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THE JOURNEY

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The Humane Society of the Southeast

October 2018

“A Voice for the Voiceless.”

Number 7

OUR JOURNEY

By T. Jackson



First a little background about our sweet Sara Bear. While taking a trip to Florida, I found her picture on the internet. It was love at first sight. I was looking for a playmate for our Aussie/Husky mix, Jet. He had lost his sister just a month before. I made contact about adopting her. After talking to a few people, we decided to go meet Sara. My boys and I went to Anne's house. We were not only looking for a companion for Jet, but a dog that loved kids and would retrieve a ball. She was as beautiful as her picture. Careful what you ask for! She definitely loved to retrieve, with a passion. She seemed to like me, but was a bit hesitant about the boys. However, the boys like her.

It took about a month to do the home check with Sara, and for Sara to meet Jet. This gave us time to really think about what we were doing. You

do not always know what will happen when a foster dog comes into your home. We decided to introduce her to Jet during a walk on our street. Their meeting was by no means perfect, but they seemed to tolerate each other. After about an hour, she moved in. I wish you could see the video, it was like she knew she was in her forever home.

The first month with Sara's relationship with Jet was rocky. I believe it had more to do with Jet than Sara. Unfortunately, Jet seemed to be sick not depressed. He passed a couple of months after Sara came to live with us, and he went to meet his sister, Angel, at the Rainbow Bridge.

Sara is a mix of Australian Cattle Dog, Chow and Alaskan Eskimo Dog. My experience with of these breeds is that they usually love their one person, Me. This began to cause some problems in our house, especially with our son Austin. When you have young boys (Austin, 9 and James, 12), you have activity and noise. This seems to really upset Sara, and she did not seem to understand the body language of a child. Every quick movement seemed to make Sara feel threatened, ears back and tail tucked. She began to charge Austin when he got off the sofa too fast or made a hasty movement. I had to watch her constantly. I was ready to return Sara, but after talking to Ann, we decide to go the obedience route and give it some more time.

Off to Petco, we go! The whole family took Sara to her obedience class. We needed to teach Sara that we were in charge. We all worked on heal, sit, stay, wait and leave it.



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SPRAY/NEUTER INITIATIVE

As part of our Spay/Neuter initiative we are announcing a pilot program in conjunction with Fayette County Animal Control. Jane Reed, a spay/neuter program expert, has agreed to administer this program for us. If you would like to help with funds, please donate via PayPal. All monies go directly to the animals. If you can help with transport, please contact Jane; her information is below.

Humane Society of Southeast and Fayette Animal Control Spay/Neuter Program

- Provides FREE spay/neuter services to Fayette County residents whose pets are **at risk** of being impounded.
 - Focus on **reclaimed** animals at shelter.
 - Referrals** from AC staff and field officer will include disabled owners and financially struggling. Residents who own multiple pets and cannot afford spay neuter services.
- Jane Reed** is the only person who schedules spay neuter **appointments** at Lifeline, College Park. She will work closely with pet owners and assist with transport.
- FREE services include: S/N surgeries; rabies, DHPP, nail trim, dewormer, ear mite treatment and E-collars.
- These services are FREE to **all pets in a family** both cats and dogs.

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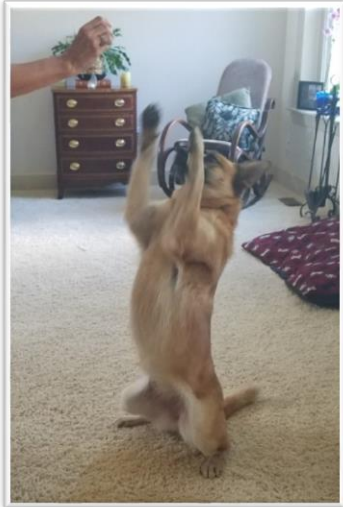
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OUR JOURNEY (Continued from front page)

With Sara, all the training needed to be positive. Each family member would teach Sara a trick. Needless to say, she can sit pretty, play dead, rollover and spin. We walked her around the store, and introduced her to other people. I also began to have Austin feed Sara. You know the old saying, "A dog would not bite the hand that feeds it." It took time, but now Austin and Sara tolerate each, too. So much so, that she will annoy Austin by bringing him her ball/toy to throw.



