

Embracing Your Inner Furry Child

It's holiday time, and, as it's said "Tis the season to be jolly." However, there is no reason that we cannot be jolly and introspective at the same time. We can reflect upon the blessings that are ours and rejoice in them. There is no better time to love, appreciate and embrace your animal companions. Most likely, there is no one in your life who is as devoted to you and who loves you as truly and unconditionally as your pet.

In spite of the many social, religious and professional obligations we may have this time of year, it is also a time for reflection, compassion, kindness, peace, good will and generosity. It is also time to pause and contemplate the special people and experiences in our lives. Certainly, for those of us who share our lives with our wonderful animal companions, we can think about the many ways our lives have been transformed and enriched by their presence.

Their innocence and vulnerability; the purity of their hearts and spirits; their spontaneity and ability to live "in the moment"; their empathy and support; their playfulness; and affection; the joy they find in the most meager of games or attention; their stoicism and innate wisdom; their intuitive appreciation of and attunement to nature – all are gifts they bring to us. These gifts help us to revisit our own childhood innocence, playfulness and vulnerability. They also help us to rejoice in the simple beauty of Creation.

Our animal companions remind us of a simpler, quieter time when life was far less technologically complex, the world of nature was more deeply appreciated, and the world as whole at least seemed to be less dangerous and complicated. Our animal companions respond to life as it is – not as it was or as it "should" or will be. They offer a treasure trove of lessons about the purposefulness, significance and interconnectedness of every living creature.

Simply petting your animal companion can feel soothing, comforting, and healing. Embracing (hugging or snuggling with him) can also feel warm, tender and rewarding. This holiday season, find time to appreciate, be grateful for and celebrate your furry child and all he represents. His gifts are simultaneously both simple and monumental...