



## WINNERS OF THE ESSAY CONTEST:

# How to Work Like a Cat



*Christina Wedberg, New York, NY*



*Steve Bederka-Toth,  
Reno Nevada*

Our black cat, Spooky, never acted like a proper pet. From the start, he made sure my wife, Ann, and I knew he was the boss.

Aloof, lazy, demanding, and unforgiving, Spooky, kept us as his servants.

It's often said that a boss should keep some distance from his workers. Spooky was so aloof that he seldom let us touch him or even get near him. When we worked in the yard, he would lie down a few feet away watching us as if to make sure that we did our work.

He set a standard for laziness. Never one to go get something himself, such as his favorite Purina dry cat food, we had to bring it to him no matter where he was. How lazy could he be?

Once I accidentally stroked his back with a broom as I was sweeping. After this he demanded frequent brushings. When called to dinner, he barely turned his head toward me. When he saw me holding the broom, he raced to me demanding a brushing.

He resented being left alone in the garage when we took a vacation. Unforgiving, on our return, he pouted for several days, punishing us for our absence.

Too bad I didn't learn how to be aloof, lazy, demanding, and unforgiving before I retired. My career as an executive could have benefited in so many ways. But Spooky arrived too late.

I admire a cat's sense of independence. He is not a team player. He doesn't have to go along to get along. He does whatever he wants, whenever he wants. Everything seems to come easy for a cat. You would never see a cat pulling a sled, would you? I want to work like that.

My work schedule would go something like this: Get up. Eat breakfast. Bath. Look out the window. Nap. Sushi lunch with extra tuna on the side. Nap. Open eyes and look around the room. Snack. Move to a sunny spot on the floor. Nap.

A cat is quietly powerful. He demands attention without physical force. He will simply sit on whatever you are reading until you scratch him under the chin. I want to work like that.

Finally, cats are mostly thinker, not doers. And there is lots of nap time in between thinking sessions. I spend far too much time awake at my job. I want to work like a cat.



*Dena Harris, Madison, NC*

There's a reason the nouns within the phrases "cat nap" and "work like a dog" aren't interchangeable. For those foolish enough to follow the canine instincts of fidelity, trust and honor—good luck to you. For the rest of us who will actually be running the world, a little primer on why cat shenanigans will always trump a strong work ethic:

**Dog:** Do as you're told, without question and for little to no pay.

**Cat:** Adopt a thoughtful look when asked to do something, as though actually considering such an inane request. Blink slowly once, then loll down the hall, swishing your tail.

**Dog:** A positive attitude goes a long way. Greet everyone with a smile and lick of appreciation.

**Cat:** Draw blood from those who dare question you.

**Dog:** When the boss keeps you waiting over an hour for your scheduled appointment, take it in stride and be grateful for what time he/she has to spare for you.

**Cat:** Oh, is my being in your face as you're trying to work bothering you?

**Dog:** I hope my co-workers like me.

**Cat:** I wasn't aware others worked here. Have one of them fetch me a rodent, will you?

**Dog:** The people are the heart and soul of our company

**Cat:** What's in it for me?