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The Intuitive Connection

Breaking Broken Resolutions

With a new year comes new energy, renewed hope, and yes, those fun and sometimes creative New Year's Resolutions. Ever wonder where this tradition came from?

The very first recorded resolutions were made about 4000 years ago in the Babylonian civilization. Most of their resolutions involved returning farm equipment that had been borrowed due to the fact that their new year was also the start of their farming season. Another culture to set resolutions were the Romans. They would look at what they had accomplished in the previous year, and then set a resolution to accomplish more in the new year. Then there were the Chinese, who had an interesting resolution to clean their house from top to bottom with the coming of the new year.

Today, all over the

world, millions will set a resolution at the beginning of the new year. Sadly, only 10% will actually accomplish their goals. Most will break their resolutions after just a few weeks. Below is a list of the top 10 resolutions that are broken:

1. Lose Weight and Get Fit
2. Quit Smoking
3. Learn Something New
4. Eat healthier and Diet
5. Get Out of Debt and Save Money
6. Spend More Time with Family
7. Travel to New Places
8. Be Less Stressed
9. Volunteer
10. Drink Less

Instead of the traditional attempts to keep your resolutions, consider these alternatives.

1. Lose Weight and Get Fit (with Your Pet)

Exercise is always a hard thing to do on your own. Consider exercising with



your pet. Most dogs love to go for walks or outings. Horseback riding, believe it or not, is actually considered exercise and you can burn over 100 calories per hour. Yes, even let your hamster inspire you. When he gets on his wheel, jump on the treadmill and walk together. Ok, not all pets might work, but you can still go outside and enjoy nature. After all, the point is to get out and get moving.

2. Quit Smoking (with help from Your Pet)

Smoking is a tough habit to break. Let your pet help you. When you feel the urge to get a cigarette, seek out your pet instead. Let them comfort you and help you through the craving. They will be more than happy to help, and enjoy the attention at the same time.

If that doesn't convince you, then think about this, cigarette or cigar smoke is toxic. There are plenty of studies that talk about the effects of second-hand smoke on people, but what is it doing to your pets? Here are some facts:

- Dogs that inhale second-hand smoke are 3 times more likely to develop lung or nasal cancer.
- Two cigarette butts eaten by a puppy will cause death in a short period of time.
- Birds may develop eye problems and respiratory problems like coughing and wheezing.
- Cats exposed have a higher rate of oral cancer. It is due to the fact that when they clean themselves, they are eating the poisons that settle on their fur.
- Cats can develop respiratory problems, lung inflammation, and asthma from second-hand smoke.

3. Learn Something New (with Your Pet)

There are plenty of activities, clubs, and organizations that you can participate in that involve animals. There are agility or obedience classes for dogs, local competitions for horses (including cutting, barrel racing, dressage, and more), costume contests, bird watching, and best of show competitions. Did you know they even have agility competitions for cats now? Get out there, and have fun.

4. Eat healthier and Diet (with Your Pet)

Pet food is not what it used to

be. There are so many bi-products and fillers found that it's a no wonder that our pets are having more health issues. Its estimated that 50% of pets are now overweight. Overweight pets suffer from the same ailments as overweight people:

- Diabetes
- Kidney failure
- Spinal problems
- Joint problems
- Cancer

If you are going to change your diet, why not make a little extra and provide your pet with organic, healthy, natural nutrition. It could save your life, and theirs too.



5. Get Out of Debt and Save Money (with Your Pet)

It's true that pets cost money. But here are some money saving tips to help keep the cost down:

- Contact your local animal shelter to find out if they have low-cost or no-cost spay/neuter services.
- Most shelters hold low-cost shot clinics to help save on the cost of vaccinations.
- Purchase heartworm medication in larger quantities and save on cost and shipping.
- Check out websites for coupons and sales on flea/tick medica-

tions.

There are also lot's of activities that you can do with your pets that cost little to nothing, like going for walks or playing games. But the amount of joy and love they give you in return is priceless.

6. Spend More Time with Family (aka Your Pets)

In my house, pets are family! They are not items to be owned. They have feelings, thoughts, and opinions (sometimes rather loudly). Spending time with them will enrich their lives, and yours. If you listen closely, you can have great conversations with them too.

7. Travel to New Places (with Your Pets)

Did you know that there are over 30,000 pet friendly inns, hotels, resorts, beaches, parks, restaurants and shopping? Instead of leaving your pet at home, or at a kennel, or sitter, plan your next vacation, and take your pet with you. Here's a website you might find helpful:

www.petsonthego.com. If you are flying with your pet, make sure to check out the airline's pet policies so you can be prepared and plan ahead.

8. Be Less Stressed (with Your Pet)

Pet therapy is increasing in popularity as more and more people are recognizing the medical benefits that having a pet brings. In recent years, pet therapy has been used for patients with AIDS, cancer, the elderly, mentally or emotionally disa-

bled, and sick children. Why does pet therapy work? Unlike people, animals love unconditionally. They don't judge us or care about our weight or if our hair is gray. They provide comfort, help us to be nurturing, and in return they nurture us. We can just be ourselves around the animals, and they accept us.

