

## A Contract with Yourself And Your Dog

I believe that this dog is a gift. He/she provides the opportunity for me to learn about myself.

This dog is deserving of all the respect, appreciation, kindness and love, as is any other member of a family. Soiling in the house, moving or a defensive bite is NOT an excuse to surrender a family member.

I acknowledge that “a dog is a dog”, and expecting otherwise will not set-up this dog to succeed in our culture. In Indianapolis, “man’s best friend” destroys approximately 26 dogs/day. Many of these deaths are because of “behavior problems” which translates to people not taking the time to learn how dogs learn.

I acknowledge that this dog’s behavior is a combination of genetics *and* a reflection of the interactions and experiences he/she has had with the human species. I commit to improving on that experience for the sanity and respect of this dog and myself.

I promise to take precautions to anticipate what I know are my dog’s behavioral weaknesses, and not allow him/her to be able to perform those behaviors that will place the dog, or others, in jeopardy.

- If the dog is fearful, I will not put him/her into situations that expose him/her to that fearful situation, (intimidating people/children other animals, etc).
- If the dog is aggressive or nervous, I will not allow others to be in proximity of the dog to expose either to risk of injury. If there is an incident where my dog causes harm, I understand IT IS NOT THE DOG’S FAULT.

I promise to make the effort to set this dog up to succeed with proactive instruction and thoughtful management.

- i.e.: I will get the dog outside BEFORE he/she needs to eliminate, and praise for the dog success. IF the dog eliminates in the house, I will get a rolled-up newspaper and hit myself over the head to “wake myself up” and anticipate this dog’s need for an elimination opportunity outside.

I promise to not be afraid to tell the dog that I love him/her. If I am beside myself and get angry at the dog for acting like a dog, I will humbly apologize.

I promise to love and care for this dog throughout his/her lifetime. I know that dogs can live for 15 years and I will make every effort to keep this family member, no matter what changes life may bring.

When the end is near, I will be near, too.

Individual/Family Member Signatures (include date):
