when I think of the familiarity of the being that was Pet One, or the devotion of the being that was Pony Boy. And forward into the future, Pet One's and Pony Boy's impact will continue as the stories of other animals that have benefited from this work will exponentially help even more people and animals. That's because many of the stories in this book will seem familiar enough to someone about their own situation, and then they will make the adjustments to improve life in their own home.

All beings have their own karma, or "stuff" they get to work through. When you connect with another—especially over something where the learning curve is so high like mine was with Pet One and Pony Boy—it might be that you are reflecting something; that you get to really be of service to them as they transmute a situation; or they are the solid ground for you to grow on. Whatever, it's an opportunity for us to embody unconditional love, even when the situation seems to go awry. Some lessons are so big you have to take notes and file them away. They could lead you to something you are unaware is even happening in the moment, and have a great impact on future events. For whatever reason, even if it's just pure fun, there was a vibrational match for the two of you to work out your contracts. We humans are the ones who are tortured by reason. Animals work through their karma and don't question their existence. It's fabulous really.

Even when Pony Boy would go after you with an evil look and teeth or feet working like weapons of destruction, his eye would change in a matter of seconds. Underneath all of that was still love. What we perceive to be evil still has love buried underneath it all. It just may not unravel in the way we'd like. Or in the package we thought it would come.

The power of the words around Pony Boy when he was eventually deemed "evil" by others, or the original outpouring of sympathy for him when he was alone in the stall, created a powerful environment. In quantum physics, the mind is shaping the very thing that is being perceived. Every day in my work, I see animals that seem to be trapped in a behavior or illness because of the perceptions around them. Sometimes, all I do is come in as the outsider and reframe the picture for the human so that the animal is out of that bondage.

Not everyone has to go to the extreme of eating hay in a stall in order to get a monkey see/monkey do reaction out of another being—but that was my journey to this work. Everyone is different. I guess I had to be conked over the head with it all because I, Joan, certainly wasn't getting that this was my path. I was seeing this as a tragedy in the middle of my work in the film industry that for the duration took over my life. I can remember the two times I did go to psychics prior to these events. I was constantly asking about some film I had auditioned for or to see if a film I had written would get funded. The psychics always said you are so intuitive; you're going to have to come to terms with that. I would think to myself, *yeah, yeah, yeah, whatever; am I going to get the part?* You see, I was just too dense to waltz into this as my life journey. Your rite of passage may be a decision or inkling that this is what you want to do. Or perhaps, like me, your motivation is just to have better communication.

Pony Boy was a perfect vibrational match for me as my experience with him set up my ability to navigate through a maze of emotional madness several years later when I was the victim of a heinous crime. I am one of those folks that seems to be compressing karma, and through the big tragic events, it

leads me to deeper compassion. But being the victim of a crime was a real mind-bender. My own perpetrator had a tragic set-up very like Pony Boy's. After the initial shock, I was able to look with compassion on my perpetrator/predator.

In Native American cultures, when a hawk swoops down and grabs a rabbit, in the moment the rabbit's life ends it becomes one with the hawk. Ancient Egyptians believed in the Oneness. My Catholic upbringing taught me about redemption. I have learned after all my experiences in life that every situation is an opportunity to recognize our connection or separation from that ever present One Mind. Everything is an opportunity to readjust or realign. Our animal companions offer us that potential to connect, to align, with it daily through their patience, their purity of spirit, and their unconditional love.

Introduction

Some of my best leading men have been dogs and horses"

—Elizabeth Taylor

I wasn't born an animal communicator or a pet psychic (I didn't talk to ducks when I was a child!). These were skills I learned and I believe that we all can be animal communicators. Now, as well as doing my consulting work, I teach basic communication and energy workshops so that pet guardians, breeders, trainers, and animal health care practitioners can learn how to get information that leads to understanding an animal's problems and needs.

People flock to my classes to learn how to receive information from animals, thinking that will make the communication between them better. Communication is a two-way street (at the very least). Through this book, I hope that you will see not only how much you are already receiving, but what you are presently *sending*. Learning how to send better information more efficiently can enhance all aspects of your life.

What is considered "animal communication" is actually the use of telepathy; the sending or receiving of information by way of the subtle language of feelings, words, and pictures. Many of you have already experienced telepathy. Say a loved one is away and you get a strong sensation about them—a feeling or an urgency to connect with them. Later on in the day you receive an e-mail, a phone call, or something in the mail from them. We tend to dismiss that as a coincidence, but it's actually telepathy at work and is every bit as real as the bank statement that also came in the mail that day. We live in a dual reality: There is that which we can see in tangible form before us, and also the energy around us that can come in the form of those feelings, words, and pictures. Then there's the whole universal web of connections that already exist between all of us humans and with other life forms. So when you have one of those experiences that you would have previously called a coincidence, know it is every bit as real as the bank statement.

You probably want to know how this invisible communication and connection affect your animals at home. The world is made up of energy. Outside influences affect our state-of-being— making us on any given day perhaps joyful or depressed—and then our state-of-being becomes its own force of energy that can have a direct impact on our animal companions. You will begin to recognize through the stories you'll read that even a subtle shift within your own state-of-being will have an effect on the animal companions in your households or barns. Hopefully, as you to make these subtle shifts and you have more harmony with your animals at home, this will have a ripple affect into the rest of your universe.

Telepathy knows no time or space. So the majority of my work consists of me sitting in my office doing a phone session while still in my riding clothes. The beauty of phone work is that I am able to

connect up with many people and animals all over the country, or the globe for that matter. Usually a client e-mails me a picture of their animal and then calls me at the appointment time: I often have back-to-back appointments on phone days. I get very quiet and connect up with the animal by way of the picture, which holds the animal's energy. I don't always work with pictures, but it makes life easier for me.

