

VetVan

Veterinary House Calls

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Mon - Fri: 8am - 5pm

Saturday: 8am - 12pm

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Greetings to everybody...

I hope that you all enjoyed the Christmas season. It has been a busy few months for VetVan and I would like to thank all clients who have trusted me with their animals care, I hope that I have served you well. I would also like to thank all of the clients who have referred their friends or colleagues to VetVan – it is greatly appreciated.

VetVan is a unique business. When you call VetVan you can speak to the Veterinarian directly; I am always ready to discuss problems with clients and will help whenever I can. Although, due to logistic issues, I am unable to be at two places at once. At certain times of the day up to one hour is required to travel from one end of the service area to the other and on surgery days I am often busy all day; this means that I am unable to see some problems at short notice. I will always help if I can, but I encourage all people to call as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

Relationship to animals

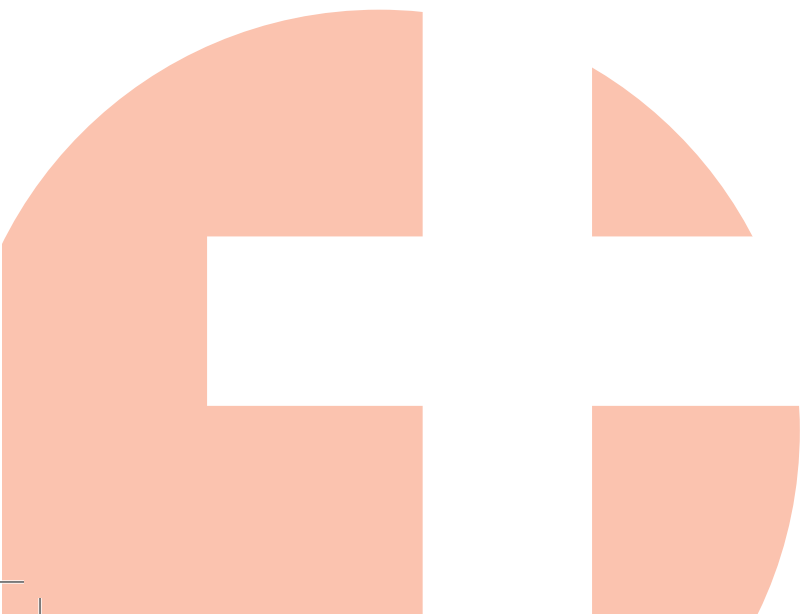


I find it very encouraging to hear clients talk about their love of animals and their wish to avoid suffering for animals. I often ponder humans relationship to animals and the links between us. In my own words, I will retell a story I heard on ABC radio from an eminent animal biologist (Jane Goodall) about this very matter.

A chimpanzee had lived in a zoo for over 10 years. He lived in a small cage with cement floors and iron bars for windows. This chimpanzee had been taken from Africa when he was 1 year old, after his mother had been shot. He had been shipped to this Zoo on the other side of the world, put in his cage and left with no contact for over 10 years. Chimpanzees are highly social and intelligent, yet this poor one was denied his mother and friends and any form of stimulation.

One day, the Zoo was taken over and the new owners deemed that this situation was not good, so they built a large enclosure surrounded by a moat (chimp's cannot swim) and provided other chimpanzees for company and stimulation.

Slowly they introduced all the new chimpanzees and eventually there were twenty in the new enclosure. Everything was going well until one of the new young males decided to challenge the senior male. This is normal and happens all the time in nature, although this situation was very different as the senior male had been kept isolated for over 10 years and had no concept of hierarchy or dominance behaviour or how to defend himself. The young male charges, his hair is bristling, he is shouting and flaying his arms and throwing stones.



The senior male is terrified; he never had a chance to learn about these things as he was taken from his mother at a young age. In his terror he climbs over a railing he shouldn't be able to get over and jumps into the moat. He starts drowning.

Beyond the railing is a crowd of people watching with fascination and fear. Included in this crowd is a family of a husband, wife and three children.

The senior male is trying to swim but is sinking and going under, the husband thinks about jumping in and helping but a keeper grabs him by the arm and tells him not to jump in as he might be killed. The keeper explains that the chimp weighs 60 kilograms and that male chimps can be very strong and potentially dangerous.

Even though he has heard this advice the husband jumps in, swims over to where the chimp has just disappeared under the water, feels around and finds his body, swims down and grabs the chimp and brings it to the surface, he can feel movements in its body and knows that it is not dead. He swims over to the embankment and pushes him up onto the bank. He then turns and swims back to his (understandably) hysterical family.

The man reaches his family and begins climbing out, yet the crowd are screaming and screaming, louder and louder. He looks around and sees that three young males have been attracted to the commotion and they are approaching the moat and the prone chimpanzee. All have their hairs bristling and they are stirred up and wild. The man also sees the senior male's body sliding back into the water (he was on a steep part of the embankment). The man looks at his family and for a moment stands there motionless, not sure what to do, then he turns and jumps back in the water.

Now the keepers have entered the enclosure and are distracting the young males. Once again the man pushes the chimpanzee up the embankment, the senior male is a little stronger and is trying to grab hold of things and eventually grabs hold of some grass and pulls himself up to a safer piece of ground.

All of this was captured on video and it was beamed around the world. When the husband was asked what made him do it he replied, 'Well, I happened to look into his eyes and it was like looking into the eyes of a man, who was asking: 'why won't anybody help me?'

I found this story so moving, I also think it helps explain our relationship with animals – I believe that we feel very similar things i.e. we are related.

Holidays



From Saturday the 8th March to Monday the 17th March I will be away and unavailable for house calls. I recommend that urgent problems be taken to either:

University Small Animal Clinic
St Lucia - Phone: 3365 2110

OR

Brisbane Veterinary Specialist Centre
Albany Creek - Phone: 3264 9400

Best wishes to everyone!



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