

THE POSITIVE FIELD OF LEADERSHIP BUILDING

By Karla Boyd



*People of certain ancient times appear to have been great virtuosos in the art of living, particularly skilled in the delicate science of being in right relations with everything, including animals. These people recognized the inseparable unity of Creator and creation. They were able to blend themselves with the universal Presence. Power and Purpose that is forever moving back of all things, in all things and through all things. Life to these ancients was an all-inclusive kinship in which nothing was meaningless, nothing unimportant, and from which nothing could be excluded. They refused to make any separating barriers between mineral and vegetable, between any vegetables and man, or between man and the great Primal Cause which animates and governs all things.*

From *Kinship with All Life* by J. Allen Boone

*Your instinctual energy is the number one most important tool you can have when it comes to influencing the behavior of... animals and all life.*

From *Be The Pack Leader* by Cesar Millan with Melissa Jo Peltier

## THE POSSIBILITY

Every single one of us who loves animals has at one time or another felt this kinship with an animal—some moment out of time when we noticed the breath of a baby calf just born, or felt the nickering of a horse draw us in, or a particular smile of the photogenic camel who retired from circus—and could not resist the admiration. Of it might have been an outing at a chimpanzee refuge where we touched fingers across the fence that separated us and we both sighed. Of course it could be the daily wags of our beloved companion dogs that

tirelessly greet us after a weary day in the world. Or the way our favorite cat curls up asleep in the window, warming herself in the sun. Those are the moments that we allow ourselves to connect beyond that great divide of our self-made separation. Something new and bigger gets opened up and fulfills us and somehow helps us to carve out a new destiny in connection with “other.” In short, we connected with our shared joy, our joie de vivre.

### **ACTING FROM GROUNDED POSSIBILITY AND ALIGNED ENERGY**

Nothing is more powerful than our connection with Mother Nature or our Ground of Being that allows us to engage our world. When we are awake and present to the living pulse of life around us, when we can see in the other that spark of a soul, we are in a field of connection that lets us truly experience our place of belonging. When, in the roots of our being, we experience our lives in connection to this larger tapestry of life, we know who we are. We realize our contribution matters to the wellbeing of the whole. That in turn opens the door to wanting to deepen our contribution to this amazing life fabric. This contribution also carries with it the mantle of being accountable to the lives before us.

In short, we move into greater relatedness with earth’s people, animals, and all life, including the great mystery which many call the Divine. We discover the value of giving to life from our developed contribution to it. We also experience gratitude for others’ contribution to our lives and that of those whom we love.

Recently a colleague, a contributor to making the world a better place, confided that she had just heard of one more tragedy of animals dying poorly and a tragedy as well for the person who assumed ownership of the animals. What did she do? She left the social gathering where she was, a place too small for her grief. She went home. There she lay down with her two dogs and simply allowed herself to be with them in grief and gratitude for their lives. Her dogs responded by doing what dogs do best. They snuggled in. They were not looking for something else to do. They responded. This is the engagement of belonging, where everybody in the conversation mattered. The dogs counted in their giving. Their person made a difference in sharing her grief. Rested, my colleague recovered faith in the goodness of life and renewed her commitment to her work.

I am no longer amazed and yet I never tire of the many adults who sit around dinner tables sharing remarkable, and often quite ordinary, experiences they had with animals; a deer in the yard, a horse who opened hearts or the dog’s new game in town. That kind of inspiration feeds our soul. It lets us begin again. It wakes us up. It bridges us back to why we care. It stops the mental chatter. It lets us be human.

Someone one asked what would go away if all the animals were extinct. Maybe our hearts, our spirits and souls. Our capacity to be in a deeply somatic relationship with all life. Gratefully, that is not the case.

As Jane Goodall points out in her latest book, we have reason to hope. This is testimony to the vital connection we all have with the world around us. This is testimony to the fundamental impact the world has on us. This is the contribution the animals offer us; they lift us up and out of our despair. They play with us and they call forth a deeper meaning with our lives. They call us out of our stupor and entreat us to help make the world a better

place. They inspire us to make better choices that go against our conditioning, like becoming vegetarians. They remind us to stop and feel our lives, to pause and take time for them.