On the days I don't do phone sessions, I do house calls. This involves going to someone's home and meeting the whole family—meaning both the humans and their animal companions. I also frequently go to a barn and in consecutive sessions meet a number of riders and their horses, helping both of them. Day to day my work is ever-changing, and is never dull! One day it might be a dog that likes to sneak of the yard and take himself for walks, another day a horse that wishes his owner had a better sense of humor! (You'll be reading more about these true cases later.)

The majority of the people I deal with are having a behavioral or wellness challenge with their animal companions when they come to me for help. Usually by the time they call me, they are losing hope. After our session, I connect them up with trainers, vets, or chiropractors, depending on what they need. Sometimes I feel like the networking sorting house.

It's been a long road to where I am now as that "go-to" person for people with challenging animals. As a child I did feel very connected to animals but I wasn't *aware* of hearing words or seeing pictures. Yet, as I look back, I believe some images that I subconsciously perceived held sway over my actions. I grew up in Washington State and being in a forest at a young age, especially on a horse, I was not just aware of but awakened to the deep labyrinth of coexistence and that was exceptionally powerful and magic.

My intention in putting my years of experience and education into this book is threefold. I want to:

- Demystify "animal communication" and what it means to be a "pet psychic."
- Have the many varied stories of my experience with this work act as a catalyst for deeper understanding in your own home, especially if you are facing a challenge with your beloved animal companion.
- Help you understand how much you are already communicating with your animals, and offer simple techniques that will help you enhance that communication.

In Part I, you will see the varied situations where I have come in to help as the animal communicator, the pet psychic, or the translator. The guidance I've offered has been through seeing all the parts of the whole picture and coming up with a plan that creates something more supportive to all the players. Ultimately I'm just the translator: The humans who call me in for help are the real alchemists. Many of the ways that animal communication works are explained here, too.

In Part II you will find tools and simple guidelines to help you become a better communicator in your own home. It starts with awareness and then focus on the solution rather than the problem. By using some of the techniques for quieting your brain to receive information, you will find that it is imperative to be a great sender of information. By being a leader in your household emotionally, you can allow your animal companions to respond in a more harmonious way. It will impact the animals in the household, the humans, and the world around you.

You'll also find some additional resources for better understanding and caring for your animal companions.

PART 1

Revelations of an Animal Communicator

Chapter One

Decoding Animal Communication

*“Ask the very beasts and they will teach you;
Ask the wild birds – they will tell you;
Crawling creatures will instruct you,
Fish in the sea will inform you;
For which of them all knows not that this is the Eternals way,
In whose control lies every living soul,
And the whole life of man.”*
—Job 12:7-10

When we make a change, sometimes those closest to us have trouble accepting the shift. My newfound passion and life direction as an animal communicator was met with a healthy dose of skepticism and mocking remarks from my friends. A complete stranger with a cat that was shredding the furniture was more likely to embrace what I was doing.

One friend in particular made fun of me more than anyone else. Still, I offered to talk to her cat. My friend had broken up with a musician I’ll call “John,” and was bereft. Many people had rallied in support and to let her decompress her grief. According to her she had not seen John in months. When I communicated with the cat, I asked if she missed John. The cat let me know that she did not miss John because he was there every night! That ended my friend’s laughing at my expense and began her laughing with me about some of the truly entertaining aspects of this work. That friend has now sent me many clients over the years. She also had a valuable experience, because she had been “breaking up” with John as if she were trying on a dress for size, and after the truth was out, she had the strength to truly break from him.

I don’t necessarily recommend anyone doing animal communication put themselves in the line of fire like that, however. In this particular case, my friend and I knew each other very well and knew what made each other tick, so the nature of our relationship would not have changed whether I had picked up on anything from her cat or not. What I’m saying here is that there should be nothing to prove in doing this work.

When jumping into this world of animal communication—or making any big change, for that matter—feeling safe and having inner peace about the work are vital. Fortunately, my years as an actress and writer in New York and Hollywood have given me a thick skin! While artists and healers share a deep sensitivity, an artist has to get up and keep going even if everyone says “no.” I have learned to roll with the punches. Sometimes people call me for a consultation even when they don’t really believe in animal communication. After doing it for 10 years, I have developed a practical knowledge of both human and animal behavior as well as a grounding in nutrition and healing modalities, so I am able to

assist them in resolving their challenges in myriad ways. Most importantly, I continue learning, learning, learning. For example, I study acupuncture and read dog training books all the time. I can't get enough.

Learning and practice are keys to this work. There are some people who have a more natural proclivity toward intuition or telepathy than others, in the same way that Michael Jordan came out of the chute a better basketball player than me. I don't play basketball because I don't have the time, but I bet if I learned the basics and practiced, I could play enough to have fun. With practice, it will be easier for you to go far in animal communication than it would be to play professional basketball.

Apart from having an ability to cut out the chatter in your head and find a quiet place within, you need to have an open heart, develop compassion, learn to trust yourself, have a willingness to look through the lens of another, and then practice all of these life-enhancing tools. I believe that animal communication, telepathy, and energy work are all muscles that atrophied once we learned language. We can re-learn them once we are aware of what they are.

Telepathy Explained

Have you ever seen a flock of birds just lift off from what seemed to be a peaceful grounded moment? Suddenly, together, they take flight as if they were all tuned into the same radio frequency. One bird hones in on unrest, and transmits a sense of fear or urgency to the group in a matter of seconds. And away they go. The same goes for a herd of horses, a pack of dogs, and many other groups of the animal kingdom.

Animals communicate telepathically to each other—when they are tuned in. Of course, they were all also given “voices.” These can be used as attention signals for each other or for us. If you have an animal companion, you likely will know the difference between your dog's bark, your cat's meow, your horse's neigh, or your bird's coo when it is saying, “Hey, hey, hey, hi, hi, hi;” or “Look at me;” or even “Oh my God, I can't believe you don't see this!” Of course there are a million other greetings or demands. A Jack Russell terrier may feel really small down there and need a guarantee of acknowledgement, whereas a Border Collie may bark to move someone through a crowd.

