Ever been sitting back relaxing and been joined by your kitty who wants to nuzzle your face or head butt you under the chin? This is often called head bunting by cat behaviorists.

You probably like it and that is probably because you realize that kitty is being affectionate. A kind of hug. But, why does she do it? There are a few reasons and one is that it is a method she uses to bond and communicate contentment with you. She may also do it to other people and other pets in the house – not just other cats. She is telling you that she sees you as a friend. Another reason is that she is rubbing her scent on you – her pheromones. The sense of smell is very important to a cat. Like dogs, cats will sniff each other's behinds to learn important things about each other (well, important to them!). They use scent to communicate and to mark territory. Cats have scent glands in various locations on their bodies – paw pads, lips, tail, cheeks, chin as well as their forehead.

Cats like to rub against things to leave their scent for themselves. It is comforting to them to know they have been in that location previously. In my house there are several cabinet corners that have to be washed regularly as the cats leave an oily residue behind when they rub. They like to leave their scent on things that are important to them and by head bunting your face, she tells you that she likes you and trusts you.

Each cat has its own unique odor and she is leaving her signature wherever she rubs. Once she has rubbed against you, you are marked as a part of her family unit.

Cats are very sensitive to touch. They have pain and pleasure sensory cells all over their bodies. That is why they react immediately to anything that touches their fur and especially their whiskers. It is also why most love to be stroked and brushed.

Often your cat will follow you around and get underfoot or rub against your legs. This is part of the same behaviour. It can be a bit annoying if you are trying to get somewhere quickly and it can certainly be a tripping hazard.

Just keep in mind when she is doing it, it is because she wants to be close to you and she wants you to know it. You are just purr-fect in her estimation… whether you call it head butting, bonking or bunting!

Come and see our pets at the shelter!