

Conflicting Attitudes and Social Dissonance:
Why Mixed Messages Lead People to Abuse and Abandon Their
Companion Animals

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Abstract

Our society's nebulous rules for how we should think, feel and behave towards animals has led to conflicting attitudes, what we have referred to in this paper as "social dissonance", and ultimately, horrific treatment towards animals-even the ones we call "companions".

This paper will explore some of the antecedents and consequences of the abuse and abandonment of companion animals that stem from our society's conflicting attitudes. Among the issues addressed will be the social influences of abandonment of companion animals, pet abuse and its link with domestic violence, animals treated as economic goods, animals perceived as "lesser" beings (lacking awareness and intelligence) and a pervasive laissez-faire attitude that companion animals are expendable and easily "replaced".

We love them, eat them, spend billions on them, wear their hides, let them live inside our homes and sleep on our beds, sacrifice them in scientific experiments, "humanize" them in children's stories and adult novels, abandon them on the side of the road in the dead of winter, adore them in Hollywood movies, hunt and kill them, buy products they represent in advertisements, hold them captive in circuses and zoos for our own entertainment, buy our children fluffy plush toys designed in their image, and torture and beat them inside our own homes.

We Americans have a strange, conflicting relationship with animals-one that has created inconsistent attitudes and has left companion animals vulnerable to being abandoned and abused. Collectively, as a society we put out and receive mixed-messages about socially-acceptable attitudes we should hold about animals. It is as if Americans have an implicit, unspoken agreement about animals in general: Most people will not think too much or too deeply about the fact that we slaughter and eat the same cute little animals portrayed in advertisements and children's cartoons. In short, we reconcile our social dissonance about our attitudes and behavior towards animals through collective denial.

Reconciling the Inconsistencies

American society sends out ambiguous and inconsistent messages about the attitudes and behaviors we are supposed to have towards animals. There are no hard and fast rules about a "right" way or "wrong" way to think about and treat animals in general. This can cause what we call "social dissonance" for people and an increased vulnerability for abandonment and abuse to companion animals.

When people experience discomfort from conflicting societal messages about animals we contend that there are three basic ways they may cope with it. The first method is to reject all harmful societal messages about animals. People who choose this alternative may become vegans, antivivisectionists, refuse to purchase any animal-related products such as leather or fur, or they may devote at least part of their time working to save all animals. The second, perhaps most common method is denial. Here the messages are viewed as so conflicting and disconcerting that people choose not to think about it nor to deal with it. And finally, the third method is for people to ignore the mixed messages and to make up their own rules. This "anything goes" attitude towards animals is hypothesized here as causing the greatest risk to companion animals. When people make up their own rules as they go along they have willfully chosen to free themselves from the responsibility of following social rules or norms. Adopting such an attitude puts the individual in control and alleviates guilt and confusion over the "right" way to treat and interact with animals. With such an attitude justifying abuse of companion animals may be only a short step away.

Conflicting Attitudes: Pets as Members of the Family and Abuse of Companion Animals

With companion animals in nearly 60% of the households, today more Americans have pets than children. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (1997) 78% of the households with children over six years old have pets. The vast majority of these pet owners consider their companion animals as members of the family (Albert & Bulcroft, 1988; Cain, 1983; Friedmann, Katcher, Eaton & Berger, 1984; Hirschman, 1994).

Unfortunately, some of the households where pets reside are violent, abusive environments. And, animals like other members in the household, may be targets for abuse. A small but growing body of literature is revealing the link between pet abuse and domestic violence including links with battered women, same-sex partner abuse, sibling abuse and child abuse (Ascione, 1998; Browne, 1987; Carlisle-Frank, 2001; Dutton, 1992; Flynn, 2000; Gelles & Straus, 1988; Wiehe, 1999).

In the case of domestic violence against women, companion animals appear to play important roles in the violent relationships. Research findings suggest that the majority of battered women have a strong emotional attachment to their companion animals and that these animals play a pivotal role in offering emotional support to these victims. Depending on the study, between 43% and 71% of such victims have reported that their partners had threatened, abused or killed their companion animals (Ascione, 1998; Carlisle-Frank, 2001; Flynn, 2000). One study found

that many battered women continue to worry about their animals who had to be left behind with the abuser when victims escaped, repeatedly checked on them, sought out temporary foster homes where possible, and were committed to searching out housing that would allow their companion animals to rejoin them (Flynn, 2000). Research has also shown that approximately 20% of battered women actually risk their own safety and well-being by delaying the decision to escape the abusive environment out of concern for their animals (Ascione, 1998; Carlisle-Frank, 2001; Flynn, 2000). In short, research findings seem to indicate that battered women make some very important life choices based on the safety and well-being of their companion animals.

