

The heartwarming story of a remarkable tabby named Knickerbocker, the owners who adore him, and the extraordinary God who loves them unconditionally. Humorous stories relating the many antics of Knick are told along with the author's testimony. Spiritual insights gleaned from their encounters together will teach and challenge readers and will touch the hearts of all those searching for a relationship with the God who desires to call them friend.

He Was Never a Cat: Knick's Story, My Story, Your Story

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/5012.html?s=pdf>

He Was Never a Cat

Knick's Story, My Story, Your Story



Patti Tingen



Copyright © 2010 by Patti Tingen

ISBN 978-1-60910-469-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Cover photo by Patricia Price
Author photo by Jennifer King
Cover design by Todd Engel, Booklocker

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked "NKJV™" are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

King James Version
Public Domain in America

Scripture quotations marked HCSB are taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Holman CSB®, and HCSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Printed in the United States of America.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2010

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: He was hungry... Find your passion.....	1
Chapter 2: He was talkative... Choose your words carefully.....	11
Chapter 3: He was intimidating... Understand your foes.....	21
Chapter 4: He was wimpy... Face your fears courageously.....	29
Chapter 5: He was uncoordinated... See your inner beauty.....	39
Chapter 6: He was domesticated... Accept yourself as you are.....	49
Chapter 7: He was funny... Learn to laugh often.....	59
Chapter 8: He was manipulative... Know there is a better way.....	69
Chapter 9: He was spiritual... Develop your relationship with God.....	79
Epilogue: ...but he was never a cat. Fulfill your purpose.....	89

Chapter 1

He was hungry...
Find your passion



Knick's Story:

He could devour a bowl of cat food with lightning-quick speed. His appetite was endless. His hunger knew no

Patti Tingen

bounds. He begged without ceasing for his next meal. He would gobble up nearly anything he could find. His name was Knick—and he was unlike any cat I had ever met.

I had wanted a cat for many years, but due to living in rental properties throughout our marriage, it was never possible. Then in April of 1992 we bought our first home. We were there about a month when it suddenly dawned on me—“I can get a cat!”

So on that warm Sunday afternoon in May, I announced it to my husband Doug. “I’m going to get a cat.”

“That’s nice,” he lazily replied, not wanting to be distracted from his television watching.

Grabbing my purse and car keys, I headed for the door.

“Hey—where are you going?!”

“I told you—to get a cat.”

“Well yeah, but I didn’t know you meant right now.”

“Yes, right now. I’ve been playing long enough with strays on the sidewalk. I’m going to the Humane League.”

Out of a litter of 9, he and his brother were the only two left. One a darker gray tabby, one lighter. I considered taking them both, but given the encouraging send-off from my spouse, I decided I best stick with just one. I chose the darker one. Off we went, he riding contentedly in his little cardboard box, me gleeful with joy at my first adult-owned pet. My little bundle of fur was 2 months old and could fit in the palm of my hand.

After a brief look around at his new environment, my little kitty strode toward the living room, ringed-tail held ramrod straight, as if he owned the place. He quickly found a seat on the back of the sofa and curled up for a nap.

Doug, still engrossed in his TV viewing, said, “Well, my New York Knickerbockers are playing the Chicago Bulls in the 7th game of the Eastern conference semi-finals—we can name him Knickerbocker—Knick for short. Maybe it will bring them luck.” The Knicks lost 110-81.

Not knowing any better, I thought Knick could be one of those self-feeding cats. So I filled his little bowl with Kitten Chow™ and he ate from it. But when I began to prepare my own supper,

He Was Never a Cat

suddenly I felt something crawling up the back of my pants, meowing its little head off. Upon being extricated from my leg, the little guy went up a few stairs near the stove, craning his neck high in the air to get a whiff of steam from the water I was boiling. “My gosh—what do you know about food?! You’re barely off mother’s milk!”

Doug made the unfortunate decision to take his dinner to the couch with him—within paw’s reach of a certain little cat. One foot in the grilled cheese sandwich and a loud human cry later, my spouse’s supper was in the trash.

