

## If your pet could talk...

Almost all people who share their lives and homes with pets agree that their animal companions can indeed communicate with them. It's not difficult to understand the signals from a pet that is hungry, frightened, content, angry, in pain, excited, or happy. The communication can be very clear between humans and their pets when they are devoted to one another. Nevertheless, understanding all the needs and feelings of a loving and loyal pet is not always clear. Of course, this is especially true when dealing with more complicated issues that go beyond simple physical expressions.

But, what if our pets could speak to us? We've read many commentaries formulated on this premise. Most are thought provoking, and serve to create empathy and enhance understanding between humans and their pets. Today, we'd like to present just a few of the admonitions your pet(s) might present if he/she could talk to you. Some of these ideas are from unknown sources. And, you may have seen similar thoughts expressed elsewhere. However, we believe you'll agree most are worth considering.

If our pets could talk, they might tell us:

- My expected life span is but a fraction of yours. Perhaps 10 to 20 years. Therefore, any extended separation from you can be painful.
- I need time to understand what you want of me.
- Your trust is crucial to my welfare.
- Please don't tie me to a fixed object in your yard leaving me alone for hours at a time. I easily become bored and over-heated. Being restricted to a small area outside is very uncomfortable for me.
- Remember, I have only you while you have friends, entertainment, and many other diversions. So, please don't leave me alone for long periods of time.
- Before you scold me for my failure to cooperate, please consider that I might not understand what you want, or something might be bothering me over which I have little or no control. Maybe I have a physical problem caused by the wrong food, not enough water, or perhaps it's time for me to visit a veterinarian.
- Should you use corporal punishment to discipline me, remember that I am capable of fighting back, but I choose not to hurt you.
- You should be aware that however you treat me, good or bad, I will not forget it.
- Talk to me often. I don't always understand your words, but I do understand your voice when speaking to me.

- If you should find it necessary to part with me while I'm still healthy, please make a concerted effort to find me another appropriate home where I will be provided with loving care.
- Please take care of me when I grow old. We will both grow old, but I will age much faster than you.
- When I am elderly and in pain, or if I become terminally ill, please don't unduly delay that final act of love to let me go. I know that choosing to end my life is one of the hardest decisions you will ever make. But, please don't hold on too long because you can't bear to say goodbye.

Jennifer Reese  
Andalusia Area Humane Society