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The Rock Star's Fifth Daughter. The Perplexing Case of Holly Kellogg. Part 1.

Thu, 2017-06-01 15:47 — Robin Olson

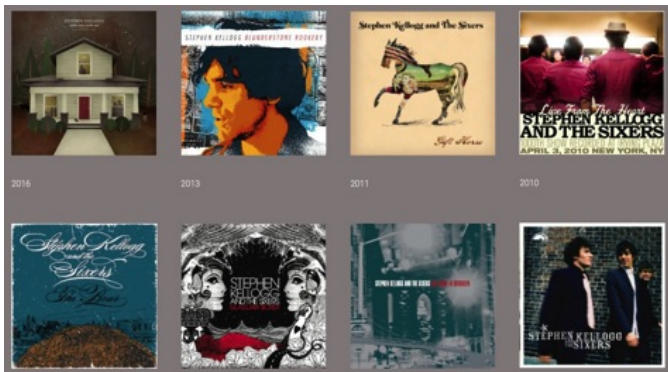
I don't know how this story is going to end and frankly there have been times I just wanted to walk away from this whole situation with my hands up in the air, completely surrendered to failure, but something inside me pushes on, unwilling to give up just yet.

It all began innocently enough. My rescue, [Kitten Associates](#) ^[1], offers a **Free Cat Behavior Counseling program**, available to anyone who needs it. The hope is that with my help as a Cat Behavior Counselor, I can keep cats from losing their home by supporting and educating their family, while helping work with the cat's behavior issues in any way I can.

I received an email from a fellow wanting a cat behavior consultation. He told me that his kitten was peeing outside of the litter pan. She was only 5-months old. As I read on, I began to think of questions I'd ask, as often times, the solution for things like this can be rather straightforward once a few questions are answered.

Some of the most often asked questions included: *Did they make sure the cat didn't suffer from a medical issue? Were there enough litter pans? Were the litter pans cleaned often enough and with litter the cat wasn't opposed to? Was the stress level in the home too much for the kitten? Were there other pets in the home intimidating the young cat?*

Then I looked at the signature on the e-mail. [Stephen Kellogg](#). ^[2] Below his name was a list of URLs, his [TedXTalk](#), ^[3] a link for his [new record](#), ^[4] and another for his [movie on Amazon Prime](#). ^[5] *Oh sh!t. He's a rock star.*



Just a few of Stephen's albums. You can learn more about him on his [web site](#) ^[6].

I saw his TedX Talk, watched his movie, listened to a few songs (*very good!*). I imagined a cool, but probably entitled guy with lots of tattoos and attitude. I wondered what he was doing contacting me. Surely he had a "person" to deal with all these things so he could spend time writing hit songs, **but talking to him was surprisingly different than what I expected. Unknowingly, this was going to be the theme of our time together.**

We made an appointment to talk on the phone. I had my 10-pg questionnaire printed out so I could get a history on the kitten, but I was nervous about the call. I wanted to focus on the cat, be professional, and hopefully solve the issue promptly. I'm just a humble nobody. I don't have a cheering fan base. I didn't know if I could even keep my voice steady. I was literally shaking when he first called.

As our conversation began, I could tell this guy sang. His speaking voice had a luscious lilt, a blend of husky and honey. He was polite, respectful, and seemed kind. He wasn't anything like what I expected or feared. **He was so sincere it was almost painful to hear him talk about his frustrations with his kitten.**

I learned about Holly, a little tortie with white paws who was adopted the day before Christmas as a gift for his four, yes, four daughters (*who range in age from about 4 to 13*). Stephen is a family-guy who married his high school sweetheart, Kirsten, and whose songs often reflect his love and struggles with his most adored people on Earth.



©2017 [Stephen Kellogg](#). (7) Holly at home.

He referred to Holly as their “fifth daughter,” but was admittedly feeling both sad and stressed that Holly had been peeing on some of the kid’s beds. I promised I’d do everything I could to get to the bottom of the issue and that odds were good that this was a solvable behavior problem.

I asked if I could meet Holly to gather more information, since it turns out they live near my home in Newtown. I was so determined not to mess this up that I figured a home visit would help me make sure I was giving them good advice. We planned to meet a few days later and after a long, miserable winter of difficult issues with the Waterbury Ferals (*more on that in another post*), I was glad to have something to look forward to.

I planned to stop at the pet supply store to get a few things for Holly and pick up some other things for our foster cats before I visited with the Kelloggs. When I got to the store I chatted with Scott, the Manager, who’s also become a friend after the many years of me coming to his store. Scott referred Stephen to me, so I had to update him on what was going on. **While we were chatting away, Courtney, one of the other employees shouted that she saw Stephen walk past the window and that his wife and youngest daughter were about to walk into the store.**

Now what? Do I play it cool? I’m not supposed to know who they are, but the entire staff is making googly eyes at me while they walked over to the cat food aisle where I was standing. I was trying to figure out what to say when Kirsten said hello and asked if I was “Robin.”

