

Birds USA Editorial: Strive For Thrive!

By Laura Doering

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For many of us who share our lives with birds, it was love at first sight. Whether it was a shy, innocent “Are you my friend?” sideways glance or that “Yippee! Pick me, pick me!” dance, our feathered companions seemed intuitive as to the proper means to win us over. No matter how you and your bird met, the important question is “Where do we go from here?” To answer that question, first, there’s the bare essentials: a cage, food and water. They will keep your bird alive, but they alone will not help it thrive. What’s the difference you might ask?

The difference is a kept animal that simply continues to be and a healthy companion that greets the day with a cheerful song and perhaps an enthusiastic “Hello!” It is a bird that feels comfortable enough in its environment, and with you, that it looks forward to seeing what new, healthy offering is in its food dish or what new toy awaits its demolishing; a bird that considers you part of its flock, which can be as simple as enjoying sharing the same space as you or as involved as snuggling up to you whenever you have a free moment.

Parrots are social creatures by nature and, just like any new friendship, the amount and type of interaction you choose to have with your bird defines what type of friendship you will have. Don’t let your initial good intentions turn into a caretaker/tenant relationship. Buy your bird the biggest cage possible (taking into account appropriate bar spacing), offer it a healthy and varied diet, consider toys an ongoing monthly purchase, set up playgyms around your home, and spend time getting to know your bird.

This magazine is here to help get you started on the path to understanding your bird and meeting its unique needs. Make thrive verses survive you and your bird's motto!