“You didn’t need to throw away the ENTIRE sandwich,” I chastised.

“He stepped in it!”

“O relax, he’s a kitten—you’ll have this.”

We quickly learned that Knick lived to eat. He’d wake up from a nap—he’d eat. He’d use the litter box—he’d eat. **I’d** go to the bathroom—he’d eat. I also learned that self-feeding (or more like continual-feeding in his case) was not going to work. So began our routine of regimented, portion-controlled meals.

As Knick grew in age, he also grew in stature. Thankfully he had a large frame with which to support his ever-growing bulk, but it was still quite evident that in spite of our regimented feeding schedule, our boy had a weight problem. This did not go unnoticed by his vet. Dr. Bill suggested that we start Knick on “light” cat food. He gained 4 pounds. Several years later, we moved to prescription diet food and our “Maxipuss” eventually slimmed down.

In his prime, Knick was quite the physical specimen. Standing at the dining room table, he could rest his large, round head on top of the surface with two massive gray paws framing his face. Tipping the scale at 18 pounds, his unending appetite never diminished. Knick knew the routine—he got fed 3 times per day. When I got up at 6 AM, when I returned from work at 5 PM and before bed at 10 PM. But that did nothing to deter the furry fellow from asking for his bowl to be filled at any other time as well. I know cats spend much of their time sleeping, but with Knick it almost seemed more like something to do to pass the time while waiting for

Patti Tingen

his next meal. When he woke up from his nap, he was certain that it would be feeding time again.

When it wasn't, he voiced his displeasure quite vigorously—and continuously. Many evenings, once Doug and I were in our assigned places watching television, Knick would take his place at the end of our long living room. There he'd sit, plump body forming a perfect triangle, asking over and over again in full voice. "*Meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow...*" He could literally keep that up for hours on end in spite of us never giving in. His persistence was admirable. I must admit, however, it was also highly annoying.

Mostly I just felt sorry for him. Those large gold eyes kept a constant vigil fixed on my every move. If I made even the slightest twitch that gave the appearance of leaving the recliner, he'd stand to his feet, ready to run towards his beloved rose-colored bowl. If I actually did get up, say to use the bathroom, or perhaps to get myself a snack, his reaction increased ten-fold. "*MEOW, MEOW, MEOW...*"

"No Knickie, it's not time yet."

After dutifully accompanying me to whatever task I might have completed, he'd once again assume the position—both in posture and voice.

Knick's passion for food was unstoppable, no matter the circumstances. One time, after returning home from surgery to have a cyst removed from his leg, he immediately went to his dishes in spite of his post-anesthetic stupor. Of course we gave him a small snack—comfort food after his medical ordeal. In he went with his usual vigor—and more noise than I would have ever thought a cat could make, especially while eating. "*MAU, MAU, MAU, MAU, MAU, MAU, MAU...*" It was a combination of "Meow" and "Ow" rolled into one—at an unbelievable volume!

After finishing off the food, he dove into his water dish—almost literally. Still groggy, his head fell forward into his bowl and we seriously thought he might drown. But he just needed to wash down his meal. After that, he began to take a few wobbly steps into the kitchen. Getting no further than the stove, he paused to look back. Eyes still glazed over, he gave his wanderings a second thought. "*I*

He Was Never a Cat

better not stray too far from here.” Making it back successfully to his feeding area, our sweet Knickie curled up for the night, his precious dishes not more than 2 feet in front of him.

Our feline was checked medically for any sort of chemical imbalance or thyroid issue, but nothing was found. He was simply hungry—all the time. Poor Knick was so desperate he would eat anything he could find, including fuzzies and even his own shed toenails!

Knick also had quite a penchant for plastic grocery bags. We never figured out if it was the lingering smell of food, or what it was, but he absolutely loved crawling inside the bags—and LICKING the insides of them! Sitting with the bag entirely covering his body, he’d slurp away, round cat face pressed tight against the side of the bag, pink tongue licking madly at the plastic. (Knick enjoyed other activities with plastic bags as well, but that’s for another chapter.)

