Dogs, Cats, Humans – Who's in charge?!
By Bruce Butcher

How often have you tried to figure out how to make them all get along? Anyone who's ever tried presenting a well-reasoned, insightful argument to the dog who plays with the yelping cat by chasing, knocking it down and clubbing with its paws knows that the human way of thinking doesn't apply to other species. What is the common language and how can Animal Communication help when we run a household of three different species – dog, cat & human?

Understanding each specie

Each specie has their own language, preferences, ways of playing and ways of being in the world. They are born as an expert in their ways. For example, a dog generally derives a sense of security and comfort by being in a group, the more members in the group, the better. A dog views a group as providing better access to more resources like love, attention, play and food. In contrast cats generally find that same security and comfort by being alone. Adding members to a cat group is viewed as diminishing each individual's access to every meaningful resource. Animals are motivated by what they consider 'necessity'; humans are mostly motivated by what they 'want' and often it is not at all 'necessary'.

Let's consider the dog who eats from the cats litter box. Why is that necessary? What purpose does that serve? The dog experiences a festival of fun – the cats hiss and race wildly, the human's run and yell and a small household riot incites. For a dog, that's awfully exciting stuff! The dog gets the tasty tidbit he was after while discovering the power to cure boredom. Further, given how much fun it was for ol' Fido, we can be sure he'll try it again. The common pitfall, we don't think like animals and cannot analyze their behavior from their perspective. The Animal Communicator shifts to the animal's perspective, asks these questions and delivers insight into your specific animal's role and motives. If its boredom the dog is "curing," we can brainstorm alternatives that work for the entire household. Or, perhaps we discover that while we're at work the dog has been "stalked, hunted and pounced" by the cats playing their hunting game. We simply caught the dog red-handed making his own counter move. Each motive has different potential solutions, solutions that work for the entire animal group.

Establish You as Leader

A universal solution is to establish yourself as a leader while shaping behaviors from the understanding of how an animal thinks. Before we run off to do that, keep in mind that the animal group chooses and sanctions the leader. It is their choice, not you decision or directive. By the way, they know you're a human and behave very unlike themselves. So we're not becoming a cat, dog, horse or hamster. We're behaving in a manner that fulfills that of a strong animal leader.

Being viewed as the animal group Leader means acting with consistency and being truthful and decisive on the group's behalf, and being humble. Yes, you are human, probably a bit ego-

centric and likely self-serving – that's part of the human condition. Behaving in a consistent, decisive and humble manner can sometimes take some work. Remember: Animals act to meet their needs; their needs are based in necessity. You will be given respect when you know your animal, its needs and motives. You'll be sanctioned as Leader when you demonstrate 'knowing' of the entire group's needs and become the chosen resource to meet those needs. I hear comments from clients who say, "…but I'm the one who feeds the animal and showers them with love… (so I should be the Leader)." The simple fact is Animals don't sell Leadership for love and food; they exchange it for understanding/meeting needs, establishing and sticking to a routine and settling disputes. What are some of the more common animal needs which all animals seem to share?

Meeting the Animal's Needs

Let's look at a broad perspective of animal needs. Although this is not an exhaustive list, several consistently surface.

- The basic needs for food, water, shelter
- The need to have a clear Territory, and manage that territory – including handling visitors (2 or 4 legs)
- The need to play freely – that is, behavior that is of the animal's choosing
- Access to attention from the Leader – in a well-balanced group that comes from the human
- Need for clear group membership – who is a group member, and what is their role?
- Need to have disputes within the group settled

The question becomes how can we meet these needs and include the animal's perspective. I will address successful strategies to meeting these needs in another Animal Behavior article but I want to expand a bit here. It is essential for the human to establish a mutually beneficial way to meet any animal need. If the animals decide how to meet their needs I can guarantee it works for them and not for the humans. For example, leave a dog to determine their territory and it will probably extend beyond the boundary line for the yard. It turns out most dogs aren't surveyors.   When the cat decides the best time & location to get attention from you, it may be 3 or 4am. When a horse decides who is, and is not, a new group member, somebody's going to get kicked or nipped. When a human decides we can choose to reinforce desired behaviors and friendly interactions. I think you get the point. An Animal's action will be to meet its own need, while our decisions/actions can extend across specie lines (dog, cat, human) to meet all their needs. I can't leave this article without mentioning the role that being truthful plays in the animal-human interaction.