In direct contrast to people who perceive their companion animals as family members and who risk their lives to protect them are the those who torture, abuse and even kill those same animals. Why are there such conflicting attitudes and behaviors towards animals by people living in the same households? Research findings on the relationship between battered women and their companion animals suggest that women who are victimized by their partners perceive their pets as family members and that batterers may target the animals precisely because of this close bond between the women and their animals (Flynn, 2000). It has been hypothesized that male batterers abuse animals as part of a deliberate strategy to control their female partners (Adams, 1995). Even in the case of issuing a threat against the animal, the tactic of using threats is a common one used by batterers to control the victim (Felson & Messner, 2000). Using animals as instruments to manipulate, the message is clear: the pet will be harmed unless the woman complies with the batterer's demands.

This all too common tactic of abusers at once exemplifies the belief that animals are lesser beings who can be abused or killed at whim, coupled with the belief that animals hold the power to make people behave and react in ways they might not otherwise. Unfortunately, both of these conflicting messages are reinforced by our society-the former through an implied social agreement to accept this attitude as one possibility among many, all of which are ultimately viewed as a "personal" choice. Through the lack of any *serious* consequences including legal, penal and social sanctions, those individuals whose attitudes justify animal abuse are sent the message that their position is just as valid as all other attitudes about the ways we should interact and treat animals.

Abandonment of Companion Animals: Common Reasons

According to one survey studying why people abandoned companion animals to a shelter, only 6.3% of the people stated they abandoned the animal for financial reasons (Arkow & Dow 1984). Among dogs, almost half (46.8%) of the animals abandoned to the shelter were obtained from friends or neighbors, while only 5.7% came from professional breeders and 4.7% came from pet shops. Of the dogs obtained from friends and neighbors, 83.2% had been obtained for no cost and almost half (46.9%) were obtained while under twelve weeks of age. Over sixty-three percent of these animals were disposed of within a year.

Among dogs from all sources, 68.3% were obtained without any monetary cost. In addition, the authors found a relationship between the cost of the dog and the length of time a dog was kept,

with more expensive dogs being abandoned on average after a longer period of ownership. Dogs costing over a hundred dollars stayed with their owners an average of 36 months, while dogs obtained for free were abandoned on average after only 17 months.

A study by Miller et al. (1996) of animals surrendered to a shelter in Ohio also found behavior problems to be a major cause of abandonment. Their data indicated that 30% of dogs were surrendered for behavior problems which included hyperactivity, problems housebreaking, biting, and destructive chewing. The second most common reason for animal surrender was time/work/cost (21%), followed by moving (19%), other (12%) owner ill (9%), litter (5%), and pet ill (4%). It should be noted that in this study as well as all other studies where the reason for abandonment may be given at time of surrender to a shelter, there may be a tendency for the responses to be clouded by social desirability --people may state what they think the shelter wants to hear.

Consistent with other studies on the subject, the authors found that dogs originally from private owners and shelters were generally more commonly surrendered and that the animals tended to be young with 67% of dogs abandoned under 2 years of age. One particularly interesting addition in this study was a question about the daily benefit and daily problem of the pet. With a score of 1 meaning "a little" and a score of 2 indicating "quite a bit", the mean benefit/mean problem of dogs surrendered was 1.9/1. Although these results were lower than that found in an unrelated study of older pet owners (which yielded benefits/problems of 2.2/0.80), it is interesting to note that the benefits reported still appeared to outweigh the problems of ownership even when the owner was surrendering the animal. The authors concluded that most of the reported behavior problems were part of the pet's normal expected behavior and that education was the real solution to the general problem of pet abandonment. The authors also suggest creating a system to offer loans for pet deposits when pet owners seek apartments, and educating landlords.