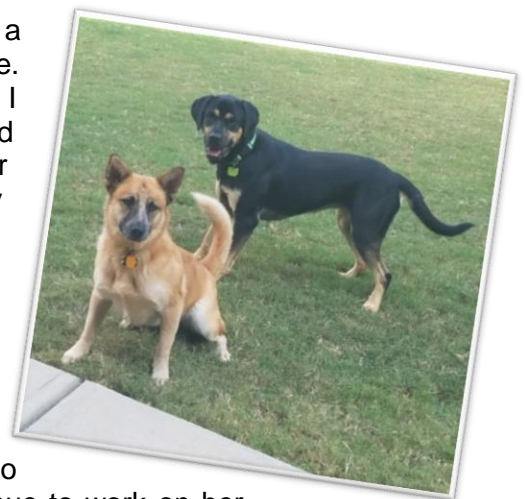
As time went by, we decided it was time to socialize her with other dogs. So a few times early in the morning, we would take her to the Pet Park. Sara was nervous (ears back and tail tucked), and she seemed to want to hover around me. After observing her for a while, we came to the conclusion that she was protecting me. To fix this, I decided to gently shoe her away, tell her to go play, and turn my back. Turning my back is my physical cue that I did not want her attention right now. It took several times, but eventually she went to play and run with the other dogs. We also took several trips and boarded her at the Dog Barn. Diane, the owner, said she would let her play with other dogs. Diane observed some different behaviors. Just like at home with my boys, too much activity made her nervous. Sara, did not like young active dogs, but she did the older gentle ones.

In September 2017, Sara became a mama to an adorable 7 week old pup named Hope. She seems to raise her like it was her own. I love to watch how they interact. I watch how Sara plays, corrects and loves this now 60+ pound 1 year old. Mama Sara controls Hope by nipping, barking or growling. I have always found it interesting how similar teaching dogs and children are. With our children, we use love, patience, understanding, consistency and a gentle correction now and again. I used the same concepts with my dogs.

When I teach one of my dogs something new, I show them what I want by guiding them into position with food and assigning a word command. Once I feel there is understanding, the food guide becomes a reward for correct response, as well as verbal praise. As in all obedience, praise and reward will become more spread out as a behavior is mastered. Gentle physical correction can be as simple as holding up a knee if the dog is jumping with a command of "no jump", or a verbal "no no or leave it" from across the room if they are touching something they should not. There is love (praise), patience (needed repetition and waiting), understanding (learned command), consistency (same expected result) and a gentle correction now and again (a reminder of an incorrect result).

Now prior to having people over, Sara gets her anxiety medication, a ball throwing session and I always greet my guests with Sara by my side. I verbally let her know that each person we invite into our home is ok. I always have my guests squat to pet her, and never reach over her head (to a dog, this is threatening). We have the guests throw the ball for her and give her treats to help her understand the new people are good. By understanding and watching her movements, I am able to direct her actions. She feels more confident. I have gone from giving her anxiety medication twice a day to only when we are having company. Occasionally, if too many people come over, I will just put her up.

Sara is a work in progress, and I continue to learn and understand her limits! I watch her body language, like pinned back ears, tucked tail, barking, lying on her back and tail wagging. Her actions and attitude determine whether or not she wants play, get a belly rub, or to be just left alone. Also, we always praise good behavior. We continue to work on her obedience around the house and in public. At our house dogs are family, but ultimately they are still animals. It is our job to keep them and others safe. We still occasionally have a struggle or two, but we work it through as a family. Sara's FOREVER Family!!!





UNDERSTANDING CAT BODY LANGUAGE

By: Brittany Cote



Cats are mysterious creatures, no doubt about that. But to understand a cat, it's as simple as paying attention. Cats are always communicating how they feel and have a pretty bad poker face. The main three ways your cat is telling you how it feels are with their tail, their ears, and their eyes.

