

Don't Take it Personal

Category: Companion Parrot Behavior

Author: Kathy LaFollett | Companion Parrot Advocate™

Taking things personal is a human thing. It's what we do, some more than others but we all do it. Generally it's an offense taken through an interpretation of an event or slight we deem directed straight at us and no one else. It's always based on miscommunication and pride though. It's hard to take things personal if you also do not take things pridefully. Humility isn't just for the other people in the room, it's also for ourselves. A humble nature creates low blood pressure and the ability to see things clearly. It's science and it's a very powerful asset. Humility in its best form, is an indispensable asset when you have a companion parrot in your life. You cannot take things personally with a parrot.

You can't because no matter how you want to interpret a bite, a faceful of butt feather as they turn away from you, or complete rejection by their going in the corner of their cage, a parrot is not rejecting you. They are rejecting an action, a timing or an object. If you take this personally, and react in kind the yield is a bushel of misunderstanding. And that leaves behind miscommunication which leaves broken bits inside a relationship that builds a new set of bad communication. Assuming your parrot is directly aiming parrot communication techniques at you, personally, out of an elevated self-perception is a big mistake. Parrots are not arrogant in the human sense. They do not hold self-esteem in the Id complex as humans. So interpreting any action on the part of your parrot personally will lead to nothing good.

Why do some parrots haul off and bonk, bite, or nip? It's a concern many have in their flock. They are with their companion, and all is well, relaxed and copasetic. And out of nowhere WHAM! They bite, nip or bonk hard. The human in the room either reacts with a shove off and an "OUCH!" or they separate themselves with a big loud question, "What was THAT for?" Here's a secret truth; you may never really know. But it had nothing to do with you. Redirection is a wonky impersonal action by a parrot. They could have been falling asleep and just at that point where they are nodding off, their body reacts and WHAM! they react without intention but action. Maybe it was a familiar sound or a perceived impending event. Butters can be half asleep in my arms getting a bit of allopreening from me and then WHAM! I get a beak donk on my hand. I don't take it personal. She wasn't talking to me, she was however talking to herself. I just carry on, and she settles back into a relaxed state.

There will be days, moments, weeks, or even months where half of the actions are parrots are doing make no sense to us. And it will be with a companion of many years or a few days. You can't take it personal, and you also don't need to interpret it as a bad behavior that needs fixing fast. We'll get these one off moments and phases that are best absorbed and ignored. Why? Because they are not meant to be taken personal. Behavior management can sometimes be a breeding ground for creating problems, not solving them. Much like changing successful food and feeding habits just because you read somewhere Kale is the new green. You don't fix what's not broke, and you don't take things personal.

We are the ones in the room with the ability to absorb complexity, analyze it, and choose through purpose our reactions. They are not. They can't. To survive predators one doesn't have the luxury of long drawn out analysis. It's best to assume the worst, and live another day. Their reactions tend to that survival drive. Parrots who refuse to poop in their cage are literally removing a clue that a predator might find about their whereabouts. It's instinct. Butters hates the turtles coming and going out of the creek in the back of our property. They are low to the ground, slow, and if the grass is long enough that is just down right creepy and predator like. She has no concepts of being in house that is locked. That turtles do not enter houses. That there is no way she is really threatened. Not for her. For her that wet, slow moving upside down green bowl is a problem! I do not take that personally. She isn't judging our care, or the safety we have created. She isn't judging me as a capable defense. She is only thinking one thing. There's some THING out there coming her way! And her Turtle Alarm goes off, LOUD, LONG and until Snickers joins in. Because every bird needs to get into the alarm act. Because every bird doesn't know turtles do not have opposable thumbs and can't use door knobs.

We chose companion parrots for a reason. We all had our personal reasons, or have a personal reason as we consider that idea of bringing a companion home. We have reasons, because we can reason. It's our responsibility to allow them to be themselves. They are, parrots. And they make choices based on comfort as defined inside their instinctive natures. This is not something behavior training changes, or even works around. This is the nugget of the relationship we are nurturing. Respect this idea. Acknowledge it as unbending truth and do not take things personal, ever.

Felix loves his dad. He loves his dad so much that even after a day with me, and his wanting to be in my vicinity, share my foods, and taxi services the minute dad walks into the house I am irrelevant! He can be on my shoulder, happy as a Felix can be and when the garage door goes up and the dogs bark he is yelling "HERE!" and begging so hard to get off me and on him he sometimes literally falls off my shoulder! (He can fly, no worries!) I don't take this personal. I loose Snickers and Butters at about 6pm, too. I do not take this personal. Sometimes on the weekends, Butters will defend her dad territory and literally run me out of the room (or try, she's really bad at being scary). She's even gone so far as to bite me. (Not real hard, she's not very good at that either) I do not take this personal. I do however humbly love and thoroughly enjoy the idea that here, in this sanctuary, our companions have freedom to choose and do so with serious intent. That's okay. We're a flock. That's how all this works.

And that I do take personal, with great pride.

Together we can give every parrot everywhere, a happy home!

FlockCall.com | Facebook.com/flockcall | facebook.com/felixlafollett

copyright 2015 Kathy LaFollett | all rights reserved