

Written by Invitation for "Paws in Thought"

What Do Animals Think About Euthanasia?

By Elizabeth Severino, B.A., M.B.A., D.D., Reiki Master

I'm an animal communicator. When Dana O'Donnell asked me to write for this publication, she assured me you, the readership, deeply cared about animals and their well-being. I knew I had many things I could write about. I asked the animals, "What topic?" They answered, "Euthanasia." I was sure I wasn't ready to write on such a controversial topic. The animals, however, are incredibly powerful, wonderful, and self-less teachers for me, and have been my entire life. Since Dana asked me to write for her, and the animals chose the topic, they immediately started teaching me newly about dying, death, and euthanasia. It was clear they had a very important message they wanted me to understand and then share.

As is true for most of us, my life has been powerfully impacted by death. In one 18-month period as an adolescent, my father, grandfather, two uncles, and all of my beloved animals died or were killed. I have been (briefly) dead myself. Even so, the lessons of the past few months have added immeasurably to my understanding of this phase of life.

My eternal gratitude and love go to the exceptional animals, out of form and in, each with an awesome and inspiring story, who have come into my life to teach me about death, dying, and euthanasia, including but not limited to: Freda; Pepper; Tara; Max; Bear; Bea; Lucky; Tanuka; and Mario.

Euthanasia. The very word evokes an emotional response in most people. The meaning . . . the morality . . . the legality . . . the religious and spiritual implications . . . the questions . . . the decision . . . the aftermath.

Euthanasia. In Greek, which as a Dean's List Classics Major at Vassar College, I studied for years, it means a painless, happy death. *Eu* means well; and *thanatos*, death. An easy and painless death; a painless method of dying.

Often, we use the word euthanasia as a verb, to euthanize, to mean the causing of death painlessly, so as to end suffering. This is most certainly our intention, one would hope, whenever we make the choice to euthanize a beloved companion animal who is suffering and/or incurably ill.

Accepted and even expected in certain circumstances in certain cultures, in our culture, that is, in the United States, euthanasia is controversial. Performed on humans, in the U.S., it is exceptionally controversial, and mostly illegal. Performed on animals, in the U.S., it is occasionally controversial, and for companion animals, almost always highly personal for the humans making the decision(s). Often, the

humans making such decisions for their companion animals experience exceptional pain and suffering and grief.

Among health professionals, euthanasia has been advocated by some for millennia as a way to deal with victims of incurable diseases. English Physician John Arbuthnot (1675-1735) said: "The kindest wish of my friends is euthanasia." Dr. Jack Kevorkian's work is thought-provoking and controversial.

Among the religious communities, the issues relative to animals deal with questions ranging from, "Do animals have souls? Does it even matter?" to "Isn't euthanasia just another word for murder?"

Legal issues include animals as property and owner's rights to the disposition of that property.

Spiritual issues recognize the One-ness, the kinship, of all life; and the innate need of the soul, regardless of its form, for gentle honoring.

The questions agonizing humans frequently ask themselves in their times of profound love and pain, anticipating the extraordinary grief of separation from a beloved companion, include, "Is euthanasia really *right* at all? *Is it just another word for murder? When* should I do it? How will I *know*?"

The aftermath, in addition to the deep sense of loss, often also includes guilt, especially if some of the factors the human entered into the equation of the decision included knowledge of expensive yet iffy interventions declined; the inconvenience of caring for the very ill; and pressure from well-meaning friends. And then there's doubt.

But this is all from the *human* perspective. Desert Dan once said, "There's opinions about animals, and there's facts about animals. If you want opinions, ask the humans. If you want the facts, ask the animals."

What *about* the *animals*? What do they think about it? Do they want it, or not? And if they do want it, is there a time that it is better for them? If so, under what circumstances?

I've communicated with over 4,000 animals in 9 countries. In person. One at a time. In multi-animal households, singly and collectively. In groups, at seminars, workshops, presentations, and animal communication gatherings. Over the telephone. Via the Internet. Many of the animals have been suffering. Many have been elderly and infirm. Many have been in extremely compromised health, in varying stages of dying.

I've "stayed with" many of them, giving healing energy, sometimes helping with transitions and more often, reading what they need to return to health now, working with their veterinarians, and communicating their reactions to various interventions. Many of the animals have lived. Some of them have died. Some of them have been euthanized. Some died "naturally." Interestingly, all of the animals who have transitioned, have asked their humans for some form of ritual honoring their passage.

