

From our Animals: The Courage to Commit

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If you believe that we are all here for a reason and there is learning in every relationship and experience, then you will understand animal commitment. Animals know innately who they are meant to commit to, what to teach and learn, and when to let go. When they are ready to leave, they do so, just as they do at their death. Cats will often leave their current owners and embark on a new journey with a new family. Humans, on the other hand, are full of attachment, to relationships, to old trauma, to agendas or expectations. We are often so bogged down that our intuition has no chance of being heard. Animals know that the more access we have to our deeper knowing, the easier it is to make a commitment in our lives. Not only to our human relationships, but to what inspires us and of course, to our animals. So often, they commit unconditionally to us, forgiving us over and over again, showering us with love when we need it and always showing us exactly what we need to see.

Many animals never experience the joy and peace of having a human commit to them unconditionally. It seems only too easy for us to break a commitment when things start to get uncomfortable. As soon as their behaviour becomes disruptive they are passed along, effectively losing the great possibilities for learning in the situation. These animals tend to shut down, choosing not to connect or commit to a human for fear of being hurt. Like so many of us, they find ways to defend their hearts from further hurt, keeping them disconnected from their human family. But, there is so much to be gained by helping them (and in turn yourself) find healing in this sometimes challenging, but very rewarding partnership. How many of us can learn from and heal with an animal who has closed down their heart?

My mare Diva was one such case. For much of her life prior to our time together, she was without strong human partnerships. At 2 years old, she was very nearly sent to an auction for being too strong-minded. Her next owner loved her but never intended to keep her. At the beginning of our partnership, she made it quite clear to me that she had no intention of spending energy or committing to our relationship. Upon working with a healer, it was understood that she felt worthless, and was not about to commit to yet another relationship that would soon end. After taking her aside and telling her plainly that we would be together until one of us left this earth, she became a changed horse, full of it to be exact! It was a profound shift. Not to say that it has not been a challenging relationship, but it has also been one of the most rewarding of my life.

If one is studied in the work of self-development, then there is an understanding that when we feel uncomfortable with something, this is often an area which holds great learning about ourselves. Animals, being some of our greatest teachers, often challenge parts of ourselves which we have buried or denied. The value of looking deeply into these shadow places of our animal and ourselves is priceless to our development of self. So when I commit to my animals, it is to their highest good as well as my own. Beginning to understand the true nature of your commitments to your animals and to yourself is the first step to strengthening your partnerships. Find the courage to commit unconditionally to learning and growing with your animals, even through discomfort. The rewards are well worth the effort!

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