

Pet ownership – a far greater responsibility than many realize!



Being a responsible owner starts even before you decide to bring a pet into your home.

I love animals. I don't know if we're raised to be an animal lover or if it's something developed in our own personality. Being someone with such high regard for her pets, the law frustrates me when it comes to protecting them. They are considered property – much like a piece of furniture. Even though animal cruelty laws have come leaps and bounds the legal understanding of a pet still leaves a lot to be desired when it comes to the punishment of those who abuse our furry family members. With that in mind...

It is our obligation to them that we be responsible pet owners.

Being a responsible owner starts even before you decide to

bring a pet into your home. You have to possess the understanding that this is a long term commitment. It will affect your finances, living situation and your time for the next 10+yrs! Especially if you desire a puppy or a kitten who has their whole life in front of them. That life becomes your responsibility.

Should you decide on a dog, you have to understand the needs of the breed you want. Either mixed or full bred, different breeds can have very opposite needs from medical to what ideal household suites them. For instance, some dogs need daily vigorous exercise and without it will become destruction or in worse cases aggressive.



Some dogs who are bred for their popular pint size appeal...

If you are unable to walk a dog daily or don't have a large enclosed yard where you can play daily with your dog in, you may want to avoid these types of dogs. For their own good and for yours. Remember dogs live on average about 13 years.

Some dogs who are bred for the popular pint size appeal have suffered genetic or hereditary medical issues. This can become a costly issue to the dog owner which can seem to be shocking that what was once an adorable little puppy has some very big issues down the line. Not that larger dogs miss this bullet as well. One of the big things to take into account before bringing a pet home is the unforeseen expense of them being sick or simply growing old. Common conditions such as arthritis and hip dysplasia, congestive heart failure,

diabetes. When your pet needs you the most, will you be there for it?

Shifting focus to the most popular pet: the cat – the adorable creature who doesn't require you to bring them for walks or possibly never have to be groomed (dare you to give a cat a bath). Then can seem like an ideal choice to someone who works often or doesn't have a yard. But is it the right choice for you?

A cat can live on average about 14 years (take that dog) and for the span of their life you need to provide food and clean water daily. Every other day you need to clean their litter box and should you like many other American households choose to have multiple cats than you need at least one litter box per cat. They need their nails trimmed monthly and require scratching post or else will find a piece of your furniture to take out their natural urge to claw at on. Some cats can take on behavior issues and require being played with to curve their needs to act out. Just like dogs, cats can have medical issues that can arise out of nowhere. Costly issues. Keep in mind that the odds are against you having Pet Medical Insurance but the cost of their medications and doctor visits are no different than with ours.

Of course there are other pets out there...some with feathers others with scales and of course the ones with more than four legs (shivers). To keep things simpler I focus on the leading two pets owned by people in this country and in this area.



One happy family!

After you've done your research on the pet you desire and have a full understanding of what needs can be met in your household.. Taking into account how stable your household is (are you a renter? do you have a job that requires you to move? do you plan on having children?).

Now it's time for you to pick-up your pet. Will it be adoption?

Animals shelters care for an estimated 6-8 million dogs and cats each year! Of which 3-4 million are euthanized. Simply no room for them, no funds to care for them and no homes to place them in. If you choose to adopt an animal, you ARE saving a life. Whether it be a kitten or puppy or a senior dog or cat. By taking them into your home you are opening a slot in which another homeless animal can fill.

To divert a bit off subject, adopting a senior animal is a wonderful thing. Not only are the adoption fees considerably less but you have a grateful pet who's full personality has already been revealed which means no surprises or sudden bad behavior. Also a great idea if you can only look ahead a few years and then maybe after that plan on having children or moving. A short term commitment that can be very rewarding.

Back to finding an animal. The other option is of course purchasing an animal. The benefit of going to a breeder is knowing the bloodline of your pet and if it's a reputable breeder than the odds will be in your favor that there are no hereditary issues. I implore you that if you decide to purchase a dog or cat that you do your homework on the breeder. Being a good breeder comes at a high expense to them for a little profit. A backyard breeder doesn't invest well enough into their animals or their offspring and you the consumer will suffer the fallout of that. Taking home a pet that could very well have a much shorter life ahead of it with

countless medical issues. Being cute never means being healthy.



A cat can live on average about 14 years.

No matter how you decide to obtain your pet I hope you do the responsible thing as their human parent and have them spay or neutered. Like I said earlier, almost 8 million dogs and cats end up in shelters and overpopulation can be controlled by us. They are animals. The basic instinct to breed is there and it's our obligation to this world to be responsible pet owners. If you've taken in a stray contact your local Animal Control about low cost programs to have it fixed. If you've decided that you want to breed your pet for profit. Have the knowledge to know that profiting from backyard breeding mostly doesn't exist. After cost, you most likely will be taking a loss. We can't end abuse on animals (I wish I could say or think otherwise) but we can stop helping the overpopulation of them which in many cases leads to horrific mistreatment of them. This starts with each of us at home.

Being a pet owner is being a parent. If you understand that, than you are already doing something right.

"Until one has owned an animal, a part of one's soul remains un-awakened" – Anatole France
