

LEVELED Book • S

Animals Feel Emotions



Written by Kira Freed

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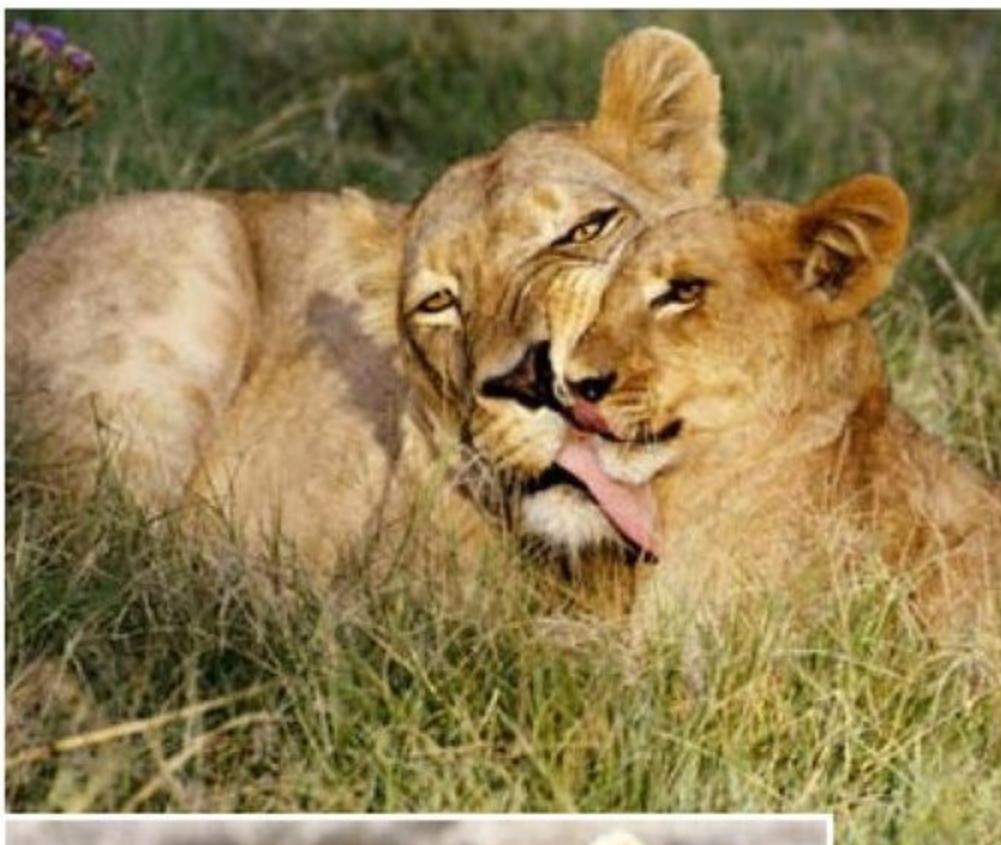


Introduction

Do you think animals are capable of feeling love? I am convinced that animals feel love, as well as many other emotions. Many pet owners and people who work with animals agree with me.

However, many scientists do not go along with this idea. To them, what you and I consider animal emotions are really **instincts**. Instincts are built-in behaviors animals do without thinking that are designed to keep them alive.

In this book, you'll read amazing stories about animals that I believe show that they aren't just behaving on instinct. The stories include tales of **loyalty**, friendship, tenderness, **compassion**, and parental care. As you read, think about how humans would behave in similar situations. When you finish reading, I'm convinced you'll agree that animals can and do feel love.





Echo with members of her herd

An Elephant's Dilemma

Echo was the highest-ranking female in a herd of African elephants being filmed for a wildlife movie. Soon after she gave birth to a male calf, it became clear that the baby was unable to stand. His front legs were bent at the wrist joints, and he couldn't straighten them. He kept raising himself up on his hind legs but couldn't get his front legs to work properly. Echo tried to lift the calf with her trunk, but he simply couldn't walk.

An elephant herd depends on its head female for leadership. It was soon time for the herd to move on to search for food, but the young calf would never be able to keep up since he couldn't walk. Echo didn't want to be separated from the herd, but she refused to **abandon** her new son, Ely. Elephants can survive for several days without food and water, but it's a big risk to stay in one place for too long. Echo had to choose between the herd and her son.



Elephants on the move



A baby elephant sleeps under its mother's legs.

While most of the herd left to search for a new watering hole, Echo and her daughter Enid stayed with Ely. It was hot, and they were soon out of food and water. Echo and Enid managed to move Ely to a small mud hole to splash themselves and the calf with water. Again Echo tried to get Ely to his feet, but he screamed. Because he couldn't stand, Ely was unable to nurse properly. The little guy was soon close to starving. Echo still did not abandon him.

Somehow, the calf survived for two days. On the third day he started putting the bottoms of his feet on the ground and trying to stand up. He kept standing, falling, and trying again. Amazingly, Ely was **eventually** able to walk, and the three found and met up with the rest of their herd.



Elephants at a watering hole

The filmmakers figured that the calf was so large that his front legs were locked in an unnatural position while inside his mother. Somehow Echo knew that Ely just needed time to stretch his legs and get them moving properly. His patient, loving mother risked her life to give the calf just what he needed to survive. In my opinion, Echo clearly felt love for her son.



