

*Tiny Tigers Feline Rescue, Inc.*

*Libby 978-582-7828*

*Madeleine 978-448-6029*

## Adopting a Socialized Kitty.

Socialized kitties are of varying ages from the very youngest kittens to "teenage" kittens to adult cats. These cats and kittens have been rescued from many different types of locations in urban, suburban and rural areas. They usually have not had a lot of dependable human contact, and need to learn the social skills of dealing with humans, and we must learn to deal with them.

Socialized kitties tend to respond better to other cats than they do to humans, at least initially. Eventually with patience and understanding a bond of trust will form between the human caretaker and the former "wild" kitty. This can be a very rewarding experience and often strong bonds are formed. Often during the taming or the bonding process the progress will be steady, other times it is fitful. Sometimes they reach a plateau and you don't think that they will ever move to the next level and then something happens, often you don't even know what, and they will breakthrough and move to the next level. When these kitties are adopted they often need more time to adjust to their new home and people than kitties that have always been around humans.

Socialized kitties will "plateau downward" in new situations. They will be very scared and go on instincts for an undetermined amount of time. ☐If they are loose in a new house they will get to a "lair" where they feel somewhat safer, and will avoid contact at all costs. They may be very calm with their foster mom and in familiar surroundings, but if they have the run of a new house right away it could be a recipe for disaster. They may hide for a very long time, or get into a place that you can't get them out of, or get loose outside and disappear. If they are too nervous in their new home they may be afraid to come out to use the litter box and then there will be elimination problems to deal with. Introduction protocols should be followed strictly, as if they were being brought out of the woods all over again, but in shorter stages. This kind of trust training will determine how they relate to you long term.

This means starting out confined to a bathroom or a cage/kitty playpen. That way they are forced to observe you and learn that you are not going to eat them, you are quiet and give food and treats, and are good to be around! They will have their "lair" in the cage while they get to know you and thus not be overwhelmed with all the new stimuli of an unfamiliar world. ☐It can feel to us like it's cruel to confine them, but actually it is just the opposite! And they learn they can receive comfort from "their" room and from you. The rest of the house can come later. ☐Otherwise they do not know that if they can get outside it won't be home ground, and they may go right through a window, or a screen. Often it takes cats (even "tame" cats that have always been around humans) about a month to acclimate and orient to a new area. That is why people should never let a cat outside right after they move. Of course we do not think cats should be outside at all unless on a harness and leash.

☐For the person that wants to put the time and effort into these kitties it is a huge joy to see them learn to feel safe and secure, and then happy! Some people enjoy this, even if the kitties do not become lap sitters, but just happy kitties with a good home. Since every cat needs a home, it's fine that different people want different things in different kitties at different times in their lives!