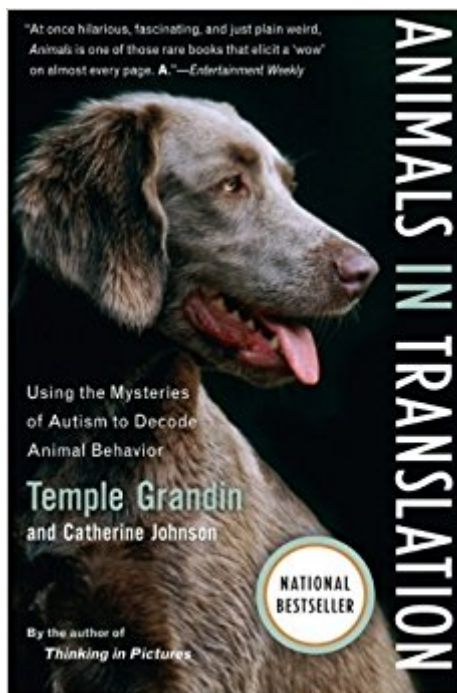




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# Animals In Translation: Using The Mysteries Of Autism To Decode Animal Behavior (A Harvest Book)



## Synopsis

I don't know if people will ever be able to talk to animals the way Doctor Doolittle could, or whether animals will be able to talk back. Maybe science will have something to say about that. But I do know people can learn to "talk" to animals, and to hear what animals have to say, better than they do now. --From *Animals in Translation*

Why would a cow lick a tractor? Why are collies getting dumber? Why do dolphins sometimes kill for fun? How can a parrot learn to spell? How did wolves teach man to evolve? Temple Grandin draws upon a long, distinguished career as an animal scientist and her own experiences with autism to deliver an extraordinary message about how animals act, think, and feel. She has a perspective like that of no other expert in the field, which allows her to offer unparalleled observations and groundbreaking ideas. People with autism can often think the way animals think, putting them in the perfect position to translate "animal talk." Grandin is a faithful guide into their world, exploring animal pain, fear, aggression, love, friendship, communication, learning, and, yes, even animal genius. The sweep of *Animals in Translation* is immense and will forever change the way we think about animals. \*includes a Behavior and Training Troubleshooting Guide

Among its provocative ideas, the book: argues that language is not a requirement for consciousness--and that animals do have consciousness applies the autism theory of "hyper-specificity" to animals, showing that animals and autistic people are so sensitive to detail that they "can't see the forest for the trees"--a talent as well as a "deficit" explores the "interpreter" in the normal human brain that filters out detail, leaving people blind to much of the reality that surrounds them--a reality animals and autistic people see, sometimes all too clearly explains how animals have "superhuman" skills: animals have animal genius compares animals to autistic savants, declaring that animals may in fact be autistic savants, with special forms of genius that normal people do not possess and sometimes cannot even see examines how humans and animals use their emotions to think, to decide, and even to predict the future

reveals the remarkable abilities of handicapped people and animals

maintains that the single worst thing you can do to an animal is to make it feel afraid

## Book Information

Paperback: 358 pages

Publisher: Harcourt; 1st edition (January 2, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0156031442

ISBN-13: 978-0156031448

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.9 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 396 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #30,268 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Mammals](#) #9 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Biology > Entomology](#) #13 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Animal Behavior & Communication](#)

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Philosophers and scientists have long wondered what goes on in the minds of animals, and this fascinating study gives a wealth of illuminating insights into that mystery. Grandin, an animal behavior expert specializing in the design of humane slaughter systems, is autistic, and she contends that animals resemble autistic people in that they think visually rather than linguistically and perceive the world as a jumble of mesmerizing details rather than a coherent whole. Animals—cows, say, on their way through a chute—are thus easily spooked by novelties that humans see as trivialities, such as high-pitched noises, drafts and dangling clothes. Other animals accomplish feats of obsessive concentration; squirrels really do remember where each acorn is buried. The portrait she paints of the mammalian mind is both alien and familiar; she shows that beasts are capable of sadistic cruelty, remorse, superstition and surprising discernment (in one experiment, pigeons were taught to distinguish between early period Picasso and Monet). Grandin (*Thinking in Pictures*) and Johnson (coauthor of *Shadow Syndromes*) deploy a simple, lucid style to synthesize a vast amount of research in neurology, cognitive psychology and evolutionary biology, supplementing it with Grandin's firsthand observations of animal behavior and her own experiences with autism, engaging anecdotes about how animals interact with each other and their masters, and tips on how to pick and train house pets. The result is a lively and absorbing look at the world from animals' point of view. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Temple Grandin has been known to crawl through slaughterhouses to get a sense of what the animals there are experiencing. An autistic woman who as a child was recommended for institutionalization, Grandin has managed not only to enter society's mainstream but ultimately to become prominent in animal research. An associate professor at Colorado State University, she designs facilities used worldwide for humane handling of livestock. She also

