



Grafton Dog Obedience Club Inc.

EVERY DOG IS DIFFERENT

It always makes me a bit sad when dog owners tell me they are hoping to “replace” their old dog that they have lost. Or they tell me their new dog doesn’t measure up to their old dog in some way.

I think it is sad that our present dog should be compared to another dog as every dog is an individual in their own right.

Two basic rules I think we should all bear in mind:

- **No dog ever replaces another dog**
- **Every dog is special in its own right**

And I feel can speak with some authority on this subject as I learned my lesson very early in life. I have had the pleasure of having 12 dogs in my life time with 9 of those dogs being one breed. Of those 12 dogs 5 have been mothers and daughters and one mother and son. Now, you might think being so closely related those dogs would be very much alike but I can assure you they have all been individuals with their very own distinctive characters and personalities.

My first dog, Darkie, was very special to me. When she died, my grandmother (who had her daughter Niki), offered Niki back to me. As a naïve teenager I looked forward, in a sense, to getting my dog back. What a shock I got! The daughter had absolutely nothing in common with her mother – her whole outlook on life, her character and personality were very, very different. You can probably imagine how disappointed I felt! Luckily, not long into this new relationship I realised that Niki in fact had some special traits and abilities of her own. I resolved then and there to treat Niki as the individual she was and make the most of her talents and abilities. Lesson learned! From that moment, Niki ceased to be a disappointment (not that life with Niki was plain sailing!) and our relationship lasted until she passed away at 16 ½ yo.

My current 3 dogs are all closely related and are as different as they can be. Sure, being the same breed, they have some basic character traits in common – but that’s where it stops.

Another thing I notice people tend to do is to gradually put the dog they lost on a pedestal - magnifying his/her good points and conveniently forgetting all the dog’s imperfections. No new dog can ever hope to measure up to that! And so the new dog will go through life always being seen as second best and both dog and owner then miss out on the chance to form a truly great relationship based on all the dog’s wonderful individual attributes.

As I write this, two of my dogs are wanting me to get their breakfast. One waits patiently, just staring at me. The other, keeps nudging me, pacing up and down and generally being a nuisance. Both are making me feel guilty in their own individual way. Gotta go ☺

Carole Bryant©