



With Albie, Sophie, and Burnsie

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Success in a two-legged world
For Scotties is dance to be twirled.
True, Life's great fandango
Takes two wills to tango,
But Scottie owns when pipes are skirl'd!

Dogmas For A Young Pup: A Graduate Course On Four-Legged Success In A Two-Legged World

I have very special instructions to pass on this issue. You see, important changes have occurred at Las Golondrinas and they've changed my life.

I'm taking all this high-octane responsibility seriously since Mom and Dad brought home the kid from Michigan. Oh, he's cute alright, I'll give him that, and the folks cluck and coo over him as if he were the best thing since the old country. But when it comes to knowing the ropes about success in a two-legged world, well, he's all wet in places other than behind his ears and this queen knows there's more to Scottie character than that—it takes some 'vinegar', too!

That's why I've been spending a lot of time in recent weeks remembering all the wisdom Gus and Willie passed on to me so I can give this kid the MacEducation he deserves.

Trouble is, the little hoser has an atten-



tion span shorter than his ... well, you know what I mean. Dad just chuckles when I complain, saying "Hmmm. Seems like I recall Willie complaining about something very similar years ago!" Leave it to Dad to get 'historical' on me in a crisis.

Anyway, I'm doing my best to put together what I call "Dogmas For A Young Pup," and whether Burnsie takes it seriously or not I'm forging ahead with this kid's education. What's the alternative, I ask myself, moaning that the next generation is going to hell in a MacChewed-up handbasket? Not me. I'm whipping this little gyro-pest into shape.

As best I remember from my teachers there were eight dogmas for four-legged success in a two-legged world and in my infinite wisdom I've condensed them to four. These are Scottish Terrier rules to live by which I've found to be crucial and which I hope "Kid Piddler" will take to heart. Here's what you, K.P., must know:

Dogma #1: Self-Whelp for Life

Now, this one is fundamental to the Scot-tie mystique and cannot be learned too early in



my opinion: self-whelp for life, or as Gus used to say, “own it or moan it.” In other words, Scotties worth their Caledonian salt are *made*, not born, we don’t play the victim, and we re-make our worth fresh each day.

The thing is—and this is the part been-there-done-that-pups-of-nano-second-attention-span don’t get—you have to keep on *remaking* yourself.

Being comfortable in your own skin, for instance, superior in the knowledge you’re not the cat, or any other dog, or a two-legged with sense deprecation, secure that you are your own Master of your domain, isn’t yours merely because of yesterday. What about tomorrow? Life’s sand-box changes. Just because you train your Person to be half-way functional doesn’t mean you’re done. In a two-legged world the players can change in a heartbeat. Then you must rescue the lot, including yourself.

Wise Scotties know life is adaptation—constant adaptation—if you’re to stay on top. I had the script all memorized a couple of years ago. Success was clear-cut and simple: one-uping Willie. Period. Now he’s gone and I’m ‘Willie-ing’ with a kid nipping *my* beard!

No, Burnsie, being a true “diehard” means more than the whelping box you came from. The test of the Diehard is the self-whelping you do every day to improvise, adapt, and conquer all the changes ... so you stay in charge of yourself!

Dogma #2: Own Your

Distance

Burnsie, listen up. To the Scottish Terrier psyche, this one ranks right up there with ‘Self-whelp for life’ because this dogma is all about who’s driving the bus. I refer to the all-important ‘distance’ you keep between yourself and all others—perhaps especially between yourself

and your Person.

Now, this dogma is complicated because it involves the fine art of making your Person think they’re in charge when they’re not; it’s the perfection of playing a two-faced Janus both loving and aloof. It’s all a delicate matter of owning your distance.

Oh, Person traps are invidious, to be sure, Burnsie. Pats on the head and “Good boy! Good Boy!”-talk, and tidbits from dinner plates. Even ceremonious car keys or flash of collar and leash in time become part of the hedgemony. Put simply, they want to own you, lock, stock, and four-inch legs! They mean well—they actually believe that they know best and that what they want from you is for you to be a dog after their own image!—but all their ploys are aimed at one thing: to turn you into a canine “Jim Mac-Crow” to do their bidding.

Kid, there simply is nothing more vital to your Scottish Terrier soul than resistance by keeping your distance. “Yess, Massah. Yess, Massah” behavior denies everything that’s worth anything in the Scottie soul.

I can’t tell you precisely how

much ‘distance’ is appropriate; it can vary. The important thing is that YOU own it, that you never barter it away, and that you use it discreetly.

I say ‘discreetly’ because you don’t want to deprive your Person of affection. After all, you’re not the cat. Kisses are okay. Even moderate lap-time may be indulged now and then, or other apparent concessions, but always hold a piece of yourself back, even if tiny—and this is the really important part—make sure your Person KNOWS you own that distance.

It’s all about keeping Persons in their place. You see, they mistakenly think Scottie ownership is about keeping us in our place, but, truth be told, our big head is but a metaphor of their inherent megalomania. Our solemn task is to love our Person enough to puncture their self-importance, to humble them without hurting.

Not easily done, considering their fragile ego! The secret is showing them their limitations by putting them in their place. And nothing does that better than judiciously owning your distance.

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“I’ve been spending a lot of time in recent weeks remembering all the wisdom Gus and Willie passed on to me so I can give this kid the MacEducation he deserves.” Albie, Headmistress of Las Golondrinas, instructs a sometimes distracted new pupil named “Burnsie.” Photo and props: Joseph Harvill.



