

WORDS BETWEEN FRIENDS

10 HINTS FOR A GREAT PET ADOPTION

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While it's exciting bringing home a new pet to join you and your family, everyone needs to prepare for the adjustment period. Some animals just walk right in as comfortable as if they were your deadbeat brother showing up to sleep on your deadbeat couch for the next five months, others are more timid and slower to feel safe and settle in. So here are a few tips I've used successfully over the years as an intuitive animal communicator that can smooth the process as you and your new friend get to know one another.

Watch what you say

The pets understand not only *what* you say, but *everything* you say. No kidding. Think before you talk rashly in their presence. What you discuss impacts their self esteem, which matches a small child's ego and is just as fragile.

If you mention to a dog it's an ugly mutt, even jokingly, it has impact. Their feelings can be hurt with loss of self confidence. Just like people, dogs and cats prefer to be told they are beautiful, loved and wanted. One of the reasons I get such powerful results is because of the conversations I have with the animals dealing with their emotional issues and feelings.

When a large great dane was brought to me because her owner said she had issues, it turned out that all the jokes and comments about her size made her feel different and at the dog park she felt like an outsider. Instead of getting angry, this gentle soul in a giant's body withdrew and became sad. Identifying this led to changes in how the pet parent let people talk about her dog. Whether or not you believe the animals understand you, what harm is there to

speak to them with respect? Go on, just try it.

Tell them what to expect

Pets live in a world over which they have little control; you are the puppet master. So always inform them what is going to happen, and prepare them for changes in routine to reduce their stress and anxiety. If you are going to the store and will be back in a few hours, let them know. If Uncle Bill and Aunt Harriet are coming to visit and will be staying in the guest room, if you're moving to a new place where it will smell different, or if a baby is on the way, talk to them about it to cut down on unwanted behavioral surprises. Even if, they act like they are clueless and could care less (visualize a human teenager ignoring you), it makes a difference, I promise.

If you have another pet at home

Imagine if your spouse suddenly brought someone home one night and told you to move over darling, you're sharing the bed, all affection and the rest of the house from now on. How would you feel? Well, some tired partners may be relieved, but most folks would be more than ticked off. So what do you do when adding to the fur family to minimize household hiccups? Here are six steps to smooth the way.

1. Tell your current pets in advance that another animal will be coming to join your family. This takes away the indignity of surprise.
2. Emphasize what a wonderful thing it will be, such as shared playtime and companionship when you are gone. Accentuate the positive.
3. Believe what you say. The pets can pick up on your thoughts and emotions, so if you are saying one thing and thinking another, they will know—and respond to the mixed message.
4. Remind your pet that they are very important to you, a valued member of the household. Acknowledge their

feelings and that you understand there may be a time of adjustment.

5. Tell your current pets that they have a special job helping the new animal get adjusted and feel safe and welcome. Let them know how much you are depending on them to help you. Animals, especially dogs, love to have a special purpose to their life.
6. It may sound silly, but if you know in advance the animal you are adopting, get a picture, enlarge it and show it to the pets in your home. I had one cat scrutinize each photo, and when asked who she wanted to join us, went over and sat on a particular picture out of an array positioned on the floor.

Walk a mile in their paws

Okay, you just adopted your fur friend, and are on the way to a new adventure together. But what is it like from their eyes? Have you ever thought about it?

Remember, adopted shelter animals are homeless and if coming from Animal Care and Control, have been in cages. They don't know what to expect. Some were abandoned, lost, abused or god knows what to end up in their current situation. Try these simple steps when bringing them home.

1. **Tell the pet who you are and why they are going with you.** "Hi sweetie! I think you are so handsome and loveable; I want you to come to live with me. I am taking you home to be my pet. Would you like that?" Whenever I visit a kennel, one of the most common questions the pet asks me, after begging me to get him out of there, is that he wants to know who I am.
2. **Tell the pet where they are going** and what they can expect when they get there. Describe your home during the car ride and speak in soothing tones. Tell your new-found friend you are going for a short drive together to her new home, and you'll give her food and water when she gets there. The litterbox

is upstairs, and she can sleep with you in the nice soft bed (or not). Discuss who will be there when you arrive, pets, family members, along with their names and even tidbits about their personalities and habits. Your new animal will appreciate your talking *to* her instead of *about* her.

