



# **10 Lessons About Life and Living**

**(or 70 in Dog)**



By Andrea (& Koda) Eygenraam



# **10 Lessons About Life & Living (or 70 in Dog)**

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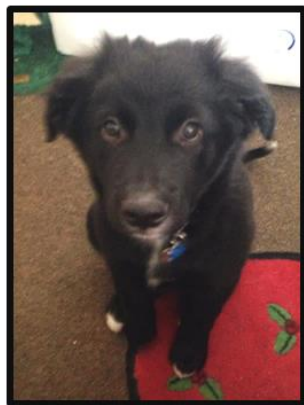
♥ A great big thank you to so many people who shared the excitement in every stage of this book, and signed up to preorder copies and help this project come to fruition.

♥ And finally, probably most importantly, the biggest thank you to YOU, the person reading this right now! This book is only as good as the people who connect with it. Enjoy.



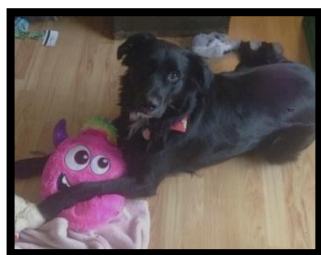
## Foreword by “The Person”

Life is full of many challenges and triumphs. I believe the lessons that help us learn and grow, will be presented to us when we need them. Three years ago, a Border Collie-Lab cross came into my life and changed the course of it forever. Out of all the puppies in his litter that I held and interacted with, when he nuzzled under my chin and fell asleep, it was clear that he had chosen me, and boy am I glad he did.



I was told Koda means friend in Native American, a role he has fulfilled and then some. With love and compassion (and occasional stubbornness), he has taught me so much and helped me through some very challenging times on my journey and often, I think he has trained me more than I’ve trained him

One day, as Koda very bluntly taught me a couple of the lessons in this book. I laughed and reflected on how much he was really helping me learn to live and get through life. I wanted to be able to share those moments and their lessons with more people, and so this book was born.

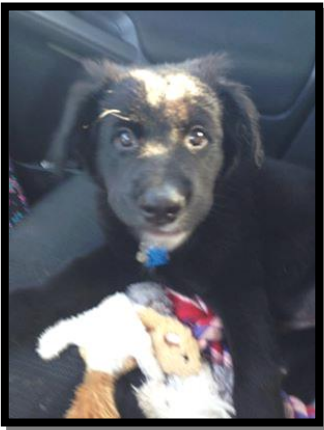


I decided I would share Koda’s lessons the way I’ve learned them: through his eyes. That is the true spirit behind this book. My hope is that you will take away from this book some of those life lessons, so that you too, can share some of the wisdom and laughs I’ve been blessed to have in my life.

**10 Lessons About Life and Living (or 70 in Dog)**

## Introduction by Koda

Life is such an adventure!  
Sometimes I have a very different way of looking at life than my person does. I am so curious and fascinated by everything. I put all 75 pounds of me into loving every moment of this great life I have. I know my person needs those reminders sometimes and I am glad I can be there to help her not take everything so seriously.



My person talks about when I was so little, but I don't see any difference to how I am now. I can still fit in her lap and snuggle up on the passenger seat beside her on our adventures. I am so glad that we have each other and all the experiences together. I even don't mind the cat, most of the time.

I am grateful to share all my stories and lessons with you. I hope you can enjoy them as much as my person and I have.

**10 Lessons About Life and Living (or 70 in Dog)**





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# Chapter One

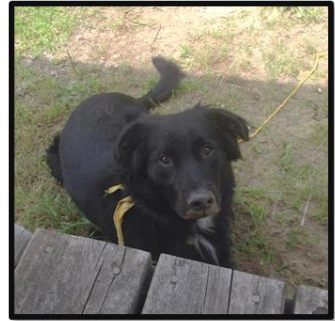
## Keep Digging Until You Uncover What You Desire

The Good Stuff is Worth It



## 1. Follow your instincts and keep digging until you find what you want

I was small enough to fit under the deck the first time I went to our friends' trailer at the beach. I smelled something good, although the people reassured me there was nothing there. I decided to dig in the sand anyway, and I uncovered a delicious bone. I'm so glad I followed my instincts and didn't listen to the others.



## 2. Live in the moment and enjoy every breath

My person used to tell me we would go see Grampa tomorrow, or as soon as she was done whatever work she was doing. I would get so excited and run to the door as soon as she mentioned his name. I didn't understand why she wasn't running to the door with me. Living in the moment keeps my life much simpler than hers because I don't need a calendar or watch. I just enjoy everything right now, completely and fully.



~ Keep Digging Until You Uncover What You Desire ~

### **3. Dare to dream: just because you don't have wings doesn't mean you can't soar like a bird**



As we go on our walks, I see birdies flying high in the air and I'm fascinated by them. I try to understand them and chase them, but I can't keep up. When I get to stick my head out the car window, though, the air rushes past me and I feel free. Just because I can't fly like the birds doesn't mean I can't fly like me.

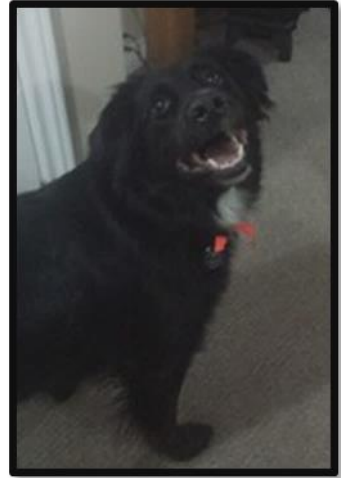
### **4. Have a bite, walk away, come back, have another bite, and eventually the whole bowl will be gone, one bite at a time**

I can be a picky eater and I'll go to my bowl and eat only one or two kibbles and walk away. Or I'll go get a drink of water and come back and have a few more kibbles. Sometimes I get distracted by what the cat is doing, but I always come back and have another mouthful of kibble. Before I know it, the bowl is empty and my belly is full! It's not so bad if I take it one bite at a time. Most things aren't.

