

LIFE'S PURR-FECT

Friends Forever

After a rocky start, a kitten brings joy to an older cat.

THERE'S THAT WELL-KNOWN saying that states, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." I agree and would like to add that it's strictly a canine thing; it certainly doesn't apply to cats.

Fudge has always been a member of a multi-cat household, and when Cali passed away, leaving her on her own, it was obvious that she not only missed her friend of over 11 years but, in fact, seemed to blame me for Cali's "disappearance" and became extremely depressed.

I felt sorry for her when I went out for even an hour. The idea of leaving her home alone made me feel guilty. She would lie around and sleep and look so mournful.

I don't remember the details, but my husband was overseas and my son Evan decided we were going to get Fudge a friend. I have to laud him; he had done his homework and spoken to my veterinarian about whether Fudge would accept a full-grown cat or a kitten more easily. The veterinarian had suggested a kitten. Still unsure and in some kind of trance, I remember driving down to the animal



Ziggy and Fudge

shelter and signing on the dotted line on Evan's behalf (because he was 17 at the time) to love, protect and respect a tiny 8-week-old bundle of fur he named Ziggy.

Driving home, I was in a state. How would Fudge react? After all, she was already 12 years old.

Evan moved Ziggy in to his room and set about his role of being "dad." Over the next few weeks, we did all the right things by introducing Fudge to Ziggy first by smell, moving them around the house to follow those smells and, finally, face to face.

Fudge hissed vehemently. In return, Ziggy fell in love and decided that Fudge was going to be his mommy no matter what!

Fudge continued to hiss and be very standoffish. But Ziggy persisted. He initiated games and, even when Fudge would flatten him with her paw, he gave in graciously and let her rule.

We watched as the hissing lessened and Fudge went about teaching Ziggy manners around the food bowls and how to share the cat beds and scratchers. Ziggy insisted on curling up next to her and even started bathing her.

And then one day, she bathed him back. We noticed she was also initiating games — Punch and Judy style "boxing" matches which usually led to them thundering around the house after one another.

All the while, we were trying to teach

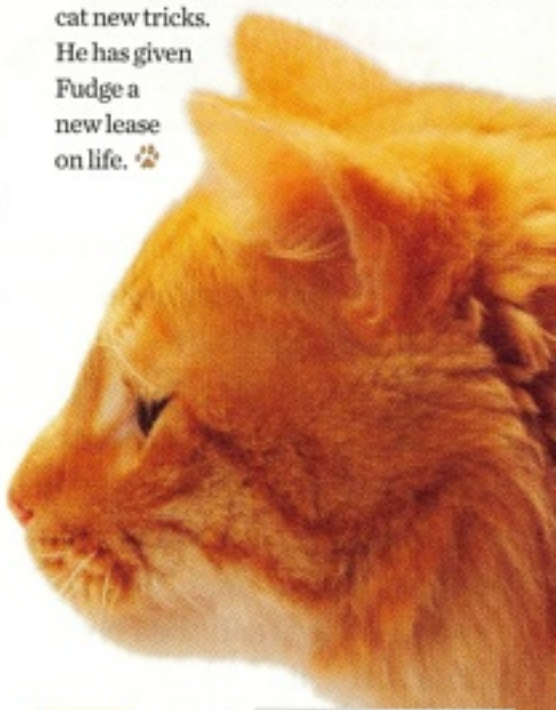
Ziggy that certain areas of the house were no-cat zones (such as the bar, the dining room table and certain other places). We then discovered that the two of them were in cahoots and Fudge was learning from Ziggy that there were new areas she hadn't explored (such as the bar, the dining room table and certain other places) and was copying him and learning about all the new fun zones! She would taunt us as if to say, "Look at me! I'm sitting where I shouldn't! Now catch me if you can!" And she would fly off with Ziggy in hot pursuit.

The age gap between them simply melted away. Looking at Fudge, you would never know she was a senior. She has become more agile, more alert and more interested in us, too. She even lost 3 pounds — what the vet called her "couch potato weight."

Ziggy has become Fudge's feline soul mate. It's now blatantly obvious that she adores him back. He has definitely taught her a slew of things, even down to how to climb our indoor plants!

But he has done more than teach an old cat new tricks.

He has given Fudge a new lease on life. 🐾



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