

## The Communication Queen

She had paused from conversation long enough to take one or two sips from her Venti coffee. But when she caught sight of a couple and their Australian Shepherd sauntering by, pet psychic Suzan Vaughn's face wrinkled into a smile and she intently, but silently, conversed with the dog. But the canine connection eluded her. "I tried to have a chat but he is totally into you," she announced to the dog's companions.

Her attention shifted. She no longer spoke to the couple but stared at the dog and continued to express her admiration.

"That is some really nice fur—you know I met a cat like that one time. Very fluffy, very pissed off. I was explaining to it that everyone was just jealous of its fur and that is why people always wanted to touch it. And you know what...its whole attitude changed."

Being an animal medium isn't something Vaughn chose to do, its something that chose her. She always had all the right pieces, she mentioned, but it took her sometime to figure out how they all fit together. Ever since she was young, people would come and ask her advice. It was her innate ability to connect with people that drove her to study psychology and communications in college. After realizing that she "didn't want to listen to people whine for a career," she took a job in a newsroom. As a reporter and a radio talk show host, she found temporary satisfaction. But in 2001 Vaughn quit her job as a reporter, left California, and moved to Washington in pursuit of something "that would satisfy her soul."

“ It was right after 9-11 and I was sitting in the newsroom at KCOY. My news director told me I needed to go out and find a relative of a relative of relative of someone who died in the September events to interview. When I heard that assignment my soul fell.”

When Vaughn recalls her past, she speaks carefully. Each word sounds as if it had been rehearsed—but it isn't practice she is relaying on, its belief. “I didn't know what kind of psychic abilities I had, so I just opened up to my higher guides and waited. People started calling me and asking about their pets. I asked my guides are you sure this is what I should do? But this was the direction my guides were telling me to go in. It's radical, just wild, but I can't deny the results.”

Looking at Vaughn, there is nothing radical about her. Lightly colored strawberry blonde hair, blushed cheeks, a touch of eye shadow, and red lipstick, no longer stain her lips but mark the small slit in the lid of her coffee cup. Her age falls hidden behind her makeup, but the light brown spots on her hands suggest she is older than fifty.

Coming out that she was a pet psychic was hard. Vaughn was asked to go public on a local morning news show in Washington. She would do readings on the air. Preparation is important. Vaughn usually begins her readings with a meditation that takes her into a blank state so that she can focus on mind-to-mind conversing with the animals. She spends some moments visualizing the animal and opening her self up to the animal's higher guides. Once she has reached them she links her heart to theirs.

“It's a process of receiving. Once everything is clear, I can hear what is going on.”

Messages, she said, are transmitted to her from the animal's guides, teachers, and higher self through pictures, visions, scents, and emotional or physical feelings she gets in her body. She didn't have time for any preparation, so she was extremely thankful when the animals opened up to her on their own accord. She said, describing her readings that the animals send her pictures and feelings, which she translates into words.

Not all believe in her abilities. "I don't really speak to my father. When I came out he told me I was defrauding the public. He said I was doing it for the money, which is absurd because we don't make a lot of money."

Vaughn is careful not to use the word psychic. Twisting her ring in circles around her finger she contemplates the word and its connotation. "The word psychic can really freak people out. So I try and use a more neutral word that won't make a people feel uncomfortable."

Vaughn has named herself the "Communication Queen." For \$45 a half hour, or \$75 an hour, she will tell you what your vet can't. "I had this one person call me about their dog. The dog had a skin allergy but no one could figure out what was causing it. The owner was very upset. I worked with the dog. I visualized different foods until I found one that made my nose tickle. The dog was allergic to it. The woman stopped giving the dog that food and its skin cleared up."

Vets don't like working with animal psychics she explained. They find her advice distracting and unhelpful.

"I don't need to prove myself to anyone. So if they don't believe me or ask for proof I just give them their money back."

