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## Suffering for Years. The Shocking Truth about Petunia. Part 2

Tue, 2015-03-17 15:04 — Robin Olson

Part 2 of 2. Read part 1 [HERE](#) [1].

**An hour later Dr Larry came into the waiting room to escort me into the back to look at the x-rays. Before he could even point them out, I saw them. Petunia has a mass of stones inside her. One looked fairly large.** While we could try a diet change to acidify her urine and dissolve the stones, the most humane thing to do is to surgically remove them as soon as possible. The diet change would take months and it might not work depending on what kind of stones she has. It must be incredibly painful, yet Petunia never acted like she was in pain. She always was ready for a pet or snuggle. She never licked at herself or squatted and left small pools of bloody urine, but she was very sick.

Dr. Larry asked me what I wanted to do-do the surgery or wait? He told me he'd do whatever needed to help, but all I could do was cry. I asked him the cost of the surgery and he told me it would be about \$1500.00. He does these surgeries all the time (**which is fodder for another post because WHY are so many animals getting stones in the first place?**). Normally I wouldn't bat an eye and just say let's do it, but this time I was lost and scared. I HAD TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN and by God I would no matter what.



Bladder stones. Lots of them.

Dr. Larry patted me on the back and said not to cry. I didn't have the nuts to beg for a big discount. I had to be a grown up and figure it out. I would find a way, but some times it's just tough to struggle and struggle, then feel like you're starting to make positive changes, then WHAM!, another big bill. I know I'm not the only one who feels like that, but it's hard to keep your head up some times.

**I told Dr. Larry that I needed some time to gather my thoughts. As I drove home, I flashed back over the decade of peeing issues we've dealt with. I was fed up. I can't list how many things were ruined by her because there were so many. I was sick and tired of trying to find a way to get the cycle to stop. I thought about how many times I wished Petunia would die so the rest of us could live in peace. I know it's wrong to think that way but that's how far I'd been pushed. But all that ill-will vanished, quickly replaced with shame when I looked over to Petunia as she sat in her carrier on the passenger seat. I stuck my index finger into one of the holes on the side so I could touch her face. She rubbed her cheek against my finger a few times, desperate for some love. I realized that Petunia must have been in pain for YEARS and even through all of that she still loved me. How could I be so heartless to her in return?**

A few minutes after we got home I called Dr Larry's office and made the appointment for Petunia's surgery. There would be no waiting on this. It had gone on far too long already.

©2015 Robin AF Olson. Petunia was in so much pain and desperate to drain her bladder she ends up urinating on her own mother, who is in the spot where Petunia has been peeing the past few weeks.

**Though I arrogantly thought we'd checked Petunia for everything last year, we hadn't and she's been suffering in silence, been called names and shunned because of her behavior.** All it made me want to do was hold her and tell her how sorry I was for being such a moron. **I recalled that when Petunia was very young she had struvite crystals in her bladder. We treated them with a special diet and within a year we started transitioning our cats off kibble, to canned food without grains, and finally to a raw diet. It never occurred to me that she could even GET stones again since she gets appropriate nutrition.** It's clear this may have been going on far before the transition and is only getting to a point of severity where we're noticing it.

**I am so ashamed.** The only thing I can do to make it better is to get this surgery done ASAP and help Petunia get on the road to recovery. Perhaps she'll never need to be on anti-anxiety medication but it's also possible that her anxiety is the root cause. **There's something called FLUTD (Feline Urinary Tract Disease <sup>[2]</sup>) that could be part of the problem and it's also VERY LIKELY related to a whole-host of issues Petunia may have called Pandora Syndrome <sup>[3]</sup>.**

Pandora Syndrome can be a combination of many factors—genetics, environment, stress and diet. The result can be IBD, dermatitis, cystitis and more. Once I read this article, I realized that because this might have genetic aspect we may never be able to “cure” Petunia entirely. **Then the light bulb moment: Petunia's mother Gracie must ALSO have it! It would answer the question as to why we have never found a treatment for Gracie's mysterious miliary dermatitis.**



©2013 Robin AF Olson. Gracie at one of her MANY vet visits.