Sometimes, though, our understanding of what our animal companion is trying to tell us is lost in translation and our communication with them goes awry. It may be an illness or a behavior that has us baffled. Or a horse that is supposed to be a soul mate is bucking us. Or we have a cat, the sentry, the overseer of all and yet he still urinates on the couch. Or we have a beloved family dog that nipped the neighbor's kid. Or perhaps we have such a profound, intense relationship with our animal companion, we want to know more. How many of you would love to know there's deeper thought going on than just, “Throw me the ball?”

I certainly don't mean to diminish the value of “Throw me the ball.” *Au contraire*. Decompressing your day with a lively session of fetch may be just what the universe ordered. And when else do we grown-ups allow ourselves the time or the space to enjoy something like that? In our world, it doesn't appear to be productive. However, who better than your animal companion to share the opportunity for a smile, a laugh, a moment of precision, of joy, of ... well, I could go on and on. Perhaps it's just a moment to share with no identification, qualification, or quantification. Only adult human minds need to define these moments. Kids and animals have cornered the market on fun and free feelings. Why not enjoy them, too?

By the time somebody connects with me to have a consultation, they may very well want to do it for pleasure, fun, or entertainment, but more likely it's the result of a behavioral or physical situation. I might add that I am usually the last call for help. Some of the problems are herd/pack related, some are people problems. For the most part, it's fairly likely that the issue will be a people *perception* problem. When we look at that concept, we can say that either:

- I'm looking at this strictly from my perception, my belief system, and actually projecting all of my experience on to what appears to be a problem.

- I'm focusing on what appears to be a problem therefore nothing will change except that perhaps now I have a bigger problem!

So to get beyond those hurdles, why *not* employ telepathic communication? Telepathy is the forgotten original communication. As a baby you were dependent on it. In the beginning, sounds, screaming, crying were simply a way of getting attention or a plea for help. Eventually we learned words and as our language developed, our telepathic muscle lost tone.

But still, telepathy is going on all the time even if you aren't fully aware of it and whether you like it or not. It's evident when you tend to speak in code with your friends. This goes beyond intimacy; this is the passing of images back and forth. Even in the days before it was confirmed by caller ID, you often knew which friend or family member was on the other end of the ringing phone. So many of us have had an experience like that with a loved one.

And you don't even need an intimate connection. You experience telepathy when you have been able to finish a complete stranger's sentence. Then there are times that through a rough form of pantomime, you can figure out what a foreigner is asking, and are even able to give them directions. Although aided by the physical gestures, the coincidence of you knowing what they need, or the just good luck of being able to figure things out, again, I believe a series of pictures has been passed back and forth between you.

Telepathy knows no time or space. When you are having persistent thoughts and can't get someone in another country out of your head and then a letter from them appears in the mail—that is no coincidence. That's you being tuned in. There is no beginning and no end to it; it just is. It is happening all the time; information and images being received and sent like ocean waves.

Telepathy can be active or non-active, so it's not like you have to sit and *do* telepathy. Your state-of-being can be sending something whether you are aware of it or not. This is why when you are in physical pain or are sick, your dog or cat will frequently want to take care of you. If you are emotionally hurt or are fearful about the security of your job, that day your horse may be even more protective of you going over a jump. If you are distracted or can't concentrate because you are overwhelmed by your thoughts, one of your animal companions might be more entertaining to get you out of your head.

Our state-of-being attracts or repels people and animals around us. It is our frequency, or vibration, transmitted by our emotions, thoughts, or physical condition. This could be as basic as the fact that you smell funny from taking a medication, or that you're depressed from taking a pain-killer. Either way, the larger world around us and our own microcosm—home—respond, just as we are constantly responding to the stimulation, frequency, or vibration of what we are exposed to; say, a spouse, a boss, a friend in a tough situation, a traffic jam, Fox News ...

As to the "why" of telepathy, I believe it has to do with the interconnectedness of every form of life.

Getting Connected

I saw a little placard in a bathroom the other day:

*"Even though friends are miles apart
They are never far from your heart."*

This is very similar to a theory in quantum physics called quantum interconnectedness. If two objects are joined and then pulled apart, what remains is a "stickiness" between the two objects, thus keeping them connected.

To a degree, our development of computers and the Internet was bred from a need to understand, catalogue, increase productivity of what is in our mind and to communicate it. The Internet is the great symbol for that need for all of us to be connected within seconds.

The World Wide Web embodies the stickiness of quantum interconnectedness. Sometimes it carries great loving e-mails, a communication with an old friend, a funny story, or the news of a tragedy. And then, on the other hand, there's a ton of junk—spam. What does that sound like? Our minds! (I know I'm not alone in this: if I'm mad enough, the spam in my head turns into a mental Tourette Syndrome.)

Just like telepathy, our connection with every form of life is: It just is. Regardless of qualifying or quantifying, connection exists. Everyone has a different relationship or a different way of describing their connection with someone else. They may see it as a heart connection, a soul connection, a mind connection, or just a “knowing.” How many of us have experienced this type of knowing connection with a loved-one? Mine occurred years ago when I flew home in a small plane from Sun Valley to the Seattle area. I was to call my mother at 11:30 P.M. for a ride home from the airport. My mother was aware that there was a possibility I could be late, even that this pilot was *truly* time-challenged. However, at 10:30 P.M. she “knew” something was very wrong. That was about the time that we crash-landed. (Of course everything turned out fine or I wouldn't be writing this.) By the time we were rescued, my mother had known for hours that I was in danger.

I believe this connection between us all is related to our soul connection with our belief system.

The Ghost in the Machine

Healing machines—whether you're talking about an alternative therapy Rife Instrument that sends in frequencies to heal cells, or a conventional X-Ray used as a diagnostic aid—were created because we can't grasp that our hearts, minds, and hands can carry a loving, healing, Christ-consciousness frequency to heal through time and space. *We know stuff, we can feel it, we just need verification.* So a machine can carry that intention for us: We can see it and we can touch it, therefore it's more believable. Meanwhile, it was created to heal and see that which our mind can already do, because otherwise we couldn't have created the machine.

