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Looking in Different Directions!

When I met the gutsy little street dog I was impressed with his tenacious spirit. Rather than feel sorry for himself he had learned to quickly adapt and to fend for himself, happily independent. I could relate to his independence and found that appealing as well. While visiting my friend who was his foster person, he jumped into my van saying he'd go home with me. At the time I said I wasn't in the market for another dog and wished him well.

After a few months passed by, his foster person called me saying no one had shown any interest in the feisty little dog so I went back to visit him again. There was no pleading for his case. As soon as he saw the leash he was jumping up clawing at my leg, barking insistently. Once the leash was attached he did his best impersonation of a sled dog. I'll never forget Joseph saying, "Patty, are you sure you want to adopt him?"

"There's more in there, I feel it." I answered.

Once we got Kiowa home I started to seriously doubt what I had "felt." Not only was the little black and white dog a champion barker, but he also showed me how someone's culture or upbringing can impact them. I was impressed because he was this pushy little street kid who took care of himself, but didn't stop to think that this meant he didn't know how to live and interact in partnership with a human. Every opportunity he got he would look for an escape route and once he managed to get out of his fenced yard or slip out the door, good luck catching him. Everything was on his terms and his alone. We were just some place he could get food when he was hungry, but he showed me he could hunt too, if necessary. No it wasn't necessary, but apparently it was a skill he needed prior to going into rescue.

He quickly earned the name "The Little Bas!!!d." I am not proud of the fact that I used a colorful metaphor to describe him, but it fit. He was smaller than the other dogs and well he had no idea who his father was so... At times it felt as if I was talking to the back of his paw. Or he would look at me and basically say, "Yea, yea, I'll get back to you." I was so frustrated with him at one point that I almost returned him to the rescue group.

What was I missing with this rascal? How could I reach him better? It finally dawned on me to not fight against who he was or where he had come from, but to figure out a way to be in harmony with all that he is. After all, his savvy little spirit is what drew me to him in the first place. I began to appreciate his pushy and cunning nature and told him so. I also started showing him how I didn't wish to take away his freedom, but instead give him more opportunities to expand his life and being. I wished to share with him not only being a part of our family and contribute his unique energy to it, but to also become an agility partner with me. We would travel together to learn from different people, meet all kinds of different dogs, and visit all kinds of different places.

He loved the idea of travel and bought in quickly to doing the agility especially since he was paid well for it; all kinds of wonderful treats. We made it a point to explore each place and I thanked him for sharing his experience with me. I showed him how working with me gained him so much more. Ki went from the dog who would run after vehicles or chasing our chickens, if he managed to get the opportunity, to a dog who I can tell to "wait" off leash and he stops and listens.

The other day I came across this picture of us during an agility competition. I had to laugh because we started out our relationship looking in different directions. Truly listening to each other has not only made us a nice working team, but beloved partners in life. I still refer to him as "The Little Bas!!!d," but it's mostly used in an affectionate context. Hey, he is who he is and I love him for it.

It's easy to find others looking in a different direction than our own. It's easy to judge that or get annoyed by it, but a little respect for another's perspective or culture can help lend itself to a lot of harmony. I am thankful for Kiowa in my life. He continues to remind me of the gift of truly listening and accepting another for where they are and working with it, rather than pushing against.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

In Kinship,
Patty



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