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It's just a matter of mind reading

Animal communicator helps owners find out what their pets are really thinking

BY VERA LAWLOR

When asked what he wanted to talk about, English Springer Spaniel Ricky chose to bad mouth his brothers Reggie and Russell. He didn't like the rough way they played and he was especially put out by the older dog Russell, who he referred to as lacking intelligence and being on the goofy side.

"Ricky is not your typical dog," said Dr. Monica Diedrich, an animal communicator, who has a Doctorate of Metaphysics from the Metaphysical Fellowship Church in Anaheim, CA. "In Ricky's mind he is not really a dog, he only wants to play and interact with people."

Joy Sarnelli, a Rutherford native who has had dogs all her life, has been trying to figure Ricky out since she got him four years ago. This has become especially important in the past few months since he seems very discontent and his intolerance for Russell has resulted in bad fights.

Following consultations with her veterinarian and an animal behaviorist at Oradell Animal Hospital, Ricky was put on Prozac. While the medication has calmed his senses, he still picks on Russell, leaving Sarnelli wondering among other things: Why her youngest dog seems so unhappy? Why he hates Russell? And what, if anything, she can do to help him?

The Parent Paper hooked her up with Dr. Diedrich, author of the recently published "What Animals Tell Me: True Stories of an Animal Communicator" (Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul, Min. 2005), who agreed to "speak with Ricky" by phone and provide answers that would hopefully give Sarnelli leads on resolving the situation.

TRANSLATOR

"I'm not a behaviorist, I don't tell people how to work with their dogs, I'm simply the translator," said Diedrich, who first discovered her "gift" at age 8 and has worked as a professional animal communicator for 15 years. She works with an average of 1,200 clients per year from all over the world. Consultations are conducted in the home or over the phone and cost \$45 for a half hour.

"What I do is picture telepathy," said Diedrich. "What I see is a series of photographs that run one after the other like a tape. Sometimes they play over and over again until I get the message right."

Not only do these tapes provide the image of an action but Diedrich said she becomes part of that action, and can feel what the dog is feeling.

According to Diedrich, while viewing telepathic images from Ricky she saw the black and white dog sitting off to one side watching two brown and white dogs (Reggie and Russell are brown and white springers) rough housing.

Diedrich said she could feel Ricky's disgust and disapproval at the way they were playing. Although her goal during consultation is to help solve problems, and not prove she has been in touch with animals, factual information – for instance the colors of the other dogs in this case – helps provide reassurance

to clients that she may have connected with their animals. In fact, Diedrich said, if you go to a reputable communicator you should always expect to receive some factual information.

While Sarnelli isn't convinced one way or the other that Diedrich actually conversed with Ricky, she is open to trying all avenues that might help her dog.

"And, it's always fun to talk to someone who wants to talk about your dog," Sarnelli said.

According to Diedrich, Ricky "told" her that he is intimidated by other dogs and would prefer to be the only dog in the household. He also feels insecure and fears that another dog might replace him at anytime.

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Dr. Monica Diedrich reads dogs' minds - even over the telephone!

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"Some of the things she said definitely sounded like they could be coming from Ricky," Sarnelli said. "Like the fact that he spends a lot of time sitting off by himself staring straight ahead, and that he thinks Russell is goofy – that's the word I always use to describe Russell."

If the communication was actually coming from Ricky, Sarnelli feels sad that he thinks: "We are too many and you have no time for me."

COMPROMISES

Owners who are willing to really listen to what their animals say and make changes accordingly usually have success in solving behavioral problems, Diedrich said. Ricky's situation is a little difficult, she added, because what he wants is to have Joy all to himself, all of the time. Compromise is often the best way to resolve conflicts, she said.

In one extreme case, a couple called on her help because Chloe, a shepherd mix, who they found as a stray, was not getting along with their two small dogs. After many fights and attempts to solve the problem with trainers and behaviorists, the owners came to the animal communicator asking her to "tell Chloe that if she didn't stop fighting with the old dogs she would have to be euthanized."

"I was the last chance for this dog and I sat right in front of her and told her: "Everyone loves you, no one wants you to go but the two little ones are very old and you have to stop fighting with them," Diedrich recalls. "She told me she couldn't help it, she had an innate need to be the boss."

The family reached a compromise by telling her she could be the boss outside (the old dogs rarely went out and when they did it was always in the company of the owners) but inside the older male was in charge. This communication, according to Diedrich, involved the whole family including the two older dogs who "showed her through images that they understood."

"I closed my eyes and sent a clear and decisive message to Chloe that if she crossed the line just once she was a goner," the communicator said. "When I opened my eyes Chloe was approaching the older dog in a submissive manner and started licking him in the face – she had never done anything like that before."

When Diedrich checked back on the family two months later, Chloe was still obeying the new ground rules.

Meanwhile, Sarnelli is also trying to reach a happy medium with Ricky. He loves doing obedience work so she plans on taking him back to a group class where he can show off his talents while at the same time building up his confidence around other dogs, and giving him her undivided attention.

Diedrich feels the great mistake today's pet owners make is not providing their animal companions with rules and regulations.

"Our pets are like children, they need structure in their lives," Diedrich said. "When bad behavior is ignored in children (or animals) they grow up to be obnoxious."

For the animals that often means being dropped off at a shelter to become somebody else's problem. In fact the number one reason pets are surrendered to shelters is because of behavioral issues.

Often owners come to her demanding some changes of their pets.

"Most of the time any behavioral change called for is on the part of the human, not the pet," Diedrich said. "When they are willing to listen to a problem from the pet's point of view they develop a whole new understanding of their companion animal and of themselves."

Dr. Monica Diedrich resides in Anaheim CA. For more information on consultations or her book, call 714/772-2207 or go to www.petcommunicator.com.

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