Introducing One Mind

I've talked about the concept that we are sending and receiving thoughts and images without any effort. Take that one step further and imagine yourself as a holographic being, and picture your soul taking the most form. And see your soul connected to whatever your belief is: God, the Universe, the Great Spirit, the Holy Spirit, Allah, Buddha, The Divine, the Force, The Oneness, Spirit Guides, your Higher Self, all the Angels and Saints. Out of respect for however you perceive it, for everyone's purpose, I'll call it “One Mind.”

Now, for a moment, feel the weightlessness of One Mind. It holds a frequency, a vibration, that is lighter than a thought such as, “Oh, I forgot to pick up my clothes at the dry cleaners.” That simple phrase could bring up mayhem because who knows what else you forgot to do that day? You could remember all of those other things just when you were trying to concentrate on nothing. Then add a little spit on the ball by thinking about an event or a serious issue you have going on in your life, and suddenly the density of that thought holds yet more weight. It may even stimulate a physiological response such as a nervous tummy, a fluttering of your heart. These thoughts and feelings whirl around us like a flock of birds suddenly scattering. Eventually they create an energetic pattern.

Getting back to the animals, we can imagine what they are thinking when you walk through the door in this state: “Uh oh, we better entertain her.” They feel helpless because they habitually have tried to lift your spirits or distract you and this time it isn't effective; the spam thoughts have taken hold of the

whole household. After awhile, they could get sullen or resort to bad behavior. This is animal communication just as surely as what I do, since you are inadvertently sending out dense thoughts and uncomfortable feelings.

People often say to me, “Animals are so spiritual.” I don’t know that they are any more or less spiritual than we are. They are definitely clued into One Mind in a way that we are not. Because of that they sense something without knowing it, and they just operate from instinct—for example, the “fight or flight” principle. They can perceive danger from One Mind. They are just being.

Years ago I moved to Denver after living in Los Angeles. When it snowed, I was *really* cold. I could let that bother me, and in addition marital problems weighed heavily on me. I’ll never forget walking my dog Olivia one night after a big snowfall. We walked down the hill and she sniffed along, curious to see who else had been out in the fresh snow. When it came time for us to turn around, we had to go back up the big hill. Well, I groaned thinking about it. She, on the other hand, trotted up the slope as if to say, “It’s a hill. Big deal, I *get* to run up it.” But really there wasn’t a thought for that, a motivation behind it, or an acknowledgement of it: It just was. Even with all that I had been doing in this line of work and on my spiritual growth—I had to see her trotting up the hill, simply because she could, for me to get the simplicity of One Mind.

Their ability to just “be” and not question their existence makes animals seem more spiritual. We humans are so far away from just being in our every day life. If it isn’t bills, it’s taxes. If it isn’t taxes, it’s what color should I paint the bathroom? If it isn’t painting the bathroom, it’s I forgot to send off an RSVP for that party. It’s always something. As a result, there are miscommunications and breakdowns in our behavior. Or we have unclear ideas around how to proceed when our animals get sick. Ultimately, the depth of love that animals express to and with us is so profound that there are no words to explain it.

Sometimes the greatest thing you can do—even if you don’t necessarily believe it is communication or that you will get any secret messages from your animal—is to just “be” with them and connect on that level of One Mind. It doesn’t require any activity. You don’t have to pet them in that moment. You don’t have to brush them in that moment. You don’t have to do anything. Just be in their space. Sometimes that’s all they are waiting for.

Animals don’t perceive themselves as separate. Yes, feelings can arise for them in a given situation. They can be momentary or last as long as we want to hold them to it. Our perception of their feelings, added to our own feelings about the situation, creates a box for them that inhibits their innate behavior. In quantum physics terms, the very thing we perceive is being shaped as we perceive it.

For instance, when one animal crosses over, the other animals in the household naturally grieve, as do we. Every fiber of the household contains that emotion. Even manmade materials started out as organic materials, and they hold energy. Thus a home could become haunted by your feelings and, ultimately, the household could almost suffocate in that atmosphere. While we need to experience the feelings and walk through them, sometimes we have to take on a role of leadership in our processing so that the animals can come through them also.

For many people, animals represent unconditional love, and I also believe that most of the time that is what they are showing us. But for some, that’s still “conditional unconditional” love. As in, it’s unconditional love until you put your hand in your bird’s cage and he bites you. We also carry so many ideas about love and we have an agenda around love.

Whether you believe in past and future lives, or whether you believe that we only have this lifetime, there is still a collective consciousness from the beginning of life on this planet that we can tap into. One Mind includes collective consciousness. One Mind includes universal intelligence through lifetimes. One Mind includes the cause and effect of Karma. One Mind includes the universal unconditional love. One Mind includes that purity of Spirit that we see when we look into our animal companions eyes. It’s like being on an observation deck, where we can get to as close as we possibly can to a neutral perspective that still comes from a place of love.

The Myth of Multitasking

One of the biggest detours from One Mind is the misperception that we can multitask. Our brains weren't set up for it. Yet we all persist that we can. I continue to sweep dog and cat hair while chatting on the phone with friends. I try to limit myself as to how far I'll go with multitasking because as supported in the scientific experiments, it tends to backfire.

Olivia and I conducted our own multitasking experiments. This is something you can try at home. All need is a dog (or any other species) that is relatively interested in retrieving, and two objects that they could retrieve.

Just so you have a clear picture of our experiments, Olivia's mother is a border collie and her father was half German Shepherd and half Rottweiler. All three breeds are smarty-pants, and needless to say, she is frequently too smart for her own good. When it comes to playing with objects, she sinks right into the border collie half and is downright obsessive. If another dog is around, she can be very competitive and even sneaky. Just to crystallize this picture for you, there are balls—and other toys—all over my house. In fact, Olivia considers the furniture to be a savings account. At some point during the day she will look under a piece of furniture and lo and behold, there's yet another ball that she has saved.

