READING: ANIMAL EMOTIONS

You may love your pet, but does your pet love you? Most animal lovers claim that animals definitely experience emotions. Many stories are told of older dogs who become jealous when a new dog (or a baby) arrives home. For many years, however, scientists did not agree that animals experienced emotions; these behaviours, they said, were simply physiological reactions to external stimuli. But now new research is beginning to confirm that animals may have feelings much like ours.

Recent studies have shown that many animals, including chimpanzees, dogs, horses, rats and birds, experience emotions similar to human jealousy, grief and love. Fear has also been widely observed by scientists, perhaps unsurprisingly, since this emotion helps in survival. Biologist Samuel Gosling claims that dogs exhibit four dimensions of personality: affection, sociability, emotional stability and "competence", a combination of intelligence and obedience. These are similar to the categories of human personality generally found in basic psychological tests.

Other studies have shown that when a recording of dogs' "laughter" is played to other dogs, they start to play with each other, and rats who "laugh" frequently seem to be popular among other rats, offering further proof of emotions among animals. In addition, animals respond to anti-depressant drugs and this proves that their brain chemistry, which is affected by the drug, must be similar to ours. Experts believe that their emotions must therefore be similar, too.
However, if animals really do have human-like emotions, there are some serious issues to consider: how fair is it, for example, for humans to keep animals in cages, or use them for pharmaceutical testing?

TRUE OR FALSE:

1. Animal lovers believe that dogs can be jealous TRUE FALSE
2. Scientists have always believed that animals have got feelings TRUE FALSE
3. Only humans experience both positive and negative emotions TRUE FALSE
4. Dogs often "laugh" when they see other dogs playing TRUE FALSE

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