

Advice on dogs, life and love



ask dog lady

Dear Dog Lady,

I have a Pomeranian/Chihuahua mix who is seven years old. He is a great dog, but in the last week he chewed up a cell phone case as well as the actual phone. I don't know why he did this. I give him dog bones on a regular basis, but, in the past, when I would forget to buy bones, he never chewed up anything such as a phone. Am I going to have to get rid of him now? Can this problem be fixed?

—Michelle

Aw, Michelle, cut cutie a break. Don't give up on your Pom/Chi mix because of a couple of bad chew choices. After all, this little guy has eaten up a lot of minutes of your life. And if the dog digested the cell phone without veterinarian intervention, he's a medical miracle.

Our dogs' magic is how different they are from us. They are animals. They can be well-trained and dependable, but they can still surprise us. Occasionally, they eat things they shouldn't or they behave in ways we don't anticipate. The best we can do is to expect the unexpected. Don't leave anything lying around that's easily grabbed and chomped upon—cell phones, underwear, designer shoes, and the like. That's how you fix the problem. You must put stuff out of harm's reach.

Make sure you're always supplying your dog with appropriate chew things. Bully sticks are great. Also, buy your dog well-made durable toys such as Kongs, which make for yummy munching when stuffed with a peanut butter/liver chunk mélange.

Dear Dog Lady,

My dog Trooper, a most adorable ten-year-old toy fox terrier, loves to sit with me on the couch and beside his dog-mate Mary Kate. When he wants something, his eyes get all soft, large and round, like a baby puppy until he gets the toy or treat he wants. Then Mary Kate barks and whines at him. She franti-

cally licks his eyes and ears when he doesn't give her what she wants: toy, treat, you name it. I always give them equal treats so I usually let them be. Besides, he seems so happy. Do you think he deliberately does the round eye thingy to manipulate her to this behavior? I know he likes her attention. Are all dogs as smart as my Trooper?

—Jane

Jane, this note is very sweet but Dog Lady is a mite befuddled because both Trooper and Mary Kate sound as if they're living a shaggy dog story. The bit about your toy fox terrier's eyes getting "soft, large and round, like a baby puppy" is cute but Dog Lady sees a Disney cartoon, not a living breathing creature.

Gal pal Mary Kate likes to lick Trooper all over—and over again—because she's besotted. Trooper is the dominant one in your household and Mary Kate wants to troop. She has no problem being bossed around. She licks him because she loves him. She would give him the tongue-bathing even if he gave her the squinty-eyed treatment.

You admire your dogs' antics and get a humorous charge out of the behavior. Congratulations. You're a prideful dog owner. Of course all cherished dogs are just as smart as your Trooper.

Dear Dog Lady,

Although not a dog owner, I really like your column. I don't know what to do around dogs. I either walk or ride my bike every day. Most dogs are tied up or invisible-fenced. Lately, there's a new dog on the block—brown, small, looks like a pit bull to me. He comes out of nowhere and comes close to me (within 25 feet) barking, growling, circling me. Of course I am freaked out. What is the safest response when faced with a strange dog that appears aggressive?

—Diane

Diane, if truth be told, this coach is Little Miss Scaredy Cat when it comes to rogue unleashed dogs that might be pit bulls. When you meet the roaming cur, ignore him—or her (doesn't really matter actually). The last thing you want to do with an unknown barking, growling or circling dog is to engage on any level. Never lock eyes with the animal, or try to pet, extend a hand, or anything at all. Get out of Dodge, quickly. And avoid this area for a while until the owners compile enough complaints to act responsibly and keep the dog contained. You have every reason to be freaked out by this dog's behavior. Just stay calm and move on.

Got a question? Write askdoglady@gmail.com.