Ears:

- **Forward in a Relaxed Position:** The cat is just that, Relaxed. He's likely comfortable, content and maybe even playful.
- **Straight Up and Tense:** He's likely very alert and focused on something.
- **Sideways or Turned Back:** This is a nervous or anxious position. Something might have spooked him, or he's stressed.
- **Straight Back and Flat Against the Head:** Angry cat warning. If the ears are pulled

back like this, the cat is very aggressive, feeling threatened, or very angry. Cats will press their ears against their head to protect them during fights, since they are more fragile, so if he's doing this, he's expecting a fight.

Eyes:

- **Staring:** A cat staring could mean multiple things depending on the situation and often is paired with the other two forms of body language. Generally, if a cat is staring at you and making eye contact, it's a form of recognition. Cats make eye contact as a kind of form of acknowledgement.
- **Dilated Pupils:** Play time! Often when a cat is stimulated, feeling playful, or is surprised by something, his eyes will dilate. Best seen when chasing a toy.
- **Slow Blinking:** This is a very good sign from a cat. The slow blink, especially with eye contact, is the cat telling you he trusts you and feels safe around you. It's also used as a friendly greeting. If you slow blink back to the cat, you're telling the cat you trust him too, and you're a friend.
- **Half Closed:** This shows he's feeling relaxed and is probably thinking of a nice catnap.

Tail:

- **Straight Up:** Happy cat! If a cat's tail is straight up in the air, or even with the top of the tail slightly curled, it means he is one happy, friendly kitty.
- **Down and Unmoving:** If the tail is down and not moving, the cat is likely uncomfortable or feeling uneasy. Something's on his mind.
- **Moving Slowly Back and Forth:** The Thinking Man statue comes to mind with this tail position. This is a sign your cat is thinking pretty hard about something, or analyzing a situation. He could be thinking about which piece of furniture to use as a scratching post next.
- **Rapidly Moving Back and Forth:** Contrary to dogs, a cat's tail wagging is not a good sign. Often paired with ears back, it means he's angry and irritated and best to leave this grumpy one alone.
- **Tail Arched and Fur Fluffed Out:** This is a sign he's feeling threatened and very scared. Cats will do this to make themselves seem bigger and scarier to hopefully ward off any threats or seem more intimidating.
- **Only Tail Fur Fluffed Out:** This can be seen as a form of excitement or the cat was startled or surprised.
- **Just The Tip of the Tail Moving:** Annoyed. This is your cat telling you that it is not amused with you or what you're doing. Kind of like how people tap their feet when feeling impatient, this is similar for cats.

When these forms of body language are combined, a cat's feelings can be pretty complicated. Breaking it down like this can help decipher your cat's moods. For example, when coming home from work or school, your cat might greet you with its tail high in the air, ears forward and giving you eye contact, which is your cat saying "Welcome home! I'm glad you're back."

No one knows your cat better than you do, so learning his body language and what he's trying to tell you will help you understand his needs better.

DIAGNOSING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN DOGS

Gary M. Landsberg, BSc, DVM, MRCVS, DACVB, DECAWBM

Director, Veterinary Affairs and Product Development, CanCog Technologies, and Veterinary Behaviourist, North Toronto Veterinary Behaviour Specialty Clinic

Many “health” problems faced by pet dogs are associated with behavior problems or unmet expectations about the pet’s behavior. Your veterinarian will first need to rule out any possible health problems that could be causing your pet’s behavior to change. For example, a medical condition could be causing your pet to urinate in the house. Your veterinarian will take a behavioral history before making any diagnosis. A behavioral history generally includes the following: 1) the sex, breed, and age of the dog; 2) the age at onset of the condition; 3) the duration of the condition; 4) a description of the actual behavior; 5) the frequency of the problem behavior (hourly, daily, weekly, monthly); 6) the duration of a typical episode (seconds, minutes, hours); 7) any change in



pattern, frequency, intensity, and duration of episodes; 8) any corrective measures tried and the response; 9) any activities that stopped the behavior (for example, the dog falls asleep); 10) the 24-hour schedule of the dog and owner, as well as any day-to-day changes; 11) the dog’s family history (in other words, are there signs of similar problems in the dog’s parents or littermates?); 12) the dog’s environment and housing; and 13) anything else the owner thinks is relevant.

