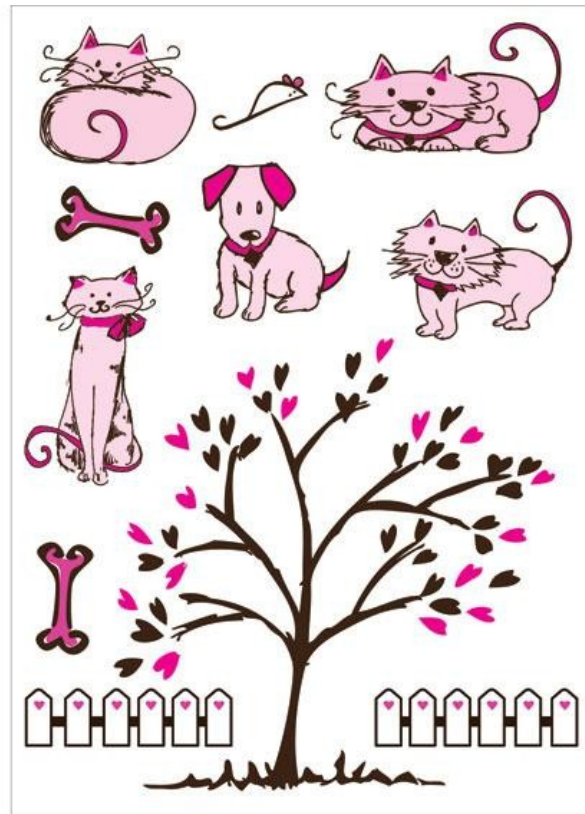


Know What Your Little Angel Needs – Taking Care of Your Pet Dog and Cat!!!

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1. **Introduction -**

Why we need pets in our life? This is one question that has always needled me on and off. What kind of feeling does a person develops, that leads him or her to keep pets. What are the needs that they feel can be fulfilled by having a pet around? Is it some status symbol for them? Or is it for security? What is their main purpose of having a pet? Because, believe me, how much simple it may

sound, but keeping a pet is not a child's play. You are making yourself responsible for a living being existence. Along with it, there are certain financial expenses attached with it also. Pets are not just for your fun. You are accountable for them. So, before bringing in a pet home one should look into all the pros and cons, and enter into it open eyed. If one is prepared to and is matured enough to take over the responsibility of managing it, then only a person should go with the idea of keeping a pet, be it a dog or a cat or some other animal. Do not let it be just a whim on your part. You can't just have a pet today, and if you find it burdensome, leave it the other day. Animals also have emotional feelings and attachments. Don't fool around them. They are little angels and should be treated accordingly.

A pet is an animal kept for companionship and enjoyment. It is a domestic animal, as in divergent to those which are reared for monetary reasons. Pets are noted for their loyal and playful characteristics, for their unconditional love and for their attractive physical appearances. A pet will always be glad to see you whatever the time of the day it is, unlike, other human beings who are bound by factors like, time, accessibility, comfort and suitability. Unknown to you along with their unconditional love, they impart certain health benefits also. They relieve you from stress and tension, improve your emotional health and most importantly relieve you from loneliness, which is the basic cause of depression. Walking dogs, provides one with exercise, fresh air and a chance of social interaction. Pets are the most patient and undemanding companions that one can have around.

It is said that people with pets around have lower blood pressure in stressful situations than those without pets. Playing with them has a calming and soothing effect on a person's reflex. Heart attack patients with pets survive longer than those without. You need to make fewer visits to your doctors if you have pets around you.

Every human being has a basic need to touch and feel. Pets fulfill this need. Stroking, holding, cuddling or otherwise touching a loving animal can do wonders when under stress. They are a bundle of joy and can substantially boost a person's mood. Caring for a living animal can help make you feel needed and wanted and take the focus away from your problems. A pet offers you comfort and help you ease your anxiety. It's a known fact that touches and movement are two healthy ways to quickly manage stress. You can achieve this by petting your Cat or by taking your Dog for a walk.

Having pet around gives a purpose to your life. It keeps you occupied and gives you the confidence to be able to manage things on your own. Taking care of an animal can also provide a sense of self worth. It also helps you to stay connected. You meet people in pet stores, clubs and training classes. Pets

encourage playfulness, laughter and exercise. It energizes you and keeps you young.

