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Jonathan Mitchell

Jonathan is an animal behaviourist at the Natural Animal Centre and consults for Jo Foster Animal Behaviour seeing Horses, Dogs and Cats who have behavioural

problems. To book a consultation with Jonathan contact Jo on 07917 432392

animal behaviour problems?

Book a consultation for your horse, dog or cat with Jo.



mobile 07917 432392

email: jo@jofoster.net web: www.jofoster.net

12 St Marys Street • Bungay • Suffolk NR35 1AX

ANIMAL CONSCIOUSNESS

JOHNATHAN MITCHELL

Have you ever looked at your dog, cat or horse and been amazed at their intelligence? We hear about elephants who can paint and dolphins who can think and we credit them with some level of consciousness, so should we be giving the animals, we choose to share our lives with, that same label?

The study of animal consciousness is possibly the last true mystery. Scientists like giving things neat definitions to explain them, but to date no-one has been able to define consciousness. However if we take a moment and think about the look you get from your cat, or the cute puppy-eyes you get from your dog – you know the one which makes you get up and feed them or stroke them sometimes for hours - and ask yourself " have they just trained me to do what they want?" Is it possible that they are consciousness?

Animal behaviourists now recognise there are a number of ways we can prove consciousness in animals. If we look at where our pets have evolved from:



the dog - from a pack living hunter of prey 4 - 5 times its size,
the cat - from a tree dwelling social feline,
the horse - from a plains dwelling flight animal,
then we see how their consciousness has evolved too. So do you think their consciousness would be different from ours? If so would this help explain why our pets seem to have so many behaviour problems living in a human world?

So what do we do as pet owners? Let's just for a minute, give them the benefit of the doubt and say they are as conscious as you or I. Would it change how we treated them? How we manage them? How we train them? At the very least it should give us a more compassionate approach to our animals.

For more information on our truly compassionate approach to behaviour problems in horses, dogs and cats please come and join us on 30th Sept at Ilketshall St Andrew village hall for our talk on animal behaviour. For your free ticket contact Jo on 07917 432392 or visit www.Jofoster.net