You and your veterinarian should consider the “ABCs” of the behavior problem. What happens prior to the behavior (the **A**ntecedent)? What is the **B**ehavior? What happens immediately afterward (the **C**onsequences)? Because behaviors can change as dogs learn and mature, your veterinarian will also consider how the problem initially started.

Modern veterinary care includes routine screening questions about specific behavior complaints—such as inappropriate or undesirable chewing, growling, or odd behavior—in addition to routine questions that alert your veterinarian to potential medical problems. This routine screening helps establish what is normal for your dog. If your veterinarian does not ask about behavior problems, be sure to mention them yourself. Unfortunately, many owners do not report behavior problems to their veterinarians, and these problems are a major reason pets are given away or put to sleep.

Because behavioral diagnoses cannot be made on the basis of a one-time event, pet owners can complete a questionnaire at each visit to mark the patterns of the dog’s behavior. Your veterinarian can then identify whether the signs (barking, growling, lunging) create a pattern that meets specific diagnostic criteria such as fear aggression or protective aggression (see [Behavior Problems in Dogs: Behavior Problems Associated with Aggression in Dogs](#)). Both you and your veterinarian must use the same definitions for the same nonspecific signs. You both must also accurately recognize and describe behaviors that are of concern.

Video of your dog’s behavior can help ensure that your veterinarian makes an accurate diagnosis. The questionnaire relies on your description and, because of this, is more subjective. However, when combined with video, your veterinarian can use questionnaires to diagnose behavior problems. When you recognize the behaviors leading to or associated with the problematic ones, you can avoid or prevent the situation that leads up to the problem. By viewing the problematic behavior on video, your veterinarian can work with you to help treat the condition.

Owners seeking help for a behavior problem with their pet can turn to several sources. The [American Veterinary Medical Association](#) recognizes a variety of specialties within veterinary medicine. Similar to specialties in human medicine, these include veterinarians who are board-certified in surgery, internal medicine, ophthalmology (eye care), dentistry, behavior, and many other areas of expertise. Most board-certified veterinary behaviorists work in veterinary colleges or private referral practices.

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DIAGNOSING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN DOGS (Continued from Page 6)

Other resources include: the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior's [Find a Consultant](#) tool; the [Pet Professional Guild](#) for information on force-free dog training; and the [American College of Veterinary Behaviorists](#).

There are also veterinarians who are not board-certified, but who have a special interest in behavior. These veterinarians have a range of experience and expertise in the field, and many offer consultations as a part of their regular veterinary practice.

In addition, nonveterinarians sometimes call themselves behaviorists and offer counseling on behavior problems of pets. Some have a doctoral or master's degree in psychology or a related field, and some have earned a certification. Others, primarily dog trainers, have no formal education in behavior but offer advice on solving behavior problems. Owners who need help for their pet should ask about the background and training of the person offering the behavior consultation before setting up an appointment. Because many behavior problems in pets can be influenced by medical conditions, veterinarians are the professionals who can offer the most comprehensive care.

Defining the Problem

The following is a brief glossary of terms commonly used when discussing behavior.

An **abnormal behavior** is one that is dysfunctional and unusual. This is different from a behavioral complaint, which can be a normal but undesirable action (such as jumping up, getting into the garbage, or herding).

Abnormal repetitive behaviors occur when dogs do not adjust to a situation in an appropriate way, often responding with repetitive or fixed movements or actions. Abnormal repetitive behaviors include both compulsive/impulsive and stereotypic behaviors (see below). Examples include signs pertaining to the mouth (eating non-food objects, licking, gulping, and excessive eating), brain (repeated jaw snapping, light chasing), movement (spinning, pouncing), or self-directed injuries (hair plucking, excessive skin licking).

Aggression in animals is everything related to a threat or attack. There are various kinds of aggressive behavior in animals, such as territorial defense, predatory aggression, and inter-male aggression (see [Behavior Problems in Dogs: Behavior Problems Associated with Aggression in Dogs](#)). Examples of aggressive acts include biting, growling, and scratching.

Anxiety is the anticipation of danger accompanied by signs of tension (vigilance, increased movement, and tense muscles). The focus of anxiety can be internal or external.