Dogma #3: Follow the Bend in the Rule

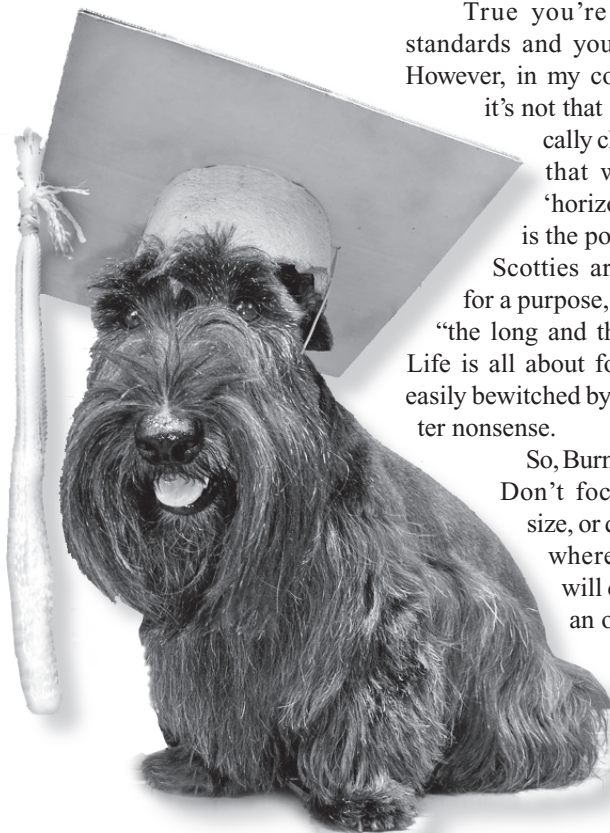
Willie used to say: “Endorse but morph” all rules. What he meant was it’s important to be seen to go along with your Person’s rules, even while you practice “mental reservation.” Scotties, you see, Burnsie, are not like regular mortals; if we don’t march to our own drumbeat, we can’t march.

Let the small-minded call it obstinence, let They Who Know Best call it stubbornness. You stay on your course following the bend in the rule. I’m not saying be defiant or run amuck. Oh, no. The Scottie Way is far too sophisticated for that. It’s all part of self-whelping for life and of owning your distance. But you can’t know Scottie success in a two-legged world without it.

“Endorse but morph” says it all. You want the appearance of obedience without “Jim MacCrow.” You want to sign-off on ‘regulations’ handed down by the important Others in your life, but you want to reserve the right to suspend those regs in your own case if and when the situation calls for it. Following the bend in the rule is actually rather Presidential. It’s what George W. Bush does when he signs congressional laws but pens presidential exemption-rights into the margins of the bill. That’s an Oval Office version of Willie’s “endorse but morph” dogma. I suspect the President learned his practice from his policy advisors, Barney and Beasley.

Be subtle. Be kind. Always be firm. Remember: bending is not breaking. In fact, Scottie superior intellect being what it is on a planet too often devoid of intelligent life, bending human rules quite often improves them. You can’t expect your Person to acknowledge improvement, however, since, after all, Life has not equipped them with all the senses. But you will know and your Persons will, too, someday at the Bridge.

The point is, bending rather than breaking is the Scottie way at its best. You are a natural wonder and Nature is about curves not straight lines. So always follow the bend in the rule.



Dogma #4: Size Is An Attitude

This dogma shouldn’t have to be included at all in Scottie basics but there is so much nonsense out there in the two-legged world about ‘bigger is better’ that even a Scottie lad who knows better in his bones can come under its spell.

And that’s what bigger-is-better madness is for Persons these days, a kind of dark magic, a spell that causes those you will care about to make choices that make no sense to us who possess all the senses. Gus used to shake his head in disGUST at trucks on the highway roaring with engines made to climb Mount Everest, rolling on wheels made to straddle old-growth timber, driven by weekend warriors who once ‘made’ a barbecue grill they bought unassembled!

Bigger isn’t better. Wind in your beard is no better in a ‘Big Foot’ pickup than in grandma’s Dodge Neon. Big house? Big career? Same thing. Size, you see, is an attitude. It’s not how much you get, it’s what you do with what you’ve got.

True you’re short by many standards and you always will be. However, in my considered opinion it’s not that Scotties are vertically challenged but only that we’re generously ‘horizontalized.’ And that is the point of this dogma: Scotties are short and long for a purpose, viz., to epitomize “the long and the short” of what Life is all about for two-leggeds so easily bewitched by the bigger-is-better nonsense.

So, Burnsie, stay on course. Don’t focus on length, or size, or quantity. That’s not where your memories will dwell when you’re an old dog in the sun. Old dogs know it’s not quantity but character that counts most in Life’s twilight because

it’s only your character you take with you to the Bridge.

And that, Burnsie, is the story of four-legged success in a two-legged world as best I can re-tell it from my teachers. There’s more, of course, but those lessons can wait for another time.

I’m new at this ‘professor’ role, and maybe a bit self-conscious. You see, I’ve always been ‘the kid sister’ myself in our pack, so taking over the running of the show seems a little out of character.

But only slightly ... and now I’m over it! Being in charge rather suits my bones and I’m liking it.

In fact, I like it a lot. So, listen up, “Kid Piddle.” I’ve got my mortarboard and serious qualifications. I’m on a mission. Shape up or deal with MacDominatrix from hell!

School’s in session! And I’m ringing your bell, big time.