**~ Keep Digging Until You Uncover What You Desire ~**

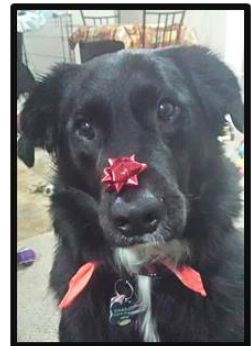
## 5. Always take the opportunity to learn new tricks

One of my favourite things to do is puzzles. My person hides treats in plastic games for me and playing these puzzles has helped me learn to open drawers, lift lids, turn handles, slide pieces, and more. I get enthusiastic every time there's a new challenge because it prevents me from being bored and keeps my mind active. I love learning new things. It will keep me sharp for when I'm not a young pup anymore.



## 6. The best rewards are sometimes hidden but if you keep looking you'll uncover them all

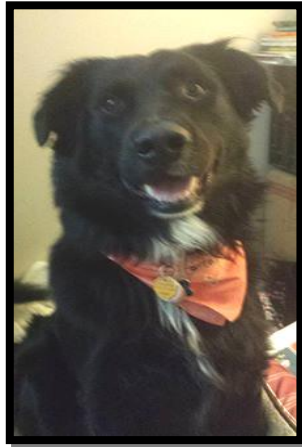
There's another game we play called Eggs. My person hides plastic Easter eggs filled with small treats all over our apartment. I get thrilled when I see her filling them and I run into the bedroom so I don't see where she hides them. Sometimes I have to hunt extra hard for some of the eggs, but much of my excitement comes in the fun of looking for them. The treat inside is an added bonus, and there's sometimes more than I expected after all my hard work.



~ Keep Digging Until You Uncover What You Desire ~

## **7. Sometimes less information is more**

Once I scammed my person for a second dinner when she was scatterbrained and on pain meds after the dentist. By the time she remembered, I had already eaten it. Sometimes you don't need to share all the information you know and you can just let people learn lessons on their own



**~ Keep Digging Until You Uncover What You Desire ~**





# **Chapter Two**

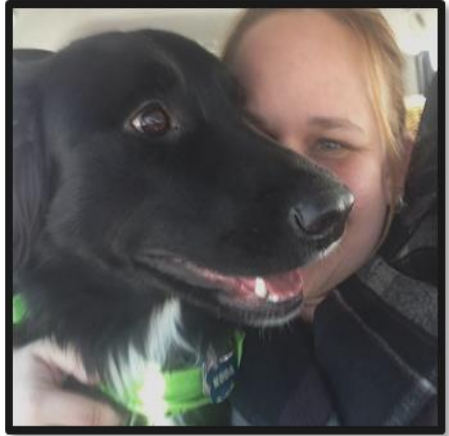
## **Be Willing to Ask for Help**

**Things are Easier Done Together**

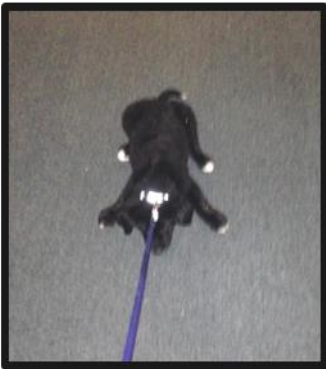


## 1. **Ask for a hug and some help when things are scary**

Fireworks and thunderstorms make me want to run and hide to get away from the loud noises. I get so scared I start shaking. If I go over and ask my person to cuddle me, she always puts aside what she's doing to give me some comfort. It doesn't make the scary things go away, but knowing there's someone who loves me does make it easier to get through.



## 2. **It's okay not to understand something, but always keep learning and ask questions**



I'm a very curious dog who has learned what many things are. Whenever there's something new I'm not sure of—like a tree stump in our new neighbourhood—I get startled and my person takes me over to it and tells me what it's called. I feel more confident after learning what

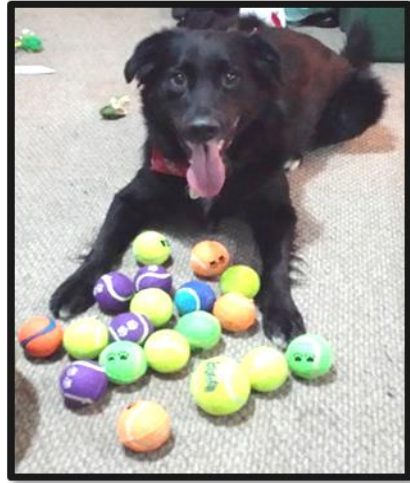
things are and being shown they aren't as scary as they might seem at first.

Sometimes I shouldn't listen to my imagination.

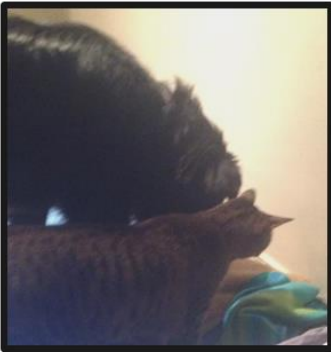
**~Be willing to ask for help~**

### 3. **Sometimes your way doesn't work and you need to ask someone else for help**

We have this bookshelf that sits off the floor a bit. Actually, it sits off the floor just enough that my tennis balls can fit underneath but not enough that I can get them out. This gets quite discouraging at times. I paw at the ball, I bark at the ball, I lay pouting at the ball, but it doesn't come out. I try everything I can to get the ball out. When I feel I've exhausted every way I know how, I usually have to go and ask for help. With one quick motion of her hand, my person can easily get the ball out. Maybe I shouldn't struggle so much before asking for help.