Flummoxed, I said *yes* and she immediately reached out and gave me a hug then said *hello* as her youngest daughter, Greta clung shyly to her leg. We began chatting about cat food when Stephen walked in behind me. Instead of how I’d imagined walking up to the door of Stephen’s home to meet him, there he was, the rock star in the cat food aisle. I had dressed carefully, trying to look less like myself and more like a cooler version who wasn’t covered in cat hair. My gut was twirling and I had no time to take a breath to steady myself because it was “*go time.*”

Stephen is tall and slender with mischievous nutmeg colored eyes. He wore a bandana around his unruly brown

hair. He radiated confidence and had sizzling charisma. His attire was casually chill featuring jeans and t-shirt. I wanted to make a joke about him wearing a hoodie that had his name silkscreened on the back. I wanted to ask *why did he have to wear something with his own name on it? Did he forget who he was from time to time and needed a reminder?* I was too “deer in the headlights” to say what I was thinking. He gave me a warm smile and hug to match, as we chatted about how funny it was to meet in the cat food aisle. But now I had to focus on the matter at hand. Clearly these people were depending on me.

I couldn't get over what sweet people they were. Their little daughter, Greta with her baby blonde hair, was wearing funky blue glasses and didn't say a word, she was so shy. Stephen explained they were going to get some food for Holly since I'd suggested taking her off kibble and putting her on a high-protein canned food with a scheduled feeding regime, instead of free-feeding her dry and supplementing with some canned. I took that to be a good sign that they were going to follow through on my suggestions.



©2017 Stephen Kellogg. Holly with her daddy.

We agreed that I'd still meet them in a few minutes at their home. I had to stop shaking and gather my thoughts, but I told them I had to go to the grocery store where I wished I could buy some time.

Doing cat behavior consultations is always very challenging. By the time someone finds me they're usually about to toss their cat out on the street they're so distressed. Working in that kind of environment is definitely a skill that takes years to finesse. I had to remember: *DO NOT BE JUDGMENTAL* and to ask open-ended questions. Be calm. *Go slowly*. LISTEN. Pay attention to what you can learn in the environment; *there you will find clues*.

I got to the Kellogg's red clapboard sided home. Their place is vintage, much homier than I imagined, and pretty darn huge. The remaining three Kellogg-daughters were spread out around the house doing their thing. I expected chaos, but it was surprisingly calm. We stood in the gleaming white kitchen as I began to get more in depth information on Holly.

I was grateful that Stephen and Kirsten were open-minded and thoughtfully replied to my many questions. I asked why they adopted only one kitten when their home was grand and with four children. Certainly only one pet wasn't enough for them to cuddle and snuggle with. The answer was they really only wanted one cat right now but maybe some day they'd get another.



©2017 Stephen Kellogg. Two cool people and a dork (middle).

I told them I was concerned that some of Holly's behavior might be linked to being overwhelmed. She's immature, in a big home with one litter pan on the second floor. She was 11-weeks old and had a URI when they adopted her, then was spayed about a week after she recovered her health. The peeing started after the spay surgery and they feared it was a complication of that procedure.

Holly had been taken to the vet soon after the peeing issues began. They performed a urinalysis that came up negative. It wasn't a thorough test of whether or not she had an infection, but the vet felt that it was enough to do to rule out her behavior issue as health-related.

At the time Holly was peeing on beds once a week or so, but that was about to change, and not in a good way.

[to be continued]

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[You Rock!](#) ^[18]

Comments

Fri, 2017-06-02 14:20 — [jmuhj](#) (not verified)

RE: HOLLY ^[19]

Can't they do what experts suggest, confining her to one easily cleanable room with all of her needs including a clean box, and working out from there?

Fri, 2017-06-02 15:29 — [Robin Olson](#) ^[20]

Next Steps ^[21]

We always start simply then take it from there. As the story unfolds you'll see how far we have to go and what worked and what didn't...nothing went as any "expert" would suggest and trust me, I ASKED the expert-one of the top in the country and she weighed in on this case and agreed with my logic, too. Sadly, this cat didn't follow anything we thought she would! You'll see ;-)

Fri, 2017-06-02 15:42 — [Eastside Cats \(not verified\)](#) [22]

Fifth Daughter [23]

I hope you are able to convince them that two kittens would be a GOOD thing, for both the humans AND the kittens! I look forward to reading more about this encounter! PS I don't know who this is, so I'm not star-struck. When I met David Duchovny in person, I lost my voice and turned into a block of wood!

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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Links

- [1] <https://kittenassociates.org/>
- [2] <https://www.stephenkellogg.com/>
- [3] <https://youtu.be/xYdTkfj5zhU>
- [4] <https://stephen-kellogg.myshopify.com/collections/music/products/south-west-north-east>
- [5] <http://a.co/1oQnhRF>
- [6] <https://www.stephenkellogg.com/music/>
- [7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Kellogg
- [8] <https://coveredincathair.com/category/cich-content-categories/cat-behaviorist>
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