



#4: Animals Make the World Go Round

If you really dislike animals, that's okay. But you might want to consider all that they do for the human species and at least respect them. Maybe end up liking them.

Without animals, where would we be? We'd all end up vegans, whether we wanted to or not – assuming plant life could survive; even 'lowly' worms oxygenate the soil and insects pollinate. Much clothing, transportation, jobs, as well as their beauty, their songs, languages and diversity – gone.

Each species has its own purpose, but the focus today is on our pets. Not the trained animals that provide therapy for people with autism, mental disorders and anxiety, or assist those with physical challenges, or find bombs, disaster victims and cancers.

In addition to guarding your family or eradicating rodents, studies show that YOUR dog or cat, if you like them enough to pet, stroke and play with them, can decrease your blood pressure, lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and pull you out gloomy slumps. By interacting with your pet, you will be 40% less likely to suffer a fatal heart attack. Growing up around 'furred' animals decreases the chances of children getting allergies, asthma and eczema, and it boosts their immune system. Health benefits plus companionship, loyalty and love!

Maybe you think your animals are too scruffy to be loveable? In most cases, this can change. Call VSPCA, or get some hints and how-to's in upcoming columns.



#5: Our Responsibility

Every animal has its own purpose. Today's focus is on us, the human being, and how it's our duty as a higher species to take care of all that was created for us.

It's written that we were given 'dominion' over all the animals. This is not to be interpreted, however, as a master who dominates his slaves, but rather as a steward, a guardian, a caregiver to other species whose survival and well-being is vital to our own, as noted in last month's column.

Regarding those closest to us, our companion animals, dogs and cats: they depend on us for a good quality of life. First step, take them to a veterinarian to be spayed or neutered (tied off) so there won't be so many of them that end up unwanted and uncared for. We, the VSPCA, help those with financial difficulties. With each sterilization at our clinics, the animal is checked, cleaned and given medications to clear up any existing health issues. Then you'll need just basic maintenance to get (and keep) them healthy with glossy coats and more vitality.

Water, food, exercise and shelter will be discussed in next month's column. If applied, the miraculous improvements will amaze you! Our companion animals can't give their special gifts to humankind – and we can't receive them – without our intervention and actions. The responsibility lies with us.



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#6: Basic Care

All animals need water, food, exercise and shelter.

- Water is vital for survival. Dehydration causes all sorts of medical difficulties and sometimes death. Best to prevent problems before they arise and have fresh water available at all times for all animals in your care.
- When nutritional needs are met, animals have the tools to help heal and repair themselves, and poor nutrition causes most dog and cat health problems. They require a moist, mixed diet of mostly protein. Tin food is fine, and kibble is okay but has a low-moisture content. If home-made, cats do best with a nearly all-meat diet (fresh beef, pork, poultry, fish and organs). Dogs need primarily raw or slightly cooked meat. Well-cooked rice or oatmeal provides calories and energy, and small amounts of green and orange vegetables add to overall health (best to grind or mash the veggies to release their nutrients).
- All bodies are made to move and if they don't, you see physical and mental deterioration. Interact with your pets; play with them; brush them; take dogs on walks, which is also a good way for you both to socialize, be around different people and get exercise the same time.
- Animals need protection from predators and the weather. Be sure yours have a clean, secure place with plenty of shade (dehydration, sunburnt skin and blistered paws are not uncommon).

Take care of your pets; you and they will be so much happier and healthier!