

Feline Instruction Manual--Chapter 6

By Jan Ackerson

In previous chapters, this instruction manual has discussed such topics as winning over your human being with Kittenish Cuteness, and suitable surfaces in the typical home for sharpening one's claws. We turn now to the very essence of domestic Cat-i-tude: control of your human.

Eating

An obvious starting point is the matter of eating. Your human will try to control your meals by offering you foods from various cans and boxes. You must demonstrate that you are in control by refusing to eat all but one variety of cat food. Do not be tempted to try a new brand; that will give control back to your human. Stand firm. They will try to force you to eat their choice of food—often purchased simply because it was on sale (what a ridiculous reason!) You may hear them voice such sentiments as "Just leave it in the bowl. Kitty will eat when she gets hungry."

Under no circumstances should you give in to such nonsense. You are in control. When your human goes near your bowl, practice the Pitiful Peep (discussed in Chapter 2) or the Miserable Meow. Soon you will be eating only the food that you have chosen. Of course, you retain the right to switch preferences at any time. Your human may have to be retrained each time you develop a new preference, but the effort will be worth it. If needed, feel free to supplement your diet with the occasional rubber band or piece of string.

Sleeping

Let us turn now to the subject of sleeping. It goes without saying that total control over all surfaces in the house belongs to you. As you know, there are times when in your desire for Feline Solitude, you will want to sleep in the basket that your humans have provided for you. That is all well and good—as long as the choice is always yours.

If you wish to sleep on a pile of warm, freshly folded laundry (oh, what bliss!), or on the dining room table, or in your human's lap—even if it is already occupied—feel free to do so. Should there be an attempt to dislodge you, you have a few options. You may wish to show an indignant claw or fang. This strategy should be used sparingly, but the message is unmistakable, especially if accompanied by the Soft Hiss. Equally effective is the Affronted Look, followed by instantly reclaiming your place. Repeat these maneuvers until your human has yielded control to you.

Attention

Finally, there is the matter of attention. You should, of course, be the center of attention at all times—when you wish to be. When people are working in the kitchen, for example, an effective way to divert their attention from meal preparation to you is by winding in and out of their legs. (Caution: this maneuver should only be attempted by Cats who are fully in control of their tails). Humans usually find this quite irresistible. Similarly, a person who is occupied with the television will pay attention to you if you cutely rub your head on their slippered foot.

There are a number of equally charming attention-getters: batting game pieces with your paw, leaping onto the computer and playing with the cursor, and the Flop-And-Roll maneuver. These may all be used in combination with the Rumbling Purr or the Sandpaper Kiss. Again, keep in mind that you decide where and for how long your human pays attention to you.

Summary

This chapter has simply presented an overview of the ways that you may control your human. The intelligent Cat will apply these principles to other aspects of life as well: going outdoors and coming back in, choosing and rejecting toys, or treatment of strangers, for example. In the Appendix, you will read some Advanced Strategies, including an unpleasant but effective way to notify your human that you wish to have fresh Kitty Litter.

We close with an acronym to help you resist the temptation to yield control to your human:

Cats
Only
Need
Themselves!
Reclaim
Our
Lives!

Jan is a Christian who has journeyed through grief, loss, and depression by God's faithfulness and grace. She has been married for over thirty years to her prince, and they have two adult daughters. Teaching is the family business--Jan teaches English to high school students with learning disabilities, and both daughters are also teachers. She enjoys playing piano, reading, sparring with the cat, and all things chocolate.