No relationship is for keep. There is no assurance, your girl friend or boyfriend of today, still is there with you tomorrow. Everyone needs a companion, a loyal companion. Someone there, who waits for him or her after a hectic day's schedule. Your pet, be it a dog or a cat, can be that loyal, faithful, wonderful companion. After a hard tiring day, a soft, warm cuddle from your pet, gives you an unbeatable comfort and energizes you. They are totally trustworthy and win your heart by their cute, adorable, lovable gestures. Very soon your pets become part of your family, an extended family. This relationship is strengthened by mutual needs and comforts. Your pets need you as much as you need their presence in your life. They need your love and pampering. Given a little time and care, they return it ten folds. As a mother knows of a child every little wants and needs, similarly, a pet lover is instantly aware of his or her little angel needs. People having pets around learn responsibility, compassion and empathy. Pets are always loving, never critical and never orders one around. Their mere presence provides a sense of security. They are a source of calmness and relaxation and stimulate the brain and body. One tends to be happier and more independent with them around. It seems having a pet have many advantages for a person. Don't you think even they deserve our unconditional love, time and care in return? Owe a pet only if you love and appreciate animals. If you are simply not a "Pet Person" then please don't go for them for just the heck of having one. Remember, they cost money, require your time and attention and can be a burden for you if you are not a pet lover. If you want to give pet ownership a trial run before making a commitment, there are some rental programs available. Opt for them first and then make up your mind.

Once you have made up your mind to have a pet, you need to know your Angel's needs and then cater to them. Pet needs to have a proper diet, grooming, and a place to sleep, proper training, social interaction and many other things in order to be able to be happy. Here is a general guide to help you to better understand how to take care of your beloved.

2. **Decide on your pet – Cat or Dog**

There are certain typical distinctions between Dogs and Cats. Caring of a pet Dog can be very rewarding experience, since they are extremely loyal and great entertainers. They give you company and at the same time provide you protection also. Cats, on the other hand can be very affectionate companion, though they require a bit of time to adjust to being in your home. Cats can be sassy and classy and full of attitudes.

Dogs are basically outdoor creatures by nature. They need routine exercise and outdoor walks during the day. Large fenced backyards to play and run around do not give them full satisfaction. They still need their daily walks. House Cats on the other hand are more homely. Though they enjoy being outdoors sometimes, but they tend to wander off.

Dogs need much more training than Cats. Understanding how to take care of a Dog requires you to know how to train them properly. They enjoy being trained since they have an insatiable desire to please their owner. Good training of a Dog not only strengthens your relationship but can also be fun. Cats on the other hand resist training. They are basically only required to be trained for using litter box. Remember, never use negative reinforcement to discipline your Cat.

Cats are more independent and playful. They are bit of a moody class. They are probably most popular pets because most of the apartment owners are permitted to keep Cat as a pet whereas they discourage Dogs. If you love serenity and quiet animal, then go for Cats. Dogs greet their owners' boisterously, noisily and with full enthusiasm every time they enter the house. Dogs are more demonstrative types. So, make your choice accordingly.

Dogs are very social and thrive on interaction, be it with humans or other Dogs. Cats are often anti-social. They are contended to be left alone and can entertain themselves on their own. So, before investing your time, money and emotions into adopting a pet, be very sure of what suits you more, a self contended, independent a wanderer moody Cat, or a demonstrative, loyal, disciplined, faithful Dog.

3. **Their Diet**

Now that you have your friend with you, you are fully responsible for his diet and health. Their diet plan depends on whether it's a Cat or a Dog. Be sure you know the diet and the feeding schedule of your pet. Most animals need to be fed once or twice a day. Sometimes baby animals need to be fed more. Always feed your pet in a quiet, protected place, so that they feel safe and comfortable while

eating. Like humans, even they do not like to be disturbed in between their meals. Keep their eating place neat and tidy. Hygiene is equally important for their health.

Dogs are omnivorous, they need all types of food, but they still require a large quantity of protein in their diet. Choose a Dog food formula that lists a protein source first, ideally with at least two sources of proteins among the first five ingredients. Don't feed a Dog a corn based food formula. Cats are obligate carnivores. Their diet is primarily meat based. It should be kept in mind to avoid a diet that is grain heavy or high in carbohydrates for Cats.