I also talk to spirit/souls. I read spirit/souls in living bodies, human and animal; and I also read them when they've left form, or are incorporeal. Since more and more people are asking me to contact their transitioned animals, and increasing numbers of people and veterinarians are contacting me to help animals otherwise quite ill, I've been placed in a very unique position of connecting some very powerful "dots" in my life.

One, I never used to believe in reincarnation. It was perfectly fine with me that others did. I just didn't, myself. Until the animals taught me, conclusively, otherwise. The animals have a VERY different "opinion" about death from the opinion of most humans. The animals know they'll reincarnate. They absolutely know that death as humans know it, is a death of physical form, only.

Two, it never occurred to me that I, a highly trained computer architecture designer, with a Masters in Computer Science and Business Administration, would ever become a healer, a spiritual mentor and energy therapist. My first book was Guide to International Computer Systems Architecture! Nor did it ever occur that I would use my gift as an animal communicator, which I've had since birth, to help, beyond the animals in my own household. And then I experienced an epiphany during which a miracle witnessed by 7 others saved my life, and the angels taught me otherwise.

Three, I believed that when at all possible, let an animal or a human live and die with grace and honor, in balance and order, with all due respect to the various health approaches possible, and with as little invasion of their bio-spirit as possible. This belief, my experiences with the animals have resoundingly confirmed.

It comes to me to say, that I am truly one who honors all beliefs as leading to One. I absolutely believe in the Divine, the One-ness, in kinship with all life. Specifically, my father was a Roman Catholic and my mother a Presbyterian. When they married, they blended their beliefs and became Episcopalian. My brothers and I were raised and confirmed both Presbyterian and Episcopalian; we went to Quaker meetings and Episcopalian schools. The teachings of St. Francis have guided me my entire life. I am blessed in that my uncle was an animal communicator and hands-on healer long before those words were even in the common vocabulary. My family was affluent and had Buddhist and Baptist servants. I live in a primarily Jewish neighborhood. My dog is named after a Cherokee Indian. I am an ordained minister in the Universal Life Church, an All-Faith Religion; and hold a Doctor of Divinity

Degree in Comparative Religion. I have studied and speak 9 languages and am currently learning Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Aramaic. I am also an energy therapist and healer who spent years studying the Judao-Christian Kabbalah, two summers ago spent time in Mexico studying with Mayan shamans and this past summer spent time in Bali studying with healers there. I am aligned with Sathya Sai Baba and absolutely honor his message of Truth and Love. My "official" title is the Rev. Doctor Elizabeth Severino.

I've known for years that some spirits, after leaving form, were clear very quickly; and that some seemed to be quite confused, for long periods of time, before I could effectively communicate with them. Some spirits I have read (mostly human suicides) are still confused, even now, years later. I haven't known why, and over the past few months, the animals have answered that question.

The animals tell me there are three stages of death. They call these stages, rather simply, Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3. Killing an animal, putting an animal down, or euthanizing it, has very different implications, during and after the death of the physical body, depending on the stage of death that the animal is in and the energy of intention around the death. Basically, the differences seem to come down to the ability or lack thereof of the physical body to recover, including the amount and the length of time of the physical suffering; and the amount of time and the approach, the energetic environment, the consciousness has had, in preparing for its separation from form.

If you "kill" an animal too soon, too quickly, when the animal and/or the spirit/body are not ready yet, not even in any of the stages, and without spiritual permission, then the spirit/soul becomes extremely confused and can take a long time, up to 2 years, or more, human time, before it becomes clear. Killing an animal before the 1st stage of death has even begun, will result in this extended confusion. This could mean that an animal which was otherwise healthy, was killed, by accident or intention.

In the 1st stage of dying, in which, although the animals call it the "1st stage of dying", an animal is still capable of recovering, the animal actually knows its physical body is capable of healing, and often can heal itself, but still requires some cooperation from its immediate environment.

This cooperation would include proper food, rest, cleanliness of wounds or abrasions, and perhaps some veterinary intervention. An animal euthanized in the 1st stage will be confused for anywhere from 6 to 12 months, human time.

