

## Catch Up With Author Penelope Smith

**Learn more about the inspiration behind her book 'Animal Talk.'**

*By Stacy N. Hackett*

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Author Penelope Smith and cat Yohinta. Photo by Starr Taovil. 1. What was the inspiration behind the book?  
The first edition of "Animal Talk" was published in 1978. Students of my basic animal communication courses asked me if I could publish a book, and I agreed to do so.

2. What was the most difficult part of writing the book?

Because I had communicated with animals my entire life and never lost or buried the ability, the hardest part of writing the book was detailing steps for people to follow to recover or relearn the ability. It seemed so natural and simple to me. However, looking through the eyes of the students and knowing the barriers they experienced to restore their ability to communicate helped me to develop steps and techniques that would spark their remembrance and help them to further practice and hone the ability to communicate with animals.

3. What was the most rewarding part of writing the book?

I enjoyed sharing some of my experiences with animals including their communications, encouraging people to try it themselves, and hearing how people opened up to communicating with animals when they read "Animal Talk."

4. What type of feedback have you received so far?

The first edition of "Animal Talk" was published in 1978. The current edition is the sixth edition. Over these 30 years, I have received countless messages from people about how much (the book) has helped them in their communication and relationship with animals.

5. What is your writing/editing process?

I write freehand or on the computer in a spontaneous, "get it all out" style. Then I organize and edit, refining the text each step of the way to eliminate redundancies, create a flowing sequence and make my points clearly. It's hard to stop tweaking my writing, so I turn it over to my publisher's editors when I get tired of reviewing it and it seems sufficiently clear and well-designed. Other eyes and minds can spot more points that may need clarification for readers.

6. Do you have any other books? Please list them here.

My other books are "When Animals Speak" and "Animals in Spirit." I also have many audio recordings and a video on the subject of animal communication.

7. Do you currently share your home with animals? Tell us a little bit about them.

My animal family members are Sherman, a 20-year-old orange tabby cat; Belinda, a 6-year-old Italian Greyhound/dachshund mix; Rajah, an 8-year-old Afghan hound; and nine bantam chickens: Cricket, Sicily (roosters), Miranda, Guinevere, Mitzi, Cassandra, Stormy, Spinky and Diana (hens). Sherman has helped many students open and deepen their level of interspecies communication. His reputation as a master teacher spans the globe! He was an active, adventurous, mostly outdoor cat for most of his life, and now he is a wise and loving elder cat.

Stacy N. Hackett, contributing editor to CatChannel.com, shares her Southern California home with two Cornish Rex cats, Carson and Evita, and a playful orange tabby named Jackson.