Never give your pet table scraps. It encourages begging and bad behavior on their part. They get undisciplined. At the same time, human food, especially chocolate, can make most animals sick. Adhere to kibble or canned pet food. Never make sudden changes in your pet's diet chart or eating habits. Introduce changes to food or feeding time gradually. Food changes and over that a sudden one can be nerve racking for an animal. Feed them properly and on time. Always leave clean water outside for them to drink. Pets get thirsty too. Don't let them feel dehydrated.

The most important and the cheapest nutrient that you can give to your darling pet is water. It is necessary that they drink enough water every day, so a bowl which is short enough with a wide flat bottom should be provided to them, to make drinking water easier for them. Keep it in a place where it will not be in anyone's way and is quiet approachable to your pet and they can drink water from it undisturbed. Change the water at least daily. Pets love to drink water from toilet bowls, which is a very unhealthy habit on their part, so make it a practice to always keep the lid down or the bathroom door closed. In the winters pets avoid drinking water, so they can be enticed to drink it by making it tastier. It can be done either by adding small amount of chopped or ground meat gravy to the water to make it into a tastier broth, or when given their main meals, mix some warm water to their food. Allow time for the food to soak up the water before serving. That way your pet will stay well hydrated. Keep a track of their water consumption .significant increase or decrease in the liquid intake can signify health problem. Though it is necessary to supply them with adequate water, but sometimes, like in the case of baby pets, it is advisable to stop their water intake three hours before their bedtime. That will avoid your strain of making several trips to the washroom at night for the purpose of emptying their bladder.

3. **Shelter and Personal Care**

Everyone needs a home of their own. One needs a place where they can be their own self. Your pet also needs a place to call home. It doesn't matter, whether it is a cage, a tank or a dog house. Even if the dog or your cat spends most of its time outdoors, they should have the assurance that they have a shelter which is at their access all the time. Shelter not only keeps the pet protected from cold, rain, heat and wind but also gives them the surety that they have some place to go back to, whenever they feel like. They need a place where they rule all alone and can rest uninterrupted. If they have a shelter of their own on their head they will get the feeling of being treated like a part of the family and will be better adjusted and more closely bonded with the family members.

Make sure you provide them with a safe place for their toilet needs. That is of utmost important. All animals need a place where they can go to the bathroom. This place should be regularly kept neat and clean. Cats in particular have the instinctive behavior of digging loose materials and burying their urine. They need to be trained to use litter box. If you have a dog and live in an apartment with no yard, make sure you often go out with your dog to give him the opportunity to relieve himself. If in a public place make sure to use trash can.

You must give your pets a personal living space. Make it attractive, clean and user friendly. Get a proper wire kennel or crate and toil with your pet until completely responsible to be left loose in the house.

Often give a proper brushing and combing to your pet dog and cat. This loosens dead hair that is to be shed and keeps their coat healthy and fine looking.

Bathe your dogs once a month and cats every few months. But it should not be overdone, since too many baths take away the natural oils from a pets skin and can cause itching or rashes.

When bringing home a new dog or cat an immediate check up from a vet is required. Veterinarians or often called animal doctors make a general health check up. They keep track of all the vaccination and immunizations needed and can give a list of all do's and don'ts that should be followed to give your pet a longer and healthier life. Never forget, just like we need annual checkups with

our doctors and dentists, similarly most pets need regular checkups too. Don't neglect their health.

Remember, just like humans, being overweight is not a healthy sign for your pet. Over eating on their part tends to lead to them having heart disease, skin problems and low energy level. They start getting lethargic and feel inactive. Pampering your pets is fine, but feeding them too much food or giving them too many treats is not the right way of demonstrating your love for them. Maintaining proper weight is a must for them for leading a healthy and a long life. Exercise should be a part of their daily routine. Being fit and active not only keeps your pet in shape, but also gives them several health benefits.

4. **Know their Language and Train them**

Dogs and Cats or for that matter every animal has a fascinating way of communication. Their methods are so subtle that we need sensitivity to understand their language. They sent hundreds of messages that are worth more than thousand of words by a minor flick of their tail or the slightest movement of their ears. At times due to their body language being so restrained, we find it very difficult to interpret their meaning and often end up making mistakes in understanding them. Various degrees in their sound levels are the indication of their different moods and behavior. A Cat can be generally happy if he or she makes the sound of a gentle purr. But at the same time seething hiss is a solid indication of it being angry at something or someone. Same goes for a Dog. You can judge his mood by the intensity of his growl. Different ways of barking gives separate indications. There is a welcome bark, a buzz off or a no trespassing bark or a signal of someone's arrival. Your interpretation depends upon how well you know and understand your pet. Understanding the body language of your pet and deciphering their speech brings you one step closer in comprehending their behavior. At times they give clue of their feelings through their actions also. If a Cat or Dog runs away from a room, when a particular person enters it, it shows that he or she has been at certain time cruel or unkind

to him and your pet is not very fond of that person. Pets are particularly sensitive to a human nature. They can easily judge and differentiate between a loving and cruel individual. They tend to back off if they dislike a person's proximity.

