

In the first issue of The Greater Cincinnati Pet Pages we discussed sending “thought messages” to your pet. In this year's edition I would like to talk to you about how animals see our thought messages.

All animals use visualization as a means of communication with us and with other animals. Certainly, animals understand and respond to our verbal and physical commands and instructions but, they also read our thoughts.

The basic difference between human and animal thought is that humans most often think in negative concepts. Animals think in positive concepts. We think “Don't do that!” Humans verbalize in words like shouldn't, can't won't, don't etc. For instance when there is a rain storm and our pet is afraid we might tell him, “The lightning won't hurt you.” We are sending the opposite message that we want to convey. We might as well be saying, “The lightning will hurt you.” The animal does not understand the negative concept. We would be much more reassuring if we said, “You are alright. Everything is OK.” If we use positive comforting words along with visualizing the animal acting in a calm manner he will feel more at ease. Use positive reinforcement - not negative. Always visualize your pet acting in the way you want him to behave. Don't visualize the bad behavior.

Words like “stop” and “no” are actually very positive words. They give a command. Often you will hear someone say “no bark” or “no jump”. This kind of command is much easier for your animal to understand than “don't bark” or “don't jump”. Keep all commands and visualizations simple. Your pet will respond much quicker.

Learning to communicate with your pet is fun for both of you and also very useful. Not only will you both have a better understanding of each other but you will be able to live together with fewer behavior problems. It is also a great bonding experience. Try it. You may discover that it is much easier than you think.