So the experiment goes like this. Her eyes bear down on the ball in my hand. When I throw it, she catches it in the air like a champ. Then, when she's gloating a bit over how great that was and plans to hang on to it, I immediately toss her another ball. You don't have to be a pet psychic to picture the thought process. "Do I catch the ball? But I have to drop this one. Is there a way to catch the other ball with this ball in my mouth? Hmm, I will have to put the first ball down I think. I might be able to catch the other one." At this point the ball is seconds from her nose in time and space. She jumps to catch it, and guess what? She loses both balls. Sometimes she will drop one and catch the other. The reality is, she can't both catch the new one and hold one to the old one. By trying to do both, there is simply confusion, verging on chaos. She wants both so badly she can hardly concentrate on maintaining one or catching the other.

We humans are not any further down the road as far as perfecting multitasking. We can delegate activities to others and we can prioritize. That's about it. We can *try* to do a couple of things at once but usually neither gets done, or they get done badly. And our minds are certainly not quiet at that point, and definitely not receptive. Sadly, this is the state of most us are in with this frenzied, over-stimulated world. We are missing the best opportunities to just have a fun moment with our animal companions because we are trying to do everything at once. We are not being anything, but we're doing a lot. Well, if we are being anything, it's chaotic!

A Matter of Interpretation

My job as an animal communicator is to go in and listen to what the animals have to say and give them messages from the human. From there I then relay to the human how their messages are being interpreted by the animal, and can start to reframe the picture for the animal's guardian. While I can tell a cat to use the litter box, it's going to be more important for the animal's guardian to change how *they* are sending that message. If the person still is envisioning yet another piece of furniture being destroyed by cat urine, then it doesn't matter how psychic I am. The cat will think, "Oh yeah, this pet psychic yahoo lady came over and told me not to pee on the fancy couch. Well, my person expects it, so watch this!"

One third of my job is the communication with the animal: that's the pet psychic bit. The second third of my job is communication with the human: being the messenger to and from the animal. The last third is forming a plan with the humans to make household adjustments to support the animal's new behavior, performance, or wellness. We are the managing partners, and most of the time people have to

buck up on their management skills. We also have to make up a new natural order for all the players. It's the human that has to be willing to take leadership in their thoughts and feelings. This is as much animal communication as the pet psychic part.

Compassion and understanding for all parties is also a very important component of animal communication. People are where they are, when they are there. If someone has gone to the trouble of contacting me, even if they are resistant to what I am saying at the time, somewhere deep in their being, they wanted a change, or they wouldn't have called me.

If I don't communicate well to the human involved, there's no chance of setting up a change for the animal. I always tell students in my classes that if they don't like people, this is not the job for them. As a profession, animal communication requires respect and compassion for all, even when what a client does is not what I would do. When a client doesn't know something, it's my job to enlighten them gently to try another way. If I put them off, they will get defensive, which doesn't help the animal. Worse, they will rebel against what I've said and that *really* doesn't serve the animal. Sure, I can be passionate about an issue; but even then, I have to accept that I have no control over the outcome.

There are very few people in the scheme of things who have purely bad intentions, mostly they are just misguided. There are even fewer animals with purely bad intentions. Of that small percentage it is usually circumstantial or some genetic nightmare. And most often, what can appear to be bad or wrong, is truly a perception and then a communication breakdown. And that very nearly always starts with humans.

Perception Breakdown

Sometimes, one of the biggest obstructions to us understanding what our animal are experiencing and needing, is being in an all-consuming state as a result of a painful experience. By being so far from One Mind, we get confused as to how to care for our animals needs when they start acting differently in concert with our own discomfort in life. In the world of theater, there is an old saying that pertained to performing: "Mood spelled backward is doom." It can be true in our households. When we have an epic, life-changing situation, or are facing the loss of our pet, the whole household gets consumed as a pall is cast upon every cell of all life that lives there. Unless we are in complete awareness, we are all guilty of this on some level at some point. Awareness is the first step to freeing the household from this.

"Annie" came to me wanting to know why her cat seemed very depressed. She suspected it might be a territorial issue with the cat next door. I got quiet and connected with the cat. According to him, Annie had experienced a life-altering falling out with what appeared to be a father or a father-figure. The cat felt that Annie was resigned and grieving, and had lost her inner fight. He was resolute that it was about the loss of fight, and really couldn't have cared less if the cat next door jumped on to their terrace and taunted him through the window.

When I described what the cat had relayed to me, Annie was astonished at how much he was aware of her life. She told me that while in college she had been a victim of sexual harassment by one of her professors. Without articulating it, she indicated it went further than harassment; it was molestation. The professor was lauded as a father figure, and actually had been a stronger presence in her life than her own father. Annie had found out that she was not the only one this had happened to, and was deciding whether or not to join with the other women in the lawsuit that was a consequence of the professor's behavior. The cat wanted her to get her inner fight back for herself, and his home life, whether she pressed charges or not.

Many client's ask at this point if the communication comes to me in the form of a conversation with the animal. And sometimes it does. More importantly, it's a matter of perception of concepts. They send how they send, and I perceive how I perceive. Every connection is different. But some of that above story came in the form of images; the strongest one being of the woman bereft. When I showed the cat a picture of the looming cat next door, it held no emotional charge for him. So I knew he was not bothered by the neighboring cat. But he was nearly overwhelmed by Annie's emotional state and couldn't penetrate it. He couldn't comfort her or entertain her: He felt useless. The concept of the father figure was more like

an impression; one that that at first I was convinced was her real father. “Inner fight” came in words, and the feeling of loss was completely overwhelming.