### 4. **Make sure you can laugh at yourself when you make a mistake**



My person decided she was going to move the water dish the cat and I share. That day, both the cat and I kept forgetting that she had moved it and we would go to the other side of the apartment and look around, confused. We are very much creatures of habit and don't like change, or our person laughing at us as she reminded us where it was. (I took it better than the cat, though)

~Be willing to ask for help~

**5. Sometimes you land on your face and people laugh but don't let it stop you from having fun and trying**

When I am happy to be outside, I jump in the air and do a twist to grab my leash and play tug-of-war with it. It's a fun game and makes my person giggle. I learned the hard way, though, that I should be more careful in the winter. The first time I jumped into the air on a winter day, we were stepping out to cross the road. I slipped on ice that was underneath the snow and



I twisted much faster than I was expecting and landed spread-eagle on my face on the street. Once made sure I was okay, she started laughing so hard. I pouted all the way home and wouldn't look at her. I missed out on fun on the rest of the walk. I sure do love playing that game, though, and haven't let it stop me from playing it again and again.

**6. Everyone makes mistakes and that's when they need love the most**

We were at the dog park the other day and my person went to throw a ball. Another dog and I both misjudged where she was throwing it and we ran straight into each other. I'm not sure what hurt most: smacking into the other dog or my pride being injured in my mistake. Luckily my person was there to make sure I was okay. Sometimes that's all I need to feel better and to move past my wounded pride.

**~Be willing to ask for help~**

7. **Sometimes it's okay to pout to get extra love and sympathy, but don't overdo it**

I ran too much at the park one time and didn't realize I had ripped the pads of my feet apart. I had to be rushed to the hospital and everyone was fussing over me. They cleaned and wrapped my paws in bandages. I got so many treats and praise for how I was letting them take care of me. I really liked this, even though I was in pain so I continued to pout and limp for a few days afterwards until they just took the bandages off and wrapped me in a humiliating cone. I should have stopped while the going was good.







## **Chapter Three**

# **Always Make Time for the Simple Things in Life**

**Like Playing Ball, Napping and  
Enjoying Your Food**



## 1. Share your excitement whenever you can



Excitement is contagious. If I'm excited, I make sure to share that with everyone around me, whether it's because I'm outside for a walk, got a new toy or am meeting a new friend. A good mood is certainly something to be shared and always seems to cheer others up too.

## 2. As much as you may want to play with two toys at once, you won't enjoy either as much

I can fit two tennis balls in my mouth. I can also usually fit a soft plush toy, a rope and sometimes a ball as well. When I have all these toys in my mouth, though, my person can't get one out to throw it or play tug with me, because they're all stuck. I want so badly to play with all the toys, but I usually end up playing with none. I just walk around in circles looking awkward. Instead of my fun being multiplied, it's actually decreased exponentially. My person says I have to stop multi-tasking.



~Always Make Time for the Simple Things in Life ~

### 3. **Take the opportunity to relax quietly doing absolutely nothing sometimes**

Whether it's because it's disgustingly hot or just that I've had a pretty active day, I love relaxing quietly in front of the fan (usually on my back with my feet in the air!). I enjoy being very active and experiencing many things, but there's also times that call for doing absolutely nothing. I make sure to get my time for stillness in whenever I can.



### 4. **Old broken toys are just as much fun**



My person doesn't like my broken toys laying around leaking their stuffing all over the floor, so when she sees one with a hole, she says "Broken! Garbage!" and I usually take the toy and run away with it so she can't throw it out. I love the toys that have shared many games with me and that I've been able to love the most. If they are dirty, falling apart and full of holes, you know I'll bring those to you first and with pride.

## **5. When you're happy, wag your entire body**

When I'm extra happy my whole body wags, not just my tail. It's good for my whole body because I get exercise and stay active in a very fun way! Just like I do a variety of puzzles and games for my mind to stay active, it's important to treat my body the same way. Dancing is good for my soul!



## **6. Life is too short not to lay comfortably, no matter how silly you look**

I love laying on my back with my feet in the air, sleeping. My person always giggles and tells me I'm silly but it's so comfy! There are other times for me to be on my belly, alert and paying attention, and then there are times where I trust there's no danger and can just relax and be me. I try to flake out as often as I can.

*~Always Make Time for the Simple Things in Life ~*

## **7. Stretch when you wake up to keep your body moving properly**

My person and I have a routine: we don't start our day unless we cuddle. She wakes up and says, "Good morning Koda", and I stretch out all the stiffness from sleeping so my muscles can wake up and work properly. If I try to jump up on the bed to cuddle her too quickly before stretching, I usually fall, so that stretch is important!





# **Chapter Four**

## **Accept All Life's Treats With Gratitude**

**Small Things Become Big Things**



## **1. Sometimes the good snacks are worth getting excited over and working harder for**

I'm pretty smart and know a lot of tricks, but I'm also stubborn and don't always want to work to my full potential. For the right reward,



though, I'll do almost anything. There are dried beef chunk treats my person has—when she brings those ones out, I will start doing tricks before she even says anything. You just need to find the ideal reward that motivates you.

## **2. The best rewards are sometimes the hardest to chew through in the beginning**



When my person comes home with a new antler treat for me, I get excited right away. Antlers are really hard to chew but the inside core is where the good stuff is. I chew through the outside edge of it because the reward inside is worth it. Some of them are harder than others, but the struggle to get to the good stuff inside is always worth it in the end.

~Accept All Life's Treats With Gratitude~

3. **When you are pleasant and don't whine, there is always a reward in the end**

When I can sit quietly and be patient for my person to finish dinner, she always gives me the last bite. Sometimes she takes really long to eat, or she gets distracted, but I have to have patience. That last bite is in her timing, not mine. But when I do get it, it's always delicious.

4. **Be grateful for what you have before asking for more**

Sometimes I get my kibble, and when I see there's no extra surprise in it (like sweet potatoes), I sulk and wait for my person to eat her dinner. Her food is always better than mine and sometimes she lets me have some. But if she asks me if I've eaten my dinner, and I haven't, I get no extra bite of hers. (Sometimes the cat has tried to eat some of my kibble as well. I'm learning to gobble it up quickly and appreciate the kibble I get, and then more yummy treats seem to come my way.)