Patronek et al. (1996a) offered insight of owners abandoning a companion animal to a shelter by selecting a similar control group to see how those who abandon pets compare to other pet owners. The authors then created a logistic model to predict pet abandonment. Factors that explained the highest proportion of pet relinquishment included not participating in obedience classes, a lack of veterinary care, owning a sexually intact dog, inappropriate care expectations, and inappropriate places of elimination. However, many other factors were also related to relinquishment including obtaining animals from shelters, keeping pets in crates, or acquiring pets older than six months in age. More expensive pets were also less likely to be relinquished.

Kidd, Kidd, & George (1992) contacted a group of people six months following adopting a pet from a shelter. Those who rejected their pets in the first six months were significantly more likely than the typical adopter to be male, were more likely to be first-time adopters, and were more likely to be parents.

The authors also surveyed owners turning their animals over to a shelter. Responses on two questions were particularly interesting: prior to taking on the responsibility of caring for a pet, 5.7% of dog owners and 8.3% of cat owners did not know that it can cost more than \$100 a year to maintain a pet. Additionally, only 37.8% of dog owners and 45.3% of cat owners said the statement, "Animals are better off having a litter before being spayed" was untrue.

In an extensive study of animals abandoned by people to shelters, Salman et al. (1998) found that the most common reasons for relinquishing dogs were Housing Issues (29.1%), followed by Behavior-other (28.8%), Human Lifestyle (25.4%), Requests for Euthanasia (16.0%), and Human Preparation-Expectation (14.6%). The authors found that the average purchase price of dogs turned in to shelters was \$48.75 (6.5% were free) and \$9.67 for cats (15% were free). Forty-six percent of dogs surrendered had been owned for less than a year. "Housing issues" appeared to be a more common cause of surrender in this study than prior studies. This may be due to changes in behavior over time, it may be due to the structure/tabulation of the questionnaire, or it may be due to the survey group.

In a separate article relating to the same study, Scarlet et al. (1999) looked more in-depth at the selected health and personal issues which made up 27.1% of dog relinquishments and 35.1% of cat relinquishments. The primary reasons reported include (in order of number of times cited for dogs): no time for pet, owner personal problems, allergies in family, child-pet conflict, new baby, divorce, owner traveling, owner deceased, owner pregnancy, and unwanted gift. It should be noted that most of these reasons generally fall under the category of "changes" or "uncertainty in the state or nature" for the owner.

New, et al. (1999) examined this same set of national survey data and focused on relinquishment due to moving, which was the most common reason for abandoning dogs. About 41% of dogs and cats given away due to moving also reported landlords or other household members (parents, roommates) as a secondary reason for relinquishing the animal. Thirteen percent of dog owners reported physical characteristics (such as lack of a yard or adequate space) as a secondary reason for keeping the animal.

According to a survey by the National Animal Control Association (1981), the greater the cost of a dog, the longer it was likely to be kept, with over two-thirds of unwanted dogs being obtained for free. This is consistent with other research linking cost of an animal to abandonment rates.

A study by Upton (1992) in Australia found the most common reason for relinquishing adult dogs to be "shifting house" (20%) followed by "biting" (17%), "uncontrollable" (14%), "fence jumper" (8%) and "veterinary health problems" (7%). The author also found that most adult dogs admitted to the shelter were under two years of age. This is consistent with other studies that have found that abandoned animals tend to be young. For example, Arkow (1987), found that of people bringing their pet to a shelter, 42.2% had owned their animal less than six months and 22.2% had owned the animal from 6 to 12 months.

Several themes of conflicting attitudes emerge from these studies on abandonment. The relationship between abandonment and price suggests the importance of the conflicting role between animals as family members and as property, for example. Perhaps the larger, overriding theme, however, often comes down to what is a matter of convenience for the animal's owner, many times resulting from situations that have alternative solutions. It is hypothesized that the conflicted position of animals within our society is a major cause of owners choosing abandonment when alternatives are available. The conflicting messages cause many animal owners to ignore the pain and possible death that will come to the animal they previously thought of as a "family member". In order to avoid the discomfort of dissonance and/or guilt for

abandoning their animal, these people quickly adopt readily available alternative social attitudes for what is "acceptable" in order to justify what is convenient for them to do-that is, abandoning their animal.

