

Advice on dogs, life and love



Dear Dog Lady,

Dog walkers talking on cell phones drive me nutty. These yakking people ignore their dogs, other people, and even traffic lights. The other day, this woman talking on her cell phone remained oblivious as her dog slipped out of its collar and nearly ran out into a busy street. If a posse of pedestrians, including myself, I hadn't grabbed the dog by the scruff of its neck and hauled it back from the brink, the poor animal might have been killed. Even then, the woman kept talking on her phone until I yelled, "Get off the damned phone, lady!" She put the collar back on the dog and scurried off. I've also seen people on phones ignore their dogs when they deposit waste on the sidewalks. Can you please advise all dog walkers not to talk on cell phones? There oughta be a law.

—Stephen

Cell addicts don't get it. Dog Lady has seen cell-talkers commit any number of offenses—from leaving poop behind to ignoring dogs tangled in leashes.

Here's a coping strategy: Carry empty poop baggies in your pocket and whenever you see someone talking on a phone and oblivious to the dog, courteously offer a bag. Even if he or she doesn't hang up the phone, at least there will be an item in hand to remind the offender of dog duty beyond the high bars.

Dear Dog Lady,

My Yorkshire terrier, Riblet, is a dog of open adoption. This means my neighbor across the street, who gave us Riblet a year ago when she couldn't handle him anymore, believes it's perfectly acceptable to come over and collect him for overnight stays. I really don't mind all that much but she's starting to come later and later in the evenings. This does bother me. Also, Riblet always comes back to us a little crazier than when he left, which makes me worry whether this back-and-forth situation is good for him. He recently bit the man who installed our kitchen tile, and he's growling more than usual. What can I do to help all of us?

—Laura

Laura, no more willy-nilly overnight visits. Riblet needs the security of one home. You betcha he's dis-

oriented by the dog-swapping. Your neighbor gave him up. Now, you set the visiting rules.

Small dogs pose a dilemma because people think they're cute enough to manhandle. This creates all sorts of problems, as your neighbor must have learned before she surrendered Riblet to you.

Dear Dog Lady,

Last May my poodle, Piccolina, died. A friend, understanding my great loss, knew of a neighbor who had a male eight-month-old poodle that was being abused. No one fed him. He was left outside 24/7 with no water or shelter. When he was allowed in the house, he was locked in a cage in a dark room. If my friend hadn't saved him, he would not be fed or touched by anyone. Hearing of his plight I said I would take him because my friend already has a dog and couldn't keep him.

The dog belonged to a sister of the people who abused the dog. When they asked the owner if she wanted to keep the dog (Sparkie), she agreed to give him away, but assumed my friend was keeping him. She refused to give the dog to me, but after she filed a couple of lawsuits against my friend (these have been thrown out), Sparkie is now my new baby. The owner, however, informed me the dog had a tracking ID implanted and she refuses to release the info to transfer the ID into my name. Can I demagnetize the chip? I could have it removed with surgery but that seems a little harsh. Can you tell how I can deactivate this chip or what I can do?

—Anna

Anna, you present a dicey scenario. In the eyes of the law, dogs are considered possessions—the same as cars or couches. OK, this may seem so cold and heartless, but such is the lowly legal status of animals. Thus, it defies logic why the lawsuits were thrown out. Maybe the former owner doesn't have proper papers. At any rate, she holds the trump card—ID microchip verification. If she refuses to release the data to you, you would be liable if you removed the chip—as well as causing a painful toll on Sparkie. So don't. You have no legal rights to demagnetize until she freely gives you the code.

As long as you keep Sparkie, you must be ultra-responsible for his welfare. Make sure the poodle doesn't roam. Also, put a collar on Sparkie embroidered with his name and your phone number so this data is instantly visible to anyone who might find him.

Implanting a microchip containing instant ID is decent and humane, causing Dog Lady to wonder how this former owner neglected Sparkie while clinging to the chip validation. What matters most is your kind treatment of the poodle.

Visit www.askdoglady.com to ask a question or make a comment.