
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

James Eaton: “Man’s Best Friend”

James Eaton · Tuesday, January 11th, 2022

A quote I have heard throughout my entire life is that a dog is a man’s best friend. According to barkpost.com, King Frederick of Prussia was the first to use this phrase back in 1789. 232 years later, I now understand just how true the statement really is.

If I had to use one word to describe quarantine, I would choose the word lonely. As someone who likes to spend their free time in the outdoors with friends, the start of quarantine really got to me. At home it is just my father and I. When quarantine first began, all I had to do was mope around the house. I had no where to go due to closings for quarantine, I had no friends to hang out with because we were not allowed outside, and my father still had to go to work. Going from spending my time at school with friends and being able to go out to places with them, to complete isolation in my home really took a toll on me. I spent a lot of my new free time just thinking about anything, and they weren’t always good thoughts. Spending all this time by myself made me think I was losing my friends. I couldn’t help but think that there are some friends I have at school who I may never get to see again. This hurt me. I’ve always thought I would keep my friends for a lifetime. I was having a very rough time at the start of COVID, and I needed a change.

My father took me into his office and sat me down in his chair. He went on to the American Kennel Club website and had me take a quiz titled “the right dog for me”. I had not been this excited in a very long time. I finished the quiz and found a couple breeds I was interested in. Every day I would log on to my computer and check adoption sites looking for my new dog. One of those days I stumbled across an Australian Cattle Dog and reached out to the owners. After a couple weeks of emailing back and forth, I got the news that he was available and a date on when I could come pick him up. I was excited to meet my new dog, but little did I know I was really meeting my new best friend.

June 18th, 2020, was the day my life changed for the better. It was the day I got to pick up my new buddy. From the moment I saw him it was love at first sight. He had soft beige fur, little black spots above his eyes that looked like eyebrows, and a fuzzy stump for a tail. He was perfect. When it was time to finalize the adoption, the lady told us his backstory. He was a rescue. He was found in terrible condition. He was starved, beaten and tied up to a fence. It was obvious he had been through a lot. The lady at the adoption center warned us that he may show some odd behaviors due to his past, however this did not bother me as I already felt like I made a connection. I took the dog back to my house and gave him the name “Howie”. Howie Kendrick was a baseball player for the Washington Nationals who had a big moment for himself and helped his team win the World Series. My new dog felt like a big moment for me, so Howie seemed to fit perfect.

Even though I was very excited to get a new dog, I ended up getting so much more. I don't feel lonely anymore. Howie wakes me up when he feels like I've been sleeping too long and from that point on he's with me all day. Howie has taught me a lot about myself, and even though he is unable to talk, Howie has taught me a lot of lessons as well. Howie loves to run around in the backyard. My favorite thing to do in the morning is watch him run around as the sun is coming out. One day when I was watching him run, I had a thought to myself. I thought about how Howie has spent half of his life so far being beaten and mistreated, however he doesn't let his past get in the way of him. I learned that day that there are some things I deal with emotionally that I just need to let go. Why spend my time thinking about my hardships when I could go run around and enjoy my day?



The author and his best friend, Howie.

The lady at the adoption center was not wrong when she said Howie may display some odd behaviors. When he hears a loud noise such as the lawn mower or a neighbor taking out their trashcan, he spins more than a dreidel on Hanukkah. When we first brought Howie home, it was a fight to get him inside because he loved having his own yard so much. Once we got him used to being inside, the fight transitioned into trying to put him outside. After so many stains in the carpet

and holes in the yard, Howie now takes himself outside to relieve himself and he doesn't spin nearly as much as he used to. Moments like these are when Howie teaches me the lesson of patience.

Howie used to hate going on walks. Seeing the leash would give him PTSD about being tied to a fence with rope and he would go and hide. Today its one of his favorite things to do. I know in the back of his head he still has a little fear from the leash, but he doesn't let his thoughts get the best of him. I wish someone gave me this advice from the start of COVID, but I'm glad Howie was able to teach me it. Something else Howie taught me is that sometimes, all somebody needs is an ear. There have been times where I have been very upset and wanting to talk to somebody. In an empty home, the only somebody to talk to is Howie. When you vent to Howie, he doesn't give you advice or any opinions to how you're feeling. He just lays his head on your belly and lets you talk. Just having an ear to listen to my problems has been a huge help for me. When friends today vent their issues to me, I often just let them know I understand. Howie listening to me express my feelings taught me to be a better friend.

When I sat down at my dad's computer, I thought I was going to be picking out a dog. I ended up picking up not only my best friend, but *the* best friend you could ever ask for. Howie has taught me things about my self that my friends of more than 10 years never have. He's been there for me when I just needed somebody to spend time with. Some of the lessons Howie has taught me are going to stick with me for the rest of my life. One of the biggest lessons he has taught me is loyalty. While Howie won't be here for a lifetime, I will be there for his. I will always stick by his side no matter what because that's loyalty. I could never thank Howie enough for all he has done for me and taught me, but I think the most factual thing he has ever reciprocated to me is that King Frederick was right when he said that the dog is a man's best friend.

*

(Read all the pieces in [This I Believe](#))

This entry was posted on Tuesday, January 11th, 2022 at 8:21 am and is filed under [Essay](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.