invented a "hug machine" (based on a cattle-holding chute) that calms autistic children. In *Animals in Translation*, co-authored with science writer Catherine Johnson, Grandin makes an intriguing argument that, psychologically, animals and autistic people have a great deal in common—and that both have mental abilities typically underestimated by normal people. The book is a valuable, if speculative, contribution to the discussion of both autism and animal intelligence, two subjects on which there is little scientific consensus. Autistics, in Grandin's view, represent a "way station" between average people, with all their verbal and conceptual abilities, and animals. In touring animal facilities, Grandin often spots details—a rattling chain, say, or a fluttering piece of cloth—that disturb the animals but have been overlooked by the people in charge. She also draws on psychological studies to show how oblivious humans can be to their surroundings. Ordinary humans seem to be less detail-oriented than animals and autistics. Grandin argues that animals have formidable cognitive capabilities, albeit specialized ones, whereas humans are cognitive generalists. Dogs are smell experts, birds are migration specialists, and so on. In her view, some animals have a form of genius—much as autistic savants can perform feats of memory and calculation far beyond the abilities of average people. Some dogs, for example, can predict when their owner is about to have a seizure. Delving into animal emotion, aggression and suffering, Grandin gives tips that may be useful for caretakers of pets and farm animals. She also notes that humans seem to need, and thrive on, the proximity of animals. Indeed, she states provocatively, in the process of becoming human we gave up something primal, and being around animals helps us get a measure of that back. Kenneth Silber --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This was first experience with the works of Temple Grandin, and I found it to be a fascinating read. Generally speaking, I would say that "Animals in Translation" is somewhere between a text book and an autobiography. For the most part, the book was very interesting, and it kept me engaged throughout. However, the prose can sway wildly between anecdotal and the scientific, making for a somewhat uneven reading experience. But in spite of this hiccup, I continued reading (and enjoying). The insights that she offers as to the thought processes and perceptions of animals are nothing short of astounding, and it's fascinating to see the similarities she draws between autistic people and animals... the way that both parties see the world makes much more sense, once Grandin applies her unique lens to the situation. I have great admiration for Temple Grandin. Her accomplishments, in the face of the challenges that her autism provides, are nothing short of amazing. I also feel that her achievements do not simply end with the acquisition of her PhD and her commercial success. She has provided real, tangible improvements in the lives of countless animals

by applying her theories and observations. I'm a vegetarian, so I would prefer that none of these animals were eaten to begin with- but the application of Grandin's theories has at least reduced their suffering, and made for more humane practices. I hope she continues her great work with animals.

Amazing insights that I have been able to apply to my own interactions with animals. Difficult to read due in part to the mechanical style and due to the large content related to Temple Grandin's personal trials. Despite those stylistic hurdles, I am on my third read through of this book and have bought two others of hers.

I ordered this book after reading *Animals Make us Human* by the same author and found it just as delightful.

Everything about Temple Grandin's life is an inspiration to me and I'm sure it will be to everyone else! She is a marvel with animals!

She and Oliver Sacks are definitely my favorite authors when talking about brain and mind. Don't be mistaken by the title: the book is about animals, but it is nonetheless illuminating on the human mind too. Obviously if you want to get more technical you can find different books, but this is one is a very good starting point for inspiration, due to its extensive bibliography and range of subjects touched.

Temple Grandin is an amazing person and her books are entertaining and informative. This is one of the most insightful books I've ever read about animal wellbeing.

I'm not yet finished with this book but have found it fascinating. I am a teacher who has worked w/autistic children and I'm an equestrian who helps other equestrians with problems with their horses. This book seemed like the perfect read for me. I'm looking for ways to improve that human/animal communication & increase my understanding of why animals do what they do. Dr. Grandin has reinforced many of my training techniques and has given me wonderful insight into the thought processes & behaviors of large livestock. I also appreciate her candor & honesty when explaining what it is like to function in the world from the INSIDE of an autistic body. Autism is fascinating and often times, those with autism cannot talk about what they are experiencing and how we can help them. While the autism spectrum is vast, it's been wonderfully informative to get the insight from Dr. Grandin on her autism and how she made it work FOR her.

A lot has already been written about this book and I wouldn't want to rehash it. I just want to add that I got this book with another written by Temple Grandin. This book's voice feels far more authentic: the writing is clear and simply structured and I felt much more "in her company". There isn't a problem with the writing in *Animals Make Us Human*, it just feels worked a bit much, to the detriment of the voice, if not the content. You feel like you are hearing Temple Grandin more in this one, in delivery.

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