

Stuck on You

Needy or demanding, it's time to analyze your cat's clingy behavior. Learn how to change your pet's needy ways.

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Posted: Tue Jun 28 00:00:00 PDT 2005

Achterkirchen says that the humans in the equation create the environment for cats that run the show. "My wife, Carol, is the enabler," he says. "When it's cold, she warms blankets for them in the clothes dryer that sort of thing. Of course, the cats respond to that kind of treatment over time and begin to expect it."

The nurture vs. nature argument also comes into play, Achterkirchen says. "Cats, in general, are more independent than dogs, but some cats will just naturally be more independent than others. Tigger is about as independent as a cat can be. He could probably live on his own with no problem. He's been like that ever since he was a kitten, while Gladdie probably should have seen a psychiatrist years ago. All the nurture in the world wouldn't change that. They've both been treated identically, so I think nature is pretty involved in this case." But nurture works, too, Lopeman explains. "Call it needy or dependent or whatever you want, [but] most people want a cat who wants to be with them," she says. "I want my cats to be social, so I raise them with that in mind. The kittens grow up with my grandkids. They're used to the vacuum cleaner and kids screaming. They've been handled from day one. That doesn't make them needy; it makes them social. It makes them want to be with people, and I don't think there are too many people who want cats any other way."