



The PETA Practical Guide to Animal Rights: Simple Acts of Kindness to Help Animals in Trouble

By Ingrid Newkirk

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With more than two million members and supporters, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is the world's largest animal-rights organization, and its founder and president, Ingrid Newkirk, is one of the most well-known and most effective activists in America. She has spearheaded worldwide efforts to improve the treatment of animals in manufacturing, entertainment, and elsewhere.

Every day, in laboratories, food factories, and other industries, animals by the millions are subjected to inhumane cruelty. In this accessible guide, Newkirk teaches readers hundreds of simple ways to stop thoughtless animal cruelty and make positive choices.

For each topic, Newkirk provides hard facts, personal insight, inspiration, ideas, and resources, including:

- How to eat healthfully and compassionately
- How to adopt animals rather than support puppy mills
- How to make their vote count and change public opinion
- How to switch to cruelty-free cosmetics and clothing
- How to choose amusements that protect rather than exploit animals.

With public concern for the well-being of animals greater than ever?particularly among young people?this timely, practical book offers exciting and easy ways to make a difference.

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Editorial Review

Review

“This book is the ultimate animal rights encyclopedia?chock- full of facts and resources that will guide you at home, in the marketplace, in life.” ?Woody Harrelson, actor

“A terrific book that uplifts you by showing you there are easy, sensible, clear ways to help animals that you might never have dreamt of.” ?Martin Sheen, actor

“This guide eloquently and truthfully spells out the situations animals find themselves in due to mankind's arrogance, and it offers us viable options that help both the animals and ourselves.” ?*Nigel Barker, photographer and judge for America's Next Top Model*

“A great read for those of us who believe that we should no more discriminate on the basis of species than we would on the basis of gender, race, or religion.” ?*Famke Janssen, actress*

“Ingrid voices the horrors of animal abuse and shows us how we can lead a truly compassionate life. God bless Ingrid!” ?*Bea Arthur, actress*

About the Author

INGRID NEWKIRK has appeared on many national television radio shows, including *The Today Show*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Nightline*, and *20/20*, among others; she was the subject of the HBO special, *I Am an Animal*.

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Chapter One

Not “What” but Who Are Animals?

To comprehend the organs of the horse,

is not to comprehend the horse himself.

—LIN YUT AN, Chinese Philosopher

Let me start with a true story about a rhinoceros. These animals are hard for people to understand. They aren't furry or big- eyed or easy to pet, and a person might be forgiven for imagining that a charging rhino could flatten you like a locomotive.

Anna Merz, the founder of the Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary in Kenya, has lived with rhinos for many years. She now realizes that these enormous animals live in a completely different sphere from ours. They are the Mr. Magoos of the animal kingdom, barely able to see a thing, and their world is dominated by smell and hearing. Anna also realizes that “different” does not mean “stupid.” In fact, the rhinos’ communication

system is quite complex. To communicate, they use body language, a wide variety of calls, and even urine or droppings as markers. Perhaps most interesting, they use a highly complicated method of regulating their breathing, a sort of Morse code, to talk to one another.

Rhinos are not alone here. Behavioral biologists have discovered “seismic communication” in elephants and mice. Male Malaysian tree frogs use their toes methodically to click out messages, and female frogs send electronic signals by vibrating the small saplings in which they live.

People may fear rhinos because they do not understand them, but Anna Merz says that fear is very much a two-way street, with most of the traffic coming from the opposite direction. “Most wild rhinos are obsessed by their terror of humans” because people have chased them, separated them from their calves, and slaughtered family members in front of them, cutting off their tusks for sale as aphrodisiacs.

The animals’ fear makes close observation difficult. In the course of her work, however, Anna was lucky enough to raise and release a bull rhino called Makara, who had never witnessed an attack by hunters and so never learned to fear people. Over time, he actually came to regard Anna as a friend.

On one occasion, Anna was out with a tracker when the two of them saw a rhino moving very slowly toward them, looking very odd. When he got close, they saw it was Makara, and that he was completely entangled in barbed wire.

Barbed wire is terrifying to animals. When horses get tangled in even a little piece of the stuff, they invariably go wild with panic. Makara had recognized the sound of Anna’s car engine and had come to her for help.

Anna got out of the car, and Makara, although trembling all over, gave her the greeting breathing. Somehow, Anna managed to get a handkerchief between Makara’s eye and the jagged wire that was cutting into it, then took off her jacket and worked it under the wire that was cutting into his huge thigh. Anna and the tracker had no wire cutters with them, so the tracker used his cutlass and a flat stone to cut the wire while Anna disentangled it as it came free.

Anna talked reassuringly to the big bull rhino for the forty minutes or more it took to get the job done. The whole time Makara stood stock-still, except for the tremors that shook his body.

When the last bit of wire fell away, he breathed a grateful good-bye and moved slowly back into the bush.

