

BUDDY, OUR DOG, TEACHES A LESSON IN LIFE SKILLS

Written by Terri Morey

Friday, 26 June 2015 10:07 - Last Updated Wednesday, 01 June 2016 08:38

Buddy is 14 years-old.

Depending on how you count dog years, he could be in his 80's, or even in his 90's.

He's a poodle, my first dog ever, and every mistake one can make as a dog owner, I made, or we made. We gave him lots of treats. He was a member of our family, we enjoyed treats ourselves, so we believed it was okay to give him the not-quite-empty containers which kept the ice cream, the peanut butter or the cheese. (We even gave him a slice of cheese now and then.) We enjoyed all of these - and so did he!

Before long, Buddy became what most people called, "a fat dog." Now, if you know anything about me, or my son, or even my husband, "being fat" is not part of our self- descriptions. And "fat" was not what we wanted to hear about our dog!

Four years ago, my vet said: "Terri, put him on a diet, he must lose weight." He also said, "The reason he is so fat is because of the carbohydrates in the dog food he is eating. That's why dogs gain weight." Of course in his life with us, Buddy had table foods AND the dog food; a pretty bad combination if you want your animal to maintain a normal weight.

And so; we cut out all table food and all treats, just gave him reduced-calorie dog food, or dog food for seniors. I fed him those dry, unappealing rations for three solid years, and changed brands repeatedly when I saw he was losing nothing. Can you imagine giving your beloved pet restricted meals that were obviously tasteless to him, hearing him whine, or looking into those longing eyes that said, "Give me something else, please! I am so hungry?" I would not budge. I was determined that he would lose weight, and as I saw him walking less and less, I became more committed to trying. I knew the weight on his body was the reason he could not walk, but I was simply a frustrated dog owner. I had tried everything my vet had suggested and still he could not lose a kilo.

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Buddy's problem eventually resulted his walking only for short stretches, and in my husband needing to carry him for most of the way on outings. People actually laughed when they saw us "carrying" our dog, when he was supposed to be out for a walk. Some even stopped and commented that "we were cruel to force our dog on a walk, when it was obvious he did not want to go." I heard it all: "he is an old dog, he has arthritis; he should not be forced to walk." On certain occasions, Buddy would just simply lie down flat out on the sidewalk and refuse to budge. My husband would then pick him up, and we would continue, with Buddy in his arms, **until** we rounded the last corner to home, and then he walked...

We made a trip to the States in December, 2014 to see our beloved family, and we left Buddy with one of our dear friends for three weeks. When we came home from our wonderful trip our dog had gained even MORE weight! He looked like a roly-poly, a cute little fat dog. When I brought him to our new vet, she took one look at him and said: "Terri get him off the dog food, feed him vegetables and fish or chicken, he needs to lose weight!"

It was as though she instinctively knew that unless Buddy's eating habits were changed, he would remain a fat dog, and his life would be shortened due to the excess weight he carried.

The happy ending to our story is that Buddy is now at his normal weight. He walks every day; hills and distances. My husband no longer needs to carry him, and Buddy gets up and down the steps to our home without assistance.

When we visit our friends he gets for a treat a cucumber, and loves it!

Last night, I knew he was hungry. He has his ways of showing us - usually with whining - so I

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gave him a sprig of cooked cauliflower. And that satisfied him.

If you are concerned about seeing your beloved pet gain weight, and not being able to lose it, I suggest you do what my vet recommended to us; get the dog off the food which is packaged for dogs and give them regular food - such as I have described. Do not even buy bones in the pet stores. Find a butcher who will give you bones from meat, then cook them yourself and give them to your dog.

I wrote this story about Buddy, and described it as learning a life skill lesson from our dog. The point is; I hear of many **people** who have problems losing weight, so I have a suggestion to make to them: Consider the Buddy plan of eating, which has been his new way of eating vegetables and fish or chicken, instead of treats and carbs or rich foods.

In the first chapter of the biblical book of Daniel, there is a wonderful story. It's about Daniel and his three companions who did not want to pollute their bodies with the delicacies the king was providing. They asked, and were granted their request, to eat vegetables only for ten days. At the end of those ten days Daniel and his group were fitter and stronger and looked better than the rest of the king's staff - even though their diet consisted only of vegetables.

In His love,

Terri Morey

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As I look at our dog now, I am filled with awe. He looks so good. He is even running a bit. Buddy has been totally renewed by the change in his diet, years have been added to his life, and my heart is filled with gratitude to my vet who God used to help us.

Romans 8:28 "All things work together for the good to them that love God and are called according to His purposes."