Have you considered all the ways your pet keeps you healthy? You may initially think about the happy feelings experienced when spending time with your cat, or the fun you have while playing with your dog, but human-animal bond research tells us that the impact pets have goes much deeper.

The bond between people and pets can boost human wellness mentally, physically and socially. According to one study, 98% of pet owners around the world reported at least one specific benefit to their health from their pets. The impact pets have on our lives doesn’t stop there. Research demonstrates that pet owners have lower blood pressure, are more likely to achieve recommended levels of daily exercise and are less likely to be obese. Pet ownership has been linked to reduced anxiety and depression and can also provide people with the kind of social support that helps lessen feelings of loneliness and isolation. In addition, children with pets are more likely to be physically active and social.

You may ask, as a pet lover, why is it important to understand the significance of the human-animal bond? You already adore pets, after all! With knowledge of the human-animal bond and the science behind it, we can work together to make our society more pet-friendly. Pets bring people together, with more than half of pet owners agreeing that having a pet makes it easier to connect with people. The power of pets to unite us is no small feat in a world that’s divided in so many other ways.

By learning more about the mutually beneficial relationship between pets and humans, and educating others, we can strengthen the human-animal bond for healthier people, pets and communities. Visit the Human Animal Bond Research Institute’s website, www.habri.org, for scientific research findings, resources and more!