

“Animal Blessing”

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Required Reading for Pets

So, I’ve been thinking a lot about how – and even why – we love our pets so much. There is some kind of magic. Or, maybe there is a guide out there that is required reading for all kittens and puppies to win our hearts.

**The Seven Principles of Unitarian Debate about
Universal Love for All Pets
in a world where we demand to be respected in all our diversity
knowing that DNA samples prove that we are all connected
regardless of bark or howl or meow or purr.**

Now for a classic exercise of UU wordsmithing an overlong title. This time though, we’ll wordsmith in reverse order. Instead of adding words, pondering for hours or weeks or years searching for just the right phrase, and then voting on it – with well thought out proposed amendments...to the amendments...to the amendments... This time, we’ll go for short. The required reading for all pets is simply called:

How to Tame Your Human

*We, the member species of the world of pets,
covenant to affirm and promote these seven principles.*

Principle #1: The inherent worth and dignity of every pet.

This is best accomplished in the first few months after birth.

Big eyes, soft fur, overall cuteness.

Humans will fall for this every time. Especially the kids. They’ll beg their parental units to allow a pet in the house.

After securing a place to live, go to the next principle.

Principle #2: Justice, equity and compassion in human-pet relations.

Food. Let your human know your schedule. They eat a lot. And often. You should too. Which means begging – oh, the absurdity! – is encouraged. Regular serving of your favorite foods, along with table scraps and frequent treats.

Every so often, sample to your heart's content on freshly prepared items before they appear on the table. You can share the scraps, if any, with your humans later. They might not be happy about this, but justice and equity aren't always easy.

Principle #3: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our families.

A spiritual life is important. Make sure you practice your prayer and meditation skills.

For cats: allow plenty of time to be aloof just beyond interaction range but within sight of your human. They will annoy you with pleading and begging to come play or eat on their schedule, but whatever you do, do NOT respond. You need your spiritual space.

For dogs: simply howl. Long, drawn out pitches that call to other dogs in the neighborhood to join in.

This is best done at night when your humans are just about to fall asleep.

This is a time-honored spiritual practice for all canines. Repeat every night the moon appears.

Don't worry. You'll still get fed in the morning.

Principle #4: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Emphasis on FREE and SEARCH.

Hunt like you mean it.

If you are a dog and have the luxury of being indoors, go for the shoes or socks – but just one at a time. Never gnaw on two of the same pair. Your humans will provide many opportunities and even try to put them out of reach, which is of course an invitation to hunt-and-destroy.

Indoor cats, attack the wayward toes of your human. Best done at midnight while settling in for a good night's sleep.

For all cats and dogs, when outdoors, go for the smelly. Bring inside if possible. Best if catch is still able to escape to all rooms and deep corners before you pounce again. It is your right to exercise your innate hunting prowess, regardless of the panic and chaos that results in your humans.

To re-enter into good graces, if a dog, revert to cute. Puppy eyes work every time.

For cats, simply go to a visible place and lick your paws while ignoring your human. They'll get over it.

Principle #5: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our homes and neighborhoods at large.

Democracy is a good thing. In most homes you will find a wide variety of papers from which to choose. If you are a Unitarian type, dig deep in the rack and retrieve enough to chew on for a long time. Drag papers to middle of room. Gnaw on all corners. Add slobber for soggy results. Bonus for toothmarks in all the right places.

Also, a good practice is to observe your human reading. When they seem particularly engrossed in an article or book – and ignoring you – go into launch position, pounce, and land at the focal point. You will now be the center of attention.

Don't worry, your human might get so annoyed that they will give up and feed you early.

Principle #6: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

The world is yours. Own it. Run it. Do it.

Your humans should fall in line. For dogs, make sure humans know when to take you for a walk. Set your limits. Get some distance from home and if you don't want to go any further, just sit. For extending time outside, explore all fire hydrants, bushes, and smells. If excited, go faster. Your human can jog, even run. But don't let your human go airborne. Or fall. That's not good for future walks.

For cats, peace, liberty, and justice is yours already. Remember, ancient Egyptians adored you and made monuments in your honor. Bathe in your glorified righteousness. Purr at will.

Principle #7: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Respect your human. Keep them in good order. You've worked hard to tame them.

You'll know you've done a good job if at the end of your days, they cry harder than they ever believed they could. That's how love works. It is the ultimate universal web.

Job well done.