**I spent two years searching for and trying treatments on Gracie. I sought out different specialists, did tests and biopsies. Gracie's a lot like her daughter and tends to be high strung.** We've been working with her every day and over the past year Gracie's become less and less fearful, but now is more clingy and demanding. Her skin is improving slightly. We got her to stop vomiting clumps of fur every day and she no longer “barbers” her fur. She needs more work to help her mojo return, but I think the fog is lifting off these mysteries. **I'm not happy about what might be going on because it means these cats are just not able to handle the stress they feel and how to reduce that will continue to be one of the biggest challenges of my life.**

**While I have failed these cats, I also feel hopeful that we may finally have some light at the end of the tunnel.** I know that someone out there will read this and will say “hey, that's my cat!” too. Perhaps they'll take their cat to the vet and discover there was more going on than imagined. **Perhaps it will save a cat from being given up or let outside to fend for itself.** I can only hope that baring my soul will help others, because I really hate myself right now.

**So, to all of you who feel like they're suffering with inappropriate elimination problems with their own cats, don't make the same mistake I did. Even if you already took your cat to the vet and they found nothing, KEEP SEARCHING if you can't solve the problem. Do research**

**online, talk to your friends who have cats, try to see the world through your cat's eyes and if you feel they are subjected to a lot of stress, there's a big clue to how to help them feel better.**

Get your cat vetted again, if needed, or get a second opinion. Yes, it may be costly, but this is YOUR cat, YOUR responsibility. Your cat may be in a lot of pain and I can promise that your cat is not trying to get revenge or ruin your life. They're not "BAD" cats. They're communicating in the only language they know and it's up to us to be better at translating their message.

**I'm so sorry**, Petunia, but I will make it right. I promise.

Your surgery is tomorrow.



©2013 Robin AF Olson. *Petunia suffered in silence for a long time, but I truly think I've learned an important lesson.*

#### **CICH Content Categories:**

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[Heartbreak](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

## **Comments**

Tue, 2015-03-17 17:00 — Kerry (not verified)

### **OMG! I have a combination of** <sup>[16]</sup>

OMG! I have a combination of Gracie and Petunia. Punky is my only female in a house full of 6 cats. She has always been a puker and nothing that I do will stop it. She throws up hairballs at least every other day. A few years ago, the boys started harrassing her and she started avoiding the litter box. Luckily, there were 3 spots that she would use, so I put down pee pads. I also started taking her to the litterbox twice a day, so that she would feel safe with me standing there with her. As far as I can tell, she is only using the box, now. I know she will go in there by herself sometimes, but I still take her in there.

I have had her to the vet a few times for this very reason and they never found anything wrong. I hate to take her, anyway, because the time before last, she got so upset in the car that she pulled out half of her claws and there was blood all over the place. I guess I'll have to get her in there again.

Tue, 2015-03-17 17:05 — Stephanie (not verified)

### **Robin, I'm very glad you** <sup>[17]</sup>

Robin, I'm very glad you discovered the problem at long last and decided to get the surgery for Gracie. I can relate to your feelings; I feel guilt any time my cats are ill or injured. My cat Dagny was diagnosed with kidney failure recently, and I felt terrible for not recognizing sooner how serious her symptoms were.

Thank you for sharing your own painful story as a reminder to us all to treasure our cats, every minute of every day. Part of loving them is understanding what they're trying to tell us; we owe it to them to slow down and make time to figure out the

message. The time and patience we invest in them will have a huge payoff down the road in the form of a harmonious home. I'm so glad you & Petunia are on that road now. <3

Tue, 2015-03-17 17:26 — Michele (not verified)

### **Don't beat yourself up! I** [18]

Don't beat yourself up! I think that you do a wonderful job with all of your cats, look at all the special care that Freya has had to have. I can completely understand missing something, especially inappropriate elimination, because you thought that it was behavioral, and she had her check ups. But now that you know, you are taking care of her and she will get better! I am thankful that she had you while she was going through this. Just think if she had been in a home that put her outside for peeing, or taken her to a shelter. Petunia is very lucky to belong to you! Let us all know how she does!