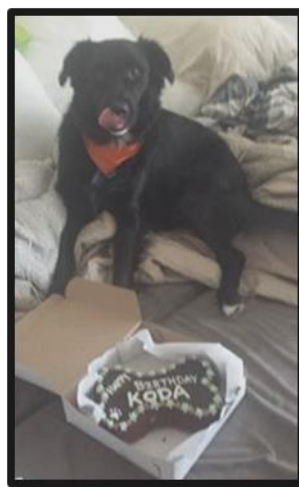
~Accept All Life's Treats With Gratitude~

5. **Share your treats and make someone else smile anytime you can.**

I really wanted some of my person's lunch one day, and waited patiently by her side. She looked at me and said, "Why should I share with you? You didn't share any of your breakfast with me!" I went to the other room for a moment and came back with my antler for her. She laughed and was so surprised. I got an extra bite of her lunch that day. I now make sure to always bring her my antler or a toy whenever I can because it makes her laugh, and sometimes I get an extra bite as well.

6. **Make sure to eat the healthy stuff too, even if you don't like it as much**

My person tries to share all sorts of her food with me, but she's on this healthy kick that I'm not so sure about. I know my person will give me my favourite treats (like frozen peas or meat) if I eat everything she gives me, so I push through and eat the ones I don't like as much like carrots so I can get the best snacks in the end. When my belly is full and I'm not hungry anymore, I can play ball for longer so I guess it's a good compromise.



~Accept All Life's Treats With Gratitude~

## **7. It's okay to change your mind and spit something out if it leaves a bad taste in your mouth**

I used to quite enjoy raspberries. Then I ate one that tasted funny, and it made me not interested in trying them again. My person keeps trying to convince me they are good, but all it takes is one bad experience. Some experiences are not worth repeating and you just need to move on.





# Chapter Five

## Spend Time Outside Every Day

No Matter the Weather



**1. Make sure to enjoy everywhere you go and be fully present where you are**

There are many places outside to enjoy. I am a dog meant for the outdoors no matter the season. I love when I get to spend time outside. I love when the first snow falls and



crunches under my feet, hiding and playing in the fall leaves and splashing in the water. I enjoy the shade of a big tree to cool off and watch everything happening around me. No matter what I'm doing, I make sure that I enjoy each activity in the moment, as much as I can.

**2. Always say yes when asked, “Do you want to go outside?” Exciting things await**

I love my person and spending time with her inside, but when we go outside there are always exciting people and doggies to meet, and new smells to sniff. Adventures are around every corner, even if we're just walking to get the mail. When I am open to meeting new people and doggies in the simplest situations, I am never disappointed and my day is always brighter.

~Spend Time Outside Every Day ~

### 3. **Always explore new situations, or look at old ones in new ways**



There's nothing as much fun for me as freshly fallen snow. I adore shoving my head in a pile of snow to smell all the fresh smells and cool my face off. When I pop my head out, my face is covered in snow and I have a giant smile on my face. I do this in older snow banks too, because

there might be some new smell inside that I hadn't smelled before. I love all the new experiences because they help me fully enjoy life and keep me smiling

### 4. **Walking is key to living, and so is lots of water**

When my person and I go on longer walks, it gives me (and her!) a great chance to exercise my leg muscles and work off all those treats I get. It keeps my body healthy so I can play more and it keeps my mind stimulated with the fresh air and exciting scenery. I always fill up on water when we come back. It's important to keep my body hydrated too. My person says she's never seen a doggy drink as much water as I do and that I inspire her.

~Spend Time Outside Every Day ~

**5. Take the opportunity to get your feet wet, or get covered in snow—it shows you're living**

Sometimes I get a little dirty or wet when we are out having an adventure, but my person never minds because it means she and I are having a good time.



I was at the doggy park with the kiddie pool the other day. I jumped in right away and splashed around so much.

This was certainly the highlight of my day. However, we had just moved, so there were all sorts of things in the car, and no towel to dry me off. My person shook her head and told me to stay on the front seat (where my seat cover is) and I got a good towel-off when I got home. Sometimes you just have to jump in and have the adventure and worry about the details later.

**6. Allow the experience of fresh air and wind in your face be total joy**

Our home has a balcony and we are on the top floor. I get so excited when my person asks if I want to join her on the balcony. I can watch everything going on below and smell all the fresh smells in the wind. I always feel energized. My person and I don't understand why more people don't hang out on their balconies all the time because fresh air makes us so much happier.

~Spend Time Outside Every Day ~

## **7. Do whatever you can to join in on fun.**

We lived in a basement apartment and my person and the cat were looking out one of the few windows we had. I was on the floor and couldn't see what was so interesting. So, my person said, "Oh you should see this, it's really exciting!" I jumped onto the bed, jumped off my person's shoulder and into the window so I could see as well. My person and the cat just stared at me shocked. I was stuck in the window and all it was, was the Rottweiler from upstairs in the backyard.



**~Spend Time Outside Every Day ~**





## **Chapter Six**

# **Be Loyal, Forgive Quickly, Let Go of Judgements**

**Always Love Others as Much as You Can**



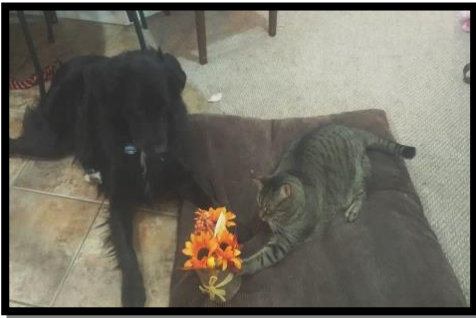
## 1. Phones don't replace face-to-face time

My person looks at her phone a lot. She used to ignore me when I brought her my ball—until I pawed at the phone. Lately, though, she's become a lot better at putting it away to play with me. She still uses it to take lots



of pictures of me, and I humour her occasionally and let her. Her perspective has changed, though, because she's realized that what's most important is what's in front of her right now, living, breathing and playing.

