Greetings from Joe | June 8, 2020
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Gifford Meets Thunder

Gifford experienced his first thunderstorm the other day as we woke up together to a giant Pacific Northwest thunder and lightning display. He didn’t like it. In fact, he didn’t know what to do with it. He couldn’t decide if he wanted to jump off the bed or stay on the bed. So, he spun in circles. He didn’t know where the thunder was coming from, so he looked frantically back and forth at all the windows in the room trying to see it. His nose was sniffing overtime too attempting to find it. He didn’t know if it was a friendly noise or an unfriendly noise, so sometimes he barked at it to warn it away, and other times he whined at it like he does with the cats when they are on a high perch and he wants them to come down so he can play with them. I finally said, “Do you want to go to see Jeff?”

Gifford jumped off the bed, ran down the stairs and sat at the front door before I could even get one foot out of the bed. As soon as I opened the front door, he ran from the main house to the door that leads to the rooms above the detached garage. As soon as I opened this door, Gifford zoomed up the stairs and jumped into Jeff’s bed. When I got upstairs to tell Jeff that Gifford was a little scared, Gifford had already burrowed under Jeff’s pillows against the wall putting Jeff between him and the thunder.

Gifford knew exactly where his safe place was, how to access it and what he wanted to do once he got there. I was surprised how quickly by just saying Jeff’s name pushed Gifford into action. I was also surprised how single mindedly he sped toward Jeff forgoing his usual slow waltz going up and down stairs and he completely forget about his routine sniff patrols to find crumbs of food on the kitchen floor.

Like Gifford, we all need our safe places and people and rituals in times of distress. Unlike Gifford, we have the ability to appreciate them through gratitude when the need for them is not imminent. Over the past week as I thought about Gifford finding solace in Jeff, I made it a point to reach out to a few people in my life that have been the pillows I’ve burrowed behind. I wanted to let them know how much I appreciated them.

I think Jeff was a bit surprised too when I shared the whole story of how Gifford got to his bed that morning. Jeff knows that Gifford has bonded with him the most, but I don’t think he really knew how deeply Gifford needs him. Jeff was a bit humbled, almost awed, by the responsibility of being a safe place for another living creature.

My hope is you will find a way to thank the safe people in your life who serve as a safe place for you as well as become that space for others.