Vaughn prefers to do most of her readings via telephone. This way she said, she could help people anywhere. She asks that the person send her a photograph beforehand of the animal so she can get acquainted. Seeing what the animal looks like helps guide her visualization and allows her to connect more naturally with the animal. If it is critical that she meet with the animal in person, she goes to the their home. “I need the animal to feel comfortable and at ease.”

She only needs one or two sessions before she can solve the problem. The people who seek her out, for the most part, are open to what she has to say, good or bad. She sometimes struggles with how much information she should divulge.

“Lost pets are the hardest for me. Sometimes I get too overwhelmed and I need to take a break from readings and recoup myself.”

Vaughn forms a strong bond with the animals she reads. In some cases she feels as though they are her own companions.

Growing up in Southern California, Vaughn never had pets. Her mother was afraid of them. Now, living in a cozy home on the Central Coast, she welcomes creatures of all kinds. Wild ducks, birds, an opossum, and a guinea pig named Wiggy, share her company there. The animals, she explains, are not our pets but are our companions. She elaborates. “ Lets say there is a man who keeps all his feelings pent up inside. He never lets any of it out. It could be his path that this will lead to cancer. And so he is driving and a cat runs across the road and he hits it and kills it. As a child he had a cat that was hit by a car, and this experience brings all those feelings back. Now the man is crying, and is able to release all this built up tension. Now the cat has sacrificed its body to help change this man’s path. He no longer will get cancer.”

Animals are not attached to their bodies, Vaughn explained. They do feel misery, though. Her blue eye shadow is almost an exact match to her eye color. She placed her black Ray Ban sunglasses over her eyes and her voice deepened. “When you tune into animals at the zoo you hear so many messages. Some are okay, but a lot of them are just going insane. I don’t spend much time at the zoo.” Her nose crinkled as she continued on about the mistreatment of animals. “Horses are really regal animals. They are just something. People spend all this money on them just to disregard their feelings. The horse’s number one complaint is about the bit. It’s usually never fitted correctly.”

“Dixie this dog, pretty mutt like, short black and brown hair. She was a rescue. The people she lived with called her stupid dog, crazy dog. When I saw her, my heart fell out of my chest. The truth was she was actually really smart. In fact so brainy that she had just been bored to do mundane things and that is why she was acting out. She wasn’t challenged enough.”

What Vaughn does is more than a career it’s a lifestyle. It isn’t something she can just turn on at nine in the morning, and off at five in the afternoon. It’s a life long commitment that she has made. When she isn’t working, she is probably sleeping. “My husband,” she says smiling “is guardedly optimistic about my life.” Married for five years, his reoccurring question is “is this person a returning client?” Vaughn stresses again her understanding of skepticism. It makes her husband feel calm to know that people are getting tangible results and when another problem occurs, she is the person they come back to. And people do return, but if they don’t, it wouldn’t matter to her.

“You know that animals have karmic debt. They owe something; perhaps in a last life a coyote ate a cat. Well, this life they have an appointment to be a cat, something like

that.” There are so many reasons why an animal is behaving a certain way, that is just impossible to understand unless you ask them, Vaughn explains. “There was this horse a few years ago, very dangerous. You know when you are sick in bed and when you start to get better you get all this energy because you have been just stuck laying around? Well, this horse used to be a racehorse and when it started losing, the owners left it behind. And so this horse was just cooped up in a stall with nothing to do. With all this pent up energy. The horse said this.”

For Vaughn, whether someone believes her work or not is unimportant. What matters to her is that the animal is heard and understood. It is painful for her to watch people misinterpret their animal companions. To mistake her for being a fraud is no weight on her shoulders. But to mistake misery for aggression hangs heavy on her soul. At the expense of sounding absurd, she described, she has taken on the voice of those who cannot speak.

Vaughn moved her hair back over her shoulder and pulled her coffee up to her mouth. Eyes never lifted from the scene in front of her. As the couple walked past her, the woman turned toward Vaughn and told her “he is really mad at me for not taking him on a walk this morning. I promised I would and then I was just so busy.” The couple and the dog turned the corner and Vaughn placed her coffee on the table and laughing said, “Well that’s just silly, the dog isn’t angry with her at all.”