Compulsive or obsessive-compulsive disorders are abnormal and repetitive behaviors typically done in an attempt to achieve a goal. These intense behaviors may be difficult to interrupt or be uncontrollable. They can start from normal behaviors (such as grooming or eating) and normal situations (frustration or conflict) but then progress to inappropriate situations and intensities. Some compulsive behaviors appear to be genetic, such as tail chasing in German Shepherds or flank skin sucking in Doberman Pinschers.

A dog in **conflict** has tendencies to perform more than one type of activity at once. For example, a dog may want to approach a person to get a treat, but may also be afraid of the person and unwilling to come too close. The motivation for the conflict, except for extreme instances associated with survival functions (for example, eating), is very hard to identify in animals. Conflict might result in aggression or displacement behaviors (see below).

Displacement activity is the resolution of a conflict by performing a seemingly unrelated activity. Because the animal is physically or behaviorally unable to act appropriately, it will often perform an apparently irrelevant activity. Examples of these irrelevant activities are grooming, feeding, scratching, and sleeping. It is less specific than redirected behavior, which is directed toward another target.

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DIAGNOSING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN DOGS (Continued from Page 7)

Dominance refers to competition over a limited resource (for example, a treat, a favorite toy, or a comfortable resting place). A higher-ranking animal can displace a lower-ranking one from the resource. Rank or hierarchy is usually defined by an ability to control the resource. A dominant animal is not the one engaged in the most fighting. Most high-ranking animals can be identified by the submissive behavior exhibited toward them by others in their group. Dominance terminology applies to communication between members of a single species (dog-to-dog) but does not apply to communication between species (human-to-dog).

Fear is a feeling of apprehension associated with the presence of an object, individual, or social situation and is part of normal behavior. Deciding whether a fear is abnormal depends on the context. For example, fire is a useful tool, and fear of being burned by it is normal. However, if the house were not on fire, such a fear would be irrational. If this fear was constant or recurrent, it would probably be considered an abnormal behavior. Normal and abnormal fears usually vary in intensity. The intensity increases as the real or imagined nearness of the object that causes the fear increases.

Frustration arises when a dog is unable to complete a behavior due to physical or psychological obstacles. When pets are frustrated, they can respond with redirected behavior, a displacement activity, or anxiety. For example, a dog that is frustrated by being unable to get to a cat on the other side of a fence can respond by attacking another household pet. This term, like dominance, is overused and usually undefined, which means it often is not very helpful when diagnosing a behavior problem.

Most fearful reactions are learned and can be unlearned with gradual exposure. **Phobias**, though, are profound, fearful reactions that do not diminish either with gradual exposure to the object or without exposure over time. A phobia involves sudden, all-or-nothing, profound, abnormal reactions resulting in panic. Phobias may develop quickly or over time, but once established they are characterized by immediate and intense anxiety. Fear may develop more gradually and, within an episode of fearful behavior, there may be more variation in intensity than would be seen in a phobic reaction. Once a phobic event has been experienced, any event associated with it or the memory of it is enough to generate the reaction. Even without re-exposure, such as the use of a shock collar on a dog, phobias can remain at or exceed their former high level for years. Phobic situations are either avoided at all costs or, if unavoidable, are endured with intense anxiety or distress. There also appears to be a genetic or hereditary basis for these responses in some canine breeds.

Redirected behavior is directed away from the inciting target and toward another, less appropriate target.

Stereotypic behaviors are repetitious, relatively unvaried actions that have no obvious purpose or function. They are usually derived from normal behavior, such as grooming, eating, or walking. These behaviors are abnormal because they interfere with the normal functioning of the animal.

Vacuum activity can occur when an animal cannot perform a highly desired instinctive behavior. Examples include flank sucking and excessive licking. Vacuum activities have no useful purpose.

Treatment of Behavior Problems in Dogs

The diagnosis, treatment, and expected outcome of a behavior problem vary depending on the underlying issue. Early on, owners will usually need to avoid situations that trigger the abnormal behavior. After implementing treatment techniques, the problematic situations might be slowly reintroduced under the recommendations of the overseeing veterinarian. Treatment for abnormal behaviors takes time and commitment from pet owners. Quick fixes or "magic pills" do not exist for behavior problems. In addition, the safety of household members, other pets, and the pet itself must be considered, especially in the cases of aggression. Modifying a pet's behavior involves behavior modification techniques to promote and reward desirable behaviors; the use of products that improve safety, reduce anxiety, or quicken improvements (for example, muzzles or no-pull head halters); and, possibly, drugs and supplements.