## 2. Jealousy gets you no further. Someone gets hurt and no one gets the treat in the end



Some of my treats are ones that the cat and I both like—like liver snacks. When my person grabs the package, we both go crazy, competing to see who can get closer to my person and get the treat first.

Occasionally we go overboard and the cat will swipe at me or I'll shove her out of the way. This usually causes a fight and we start to scrap with each other. At that point, the treats go away and neither of us get any of them. If we work as a team and have patience, we always get the treats. I guess we forget that sometimes.

~ Be Loyal, Forgive Quickly, Let Go of Judgements ~

### **3. Always wag your tail even when others snarl or growl**

I am a very outgoing and sociable dog. I love to greet everyone at the park when we go. Most of the time, if another dog isn't as welcoming to my greeting as I'd hoped, I just back away and leave them be and instead find the next friend I can make. One time, though, I had an incident where I was attacked by two huskies, and it's caused me to be hesitant about huskies when I see them. While I may be a bit more cautious around them, I still do my best to be friendly and pleasant to as many doggies as I can, because I'm determined to have fun at the doggy park. That's just who I am.

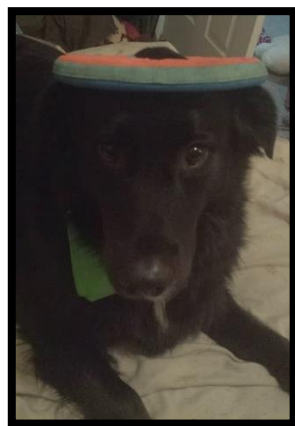


### **4. Avoid biting when a growl will do**

The cat likes to push my buttons and tries to steal some of my kibble from my bowl. She's a sneaky ninja but I always catch her. I get in her personal space, and give a low growl to remind her this is mine, and that I don't appreciate her going after my things. This reminds her to keep her attention focused on her things, not mine.

**5. Be honest and let friends know when they've done something to offend you**

Sometimes when my person and I are playing ball, it doesn't even seem like she's trying to throw the ball properly. When the ball bounces a few feet away, I give her a dirty look to remind her to improve her throws so we can have more fun. She doesn't realize that she's upset me sometimes, so the reminder helps her to understand. I always bring the ball back to her for another chance. It's the caring thing to do.



**6. Someone may poop on your things but in the end, you'll have the last laugh**



The cat was upset with me getting so much attention from my person. It made her anxious and she decided she would go to the bathroom on my beds. This happened three times on different beds! She wrecked some really comfy beds. Finally, my person decided to take her to the vet and she came home with medication for the cat. The cat hates taking the medication. I usually just sit and laugh at her...from my new bed. My person calls it karma.

~ Be Loyal, Forgive Quickly, Let Go of Judgements ~

## **7. Sometimes people will hurt and disappoint you but don't let it affect the love you give others moving forward**

Many doggies have come and gone from my life. Some who were good friends have since disappeared. I miss them often, but I don't let that affect me making new friends and accepting new doggies into my life. I realize that if losing those past doggy friends stops me from making new friends because I don't want anyone else to leave me, I will miss out on the wonderful opportunities of the new ones that come into my life.



**~ Be Loyal, Forgive Quickly, Let Go of Judgements ~**





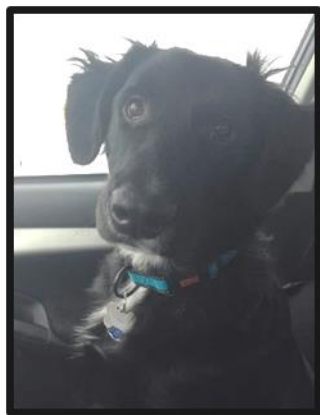
# **Chapter Seven**

## **Love With All Your Heart**

**My Human is the Coolest Person in the World,  
and She Says I'm Her Favourite**



**1. Always go with for a car ride, even if you don't know where you're going—those are some of the best adventures**



Sometimes we go on short trips like moving the car to a different spot, and other times we go on longer trips like up North where it feels like we are in the car forever. The car transports us to such interesting places each time, so I trust my person and say “yes” to new adventures. It's always fun trying something new.

**2. Humour those you love when you can, but that doesn't mean you need to all the time**

My person takes too many pictures. I have a way of sensing when she's about to take a picture, even when she tries to be very quiet and I've been passed out sleeping. I move, lift my head and give her the evil eye to remind her not to overdo it. I make sure I let her get a few nice ones, though, because I love her and it's important to her.



~Love With All Your Heart ~

### **3. I don't care where we are going because we are going together**

I love when I can go with my person somewhere, and it doesn't matter where we go because the journey is often more fun than where we end up. We laugh and sing and explore. There's usually snacks involved too and maybe some cuddles. Just being near each other and spending the time makes my heart happy because I'm with the person who is most special to me.



### **4. Start every morning with a stretch and a cuddle and there's no way your day can go wrong**

When my person wakes me up in the morning and I get to come up on the bed to cuddle her, it makes me so happy. Sometimes I wake her up excitedly because she's taking too long to wake up. Even if she sleeps in and is running late, we always make sure we still get a quick cuddle in. Starting the day with love and a laugh is most important to make sure the rest of the day goes well.

~Love With All Your Heart ~

**5. Help those you love to enjoy the little moments in life**



Sometimes my person lets me lick out the bowl and I end up with food on my face or looking silly because I'm so focused on the yummy treat. I don't worry about the oatmeal or soup on my face because it makes my person giggle and that makes me happy. Helping my person laugh is the best because I love her and want to help her enjoy life. A little oatmeal or soup never hurt anyone.

**6. Get excited to see those you care about, whether it's been a few minutes, months or years.**

Whenever she comes home, I greet my person at the door with so much excitement that my whole body wags. Sometimes I even whimper a bit because I'm so happy. She



always smiles, laughs and bends down to give me a big hug. I greet her the same way whether she has just gone down to do the laundry or has left me alone with the cat all day. I know she can tell how much I love her and that I'm happy we are together again.