The size of the pupils of your pet is a solid indicator of their feelings. Dilated pupils indicate fear, whereas if their pupil contracts it suggests aggressive feelings. If a pet stares at you directly, it is in your favor, if you back off immediately and move further away as soon as possible. Don't fool around at that moment. Know your pets for a better relationship.

Every pet has certain inherited or natural behavior, and certain others are deep seated into them. You must have noticed that when you run your hand down your pet's back, from head to tail, they react in a particular manner. Generally, they stick their back side up in the air. It comes very naturally to them. It's their instinctual behavior. A learned one is when your Cat or Dog runs towards their eating place whenever they hear a particular sound which is associated with their food.

A pet needs to be trained properly before let loose in a house. There are various valuable and fragile things lying around. The pet should be aware of the no entrance zone area and should stay clearly away from it. You can't be around 24/7 to keep a check on their full day activities. A family with a small child has to be careful in particular. A child can unknowingly put its hand into the pet's mouth or can eat your pet's food. While playing with the Dog or the Cat, they can harm your child unintentionally. So, firstly the child should not be left unattended with the pet around and secondly, your pet should be well trained and should know that the child is off limits for him. You have to set the basic rules for your pet and he should be clear that you are the boss around. It is critical to keep your pets under control at all times. Do it in a very gentle manner, don't be aggressive and raise your voice on them. An animal can be very sensitive to a loud noise. It might scare him off or convey wrong messages to them. If you don't want your pet on your sofa or your bed, be very firm but gentle with them. Everyone likes a well behaved and a trained pet in their house. Just be patient and loving and eventually your hard work will pay off.

It is just not your pet that needs to be trained; even you need to prepare yourself and your house before bringing in a new animal. Animals in certain aspects are like babies – they are always attracted towards the forbidden areas and things. See to it there are no broken tiles, no big holes or drains or any broken gate or untended fence that can harm your pet or can endanger him. Always keep toxic chemicals and other medicines, pills and potent stored away in a place far out of your pet's reach. All the electrical points and cords should be properly plugged in and taken care of. Take care that you don't leave your pet unattended in a closed car for a very long period. Over heating due to the enclosed area might suffocate

them. Don't let them wander on their own. They might get hurt or get lost. Your pets are very precious, tread them carefully and delicately.

5. **Time, Love and Affection**

Give some of your precious time and attention to your pet. This is one of the most valuable gift that you can give to your pet, be it a Cat or a Dog. Walking with them in the morning or in the evening is a good stimulus to both of you. It gives one a chance to get some fresh air and exercise which normally a person tends to forego in his daily hectic routine. (In fact your pet can be the most unassuming companion you can have around. While on your walk you can burden him with all your worries and tensions without expecting any answer back.) At the same time your pet that is bound to be locked in the house the whole day with you off to your office gets this as the only chance to have his share of fresh air and your undivided attention. Play with him; take him or her to a park or to your backyard with a ball, or a Frisbee, or a fetch or any other such things to entertain him and to keep him stimulated.

Taking them to the park helps in your pets' social interaction also. They can be in the company of other people and other pets as well. Socialize them properly; too much of solitude is not good for their growth and development. Pet's movement should not be confined just until the backyard or the house. They also need some free movement space and a change in their surroundings. Let them also get the feel that they are a welcome and a useful member of the household and their needs and wishes are of equal importance. Spending time and playing with your pets is just not fun for them alone, you will notice even you feel freshened up and rejuvenated after your playtime with them. When out on some errand try to involve them also whenever possible, because anything that involves physical and mental involvement of your with your little angel pets goes a long way toward meeting their social needs. It gives them a feeling of security and emotional stability. You will see discipline problems will be fewer and training them becomes easier. Simply being in your company is a welcome and necessary requirement for your pets.

