

I HAVE LEARNED... *By Jim Willis*

My animals have taught me to not see breeding, pedigrees, colors, physical or personality oddities. They expect to be accepted for who they are and 'improvement' can only be accomplished through love and encouragement.

They don't assume or anticipate. They have no sense of elapsed time and they live for the moment. They respond to kindness and they immediately recognize a loving spirit. They react to how they are treated and always respond appropriately. They don't judge and they forgive.

Their communication is natural and direct, without subterfuge or cunning, and every movement has meaning. They notice everything and live by their senses. They don't rely on other's opinions and they do nothing for the sake of appearances.

They respect their elders and would die for their young. They maintain a hierarchy for survival, not for prestige or arrogance. They are good to themselves. They own nothing, accumulate nothing, and are rich in their simplicity their needs are pure sustenance, and their love and loyalty are without restraint.

They do nothing to damage the Earth or threaten our environment.

As an imperfect human who respects their perfection, and that of all animals, I can only wonder if 'dominion over the Earth' was granted to the wrong species. And I consider it the supreme human arrogance to suggest that animals do not have souls. How can we flawed humans claim to be the only species created 'in His image,' when by their very nature, they are surely closer to the Creator than we are?"