In the 2nd stage of dying, an animal's physical body may or may not recover. An animal in this stage knows it requires intervention of some sort in order for its physical body to heal. It is no longer able to heal itself completely by itself. An animal

euthanized in the 2nd stage will be confused for anywhere from 6 weeks to 6 months, human time.

In the 3rd stage of dying, an animal knows its physical body can no longer be healed without a Divine intervention. It begins the separation of soul/spirit from form. The spirit/soul of an animal euthanized in the 3rd stage can be sufficiently clear to be contacted within 24 hours, and is usually completely clear in 4 to 6 weeks, human time. I find the same is true of human consciousness. My best friend's mother suffered with Alzheimers for years. She was clear within an hour of the death of her physical body. Animals euthanized in the 3rd stage react very, very similarly to animals who have died naturally. It is almost the same for them as dying naturally, and they are fine with it. Some are quite clear that their primary experience, from entry into the 3rd stage on, will be pain and progressive failure of the body.

Human words cannot do justice to the extraordinary range, the difference, the distinctions, the continuum from the exquisite peace and clarity of an animal euthanized in the 3rd stage, to the painful, explosive confusion of an animal leaving form even before the 1st stage. Nor can human words appropriately stress how extraordinary it is and how important it is to know that the 3rd stage is so similar in its spiritual impact, to natural death. Once I finally "got" this lesson, it became mandatory for me to understand what clues or keys the animals could give us, so that we would know when they were in the 3rd stage, so as to not euthanize them too soon. And it became mandatory for me to share the knowledge.

This discovery has been a dramatic one for me. I still get tears in my eyes when I recall the week of lessons when I "got" it, really understood their message to me, and remember the animals, some of whom quite literally gave their lives so that I could understand the stages and their distinctions, energetically; and their deep plea that I share this understanding. I remember the week as clearly as I am now sitting at my computer writing this.

And in that incredible week, toward its end, amazingly, almost every veterinarian I work with, somehow, suddenly, had a reason to contact me. I was able to tell them what I am now writing to you; and every one of them medically understood exactly what I was saying.

A *suffering* companion animal's entry into the 3rd stage is marked by a very sudden change in behavior, a change dramatic enough and different enough so that its humans notice. Please note we are talking about suffering, dis-eased, or old and infirm animals. An animal who has never bitten, will bite. An animal who has never experienced seizures, will experience fits. An animal which has never "sounded" excessively (barked, screeched) will sound excessively. (Exception: an elderly cat, doing what I call vocalizing, is doing something very different . . . it is NOT an indicator of 3rd stage). An animal which has always been familiar will become distant.

An animal either entering into or already in the 3rd stage, will suddenly start to react as if it were (in human terms) delusional, relating to and or responding to, figures that to human eyes "aren't there." What's happening at this point, is that the animal's consciousness is starting to separate from form, and it is actually starting to more clearly see energies, sometimes incorporeal human or animal, and often angelic, which most human eyes can't readily see.

If you're a caretaker for a suffering animal, are convinced your animal's physical body cannot recover, and you suspect but aren't sure if your animal is in the 3rd stage, ask it. Breathe deeply and center yourself as best you can; clear your mind as best you can; remember foremost your love for your animal and the highest good; turn your energy intently to your animal, and ask, "Are you ready to leave form now?" Breathe deeply again. Your animal will answer in that breath.

If you're not sure of the answer, repeat the procedure, and this time, ask, "Will you please give me a sign, a behavior change, if and when you become ready, if and when you enter the 3rd stage?" The animals will *always* respond, "Yes," to this question. Then you wait and watch. And if you're still not sure, repeat the procedure, and add, "Will you please make it *very* obvious if you're in or when you've entered the 3rd stage?"

Virtually every animal I've assisted at this time, has asked for an honoring ritual, to assist its' spirit's separation from form.

The clearer an animal gets, the sooner it can move its essence energy on to its reincarnation. In many cases over the past few years, I've found animals that were so clear after separating from form, they could and did tell their humans whether or not there was a chance that they would be together again in this lifetime; and if so, have told the humans the approximate geographical location, the approximate timing, and the form, into which they would reincarnate. Several are indeed now together again.

So, if this relates to your life, to the animals in your care, please know that the animals are OK with being euthanized. Please also know that they will love you whatever you do and whatever you decide. It's easier on them ultimately, however, if euthanizing is done in the correct time.

Look for the signs of being in the 3rd stage. It matters. To all of us.

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