Customarily in a session, unless it’s a direct question-and-answer period near the end, I tend to write down the images, words, and impressions. Then I sit with the animal for a moment before I begin saying what I received from it. While I can perceive this information and conceptualize it, the form I received it in may not be in the same form it was sent in. Nobody really knows for sure what anyone else is seeing, and what I call the color red is in fact the same thing that you are seeing and calling red. The only thing we can agree upon is that we would call it red. Red for me is this beautiful color. Red for you may be a mathematical equation; your cousin may experience the frequency of red. But we would all call it red.

Sometimes the animal is caught a painful state because of the mixed messages that are being sent back-and-forth with it’s human guardians. For example, if an animal is sick, we may not know what the right thing is to do because our own emotions about the situation get in the way. Or we feel guilty because we could have prevented it, or because the choices we are making are having an immediate cause and effect. We forget, of course, that the animals have their own journey. And maybe by being in One Mind with them, we can just enjoy whatever time is left.

Years ago, my friend Frank called me saddened by the idea that he should put down his beloved Christian that day. Christian was a 12-year-old Golden Retriever that had been his companion for many years and had been through many ups and downs and all-around of Frank’s life. At this point, Christian could barely walk. Frank had to help him up and felt guilty about spending more active time with Devlin, his seven-year-old Golden.

I connected telepathically with Christian and was surprised with what I found out. I had a sense that his lungs and the heart were a bit taxed. But Christian told me he wasn’t ready “to go” right now: He wanted to have a party.

“A party?” Frank asked in disbelief.

“A party” I said emphatically.

That day Frank took Christian to the vet who let him know that Christian had bronchitis. The dog was given some antibiotics and sent home. Frank then planned the party.

When the day came, Christian sat in a corner basking in the sun. Kids jumped on the trampoline while the adults were either aghast or amused that they had all gathered for the fabricated birthday of the dog. Frank brought out the birthday cake and gathered everyone to sing “Happy Birthday.” As the song began, Christian shot up and *ran* over to Frank and sat there, howling through the song. Nobody could believe it. No more than a week later, Christian had a heart attack and died in the hallway—it was very fast and he was at home. *And* he gotten to have his party.

Thankfully, Frank had realized he wasn’t clear enough to know what to do as Christian was declining before his very eyes, and had called for a session. Christian got to have a say in what he wanted and his people entertained this wish. In the end it was a beautiful closing to a very important chapter called Christian.

“James” called me to visit his farm because his horse was bucking him off. When I went out to the farm, I could sense from both James and the beautiful mare that the relationship had been that of animal/human soul mates. James and the mare were both devastated by the situation. James was hurt, he was angry, he felt like he was failing. He had never been so close with a being and yet she was tossing him off in the air like a light-weight stuffed animal and he was at an age where bones didn’t mend so quickly. The worst part of it for James was that he felt betrayed by the love of his life, this magnificent mare.

When I connected with the mare, the image of an impasse, or a standoff, kept coming up. She felt James wasn’t getting that her back was very sore and that the minute she saw the saddle, she knew it was going to hurt her physically. Her feelings were hurt because James had been so attentive until this point, and it was disturbing to her that he was ignoring this most basic need.

By being stuck in his own feelings about the situation, James couldn’t see her true, simple needs. Even when I told him of her pain, he remained locked into the betrayal until I poked her back right where

she said the pain was and her legs buckled. He finally saw with his own eyes that the horse wasn't in any way, shape, or form betraying him, just communicating that she needed help. If he wasn't going to hear her subtle message, like when she moved away as the saddle was going on, she would have to resort to more dramatic communication.

James immediately sought out an equine chiropractor and once the horse was adjusted, they were back to being in love again. A couple of years later he called me and thanked me profusely because they were doing so great that sometimes they were going on the trail twice a day! And he was staying on top of her body work.

Loyalty

Animals are always loyal in communication sessions. Even if there is a perception breakdown and the household has run amok, the animal companions still communicate from a place of love. Sometimes people are afraid that their dog or cat is going to tell on them. This still cracks me up after years of doing this work. That is anything but the case. The only information that gets exposed is exactly what needs to come out in order to better the situation. On occasion, the animal will reveal some quirky behavior of their person. For example, a 20-something gal came over to have a reading of her two adorable little Daschunds. One of the Daschunds told me that his person sang a lot in the middle of the night. The gal confirmed that when she couldn't sleep, she got out of bed and did Karaoke! I don't think any loyalty was broken there and we had a great laugh.

Sometimes, an animal sends me a concept wrapped in symbolism to protect their person, yet it stills convey a message. A woman named "Beth" had me over to talk to her three cats. One of the cats had been sick and Beth wanted to know if it was his time. That day, that minute, it was not. A moment is merely a snapshot in time—so this could change.

The cat's main concern was how grateful he was that after two years Beth had come out from under what looked like a giant sticky web, and was now going back to work. The cat had been very helpful for Beth while she was under this "web." Well, Beth was astonished. She revealed to me that the web was breast cancer, from which she had been very sick. She had been battling the cancer, had finally won, and was indeed finally going back to work.

This came as an image, an impression of her being nearly suffocated by this thing, the "cancer web." The cat was very protective and loyal to the woman's situation, knowing what a struggle this was for Beth with the public's perception of sickness. It's not our animal's job to "out us" in our feelings or circumstances. Without being specific about a painful experience or blowing open our deepest, darkest secret, the animals will reel out enough information to enlighten me as to how much of their human's lifestyle, work habits, or human relationships have impacted them.

I walked into the lovely townhouse of a woman, "Mary" who had called me as a result of having problems with her dog. It was a well-decorated home with artwork on the floor waiting to be hung. The dog was a small, white, very cute guy who was tremendously excited to see me. Mary warned me as I entered that he had aggression issues with visitors. Thankfully he refrained, although it wouldn't have been the first dog bite I'd had while doing this work.

A dog trainer waited with Mary for my arrival. I sat down and asked Mary the usual questions. "What's your dog's name? How old is he? How long have you had him? Are you the only two in the household?" And from there I got quiet and asked "Ringo" what was going on.

