

# The cat whisperer

## With help from a pet communicator, Rich Warren talks to troubled feline Lucy

by Rich Warren

Remember Lassie? The courageous collie would charge into a room, barking frantically, and someone would leap up and say, "What's that, Lassie? Timmy's fallen off a cliff and is hanging from a branch? Show us where he is!"

Sound implausible? As it turns out, there may be real-life Doctor Doolittles among us. Called animal communicators, they "talk" with pets nonverbally, using intuitive abilities they say humans have suppressed but can regain by clearing their minds and tuning into the telepathic energies all creatures radiate.

"I hear them like I hear you," explained Morgen Espe of Worthington, who will present a two-day course on the subject at Pearls of Wisdom bookstore July 14-15. Morgen has transcribed entire conversations with pets, located lost animals by describing what they were seeing, and is a fervent believer in our pets' abilities to reveal the deeper rhythms of nature.

"They have so much to teach us," she said. "Communicating with them is very spiritual."

As the roommate of three feline furballs—Ernie, Lucy and Buster—I figured I could benefit from Morgen's counsel. The four of us already communicate in a special hybrid language I fear my neighbors will overhear, kind of a cross between babytalk and gibberish. The cats have picked up a number of words along the way and can sometimes understand short sequences like "No tuna now, Ernie." It's a modest beginning, but I figured we might eventually move toward subordinate clauses and irregular French verbs.

Basically, we're a happy family, but we have our issues. Lucy and Ernie squabble frequently, and Lucy—a beautiful and high-spirited calico—is prone to temperamental outbursts with guests, some of whom refer to her as "Lucifer." She's so misunderstood. I honestly believe when she leaps at someone's hand, she's merely mistaken it for a gerbil.

But it's Lucy's disconcerting "Maybe I will, maybe I won't" attitude toward the litter box that drives me most to distraction. So when Morgen said she preferred to give quality time to just one cat, I settled on the vivacious but troubled Lucy.

We met at Pearls of Wisdom. Morgen is a warm, amiable woman whose love for people and pets is immediately apparent. "It's nice to meet you, Lucy," she cooed, but Lucy, her nerves jangled from the ride in the car, forgot her manners and failed to reply.

Morgen and I chitchatted while Lucy relaxed, Morgen occasionally calling out pleasantries like "I love you, Lucy," and stroking her ears. Lucy ate it up, which is odd. Usually she loves men but is completely indifferent to women.

According to Morgen, that's because Lucy, who I adopted as an adult from Cat Welfare, was once owned by a clingy woman who wouldn't give her any personal space. Lucy had begun sharing these intimacies with Morgen, who'd seated herself cross-legged on the floor, shut her eyes and started sending out silent questions. I was astonished to see Lucy sit still, perk up her ears, and stare at Morgen with keen interest. Then her telepathic communiqués came in a torrent.

What does she think of her home? "It's safe. It's full of boundaries."

Her opinion of Buster? "Buster's a dude. I like Buster."

What about her rival Ernie? "I love Ernie,

but he's very bossy."

And finally, what does she think of me? "He's my life. He's the king of our castle. I adore him."

I was so taken aback I blurted out, "Well, bless her heart!"

Lucy's reply? "No, Daddy, bless *you*!" Later, she confided to Morgen, "I delight in his beingness." It was a heartwarming moment.

Evidently, there are elements of Lucy's rich interior life she chooses not to reveal. Morgen speculates Lucy and Ernie's noisy disagreements stem from Ernie's attempts to get Lucy to "lighten up."

And the litter box thing? Morgen wasn't sure. Possibly it's a cry for attention, she said, but I had my doubts. If anything my cats get *too much* attention. The solution, Morgen told me, was constant praise and positive visual imagery of what was wanted. I gathered that I needed to carry in my head a picture of a litter box with poo *inside* it.

Then it was time for Lucy's "healing," an unexpected part of the bargain for both of us. "I'm not broken. You don't need to fix me," Lucy told Morgen, but nevertheless flopped obligingly on the floor and permitted Morgen to stroke the air above her, scanning for potential health problems.

There were a few worrisome things—a weakened hip, liver toxins, chronic congestion. From Lucy's root chakra at the base of her spine, Morgen detected some major unresolved fear issues. I doubted my insurance would cover psychiatric counseling for a 'fraidy cat, but fortunately a deep sigh from Lucy revealed she'd had "a really big release."

As we parted, Morgen warned me to look out for subtle changes in our home dynamics and to work hard at those positive visualizations. I'm happy to report Lucy and Ernie's fighting has been reduced to occasional sulky tiffs. Apparently Lucy came home with a new sense of empowerment.

Then one morning I discovered a brown stinky pile in the back hallway, several yards from the litter box, not several inches as it had been before. Obviously a major statement of some sort. I tried to hide my dismay, but I'm sure I sent out vibes of disgusted disappointment, causing Lucy to flee in panic each time I entered a room. So I worked instead at radiating love and happy thoughts about litter boxes. She stopped running.

Finally I sat down as Lucy groomed herself and silently sent forth the question, "Why, Lucy, why? Why'd you do your doo-doo there?"

After a minute, she pricked up her ears and looked at me the same way she'd looked at Morgen. I tried to clear my mind to read her signals. But Lucy just picked herself up and stomped away. It didn't take telepathic abilities to read the disdain in her face. It said something like, "Shut the hell up."



top: animal communicator Morgen Espe; bottom, Lucy