In addition to non-edibles, Knick also took advantage of every available opportunity to obtain any sort of “people” food, even though we were very diligent in never purposefully sharing our bounty with him. Doug had an unfortunate habit of leaving the table in the middle of his meal, and “you know who” never missed the chance at an unmanned plate.

One night I had made little mini-pizzas out of pita bread. Sure enough, Doug left his place for some reason, and upon return, there he was. Seated in the chair, his large, gray head resting just above the table—with a small rectangle of cheese pizza dangling from his lips. Although he never really had a full slice, pizza was definitely on our boy’s top ten food list.

One evening I made the mistake of placing an empty carry-out box next to our sturdy wooden trash can, the box wedged tightly between the wall and the can. A loud crash later, I arrived to find one large tabby standing in the middle of the folded cardboard, licking grease as quickly as his rough-edged tongue could carry him.

On another occasion, the boy swiped a piece of pork chop fat. I found him under the table, lips smacking, slobber flowing, as he tried in vain to get it chewed and swallowed before it was too late.

Patti Tingen

Thankfully I was able to reach into his mouth and extract the piece before it had the chance to get lodged in his little kitty throat.

One of our favorite Knick stories involves his once in a lifetime opportunity to gorge himself with absolutely no end in sight. We kept some food in a plastic container in the kitchen closet to use day to day, but we always kept the bag of cat food on the basement steps, behind closed doors and out of kitty's reach.

For some reason on that fateful day, I brought a brand new 20-lb. bag home and left it in the mud room, right inside the back door. Later, I went away for the evening, leaving Knick in my capable husband's hands. Looking back on it, Doug says that he hadn't seen much of him that evening, and assumed that he was sitting on his table in the back room, awaiting my return. To him, the only sign of Knick's presence that night was the large pile of vomit that he left in the kitchen at one point.

Needless to say, I was taken aback when I walked through the back door a few hours later. There he was—in full glory—sitting in front of his bag of Heaven—large round hole chewed and clawed through at PERFECT feeding height—eating to his heart's content!! Already gapping and swallowing as fast as possible, knowing that it was only a matter of time before the gig was up, Knick increased his pace, if it was even possible, the second he saw me coming.

Of course, my first instinct was to yell. “Doug!!!” “Do you know what he's doing?”

“What? No—I know he threw up.”

“How could you not know he was doing this?!”

Meanwhile, Knick was continuing his inhaling.

Quickly I grabbed some tape and worked on sealing off his opening, all the while needing to fight against his furry face even more furiously trying to get some last morsels before his feeding frenzy was over.

That night convinced me that Knick truly had no satiation point. I honestly believe he would have ate and puked and ate and puked until he finished off the complete bag if I hadn't returned home. It goes without saying that that was the last time I forgot to put the new bag of cat food away.

My Story:

So what can we learn from Knick's insatiable appetite? Well certainly he shows us what passion looks like. His desire and drive for food was unstoppable.

I had never been a particularly passionate person. Doug would often ask me, "What are your hopes, your dreams? What's your passion?"

And my response was usually, "I don't know. I just kind of go with the flow. Yeah, I have some ideas of things I'd like, but overall I'm pretty content just seeing what each day brings."

He would just sigh and shake his head.

Unfortunately, that blandness began to carry over into my spiritual life as well. I'd been a Christian since I was a child, and my faith really grew during my college years. But after settling into marriage and a job, my relationship with Christ began to get stale.

If you had asked me, I certainly would have said that I loved God—and I did! But I thought the real spiritual way of living was kind of reserved for pastors or other church staff. I thought it was a little too much for regular people like me. Besides, I thought, they do that church stuff all week long—that's their job—so of course they're going to be closer to God than the rest of us.

That seemed like a good theory to me—until I saw Doug really starting to grow spiritually. Then I was kind of getting stuck. I found myself in this in-between place where I was feeling more and more uncomfortable. I thought, "I'm okay with how I'm living, aren't I? Can I really get that excited about God? I'm not sure I want to go there; that just seems a bit too fanatical for me."

