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Dog Wisdom: 6 Reasons Why I Wish I Was More Like My Dog

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Here are six pieces of dog wisdom my dog has taught me, just by living her life -- and why I hope to be just like her someday.



Image via Unsplash.com/cbowers

Recently, I stumbled upon a beautiful video on the Oprah Winfrey Network by award-winning photographer Robin Layton, called "Dogs in Meditation."

Yes, it is actually a video of dogs meditating. And no, they're not sitting with legs crossed, paws on their laps, chanting. It's quite simply a video of dogs doing what they do so well: living in the moment, truly savoring the beauty that surrounds them and enjoying life.

As someone who has struggled with anxiety and control issues since taking up residence in her mother's womb, I'm not ashamed to admit that I wish I could be more like my dog.

In fact, I aspire to it.

Dogs have an innate ability to be fully present, without the weight of their thoughts and "future-think" holding them down. Meanwhile, my active mind runs a mile a minute, going from 0 to 100 in the blink of an eye. Anyone who's lived with anxiety can tell you: It's a real struggle, and some days are more difficult than others.

We anxious folk tend to live anywhere but in the present.

Even though I don't particularly enjoy that part of myself, I accept it and I'm always striving to do better when it comes to managing it. Though I've adopted a number of anxiety-reducing behaviors -- from yoga, meditation and self-help books to talk therapy, anti-anxiety medication and exercise -- there's nothing quite like the simple act of watching my dog *just be* that instills a sense of calm, serenity and mindfulness in me.

I'm a work in progress, but my ultimate goal is to live my life more like how she does -- and here's why.

My Dog Doesn't Hold Onto Anger, Resentment or Blame

A few weeks ago, I inadvertently left my dog outside in the rain for a good 10 minutes. The poor girl didn't even bark; she just sat there waiting for this airhead to remember that she was out there and open the door to let her back in. When I finally did, I wrapped her in a big, fluffy towel, kissed her wet face and cried, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" over and over.

If I'd left one of my kids out there, he'd have pushed me aside, accused me of neglect and given me the silent treatment for a good day or two. My dog simply wagged her tail, licked me on the nose and jaunted off happily into the TV room. As I stood there staring at my sweet dog, I realized that I wished that she could show even a little anger towards me. But what I also realized is that she's simply incapable of feeling such an emotion. She never has, and never will be, motivated by anger, resentment or blame.

She Has an Acute Awareness of Her Surroundings

As humans, we often get so caught up in what's going on in our own heads that we often fail to see, hear and feel all that is around us.

Dogs are just the opposite. A dog's reality is based on their senses, rather than on destructive and futile thought patterns.

Think about it: When you take your dog for a walk, are you thinking about the bills to be paid, the appointments to be kept or the housework to be done? I sure am. But not my dog. No, whether she's with me or with a dog walker, she's happily exploring the terrain beneath her, listening to the sounds of life that surround her, and feeling the breeze as it tickles her long, golden fur.

That simplicity is all she knows.

She Has Total Appreciation for Life's Simple Pleasures

With a complete reliance on those acute senses, and without the swirling vortex of thoughts in her brain that I so often succumb to, my dog can appreciate the most basic elements of life. In fact, her greatest joys include rolling in the grass, chasing a ball, or greeting someone -- anyone -- as they walk in the door. Give her those three things and her life is made.

I'm ashamed to admit it, but it takes much more than that to get my own proverbial tail wagging.

She Has Zero Interest in Money and "Stuff"

Have you ever heard your dog ask for a few bucks to go shopping? Mine doesn't. She doesn't care how big her house is, what kind of car I drive her around in, or whether or not her leash is bedazzled. She doesn't know how much I make, what my mortgage payments are, or how much is in my 401K. None of that matters to her. All she demands of life is love, food and water, access to the outdoors and the occasional belly scratch. That's about it.

Can you imagine a world that didn't revolve around the almighty dollar? This must be why she sleeps so well at night while I count sheep (and credit card bills).

She Finds Excitement in Each and Every Day

I have a reminder that pops up on my iPhone every morning at 6:45 and asks me, "What are you looking forward to today?"

I set that prompt for myself to keep at bay any sense of negativity that I may be inclined to start my day with. Before I even get out of bed, I'm reminded by my digital companion to think of at least one thing that I can set my sights on with some sense of excitement and anticipation. I need that tangible, external reminder so that my mind doesn't veer towards negativity automatically.

My dog? She's excited to just wake up in the morning. How amazing it must be to naturally conjure up enthusiasm every single day, just by opening your eyes.

She Lives for Today -- Not for Tomorrow

At the end of the day, it really comes down to this: Dogs live for today. They don't regret the past and they don't fear the future.

In my quest for conscious living, I often think of a famous quote by philosopher Henry David Thoreau.

"You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment," he wrote. And while I'm fairly certain that he didn't have man's best friend in mind when he composed this mantra, I do believe that it describes dogs to a tee.

I have only a few key role models in my life, those whom I look to regularly as I strive for continued self-improvement. And I'm not ashamed to admit that my dog is one of them.

Tips and stories from parents and caregivers who've been there.

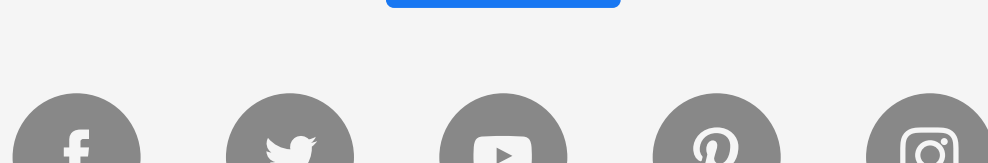
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