

What Sort of Language is That? (Musings of a Contented Dog)

As I was trotting along the park's path beside my master, he was on his mobile talking. What sort of language is that without even one bark in it? I can understand his commands but usually by tone and inflection rather than the words themselves. Often, when I am off trail and I hear a single command "stop" or perhaps "come here" I can detect by his tone anxiety or anger then I try to obey immediately. On occasions when I wander too far he will give a sharp whistle, I'll prick my ears and come running back as soon as I can. Well, he treats me with love and kindness, feeds and waters me regularly, even picks up my excrement so why shouldn't I be faithful and give him the respect he deserves? Picking up my "poo" will keep the grassland and park in a pristine condition for us to play in, for that I am grateful, but still leaves my scent there for others to recognise. Even my paws will leave a trail so they will know my whereabouts. Sometimes when I am on the lead, I am nosing around sniffing the air computing all the scents I am able to smell, I hesitate on a lamp post or tree and if he is patient he will allow me to sniff to my heart's content then I am in Seventh Heaven, detecting the scent of friend or foe who I might meet on the course of our walk. He does not seem to sniff at all except when he has a cold, then he is forever sniffing and blowing his nose although I don't think he is sniffing for the joy of it! Occasionally when he is in a hurry he will pull on the lead which tugs on my collar and leaves me truly disappointed. He will always allow me to set my own urine trail however, to tell others I am about and to be reckoned with.

Oh, the happiness that I feel when off the lead and I can dash about after a thrown ball or stick, to bring back to my master and wait impatiently for him to throw it again, only I never let him have it right away after I drop it as I get to it before he has a chance to pick it up much to his annoyance, but that is what dogs do. It never occurs to me to tire of the game but I suspect often he tires of it before I do. Best of all, where there is a stream or pond to plunge into after a thrown stick especially in the summer when I am hot and sweaty. The park offers us our dedicated walk each day, usually around the same time so I get to greet all the other dogs that adopt the park for their walks too. What joy to gambol and dash about, sniff each other to recognise each other, you should see our tails wagging with contentment. Sometimes there is a stranger to greet and they are a little shy and hesitant, backing off but eventually they come round and another friend is made. Of course the humans also enjoy the walk but not as much as we do, they may stop to pass the time of day with each other, then other humans may pat us on our head or scratch behind our ears, say a few kind words whilst we try to get to each other tugging on our leads. Eventually we part company, they going one way and we in the opposite direction. Who knows humans, men and women, when they meet, may become even more friendly than us dogs! After such a daily romp and walk in the delights of Skipton's Aireville Park it is nice to return home of a winter's day to curl up in front of a warm fire and have a nap. In the summer it is just as nice to find a cool spot at home by an open window, let the breeze caress my nostrils, taking in the available scents and dream of the little bitch I got to know last summer.

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