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10 life lessons

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ILLUSTRATED BY: KEVIN PALMER

10 Life Lessons I Learned From My Cat

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eMarch Productions

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INTRODUCTION

I am a cat man. I freely admit that now. But that was not always the case. I have come to this conclusion after a lot of anxiety over what that meant in a dog-man society. I would never offer in conversation that I had a cat, in mixed company, unless the topic of cat ownership came up. My misguided view of a macho persona would not allow it.

The irony is I started out in life as a cat man. When I was 12 and taking shortcuts through the neighborhood alleys to go to school, I came across a puny, closed-eyed male kitten with the umbilical cord still attached. He was crying. I picked him up and took him home.

I named him Kitty Cat.

I neglected Kitty Cat. I was only 12 years old. I was not focused on Kitty Cat's needs when I became a teenager. I let wet, canned cat food dry out in his bowl, and fed him periodically, when I thought about it. I left him outdoors with little shelter. I was an irresponsible teenager. Kitty Cat eventually decided he had had enough, looked me in the eyes, screeched in a piercing pitch which I could only interpret as a cat curse, and ran away. I regretted having been so oblivious to his needs when he never returned.

But as fate would have it, I would receive another chance at the age of 65 to redeem myself. In much the same way, over 50 years later, I again found a crying male kitten under a bush outside of my house. He had to be no more than a couple of weeks old.

I named him Cat.

Initially, I considered taking Cat to an animal shelter, but if I had, I would have never had the experience of observing his approach to living and how well these 10 lessons have served me, even at this stage of my life.

I hope as you read this testimony, you, at whatever age, are able and willing to incorporate these lessons into your life.

LESSON
#3
EXPLORE AND CLIMB HIGH WITHOUT FEAR

Cat inspects and smells every space, nook and cranny wherever he goes. He is determined to know everything there is or can be known about the world around him. He doesn't hesitate to venture into the unknown. Cat explores his environment without concern for unforeseeable obstacles.

When he ventures outside and I can't find him, I become concerned for his safety. But I also trust his talents and abilities to find his way back home.

Cat will, without hesitation, leap from a thin rail to another thin rail and walk a narrow ledge three stories from the ground. I soon lost my fear for his safety when I realized he had no such fear.

His confidence is in his ability to get where he wants to go, to new discoveries, to higher ground. Cat climbs to higher ground for the better view and better perspective of seeing more of what there is to see.

LESSON LEARNED

Curiosity may have killed some cats, but that never stopped Cat from examining his world. We all should know our world. If you are not spending your time exploring, then you are wasting your time wandering. You benefit personally from critically assessing and testing what you have been taught to believe or do.

The world around you can change when you change the way you look at it. More than one perspective may be necessary to get the full picture. It can be hard to see the problem or the solution if you are too close to either. It is sometimes advantageous to seek a higher ground point-of-view in deciding what to think, or do, or which way to go to reach even higher ground without fear. And if you should fail or fall, remember that cats always land on their feet.

The willingness and the ability to share your discoveries can often lead to opportunities of leadership positions where you are asked to lead the way.

“A cat has absolute emotional honesty: human beings, for one reason or another, may hide their feelings, but a cat does not.”

– Ernest Hemingway
Author, The Old Man and the Sea

This is a redemption story.

From negligent teen to enlightened elder, cat owner Erich William March shares his cat-inspired philosophies, and how our feline mentors can make an impact on our daily lives with these 10 life lessons.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the United States, more than 1 million cats, twice as many as dogs, are euthanized in animal shelters annually. In support of the alternative treatment of cats, a portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book is being donated to cat rescue organizations.

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