But then God stepped in and gave me revelation and He changed my heart. He helped me to see that along with my husband, some of my friends were going on in a deeper relationship with Him and that our church was moving ahead as well. I thought, "Gosh, I do not want to be stuck in this wishy-washy, kind of halfway-there, lukewarm Christianity." I knew that I could no longer sit on the fence.

So on July 6, 1997, I decided to give myself fully to Christ and seek Him with a hunger like never before. It was amazing! I

Patti Tingen

understood in a way that I never had before that I was a sinner and that I really was not good enough on my own. For the first time in my life, I finally understood why I needed Christ. The road after that decision has not been easy by any means, but I've never looked back. God honored my choice and put me on a path of which I never would have dreamed.

Finally—I had some understanding of passion.

Your Story:

What is your passion? Do you even have one? Or are you like I was, living a blah, kind of day to day existence? If you do know your passion, how vigorously are you pursuing it? With the same fervor and drive that Knick desired food? What if you did? How would that decision impact your life as well as those around you?

One of the Beatitudes says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” (Matthew 5:6, NIV)

What if you pursued God with the kind of passion that Knick had for food? What might our world look like if all of us had even a small portion of that kind of hunger for righteousness? The best part is that Scripture promises that if we do this, we will be filled, unlike poor Knick's ever-present hunger. But his laser-focused drive and determination can give us a picture of what that type of “hunger” might look like.

God is looking for believers with passion. He wants followers who will love boldly, serve energetically and follow Him fully. Our Lord despises half-heartedness.

Revelation 3:15-16 (NIV) states, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

Those are strong words and we would do well to take them seriously. I greatly encourage you to take an honest look at your

He Was Never a Cat

relationship with God. Are you leaving a bad taste in His mouth because of your tepid lifestyle?

You have no idea what far-reaching plans God may have in store for you. But in order to find out, you need to begin or continue the process of discerning and following your passion. If you're content to continue in your bland existence, not understanding your purpose in life, you'll never fully experience all that God has for you.

Our greatest desire should be the pursuit of our relationship with Christ. Then from that passion will flow our gifts, talents and opportunities to serve and bless others in the way that He is calling us. But in all of this, there needs to be a balance. As we discovered with Knick, his appetite for food was so strong that it was actually unhealthy for him. He became overweight and also proved that he would literally eat himself sick if given the opportunity.

As vital as it is to pursue your dreams and desires, there also needs to be some perspective. When the pursuit of something becomes all encompassing and the drive towards that goal, whatever it might be, becomes your only focus, it's time to take a step back and reevaluate.

Are you pursuing your career with so much passion that you're neglecting your relationship with your spouse and children? Is your desire for money greater than your longing for spiritual riches? In your fervor for giving and serving others, even through service in the church, are you inattentive to your health or your own family's needs?

No matter what our passion or pursuit—if it's out of balance—we're not helping anyone. We need to constantly be checking our motives, desires and actions to insure that they remain pure and focused on the ultimate goal.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." Then to "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-38, NIV)

Let those commandments be your guide.

If you've never entered into a relationship with Jesus, all you need to do is ask. One sincere "Meow" will do it. Acknowledging

Patti Tingen

your sins and Christ's death and resurrection in paying the penalty for them is all that's needed. And you can begin the adventure of a lifetime!

If you're already a believer, but have lost your passion somewhere along the way, it's never too late to rekindle the flame. I can certainly testify to that. Let your lips water and your stomach yearn for food that will really satisfy. Hunger once again for your first Love with all the determination that your Knick-like soul can muster.

The heartwarming story of a remarkable tabby named Knickerbocker, the owners who adore him, and the extraordinary God who loves them unconditionally. Humorous stories relating the many antics of Knick are told along with the author's testimony. Spiritual insights gleaned from their encounters together will teach and challenge readers and will touch the hearts of all those searching for a relationship with the God who desires to call them friend.

He Was Never a Cat: Knick's Story, My Story, Your Story

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/5012.html?s=pdf>