

# The Human Animal Bond

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Coarse 101  
Module 4

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# The Human-Animal Bond

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- Possession
- Pet
- Child

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The human-animal bond is an important part of working in an animal clinic. As you have probably realized, there are different types of pet owners and the category they fall into depends on how they view their pet. They can be categorized as possession, pet or child.

# A Possession or Property



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Some believe that owning a pet is like owning a car. They consider the pet property and typically you only see this animal when it is ill, and has been ill for a period of time. The owner has finally decided that they should bring the animal in, but they do not want to pay a lot of money to treat it. They feel like the pet is a nuisance and unworthy of them spending any amount of money on it. After all, they can just get a new one.

# A Commitment



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Other clients understand that having a pet is a commitment. They come in regularly for vaccinations and they do bring in the animal if it appears ill. These owners are willing to pay for blood tests to try to diagnose the animal's medical problem, but they may not be willing to take it to a specialist if recommended.

# Almost Human



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The other owners do not believe that their pet is an animal at all. It is a mutated human which can comprehend everything the owner says, and the owner can understand what the animal says. These animals sleep with the owner, are in family portraits, and if they have a slight cough, the owner is racing in like it is a full-fledged emergency. They are willing to do whatever it takes to find out what is wrong with their "precious baby" and to treat it.

## Best Fit For Your Client



- Watch their interaction
- Determine their fit
- Adjust Accordingly

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Of course, some clients may fit two of these categories. As you observe the way a client relates to the patient, you will be able to determine which category they best fit into and behave accordingly. The third type of client is the client you have to be aware of when it comes to understanding the bond that exists between humans and animals.

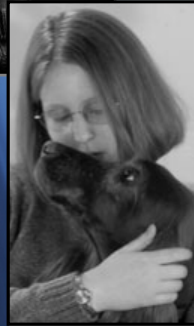
# A True Family Member



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This bond has existed to a certain extent for centuries, but it has only been within the last 50 years or so that the animals have become family members. In some cases, these pets even get Christmas presents from Santa and have their own Christmas stockings so that they do not feel left out.

# The Grieving Process



- Treat the pet as a family member
- Allow the owner to grieve
- Be sympathetic and empathetic
- Remember the grieving process is the same as it is for humans
- You can leave a lasting impression

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When a beloved pet is ill, you must behave toward that pet as you would a grandmother who is seriously ill. The owner will believe that your veterinarian is a true angel if the pet gets well. If the prognosis is grave, the owner will begin grieving just as they would if they had found out a human they are extremely close to is seriously ill. You must be sympathetic and empathetic to these owners. If they want to sit in an exam room with their precious pet on their lap all day long, let them. Grief has several different aspects to it and some clients may go back and forth between the levels. There is no difference in the grieving process, whether the grief is for a human being or for a beloved pet. You must always remember, the impression someone gets during a crisis is the impression they will keep forever.

# Euthanasia



- Use a different room than the exam room
- An owner may choose euthanasia
- The owner may bring in a new family member

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If at all possible, euthanasia should not be performed in the exam room you use most often. If an owner elects euthanasia for a pet and down the road brings in a new member of the family, he/she will not want to go to the same room that was used the last time he/she saw his/her prior pet alive. Some clinics even have a special room used only for euthanasia. That way the rest of the clinic will not be associated with one of the hardest decisions some clients have ever had to make.