

# A BLESSING FOR ANIMALS

By Debby Kay

---

**Job 12: 7-10,**

**"Ask the birds, ask the beasts and they will teach you."**

I have spent my entire life living and working closely with animals, with over 30 years of that as a communicator, healer and professional trainer. While my role more often than not has been as the teacher, in more cases than less, I have been the one learning from the animals.

The first family photos of me coming home from the hospital show a tiny hand reaching for the family beagle. That dog was my first friend and teacher. As I grew up on our isolated family farm with no siblings my Beagle friend taught me to listen, watch and be patient. I learned the language of all my animals friends and playmates. Later my career with animals included training horses and dogs for competitions, for work, for wars, and for security forces during events such as the Olympic games. I even trained birds and bugs to perform

special tasks in the name of national security. And through all these, literally thousands of associations, I gained the greatest insights and learned the greatest lessons of life. I think the vet Dr Marty Becker, author of Chicken Soup for the Cat and Dog Lover's Soul said it well in his book's introduction

"For truly, our pets lend a touch of grace to our lives. They teach us the real meaning of unconditional love and bring out the kindest and most generous impulses of humanity."

I would like to share 7 of the greatest lessons the animals have taught me with you today:

1. Have a positive approach to life, be joyful. My friend Dory here, is truly one of the most joyful souls I know. Everything goes so much easier when you keep a positive attitude, no matter what the circumstances. **Ask and they will teach you**
2. Trust and support your family and friends: cooperate. My other friend here today Erin, has taught me much about trust and supporting those around you. She has always been there for me no matter the circumstances to lend support and her trust in

me has given me strength when I thought I had none. **Ask and they will teach you**

3. Listen patiently and with your heart – I did not have an easy time in life after my family left the farm. Thankfully I had my Chihuahua, Candy, during those years. Candy would sit for hours as I poured out all my troubles to her. She never judged, she just listened and would lick away the tears in the end.
4. Be loyal – I dropped out of school when I was 16 and left home with no money and no where to go, I had little possessions and my dog. My dog never left my side which caused me to turned down offers of nicer places to stay and better jobs so we could be together. She guarded me when we were in not so friendly areas and remained a loyal friend for 20 years.
5. Be generous of yourself – don't adopt a "what's in it for me attitude". I had a Cocker Spaniel years ago when I lived on my first farm that would help with any babies that needed extra mothering. She never refused a baby, and would wet nurse stray kittens and baby pigs and help keep warm baby chicks or rabbits that lost their moms. Be generous always with what you have to give, **Ask and they will teach you**

6. Be grateful – there have been times in my past when money was scarce and I can remember once having only enough money to buy a loaf of day old bread to share with my animals. Everyone was grateful as if it was a feast of the finest foods. There was never a complaint. Be grateful for what you have

**Ask and they will teach you.**

7. Don't get angry – I had a wonderful stud dog years ago that I was showing in competition to earn his championship. Dog shows, I have to tell you, are very political and highly competitive. Well, at a show one day as I was coming out of the ring, a well known judge told me he really liked my dog and thought he was one of the nicer males he had seen in the breed for a long time. He hoped I would show the dog under him as he thought he could give the dog a higher placing than the judge I just shown under did that day. So being naive as I was, I entered the dog under this judge at the next show, thinking, well I'm going to win this one easily enough. Much to my shock I did not even get a ribbon that day. The judge who said my dog was so nice, never even so much as gave us a second look. I was furious to say the least, that I had been masterfully had by

this trickster, who just said those things to fill his ring up with many dogs to impress the officials at the American Kennel Club. Well, I waited until the ribbons were all handed out and I walked over to that judge, ready to give him a piece of my mind. But, before I could say anything, my dog walked up to the judge, looked him square in the face, and lifted his leg peeing on the judge's nice expensive suit. I did not say a word.

Animals never get angry - **Ask and they will teach you**

*Then with the entire congregation repeat the UU principle*

"We affirm and promote respect for the interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part."

Let us affirm and celebrate our connection to all of creation now, with a blessing of our animal friends present today.

The blessing of animals has very ancient roots in pagan rituals from the 3rd century, when the farm animals producing food were ritually honored and blessed for their help in keeping the people alive. There are accounts of great rituals blessing the horses of the warriors going

into battle. Later as sport hunting became popular, the hounds and horses and falcons of the hunt were blessed. But it wasn't until much later in time that the occasion grew into an event for companion animals. This tradition started from the teachings of the famous Franciscan monk, Francis of Assisi who lived from 1181-1226.

Legends have been passed down through generations that Francis's rapport with animals was so great that he preached to the birds and tamed a wolf by his words. Thus, he has become the patron of natural conservation. And so on his feast day [October 4th](#), we bring animals for blessing as a way of reminding ourselves of the beauty of all creation and our role in ensuring their care.

[GIVE Directions for how this will done.](#)

### THE BLESSING OF EACH PET (INDIVIDUALLY)

*"(name of animal) may you be blessed in the name of the divine creator of all life. May you and (the name of the "owner") enjoy a long and healthy life together and find joy and comfort and unconditional love in each other."*