

Don't Grab the Pussy(Cat)!

The Power of Consent in All Species

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GrishaStewart.com/Consent
Instant Access to Empowered Pet Care & Training

EmpoweredAnimals

Agenda

Boundaries:
What & Why

Consent:
Non-Humans

Consent:
Humans

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What are Physical Boundaries?

- Bottom lines
- Personal limits on behavior that has a physical effect on us
- We have the right to give/deny consent to what
 - ▣ Touches or enters our bodies
 - ▣ We hear, see, taste, smell, feel
- May need to go away to deny consent

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Boundaries = What is Appropriate?

- Your pet's behavior
 - ▣ Toward you
 - ▣ Toward other people
 - ▣ Toward other pets
- Behavior toward your pet
 - ▣ From you
 - ▣ From other humans
 - ▣ From other pets



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Healthy Boundaries

- Protect us from harm
- Flexible, set moment to moment
- Not rigid, but not transparent
- Varies by relationship and individual
 - ▣ Partner
 - ▣ Friend
 - ▣ Family
 - ▣ Stranger



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Bill of Rights (1 of 3)

- ☐ 1. I have the right to ask for what I want
- ☐ 2. I have the right to say no to requests or demands I can't meet.
- ☐ 3. I have the right to express all of my feelings, positive or negative.
- ☐ 4. I have the right to change my mind.
- ☐ 5. I have the right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
- ☐ 6. I have the right to follow my own values and standards.
- ☐ 7. I have the right to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe or it violates my values.
- ☐ 8. I have the right to determine my own priorities.

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Bill of Rights (2 of 3)

- ☐ 9. I have the right not to be responsible for others' behavior, actions, feelings or problems
- ☐ 10. I have the right to expect honesty from others.
- ☐ 11. I have the right to be angry at someone I love.
- ☐ 12. I have the right to be uniquely myself.
- ☐ 13. I have the right to feel scared and say 'I'm afraid.'
- ☐ 14. I have the right to say 'I don't know'.
- ☐ 15. I have the right not to give excuses or reasons for my behavior.
- ☐ 16. I have the right to make decisions based on my feelings.

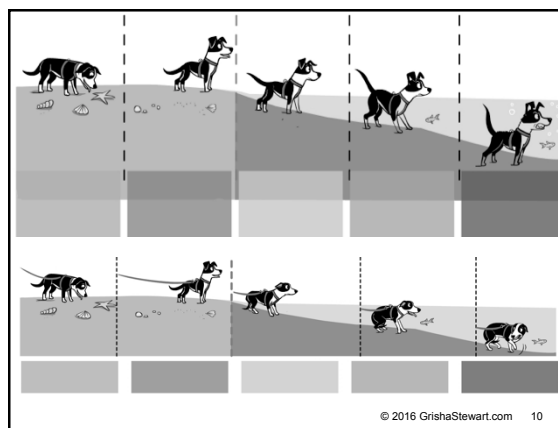
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Bill of Rights (3 of 3)

- ☐ 17. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time.
- ☐ 18. I have the right to be playful and frivolous.
- ☐ 19. I have the right to be healthier than those around me.
- ☐ 20. I have the right to be in a non-abusive environment.
- ☐ 21. I have the right to make friends and be comfortable around others.
- ☐ 22. I have the right to change and grow.
- ☐ 23. I have the right to have my needs and wants respected by others.
- ☐ 24. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- ☐ 25. I have the right to be happy.

<http://www.samhorodskocounseling.co.uk/a-bill-of-rights-for-confidence-self-esteem-and-assertiveness>

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Benefits of Getting Consent

- ☐ Empowerment (behavioral control of environment)
- ☐ Trust in whoever asked for consent
- ☐ Communication about needs
- ☐ Learn what the other individual wants
- ☐ Eliminates aggression / fear / shut down

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Some Dog Boundary Violations

- ☐ Petting a dog without asking the dog's consent
- ☐ Pulling your dog to greet another
- ☐ Petting a dog who is held
- ☐ Making dog sleep outside
- ☐ Off leash and/or out of control
- ☐ Dog sniffing a person whose religious beliefs ban dogs
- ☐ Dog licking a baby

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Interpersonal Boundary Violations

- Consent is permission IN ADVANCE
- Children
 - Squeezing cheeks
 - Hugging without consent
 - Forcing child to clean her plate
 - Sexual touch of any kind to children
- Adults
 - Shoulder massage or casual touch
 - Husband assuming wife is always available for sex
 - Sex with a woman who said yes, but then says no or falls asleep / passes out

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Violating Boundaries

- Enforcing your own boundaries with aversive corrections (e-collar, prong, hitting, yelling, etc.)
- Holding down to force submission
- Flooding
- Focusing on Obedience rather than needs of the individual
- Medical care without cooperation

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What Boundary Violations Do

Example: Touch Without Consent

- Make us feel icky or scared
 - Depression
 - Aggression
 - Avoidance
- Make good boundaries harder to maintain
 - More rigid or more permeable
 - Lose elasticity
 - Stop protecting us
 - Don't respect others' boundaries