3. **So how do you talk to them?** You can drop any pretense at being a Rhodes Scholar, but skip regressing all the way back to baby talk. Just keep it simple. If you tell Ralphie you are going away for five days, he may not know how long that is, but he can understand the sun going up and down five times. If you have to leave to go to work, tell Fifi you'll be back at the end of the day, when the sun starts going down. *What's work?* Something you have to do to let us live in this nice place and put food in your bowl.
4. **Acknowledge their feelings.** Rescued pets are terrified of once again losing their home, and sometimes respond in extreme measures to try to please you. Tell them it's okay, you understand they may be anxious about being a new addition to your animal pack, but everything will be fine and you will love them and help them understand the household and where they fit in. Recognizing how someone feels in a situation, whether canine, feline or human, is reassuring and builds bonds through thoughtful communication- and shelter animals do best with lots of reassurance.

Challenges or opportunities?

All animals are different, just like people. Some, no matter what you say to them, have a more challenging personality. I had a cat that I adored but behaved as if she was the love child of radio shock jock Howard Stern and acerbic comedienne Joan Rivers. When it came to dealing with other pets in the home it was if she suddenly channeled Linda Blair auditioning for the Exorcist. She heard everything I said, but

could care less. She'd wait till my head was turned than whomp the dickens out of another cat.



That my friends, was a long road to hoe, but her ability to communicate with me was astonishing-and worth the challenges of socializing her.

Don't give up on your pet if things seem frustrating, work with them, get a trainer, a behaviorist, an intuitive, check with your vet for physical ailments, whatever it takes. Almost every time a behavioral situation can be improved with effort on both sides of the pet-human relationship and with the person learning about the animal mind along with pack behavior for dogs and colony life for cats.

Come on now, is all this for real?

Animal communication, whether through intuitive insight or other means, is genuine, but we humans often have difficulty with quantifying the intangible. Intelligent pet talk is one of those areas that begs controversy, but think of it this way. A lot goes on in the unseen worlds that escape our five senses through which we interpret life. Just think of how busy your body is, with your hidden liver flushing out toxins and out-of-sight pancreas secreting hormones that regulate bodily functions, while you have no idea about any of this silent activity that takes place as you go about mundane tasks.

If you dismiss something as not real just because it's not part of your personal experience you'll miss out on many rich opportunities. Some folks find it downright unnerving to consider that pets have advanced understanding, but I assure you, they do. The only problem is they don't have the same means as humans to respond in a way we are accustomed, so we have to dip in their world to decipher what's going on instead of the other way around.

So before you poo poo Fluffy's ability to digest words as well as her kibble, take a moment to consider the quality of your conversation. It all boils down to making

your pet partner a valued and respected family member. If it takes a few sentences between you and them, what's lost in the process?

To learn more about the invisible world and how it impacts us, along with valuable pet resources and information, go to beyondzebra.com, where you can also contact Marcia Schafer for private sessions, training and her popular intuitive pet communication workshop "Inside the Furry Mind."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marcia Schafer is different from what you might expect. A highly credentialed MBA business consultant who happens to be intuitive, she opens people's eyes to the not so silent world behind the animal mind as she blends in her otherworldly abilities with everyday circumstances to give you a peek into the furry intellect.

Lauded for her crossover talents to reach mainstream audiences, Schafer encourages folks to reexamine the meaning of individual life as she breaks all barriers about advanced sentience.

Professional achievements blend alongside a master's degree in business, bachelor's degree in nursing and undergraduate studies in anthropology. Her award winning life story has been read in 15 countries and she's spoken internationally alongside astronauts and Pulitzer Prize winners. Her clients come from all over the world for help with personal issues, professional growth and animal insight.

Founder of the visionary consulting firm Beyond Zebra®, Marcia has an animal advocacy division within her company, works with shelter organizations and has begun a nationwide network of intuitive animal communicators. Schafer is working to change society's perception of all living creatures so they will gain the international life rights and legal protection they deserve, and does this by bringing to light the hidden world we all too often turn a deaf ear to: their advanced sentience and sophisticated social networks.