

## How Does Your Pet Speak to You?

*Audrey Frederick*

I'll bet that every single one of us who has a pet, has carried on a conversation with our animal at one time or another. The question here, however, is how many of us understand what our pets are saying? Granted some of our pet's requests are fairly obvious and we understand them, but many times we do not have a clue, and this is where the trouble starts,

Cats and dogs have been around as pets for hundreds of years. In days gone by the household pets worked for their keep. The cat's job was catching the small rodents and the dog had many chores from helping herd the sheep or cows to hunting with the farmer. The pet of today has an easy life, or does it? Why do I say that?

In yesteryear, animals spent most of their days out in the open, doing whatever it was they did best. Today, animals spend most of their time cooped up in a house or apartment waiting patiently for their person to come home from work. They are unemployed; most pets were specifically bred to do certain jobs and now most of those jobs are gone. Unfortunately many owners do not even know what kind of work their dogs were bred for and that opens another can of worms.

Our pets want to please us and in subtle ways, they try to tell us what they need or want. You may not realize this, but our pets watch our every move and try to determine what we want from them. They are aware of our mood by the tone of our voice; they can determine how we feel by our footsteps, the expression on our face and even by the odor our body emits. They know if we are happy, sad or mad. Surprising, huh!

Dogs and cats can understand more of our words than we give them credit for, some can even understand when we spell a word. Sometimes though, they do not understand our actions. Consider this: your dog is doing something you do not want it to do, so you start yelling and throwing your arms about. What does your dog think? You look like you want to play. You do the same kind of act when Miss Kitty is on the table or counter and she thinks, "well, I won't do this again, when she is around."

There are so many things we humans do that baffle our pets, and because they do not understand our actions, the signals get crossed and misbehavior happens. Pets communicate to us through body language and some sounds. Every flick of the tail or blink of an eye means something in dog or cat language. This is why I have said many times before and will say it many times again in the future, "it is very important to take time to bond and know your pet."

A dog's language is very different from a cat's. Their understanding of our language and actions depends a good bit on the breed, especially with dogs. A dog bred to be a guard dog and one that is best suited as a lapdog, do not speak the same language. A dog (not a puppy) that chews your favorite shoes is not doing it for spite, but may be trying to tell you that it is afraid of being alone and chewing something that belongs to you, helps it to feel closer to you. A dog that barks excessively may be telling you that it is lonesome, anxious or needs some exercise.

Dogs have needs that need to be fulfilled, if their needs are not met, they will try to

tell you. Sudden acts of misbehavior are usually signs of a need not being fulfilled. Dogs have a need for socialization, companionship with their owners and exercise. Boredom is a great cause of misbehavior. All dogs need stimulation of one sort or another. It is up to you, as the pet parent, to recognize and fill that need.

Cats on the other hand have a different way of communicating. Most cats like a few scratches, but when they are tired of being scratched, a sure fire way to let you know, is with a little nip on the hand. A rapid flicking of a tail is another sign that Miss Kitty is annoyed, along with a quiet growl or even a louder than usual purr. If your cat is scratching your prize possessions, it is really telling to get it some scratching posts.

Pets do not do anything for spite. They do not know what the word means. What may seem destructive to you, may be normal behavior for them. Nature intended for cats to scratch, just as it created certain breeds of dogs to dig.

The important thing here is awareness and knowledge. Take time to learn about your dog's breed. Even a "Heinz 57" variety of dog has certain breed characteristics. Learn what they are, become familiar with them and know what to expect from your dog. Pay attention to your pet; every dog and cat is different. Humans have different personality traits special to them and pets are no different.

Our pets are not furry children as we sometimes like to think they are. They are animals, behaving as animals should. They did not go to school to learn English, just as we did not learn animal talk. However, they understand us far more than we understand them. Why?

Simply because they have taken the time to observe our behaviors and have somewhat of an idea what to expect from us. Do you not think, that we, the more intelligent of the two species, should take the time to observe and learn about what they need and expect.

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*Since I, Audrey Frederick, was a small child, words have always been an important part of my life. I have always loved to write. Animals also are an important part of my life and thus was born my web site <http://www.cats-and-dogs-on-the-web.com> if you have enjoyed this article come and visit my site and blog, you might be glad you did.*