

The Animal Line ~ March 2012 ~ Denise Johnson

"I have a companion animal who has serious physical issues and seems to be suffering."

- How do I decide when to euthanize?

- Is it best to let my companion pass naturally?

- How do I know what the animal wants and will I be forgiven if I make the wrong choices?

These are some of the most common questions I am asked as an animal communicator. The burden of medical decisions is fraught with the potential for guilt and regret as caregivers struggle with the choices. Do we restrict ourselves only to non-invasive or holistic methods, or exhaust all traditional medical options? When is surgery appropriate? What role should cost play in the decision process? How do we know when the animal prefers to leave its body instead of suffering continual pain? Many people spend the rest of their lives revisiting their actions, never confident that they made the "right" choices.



I first faced the euthanasia issue for Boo, the cat I adopted from a shelter when she crawled onto my shoulder and rubbed her face against mine, after ten days of refusing to eat or interact with visitors. At the age of fourteen, she suddenly collapsed, and we began a process of monitoring widely varying lab results as her kidneys and liver began to fail. During the next five years, she relapsed and recovered, until she could no longer step into her litter box or climb onto the bed where she slept with my husband Dave and me.

For the last several months of her physical life, Dave and I alternated sleeping on the sofa as she rested on the love seat across our living room. Feeling desperate, and reluctant to have her euthanized, we found an animal communicator who told us that Boo was ready to leave her body and beginning to do so, supported by angels.

She preferred to stay at home, and we made arrangements for a vet to come to the house, if necessary, to administer the injection. We were also told that Boo was holding on because she needed to be sure that our relationship as a couple was solid, and that we would be able to let her go. It was our duty to reassure her that we would stay together and she was free to leave her body, and we repeated these messages in the ensuing days with great love.

As time passed, she stopped eating and drinking water, and Dave injected fluids under her skin. During the final week, I could smell the decay as she dehydrated and her organ systems shut down. On the final morning, as she softly gasped her last breaths, Dave noticed that I was stroking her and replaced me at her side while I went to sit on the floor beside Kato, our Akita dog, who was keeping vigil. The room became cool and damp, and suddenly Kato made a sort of keening sound in his throat, unlike anything I've ever heard from a dog, staring intently at something I could not perceive. The moment passed, and Dave said, "She's gone." I asked, "What just happened here?" and he murmured wonderingly, "Someone came and got her."

Though we grieved, we were comforted by the knowledge that we had done what Boo wanted, allowing her to pass from her body at home in the company of her family. Any doubts we had as to whether animals lived on in spirit were erased. When Kato developed a cardiac tumor and passed the following year, he reached out to us many times before and after he left his body.

Now, as a communicator, I have the honor of working with animals in both physical and spirit form. Whether or not their human companions have allowed them to pass naturally, taken extreme measures to prolong life, or had them euthanized and later regretted the decision, the animals have one universal message. They are always happier having left their bodies, they often express satisfaction with their jobs on the Other Side, and they are, in every case, eager to assuage the guilt of the people who cared for them.

When asked about medical treatment before or after physical symptoms are apparent, each animal will have his or her own preferences as to the type and extent of treatment. Interestingly, each one will acknowledge that the human family will also have preferences, and most of the animals are willing to defer to whatever comforts their people. Regardless of what you do, if you do it from love and compassion, your animal companion will be grateful and accept your decision. Timing or style may vary, but you can feel reassured that you have acted from the heart, and the spirit of your beloved companion is on the Other Side, sending the energy of love from a higher vibrational plane. Open your heart, shed the guilt that drains your energy, and share the infinite love and gratitude your companion continues to send.