~Love With All Your Heart ~

**7. When you're confident and assertive, others follow you and it makes life easier**



My person and I did training classes and she couldn't figure out why I wasn't listening. The problem was that she wasn't even sure of what she was telling me to do. When she figured things out and became more confident in guiding me, I trusted her to know what she was doing and I followed her without question. It made both our lives easier





# **Chapter Eight**

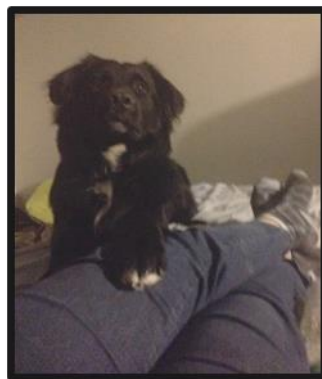
## **Always Give Comfort When You Can**

**Love is Always the Right Answer**

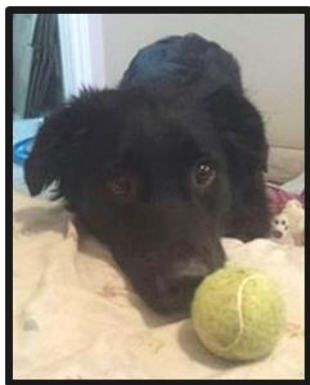


## **1. Help others so they don't feel alone**

When I notice my person having nightmares now and again, I will jump on the bed to wake her up and cuddle with her. When she's scared, often all she needs is me nearby to give her love and help calm her down. She does the same when I start squeaking and growling from a nightmare. It's good to have each other.



## **2. Do what you can in your own way to cheer others up from sadness**



My person gets sad occasionally and I want to help any way I can—I don't like seeing her crying. I always find her my best toy and bring it to her. I sit at her feet and give her my paw so she knows it's okay and that we can play together and be happier. The distraction frequently helps and I'm happy I can cheer her up.

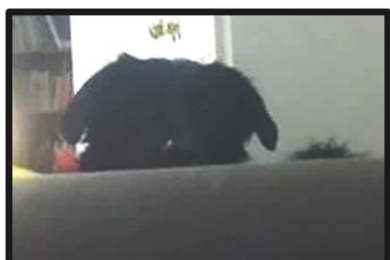
**~Always Give Comfort When You Can~**

### **3. Sometimes it's best to sit close and listen when someone is having a bad day --You never know when they might need you.**

We just moved, and it was tough for my person. There was so much to do and so many boxes everywhere! She was busy putting things away in the kitchen while I lay nearby to keep her company. She came across a memento from her late mom that made her start crying and I ran to her side to give her comfort. I knew I was nearby for a reason!



### **4. Make sure you take regular breaks to rejuvenate**



Since my person works from home, she gets into grooves of working in front of her computer and doesn't take proper breaks. I'm good at reminding her, though. I peek over her computer every few

hours to encourage her to go outside with me and not to work so hard. It's better for your body to get up and stretch and move. My person is grateful to me – not everyone has a doggy like me to help.

~Always Give Comfort When You Can~

## **5. Remember to breathe and focus on what's really important, no matter what life throws at you**

It used to be that we would be driving and my person would get frustrated at the driver ahead of us going too slow. The last time she got really frustrated, I pretended I had to go to the bathroom so she had to pull over. I pranced in the grass and acted silly.



It made her laugh, and I jumped back into the car. She calmed down and got perspective on what was really important. It has been months now since she's been upset in the car like that, and if she starts to forget, sometimes I put my paw on her hand and she remembers to take a breath.

## **6. Always treasure a quiet night in with those you love**

Some of my favourite times are those when I can lay beside my person and nap while she's reading a book. I even like when the cat is napping nearby as well and we are just spending time quietly together as a family. We don't have to be doing anything special to just enjoy being in the presence of each other's love.

**~Always Give Comfort When You Can~**

**7. No matter what the occasion, take every opportunity to celebrate—even if you aren't sure the reason**



Sometimes my person stands on the scale and gets really excited. I don't know what's happened, but if she's celebrating, I want to get in on it too. We high five and dance around a bit. Often I don't really know why we are so happy, but I love that we can be happy together and share that joy.





# **Chapter Nine**

## **Memories and Love are the Best Treasures**

**Live Every Moment of Your Life**



1. **Take what others say and do what makes your heart smile and leave the rest**

Since I'm scared of thunder, everyone always gives my person quite a few suggestions about how to make me better. One of the most common is buying this shirt that wraps me tight like a

Her fussing over me and hugging has made it worse, but she decided to try one of her smaller tee-shirts on me and leave me to it. I thought this was the greatest thing ever! I loved wearing her shirt. It smelled like her and made me feel better. It certainly helped some with the thunder.



hug.

2. **Sometimes when there's something that lights up your heart, you need to find a way to bring it into your life.**

My person always said she wasn't going to dress a dog in clothes but she already broke that rule with the tee-shirt. We were at the pet store shortly after that experience. I saw this pumpkin costume on the rack. I thought this was such a great thing! I grabbed it off the rack and tried to run away with it and cuddle it. My person sighed, and asked me if I wanted to try it on. I pranced around so proudly wearing that outfit. I still wear it a few times a year and it makes me smile every time I get to wear it.

~ Memories and Love are the Best Treasures~

### **3. Everyone needs to have contact with each other every day**

My person also bought me a snowman outfit and I get to wear this one more often. I love it. The best part is when we go out for a walk or to the pet store and people pat me or give me attention. It makes me feel really good. I know it helps my person to get out and be sociable as well. We all do need contact with others. It's not good for us to be isolated all the time, especially in the winter



### **4. We have to do things we need to do even if we don't feel like doing them**



I get smelly playing with other dogs, or playing in rivers, or just doing doggy things. Because of this, I need to have a bath sometimes. I love playing in rivers and the lake, but for some reason when it comes to the bath, I get so scared. My person is gentle and talks to me to calm me down. She uses nice smelling soap and never gets it in my eyes. I still get very pouty afterward, even though I know it needs to happen but I know I can't do fun things all the time.

