

## Actions Speak Louder Than Words

It was a warm summer's day and Mike was in deep thought. Ever since he was a little boy, Mike wanted to get a kitten. But his parents felt he was too young. They would always say "Maybe when you're older." Now that Mike was about to turn twelve, he thought he was old enough.

"Having a kitten is a lot of work," Dad said firmly with a deep voice. "You will have to feed it, play with it, and take care of it when it gets sick too."

Mum added, "It's not that we don't like kittens. But a kitten takes up a lot of time and you need to focus on your studies. You will be going to secondary school soon."



Mike tried to think of a way he could convince his parents that he was ready for a kitten. Just telling them he was ready wasn't working. Then, he got an idea. His face lit up with excitement. "If I volunteer at an animal shelter," he thought, "Mum and Dad will see that I'm ready for a kitten of my own!"



He decided to volunteer at the shelter twice a week, on Mondays after school and on Sundays.

Mike was as busy as a bee at the animal shelter. He fed the animals, washed, and brushed them. Brushing the long-haired cats took a long time! Cat hair flew everywhere. He cleaned up the cats' litter box too. There was always work to be done at the shelter.

Mike volunteered at the animal shelter for three months. He learned a lot about all the work involved in taking care of a pet. He was always learning new things about kittens each time he was at the shelter.

He also shared what he was learning with his parents. He wanted to show them what a responsible boy he was. One Sunday afternoon, Mum picked Mike up from the shelter and asked him how his day went.

"Oh, it was great," Mike answered happily and proudly with his chin up in the air. "Someone even asked me to help them pick out a cat to adopt!"

"That's great!" Mum answered, smiling from ear to ear. "I'm so glad you're getting this experience. You'll need it for your new kitten!"

"I can have my own kitten?" Mike shouted as loud as a boom box. "That's amazing! I can't wait to tell all my friends!"

Mike's parents finally gave him permission to get a kitten. Mike was so excited about it and he was jumping up and down with joy. He could hardly wait to bring his kitten home. The family decided that they would adopt instead of buying from a store. One Saturday, Mike and his parents visited the shelter where Mike was volunteering. When they arrived, Mike told the shelter manager why they were there.

"That's wonderful!" exclaimed the manager with relief. "We have two litters of kittens that are waiting for good homes."

The manager took Mike and his parents to the room where the kittens lived. Within a moment, Mike found the kitten he wanted. "Look," he pointed. "That's the one I want!" Everyone's heart melted as they looked at the kitten. He was the smallest of the litter, but he looked healthy and friendly. The manager let Mike and his family cuddle the kitten and play with him for a few minutes. Then Mike nodded his head enthusiastically and said "I'm absolutely sure about him, Mum and Dad."



Mum and Dad agreed that he was a good choice. Dad asked curiously, "What's his name going to be?"

"How about Tabby? He looks like a Tabby, doesn't he?" Mike suggested.

"Tabby it is," said the manager as she printed out the adoption papers. Mum and Dad signed the papers, and then the manager handed Mike and his parents a pet carrier, a bag of cat food, and two cat toys. "Here are some other important things you'll need," she said, handing Mike a list.

Mike looked at the list. They would need a box for the cat to sleep, food and water dishes, and a lot more. "We'll have to go to the pet-supply store next," he told his parents.

Mike learned a valuable lesson from his experience that actions speak louder than words. He wasted so much time trying to convince his parents he was ready for a pet when he should have just showed them instead.

