

We cannot tell you how to change your bird's behavior – because each bird is a study of one. What I can tell you with absolutely certainty is that behaviors that continue are behaviors that are reinforced. And behavior is always a function of the environment which includes many factors. That doesn't mean that we always want to encourage what we reinforced, so we need (as humans) to figure out ways to shape the behaviors that we want, to reduce the unwanted behaviors, to increase the behaviors that we want, and to redirect our birds to behave in a way that is acceptable to us. It's a process that requires a commitment from you to help teach your bird, and your bird to teach you, what helps you to achieve the desired behaviors.

You'll need to understand some of the basic skills to help achieve this, and when/if we work together, we'll come up with a training plan that you can start with. You will most likely need to do several brief daily training sessions and within a few days, you should see improvement. But this change is a process, and it will be up to you, like with any relationship, to keep up with reinforcing the desired behaviors.

You should think about 1 to 3 behaviors that your bird does that are acceptable/wanted/encouraged that you LIKE.

Also think about the series of events that take place that start your bird to begin the undesirable behavior – time of day, what the bird's eaten, what you do when the bird behaves that way, what the bird does after your behavior/reinforcement. The bird's cage, the bird's environment, diet, exercise, bathing, sleeping, activity level, activities that you like the bird to do, and how you reinforce those behaviors. Also what interaction that takes place between the 2 of you that you and the bird enjoy and the duration of those activities. How does the bird behave around other people? And how do you behave during those times? Documenting what you do, what the bird does, instead of writing what it "feels" like or labeling it with a construct like "mean, angry, jealous, happy, aggressive, scared, attacking, cuddling", having details about what those names mean is what gives us the tools to work with to start some behavioral changes.

When is the last time that your bird had a complete avian wellness exam? What was included? Avian wellness exams are very important.

Parrots are highly social animals. Their lives revolve around feeding, bathing, sleeping, exercising, finding a partner and propagating, and staying safe. Just because our birds don't live in the wild doesn't mean that those same survival skills change. If it's just you and your bird, it's highly likely that your bird has become accustomed to having you provide the other half of the pair bond relationship.

Please go to www.behaviorworks.org and read the behavior tool kit info that Dr. Friedman has written. That info can help you have a better understanding how the most positive, least intrusive methods of behavioral change are ultimately the most successful.

Sincerely,
Julie Murad