

The Feline Rulebook

Your cat's guide to running your life.



FROM GREEN

If your cat is going to be sick, chances are it will happen on your favorite chair.



BY SANDY ROBINS

Recently, while entertaining friends, my cat Fudge, who had been asleep in her bed for hours, suddenly got up, rushed over to my valuable silk Royal Tabriz Persian rug and vomited up a hairball-and-dinner combo.

That brought conversation to a halt. I hurried to mop up the mess while complaining that she had to pick that spot when there are plenty of tiled areas in the house.

"Don't you know? It's in the rules," said one of my cat-wise friends, a full-time slave to her three cats. "It's called The Basic Rules for Cats Who Have a House to Run. It states very clearly that if a cat has to throw up, it should quickly get into a favorite chair, and if that's occupied, head over to a prized rug. So, she was just following the rules."

Instantly, the conversation turned to other basic cat rules, such as why cats always pick out the guests who are allergic to them or hate to be covered in cat hair to sit on.

"Oh, that's in the rules, too," pronounced my knowledgeable and obviously well-trained friend. "Cats are required to pick a lap that's upholstered in a fabric that contrasts well with their fur. Similarly, they know that if you kick them off your favorite chair, they have to pretend nothing has happened and do a quick manicure. It's a way of saving face."

Just as parents sit and discuss their children, we were suddenly dishing on our cats.

"Fudge likes to work with me," confided my husband, Michael. "Whenever I take files out and put them on the kitchen counter, she'll get up and come and sit on them. If I don't play with her, she starts pushing the papers around until they fall onto the floor. When I move her, she sits on the side looking put out for a while and then comes back and pushes the pen out of my hand. It's so cute."

"Cats? You're just being manipulated according to the rules," explained my friend. "It's listed under 'H' for Hampering and Helping. Cats know that humans are quite incapable of performing even the simplest of tasks without feline assistance.

They consider it helping, but a lot of people call it a hindrance. This feline assistance also kicks in when you're knitting or sewing or trying to wrap a gift."

"And they always come and ask you to fill their food bowl when you've just left the kitchen," chipped in another feline-manipulated friend. "Or, if they ask you to open a door, they stand there, half-in and half-out, undecided about which direction to go."

"It's in the rules," we all chorused.

I guess that's where the maxim that states dogs have masters and cats have staff comes from ...

When everyone had gone home, I went to the computer to check out these feline rules firsthand. Needless to say, as I sat down, Fudge arrived and positioned herself in front of the computer screen.

When I finally managed to type around her, 157,000 entries popped up in less than half a second! With so many versions of these feline household rules out there, it's difficult to pinpoint the original author.

If there's a cat person out there who knows for sure, please tell me. We need to talk ... ○

Sandy Robins is an award-winning pet-lifestyle expert who appears regularly on TV, radio and in international publications. She is an avowed pet owner to her cats Cali and Fudge.

Most cats think their assistance is required in every aspect of their owners' lives.



DEB HALL