



# “Choosing Not to Push Back”

by Patty Summers

“Don’t touch me!” growled the short-haired grey cat with the white handle-bar mustache. I could feel his rage and see it reflected in his eyes.

I had picked up the new arrival to our home as I didn’t want him to get knocked over by the incoming dogs. It was a stupid mistake. For my trouble, I was rewarded with a scratched up face and a bloody lip!

Bartholomew was found as a kitten wearing a collar and tied to a dumpster near a feral cat colony. The Good Samaritan who took care of the feral colony found him, and knowing he was not feral, took him to her local animal hospital. There he lived for a few months overlooked by potential adopters mostly due to his strong personality.

It was one of the vets who told me about Bart and asked if I might be willing to go “meet him.” Little did I know that her definition of “meeting him” and mine were different. Oh, I met him for about one minute before a box could be found to deposit him in and then I was promptly presented with my cat package. “If he doesn’t work out you can bring him back.” I heard her say as I walked a little shell shocked to my car.

I have met and worked with a lot of cats in my experience. The rage I felt from Bart that day was comparable to some of my toughest of cases. I was left questioning his place in my family.

I connected with him to relate that knowing his background I could understand his anger and his lack of respect for humans. I explained I was not here to change him, but I was offering him an opportunity. This was a house that walked in understanding and respect. It was time for him to think and respond rather than simply reacting, while assuming he had to defend himself. While there may be times he would need to defend himself, it would be rare living in this household.

It’s easy for me to be reactive, rather than responsive. I was pulled into that angry energy for a moment when Bart attacked me for picking him up. I wanted to throw him across the room. I didn’t, but I wanted to.

There were several possible outcomes. I chose a calm and thoughtful response. That choice opened a door for Bart to become a member of our family and allowed me to be reminded that a thoughtful response can lead to harmony.

The angry frustrated and unappreciated soul, who once attacked me, has bloomed into a being who inspires me with his confident, adventurous and free spirit.

Once again I find the animals to be my greatest teachers, especially when it comes to my interactions with all beings.

Wishing you a Thanksgiving in which you can reflect and find inspiration from your wonderful animals, as well. Harmony on the Earth through respect towards all.

In Kinship,  
Patty



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