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Example: Stanford Rape Case

You cannot give me back my sleepless nights. The way I have broken down sobbing uncontrollably if I'm watching a movie and a woman is harmed, to say it lightly, this experience has expanded my empathy for other victims. I have lost weight from stress, when people would comment I told them I've been running a lot lately. There are times I did not want to be touched. I **have to relearn that I am not fragile, I am capable, I am wholesome, not just livid and weak.**

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Continued...to other women:

- I hope that by speaking today, you absorbed a small amount of light, a small knowing that you can't be silenced, a small satisfaction that justice was served, a small assurance that we are getting somewhere, and a big, big knowing that **you are important, unquestionably, you are untouchable, you are beautiful, you are to be valued, respected, undeniably, every minute of every day, you are powerful and nobody can take that away from you.**

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Get Active Consent

- Affection and Everyday Touch
 - ▣ Petting
 - ▣ Hugging / picking up / belly rub
 - ▣ Harness & leash on
- Grooming
 - ▣ Brushing fur
 - ▣ Brushing teeth
 - ▣ Trimming nails
- Medical care

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Consent is Contextual

Familiar is better

- Who is touching the animal?
- Which body location?
- What location in space? (home/vet/surface)
- Does the animal feel safe?
- What happened just before the experience?
- Are there other stressors?
- Any new tools or objects present?

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Watch Out for “Should”

- “He knows he **SHOULDN’T** do that”
- “She **SHOULD** just let me do this”
- Why is that?
 - ▣ Natural order of species (dogs obey)
 - ▣ Love
 - ▣ Sense of right and wrong
- Justifies techniques that aren’t necessary

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Understanding Your Dog



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Asking for Consent

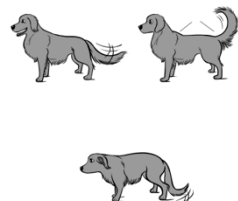


- Cut-Off Signals – innate and learned behavior
- 5-second rule
- More Please Signal



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Observe Changes



- Sounds
- Food preference
- Spine
- Movement
- Muscle tension
- Breathing
- Fur & Skin
- Heart rate
- Gaze
- Other behavior

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1. Turn Away

- Eyes, head, or whole body
- Like in Elevator
- Whale eye
- Most animals will avoid if given a chance
- Can charge in then move away



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2. Pupil Dilation

- Take in more light
- Shiny eyes
- Easy to see in cats

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3. Paw/Foot Lift

- Paw lift
- Quick/sporadic pawing at ground (horse – “that freaks me out”)

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4. Size Changes

- Lower/Smaller
 - lowers head: “This is mine!”
 - lowers body and flops over: “Don’t hurt me!” (note cats)
- Taller/Bigger
 - Up on toes, chest leaned forward, puffed up fur or feathers
 - “I’m big and scary, go away!”
 - Vertical play



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5. Ears

- Pinned Back
- Folded back is ok in petting
- Tilted Forward
- Twitchy (cat ears)
- Tense ear muscles



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6. Tail

- Tucks down: "Don't hurt me!"
- Flag: "Don't make me hurt you!"
- NOTE: Wagging doesn't mean happy
(especially not the swishing of cats and horses)!

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7. Vocalizations

- Growl, snarl
- Scream (bird)
- Hiss (cat or bird)
- Yowl (cat)
- Whinny (horse)



Note: purring doesn't necessarily mean a happy cat!

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8. Freezing/Stopping

- Statue: "Bite or run away?"
- Micro-freeze
- Especially threatening with stink-eye
- Moving more slowly than usual



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9. Fidgeting

- Sudden, out of context behavior
- Nibbling: hands, leash, or lead rope
- Jumping up on you (need space from something else)
- Sniffing where there's no real odor
- Grooming out of normal pattern
- Scratching

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10. Teeth, Beaks, and Claws

- Wrinkling of area around mouth
- Teeth bared
- Pulled way back
- C-shaped pucker (Commissure)
- Batting at object of fear (cats)
- Lunging, clawing, pecking, biting (birds)

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"Really, I Said No"



- Dry panting
- Tail high or tucked
- Ears high or pinned back
- Avoidance (looks/sniffs anywhere but at trigger)
- Leaning forward or backward
- Mouth closing with head forward
- Food preference change
- Fast/high wag

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1. Exploration

- Smell, sight, sound, etc.
- Exploration = low stress
- Don't pet yet!
- Following information
- Natural movement
- Not frantic

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2. Loose Muscles

- Ears
- Feet
- Face (forehead, muzzle)
- Tongue
- Tail



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3. Curvy

- Bouncy bow
- Side to side bend in spine
- Flopped on hip if lying down (not sphinx)
- Tilted head



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4. Touch With Side

- Ready for physical contact
- Side of head, body
- Contact your legs or hands
- Leaning
 - Into petting ☺
 - Away from something ☹
- Note: Cats may be Scenting you