In addition, the role of the shelters themselves is conflicted. Some of these animal shelters actually act to "shelter" owners from the implications of their decision to abandon their so-called "family members". The reality is that there are so many animals being abandoned each week and so little space and funding available that many animals remain in these shelters for an average of just weeks or even days. If they are not adopted by the end of this time period, they are killed in order to make room for the steady stream of new animals being abandoned. Shelters often protect owners from the dissonance of abandoning their animals by avoiding discussion of the need to kill surplus animals, making incoming animals' chance of death seem smaller than it actually is, by not exposing owners to the conditions where his or her animal will be kept, and by having a quick and easy "drop off" process that avoids intrusive or potentially embarrassing questions. In short, many shelters play the role of a socially-sanctioned place where people can simply fill out a form, drop off their pet, and, free of their inconvenience, go on about their day.

Animals as Economic Goods

Probably one of the most powerful social influences on the attitude that people can use, abuse, or dispose of their animal as they see fit is the social structure which ultimately treats animals as an economic good or "property".

Generally in the United States, animals do enjoy some special status relative to other goods in that there are criminal penalties for cruelty towards animals. In many states however, penalties for even severe cruelty are minor (misdemeanors) though some states have recently enacted legislation to raise the penalty for these acts to the felony level (for example, "Buster's Law" in New York State). Even when there are severe acts of cruelty judges often give minimal penalties. (In a recent case in Nevada, a 13-year-old male who cut out the eyes from a Golden Retriever and left it bleeding and wandering the streets to die was sent back home to his parents while he awaited sentencing. Animal activist groups have worked vigorously to convince the prosecutors and judge not to reduce sentencing to a short period of probation.)

Any laws that distinguish animals from other property should be treated as exceptions rather than the rule. "Owners" can and do trade companion animals freely and are generally allowed to treat these animals as they see fit, even to the point where an owner is free to dispose of an animal if it is no longer desired. Although killing a companion animal at home is generally frowned upon as "cruel", taking the animal down to the local shelter for disposal is not only legal, but a socially-sanctioned course of action.

Companion animals do have many unusual traits as economic goods. The first and most obvious trait is that these "goods" are living creatures. This is certainly not unique. In fact, some of the earliest economic goods in human civilization were livestock. However, it is unusual in terms of modern consumer goods in Western Civilization. The fact that these "goods" are actually live

animals implies some other traits including unusually high maintenance costs, the possibility that the good can actually increase in quantity without any intentional production efforts, and moral issues regarding what rights and responsibilities people have toward their "property".

This moral issue is further accentuated by the fact that much of the utility gained from this property comes from the unusual relationship owners have with it. In many cases the position held by the companion animal in this relationship is distinctly unproperty-like (for example, see Smith (1983) for an ethological study of owner-pet interaction or Cain (1983) for a study of the roles pets take in the family system). Paradoxically, often the factor that defines the benefit of what is legally an "owner-property" relationship is this non-property relationship. Studies report a high percentage of companion animal owners who state that the pet is a family member. For example, a survey by Friedmann et al. (1984) found that 88% of respondents agree with the statement that the pet is a family member. Hirschman (1994) also found a high percentage (80%) of pet owners who consider their pets to be family members.

Research on this topic has also examined "emergent themes" in the human-animal relationship. One theme that is particularly relevant here relates to "wildness", where owners seem to want some aspect of nature or wildness but not "too much" wildness in their animal. Animals perceived as "too wild" are often abandoned. Additionally, in a survey of white, married women age 65-75, Ory & Goldberg (1984) found that when pet owners were asked how attached they were to their pet, 72.9% described themselves as "very attached" while 27.1% described themselves as "not very attached". These results are interesting in light of the fact that pet abandonment and abuse has been hypothesized to be closely tied to low levels of attachment.

Given the unusual relationship between many humans and animals as "property", it is not surprising that many people feel that companion animal species deserve treatment and a status different than other property. Yet the workings of a freely functioning market often conflict with this concept of different status for companion animals. Although there are some laws protecting these "goods", this protection is minimal. The reality is that in many ways companion animals are produced, purchased, and disposed of at the whim of the consumer, just like any other economic good.

Although many owners view their companion animal as a "family member" when times are good, society's pervasive message that the animal is really a piece of property probably greatly facilitates switching cognitive schemas when it would be beneficial to pet owners (for example when it would be more convenient to leave the animal behind due to a move, change of life situation, or behavioral problem in the animal). This perspective of the animal as property (even as a temporary shift in viewpoint) also would facilitate violence against the animal. Not only is this view that companion animals are really property in society's perspective reinforced by the legal treatment of animals, it is likewise reinforced in the language used surrounding companion animals, with a companion animal's human companions being typically referred to as the "owners" who "harbor" the animal, rather than the "caretakers", "stewards", or "guardians" of their non-human family member.

