

Parrot Personalities

Category: Companion Parrot Behavior

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We've all got relatives and friends that we love, but find some of their personality traits beyond annoying to downright insulting. And I'm pretty sure they find some things in us completely questionable. We are all individuals you see. We've all come to be us through a soupy mix of DNA and experiences. And results will vary.

Yet, we still love our friends and relatives and spouses in spite of those points of contention. We just learn to accept them for "who they are". I am considered a unicorn in my family. Annoyingly private, hard to catch and harder to spend time with than they prefer. Some find it downright wrong, others just accept my ways as me, and when we do get together we have a grand time. I am private, to a fault. You could call me selfish even. My daughter would like to see me "fix" this issue. My sisters shrug it off and laugh knowing when the moon and planets are in alignment they will find me in the mist of Jupiter.

We can, as humans, accept the idiosyncrasies of each other as normal and expected. Yet for some reason, we can not accept the idea that companion parrots, too, will have a set of personality traits. Traits that taken in the whole of their personality makes them who they really are as a singular parrot personality.

We can, as humans, accept the idea of changes in tastes, beliefs and preferences as we age and experience new things in our lifespan. I liked certain foods before, I do not now. I enjoyed a certain music in high school, that same music now makes me cringe on the inside. Age and time will do that to a person. Age and time will do that to a parrot as well. It seems though, we see these changes in our companions as a fault. Something to be fixed rather than acknowledged as growth and expansion of personality. That's not fair to them, or us. We can accept change when it's a "modified behavior" we deem necessary. We can not accept the change if it's of a trait we favor. Why? There are more articles and inquiries about changing parrots to our desires than there are articles about how to recognize and change to the desire of companion's personality for a better parrot. That is such a shame. And I will write everyday to change that scoreboard.

There will be times when changing our ways, expectations and desires first will yield a result better than maneuvering to change their ways. I read a question not too long ago about "getting" a parrot to eat. Literally how to force a parrot to eat something or some way the owner (you become an owner in my eyes when you want to learn how to force anything on or about a companion parrot) wanted. That question, and the answers that followed broke my heart. I shudder thinking about what that parrot is going through today.

So many parrot folk site the African Grey, Alex, as proof that parrots can think, learn, and are cognitive of who they are and what is going on. I agree wholeheartedly! Companion parrots are fully functional, free thinking, and free willed companions making decisions all day long about everything and every one that crosses their path. Alex asked what color he was after learning the names of colored items. He was told he was Grey. He acknowledged that information and repeated it. Alex knew he was a grey parrot at that point. So why then, was Alex treated as a control group individual after proving his intelligence? Why wasn't his independent thought and curiosity rewarded with a fuller more companion like life? For the same reason companion parrots are still considered a creature to control, train, and influence for our convenience, entertainment, profit and interactive preferences.

Either you believe it and modify the actions, words and approaches you bring to companion parrots, or you do not. If you do not, if you cannot, then you agree by your own actions that they are just a pet to be controlled, commodified, and put on display for one reason or another. If a breeder tells me they breed, and sell for the betterment of the species I am always suspect. Because by placing a monetary gain on the life of a scientifically proven individual personality, they prove themselves a liar. When a companion parrot is placed for "sale" by an individual to rehome, I know they have not accepted the reality of that individual personality at all. They are merely attempting to recoup their initial costs of ownership. Rationalize all you want about proving a "buyer" able to care for your parrot, but charging money is not proving anything except that you kept track of the parrot's cost to your bottom line. It's one thing to financially prepare for costs associated with our companion parrot. It is quite another to keep score, and apply that value to them when we become overwhelmed, tired, too busy, over-employed or bored.

My advocacy will always be positioned in the light of current accepted knowledge and science. Companion Parrots are proven intelligent, cognitive, tool making, opinion gathering, problem solving individuals. My advocacy grows bolder in that belief every day I work with companion parrot flocks, and every single day I live with and grow alongside my own companion parrots. So, as such, when a parrot is "misbehaving", "being mean", "not obeying", "cage defensive", "biting", "not bonding", "not cooperating", "acting hormonal", "screaming", "throwing food", "insert standard complaint here"; my first reaction is simple. What is going on with the human in the room?

I will to my last breath hold the human in the room liable first. And if the human in the room is not conducting themselves as participants in a companion based relationship, then the parrot doesn't need the fixing. The human's knowledge and understanding requires the tuneup.

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

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