

Telling Tail Tales

We're All Connected

By Ankai Jin



We're All Connected

“Oh, my gosh! She’s so cute!” was everyone’s reaction to the tiny Golden Retriever puppy outside the pool. The puppy’s name was Mango. She was a little more than 2 months old, maybe a foot tall. The sun had set, and her soft golden fur glowed in the moonlight. After examining her surroundings, she decided to start chewing on a nearby mesh bag. As I later learned, newborn puppies love chewing on things. Although I’ve only had a few extremely close interactions with animals, the experiences that I’ve had with animals have had a huge positive impact on me. I do my best to protect animals whenever I can. Here are a few of my experiences that I would like to share:

The next time I met Mango, she had already doubled in size. I couldn’t believe my eyes that this was the same Mango I had previously pictured in my head, a tiny Golden Retriever puppy less than 20 pounds soaking wet. Her fur was darker, and her legs had grown a ton. After asking my friend, Mango’s owner, it turns out that Mango’s parents were both very big, and she would likely double in size again once she was fully grown. As I played with her more, I discovered that Mango has an extremely interesting personality. She loves discovering new things such as greeting people she’s never met and sniffing her surroundings whenever she’s outside. She’s also a hard worker, especially when it comes to food. In order to control her diet, she eats through a cone-shaped device with a small opening that contains food at the bottom. Most of the time when she’s indoors, she’s busy trying to lick bits of food from the base of the container. However, she’s most excited when she’s outdoors and will start running all over the place. “She loves going on walks and playing with other dogs,” my friend told me. Second to eating, Mango loves playing with her toys and sleeping. Her favorite toy is “broccoli.” As the name suggests, “broccoli” is a cute broccoli-shaped plushy. Whenever I see Mango, “broccoli” is always close by, whether she’s playing or sleeping. Although I only see Mango about once a week, being a witness to an animal’s growth is truly an amazing experience. Mango has inspired me to take on a growth mindset, just like how she’s grown so much over such a short period of time, and being open to new things, exactly like her personality. I am glad to have known Mango, for she is truly an amazing dog.

Rocky is another dog that I’m familiar with. He’s a small brown dog with a fiery personality. Whenever I come by to visit, he never recognizes me at first. He’ll start barking at me before I even have the chance to knock on the door! When he sees me, I try to greet him with a friendly smile, but in return, he always growls at me with his teeth bared. Five minutes in, he’s still glaring at me while making a deep growling noise from the back of his throat. It takes him at least twenty minutes to stop glaring at me. I take this as a signal that he’s now friendly, but am gravely mistaken every time, as I’m met with fierce barking and more growls. By the time he’s realized that I’m not a bad guy, an hour has passed. Finally, he’s willing to let me hold him without any complaints. At first glance, he seems hostile, but once he’s cooled down, he’s actually the exact opposite. I was curious why this

was the case, so I tried to understand Rocky's personality better. It turns out that Rocky is actually not all that brave. He tries to hide his own fear by appearing to be scary. Funnily enough, he's even scared of Christmas trees! After interacting with Mango, Rocky, and other dogs, I've come to understand that humans and animals share many similarities. Like humans, animals also have unique personalities, and they think in similar ways.

In addition to interactions with other people's pets, I've also had an interesting experience with endangered animals, bats. Squeaking and clicking sounds coming from inside my bedroom wall would always wake me up at night. At first, I thought that it must have been mice, but after calling in an expert, they checked the attic and found bat droppings. This made sense because as I learned in school, bats are nocturnal, and nighttime was the only time I heard noises. Sometimes, I also observed small black figures flying outside my bedroom window in the moonlight. The next challenge was how to safely move the bats back into nature. It was spring at the time, and baby bats had just been born and were too little to fly. In order to ensure the safety of the newborn bats, the future of the endangered species, we decided to wait until the newborn bats were old enough to fly before taking action. A few months later, we called a licensed specialist to help transfer the bats. They installed a contraption near the opening the bats used to enter and exit the wall. After installation, the device gave the bats a one-way trip to move out of the wall. A week later, the squeaking noises ceased, and it seems that they have successfully moved back into nature. I'm glad that I was able to help these bats move back into their natural habitat, as well as learn more about them through this event. There are currently more than 40,000 endangered species on Earth. Even if it's through small actions such as safely moving animals back into nature, by choosing to protect animals, as a group, ordinary citizens can help prevent species from going extinct.

Interacting with pets and wildlife has taught me a lot and has had a positive impact on my life in many ways. Additionally, just being around animals makes people's days better. I've also come to understand that all living things share universal traits. Because of this, animal behavior also represents fundamentals of human nature. In order to understand each other better, whether humans or animals, there must be mutual understanding and respect. This has been a huge life lesson for me. A future without animals and wildlife would be devastating. I will do my best to learn about and protect animals, helping humankind as a whole protect endangered and threatened species, ultimately preserving our biodiversity.



Palo Alto Humane Society

PO Box 60715

Palo Alto, CA 94306

pahs@paloaltohumane.org

p 650.424.1901

www.paloaltohumane.org