9. Volunteer (at Shelters or other Animal Organizations)

Most shelters need all the help they can get. They are usually the "low agency on the totem pole" and are the last to get any funding. They are short staffed and have more animals than they can handle.

I'm proud to say that I've been volunteering at my local animal shelter for a year now. Here are some facts that I've learned from my shelter that I'd like to share:

- The shelter holds 150 animals and was filled to capacity in just a few months.

- The shelter does 3000-4000 adoptions each year.
- The shelter sends approximately 2500 animals to rescues each year.
- The shelter has only 17 staff members for the entire county.
- The shelter has approximately 100-150 volunteers that help each month.

Still don't think volunteering makes a difference?

10. Drink Less (with help from Your Pets)

I'm not suggesting that this is the cure-all end-all. If you have a drinking problem, please seek professional help. However, if you would just like to cut back, then one good way is to replace drinking with a positive activity. What's more positive than spending quality time with your pet? Too often, we get distracted by life and forget about what is important. Spending time with your pets will not only make your pet feel special, but they in turn, will give you the

gift of unending, unconditional love.



Whatever your resolution, remember this one important thing, change affects your pets. If you make lot's of changes, you need to communicate this to your pets. Otherwise, they won't understand what is going on, and you may experience some behavior issues.

Just like people, pets will make assumptions when there is a lack of communication. They will be thrilled that you are talking to them and keeping them in the loop, just like in this letter's Success Story.



Winter and Your Pets

Winter has rolled around once again, and even though it hasn't rained much (at least in California), the mercury has definitely dropped in the thermometer (yes even in California). Although they have fur, it may not protect your pets from exposure. With some help

from the ASPCA and WebMD, the following are some tips to help keep your pets safe and warm during the chilly winter season.

1. Never leave your pet alone in a car when the weather is cold. Your pet could freeze to death as the car acts like a refrigerator, holding in the cold winter temperature.
2. Antifreeze is toxic to pets. Consider switching to products with propylene glycol instead of eth-

ylene glycol, and clean up any spills thoroughly.

3. Make sure your indoor pet has a sleeping place that is warm, off the floor, and away from drafts.
4. Make sure your pet has plenty of food and water. Consider switching to a food that is rich in protein, fatty acids, or nutrients that will help naturally increase your pet's body temper-

ature and coat. Also, if you live in an area where the outdoor water source freezes, consider using a heating system to make sure your pet has water to drink no matter how cold it gets.

Animals that don't have a clean source of water will likely drink from gutters or puddles which can have pollutants such as oil, antifreeze, or other harmful toxins.

5. Give extra care for young, elderly, or arthritic pets as cold weather can make their joints stiff and movement difficult, or if they haven't built up enough of an immunity to the cold. Support them if needed.
6. Provide a warm, dry shelter for outdoor pets. Insulate the inside, and line the bottom with blankets, fleece, or even hay. Check to make sure the lining doesn't get wet as this could cause your pet to freeze to death. Also place the shelter off the ground and in a protected area (such as garage).
7. Never shave your animal's coat in the winter. If you bathe your animal, make sure they are completely dry before letting them outside.

For Cats:

1. Keep your cat inside, if possible. Try transitioning your outdoor cat to an indoor cat before the cold weather starts. Begin in early summer and use treats to coax them in. Slowly extend the time they spend indoors by

feeding inside.

2. Beware—cats like to sleep under the car's hood, which can injure or kill them when the engine is started. Bang on the hood, honk the horn, or make loud noises before starting your car to give the cat a chance to escape.

For Dogs:

1. Bring your dog inside, if possible.
2. Don't take your dog off its leash as their scent fades easily in snow or ice and they can become lost. Always make sure they have on ID tags.
3. Thoroughly wipe off your dogs feet, legs, and stomach when they come in from the snow. This helps to protect their pads and keep them from ingesting toxins and chemicals if they lick their feet.
4. Put coats, sweaters, or boots on your dog to help insulate them from the cold. Most pets lose body heat from their ears, feet, nose, and respiratory tract. If you use boots, make sure they fit snug, but not too tight as this can cut off circulation and lead to frostbite. **ALWAYS** supervise your dog outside to prevent them from getting the clothing caught or snagged on something, which could be fatal.

For Horses:

1. Don't over-groom your horse. Grooming too much can cause their natural insulation to be removed.
2. Blanket your horse when you first notice they are uncomfortable.

If it is too cold outside for you, it is likely too cold for your pet.

Signs Your Pet is Cold:

- Whining
- Shivering
- Limping
- Seems anxious
- Slows down or stops moving
- Starts looking for a warm place to go

Signs That Rain is Too Cold:

- Shivering
- Looks for a dry place
- Walking, as if the rain is weighing them down

Signs That the Air is Too Cold:

- Shivering
- Tail tucked into the body
- Looks for shelter to block the wind
- Curls up tight to conserve heat

Signs to Blanket Your Horse:

- Uncomfortable or shivering
- If your horse is young, weak, old, or recovering from illness
- If your horse is clipped/shown
- Has an insufficient winter coat

Hypothermia Symptoms in Pets:

- Violent shivering, followed by listlessness
- Weak pulse
- Lethargy
- Muscle stiffness
- Problems breathing
- Lack of appetite
- Rectal temperature below 98°F (101-102.5°F is normal)
- Coma
- Cardiac arrest

Seek out a vet immediately if your pet displays any of these hypothermia symptoms.



