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How to *TALK* Cat

BY RITA REIMERS

Before you can learn to talk to your cat, you need to understand how your cat talks to you. Did you know that meowing is something your cat reserves just for you? In nature, cats do not meow to one another past kittenhood. If your cat meows at you, he's trying to tell you something.

And it's not just about meow; grasping the meaning of your cat's body language is an important part of how he communicates with you and the world around him. Gauge his mood by his body language before you start trying to talk to him. If your cat is open to your attention and conversation, his body language

will be very relaxed and inviting. His tail will be up greeting you or curled around him and still if he is lying down. His ears will be forward or slightly to the side, ready to listen. He may even be kneading or roll over to show you his tummy. If you see any tail swishing, big, black pupils, ears back or hear any growling, then he



is most certainly not in the mood to entertain you right now.

Sweet talk

If your cat is in the mood to converse with you, how do you talk to him in his language — or yours? Both, actually! I meow at my cats sometimes when they are meowing at me (and I do wonder just what I am saying to them). Seriously, the most important thing about talking to your cat is your tone of voice.

Speak in a higher voice. Cats respond better to sopranos, so use a higher voice when speaking to yours. Men, too, should speak to their cats in a higher tone than they normally would use. I've noticed that when I use a very high, sweet voice, my cats come running to see what's up, usually expecting a treat. I think I taught them that — or did they teach me? Hmm ...

Match your tone to the message. Tone of voice is important with cats, let alone humans. If you're giving your cat praise for something, make your tone of voice light and loving. If you're teaching him that a behavior is unwelcome, make your tone more serious (but there is no need to yell). The two messages have to sound different; otherwise your kitty won't understand the difference between their meaning when you talk to him.

Use vocal cues and repetition. If you want your cat to learn something, repeat the action and add a vocal cue to help him learn. "Good Boy or Good Girl" works well on cats, too — it's not just for dogs. Reinforce your praise

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Rita Reimers' Cat Behavior Coaching has helped many cat owners better understand their feline friends.

Visit RitaReimers.com to read her cat behavior blog or to book a cat behavior coaching session. Rita is also the CEO/owner of JustForCatsPetSitting.com. Connect with her on Facebook and on Twitter at [@theCatAnalyst](https://twitter.com/theCatAnalyst).



Quiet, please!

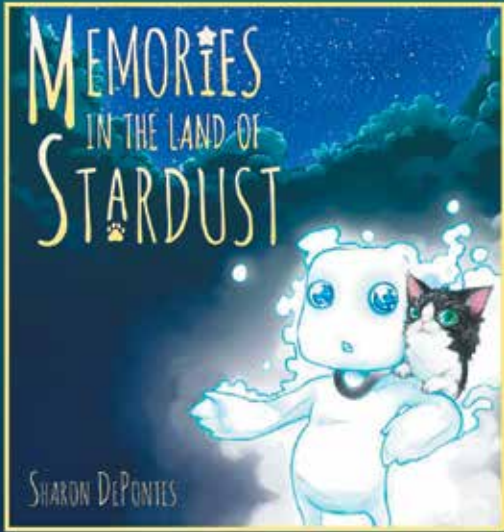
Cats are happiest when they live in a quiet and peaceful environment, free from noises like loud music, vacuum cleaners or even people shouting.

Loud noises can be frightening to cats for two reasons:

- ❖ A cat's hearing is more sensitive than ours, and they can hear things at both ends of the spectrum (higher and lower) than we can. So they hear every nuance of a sound, and it's amplified to them, too. This serves them well in nature when they are hunting for food. (That's how they hear a mouse stirring in the brush.)
- ❖ Cats are both predator and prey, therefore they are always on alert for something/someone who might cause them harm. Because they're always on high alert, any sudden loud noises could send them leaping straight up into the air. It might be funny to watch, but it's not at all amusing for your cat and can lead to stress, anxiety and behavioral problems.

So keep the music down, don't make loud, sudden noises, and he will stay one cool cat.

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About the Author
Inspired by the beauty of nature, Sharon De Pontes writes to show the world how much we can learn from animals. As someone who has overcome great loss and struggle, including an eye disease that has left her legally blind, Sharon finds strength in the world around her. With her writing, she hopes to capture the powerful spirit in nature for all to enjoy.