It is argued, therefore, that there is a conflict between the role that companion animals have within the household as a family member and the role dictated by society at large where the

animal is considered an owned, economic good. It is hypothesized that this conflict helps lead to dissonance, abuse and abandonment by allowing people to cognitively switch schemas and view their companion animal in the role of "property" when they are considering abandoning or abusing them.

Uncertainty in Costs/Benefits

An unusual feature of companion animals as economic goods is that the up-front costs are low relative to both the long-term benefits and costs. Even the cost of a \$1,000 pure-bred animal is low relative to the life-time costs of food, veterinary care, and miscellaneous supplies. In addition, as with raising a child, the monetary costs may often be small relative to the non-monetary expenses of companion animal ownership if they were quantifiable. The time spent on feeding an animal, cleaning up after them, walking and exercising them, and other miscellaneous activities can have a high value. In addition, many owners plan day-outings, vacations, and other activities around their animal. The total non-monetary cost of companion animal ownership in time spent and inconvenience is potentially very high.

Yet the high costs of maintaining a companion animal may often be small relative to the benefits for some people. As previously discussed, many companion animal owners consider the animal to be a family member. If this is meant literally, then the situation would be much the same as some people express regarding their children. The idea is that the costs are high, but the intangible benefit of having that family member is much higher than any cost could be. In economic terms, this could be interpreted as a very steep demand curve for these individual companion animal owners, leading to a very high consumer surplus.

In a survey of dog owners in Albany and Rensselaer Counties, New York, Frank (2000) found evidence that owners underestimate both the costs and benefits of dog ownership. The table below shows how costs and benefits compared to expectations. For costs, most people reported about the same costs as expected, while for benefits most respondents reported higher benefits than expected, with almost half reporting much higher benefits than expected. There are a few important observations to be noted from this table. One is that as predicted, and in opposition to a simple rational expectations view of companion animal purchasing behavior, both costs and benefits are skewed in the direction of being higher than expected. In addition, the average benefits are more positive relative to expectations than costs relative to expectations. This suggests that if consumers purchase a companion animal because they expect the benefits to be higher than the costs, according to the survey results most consumers should be even more satisfied with their purchase than they originally expected. It is also interesting to note that only 3% of respondents reported less benefits than expected while many more people reported greater costs than expected. This may imply that if unexpectedly high costs or low benefits are to blame for many cases of animal abandonment, it is the costs rather than the benefits that usually negatively vary from expectations.

Dollar Costs	Non-monetary Costs	Benefits
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Much higher than expected	14.0%	8.7%	46.0%
Slightly higher than expected	14.6%	15.2%	15.4%
About what I expected	69.9%	71.6%	35.6%
Slightly lower than expected	0.9%	1.8%	2.4%
Much lower than expected	0.6%	2.7%	0.6%

Not surprisingly, as the unexpected dollar costs and non-monetary costs increased and as the unexpected benefits went down, respondents reported more seriously considering getting rid of their animal.

It is hypothesized that a mismatch between expectations and reality can lead to both abuse and abandonment of animals. This mismatch is also very much a function of the conflicting roles of animals in society. "Owners" may often take on a companion animal with the cost expectations of maintaining property. However, such expectations and attitudes conflicts with the role the animal often ultimately takes (ie., that of a family member), causing the original expectations and attitudes to be violated.

Social Dissonance in Attitudes Toward Animals

In addition to the cultural attitude of animals as property, a second social influence that may increase abandonment and abuse is the conflicting attitudes that society has towards animals. These conflicting views are too numerous to list here, but in general, it is true that the two most common companion animals, cats and dogs, in some ways have a relatively elite status as animals. This is due in large part to the strong bonds that many humans have developed towards animals of these two species. Dogs and cats in the mind of many people has shifted from a general category of "animal" into the category of "unique individuals" that can be clearly seen in the home environment (at least from the perspective of many "owners") to suffer and enjoy the world around them.