I received an email from Karen about her dog Tedi, whose behavior had changed. She started hiding and waking up in the middle of night, panting heavily, and running around each side of the bed, waking up Karen and her husband. Karen is a very dedicated and loving owner, and after ruling out any physical problems with the vet, she contacted me.

An appointment was scheduled, and Karen brought Tedi to meet me. Tedi is an adorable Chow-Choc lab mix with soft eyes, and a wisdom about her.

The first thing Tedi communicated was that there had been a lot of

Success Story

change recently. When I relayed this to Karen, this is what I learned.

Karen had owned Tedi for 13 years. Tedi had been the dog of Karen's first husband, who had passed away unexpectedly. She and Tedi grieved his loss together, and really bonded. Karen had since remarried, and Tedi had connected with her new husband. Karen had recently decided to make some positive changes in her life, including a new healthier lifestyle. This also created some scheduling changes.

When I relayed that the changes Karen had made were positive, Tedi still wasn't convinced. Tedi felt the need to protect Karen, and make sure she and her husband were okay.

Karen then shared with

me that a friend of her's passed away recently, bringing up the old feelings of grief and loss. This was a catalyst for the changes she had made in her life. Tedi's behavior suddenly became clear.

From Tedi's point of view, Karen was grieving again, and it was her job to take away Karen's pain, like she had before. Factor in the new changes, and Tedi assumed that Karen was preparing to leave (pass away). So Tedi started waking up each night, running around the bed, stressed (panting heavily), worried that Karen and her husband would soon depart.

Now understanding what Tedi was thinking, I was able to communicate with her. First I explained that she didn't need to take

on Karen's grief. Although Karen was sad, Tedi's job wasn't to protect her from the pain, but to support her with love. Next I explained to Tedi that the reason for the changes weren't because Karen was planning on leaving, it was so she could be healthier, and be around longer. Once Tedi understood why things were changing, she was able to relax.

Karen and her husband now communicate with Tedi regularly and Karen is proud to report that Tedi is once again her happy self, relaxed, and sleeping peacefully through the night.

Changes, even positive ones, can be stressful for your animals if they don't understand why they are occurring. The key to change is communication.



Shelter Stars

Being able to communicate with animals has been a blessing in my life. Animals have given me so much comfort and joy, that I felt compelled to somehow pay it forward. So in December 2010 I started volunteering

at the Solano County Animal Shelter. Every Sunday, I select 2-3 dogs or cats to work with. I send them healing energy and help them work out issues such as fear, trust, abandonment, sadness, etc. Some just

need to be touched and loved. Others need to understand why they are there. Whatever the need, I do what I can to help them.

I wish I could adopt them all, but my home (not to mention my budget) is

not large enough for them all. So in addition to working with the animals, I decided to start a Facebook campaign. I take their pictures and I write a bio story on their personality, and likes and dislikes that they

communicate. Here are a couple of the adorable animals that are still available for adoption at the Solano County Animal Shelter in Fairfield, CA. Each animal is assigned a special ID number that starts with A.

If you are interested in adopting one of them, contact the shelter at 707-784-1356 or visit them Tuesday-Friday 10:00-6:00 or Saturday 10:00-5:00. Don't forget to mention their ID

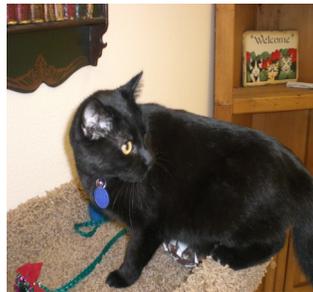
#A157259 (Sasha)



She is a 1 year old calico domestic shorthair. She was found as a stray in Vallejo on 9/8/11.

Nicknamed Sasha, she is shy, but affectionate. She likes to cuddle. She is uneasy in new surroundings, but will come to you for reassurance. Once comfortable, she will explore her surroundings, and will ask for your attention. She has a quiet gentle energy, with a soft purr.

#A109284 (Sleepy)



He is a 4 year old black domestic shorthair. He was found as a stray in Vacaville on 11/18/11.

Nicknamed Sleepy, he is on the shy side. He is afraid of noise and movement. He has a quiet gentle energy. He wants to be affectionate, but needs a little encouragement. He does like to head-butt, and once he gets comfortable, he is very loving. He has a nice, gentle purr.

#A158440 (Tobie)



He is a 3 year old brown tabby domestic shorthair. He was found as a stray in Vacaville on 10/7/11.

Nicknamed Tobie, he is a total lap cat (in fact he is laying on my lap in the photo). His only interest is in you. He is very quiet and gentle. If you listen really closely, you can hear him purr. He just wants someplace to call home, and someone to call his own.

If you can't adopt, consider volunteering. Contact your local animal shelter for more information.



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