

# Get the message: Communicating with your pet



*Kim Pickett uses Mr. Zip to help her students practice their communication skills.*

By Betsy Gilliland,  
November 23, 2001

Junebug was at it again. The moment Tunia Hyland walked into her Bryn Mawr home, her 7-year-old Scottish terrier started one of her favorite activities—licking her feet.

“I asked her silently, ‘Why are you doing that?’” Hyland said. “And she said, ‘I’m bored.’”

Hyland pulled out Junebug’s toys and Frisbee, playing with her terrier until she was exhausted. After Junebug curled up in her bed and fell asleep, Hyland headed for her computer.

“I e-mailed Kim Pickett and said, ‘I did it,’” she added.

Pickett of Chester Springs was the instructor of an all-day workshop, “Communicating with Animals,” that Hyland had just completed, and “it” was a successful communication with one of her two Scottish terriers.

Another student, Sharyn Cerniglia of Wayne, did not even wait until she got home to try to communicate with her 8-month-old golden retriever.

She initiated a conversation with her willful puppy, Cedar, during the latter part of the workshop while the group practiced their new-found skills on horses in a Malvern barn.

“I started to communicate with one of the horses,” she said. “But then I thought, ‘I really would rather talk to my dog. That’s why I’m doing this.’”

Cedar, she learned, does not like her name and resents the expectations it imposes on her.

“I just expect her to be this good little dog just like the last one,” Cerniglia admitted. “And she’s not.”

Pickett, who conducts workshops and sees clients individually, has been communicating with animals all of her life.

“As I look back on it,” she revealed, “I see I was doing it quite naturally.”

In 1978 she qualified for the screening trials for the U.S. Olympic equestrian team. However, a broken back and neck injuries she suffered in an automobile accident that same year dashed her Olympic dreams. Instead of pursuing her equestrian training, she found herself undergoing a healing process.

Turning to alternative medicine to mend her broken body, Pickett also began to study the techniques. Her training in healing modalities and her ability to communicate with animals came together in the mid-1980s when she was working with U.S. equestrian team horses.

“In the midst of working on some of our Olympic horses,” Pickett said, “they started giving me messages.”

In her workshops, Pickett emphasizes that animals and humans have the ability to communicate intuitively

when people learn to access “native intelligence” suppressed by modern lifestyles and technologies.

“It’s like a muscle that you now know you have. And if you continue to exercise it,” said Cerniglia, “it will get stronger and stronger.”

According to Pickett, successful communication with animals requires an open heart and quiet emotions.

“The language of the mind is very loud and very bold,” said Pickett. “The language of the heart is far softer and more subtle ... It has to slip in the cracks somewhere.”

She begins her workshops by teaching her students to quiet their minds so they can hear the voices of their hearts.

Once their bodies have entered this nonresistant state, Pickett said, people can receive mental images, feelings, strings of words or entire dialogues from their animal friends.

“Every connection is different,” she said. “Often, it’s a combination of all of those.”

Sometimes she finds it easier to communicate with animals that are in different locations because barriers have been broken down.

“Animals and people support each other subconsciously,” noted Pickett.

She rarely encounters skepticism in the process, Pickett revealed, because most of her clients are receptive to the idea of communicating with their animals.

“I know it sounds really hokey,” said Hyland. “But it’s not.”

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call Pickett at 610-363-1452.

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