The discovery of furs made of dogs and cat in China and imported to the United States created a much stronger outcry among the American public than when furs have been made of other species that may be equally sentient. Similarly, the use of dogs as a food product is repulsive to many Americans because of the special relationship they have with these animals even though if dogs are capable of suffering, at least some of the other animals used in food and other products are equally capable of suffering.

The use of dogs and cats in animal laboratories that often inflict significant suffering while simultaneously protecting a different population of dogs and cats from cruelty of any kind also creates a conflict.

The numerous logical inconsistencies in human treatment towards animals can and has been used as an argument from both sides. On the one hand vegan groups and some other animal rights activists maintain the only way to treat animals logically consistently is to abandon all use of animal products. On the other hand, hunters as well as other groups that wish to advocate behaviors that harm animals often use these societal inconsistencies to argue for their cause (for example, hunters can compare their recreational activity to the purchase in most households of slaughtered animals for food).

The inconsistency in attitudes can be compared to the psychological construct of cognitive dissonance, except at a societal level. Cognitive dissonance describes the tension one experiences when he or she becomes aware of two inconsistent thoughts or cognitions (Festinger, 1957). In this case, taking a logically consistent perspective that avoids any suffering or death to sentient animals for human gain involves a large social cost since animal products take great effort to avoid in our society. And even if an individual changes their behavior so that they can morally maintain that they do not contribute to animal suffering, the resultant awareness of the large-scale death and suffering of animals at human hands can take a large emotional toll. Therefore the least-effort method to reduce dissonance for many people may be to either decide at some level that animals do not really suffer, or that the problem is simply too large, therefore "anything goes". At this point many people "fragment" or "compartmentalize" what is an "acceptable" or "unacceptable" attitude and behavior with regard to animals so that they are not faced with the discomfort of trying to reconcile their actions. This dissonance-reducing mechanism may only manifest itself at critical moments such as when an owner wishes to strike an animal or suddenly finds the animal "too inconvenient" and wishes to get rid of them.

Animals as "stupid" or "unfeeling"

A common underlying belief that pervades animal abuse and abandonment is the view that these animals are "stupid" or that they do not feel anything. Often, the level of intelligence that people will conclude an animal has even after long-term exposure will be prejudiced by their own preconceived notion of that animal's intelligence level. For example, a dog owner that views his/her animal as unintelligent and simply a piece of property, will be more likely to leave that animal confined in a yard on a chain with little opportunity to demonstrate its intelligence. In addition, the use of intelligence by companion animals will more likely to occur if reinforced. The owner that tries to interpret a dog or cat's gestures and vocalizations may soon establish the ability to communicate with that animal effectively while the owner who assumes the animal is too stupid for such behaviors will often ignore these early attempts to communicate and extinguish these behaviors. Just like humans, animals in abusive or neglectful relationships with their owners are also more likely to develop emotional problems that may be viewed as "stupid" behavior.

Anthropomorphic Perspective

The error in using an anthropomorphic definition of intelligence should be acknowledged. If intelligence is loosely considered to be the ability to flexibly solve novel problems, the caveat should be added that intelligence needs to be measured based on novel problems likely to occur in the animal's natural environment. For example, a Husky's inability to learn the dangers of a

busy street or negotiate other situations in a predominately human-defined world is no more a lack of intelligence than a human's lack of ability to remember the smell of a dangerous animal should be considered a lack of intelligence. If intelligence is judged to be an important criterion for how we treat animals, then some attention needs to be paid to the context in which we are judging intelligence. Often, abusers' and abandoners' notions of animal intelligence are based both on preexisting prejudices and anthropocentric definitions.

Summary

The consequences of our society's conflicting attitudes are many. Firstly, there is the needless pain and suffering to abandoned and abused companion animals. There is also the enormous hidden costs to our society vis-à-vis increased personnel for shelters and law enforcement, nuisance costs and medical costs to humans stemming from dog bites, traffic accidents, and so on because of animals who are abandoned and running the streets.

Part of the solution for protecting these animals is to change public policy and create laws that are truly effective in protecting animals and punishing offenders. Before this can happen, however, there must be a shift in social attitudes about companion animals and animals in general-a shift to one that clearly says it is as equally egregious and heinous to beat or throw away companion animals as it is to do to humans. Creating clear, consistent, concise social rules and norms for appropriate attitudes and behavior towards companion animals may seem an impossible undertaking, but it is the process of exploring and reconciling the reasons for the existing inconsistencies that will present the real challenge.

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