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5. Play

- Inefficient out of context motions
- Own species or others
 - Wrestling (but be gentle)
 - Mutual activity like exploration
- With toys
- Different from hyper-focus

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6. Self-Handicapping

- Shoulder bow
- Getting lower for play (w/ Small or Shy)
- Waiting for the play partner



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7. Tail

- Middle height for that animal
- Slow wag
- Back and forth
- Helicopter



- Wagging ≠ happy (dogs, horses)
(especially not cats)

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8. Vocalizations

- Greeting
 - dogs (wookie sound)
 - horses (nicker)
- "That feels good" (like petting)
- Purr
- Contact calls (birds), example, signaling food source

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9. Grooming

- Natural grooming behavior
- Not a frantic pace
- Self-grooming & grooming others
- Proper grooming - overall low stress

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10. Repeating Behavior

- Behavior has a consequence
- Repeating = "I want that consequence again"
- Example: nuzzle for petting
- Way to ask animal if they like something
- Foundation of positive training



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Things We Have to Do To Them



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Clothing



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Watch out for Feet & Hands!

- Teach "Excuse Me"
- Teach "Off" & "Up"
- Teach "Go Say Hi"
- Walk in curves
- Stationing



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Honesty and Trust

- Let your dog communicate needs
 - ▣ Avoid training in a way that creates conflict
 - ▣ Avoid punishment
- Don't lure into danger
- Support isn't coddling

You Can Train Without Pain!



Search Where It Counts. www.PetProfessionalGuild.com

Help Your Dog Feel Safe

- Other dogs
 - ▣ Force field
 - ▣ Appropriate playmates
 - ▣ Can "aggression" be ok?
 - ▣ Big dog tails
- Objects
- Noises at dog height



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Help Your Dog Assert Boundaries

- Dog in arms?
- Picking up versus jumping
- Greeting posture
- House guests
- Growling/etc.



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Benefits of Teaching Children to Respect Animals' Boundaries

- Safety around animals
- More able to assert their own boundaries
- More respectful of others' boundaries



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Watch for Consent in Conversation

- Close talking? Step or lean back from time to time
- Pause to give others a chance to talk
- Be aware of space
 - Avoid cornering or blocking exit
 - Include by orienting your body toward them

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Signs of Interest/Comfort

- Comfortable with the situation.
- Seeking eye contact (looking away after a few seconds)
 - Moving body/shoulders toward you
 - Smiling at you
 - Resting hand on chin, touching hair, tilting head
 - Touching you
 - Feet/foot pointed at you

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Signs of Discomfort

How people can calm themselves down. Also signs of distraction, disinterest, sleepiness...

- Adding distance: Turning away, moving away, moving to put something between you
- Crossing arms
- Rubbing face & eyes, especially with both hands
- Wiping off sweaty palms on legs
- Biting nails
- Avoiding eye contact, checking the time/phone
- Feet pointed away

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Boundaries on Casual Touch

- What is your own preference?
 - Hugs
 - Western handshakes
 - Euro-style kisses
 - Hair
 - Shoulders
 - Hands/arms
- Ask before contact
 - Verbally OR
 - Nonverbally



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Did I Just Cross a Boundary?

- Discomfort may not be about you
 - Pain, cold, heat, noise, their own thoughts, etc.
- If you think you crossed a physical boundary (too close)
 - Give the person a little more space
 - Ask if it's okay that you do whatever it was
- If you aren't sure, just ask
 - Be open to learning, not defensive
 - It's their responsibility to be honest

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Setting Boundaries for Sex

- Awkward?
- Discuss in advance
 - Safety
 - Soft limits
 - Hard limits
- Be clear
 - Verbal Yes/No
 - Nonverbal Yes/No
- Be 100% honest
 - Ok to change mind
- Check in frequently
 - Turns taking the lead
 - Set roles
 - Mutually agreed
 - Safe word
- Or just ask!

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Discuss With your Partner(s)

- What is ok?
 - Always*
 - Usually
 - Sometimes
 - Never
- For "usually" and "sometimes"
 - Certain predictable situations OR
 - Need to ask



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Bringing it Back to All Species

- Get Consent for Contact!
- Any species
 - Any age
 - Every time
 - Consent is only for that Context



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Think Empowerment Whenever...

- You have to move the individual
- You have to do something to the individual
- The individual wants something
- The individual wants to avoid something
- You're giving something anyway
- Look at your routine!
 - Add predictability
 - Add control

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Resources

- Talk With Me streaming/DVD: GrishaStewart.com/talk
- Empowered Puppy Raising Course: GrishaStewart.com/empowered-puppy-raising/
- Boundaries: Where You End and I Begin (Anne Katherine) amzn.to/2qFINgb
- Ready, Set, for Groomer & Vet (Laura Monaco Torelli) abtConcepts.com/training-videos
- Human Social Skills: ImproveYourSocialSkills.com

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