

New Year's Resolutions



By Elizabeth Chandler

It's the end of one year and the beginning of another. Of course, our pets don't really care about calendars and New Year's Eve parties (although, many of them do hate the fireworks that go off!). They don't really care about New Year's resolutions, either. We humans, however, usually make New Year's resolutions each year, rarely sticking to them.

This year I sat down with my cats and dogs and had a little chat with them, kind of a family meeting, to explain to them the concept of one year ending and another beginning. I also explained the concept of New Year's resolutions to them and I was met with blank stares. After all, animals live in the now and so the idea of one year ending and another beginning is quite foreign to them. But, my pets are good sports and humor me often, so we discussed some resolutions they could make for the new year that might make all of our lives better. While they ended up negotiating some resolutions out of me, too, they finally agreed to consider making some resolutions and trying to stick to them. Here are some of the resolutions my dogs have made for 2007:

Neo: I will make all of my contacts in agility competitions this year.

Eddie: I will not chase squirrels, loudly using my special Beagle "must-alert-the-neighborhood" alarm bark, at 6:30 a.m. ... oh look! A squirrel! ARK! ARK! ARK! ARK! ...

Neo's and Eddie's 2nd resolution: When Mom calls us in the house, we will come in. We will not do what we usually do ... that is, look at each other and then defy her by starting a game of chase with each other.

Beezer: I will seek treatment for my OCD.

Rocky: I will cut back to chewing only 3 sticks per day.

Casey: I will stop eating blankets, sheets, furballs on the floor, and carpet.

Lil Dog: I will wait until I brush my teeth to kiss Mommy after grooming all of the other dogs and cats.

Sheena: I will quit staring at Mom in the morning and groaning loudly to make her get out of bed.

Cassie: I will stop making Mommy run around in the yard screaming at me to stop eating the other dogs', um, "deposits."

Dog-Wog: Ditto Cassie's resolution.

The cats, too, somewhat reluctantly, have agreed to make resolutions as a group. Here are a few of their resolutions:

Cat Resolution #1: We will stop having screaming cat fights in the living room and knocking things off the shelves immediately after Mom gets comfortably into bed at night.

Cat Resolution #2: We will try to make a concerted effort to hurl hairballs in places that are easy to clean, like the kitchen sink, versus on the computer keyboard or Mom's important papers.

Cat Resolution #3: We will stop using Mom's computer to cruise the internet for kitty porn when she isn't home.

Cat Resolution #4: We promise to wait a while before using the litter pan when Mom cleans it out, instead of jumping right in like we usually do.

Cat Resolution #5: We will stop taunting the dogs, sashaying past their crates with our heads and butts held high, reminding them that we are the superior species. (The cats were a little resistant to this resolution and I'm pretty sure I saw at least one of them rolling their eyes at me when I suggested this.)

In our discussions, the pets insisted that I make some resolutions, as well. So, here are my resolutions:

Resolution #1: I will try to give the dogs more play time in the back yard.

Resolution #2: I will no longer start my day by screaming at Beezer for repeatedly barking her screechy bark when the alarm clock goes off.

Resolution #3: I will try to stop freaking out when the dogs or cats do things that dogs and cats normally do, no matter how disgusting I may find those things to be (we all know the types of things I'm talking about here).

So, can my pets and I stick to our resolutions? I'd say that only time will tell, but cats and dogs don't keep track of time. I think it's a safe bet that they, like all of us humans, will forget all about their resolutions (if they haven't already) before the New Year even gets here. So what was the point of all of this? Good question. I guess it has something to do with my human need to fix things or maybe my therapist's suggestion that I get my act together. At any rate, I hope you and your furry beings have a wonderful 2007, regardless of whether or not you keep your resolutions!