Tue, 2015-03-17 20:59 — catmom (not verified)

### **Petunia** [19]

You won't like what I have to say so feel free to close your email now: I have no sympathy for you. Not only does Petunia have (at the very least) a Urinary Tract Infection but also you berate her for her inability to pee in appropriate areas. Instead of realizing her peeing was a symptom of a serious health problem, you "shunned" her. You blamed her for the behavior rather than being pro-active and having her checked by a qualified vet. Within 2 weeks of noticing my girl was struggling with peeing, I took my female cat to the vet. Using a simple urine test, we discovered she had struvite crystals. My vet prescribed Urinalysis dry cat food. She has been eating for the past 4.5 years. Knowing she had this health problem, I would never assume that she didn't need the special food. I don't have any experience with anxiety in cats but I wouldn't be surprised if it's somehow related to being berated on a daily basis by the one person she trusted unconditionally.

Thu, 2015-03-19 21:52 — [Robin Olson](#) [20]

### **You need to re-read my posts** [21]

I've spent YEARS trying to help Petunia. She was taken to the vet OVER AND OVER again. She was not ignored, but our Vet said she was fine so I believed that to be the case so we looked into helping her with behavior issues while she continued to destroy the house. She was LOVED and is LOVED. She was very well cared for and we tried very hard to find a solution for her all these years. During that time just about every day something else was urinated on or we'd think we helped her and a few weeks or months would go by and she was happy, only to find out she wasn't happy and was peeing again. It was TORTURE so there were days when admittedly I hated her-esp on Christmas when the sofa got soaked after we finally saved enough money to have it steam cleaned. You can vilify me and tell me how wrong I am, but you didn't read my post carefully. I tried and tried to help this cat and I've always told anyone who had a cat behavior issue to ALWAYS see their vet first. When our vet couldn't find anything wrong, how is it still my fault? I don't expect everyone to love me, but I do expect them to make judgements about me based on facts. Lastly, you're feeding your cat a terrible diet. You may not like that, but kibble, esp prescription diets are TERRIBLE for cats. It will slowly do harm, rather than cure your cat by causing her to drink water, which will harm her kidneys. Even if you hate me, get online and do the research. A bio-appropriate diet will help your cat instead of kill her slowly. [www.feline-nutrition.org](http://www.feline-nutrition.org) and [www.catinfo.org](http://www.catinfo.org) are great resources.

Tue, 2015-03-17 21:20 — Book Hog (not verified)

### **Vet Bills** [22]

What do you need, money-wise? Vet bills are expensive! Please let us know what you need! I can spare a few bucks, and I'm sure some of us can. Don't be shy; let us know!!!

Wed, 2015-03-18 14:33 — Jenn (not verified)

### **Petunia** [23]

Please don't blame yourself, Robin. Cats are singularly stoic and they are also incredibly forgiving. She doesn't blame you. And she'll soon be pain-free and healthy. And that's because of you. Please be kinder to yourself. You do so much good for your critters and by sharing their lives with all of us. Sending you big hugs, big hurrahs and many prayers for Petunia, Gracie and the whole furry family. But mostly lots of prayers that you will find a way to forgive yourself for this situation over which you had absolutely no control and no way to know was happening. Bless you.

Thu, 2015-03-19 06:34 — Joanne (not verified)

### **Thank you** [24]

Thank you for posting such a thorough account of Petunia's issues and the lengths you went to in caring for her. I see signs in both Petunia and her mom in one of my cats. Right now her urinary tract issues are under control. But the excessive grooming has started up again. I have tried everything with her and know she has to be uncomfortable. I will look into Pandora Syndrome and see what I can try next.

It's difficult to forgive yourself sometimes, but try to remind yourself you did everything in your power to care for your kitty. Maybe you didn't hit on the solution until now, but you didn't give up either. Many people would have given up long ago or, worse, blamed the pet.

Please let us know how Petunia's surgery goes and how she does afterward. You are helping pet parents in more ways than you can imagine....thank you!

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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- [3] <http://veterinarymedicine.dvm360.com/pandora-syndrome-rethinking-our-approach-idiopathic-cystitis-cats?id=&pageID=1&sk=&date=>
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