

# Advice on dogs, life and love



## ask dog lady

Dear Dog Lady,

I can provide a very good home to a rescue dog because I live on two acres. Yet, I am very frustrated by my experience with the local “rescue shelters”. When I initiate contact, they take weeks to respond to me. Then they tell me a dog is “difficult, with problems.” I found a dog on a Web site asking for “foster parents for pooches.” I have emailed them and called four times but no response. Why is this process so difficult? —Lenny

*Lenny, ease up. Dog rescue and shelter groups operate on a dime, with spit, shoe polish, and the sheer love of animals driving them.*

*Go first to your local shelter and ask about other rescue resources in the area. On the computer, click to [petfinder.com](http://petfinder.com), the online resource that lists thousands of dogs available for adoption through local rescue groups. Visit your nearby veterinarians’ offices and pet stores—or anywhere dog rescue notices might be posted. You seem to want to snap your fingers and have this process be done. Just because you have two acres doesn’t mean you can easily shelter a stray. Do the hard work and the rest will be easy.*

Dear Dog Lady,

About four months ago my wife brought home a Shih Tzu that was abandoned and found at her church wandering outside. After trying to locate his owners with no luck, we decided to keep him. He’s about one year old now. We also have a Yorkie and a Maltese, both female.

Coco, the Shih Tzu, has become my personal favorite. He runs to me when I come home from work and hangs around and plays with me all evening, or lies on the couch beside me if I’m watching TV.

The problem? Coco never wags his tail. I just noticed this a few days ago and now watch him constantly. The others wag their tails when we play, when I come home, when I give them a treat, but Coco never wags his tail. He seems to be able to move his tail around okay, so I don’t think it’s physical. Do you have any thoughts about this? —Howard

*Howard, how do you know that Coco’s ability*

*to “move his tail around okay” is not wagging the tail? Don’t worry about it. Dog Lady’s dog does not have a conventional tail so the adorable appendage jerks awkwardly instead of flapping smoothly back and forth. This stumpy action initially stumped Dog Lady. Like you, she was convinced her darling didn’t wag his tail at all.*

*Coco’s affections toward you prove he has nice bones in his body, even if his tail doesn’t always easily communicate pleasure. Ease up. Enjoy him for what he is, and don’t fixate on what he fails to do.*

Dear Dog Lady,

We have had a sheltie for eight years and he has always been the king of the house. But we just got a golden retriever puppy and our sheltie does not like her. Can dogs feel jealousy? Another thing I wanted to ask you was our new seven-week-old golden has been using our stairs many times, and she has fallen a couple of times coming up and going down. Is it unhealthy for our young golden retriever puppy to keep climbing stairs like that? —Mackenzie

*Mackenzie, yes, canines feel jealousy. Despite their non-judgmental nature, dogs are far more complicated psychologically, according to a new study. It showed dogs that performed tricks refused to do it again when they were not rewarded and saw other dogs receiving treats for doing the same trick. Call it good sense, envy, or righteous stubbornness, as in “Hey pal, I do nothin’ without dried liver.”*

*Keep your two dogs separate when giving their meals, but walk them together because the sheltie will teach the golden how to perform like a grownup. Also, don’t make your puppy climb a lot of uncarpeted stairs. She can do it but, as you noted, there will be a lot of slipping, sliding, and falling, which could cause harm. And why put her in a perilous situation?*

Dear Dog Lady,

My seven-month-old golden retriever, Penny, loves digging anywhere—in the yard, on the carpet, on the sofa. She is like a maniac. She could have a million toys but the minute you have your back turned for one second, she’s digging. Any suggestions? Is she bored? —Kathleen

*Kathleen, yup, if you think Penny is bored, she probably is. She’s a puppy with bolts of pent-up energy. Take her out for long, long walks. Make sure you keep her in a crate. Puppies need containment. Basically, you have a dog that digs digging. You are going to have to provide enough training and distraction so Penny grows up to be a shiny golden canine citizen.*

*Visit [www.askdoglady.com](http://www.askdoglady.com) to ask a question. Dog Lady’s on Twitter at [twitter.com/askdoglady](https://twitter.com/askdoglady).*