

TREAT YOUR MATE LIKE ADOG?

How often have you said, “Ah, if only I had it as good as my dog?” or “In my next life, I’m coming back as my dog?” We are so in love with our animals. I think there are as many dogs in my neighborhood as there are people. Maybe more.

It’s probably right there on Amazon, although I haven’t looked, self-help books that will tell you how to have a good relationship with your wife/husband/partner modeled on how you treat your dog.

Just think about it. The same rules apply in both relationships. Somehow though, it’s easier to respect and adhere to them with our dogs than it is with our mates, but that’s a whole different column.

So here’s my take on a self-help guide to improving your relationship modeled on the one you have with your dog. I’m taking the liberty of interchanging pronouns as fits best.

1. Greet him at the door when he comes home. Make a big deal about it so he knows you’re happy to see him.
2. Rub his belly—figuratively and literally. Gently and lovingly and a lot!
3. Let your eyes be delighted by the prance of her legs and the wiggle of her little rear end as she walks.
4. Notice all the little sounds—bark, whine, growl, low rolling rumble—and be in tune with what they mean.
5. Be willing to play at a moment’s notice.
6. Be firm and clear when his behavior is not ok. Say what you mean in an even tone of voice in as few words as possible, just enough to convey the message.
7. Walk (with) him/ her 3 or 4 times a day. Spend the time paying attention, admiring how cute she/he is, not spacing out or talking on your cell phone.

8. Notice the subtle facial expressions. The lips drawn back in a smile, the dark-eyed long unhappy face, the urgent feed-me- gotta-have-it-now face. They tell you a lot about what's really going on and the state of his or her emotions.
9. Roll around on the floor and play together.
10. When he growls fiercely, he wants what he wants. The message is "Get away." Respect that and leave him alone, at least for a while.
11. Look him/her straight in the eyes when you have something important to say.
12. Move him gently when he's sacked out on your pillow and you want to go to sleep.
13. Put up with some of the dirt and the hair. Put up with the bones, ropes, balls, kibbles, chews, and boodas left around. It's not such a big deal.
14. Tell her you love her whenever you feel it and pat her generously and lovingly.

Ah, the life of a dog.

Our mates should have it so good!