

'Animal intuitive' connects with four-legged friends

Pet consulting sessions start at \$150

By Sandra Thomas, Staff writer August 23, 2012



Animal intuitive Dale McCarthy, seen here with horse named Sierra in the Southlands area.

Photograph by: Jason Lang , Vancouver Courier

After a busy day of sessions communicating with dogs and cats earlier this year, Dale McCarthy headed down to the beach for a break.

"But then all of these dogs going by were looking at me," said McCarthy, who claims to be able to talk with pets as an "animal intuitive". "I was so tired I just thought, 'don't even talk to me.'"

McCarthy said she always knew she had a special connection to horses, but it wasn't until 12 years ago when she took a two-day course in moving the large animals by using energy instead of touch that she realized how strong that bond was. The instructor later told McCarthy she was one of the best horse communicators she'd ever witnessed.

Years later while visiting a friend, McCarthy was asked if she could speak to dogs as well.

"I said no," said McCarthy. "But then I told her this, this and this about her dog and she said, 'Guess what? You do talk to dogs.'"

McCarthy doesn't meet the animal or owner in person until after she's communicated with the pet. Sessions start at \$150 and the minimal information she receives includes the pet's name, breed, age and sex. She then asks the pet for permission to communicate with it the night before she's to meet with the owner. During a recent session, McCarthy told a client her dog was stressed due to tension at home. In response, the woman told her she'd been to counselling with her daughter that same morning.

One of the hardest parts of McCarthy's job is helping owners and pets prepare to say goodbye. In one case a woman asked if it was the right time to have her senior dog euthanized. After communicating with the dog, McCarthy told the woman her pet wasn't ready.

"She was going through a divorce and just starting a new job and her dog didn't want to leave her alone," said McCarthy. "But in a couple of weeks it let me know it was time."

Vancouver pet owner Lori Massini worked with McCarthy to communicate with her affenpinscher Charlie. Massini said the little dog had a habit of flicking its neck and she was concerned there was something wrong, despite her vet's assurances.

"I didn't tell her anything about Charlie and the first thing she said was, 'Charlie doesn't want you to worry, he's just stretching,'" Massini. "I didn't even ask about that, she just brought it up."

McCarthy also told Massini her once friendly cat Frieda wasn't happy because she felt replaced by Charlie, who arrived four years after her.

"She had no idea I had Frieda before I got Charlie," said Massini. She added the night after the reading, Frieda slept in the couple's bed for the first time since Charlie arrived and has shared the space ever since.

In an email to the Courier, University of B.C. professor of psychology and dog expert Stanley Coren said "animal intuitives" are very good at reading emotional responses, often by observing how the animal responds to people in its life, places in the home, and common activities and then piecing together what, or who, is bothering the animal with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

"This information can be useful to a pet owner," wrote Coren. "However to couch their conclusions in terms of 'Your dog is telling me...' is just show business to give an air of mystery or certainty to their conclusions."

McCarthy said her observations are written down prior to meeting the animal or its owner.