

Regal Continued to Show Affection

Years later, Regal showed outstanding tender cuddling behavior that still touches my heart deeply when I think about it. During her final month, before she was unable to make it up the stairs, Regal chose to spend her last nights with me, either lying on the down comforter near the foot of the bed or more often perched on a pillow above my head. After getting into a nice curl, she would rest her chin on my forehead. I felt that she wanted to be close, and at the same time to be there for me. Both she and I would fall asleep, each comforted by the gentle touch. Her actions were sweet and wonderfully expressive of her affection. She wanted to be close but not confined, and found the perch on the pillow best for her. She would often kiss me goodnight on the forehead before resting her chin lightly on my forehead.

These incidents showed me the capacity felines have for gentleness and tenderness. I suspect all animals have the ability to share feelings of love and preference; to communicate their needs, intelligence, and emotions.

If we listen and make it safe for animals, our relationships with them can develop into priceless opportunities to give and receive understanding and love. I'm not telling animal lovers anything new. We all know that our animals can give us unconditional love, will teach us if we will listen, and often heal our hearts. They are gifts: beloved, precious, unique—every single one of them!