Here is a promise we can make to the animals. Renew our commitments to them. Engage their contributions. Value them for their existence. Bring them into our everyday experience by blessing them. We can make decisions to stop abusing or exploiting them. We can inspire each other and offer reasons for hope for the animals and their stewards. We can begin right now.

Listening into the still accessible conversation between the rocks, trees, horses, dogs, frogs and all creation allows us to reclaim our place of belonging. We learn to communicate in harmony and relationship with the “other” from a shared energy field. One of my friends is a very earnest fellow, a serious intellectual and scholar, a strong, steadfast meditator. He tells me that routinely on his walks he sustains his sense of ardor for life by hugging a tree. It is this kind of connection that lets all those words come to life and his meditation unite him with his roots. It is this connection that lets him feel the shared field of energy that is the ground of all our being.

When we engage this magical, fluid conversation with the world, we can become inspired with our new direction and passion. Immersing ourselves back into nature, we become one with our animal kin, we open to a deeper heart connection. We feel more aligned with our bringing value to our world. We take bigger risks. We care more. We feel a sense of belonging and purpose, a connection with mattering in the world.

Can there be more admirable leaders, joyful and, in partnership with all that is, creating positive change for animals and our world? What kind of world do you imagine when the leaders are inspired by nature and in collaboration with the animals?

Namaste places our offers in nature to help you rediscover this basic conversation with all life. This connection lets you align with your joy and faith in the possibilities to create a new world. This faith and joy allows for the best of outcomes with everyone happy and in partnerships that flourish. We help you come into a more relaxed and open connection with nature and the animals. In nature, you drop the mind’s incessant chatter, scheming and strategic planning. You drop into the spacious connection with the natural world around you. This world informs you in fresh and innovative ways that move your projects forward. You can then incorporate these new ways with your coworkers, stakeholders and those you serve. The animal partners will be with you in your leadership development, not as patients or rescues, but to share new possibilities. The horses show you how to be better partners and better leaders.

By going to nature and the animals, we become more intrinsically connected and resourced in our leadership strengths and styles. We revitalize our missions of making the world better for the animals by being contributed to by them. By becoming a team. By joining up as a herd in motion, fluid, alive, engaged, empowered and turned on.

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SOL for Animal Stewards will help you engage into powerful, dynamic partnerships that infuse you with new spirit in relating to everyday life. What we offer through our SOL programs is an essential way for you to reconnect with your core values and rediscover your passion and vision. The horses will infuse you with new spirit and a remembering of what it was like to stand at the edge of the ocean and smell the breeze, or to stand on the mountaintop and feel the majesty of the world. It will awaken you to your senses that connect with spirit. Where else can you find this kind of door that lets you discover how to best lead the new way?

When we see the world in relationship with us and us with the world, the very nature of the projects and animals we serve nourishes us, informs our creativity and revitalizes us daily. In our work, we visit Dog Hollow or the Cat Sanctuary to meditate, share affection, be inspired for our day of work. We visit the cows, horses and sheep to reflect on how best to move forward or maybe, if even for a few moments, to kick back and just relax. We sit with the elephants and chimps to remind us that we are all interwoven in the world to save all our lives.

Our animal friends make us laugh; they invite us to take our work and ourselves lightly. They show us the pain of their journey. They nurture us and we them. They do awaken our grief about the callous ways we treat each other and our animal kin. These friends often fly up higher onto their perches, chirping out cheerful and highly spirited songs. They remind us to celebrate our success and to feel gratitude for the everyday miracles. They say stop and spend some time with me! Remember me. I am the reason you are here doing all this work. Let us be happy together for a little while. Come back and give me a walk. We will both feel better about our world.

The animals are touchstones for our days. They set the standard for how our work needs to flow and how we need to relate. These animal-partner encounters often connect us back in time with the animal kin of our earlier lives that brought us into our steward work in the first place. There is more hope as we become more aware of our gentle, big-hearted life breathing in rhythm and sanctuary.