Be truthful

It may sound odd to read about being truthful with an animal group. If you have ever tried to get a cat who hates the Vet into their carrier under the guise of, "going for a little ride," then you know exactly what being truthful is all about. You can't fake a cat. Our internal intent (to go to the Vet) and our external words ("just a little ride") are conflicted. When we send mixed

messages, the animal always defers and responds to our internal message; they have learned to look for and respond to what is <u>true</u>. The great thing is, it's simple to be truthful. I suggest speaking the facts in simple, affirmative, non-analytical statements. Let's take an example in which your animal group's behavior deteriorates shortly after a new member is added. Be truthful, factual, simple and direct in establishing the situation. Here is a truthful example, "I decided to add a member to our group. He will be with us from here forward. I will take care of him. We are all together. Our group gets along. Be friendly with the others even if they're different. Cat people, continue to go in the litter box; dog people, continue to go outside; I go wherever I decide. Let me know if you need anything that I don't see. Thank you."

The fundamental facts in stating truth to animals: You are the Animal Group Leader and you decided. You may discover new things and change your decision. You will let them know when you do. One of the gifts of an Animal Communication class is that you immerse yourself in their perspective and take away a greater knowing of what it is to be an animal.

The way to take charge of the group is to become what they understand and value. You may need first to refresh yourself to think like an animal. In the animal world necessity motivates actions. Practice filling the role of a good Animal Leader so you're voted in and to speak and act from the truth. This may challenge your humanness and stretch you to grow, but the rewards are a cohesive, relaxed group in which the individuals live happy, fulfilling lives. Coincidently, that is our secret desire for our own life as well.

This was written to help Cathy Kneeland & family establish a dynamic that works for all the humans & animals in the house.

[Video: Sage and George work it out](#)

Cathy's feedback: Bruce's approach is very direct and to the point. When we introduced a dog into the home we were already sharing with two cats, I was extremely nervous about how the cats would respond. My reaction was to baby them and try to keep them safe. We separated them from the dog and the cats lived in the lower level of our house for many months, rarely coming up to interact with us unless we went down there. I missed them during that time.

I was also learning about having a dog, as it was my first experience with one. I really needed to set clear boundaries, something I wasn't quite good at in many areas of my life, not just with pets. As Bruce mentions in his article, you can't just decide that you are the group leader. The animals get a say, and they vote based on your energy. My husband would constantly remind me to be strong and be consistent, as the dog would pick up on my weak energy. I saw that Bob could be decisive in setting limits on acceptable behavior, but also loving at the same time. I can't say enough about Bruce's advice on being truthful. About telling pets this is the way it is and will be. Once I finally got that, I stopped tiptoeing around all the pets and decided we all needed to get along, and that we would get along. I took more of a leadership role and dropped the energy of always fearing there'd be a fight. It did take a while, but the cats started coming

upstairs more when the dog was around, and we started letting the dog downstairs into what had been the cats' domain. I still remember the first day I came home from the store to be greeted by the cats at the door. It was such a warm feeling to know they were comfortable and happy again, their needs being met.

The process of introducing the dog into the house could have gone a lot smoother had I taken a leadership role from the start, but we all learn from experience. It really wasn't that hard once I was in the right frame of mind. Bruce helps us access that frame of mind, either through a private session where he gives us information he receives, or by taking his Animal Communication workshop, where we learn to see from the animal's point of view. Now I love watching the dog and cats interact.
- Cathy Kneeland, Circles of Wisdom

Video: A little more Sage and George