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"Many have forgotten this truth but you must not forget it. You remain responsible, forever, for what you have tamed" ~Antoine de Saint-Exupery

The Gabriel Foundation® is a 501(c)3 avicultural and veterinary affiliated parrot welfare organization licensed by the State of Colorado, promoting educational outreach, conservation, rescue, rehabilitation, adoption and sanctuary pertaining to the needs of parrots everywhere. Tax ID #84-1396085

Desperately Seeking Help for My Bird (and ME!)

As a parrot welfare and education organization, we receive hundreds of requests every week for help with issues related to having wild animals living in a captive setting – specifically birds. It is our goal, as individuals and as an organization, to help YOU enrich the live(s) of the birds you live with and learn to co-exist in a successful and rewarding way. Parrots don't come with an owner's manual. Unlike our computer or TV, each bird is unique even within the same species and we can't just do "steps 1,2 and 3" and it's fixed!

Because of the large volume of requests and the limited time available between our volunteers and staff to answer these questions, priority must be given to members of The Gabriel Foundation first. If you are not a member, we encourage you to consider becoming one for the multitude of educational resources! See www.thegabrielfoundation.org.

Many of the behavior issues that have brought you to the point of desperation have become patterned over a period of months to years. Therefore, "fixing" them will not happen quickly. Remember, behavior does not occur in a vacuum but is a direct response to many factors in the birds environment. In many cases, an in-depth behavior consult* with one of our staff is the optimal way to go. However, we are often asked for something more immediate to get started with. So, to get you started, here are some starting points:

- 1) First of all, you must change your expectations. Let go of what you WANT the bird to be or do and instead objectively describe what the bird is DOING by detailing your birds specific behavior. (Note this does not include what the bird is THINKING OR FEELING as we cannot quantify that). Once you can do that, you will be on your way to identifying the behavior that is the problem and finding ways to change or modify that. (example: My bird hates my husband does not describe the behavior. Saying "when my husband extends his hand to pick up the bird, Tweety pins his eyes and bites his hand" would be an objective description of a specific behavior)

- 2) Evaluate and modify the birds diet. MOST BIRDS RELINQUISHED to The Gabriel Foundation are on inadequate and inappropriate diets that do play a significant role in behavior!
- 3) Increase your birds exercise and create foraging opportunities in their environment. BOREDOM gives way to behaviors that we consider difficult to live with.

If you have not taken The Gabriel Foundation's online class Birdie Basics and Beyond, please get signed up for the next class. We have classes starting the 15th of every month. You will learn about diet, environment, husbandry, veterinary care behavior and more. Often times, engaging in this course will teach you adjustments needed to make the relationship work (again). You can sign up by calling Patti Christie at 303-629-5900 x213.

In addition to the Birdie Basics class, the following videos are a must for every bird household:

"Captive Foraging" by Dr. Scott Echols

"Training Your Parrot I" by Barbara Heidenreich

"Happily Ever After" by Ellen Cook, DVM

"Training Your Parrot for the Veterinary Exam" by Barbara Heidenreich

The following books also provide excellent, up to date information for the parrot owner:

"The Parrot Problem Solver" by Barbara Heidenreich

"Good Bird" by Barbara Heidenreich

"Don't Shoot the Dog" by Karen Pryor (understanding Applied Behavior Analysis)

"Environmental Enrichment for Captive Animals" by Robert Young

"Avian Nutrition" by Robert G Black

"A Parrot for Life" by Rebecca O'Connor

Many of the species specific books published by Australian Bird Keeper (ABK Publications)

"Parrots" by Tony Juniper and Mike Farr

"Parrots of the World"

Internet Resources that provide accurate, helpful information:

www.behaviorworks.org (Dr. Susan Friedman's Living and Learning with Parrots online class is available through this website. It is THE best behavior course we know of!)

www.yahoogroups.com/ParrotBAS

www.yahoogroups.com/feedingfeathers

Thank you for contacting The Gabriel Foundation. It is an important first step in working toward a solution that will benefit both you and your bird. While we wish we had unlimited resources of time and money to individually address these concerns, we hope this information has provided an avenue for you to do some more work on your own to get the answers and support you need.

*To properly “diagnose” and treat behavior related problems, a behavior consultant will invest minimally 4 hours of time, provide you with written recommendations and have a follow up protocol. Typically, you can expect an investment of about \$60-\$75 per hour for this specialized consultation.