

When a cat is like a teenager

Posted by Jennifer on May 30th, 2011



Just like humans and other animals, cats go through very distinctive formative periods in their lives. Kittenhood, pre-teen/adolescent, teenager, young adult, mature adult, and senior ages all include important differences and a loving educated cat owner that recognizes and responds to each appropriately will help their cat live the richest and happiest life possible. So what about those often troublesome teenagers? They aren't tiny baby kittens exploring and learning like little furry sponges, nor are they out-of-control wild young adolescents, but rather like human teens, their feelings can be very sensitive. Easily hurt but also quickly consoled, they require a bit of special nurturing at certain times to help them along their path to being a happy, well-balanced adult cat.

Our friends over at the wonderful [Way of Cats](#) blog explain teenage cats through an example with their 8-month-old kitten Tristan. "Last weekend, I made meatloaf. Which meant eight month old Tristan got locked in the bathroom. Most of the time he perches on the cat cabinet, or the kitchen stool placed near the work area, and simply watches like a Good Boy. He gets a few reminders and he'll ignore brownie batter. But the combination of raw hamburger and my mixing it with my hands means if his curiosity gets the better of his common sense, there's not a lot I can do about it.

Thus, I do a pre-emptive strike; and put him somewhere else.

This simple precaution is an excellent kitten approach; past a certain point, they aren't learning anything, and we are getting exasperated, so it's time for the lesson to be over. Then we can complete our task, and they can ponder their lesson, or not, depending on their age.

Our kitten needs raising in a way that acknowledges their needs and limitations. So if we find ourselves getting frustrated, both we and the cat need a "time out." In this case, I started by assembling my ingredients. When Tristan persisted in getting on my kitchen cart, I was able to put him away before my hands were too messy to do so."

You can read the rest of how Way of the Cats manages Tristan's hurt feelings at being confined away from the hamburger (for his own safety) at <http://www.wayofcats.com/blog/the-teen-years-in-cat/13304>