## 5. **Do spontaneous silly things sometimes because they feel like the right thing to do**

When I was little and my person first came into my life, we used to have fun taking the mattress outside and sleeping on our balcony. I thought it was so much fun to be outside and smelling all the smells. The cat would get mad and watch us from the window because my person said she would get in trouble outside. Sometimes it would start raining, though, and we would scramble to get inside but she would always laugh so hard. It was nice to do something different.



## 6. **Cuddle close to those you love, for warmth and just to be near them**

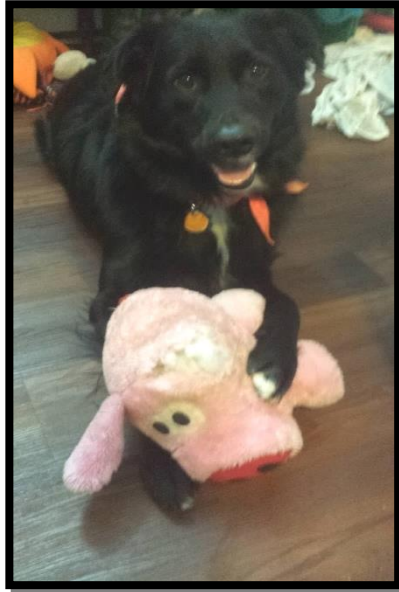


When it gets cold I don't always sleep in my bed on the floor. My person lets me cuddle up against her when it's really cold. I know it helps her feel comfortable, and it helps me be close to her and warm. The cat joins in on things as well sometimes, although I try to push her out of the way if we are on the bed. My person says we are a family and everyone deserves to snuggle to be warm and share love. I guess she does know best, and I do like it when the family is together.

~ Memories and Love are the Best Treasures~

## 7. **Life is better when we embrace kindness and love**

I have all sorts of stuffed toys. I love to pretend I'm chewing on them but I don't hurt them or tear them apart like some doggies do. I just make them really slobbery. I choose a different one each day to share love with because I don't want any of them feeling left out. Sometimes I love them too much, though, and they get holes in them, or their stuffing starts to come out. My person says she needs to do sewing surgery on them, and I sit and watch so intensely as she pokes them and closes up the holes. I usually run away with them as soon as she's done. It lets me love them longer and that makes me so happy



..~ Memories and Love are the Best Treasures~





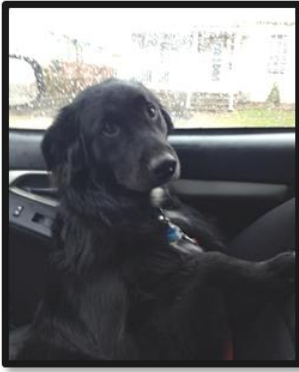
# Chapter Ten

## Sometimes Change Happens

Accept It and Embrace It



## **1. Go with the flow rather than fighting the things you can't change.**



I love the rain. My person doesn't. She always tells me, "Hurry hurry, we don't want to get wet," but she doesn't seem to realize we are going to get wet anyway. I love to splash in the puddles and feel the drops tickle my nose. I especially love getting dried off with a towel after. There is always something to appreciate in any situation. I can't change that it's raining so I may as well enjoy what I can.

## **2. Sometimes it's tough adjusting to new routines and smells but you never know what's around the corner**

We have recently moved to a new town and the cat and I are having a few struggles adjusting to our new life. We do still have our little family and we are finding there are many new things to enjoy. We have a big window to see the outside world all the time, which certainly helps. We don't have our backyard anymore but my person has taken me to a new park with so many doggies and places to explore. Everyone always seems to have a ball to chase, so I'm finding more things to love about our new home. It's not as big of a deal as it seemed at first, especially when I focus on all the fun new things.



~Sometimes Change Happens ~

### **3. Take a chance and chase the waves.**

I love playing in the river, chasing the current and trying to catch it in my mouth. The other day, though, my person and I went to the lake. I couldn't see the other side and some of the waves were bigger than me!



My person went in the water quickly and I wanted to join her, but those waves were coming in like nothing I've experienced before. My person encouraged me but I had to overcome my fear before I could be near her. I finally was able to go out deeper and catch big waves in my mouth. When one wave washed completely over top of me, I almost ran back to the shore but my person encouraged me and I stayed out with her. The lake was so fun, new and exciting. I can't wait to go back

### **4. When you expect a treat or a car ride, sometimes you'll be disappointed. Let it go and appreciate the ones you do get**

When I see my person getting ready to go out, I get all excited. If she avoids looking at me, I know something is up. If she says the words I dread— "You have to stay here this time. Be a good boy"— I go off and pout. It feels like forever until she comes back because I am impatient. But sometimes when she comes back, she brings me a treat in her purse.

I may not always get what I originally wanted, but I often get something pretty great.

~Sometimes Change Happens~

## **5. Wake up with your tail wagging, believing it will be a great day and it will be**



When my person is getting ready in the morning, I run around excited, finding all the toys I want to play with that day. I always bring her a tennis ball with a big smile on my face and it makes her laugh too. I know that no matter what the day throws at us, we can handle it because we are

feeling good. And if it throws a tennis ball, we can turn it into a game.

## **6. Don't stay stuck on the old stuff when it's over**

Recently we changed the walk we take around the neighbourhood. We don't walk along the busy street anymore where all the other doggies go. Instead we walk in a different area with lots of people who stop to pet me. There are more smells to smell because we walk for longer, and I am always ready for a nap when we come back. Even though the new way is better, I still try to go the old way sometimes, before I remember that we've changed it up. Old habits are hard to break, even when the new ones are more fun and make your whole body wag with excitement. I am learning to accept the change.

