

## Cats Rule!



By Elizabeth Chandler

Are you owned by a cat or two (or three or four)? If so, you know that it isn't the dogs that control your life nor is it your significant other and it certainly isn't you! The cats run your life. Come on, you can admit it. It's nothing to be ashamed of! While dogs are content to follow us around and answer to our every beck and whim, cats are more discerning, thereby ending up with us wrapped around their paws, working diligently to serve them and somehow make them happy.

My dogs will eat anything: cigarette butts, crispy-fried dead frogs or lizards, rotten fruit, sticks. But my cats will watch as I bring home the most expensive and exotic foods (pheasant, venison, salmon) and give me that "look" if one of my choices displeases them. That "look" just makes you want to crawl into a hole, doesn't it? It's as if they are saying "We are paying you for *this*?"

Whenever I get up from a chair or even just adjust the way I am sitting, the dogs jump up, get all excited, and look at me as if to say "Are we going somewhere? Are we? Are we? Huh? Huh? Huh?" I can't sit down in my house without dogs jumping all over me. I can't even escape to the bathroom without a long line of dogs following me. The cats, on the other paw, strewn about the house on their various invariably high perches, looking down over their "kingdom," remain calm as I move about the house. It's as if they have some sort of high level communication device (like the spiral wire ear-pieces the Secret Service uses) to let each other know the "the human" is on the move:

**Cat #1 (from high atop the cat tree):** "She's moving from the living room to the dining room."

**Cat #2 (from top of desk):** "I've got her in my sights. Will report back on activities."

Cats wait ever so patiently until the spirit moves them to occupy lap time (usually when I am trying to work on the computer or trying to read a book). They can't be bothered to jump up every time I move. They move on their own schedule and don't allow themselves to get all hot and bothered over what I do or do not do. Cats almost always move in that slow, sashaying, "I'm cool" sort of way. They walk like lions on the Serengeti, as if they have nowhere to go and nothing to do but survey their kingdom and find a nice place to plop down for a nap.

In fact, the only time I see cats move fast is when they are chasing some poor unfortunate lizard or spider that has unwittingly wandered into my house. But even then, cats move in a controlled, cruelly methodical way. When my dogs chase squirrels in the back yard, they do it in frenzied, spastic, mosh-pit sort of way. But my cats never seem to lose control. Even when more than one cat is torturing their prey, they seem to have a polite, ordered way of taking turns, each patiently waiting for their opportunity to swat or remove an appendage. The one exception is the "cat crazies" that possesses cats from time to time. When that bizarre moment captures them, the cats will speed around the house, up and over all kinds of obstacles, for about 30 seconds. Then they seem to remember who they are and settle down into their usual calm demeanor.

At times, I find myself envious of their self-confidence and style. I think of myself as having more of a "dog" personality – spastic, easily excitable, trying too hard to please. But, I'd like to unleash my "feline" side by emulating my cats: walking like a cat, stretching like a cat, being calm, confident, and in control like a cat. I wonder if they'd help me. Would they? Would they? Huh? Huh? Huh? Oops – there goes my dog personality again.

Cats are truly a study in calmness and self-control. That's right, cats rule -- and dogs drool (my cats made me write that last line; please don't tell my dogs)!

*Elizabeth Chandler is a loving mom to several furry companions with whom she shares her life.*