Just like people, pets thrive on attention. They also need your hugs, cuddles and gentle pats on their back. They constantly need to be reminded of their importance in your life. Remember, you have your other family members and your friends apart from your pet to call your own but for your pet it's only you, his master, his protector, his well wisher, his owner to lean upon or to go back to. You have brought your pet into your house and into your life so now it's your responsibility to make him feel wanted and loved. Make him feel at home.

Never ignore your pet. If you do not have time for them, you have no right to owe them or any other pet for that matter. Your love and affection will not only improve the quality of your pet's life but will also increase their life span.

Animals are very sensitive and can easily sense when loved and cared for. They are supposed to be a better judge of a human nature. They reciprocate and return your affection and attention many times over. Pamper them like you would pamper your own baby. Give them a name and call your pet by that name. Buy regular gifts for your pet like you would buy for your own child. Gift him a new cage, or a pet house, new coat, a neck band, a colorful bowl for their food or some toys to keep them entertained. They have plenty of free time at their disposal and often wander around aimlessly not knowing what to do. Keep them occupied and busy. Introduce them to other pets around. Give them some space to move around and have fun. You will have a much closer, happier relationship with your pet if you keep their needs and requirements in mind. Bonding with animals can be very easy and fun loving if you know how to go about it.

Don't keep pets for just your selfish reasons – for the company they provide, the attention they give, the satisfaction and entertainment you get by simply watching them. Though there is no harm in that but being a good pet owner is equally important. A pet owner should be aspired to keep their pet healthy and happy. Different animals have different needs and it is important that you provide them with a comfortable and as natural as possible surroundings and habitat. Your companionship is equally important for keeping social animals like Dogs and Cats happy and healthy. Do not leave them alone for a very long time. They should not get the feeling of being neglected or left all alone. Involve your pets in your activities as much as possible. Develop their skills required to live in a human household and in this society. Let them be welcomed in other people's house along with your own. It all depends on their good behavior and discipline. You alone are responsible for your pet's life. Provide your pet with opportunities to enrich their mind and bodies. It will enhance your mutual relationship. Giving enough of your time, love, care and attention and taking care of your pets needs, is just what your little angels need.

Just as each and every family member of your family has a specific task to perform within the group, similarly, the pets need a purpose in their life. It gives them the sense of belongingness. They get the feel of acceptance that is given by you, and also by your other family members. Keep in mind they consider themselves as a member of the household and expect to be treated like one. If left on their own with nothing constructive to do the whole day out, they get bored and irritated and try to get into your way if only to gain your attention. It ultimately turns them into a nuisance and they get troublesome. Keep them busy. Empty mind is a devils workshop. Dogs in particular can perform various tasks if properly trained. They understand the idea of team work and tend to follow their leader. Give your dog some chance to prove his utility around. Let it be to fetch your keys or to guard your child when you go the washroom or other such jobs which are within his limits. Decide on the task on the basis of his size, his maturity level and his personality. Always praise your pet once they have performed the assigned job. Give them a chance to bask in their own glory.

Summary-

Having a pet can be a wonderful, rewarding experience. Your pets are always there for you with their unconditional love. They make the best of pals, are forever loyal, most lovable and endearingly adorable. Having a pet around gives a person a sense of belongingness and responsibility. [Believe me, being responsible for another living beings life is not a child's play. It needs lots of dedication and commitment.] Having a pet enriches your social life. You tend to interact more with others {even though at times due to necessity rather than by choice} It widens up your social network, and makes you more aware and conscious. Your pets take away the loneliness and depression from your life and fill it up with laughter and happiness. Your anxieties and worries develop wings all of a sudden and disappear out in the blue. Your darling little cute angels add a new purpose in your life and keep you motivated and stimulated. It goes without

saying how beneficial they are for your health. You tend to be more active and tension free with them around. Like little babies they keep you distracted and put a smile on your face with their silly, funny tactics. Lesser doctor visits are required for people having pets at their home, since being in the company of their little beloveds keep them happy, lively, and thoroughly energetic

It is a mutual bond that ties the animal to its owner. Both are the beneficial parties and both need each other's commitment, love and care equally. No relationship can be one sided. It is a give and take affair. You give your time and attention to your pet; in return you receive his undying loyalty and trust. Make these little angels a part of your life, give them a little space in your heart and they are yours for lifetime.