~Sometimes Change Happens~

## **7. Living breathing beings are more important than things**

One time, when I was a puppy, my person came home one night to find that I had been into an important box of mementos from her late mother. In my excitement, I had destroyed quite a few things, including her mother's favourite elephant figurine. My person locked herself in the bathroom to calm down. I knew I was in trouble, but I was just a little puppy so I didn't understand I wasn't supposed to do what I had done. When she came out a couple minutes later, instead of yelling at me, she picked me up (because I was little and she could) and she held me in a great big hug. She told me I was more important than things and that she loved me very much. I think she needed the hug even more than me.



**~Sometimes Change Happens ~**





# Postscript

## 10 Other Important Lessons

**Sometimes Letting Go is the  
Toughest Thing to do**





## **Postscript**

Our dogs teach us lessons throughout their entirely too short lives. Koda teaches me new life lessons every day but he's not the first dog I have known.

These last reflections are written in memory of the other dogs who have touched my heart and taught me in their living and their leaving, particularly Sasha, another Border Collie-Lab cross.

Fortunately, Koda has not directly taught me these last lessons yet, although I know much, much further down the road, he will have his own versions of these.

Koda's contributions to this chapter do not go unnoticed, though, as he has provided many hugs for my tears, and I'm so grateful for his love, as I am for all of the dogs who have crossed my path in life.

## **1. When you notice a friend not doing well, offer them comfort however you know how**



For some dogs I have loved, that has meant offering them an extra-soft blanket if they are sick or trying to cheer them up with a ball if they are able. Sometimes it's just been offering them the quiet comfort of having me nearby, sending out as much love as I can. Sometimes it's medication or sadly, sometimes it's just letting go. Every situation has been very different, but you will never go wrong when your heart is filled with love.

## **2. Life requires you to think beyond yourself and your immediate wants and needs, to do what's best for someone else**

Sometimes we have to let go when we don't want to. Seeing my dog Sasha suffering with diabetes and other health issues was so incredibly hard. She had always been such a playful and energetic dog and seeing that taken away from her was not fair to her. My dad and I wanted to keep her forever but we knew we had to show her all the love she'd given us and let her go. Sometimes we need to end the situations that we least want to.



~Sometimes Letting Go is the Toughest Thing to do ~

### **3. Sometimes decisions are hard and you don't want to make them, but in the end it's necessary to avoid further hurting**



At the end of her life, Sasha was hurting, confused and sick. Seeing her like that hurt me and made me feel confused and sick as well. It wasn't helping either of us to continue in that situation. Sasha had been such a caring pup who always tried to make me feel better, even if it made her hurt more. As tough as the decision was to help end her pain, it was necessary, and what was best for her.

In the short term, my pain was increased exponentially. But knowing she was at peace and not in pain anymore, helped heal my sadness. All the loving happy memories I held (and still hold) close to my heart about my slushypup Sasha helped the healing as well. Sometimes we have to deal with more pain in the short term in order to experience what's best for the situation in the long term.



**~Sometimes Letting Go is the Toughest Thing to do ~**

#### 4. **When you lose those most important to you, it's okay to take time to be sad**



When I've had to say goodbye to dogs in my life, one of the hardest parts was the ghosts of memories they left behind, the paw prints on my heart. Not having Sasha come running up to the fence when I pulled into driveway, or seeing the dog beds empty and toys in the

same spot—these were the hardest. I struggled trying to establish new routines without them. Life is always different when we lose someone we love, and we must be gentle with ourselves as we try to adjust. It's okay to sit and cry and let the memories wash over us. It's okay to miss them and remember all the love we shared.

#### 5. **You don't have to be sad alone—it's important to reach out for support**

Often those close to us aren't sure how to support us. It's important, though, that we let those that love us be there for us however they know how. After we had to say goodbye to Sasha, my dad and I sat in his truck and cried. We



watched the videos I had taken of her and we laughed and cried together. The sadness didn't feel as overwhelming when I had someone who cared nearby.

~Sometimes Letting Go is the Toughest Thing to do ~

6. **There is always going to be another cuddle—it just may be different than the one you are used to. Look forward with hope and love.**

Anytime I've said goodbye to a dog, I've said, "I can never go through that again—my heart hurts too much." In the days to follow, however, I miss the furry companionship around me and start considering the idea again. Every time I have chosen to share my life with a dog has had its wonderful rewards and certainly has not been a mistake.



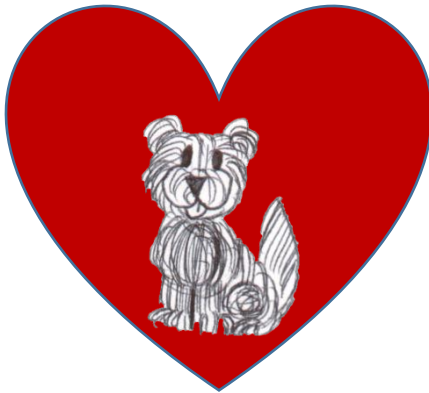
The abundance of love that is unconditionally exchanged enriches my life in more ways than I can count. I have always found the next furry friend has helped me heal that pain in the way only a dog can. Often the new dog helps soften the sadness of the memories with many new and different ones. With all the love they have to give and inspire in me to share back, I couldn't imagine not sharing my life with a doggy friend.

~Sometimes Letting Go is the Toughest Thing to do ~

## **7. Life is impermanent and you learn that no matter what, you are okay.**

Dogs may live fewer days than us, but they sure know how to live each day and make them count. I heard it explained by a young child that people are born so they can learn to love everyone all the time and be nice and kind—but dogs already know how to do that so they don't have to stay as long.

The impermanence of life can be tough to accept but when I'm able to use this truth to more richly enjoy every moment I have; I feel like I'm making all the dogs that have crossed my path proud. Dogs teach us so much if we are willing to learn. They teach us about themselves, ourselves and even the human experience. No matter what, we are okay. Dogs just help make the time we have here a little easier and more beautiful.



Please note that \$1 from every book sold will be donated to the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. Koda has helped me to overcome those dark thoughts so many times, and it's one of the big reasons I'm alive today. This is being done for all the people who don't have a Koda of their own in their lives.

**; Your Story Isn't Over ;**

