

Alan Roberts sharing an event which involves Eugene Halliday

We continue...

Then one evening I attended a meeting very depressed over a family pet. She was very ill with nephritis. It may sound trite now but the dog had been a true friend since I was eight and I was under pressure from my family to have her put down as she was really suffering. I could not bring myself to do it.

Leaving the ballroom where meetings were held, the usual crowd around Eugene seemed to part. Perhaps it was the dark cloud that hovered over me as I walked passed, but surprising myself as much as anyone I turned and blurted out, 'Eugene is it ever right to have an animal put down?' It was probably the most genuine thing I'd ever said at a meeting up to that point.

His response was far more sensitive than I had expected or deserved and advised me that my dog had lost her natural instincts to let herself die, and, by being enmeshed in a human family and the emotional ties and relations this creates, was holding herself in life.

I listened, it was not the philosophical reply I thought I wanted. He then advised that I return home, keep her warm with a hot water bottle and tell her that I understood that it was time for her to go. She would understand the emotion behind the words, he said. The words would help me to release my end of the relationship and she could then release hers.

Not knowing what to make of this answer that ran against all I expected I went home and did as he said. The dog relaxed and slept. My father and mother bemused by all this were nevertheless both impressed with the change in the dog.

She died the following day. She just relaxed and relaxed until as my father put it 'She lay like a man, legs and 'arms' outstretched breathing deeper and slower until she died'.

So impressed was my Dad with her death that he wrote to Eugene although he had never met him and, father-like, had been disparaging of my initial descriptions of him. Probably he was concerned in case I was getting drawn into some sort of crackpot organisation.

This incident and Eugene's return letter deepened my opinion of the man. There was much more to this 'intelligent man', something far more than I, or my father, had met before. My Dad started coming to lectures. He remained involved and committed to the ideas that Eugene discussed with us to the end of his life; literally, the very end of his life.

Eugene's return letter is reproduced at the end of this article, so that you can make up your own mind about that. But beyond that it was the level of the response to my concern and to the animal's plight that made me value more intently what was happening at Parklands from then on.

And I have had other pets, and I have spoken to them too when their bodies have been too tired or infirm but it has never been as it was then. Only one other has taken themselves off rather than be 'euthanised'. So maybe it was just a coincidence. Or perhaps that when you are around someone as focussed as Halliday was, that so many coincidences happen.

And as my father soon realised it was about as far from being a cult as you could get. No commitment from us was asked at all, either financial or in terms of involvement by Eugene or any of the company at Parklands. Which is important, yes they did have to function, but I was not asked to help – ever. And to my eternal shame I never offered anything although I received so much.

His involvement and commitment to our understanding seemed to go way beyond ours. If we stayed on discussing things till one o'clock after a three-hour lecture, he did too. If you needed to sort something out and he was not seeing another, he made space to see you. On several occasions when talking to him others would arrive for a scheduled meeting. He would then leave me, sometimes for two hours, sometimes with an exercise to practise, and then return to me and continue where we had left off.

He never in all the time I listened to him claimed the ideas to be his. We did, and still do, we have no other way to refer to them, but he never did. If it is the truth then it is the universe's was the type of his answer. He was like an entry port for them, and like an entry port they flowed endlessly. He would attribute links and sources that echoed his argument continually – just as he does in his talks – but the depth of the conclusions he drew and the reach of the ideas seemed uniquely present in him.

I have never had such a commitment to my progress and to my understanding than his. We would follow an idea, argument or a problem through its history, geography philosophy whatever until I understood.

It is on the strength of the intensity commitment shown to me and to the others who knew him and on the thorough and absorbing nature of his work that I recommend his works.

Parklands,
27. XI. 74.

Dear Geoff Roberts:

The emotional life of a dog is intimately linked with the human beings who love and care for it. In the wild state a sick or old dog would creep away and hide until it either recovered or died.

But in a domestic situation a dog is led into an emotionally charged situation which heightens its sensitivity to human feelings and in consequence dissociates it from its own natural instinctive way of reacting to its own life processes, and to its tendency to release itself from its body when it reaches a certain state of "old age".

If the dog is attached strongly in its feelings to the human beings with whom it lives, its natural instinct, which in its old age would allow it to die, does not function properly, and so the dog is held into the emotional situation longer than it would naturally be. But if the human beings come to a realisation of the situation and feel that they can let the dog let go of its life-in-the-body, this removes the emotional holding-force which is keeping the dog in its body.

Judy's position was an economic one, distributing her energies in the best possible way for her during her process of withdrawal from her body.

As you are aware, all beings originate from and within the universe, which is itself a field of intelligent power. We originate in it, and, when we leave our body, we return to it to take up our essential positions within it.

We are all in our origin a system of forces stretched out within the universal mind. This is why the symbol of the cross is so powerful. Judy's position echoed this symbol, as our own body does when we lay it down most economically. When we stretch ourselves out in this way, we re-experience at a certain level of consciousness the form of our origin in the star-forces from which we derive as a radiating pattern of power.

The lasting significance of any death is that we return to our Source, that the forces which constitute us return to the place from which we came, a place in the universal power, unique for each one of us, yet constituting part of a cosmic pattern which in its totality makes up the mind of God, who is Himself the infinite intelligent power which builds the whole universe and everything and every being in it.

I hope this helps a little towards an understanding of the questions raised in your letter.

Thank you for your letter,

Yours with good wishes,
Eugene Hathaway