Ringo told me that *everything* seemed out of control. He told me that the woman had been a victim of a heinous crime and that she had had to move immediately and assume another identity. Plus Mary had sustained other losses (it felt like a death and a breakup). Ringo also told me that there was something wrong with him when he was born and even though the breeder didn't sell him to show, he had turned out handsome after all. He told me he was in trouble a lot. He told me a few other small details and then with a giant sigh, went to sleep.

Mary said, "Wow, I've never seen him so quiet with new people here."

I told her that Ringo had gotten a big story off of his chest and that now he could relax. For some animals, being able to tell their story is enough to shift the energy.

I proceeded to tell Mary just what Ringo told me. On hearing the first part about the crime, the woman just stared at me in disbelief and couldn't lift her jaw back up. At that point the dog trainer was uncomfortable and asked if he should leave the room. Obviously, with the move, Mary was starting over and nobody in her new life needed to know what she had run from.

We both said, "No." I assured Mary that her dog was loyal to her and didn't tell me the specifics of the crime: He only told me because it had such a profound effect on both of their lives that he couldn't hold it back anymore. I also let her know that the crime was none of my business and she didn't need to tell me details unless she felt it necessary.

"Ya know, I didn't even believe in this—I was just doing this because the dog trainer was at a loss," she said.

When I finished with the dog's story, Mary confirmed for me that there had indeed, been a breakup; in fact, her ex-boyfriend was the perpetrator of the crime. As it turns out, Mary shared the details of how her old boyfriend tried to kill her. The boyfriend had obviously been someone that Ringo also loved and trusted. As a result, Ringo didn't reveal to me who the perpetrator had been. While the crime was being committed, Ringo hid under the bed.

Ringo was struggling with his own fear, frustration, sadness, and incompetence, not to mention post-traumatic stress disorder over the event. Simultaneously, the dog was picking up from Mary fear, betrayal, sadness, loss, desperation, and of course, her own post-traumatic stress disorder.

Also, Mary's mother had died at around the same time as she got Ringo—the other big loss that she was dealing with. And Mary confirmed that Ringo had some sort of lining around his eye that wouldn't be acceptable in a show ring but it cleared up within the first year. While the love between Mary and Ringo was evident, she admitted to being very frustrated and irritated with him.

To make matters worse, Ringo knew he was constantly frustrating Mary no matter what he tried to do, so it was a vicious cycle. Ringo obviously needed to feel mini-triumphs in everyday life rather than being in trouble.

This is the heart of animal communication. As much as we'd like to think that it's about getting quiet on a mountain top and hearing their voices, or seeing them as some greater spiritual being, it's really rather pedestrian. Behavior communicates plenty. Being able to objectively look at the behavior and disconnect your feelings from it or about it is a great place to start. Learning to quiet your mind within the world we're living in helps. In this case, what the dog was clearly communicating through the behavior was: "Hey, I'm scared still and I don't know how to act, so I'll bite whoever comes in the door to protect you. But I'm still terrified that they could do something bad, so I'll pee at the door too, because I can't contain it." At the same time Mary was so entrenched in her circumstances; she was navigating through her own unpleasant emotions *and* she was completely frustrated by the behavior of the dog and couldn't see past the concept that he was purposely frustrating her.

Once the communication happened, Mary softened her own feelings about Ringo's behavior. Granted, Mary still had her own post-traumatic stress disorder to walk through, enduring pain and suffering but hopefully seeing light at the end of the tunnel. Nevertheless at that point she did have more compassion for Ringo because she has been enlightened to the idea that he too is going through this with her. Being vigilant about self-awareness is equal to being compassionate.

Compassion and awareness *that minute* of her feelings and how they affected the dog still might not have been enough in a situation like that. Believe it or not, the biggest healing component they could have at that moment was continued training for the dog. Because both the woman and the dog were suffering from the same event and had so many similar feelings, training would be not only useful but a great distraction. It is also esteem building, in this case for both. They both needed a win/win in their relationship.

Until then, even the dog trainer had been ready to give up on the situation and felt defeated by what he perceived to be the circumstances. Having this in-depth information gave him a new starting point.

Evolution

One could argue that the players in these stories are anthropomorphizing. Maybe. Maybe not. Perhaps it's evolution. Every one in the household has a right to their feelings, a right to their history; we can't take that away. But we can shift the perspective and that could create a shakedown that leads them to eventually coexist: Even better, create a shift to live with joy.

These days, you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who believes that animals don't have feelings. (Of course, some people don't care, or animals are not "their thing.") But the nay-sayers have a tough argument and the cards are very much stacked against them. Furthermore, the intelligence of an animal is frequently measured in the terms of our world. And in our world alone, they are evolving right along with us even though their brains may not have the capacity of our brains. (In some circumstances I think, *lucky them!*) Or they are evolving *because* of us. In fact, without horses especially, we wouldn't be where we are today—they have helped us build civilization. That also goes for oxen, donkeys, and elephants.

Dr. Temple Grandin is a designer of livestock handling facilities and a Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University. She is also perhaps the most accomplished and well-known adult with autism in the world. In her book *Animals In Translation* she states:

"When you compare human and animal brains, the only difference that's obvious to the naked eye is the increased size of the neocortex in people. The neocortex is the top layer of the brain, and includes the frontal lobes as well as all of the other structures where higher cognitive functions are located."

Grandin explains that the human neocortex is thick and the size of a peach pit, and that the animal's neocortex is much smaller. The bigger the neocortex is, the more intelligence we can expect from that animal. She also goes on to say that we all share the same three brain regions, therefore having three different intelligences or places to process. We all share a reptilian brain, the middle—paleomammalian—brain, and the latest to develop and the highest in our heads—the neomammalian brain. She states:

"...the reptilian brain corresponds to that in lizards and performs basic life support functions like breathing; the paleomammalian brain corresponds to that in mammals and handles emotion; and the neomammalian brain corresponds to that in primate—especially people—and handles reason and language. All animals have some neomammalian brain, but it's much larger and more important in primates and people."

