


SUN LIFE



Cat addicts

Oh meow, you're just all jealous



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Special to Postmedia Network

How serious is your condition? Are you an addict?

You've made earrings out of your cat's fur. It's always fresh, wild caught — never farmed — salmon for Fluffy. You groom your cat — and not with a brush!

Intervention needed? No way. Cat-aholics, rejoice! If you love your cat too much and are just one cat away from becoming a crazy cat lady, don't despair, says Allia Zobel Nolan, author of *Women Who Still Love Cats Too Much*.

Felines rule not only over mere humans but the Internet too, and it's good for us. Mega-millions of feline footage entertains us, and heals us. It's been scientifically proven that watching videos of cats can improve your mood so it makes sense that owning one has gotta be better than Prozac.

Those "crazy cat ladies" were ahead of their time, says Zobel Nolan. Cat worshipping is now de rigeur.

Finally "women who love their cats too much are coming out of the closet in droves."

She wants the cat-crazed, both women and men, to know there is nothing weird about their attachment because really you can't love your cat too much. "Can you love your partner too much? Can you love your baby too much? Of course not!" says Zobel Nolan, who owns cats — or should we say she is owned by cats, three in fact.

Enough is never enough. For her newly-rescued kitten Nolan, she runs her face up and down his fur, imitating the licking gestures of a mother cat so he doesn't miss being groomed by his birth mom.

That's hardly bizarre, she adds. "I read on the web

of some woman who actually 'married' her cat. Now, to me, that's bizarre. That's like marrying your child."

The author says it's about time the masses have caught on. "Now all of a sudden, the cat is the hottest thing since the smart phone. The net is overflowing with cat videos and jokes and photos of cute cats, and big cats, cats in boxes, and with hunky men, cats who have geese for friends, library cats, you name it, and if it's got a 'cat' in it or on it or near it, it's popular."

No paw has been left unturned. For the dearly devoted, there's *How to Speak Cat*, a new guide written by Dr. Gary Weitzman to help decode cat language and boost connection with our fur babies.

Cats are independent and easily misunderstood. "Even the most loyal cat parents are often baffled by their own pet's behaviour," says Weitzman, a vet and president of San Diego Humane Society. Bridging the language barrier can help us better serve our feline masters.



Red flags

Red flags that you are cat-codependant according to Allia Zobel Nolan who blogs on her site, alliawrites.com.

- You dry your hair in the garage because the cat doesn't like the sound of the

dryer.

- You can't enjoy an evening out if you know the kitty litter needs cleaning.

- You eat dry stale bread, but the cats get shrimp and warm cream.

Weaning yourself away

According to Allia Zobel Nolan, this three-step program will help to cut the umbilical cord:

- Be firm when it comes to opening and closing the door for your cat. Do it 50 times, and then leave the door ajar. Kitty may learn the mechanics of door-opening and you'll have 10, maybe 20, extra minutes in your day.
- Try not to feed your cat every time she stands at her feeding bowl staring at you

with soulful saucer eyes. Walk away, engage yourself in busy work, build a catio (cat patio)... anything to get your mind off that face. If you can't stand the silence though, wait a while before you fill her bowl.

- Do more outside the house: Volunteer, go shopping, get the mail. If it becomes simply too unbearable, you can always get a video monitor app for your phone to check on them.



What is your kitty saying?

Decode your cat's behaviour with help from Dr. Gary Weitzman, author of *How to Speak Cat*:

Hiding: Looking for security in dark, quiet places.

Licking: In addition to grooming, this calms cats. If your cat licks you, she could be trying to comfort you or bond with you.

Rolling: Exposing his belly is saying he feels

safe and trusts you. Cats don't appreciate belly rubs, so just talk sweetly to him to show your affection.

Flattened ears: They're scared so give them their space.

Wagging tail: A tail straight up means he's feeling friendly, wagging could mean he's mad or alert.

Slow blink: A wink between friends.