Anna knew she had witnessed an act of outstanding intelligence and courage. Wire is terrifying for animals to comprehend, yet Makara had known to come for help. Still more incredible was the control he had exercised over himself while he was being slowly extricated, although the process must have been painful to him. And, although Makara knew Anna’s voice well, she had never before attempted to touch him.

Perhaps if we could sit rhino hunters down and get them to see that a rhino is not just an object to line up in their sights, not just a meal or trophy on the hoof, but a living, thinking, feeling player in what behaviorist Dr. Roger Fouts calls the “great symphony of life in which each of us is assigned a different instrument,” it might be harder for them to raise their rifles to their shoulders and blow these magnificent beings to kingdom come. Perhaps not. But lightning-quick realizations do happen.

Take, for example, a case in upstate New York one winter when the lakes and rivers were frozen solid. Two hunters, a father and his son, were out looking for “game,” when they came across a deer lying on the ice in the middle of a frozen river.

Seeing them, the deer struggled to get up, but the slippery surface prevented her from rising. Every time she struggled, she fell back hard on the ice, her legs splaying out from under her. The hunters stood back and watched her trying to right herself, each time without success, until she seemed too exhausted to try again.

The father and son skated cautiously up to the doe. Like most hunters, they had never been really close to a live deer before, except to deal a final blow to their prey. The son, a man in his twenties, said later that when he bent down and put out his hand, he was afraid she would bite him. He reached out slowly, and the deer leaned forward and gently smelled the back of his hand, then looked up at him with her big eyes. The younger man began petting her.

The hunters found themselves in a predicament. Things were different. Somehow, they could not bring themselves to shoot this animal who, lying at their feet, as the son said, "looked like a big, old, sweet dog!"

The father and son found a nylon rope in one of their backpacks, and to their surprise the deer let them put it under her rump. Then, working in tandem, they started pulling the deer carefully across the ice toward the bank. It was hard work, and about every ten minutes they collapsed to rest, the three of them sitting close together on the ice until the father and son caught their breath. Then they pulled again, and the deer sat there quietly and helplessly, knowing they were all in this together.

When they finally got to the shoreline, the deer put her hoofs on the snow- covered earth, balanced herself, and stood. But now she saw the men as friends, rescuers, and was reluctant to leave. The three just stood there together, stock- still except for their labored breathing until, eventually, the hunters decided they must shoo her away.

Later, the younger hunter appeared on television, showing his home video of the incident and saying nothing could ever be the same again. He can't hunt deer any longer because he sees them differently now.

If this wonderful sort of breakthrough happened every day to people actively engaged in harming and killing animals, we would have a peaceful revolution on our hands. Hunters and slaughter house workers and people who steal cats to sell them to schools for dissection would not see animals as inconsequential and unfeeling commodities or as enemies. Animals might come to be viewed in the way Henry Beston, an English philosopher, saw them— as members of "other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time."

Most of us can't imagine picking up a firearm to slaughter a deer or a rhino. We never meet or come to know the animals we ourselves harm, directly or, far more likely, through strangers. Because we haven't really thought much about it, or don't imagine there is a choice in the matter, we buy products and ser vices that provide the funds to pay others to put harsh chemicals down beagles' throats, to castrate lambs without anesthetic, to shoot mother orangutans out of trees, and to build tiny cages in which foxes and lynx live until their necks are snapped and their pelts turned into the fur trim on winter jackets and gloves. These experiences are all very real to these animals, who aren't lulled into acceptance, as we are, by the myths about humane treatment and necessity, and who aren't distracted, as we are, by the pretty packaging, alluring descriptions, and upbeat marketing that surround almost everything we buy, from floor cleaner to circus tickets.

Although anyone who has taken Biology 101 would agree that animals are not inanimate objects, people often treat them as though they have no more feeling than a desk or a chair. Stop and look at the images of animals offered to us by fast- food companies. Animals are converted from flesh and blood into caricatures to make us feel comfortable about our complicity in their slaughter: happy chickens in little aprons dance their way merrily across the sign above the fast- food restaurant; a cute baby pig wearing a chef's hat stirs the pot. Similarly, to nip children's inquiries in the bud, the research industry sends colorful posters into schools, dishonestly depicting the rats it poisons and kills by the millions as cute cartoon creatures, snuggled

up in cozy laboratory homes. And so it goes.

Walt Whitman saw things somewhat differently. He wrote:

I believe that a leaf of grass is no less than the journey work of the stars, And the ant is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren, And the tree- toad is a chef d'oeuvre for the highest, And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven. And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery, And the cow, crunching with depresso'd head surpasses any statue,

And a mouse is enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

To the outside observer, the human race seems not to agree. It has separated the entire animal kingdom into two parts. Humans are given the status of gods. We can do anything we please. We can take baby orcas away from their loving families at sea and put them in a SeaWorld tank for visitors to gawk at, or we can destroy scores of animals' habitats to build a new driveway or roller rink. Quite separate from us are all the other animals, be they our closest living relatives o...

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