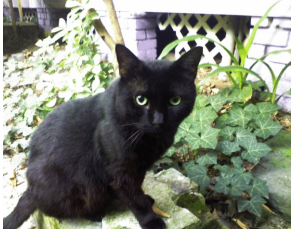


Respect: The Lesson I learned from Neko and McMuffin

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I've learned a LOT of lessons from my animal friends and from animals that I've met along the way. I'm sure we all have. Yet the most difficult lesson is the one I'm about to describe. I share it with you in hopes that it will strike some chord of remembrance in you. That it will fill your heart, as it does mine, with love and gratefulness for all things.

This is a two-part lesson - seems I needed a second dose! The first part is the story of Neko, a beautiful black cat with deeply soulful eyes who chose to be a member of my family for a number of years.

Neko was very independent. Loved being a cat. Loved being in nature, doing cat things. And he was a very loving, compassionate fellow... never the one to start a fight but always there to assist if another family member was in trouble (we have had as many as 12 felines in our family at one time). By agreement he took on the role of Family Manager. He kept the balance of feline - and human! - energy and held the space for everyone else to do their thing within the loose structure of the family. He kept the peace, held the love quotient steady. All in a very unobtrusive way. The gentle giant in a feline body.

Neko was injured a couple of times... bitten by another cat who lived on the fringes... and he was hit by a vehicle - or, as he chose to explain it, ran into something because he wasn't paying attention. Infections arose as a result of these injuries and set in deeply because Neko was reluctant to be treated until tough love forced the issue. The residue of these injuries most likely led to his final illness, kidney disease.

There are lots of details about his medical situation that aren't really important to the story - or to the lesson - suffice it to say that he became very ill over a short period of time. So ill that he was easily picked up and taken to the specialty vet hospital - never possible if he were in good health. The vets said he needed fluids twice a day via an IV. We did this at home in my bedroom... where he lived under my bed for several weeks. I made a special litter box for him out of leaves and dirt to appeal to his outside yearnings. Had special food for him...sometimes he ate, sometimes he didn't. Yet he was a prisoner in my bedroom. Not that he had any desire to escape.

Neko's health improved and then it would fail. I subjected him to trips to the specialty vet requiring that he spend a number of nights in a cage. I also carted him off to the family vet for more tests and examinations. He was compliant through it all. Which should have told me something.

Through all of this I consulted other animal communicators for guidance, support, and communications with Neko. Everyone was extremely supportive and helpful. Everyone had suggestions and advice which I took to heart.

Finally, after one of the visits to the vet, Neko made it clear that he wasn't going to tolerate any more. There would be no more IVs, no more force-feeding, no more poking and prodding. He mustered all of the strength he had in him to make sure that I understood - he bit me! My gentle giant bit me! More than once, to make the point.

About a week after Neko's stand I decided to give him the run of the house and I opened the bedroom door. He moved under a bed in another room, where he stayed for many many days, occasionally returning to my room. Then one night at about 2 am he woke me with a noise he made by repeatedly slapping a lamp cord against the wall. I turned on the light, got out of bed and sat on the floor with him for more than an hour, all the while kissing, head bonking and rubbing on him and he on me. He purred. Hadn't done that since we started down this road. I stretched out on the floor and he lay on top of me. When he eased off of me I sat for a little while waiting to see what was next, then turned off the light and lay on the floor to sleep. Neko didn't move. I understood he wanted me to get back in bed, so I did. Later that morning when I got up to feed the other felines, Neko was gone. He'd found his remaining strength and gone down the stairs and out the cat door - to leave the physical realm on his own terms. At that moment I realized he'd given me a very special good-bye. I also clearly understood the lesson. And the amazing love he vibrated.

The second part of the lesson is McMuffin's story.



McMuffin was a very large full-figured yellow-orange tabby with sad-looking eyes and a tummy that called out to be rubbed. He came to us after his previous family left town without him. Many a day he spent sitting on the top of the fence observing our comings and goings before deciding he might want to join the family. He was initially aloof, not really integrating with the other felines and avoiding close human contact. Gradually he adopted us and allowed us to be family. He made close relationships with some and had a healthy respect for the others.

McMuffin loved the outdoors. He was not a housecat as he was clear to let us know. He did enjoy the comfort of the living room couch on occasion. He loved the garden and could usually be found in any number of his special spots (on top of the rain barrel, curled around the potted lemon tree). He was devoted to me (and I to him!) and always always always came to me when I called whether out loud or telepathically. He always wanted more... more food, more space, more love. He was full of life.

After Neko's departure McMuffin agreed to take on the job of Family Manager. And he took it seriously - stopping fights and sharing the love with the intensity that I came to know as McMuffin.

He too, was very independent. Guess you could say that about most cats. This became evident when he became ill.

I noticed that McMuffin was struggling to have a bowel movement. I observed this for many days being careful not to intrude especially after Part One of my lesson from Neko. My energetic scan of his body (with his consent!) showed me a tumor or other blockage. I checked with the vets, did some research, and came up with a plan of things I could do - and set about "helping" him. He was having none of it. Not your business, he said.

I returned from twelve days on the road and he still wasn't eliminating and I made a spur of the moment decision that he HAD to go to the vet right then. I enlisted the aid of Jim and we worked together to catch him and put him in a carrier. The catching part was OK - but the carrier part was not. McMuffin bit the hell out of both of us. Jim still has a scar and other residuals from this episode. Needless to say, McMuffin was clearly letting us know his wishes. Sound familiar?

Time passed.... weeks and then months... and still McMuffin was unable to eliminate. He was always excited to see me at meal times though he would usually only lick the food, and otherwise ate nothing. His body grew thinner and thinner.

Again, I contacted many other animal communicators and vets. Did lots of research. Again, lots of opinions and advice. Everyone wanted me to DO something. Catch him. Take him to the vet. But I knew this was impossible. Not just because I couldn't catch him if he didn't want me to, but also because it wasn't the right thing to do.

He chose to stay within the family compound most of the time. As his body became weaker and the summer hotter, he disappeared for days at a time. Each time I energetically checked on him he assured me that he was indeed in his body and "OK". And then he would show up again in the garden as if nothing had happened, wanting and giving lots of love.

Letting him BE was the hardest thing I think I've ever done. Allowing him to experience the issue - his issue - the way that he wanted and or needed - especially as he lost more and more weight was very hard for me. That ingrained sense of "must help, must fix" constantly urged me to take control of the situation.

McMuffin disappeared for about three weeks the last time. I checked in with him every day - to confirm that he was still in his physical body and to let him know that he was loved and supported. I know the other feline family members were doing the same. One

day when I checked in his energy was lighter, nebulous... and I knew that he had gone.

And the lesson? The title tells it all. Perhaps you can sense your own lessons from these stories... from the memories and emotions they invoke. I am forever grateful to Neko and McMuffin for these experiences and for their boundary-less, cease-less love.