Ely at age 10 in 2000



Owen and Mzee are close companions..

Mom and Baby?

During the 2004 Asian tsunami, a young hippopotamus named Owen became separated from his mother and was carried far from his home by the ocean's waves. A wildlife ranger rescued him and arranged for Owen to be taken to a wildlife park. Missing his mother, Owen found a substitute mom in a 100-year-old tortoise named Mzee. The unlikely pair are now devoted and inseparable companions.



On the way to the nesting ground

Penguin Parenting

Emperor penguins live in Antarctica, which has one of the harshest climates on Earth. In March, these penguins migrate one hundred miles—on foot or by belly sliding—to their nesting ground. After arriving, the colony huddles together to survive freezing temperatures and high winds. Each penguin also chooses a mate.

In May or early June, the female, whom we'll call Snow, lays an egg. She places it on her feet to prevent it from touching the ground and freezing. As soon as the male—let's call him Ice—sees the egg, he begins singing **ecstatically**. Snow joins him in song, and the pair sing together for as long as an hour as they stare at the egg.



An Emperor penguin holds an egg on its feet to keep it off the ground.

After singing, Snow carefully passes the egg to Ice. He supports it on his feet and covers it with a flap of belly skin to keep it warm. Ice protects the egg from harm while Snow treks back to the ocean to feed. In her absence, Ice eats nothing for nearly four months through a brutal winter while balancing the egg on his feet and barely moving.

The egg hatches in August. When Snow returns from the sea, she sings and dances when she locates Ice. She is even more excited to hear her chick peeping and quickly takes it onto her feet. Ice takes off for the ocean and the promise of a good meal after a long, hard winter of babysitting.



Emperor penguins keep their hatchlings warm and safe.

Snow and Ice give new meaning to “going the extra mile” for their child. During the next few months, Mom and Dad take turns traveling up to 50 miles back to the ocean to feed. The penguin chick is always in the watchful, loving care of one of its parents, who show their love by always keeping their chick safe.



Gentle Tika

Malamute Mates

Kobuk and Tika, two champion malamute show dogs, were a breeding pair enjoying their doggie retirement. Kobuk, the male, was dominant and demanding of attention from Anne, his owner. He was quick to make his needs known, whether a belly scratch, a meal, or a trip outside. Tika, the female, was much quieter and more **passive**. If someone tried to pay attention to her, Kobuk would grab the attention for himself. He also insisted on going out the door first for daily walks. If Tika was in the way, he'd often knock her down.



Kobuk worried about his companion.

One day, Anne discovered a tumor on Tika's leg that turned out to be **malignant**. Somehow Kobuk knew, and his behavior toward Tika immediately changed. He insisted on staying by her side day and night, and frequently groomed her face and ears. After Tika's leg was **amputated** to remove the cancer, Kobuk watched over her attentively. Anne could tell Kobuk was terribly worried to see Tika suffer.

One night Kobuk woke up Anne with great urgency. He ran over to Tika, and Anne took them both outside. Anne discovered that Tika's belly was swollen and huge. Tika's stomach had filled with air, a condition that can be life-threatening. A visit to an emergency veterinary clinic saved Tika's life, but only because of Kobuk's alert warning. Tika recovered from her surgeries and learned to walk on three legs. Kobuk went back to being his **rambunctious** self—but only after he had proven his **devotion** to his beloved mate.



Tika learned how to get around on three legs.



Marc with Jethro, left, and Zeke.

A Dog with a Big Heart

Jethro was a large, gentle dog who came to his owner, Marc Bekoff, from the Humane Society. Jethro didn't chase animals, even though that behavior is instinctual to most dogs. He preferred to peacefully watch the world around him. One day Jethro brought Marc a baby rabbit that didn't have parents to care for it. While Marc nursed the rabbit over the next two weeks, Jethro insisted on staying right next to the baby's box to watch over her. For months after the rabbit was released back into the wild, Jethro would run to the spot where Marc had let the rabbit go, hoping for a reunion with the rabbit whose life he'd saved.

Conclusion

This book contains just a few of the many inspiring stories of animal love and devotion. These kinds of interactions take place all the time in the animal kingdom when people aren't watching. Each interaction provides **evidence** that animals can and do feel love.

The next time you see animals interacting, consider the fact that they are family to each other. Just because they can't speak the words *I love you*, as humans do, doesn't mean they don't feel the emotion behind the words. Their loyalty, devotion, and compassion for each other leave no doubt that animals are capable of love.



Glossary

abandon	leave behind (p. 7)
amputated	cut off (p. 16)
compassion	feeling for the suffering of others and wanting to help (p. 5)
devotion	great love and commitment (p. 17)
ecstatically	extremely joyfully (p. 13)
eventually	finally, after a long delay (p. 9)
evidence	information that proves something is true or false (p. 19)
instincts	patterns of behavior animals do without thinking about them (p. 4)
loyalty	being committed (p. 5)
malignant	dangerous, deadly (p. 16)
passive	not active (p. 15)
rambunctious	noisy, active, and full of excitement (p. 17)

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