In the 1980s and 1990s, Dr. Rizzolatti at the University in Parma, Italy discovered that monkeys may have a neuron that's responsible for "monkey see, monkey do" activities, but it became clearer and clearer to him that this neuron truly was triggered by intentionality.

The studies followed the mirror neuron in relation to how we learn language, and it has been found in Macaque monkeys, humans, and birds. Since then, scientists have discovered that people with autism may not have this neuron, or that it is not firing in them.

What does it mean when it is fully firing? It means that we have the ability to feel, hear, see, taste, and understand what another is going through. We can perceive the intention behind someone's action rather than simply mimicking it. There is a special place in our brain that responds to and perhaps jumps when someone is shot in a movie. Or gets thrilled by and identifies with what an athlete is doing in a great game. Our reaction is based on our engagement in that other world that we are watching. When we are lost in a state of our own, we have no way of deciphering this sort of information. The next time your partner gets riled up over a football game, remind him of how in-tune his mirror neuron is so that when the game is over he can go into the kitchen and talk to the dog!

As Temple Grandin stated, our brains are more developed than animals. But the brains of many species share many components. I don't want to dwell on the science of telepathy; I'm more interested in the art of it and allowing the information to come through. It's nice to know that there are studies that are proving what intuitive folks or trainers already know.

We do have the ability to understand the feelings and thoughts of our animals. Taken a step further, we could interpret behavior if we were able to get quiet enough to examine what their intention is through their feelings and thoughts. Awareness of feelings and thoughts, and more importantly, what is driving behavior, will have an impact on your house mates.

Animals that have been domesticated and are living in our homes are, of course, still after the basics in life like food, water, and safety. But their awareness of our world is heightened. They are sifting through our world, sifting through our thoughts, sifting through our pictures in order to get a sense of their own safety. They are trying to penetrate this madness with their own thoughts and then they resort to communicating with us through behavior. Some of the behavior is, by our standards, acceptable. Some of the behavior is true to their species and breeding, and some of the behavior is plain, old not-so-good for our home environment! The not-so-good behavior is a result of us, or some human in their past, sending mixed messages.

As much as we want to become aware of their thoughts and feelings, the first key to the that experience is becoming aware of your own thoughts and feelings. Otherwise, we are looking through the lens of our own thoughts and feelings. The more we can take a step back and get to the observation deck of One Mind, the more deeply connected we can become. And then animal communication is just ongoing.

Years ago, when I lived in Los Angeles, Marianne used to call and set an appointment a week ahead of time, only to cancel on the day of the appointment. She said her husband, Larry, didn't believe in animal communication. He was a screenwriter who worked from home and she always set up appointments when she thought Larry would be at a studio meeting. After several times I swore to myself I wasn't even going to answer Marianne's call as it was very frustrating. Then one day she called and said her dog was going to be put down. Could I please come to the animal hospital?

When I got there, Marianne was in the back room that the veterinarian had allowed us to use. Sparky, her Labrador Retriever, was very old and had struggled with Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Marianne was overwhelmed by the variety of problems that the disease had caused, and by the secondary illnesses and other problems that she had been handling as the dog aged. She was beside herself and wanted to know if Sparky was ready to go.

Sparky told me she was ready to go but not today. She wanted to go home and say good-bye to the husband, to the home, and even to the other dog—a dog that she didn't necessarily love or like, but that had been her companion. She wanted one last night with the family. Marianne was not thrilled. This was a devastating situation and it is so difficult to be ready to let go of a loved one. Not only did she not want to acknowledge the dog's feelings (even though she had called me to learn what they were), she couldn't handle another agonizing day of watching the dog struggle. Marianne seemed quite annoyed with me and what I had told her.

The vet then popped his head in and asked what the dog wanted! I said, "Sparky wants to go home and say good-bye and do this tomorrow."

He said, "That's what I said." Then he left as quickly as he appeared, the sound of the door shutting was like an exclamation point. I had done my job and now I had to leave. The outcome was out of my hands.

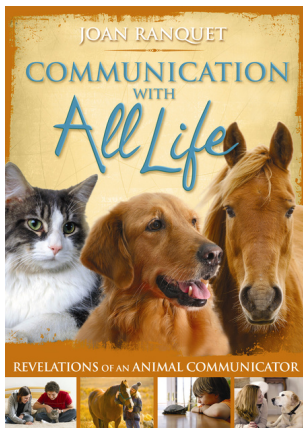
But it turned out beautifully. Even though Marianne had geared up for this event all day, and intended and was prepared to let go of Sparky, she listened to what her dog wanted and took her home. Marianne even told her husband Larry, the non-believer, about the session.

Sparky hadn't really walked very well in a very long time. Larry pulled out an old wagon and put Sparky in it. Then Larry, Marianne, Sparky, and Hannah (the other dog) went on a hike over all the old fire roads that they had walked for years. When they got home they made a big dinner and sat with the

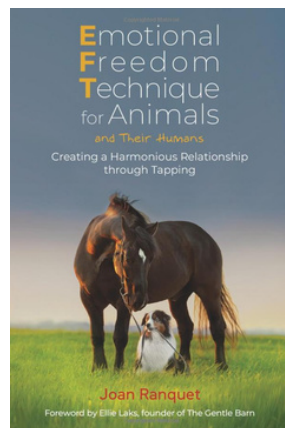
two dogs and reviewed Sparky's life. Sparky crossed over the next day. That simple communication led to a great sendoff, fully honoring her spirit.

Thank you!

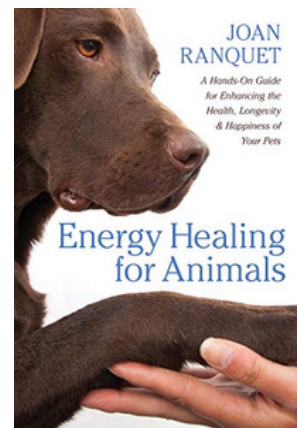
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