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DOLLY'S JOURNEY INTO BLINDNESS

BY: Jenny Caldarello

Finding out your dog is going to lose both eyes is simply devastating. How on earth can a dog live any kind of life without her sight? How will we help her adjust to this new, dark world? Will she ever be happy again? These are just a few of the hundreds of questions that we had when Dolly's eye specialist gave us the grim news that her eyes were not going to get better and that they were actually causing her terrible pain.

Our eye specialist was reassuring and calm, as we asked our questions about things we were reading online to help blind dogs. He didn't seem to be in favor of changing things in our home, and he believed that our Dolly would be "just fine."

I began to research everything I could find about helping blind dogs. People have posted ideas all over the internet, have written books and blogs and Facebook pages on ways to help these dogs adjust to life in darkness. There were people who attached pool noodles to every vertical surface, painted essential oils on door frames, placed carpet runners through their homes like paths through a maze. Dogs were wearing "halos", which are special harnesses with a ring at eye level, worn to prevent them from touching their heads and noses to items in the environment. There were many things to try, and we thought we would do them all!

Pretty soon, our doorways all smelled like different essential oils --- and immediately after application, our sighted dogs licked off every drop! When I asked the specialist about the idea, he answered, "Dolly already knows what every room in your house smells like." I used the rest of the oils as moisturizer for myself. Before we could purchase runners for our home, we realized that Dolly just walked as she always had, using her own pathways, which she obviously remembered. We decided she did not need any runners.

We have learned an awful lot about a dog's mapping ability and how that happens, by watching our Dolly in action. I blindfolded myself and walked around to learn what that is like. I knew where the rooms and doors were, but lacked the fine-tuning skills to find them quickly. We humans use our hands and feet to test our steps forward by searching and lightly bumping walls, stairs, doorways, and other things as we go from room to room. Dogs use their noses and their feet to do the very same thing. Dolly walks her path that she remembers, and when she comes to the end or needs to turn, she will lightly bump with her nose and then make her turns to adjust and change her direction. She uses her feet by feeling changes in the surfaces she is walking on -- the door mat alerts her that the outside door is near; the patio surface gives way to grass, where she can explore safely in the yard. She feels her way down the outside stairs with her feet, touching the next one lightly before stepping down. And she knows the stairs are nearby when the concrete changes to a wooden crosstie under her feet. Dogs make great use of their heads and their feet to help find their way.

Dogs also use their noses in a different way and their ears to navigate. I simply cannot sneak up on Dolly. She is "looking" right me the minute I can see her and she already knows I am there. She hears everything! Dolly hears our neighbors' dogs and knows they are outside, when I had no idea they were; and she barks, facing them directly. You'd swear she sees them! We can be inside our home and she alerts and rushes to the door, hearing things that I cannot hear. After doing a lot of reading, I've also learned about the amazing abilities dogs have through scent. Of course, our Dolly is a "scent hound"! I should've known she would have very little trouble getting around! She not only hears me open the door ---her head goes up and that nose sniffs the air on her way outside, no doubt telling her who or what she is facing. Then her nose hits the ground and stays there, guiding her through the yard, taking the same, exact path every single time! Her nose guides her into the woods to enjoy so many wonderful aromas to her liking! She's truly in her element outside.

Dogs do have the ability to cognitively map their surroundings. Scientists have studied this, and because dogs take "short cuts", they know where things are without always using the same route. That ability, along with the use of all their remaining senses, makes it entirely possible for a dog, like Dolly, who has lost her sight, to walk through the house and yard and take walks outside with very little trouble at all.

Through research and experience, we know that our Dolly is just fine. She knows exactly where she is. She even knows her way around the veterinarian's office, leading the way along an unseen path. Those of us whose dogs cannot see have a saying: "Blind dogs see with their hearts!"